

**INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO
EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AT A PRIVATE HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN MALAYSIA**

THIAN LOK BOON

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
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EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AT A PRIVATE HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN MALAYSIA**

THIAN LOK BOON

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Name of Candidate: Thian Lok Boon (I.C No: 730724-13-5280)

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my father, for showing me how life can be enjoyable

my husband, for his love, support and belief in me, always

Sinopsis

Kepelbagaian tahap kualiti pendidikan dalam kalangan institusi-institusi pendidikan tinggi swasta, terutamanya institusi-institusi bermotifkan keuntungan, adalah satu isu berpanjangan di negara-negara membangun, termasuk Malaysia. Pelbagai mekanisme jaminan kualiti telah dikuatkuasakan ke atas institusi-institusi pendidikan tinggi swasta di Malaysia sejak 1990-an. Baru-baru ini, institusi-institusi bermotifkan keuntungan yang tertentu telah berjaya berubah dan membina reputasi kualiti yang baik, sedangkan institusi-institusi yang lain masih dipandang sebagai “penyerap permintaan”. Maka, kajian ini bertumpu kepada memahami perspektif sebuah institusi pendidikan tinggi swasta tentang kualiti pendidikan, pengalamannya dari segi proses-proses yang terlibat dalam usaha meningkatkan kualiti pendidikan dan cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi, untuk mengenal pasti faktor-faktor institusi sumbangan. Kajian ini diharap dapat menyumbang kepada pengetahuan untuk menangani isu kepelbagaian tahap kualiti di sektor pendidikan tinggi swasta.

Kajian ini menggunakan kerangka konsep pengurusan strategik kerana usaha meningkatkan kualiti pendidikan adalah sejenis pengurusan strategik. Kajian ini adalah kajian kes kualitatif penerokaan menggunakan reka bentuk tertanam kes tunggal holistik. Kes kajian ini adalah sebuah universiti swasta bermotifkan keuntungan teladan di Malaysia yang telah disampel secara bertujuan; dan ia disokong oleh dua buah fakulti teladan demi mengumpul data pelaksanaan secara terperinci. Satu tahun kerja lapangan telah dijalankan demi mengumpul data dari pelbagai sumber secara pemerhatian, analisis dokumen dan temu bual dengan pemimpin universiti, pemimpin fakulti dan ahli akademik. Data yang telah dikumpul dianalisis dengan bantuan perisian NVivo 10. Data dari pelbagai sumber telah ditriangulasikan untuk mengenalpasti tema-tema bagi menjawab soalan-soalan kajian.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa institusi pendidikan tinggi swasta bermotifkan keuntungan menghadapi pelbagai cabaran dalam usaha meningkatkan kualiti pendidikan, terutamanya dari segi mengimbangi kualiti dan keuntungan demi memastikan kelestarian perniagaan. Memenuhi objektif perniagaan dan memastikan kualiti pendidikan adalah sama penting untuk institusi bermotifkan keuntungan memandangkan kekangan kewangan dan persaingan yang semakin sengit. Dapatan kajian mencadangkan bahawa kualiti pendidikan dan motif perniagaan bukan sahaja boleh wujud bersama, tetapi boleh disinergikan jika diintegrasikan dengan betul. Ini berpotensi dalam memastikan kualiti and keuntungan pendidikan tinggi swasta secara jangka panjang. Integrasi itu memerlukan model-model yang lebih berkaitan untuk (a) konsep kualiti, dan (b) pengurusan strategik kualiti untuk institusi pendidikan tinggi swasta. Kedua-dua model ini telah terbentuk daripada dapatan kajian ini dan merupakan jawaban kepada soalan-soalan kajian ini. Tema-tema utama bagi model pengurusan strategik kualiti pendidikan tinggi swasta termasuk: (a) tujuan, misi dan nilai-nilai yang merangsangkan, (b) strategi-strategi bertujuan nilai untuk wang yang menyepadukan kualiti dan motif untuk keuntungan dengan betul, (c) pemimpin berkeupayaan akademik dan perniagaan yang berniat untuk menyumbang, (d) budaya dinamik dan sistem progresif, (e) komuniti yang menumpukan hati, minda dan tingkah laku untuk kualiti.

Pemahaman dari kajian ini menyumbang kepada literatur tentang kualiti, jaminan kualiti dan pengurusan strategik kualiti pendidikan di pendidikan tinggi swasta. Dapatan kajian juga menyumbang kepada pembangunan polisi-polisi kerajaan untuk menangani isu kepelbagaian tahap kualiti dalam kalangan institusi-institusi pendidikan tinggi swasta untuk pembangunan Negara; dapatan juga menyumbang kepada perkongsian amalan-amalan baik dalam usaha meningkatkan kualiti pendidikan dalam kalangan institusi-institusi pendidikan tinggi swasta di Malaysia dan negara-negara membangun lain yang menghadapi isu yang hampir sama.

Synopsis

Diverse educational quality in private higher education, especially for-profit private higher education, is a prolonged issue in developing countries including Malaysia. Various quality assurance mechanisms have been enforced on private higher education institutions in Malaysia since the 1990s. Lately, certain for-profit institutions manage to evolve and establish good quality reputation while the others are still being perceived as demand-absorbing. Aiming to contribute to the knowledge in addressing the diverse educational quality issue at private higher education sector, the study focused on understanding the conception of a private higher education institution on educational quality, its experience in terms of the processes involved in the quest for educational quality and the key challenges faced, in order to identify the key institutional contributing factors.

The study employed a strategic management conceptual framework since the quest for educational quality can be a form of strategic management. The study was an exploratory qualitative case study using holistic single case embedded design. The case was a purposefully sampled exemplary for-profit private university in Malaysia, supported by two exemplary faculties for collection of detailed implementation data. One-year field work was conducted to collect data from multiple sources, using observation, document analysis and semi-structured interview with the university leaders, faculty leaders and academics. The data were analysed using NVivo version 10 software. Data from multiple sources were triangulated to identify the themes to answer the research questions.

The findings of the study show that for-profit private higher education institution does face multiple challenges in the quest for educational quality, especially in terms of balancing quality and profitability to ensure business sustainability. Fulfilling the business objective and ensuring educational quality are equally important in a for-profit

institution, especially given the financial constraint and intensified competition. The findings suggest that educational quality and business motive not only can co-exist but also can synergise if properly integrated. The synergy may ensure long-term quality and profitability of private higher education. The integration of educational quality and business motive requires more relevant models for (a) conception of quality, and (b) strategic management of quality for private higher education institution. The models have emerged from the findings and answered the research questions. The core themes of the strategic management model for quality at private higher education institution include: (a) compelling purpose, mission and values, (b) value-for-money strategies that properly integrate the educational quality and for-profit motive, (c) leaders with academic and business capabilities, and intention to add value, (d) dynamic culture and progressive system, and (e) aligned community with the heart, mind and behaviour for quality.

The insights of the study contribute to the existing literature in the areas of quality, quality assurance and strategic management of educational quality in private higher education. The findings also contribute to the development of government policies that may address the diverse quality issue in private higher education, to support national development. Finally, the findings contribute to sharing of good practices in the quest for educational quality among private higher education institutions in Malaysia and other developing countries experiencing similar issues.

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List of Abbreviations

<i>Bahasa Malaysia</i>	Malaysia national language
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COPIA	Code of Practice for Institution Audit
COPPA	Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation
D-SETARA	Discipline-based rating system for quality of undergraduate teaching and learning for university and university college in Malaysia
ETP	Economic Transformation Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross national product
HE	Higher Education
MAPCU	Malaysian Association of Private Colleges and Universities
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education (was integrated with Ministry of Education in 2013)
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NKEA	National Key Economic Areas
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development
<i>PTPTN</i>	National Higher Education Fund Corporation
<i>Rakyat</i>	Citizen
<i>Rukunegara</i>	National Ideology
SETARA	Rating system for quality of undergraduate teaching and learning for university and university college in Malaysia
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
USD	United State Dollar

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Aiming to contribute to the knowledge in addressing the diverse educational quality issue in private higher education, this thesis is about the experience of an exemplary private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality. This thesis aims to explore the understanding of private higher education institution in Malaysia on educational quality, to understand the experience in terms of the processes involved and the key challenges experienced in the quest for educational quality through a strategic management framework, in order to identify the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality.

This chapter starts with the background of the phenomenon, follows by statement of problem and significance of the study that justify the needs for and importance of this study. It then presents the research objectives. It then provides the conceptual framework of this study and the research questions to be answered. Then it provides the operational definitions of key terminologies and concepts. This is followed by a discussion on the delimitations of this study. This chapter then ends with an outline of the following chapters.

Background

The Development of Private Higher Education

Private higher education has grown drastically worldwide and it is the most rapidly expanding sector of higher education in the twenty-first century (Altbach, 2009; Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010b). According to Bjarnason et al. (2009), the private higher education market in 2006 was estimated to approaching USD 400 billion

worldwide and would continue to expand. As highlighted by Altbach (2009), 30 percent of global higher education enrolment is now private, according to Trends in Global Higher Education, a report for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The growth of private higher education is primarily due to the growth in demand for access to higher education, as well as the inability and unwillingness of governments to fund the expansion of higher education (Altbach, 1999; Altbach et al., 2010b; Lee, 2004a; Muhamad Jantan, Chan, Suhaimi, & Suzyrman, 2006; Sanyal & Johnstone, 2011; Tilak, 2006, 2010). The inability is mainly due to economy downturn and the unwillingness is mainly due to the belief that higher education benefits individuals more than the society.

According to Altbach (1999, 2010b), traditionally, higher education has been considered as a “public good”, valuable to both society and individual students. It disseminates knowledge through teaching and it offers credentials to apply knowledge in modern society, where individuals with more knowledge and skills are able to raise their incomes and to achieve a better quality of life. Besides disseminating knowledge, it applies the knowledge through sharing of expertise. In addition, it creates knowledge through research and development. Therefore, higher education develops human resource with greater participation in the social, cultural, political and economic development, as well as having direct contribution to the solution and new knowledge for the modernization of society. As a result, it supports the economic growth, social mobility, social, cultural and political advancement of a nation or society. From this perspective, higher education is primarily to be funded by society as a whole.

However, many governments have adopted the neo-liberal economy which is market driven, and where privatisation and market differentiation are highly encouraged (Lee, 2004a; Mok, 2013). Observation also confirms that the modern-day university is

no longer an arm of the government. It is a relatively autonomous consumer-oriented corporation, where its primary stakeholders are the students and employers. This development is supported by the idea that higher education is “private good” benefiting primarily the students and thus to be paid by the students or their families. Hence, private higher education is allowed in many countries and is encouraged in some countries to absorb the excess demand for higher education as an alternative option. However, this development raises question about the role of the modern-day university as well as the concern for quality (Lee, 2006a).

In short, the growth of private higher education is a global phenomenon and it has started to dominate the higher education sector in many countries. The following Table 1.1 shows that private higher education enrolment is either a major component or has dominated the total enrolments in countries like India, Malaysia, Brazil, Indonesia, Japan and Republic of Korea.

Table 1.1

<i>Private/Total Higher Education Enrolment: A Few Examples</i>				
	0-10%	10-35%	35-60%	>60%
Developing countries	Cuba, South Africa	Egypt, Kenya	India, Malaysia	Brazil, Indonesia
Developed countries	Germany, New Zealand	Hungary, United States	(none)	Japan, Republic of Korea

Source. www.albany.edu/dept/eaps/prophe/data/international.html

The main distinction for private institutions is that they are responsible for their own funding, even though a few do receive government funds (Altbach, 1999). As cited in Alam (2008, p. 25), Kitaev (1999, p. 43) in his study on private higher education in sub-Saharan Africa defines private education as:

All formal schools that are not public may be funded, owned, managed and financed by actors other than state, even in cases when the state provides most of the funding and has considerable control over these schools (teachers, curriculum, accreditations etc.)

The private higher education segment is traditionally funded by tuition payments from students (Altbach, 2009). Hence, private higher education is perceived to be

business oriented, that is, for profit. Altbach (1999) commented that “majority of private higher universities and post-secondary institutions world-wide provide training and bestow credentials in their areas of expertise, but little else.” In addition, private higher education is very market-oriented and it risks being dominated by the market and the need to serve immediate goals. It may not share the commitment of higher education in the pursuit of knowledge and truth as well as the values of academic freedom of inquiry (Alam, 2013; Altbach, 1999). In short, there has been a continuing concern that educational quality has been compromised by private higher education for profit and growth (Alam, 2013; Altbach, 2005; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005; World Bank, 2002).

On the other hand, there have been different views of the role of private higher education. Lockheed and Jimenez (1994) argued that private higher education plays the following three important roles worldwide. The first role is to fill the gap or to absorb the excess demand not fulfilled by public higher education provision. This is especially crucial in developing countries where the governments are facing financial constraints and are unable to address the ever-increasing demand for higher education, which is viewed as an important channel for social mobility by society. In some developed countries such as United States of America, it is the differentiated demand that fuels the development of private higher education. The second role of private higher education is to foster greater effectiveness and efficiency in public higher education through competing for students and research grants. Private higher education is perceived to be more flexible and responsive to stakeholder requirements, especially to those providing the funds or paying the services. Thirdly, private higher education serves as an alternative model of management that is more efficient, which can be adopted or adapted by its public counterpart. In conclusion, even though there is still concern about the quality of private higher education, its role is becoming more prominent.

Private higher education is always being compared with its public counterpart for better understanding. Private higher education is perceived to be different from public higher education in many ways. The following comments are summarised from Alam (2013); Altbach (2005), Johnstone (1999), Muhamad Jantan et al. (2006), Sanyal and Johnstone (2011), Tan (2002), Tilak (2004), and Wilkinson and Yussof (2005). Public higher education is owned, managed and funded by the government; private higher education is normally not, except in certain countries where the private institutions receive government funding. Public higher education serves the public and private good; private higher education focuses more on the private good and tends to have minimum contribution to research. However, private higher education is perceived as more responsive to market demand compared to public higher education, possibly due to the difference in the source of funding. As a result, private higher education tends to focus on niche courses with greatest demand, at premium prices and relatively low in investment needed. Thus, private higher education is viewed to have not addressed the full spectrum of human resource needed for national development. In addition, private higher education institutions tend to be located in cities or towns where there are more qualified teaching staff and families able to afford private education. Private higher education also tends to charge higher tuition fee compared with public higher education. However, this is partly because public higher education is subsidised by the government and private higher education is normally not. Private higher education is perceived to be more cost-efficient. However, there are also negative comments that its infrastructure is poorer and it tends to hire lower quality part-time academic staff. The most challenging aspect regarding private higher education is the diverse level of quality compared with public higher education.

Private higher education is characterised by its heterogeneity (Altbach et al., 2010b; Levy, 2009). The highest in the hierarchy is the elite and semi-elite type (refer to

the following Table 1.2). Elite private institutions are normally research universities, which provide academic and intellectual leadership, such as Harvard University and Stanford University from the United States of America. Semi-elite private institutions are normally teaching universities with good practical teaching capability and may carry out some research especially pedagogical-related research. The semi-elite institutions are job and market-oriented with entrepreneurialism drive. Their management style is businesslike and they normally have strong ties with and recognition by foreign universities. The semi-elite institution can be for-profit.

The other type of private higher education is culturally and religiously affiliated institutions. They are mostly religious and non-profit organizations. In Malaysia, a similar and yet different type is political parties and government-linked corporations affiliated institutions and they are not for profit too. Most of the expansion is taking place at the “low end” of the higher education hierarchy to absorb the excess demand (Altbach, 1999). As a result, it is perceived to be relatively low in quality. This type is named as non-elite and demand absorbing. The average enrolment per institution is normally small. They normally offer technical and vocational courses targeting the underprivileged group such as working adults. This type is sub-divided into the serious category that is job-oriented and the less serious category that offers low academic quality courses. The following Table 1.2 gives the classification of private higher education institutions.

Table 1.2

Classification of Private Higher Education Institutions

No	Type	Characteristic
1	Elite and semi-elite	
a)	Elite (normally research university)	Academic and intellectual leadership e.g. USA Harvard University and Stanford University
b)	Semi-elite (normally teaching university)	Good practical teaching and may carry out some research Job and market-oriented, entrepreneurialism drive Business like management Foreign ties and recognition
2	Cultural and Religiously Affiliated	Mostly religious and non-profit e.g. Catholicism, Protestant Emerging: increase mix of religious, e.g. Islamic
3	Non-elite and demand absorbing	Largest growth in number to absorb surplus demand Small enrolment no. per institution Technical, vocational or “college” institutions Unprivileged groups, e.g. working adults 2 types: a) problematic in academic quality b) serious, job-oriented

Source. Altbach et al. (2010b), Levy (2009)

Quality in Private Higher Education

Quality is a multi-dimensional and highly contextual concept (Vlasceanu, Grunberg, & Parlea, 2007, p. 68). Its meaning depends on the interest of stakeholders, the reference to output, process or input, the attributes of importance to higher education as well as the historical development of higher education. The different ways of defining quality in higher education are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

Mass private higher education, especially the for-profit sector, is tuition dependent. Hence, it can be highly influenced by its source of funding or its key stakeholders. In order to compete and secure funding, private higher education has to communicate its value clearly to the “market” or its stakeholders. In addition, financial constraint may further influence the mission and educational goal of the private higher education institution as well as its quality related strategies. On the other hand, the

direction of an institution is highly dependent on the leadership of the private higher education institution.

Many private higher education institutions, especially in Malaysia, are for-profit. Coupled with financial constraint, there is a continuing concern that the quality of education has been compromised (Altbach, 2005; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005). Various quality assurance mechanisms have been implemented in Malaysia since the 1990s. Lately, certain private institutions manage to evolve and establish good quality reputation but the rest are still being perceived as demand absorbing. Hence, this study aims to understand the experience of an exemplary private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality so that the key institutional level contributing factors can be identified. More specifically, this study aims to explore the understanding of the private higher education institution on educational quality, how the private higher education institution has driven educational quality, as well as understanding the challenges experienced in order to identify the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality. Literature argued that external stakeholders' expectation, the market condition, the leader's vision, mission, values and stance towards quality and profit-making, as well as the financial status of the institution are factors that may influence how educational quality is driven at private higher education institutions.

Quality and Strategic Management

Rahimnia Alashloo, Castka and Sharp (2005), Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011), Kotler and Murphy (1981), Osseo-Asare, Longbottom, and Murphy (2005) argued the importance of strategic planning and strategic management process in driving significant change such as quality improvement. Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011, pp. 9 - 10) argued that the strategic planning process allows the leaders to explore current

values, missions and goals of the institution within the current setting of the institution, internal and external environment as well as resources.

Kotler and Murphy (1981, p. 471) outlined a strategic planning model whereby the higher education institution must first analyse its internal and external environment for threats and opportunity. Then it must analyse its resources as an indicator of what it is capable of achieving. These analyses provide insights into the formulation of goals the institution wants to achieve within the planning cycle. It is continued with strategy development where the most cost-effective strategy is selected to achieve the goals. The organization design is revised in order to support the strategy implementation. Last but not least, the institution's systems must be designed to enable the strategy implementation.

Similar to Kotler and Murphy's model, the Strategic Management Process Model from Rahimnia Alashloo et al. (2005) argued that a leader considers external and internal factors, as well as the institutional culture and mission in order to select the strategies. The leader then addresses the implementation issues and carries out performance evaluation to further enhance the strategies.

Osseo-Asare et al. (2005) further emphasized that the underpinning strategic quality management concepts and principles, and Total Quality Management driven models, such as the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model is that leaders drive people, policy, strategy, partnership and resources through processes in order to achieve people, customer and society results.

In summary, the literature has argued that leaders drive quality through the strategic management process. Hence, the strategic management framework is adapted as this study's conceptual framework.

Malaysian Context

Higher education in Malaysia has experienced “constraint” private policy in the 1970s, “controlled development” in the 1980s and the 1990s, and then pro-private policy (Lee, 1999). At present, the higher education sector in Malaysia has diverse types of institutions in both the public and private sectors to serve the national development need. Under the public sector, there are universities offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, polytechnics focusing on technical and vocational training, and community colleges supporting life-long learning of the communities. Under the private sector, there are universities, university colleges and foreign university branch campuses that have degree awarding authority, as well as colleges with limited awarding authority up to advance diploma level of qualification. In terms of number of institutions, the private sector outnumbers the public sector due to the drastic growth after the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act was approved in 1996. Private sector enrolment has grown significantly after that and around 42 percent of students enrolled in the private sector in 2011 (refer to Table 1.3). However, enrolment per institution is generally lower in the private higher education sector.

Table 1.3

Percentage of Institutions and Enrolments for Public and Private HE, 2011

Aspect	Public higher education	Private higher education*
No. of institutions	25%	75%
Enrolments	59.4%	41.6%

Note: * The information is based on what has been provided to MOHE. It is based on 87.69% of private institutions that provide complete data.

Source. MOHE (2011)

As in other developing countries in Southeast Asia, the primary issue facing private higher education in Malaysia is quality. While the growth of private higher education in Malaysia is encouraging, the expansion is accompanied by a diversification

of educational institutions and programmes of study (Lee, 2004a). Hence, there is an on-going concern that the level of quality of private higher education in Malaysia is diverse and there is also fear that educational quality has been compromised for profit and growth. This is mainly because most of the private higher education institutions in Malaysia adopt a commercial approach to higher education (Lee, 2004a). The commercial approach of private higher education, especially those funded by private investors, poses a challenge for the institutions to achieve the quality standard while facing financial constraints.

Various policies and strategies have been implemented in higher education in Malaysia to address the quality concern since the 1990s. These include the legislative framework, national quality assurance agency, national qualifications framework, licensing control, programme approval and accreditation, rating mechanism and so forth. Despite the various policies and strategies, there is still an on-going concern that limitation of funding among the private higher education institutions, besides the for-profit motive, has limited the quality of private higher education (Morshidi, 2006). It is expected that through this research, greater insights into the experience of private higher education institution in driving educational quality are obtained. These greater insights can inform the policy making that supports the development and contribution of private higher education.

Chapter Three, Country Context, discusses the research context, Malaysia, in more detail with the focus on the quality of private higher education.

Statement of Problem

Private higher education has grown drastically worldwide, including in Malaysia. It has moved to the central stage of higher education and plays a more prominent role in national development. As indicated above, private higher education is different in many ways compared with its public counterpart. Profit-orientation, financial constraint and

diverse level of quality are the key issues facing private higher education, especially for-profit private higher education, around the world especially in underdeveloped and developing countries including Malaysia (Sanyal & Johnstone, 2011). This is mainly characterised by its uniqueness, namely the academic in commercial setup. The diverse quality concern especially among the for-profit private higher education is possibly best described by Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2010b, p. 81) that:

For-profits are not academically elite institutions, though some may have semielite characteristics. Yet, many for-profits are exploitative institutions, taking advantage of unmet demand and delivering a poor-quality education.

Hence, Altbach (2005) highlighted that “how to perceive the private sector and integrate it into the broader academic system in a country and worldwide is a key challenge”. He also commented that understanding, integrating and creating an appropriate policy framework for private higher education are key issues of the time.

As highlighted by Altbach and Forest (2006), one of the unavoidable consequences of massification through privatisation is a decline in the overall standards and quality of higher education. Mok (2009) shared similar concern that the growth of private/*minban* higher education institutions in China has also created concerns regarding quality assurance. Mok (2009) highlighted that massification of higher education in China has raised doubt in the institutional capacity to manage the rapid expansion especially in terms of quality assurance. Tan (2002, p. 57) held similar opinion that private higher education in general has been subject to a trade off between quantity and quality. As cited in Tan (2002), Geiger (1986) also argued that the limited finance and resources restrain private higher education to becoming primarily teaching institutions. Geiger (1988, p. 707) further emphasized that “tuition dependence is thus an inherent limitation on the quality of the educational services that private universities can provide”.

In addition, after suggesting policy solutions for public and private funding of higher education, Sanyal and Johnstone (2011) commented that “the solutions will differ in their applicability and urgency in different countries, and all the suggestions must be considered in the light of different political, economic and cultural realities *on the ground*”. Boyle and Bowden (1997), Cao (2007), Chalmers (2008, 2008b), Mckinnon, Walker and Davis (1999), MOHE (2010b), Rodgers (2008) as well as Wilkinson and Yussof (2005) have proposed factors or enablers at the institutional level that affect the quality of higher education which can be categorised under the categories of input, process and output. Despite the important role of private higher education in Malaysia, there is still a concern that the rapid growth of private higher education has affected the quality (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2010b; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004; MOHE, 2006, pp. 74-77; Morshidi, 2006; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006; Pitcher, 2013; Sivalingam, 2006; Shah & Nair, 2013; Tan, 2002). Morshidi (2006) argued that limitation of funding among the private higher education institutions is an important factor that limits the quality of private higher education. In a report to the Ministry of Higher Education, the Committee recommended that “private higher education be recognised as a sector that generates economic growth while playing a role in increasing access and equity” (MOHE, 2006). In addition, it is also recommended that the burden of responsibility of higher education financing should also be borne by the private sector. However, without in-depth understanding of how educational quality is driven at private higher education institution, the policy makers may hesitate to make drastic changes or they may make inappropriate changes to the policy concerning private higher education.

Despite the critical role of private higher education and the prevailing concerns about the quality of private higher education, “our knowledge of the patterns of private higher education development world-wide and of the way the private sector fits into the

higher education system is quite limited” (Altbach, 1999). After reflecting the UK experience in funding of student education, Brown (2012) concluded that they “lack any systematic data on understanding of the impact of funding changes on quality”. Despite the effort and research to define quality in higher education, Reisberg (2011, p. 131) argued that “One of the enormous challenges confronting the quality issue is defining quality in higher education. The quest for a broadly useful definition is on-going.... Different constituents and stakeholders use different constructs for addressing quality in higher education.” After an extensive research focusing on private higher education in Malaysia, Tan (2002, p. 265) stressed that “there should be a study to develop a model to address Malaysian private higher education both as a private and a public good, especially from financial view point, and the roles to be assumed by the Government.” After conducting a research regarding the implementation of quality assurance policy at two Malaysian private higher education institutions, Tang (2012) highlighted that “This research has made a beginning by inquiring into QA (quality assurance) policy implementation process... similar case studies can be developed because with enough cases developed it could well be a great reservoir of knowledge on practice of quality management.”

Hence, literature review has shown an obvious lack of in-depth research in understanding the meaning of educational quality at for-profit private higher education institutions and how educational quality is driven at a for-profit private higher education institution in Malaysia. While public universities receive funding from government, private higher education institutions, especially those funded by private investors, need to be able to maintain and enhance their academic quality standard while facing financial constraints and the need for long-term profitability and growth.

Therefore, this study aims to understand the experience of private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality. This research aims

to enable policy maker to make more relevant policies to ensure quality standard is not compromised, as well as to allow or encourage the development of private higher education in Malaysia. With a better understanding of this phenomenon and more relevant policy being formulated, private higher education in Malaysia is expected to play a more prominent role not only to serve the marketplace but also in nation building.

Significance of the Research

This study is important because it provides an in-depth understanding of the conception of quality, and the experience of private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality in terms of the processes involved and the key challenges experienced. This understanding contributes to the identification of the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality. The findings and the models developed through this study contribute to the knowledge and serve as a foundation for future studies by other researchers. This study also contributes to the policy review, policy formulation and implementation by the ministries, quality assurance agency, quality assurance professionals and higher education institutions. More specifically, the findings and discussions of this study contribute to sharing of good practices among the private higher education institutions in Malaysia and other developing countries experiencing similar quality concern. In addition, the good practices may contribute to the public universities in terms of educational quality enhancement.

It also provides suggestions of the possible relevant policies to ensure quality and development of private higher education in Malaysia. In view of the important role played by the private higher education in national development, it is important to ensure the private sector participates actively in the national higher education context. As emphasized by Altbach (2005), creating an appropriate policy framework for private higher education is a central issue of the current period.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the conception on educational quality, and the experience of a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality in terms of processes involved and key challenges experienced, so that the key institutional contributing factors can be identified. The research objectives are:

- 1) To explore the understanding of a private higher education institution in Malaysia on educational quality
- 2) To understand how a private higher education institution has driven educational quality
- 3) To understand the key challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality
- 4) To understand the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality

Research Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

Through literature review of previous studies, relevant models and concepts (refer to Chapter Two) as well as the understanding of the scenario in Malaysia (refer to Chapter Three), it is concluded that the central concern of private higher education in many other countries as well as in Malaysia is diverse quality. The key relevant concepts highlighted in the literature are summarized within the research conceptual framework.

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 18), as cited in Bell (2005), described that a theoretical or conceptual framework is an explanatory device “which explains either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the factors, constructs or variables – and the presumed relationships among them”. Bell (2005) further cited Polit and Hungler (1995, p. 101) that it is “an efficient mechanism for drawing together and summarizing accumulated facts ... which makes the body of accumulated

knowledge more accessible and, thus, more useful both to practitioners who seek to implement findings and to researchers who seek to extend the knowledge base”.

In addition, Bell (2005) also cited that the following is a very clear explanation of what conceptual framework is.

Theory building relies on a few general constructs that subsume a mountain of particulars. Terms such as ‘stress’ or ‘role conflict’ are typically labels we put on bins containing a lot of discrete events and behaviours. When we assign a label to a bin, we may or may not know how all the contents of the bin fit together, or how this bin relates to another. But any researcher, no matter how inductive in approach, knows which bins to start with and what their general contents are likely to be. Bins come from theory and experience and (often) from the general objectives of the study envisioned. Laying out those bins, giving each a descriptive or inferential name, and getting some clarity about their interrelationships is what a conceptual framework is all about.

(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 18)

The conception of quality has evolved over time, but centred on the value to the relevant stakeholders. The commonly used five (5) ways of defining quality proposed by Harvey and Green (1993) has been adopted as the conceptual framework for the conception of educational quality (refer to Figure 1.1).

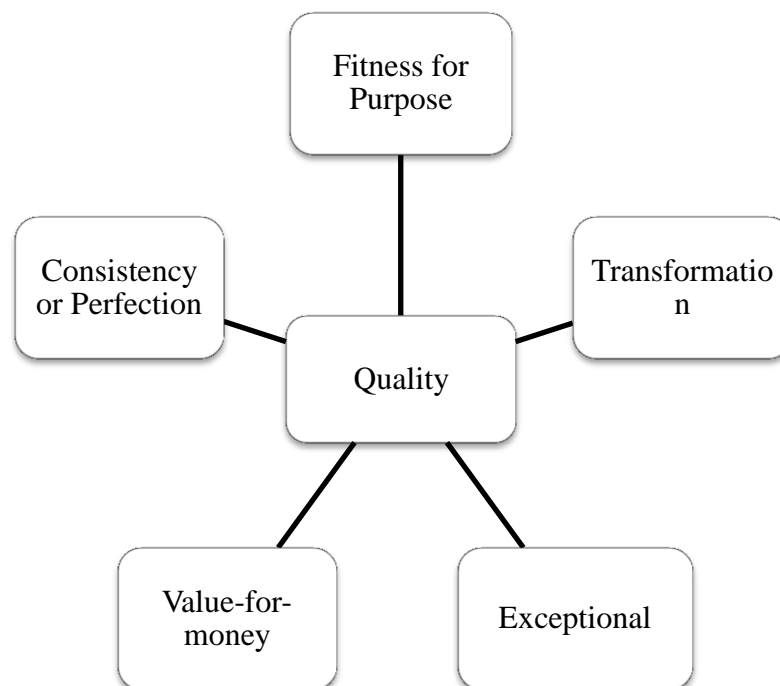


Figure 1.1. Conception of Quality

Source. Harvey and Green (1993)

The relevant models and frameworks for the quest of educational quality is strategic planning and management process from Rahimnia Alashloo et al. (2005), Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011), Kotler and Murphy (1981), Osseo-Asare et al. (2005). They have been adapted to form the conceptual framework of this study (refer to Figure 1.2). The influences for establishing goals, formulating strategies, and implementing strategies come from the environment, resources and the personal belief of the leaders. The environment refers to today's and future's probable one. It covers the stakeholder requirements including student, parent, industry employers, ministry, quality assurance agency and so forth. It also refers to market competition, increased cost of higher education and so forth. The changes in environment may represent threats or opportunities. The resource refers to what it can accomplish, focusing on its strengths and weaknesses, in terms of staff, funding, facilities, systems and so forth. A key understanding of the strength is one's competitive or differential advantage, which refers to resource or ability where an institution outperforms others. Personal belief refers to "how an individual thinks about or perceives things in a cultural setting" (Creswell, 2008, p. 636). Personal belief in this research refers to something that a leader trusts, has faith in or confidence. This belief includes the stance regarding quality and for-profit motive. The leaders establish goals that include the vision, mission, values and stance with regards to educational quality. After that, strategies including plans of action are formulated to achieve the goals. The strategies are implemented by the middle management, lecturers and support staff. The institution may face challenges or difficult situations that test the people's abilities to establish goals, formulate strategies and implement the strategies. From the experience, key institutional factors contributing to educational quality are identified.

Since the institutional and faculty leaders are the key persons involved from the strategic management perspective, they are the primary participants of this case study. Secondary participants include the lecturers and support staff. The institution's quest for educational quality is studied through the research conceptual framework.

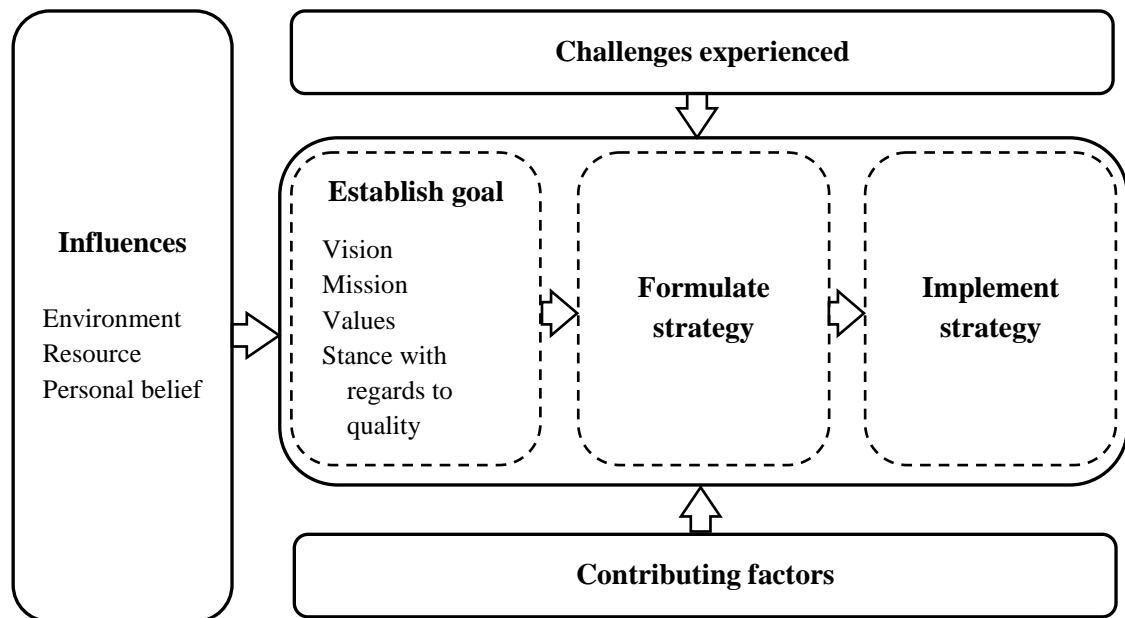


Figure 1.2. Research Conceptual Framework

Source. Adapted from Alashloo (2005), Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011), Kotler and Murphy (1981), Osseo-Asare, Longbottom and Murphy (2005)

Aligned with the research objectives, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What does educational quality mean to a private higher education institution in Malaysia?
- 2) How has a private higher education institution in Malaysia established the goal, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies in the quest for educational quality?
- 3) What are the key challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality?

- 4) What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality at a private higher education institution in Malaysia?

Each of the research questions addresses its corresponding research objective.

Operational Definitions

Private higher education:

Traditionally, the main distinction for private institutions is that they are responsible for their own funding, even though a few receive government funds (Altbach, 1999). As cited in Alam (2008, p. 25), Kitaev (1999, p. 43) in his study on private higher education in sub-Saharan Africa defines private education as:

All formal schools that are not public may be funded, owned, managed and financed by actors other than state, even in cases when the state provides most of the funding and has considerable control over these schools (teachers, curriculum, accreditations etc.)

Altbach (2009) highlighted that the private higher education segment is traditionally funded by tuition payments from students, even though this has changed recently where in certain countries, the “private higher education” does receive government funding. In this research, it uses official judicial status to distinguish private institutions from public ones. The primary distinction between the private and public institution is whether the institution is owned and governed by government or private entity.

Educational quality:

As provided in the UNESCO-CEPES report, cited by Altbach et al. (2010b):

Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multi-level, and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an educational model, to the institutional mission and objectives, as well as to the specific standards within a given system, institution, programme, or discipline. (Vlasceanu et al., 2007)

Harvey and Stensaker (2008) argued that there are five (5) ways to define quality, namely exceptional, perfection or consistency, fitness for purpose, value for

money and transformation approaches. In this research, educational quality refers to the quality of teaching and learning, and not the quality of research. It is primarily measured by the educational outputs (quality of graduates) and supported by the educational inputs and processes.

Quest for educational quality:

According to Merriam-Webster, quest means an act or instance of seeking. In this research, quest for educational quality refers to the effort, experience or process of an institution in the pursuit of educational quality.

Factor:

According to Merriam-Webster, factor means circumstance, fact, or influence that contributes to a result. This study adopts this definition.

Contribute:

According to Merriam-Webster, contribute means help to cause something to happen. This study adopts this definition.

Strategic Management:

Kotler and Murphy (1981) defined strategic planning as “the process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the organization and its changing marketing opportunities”. In this study, strategic management refers to the process of establishing goals, formulating strategies and implementing the strategies, taking into the consideration the environment, resources and the personal belief of the leaders of an institution.

Delimitations of Research

This section describes the scope or boundaries of the study, or what the study is not about (Wolcott, 2009). Delimitations are factors that affect the study over which the research generally does have some degree of control.

This study is delimited to a for-profit private university, which has achieved high rating for quality of teaching and learning, owned by private local investors and with comprehensive programmes. The rationale is that this is an exemplary or enlightening extreme case study to identify best practices that can contribute to literature for educational quality advancement and good practices for addressing the diverse educational quality concerns in the private higher education sector. Troublesome case with poor educational quality was not selected for replication to maximise the variation in findings due to the inability to gain access to such site and people. Literal replication for similar case was not conducted due to limited number of extreme cases and in order to focus the limited resources in collecting holistic and in-depth data from a single case with two embedded sub-cases at faculty level as required to answer the research questions. Collecting holistic and in-depth data is crucial in theory development (Yin, 2009). Because of limited time and resources, this research does not study the private higher education sector. However, this study has contributed to the literature and database for understanding the sector.

This study is also delimited to understanding the conception and experience of a for-profit private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality in terms of the processes involved and the key challenges faced, in order to identify key institutional contributing factors. Understanding the “how” and “why” through qualitative case study is crucial in contributing to the literature and in addressing the diverse quality issue in the private higher education sector. This study is about how educational quality is driven and not about quality assurance implementation. The reason is various quality assurance mechanisms have been enforced on the private sector since the 1990s; however diverse quality concern persists until today. Hence, this study aims to understand how and why certain institutions have managed to establish

good educational quality reputation but others are still being perceived as demand-absorbing.

In view of the philosophical worldview in terms of the relationship between theory and research, ontology and epistemology, chosen by the researcher as guided by the research objectives and research questions, the findings of this study are not meant to be generalised to the population through statistical generalisation, but to be generalised to develop theory through analytical generalization (Yin, 2009).

Chapter Outline

This thesis consists of seven chapters, including this chapter. Chapter Two provides a review of literature regarding the role of higher education. It also describes the emergence of private higher education around the world, characteristics of for-profit private higher education as well as the growing concern on diverse quality in the private higher education. It is followed by discussion on quality of higher education, which leads to the relevant external and institutional influences towards quality, including leadership and strategic planning. Since Malaysia is one the countries in Southeast Asia, the current status of higher education among the countries in Southeast Asia is reviewed with regards to quality.

Chapter Three describes the research context, Malaysia. It presents the current status, profile and role of private higher education in Malaysia. The prominent issues faced by private higher education, namely diverse quality as well as the need for research are discussed. It ends with the policies and strategies implemented for assuring and improving the quality of higher education, including the legislative framework .

Chapter Four outlines the research methodology, explaining how the study was conducted. This includes the rationale for selection of research method, which is quality case study, how the characteristics of qualitative research have been fulfilled, how the concerns on validity, reliability and ethics have been addressed and the different phases

of study. It follows with the research procedures, including the case selection procedures, data collection procedures, data analysis and validation procedures before concluding the chapter.

Chapter Five presents the data collected regarding the conception and experience of private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality. The chapter answers the four research questions that address the four research objectives. The models emerged from the findings were discussed too.

Chapter Six discusses the experience of a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality. The findings of this study are compared and contrasted with the findings of existing studies presented in the literature review and the chosen conceptual framework of this study, taking into consideration the country context.

Chapter Seven provides a summary of the research, highlights the implications of the research findings, discusses the limitations of the research, and outlines the recommendations for future research. It concludes with the contribution of the research.

Conclusion

The introductory chapter has positioned the research in perspective by briefly outlining the worldwide development of private higher education and its development in Malaysia, as well as the growing concerns regarding the diverse quality in private higher education. The statement of problem and significance of the study provide justification for the urgent and important need for this research. It is followed by statements of research objectives, an overview of the research conceptual framework, research questions and the operational definition of key terminologies. Delimitations of this study are provided.

The next chapter, Chapter Two, reviews the literature focusing on the development of private higher education worldwide as well as the key concerns

regarding quality. Relevant important topics with regards to quality of private higher education are discussed too. Chapter Three presents the research context focusing on the development of higher education in Malaysia, followed by the emergence of private higher education as well as the central concerns of diverse quality in the private higher education institution.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to understand the central phenomenon of this research, conception of quality and experience of private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality in terms of the processes involved and the key challenges faced, this chapter reviews the relevant literature in the higher education domain. This includes areas regarding the role of higher education, emergence of private higher education, for-profit private higher education and diverse quality concern, as well as the conceptions of quality in higher education. Literature regarding the external (external to the institution) and institutional influences towards quality is reviewed too. The external influences include external stakeholders' expectations, increasing unit cost of instruction, higher education financing mechanisms, external quality assurance framework and mechanisms, as well as the concerns with external quality assurance drive. The institutional influences include areas regarding institutional framework for quality, generic student attributes, the role of leadership and strategic management in quality improvement as well as the challenges experienced by mid-level management, the faculty leaders, in driving quality improvement. The Southeast Asia context is discussed in this chapter too as an introduction to a more detailed review of the research context, Malaysia, in the following chapter.

In order to ensure a comprehensive review of all relevant literature in the field of private higher education, *Private Higher Education: An International Bibliography* (Maldonado-Maldonado, Cao, Altbach, Levy, & Zhu, 2004) was referred. It was continued with recent literature regarding the areas mentioned above. In order to understand the important role played by higher education, the concept of national

development, as well as the historical and modern roles of higher education are discussed in the following section.

The Role of Higher Education

National Development

National development is a key agenda of many countries, especially the underdeveloped and developing countries. According to Alam (2009b) as well as Teferra and Altbach (2004), education is considered a key agent of national development. It is either as a way of developing human capacity, increasing the skilled workforce for modernization or as a matter of personal freedom, developing capacity and empowerment.

From the literature, it appears that the intention and the underpinning concept of national development evolve over time. According to Alam, Haque, Khalifa, Siraj, and Ghani (2009b), since the 1950s there have been at least three (3) main schools of thought on the concept of national development. They are the (a) economist's perspective, (b) sociologist's perspective and (c) human needs theorists' perspective.

Economists (e.g., Bernstein, Shultz, Psacharapolous) view development primarily for a nation's relative prosperity, which is measured by the gross national product (GNP), highlighted by Alam et al. (2009b). However, there is a concern that greater income does not guarantee greater buying power and more choices or better quality of life. This is partly due to globalization and free trade that make it challenging to preserve a reasonable inflation rate. More importantly, growth in economy without development in politics and society may lead to corruption caused by lack of transparency, maturity of the society and participation of the individuals within a nation. The concerns raised lead to the emergence of another school of thought, namely the sociologists' perspective.

According to Alam et al. (2009b), sociologists (e.g., McClelland, Weber, Inkeles, Smith) propose that modernising a country leads to economic development and a modern society, which has similar economies, societies and politics as those in the prosperous West. The modernization transformation agents are education, technology and industrialization. However, the word “modern” is an abstract and broad concept, and can be interpreted from different perspectives in different contexts. Even the different developed countries from the West interpreted it differently. In short, developing countries, such as Malaysia, need to have a common understanding within society, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion and culture, on their definition and choice of modern society. In addition, this consensus needs to be well-supported by the national development and educational strategies. On the other hand, the social contract should not undermine the individual need and free will to practice freedom of speech and freedom of choice, which is the core belief of the human needs theorists.

Human needs theorists (e.g., Seers, Sen, Edwards) consider national development from a human needs perspective. According to Alam et al. (2009b), the emphasis was not on economic growth as the primary indicator of development, but more on assessing the needs of individuals: their freedom, equity, participation and empowerment to fulfil their potential capabilities. However, it is important for the developing countries, including Malaysia, to have a clear understanding of human needs rooted in their own culture. It is also important to recognise that the prospect of an individual is heavily dependent on the economic, social and political development of a country. In certain instances, individual freedom and equity may not be the primary concern at that point of time.

In short, the three schools of thought have their own roles to play in national development. The ultimate purpose of national development is to improve the quality of life of individuals in a country, by enlarging the people’s choice (UNDP, 2002), and

hence the role of higher education. However, due to the unique scenario and culture of a country, the focus of development and the role of higher education may differ over time. Hence, the historical and modern role of higher education in supporting national development is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Role of University Historically and in the Era of Massification

According to Perkin (2006), “all advanced civilizations have needed higher education to train their ruling, priestly, military and other service elites, but only in medieval Europe did an institution recognizable as a university arise: a school of higher learning combining teaching and scholarship and characterised by its corporate autonomy and academic freedom”. University originally was a place where ethical and intellectual renewal took place, as well as where independence of thought was nurtured. Perkin (2006) further highlighted that later in the eighteenth century, a new model of professorial organization combining teaching and research emerged in Europe and this form of university suited the needs of the new society produced by the Industrial Revolution. In the worldwide expansion of higher education following World War II, universities served the new society by providing specialised professional or high-level training to produce a highly competent work force needed for national development. Universities also supported national development by their scientific research outputs. This entailed the transition from elite to mass higher education, from a system catering to less than 5 percent of the age cohort to more than 15 percent of the age cohort.

Because of massification, the traditional role of higher education to serve the public good has changed to serve the private good as a tradable commodity. Traditionally, the university serves society by creating, applying and disseminating knowledge, as well as being the cultural centre and repository of knowledge. Nowadays, higher education especially the private sector focuses primarily on dissemination of knowledge through teaching and offering credentials. Hence, the primary contribution

of these institutions is producing graduates with better skills who may eventually attain more prestigious careers and higher incomes, depending on the value of the certificate, actual knowledge and skill acquired, as well as the economic conditions and job availability at that time. In addition, these institutions also contribute to attracting international students where higher education is treated as an export commodity.

In conclusion, the traditional view on the contribution of modern higher education, namely to develop human resources that have greater participation in the social, cultural, political and economic development of a nation, support social mobility, contribute to economic development through research outputs and pass on civilization to the next generation, which is also known as “public good”, is changing. At the same time, the view regarding stakeholders served by higher education is also changing. Traditionally, higher education serves a wider scope of stakeholders including the nation, society, student, family, employer or industry. The modern institutions that exist for the “private good” serve a narrower range of stakeholders, which are primarily the student, family and employer or industry.

Modern Role of Higher Education

According to the “World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action”, adopted by World Conference on Higher Education, (UNESCO, 1998), the mission of higher education is to contribute to the sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole. UNESCO (1998) also adopted the following roles of higher education in supporting its mission, which was echoed by Tilak (2009). Among them are to educate highly qualified graduates and responsible citizens able to meet the needs of all sectors of human activity; to educate for citizenship and for active participation in civil, political, social, cultural and economic activities of society; to advance, create and disseminate knowledge through research; to promote and disseminate cultures; to protect and enhance society values; to contribute

to the improvement of education at all levels and so forth. In addition, Tilak (2009) also highlighted the role of higher education in creating a meritocratic society that is able to secure the best political leaders, civil servants, doctors, teachers, lawyers, engineers, business and civil leaders, and being inclusive at the same time.

After understanding the mission and role of higher education, according to Alam, Rabby, Thian, Issa Khan and Hoque (2011), education can only play its role effectively by first knowing exactly the desired long-term ideal state of a nation from the economic, political, social and individual needs point of view. This is in view of the primary role of a government, which is to address the economic needs of the country. Hence, in many underdeveloped and developing countries, education policy is planned according to economic development needs. In Malaysia, for example, industrialization of the country requires many human resources specialised in science and technology. As a result, the public and private universities respond by producing many graduates who potentially can address this need.

However, the true challenge in executing the roles is to have the personnel within the higher education institution, expressing their independent and critical thoughts to uphold the role of higher education. For that, UNESCO (1998) further adopted the following roles that the personnel and students within the institutions should play and these roles should be supported by the higher education institutions. The roles are to preserve and develop their crucial functions through the exercise of ethics, scientific and intellectual rigour; be able to speak out on ethical, cultural and social problems completely independently and in full awareness of their responsibilities; exercise their intellectual capacity and their moral prestige to defend and disseminate universally accepted values; and play a role in addressing issues that affect the well-being of communities, nations and global society.

In conclusion, the primary role of higher education is to produce independent and critical thoughts and knowledge, as well as to nurture responsible and innovative intellectuals who can involve productively in the economic, political and social development of a nation, in order to achieve its long-term goals and live its core values. In a nutshell, the primary role of higher education in national development is to increase the ethical standard and intellectual capacity of a nation.

Emergence of Private Higher Education

Massification of Higher Education

As mentioned earlier, a central phenomenon of higher education in the twenty-first century is massification, a drastic increase in higher education gross enrolment ratio of the age cohort from 19 percent in 2000 to 26 percent in 2007 (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2010a). The increase in access to higher education, especially after World War II, is mainly due to increase in demand for higher education by society.

According to Trow (2007), 0 to 15 percent of access to higher education from the age cohort is considered “elite” higher education, 16 to 50 percent is considered “mass” higher education and over 50 percent is considered “universal” higher education. Trow (2007) further elaborated that the function of “elite” higher education is “to shape the mind and character of the ruling class in preparation for their elite roles”. Hence, “elite” higher education is for a privileged group of people only, depending on its social class or special talent or both. The function of “mass” higher education is “to transmit skills in preparation for broader range of technical and economic elite roles”. Hence, it is a right for those with certain qualification. The function of “universal” higher education is “to prepare the whole population for rapid adaptation to social and technological changes”. Hence, it becomes an obligation for the middle and upper class.

Access and selection for “elite” higher education is based on meritocratic achievement. Access and selection for “mass” higher education is based on meritocratic plus “compensatory programs” to ensure equality of opportunity. Access and selection for “universal” higher education is open with emphasis on “equality of group achievement” including social class and ethnicity. Partly influenced by the access policy, the academic standard of the “elite” higher education is broadly shared and relatively high. The academic standard of “mass” higher education varies and there are various types of higher education providers covering the academic programmes, technical and vocational programmes and so forth. For “universal” higher education, the perspective of quality or criterion shifts from “standard” to “value-added”. The following Table 2.1 provides a comparison among the elite, mass and universal conceptions of higher education.

Table 2.1

Trow’s Conceptions of Elite, Mass and Universal Higher Education

Characteristics	Elite (0-15%)	Mass (16-50%)	Universal (over 50%)
Attitudes to access	A privilege of birth or talent or both	A right for those with certain qualifications	An obligation for the middle and upper classes
Functions of higher education	Shaping mind and character of ruling class; preparation for elite roles	Transmission of skills; preparation for broader range of technical and economic elite roles	Adaptation of ‘whole population’ to rapid social and technological change
Curriculum and forms of instruction	Highly structured in terms of academic or professional conceptions of knowledge	Modular, flexible and semi-structured sequence of courses	Boundaries and sequences break down; distinctions between learning and life break down
The student “career”	“sponsored” after secondary school; works uninterruptedly until gains degree	Increasing no. delay entry; more drop out	Much postponement of entry; softening of boundaries between formal education and other aspects of life; term-time working
Institutional	Homogenous with	Comprehensive	Great diversity with no

Characteristics	Elite (0-15%)	Mass (16-50%)	Universal (over 50%)
characteristics	high and common standards; small residential communities; clear and impermeable boundaries	with more diverse standards; “Cities of intellect”-mixed residential / commuting; Boundaries fuzzy and permeable	common standards; Aggregates of people enrolled some of whom are rarely or never on campus; Boundaries weak or non-existent
Locus of power and decision making	“The Athenaeum”-small elite group, shared values & assumptions	Ordinary political processes of interest groups and party programs	Mass publics’ question special privileges and immunities of academe
Academic standards	Broadly shared & relatively high (in meritocratic phase)	Variable; system/institution “become holding companies for quite different kinds of academic enterprises”	Criterion shifts from “standards” to “value added”
Access and selection	Meritocratic achievement based on school performance	Meritocratic plus “compensatory programs” to achieve equality of opportunity	“Open”, emphasis on “equality of group achievement” (class, ethnic)
Forms of academic administration	Part-time academics who are “amateurs at administration”: elected/appointed for limited periods	Former academics now full-time administrators plus large and growing bureaucracy	More specialist full-time professionals. Managerial techniques imported from outside academe
Internal governance	Senior professors	Professors and junior staff with increasing influence from students	Breakdown of consensus making institutional governance insoluble; decision making flows into hands of political authority

Source. Trow (2007)

Governments around the world nowadays believe that “mass” or “universal” higher education is important to ensure social and economic development of a nation. This belief has further intensified the growth of access to higher education around the world. This is evidenced by the higher education gross enrolment ratio for various regions of the world over the last thirty (30) years as summarized in the following Table 2.2. United States achieved universal higher education in the 1980s, much earlier than

all other countries. Western Europe and other countries such as Australia and South Korea reached universal higher education in the 1990s. Few Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand and the Philippines massified their higher education in the 1980s and Malaysia massified its higher education at the second half of the 1990s. Countries with large population such as China and India, as well as less developed countries in Southeast Asia were struggling to increase access to higher education.

Table 2.2

Higher Education Enrolment Ratio Over Years¹

No	Countries	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
1	American						
	United States	59	72	77	68	82	(83)
2	Western Europe & Developed						
a	Finland	32	45	67	83	92	(94)
b	Australia	28	35	70	65	72	(77)
c	United Kingdom	21	27	48	58	59	(57)
d	France	29	37	51	53	55	(55)
3	East Asia						
a	South Korea	32	37	49	78	92	(98)
b	Japan	29	29	40	48	55	(58)
4	Southeast Asia						
a	Singapore	12	-	34	-	-	-
b	Thailand	20	16	20	37	44	45
c	Malaysia	6	7	11	26	29	(36)
d	Philippines	28	24	(25)	(28)	27	(29)
e	Indonesia	6	9	12	-	18	24
f	Brunei Darussalam	(3)	-	(6)	13	15	17
g	Lao PDR	1	1	2	3	8	(13)
h	Myanmar	5	5	5	-	(11)	(11)
i	Vietnam	-	3	3	10	(10)	-
j	Cambodia	0	1	1	2	4	10
5	Latin America						
a	Chile	15	(19)	28	37	48	(55)
b	Brazil	(11)	11	(11)	16	25	38
c	Colombia	11	(14)	16	24	30	37
6	Others (with huge population)						
a	China	2	3	5	8	19	25
b	India	6	6	6	10	11	(13)

Source. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics

¹ Gross enrolment ratio is the ratio of total enrolment, regardless of age, to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. Tertiary education, whether or not to an advanced research qualification, normally requires, as a minimum condition of admission, the successful completion of education at the secondary level.

While governments around the world are under the pressure to increase access to higher education, they also experience tremendous budget pressure. Hence, the key challenge in the massification of higher education is financing, which is discussed in the following section.

Financing the Massification of Higher Education

According to Pan and Luo (2008), there are four (4) models of massification of higher education around the world in terms of financing. They are the American Model, Western European Model, Southeast Asian and Latin American Model, and the Transition Countries' Model. As summarised in the following Table 2.3, the unique characteristics of the American Model is the pluralistic of its sources of funding, from public and private sectors, supplementing each other. This pluralistic model has supported the drastic growth of access to higher education in American to the “universal” level with the active involvement of all stakeholders. However, the disadvantage of this model is that it is very market-oriented with diverse level of education quality.

On the other hand, the Western European Model relies solely on government funding which has put tremendous pressure on the government budget and to a certain extent constrains the growth of access to higher education recently. However, the strength of this model is the highly consistent educational quality among the higher education institutions. The Southeast Asian and Latin American Model, including Malaysian model, relies primarily on its private sector for the growth of access to higher education, with funding received through tuition and social fund-raising. These private institutions are primarily for-profit, which focus on low cost and saleable programmes, and a diverse level of educational quality is seen among the many higher education institutions. The advantage of this model, however, is that it relieves the government from the ever-increasing budget expectation. The model of transition countries experienced changes to its source of funding from government to private, accompanied

by its political transition. Because of the change in source of funding, the higher education sector grows rapidly after transition.

In conclusion, developing countries such as Malaysia rely on private higher education to increase access to higher education, but at the same time, they experience challenges in terms of diverse educational quality. The emergence of private higher education and the corresponding beliefs are discussed in detail in the following section.

Table 2.3

Models of Higher Education Massification from the Funding Perspective

Name of model	Key characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
American Model	Funding sources for expansion is pluralistic. a) Government at all levels b) Tuition fee c) Social power (endowment) d) College auxiliary enterprises Both public and private sources of funding supplement each other. Both public and private HEIs help to achieve massification.	Fast development in terms of massification and active involvement of all stakeholders	Market-oriented with diverse level of education quality
Western European Model	Rely on public HEIs, source of funding mainly from government while nongovernment plays little or no role.	Consistent education quality	Insufficient funds; slow in development in terms of massification
Southeast Asian & Latin American Model	Rely on private HE institutions, funded through tuition and social fundraising.	Does not rely on government with budget constraint, especially the developing countries	Focus on low cost and saleable programmes; diverse level of education quality
Model of Transition Countries (Eastern Europe & former USSR)	Accompanied with political transition: rely on public HE institutions and government funding before transition (slow development) and rely on private HE institutions and tuition after transition (rapid development)	Rapid development after transition	-

Source. Adapted from Pan and Luo (2008). A Comparative Analysis on Models of Higher Education Massification

Emergence of Private Higher Education

It is more and more accepted by the countries around the world that higher education benefits the students and their families (private good) more than the society (public good). Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002) showed the comparison between private and social or public rates of return for primary, secondary and higher education in the following Figure 2.1. It is observed that the private rate of return for higher education is much higher than the social rate of return. This is possibly due to the fact that graduates from higher education do earn much higher salary that benefits the individual more than society.

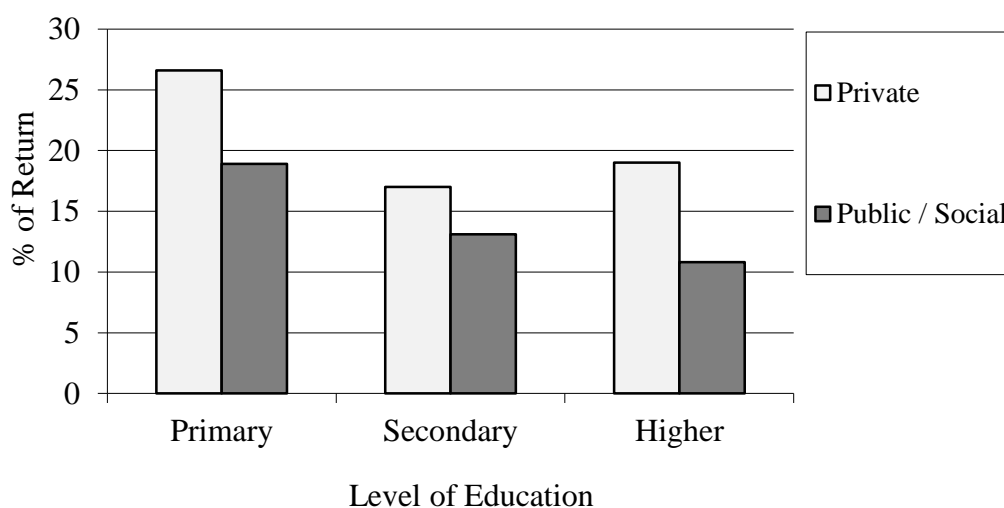


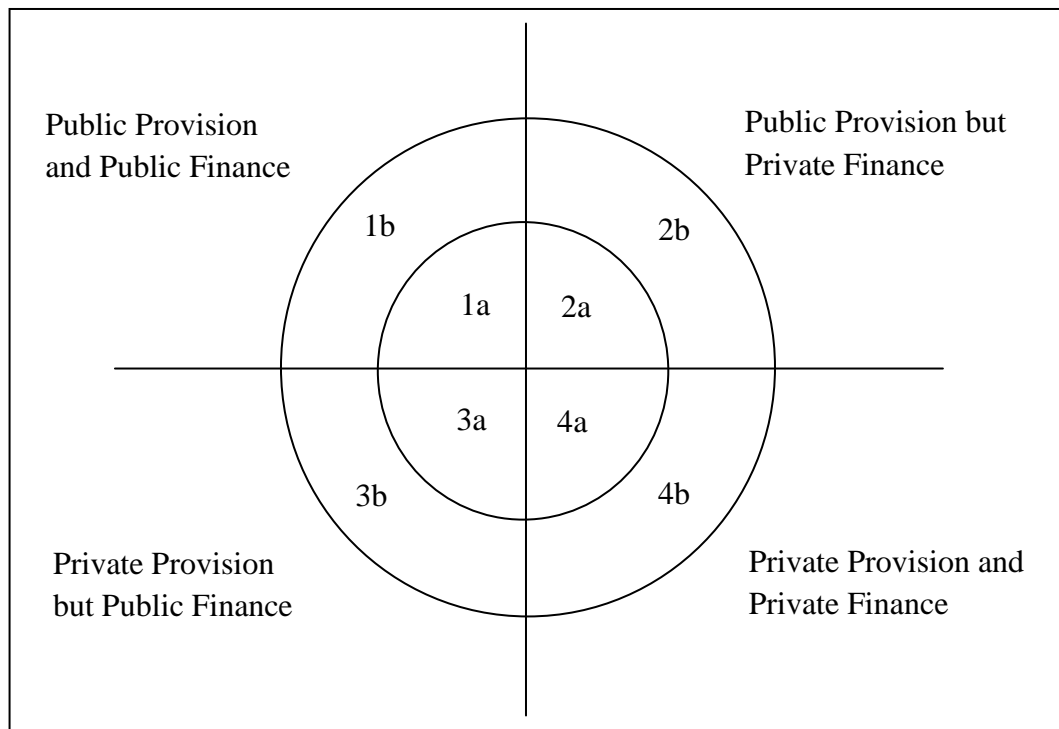
Figure 2.1. Private and Social Returns to Investment in Education by Level

Source. Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002)

Altbach et al. (2010b, p. 12), Johnstone and Marcucci (2007), Lockheed and Jimenez (1994), and Sanyal and Johnstone (2011) argued that it is widely accepted that education is a responsibility shared between the government and the family (or the student). Traditionally, higher education has been seen as a public good, serving the society as well as the individual students (Altbach et al., 2010b, p. 12). Hence, the role of government is important to ensure sufficient funding for higher education that

primarily serves the public good and national development. In other words, the government or society is to be the primary source of funding through the tax received. However, recently it is more and more widely accepted by the governments around the world that higher education is a private good, benefiting the student and the family more than the government. Hence, it is increasingly believed that the students and their families should pay more for their higher education than the society (Altbach et al., 2010b). Sanyal and Johnstone (2011) refer to this as “cost-sharing”, a terminology used to describe the situation where the cost of higher education is shared among government or society, student, parent, and industry or employers. It also refers to the “worldwide trend of these costs being shifted from a dominant reliance on governments to an increasing reliance on parents and students” (Sanyal & Johnstone, 2011). Fielden and Cheng (2009, p. 29) described the changes to higher education in the following manner: “...wholly public good, publically financed, is now increasingly regarded as shared public/private good, privately financed”.

Recently, globalization has led to new political perspective towards public services, including higher education, from social democracy where the government is responsible for goods and services distribution, to neo-liberalism where the market is viewed as a more effective and efficient mechanism for goods and services distribution (Deem, 2001; Lee, 2006a; Mok, 2010, 2013; Ntshoe, 2004). As a result, most governments around of world have started adopting quasi-market practices. The result of marketisation of what used to be public goods and services may be represented by the following diagram, Figure 2.2.



Note: 1a: Pure public service

2a: Publicly provided services paid by charges to users

3a: Contracted out services paid by state (government)

4a: Contracted out services paid by individual

1b: Publicly provided service bought with vouchers

2b: Publicly provided services bought by individuals

3b: Privately provided services bought using vouchers, tax reliefs, grants

4b: Free market

Figure 2.2. Spectrum of Marketisation and Privatization of Welfare

Source. Whitty and Powell (2000), as cited in Muhamad Jantan et al. (2006)

The various forms of marketization from Whitty and Powell (2000), as cited in Muhamad Jantan et al. (2006), are consistent with the various forms of marketisation of higher education from Tilak (2004), as listed in the following.

- a) financial privatization of public universities
- b) transfer of ownership of public institutions
- c) establishment of private institutions
 - i. private institutions with government support

- ii. self-financing private institutions (with no government support)
- iii. profit-making private institutions

One of the forms is for-profit private higher education institution, which is the focus of this study, and it is discussed in more detail in the following section.

In conclusion, because of the belief that higher education is more of a private good than public good and the neo-liberalism belief, coupled with the budget pressure, many developing countries, including Malaysia, choose to increase access to higher education through privatization. According to Altbach (2009), as reported in Trends in Global Higher Education for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 30 percent of global higher education enrolment is private. This percentage is expected to increase in the coming years. As shown in the following Table 2.4, many countries from East Asia, Southeast Asia and Latin America rely primarily on the private sector for the growth of access to higher education, with funding received through tuition.

Table 2.4

Private Higher Education Enrolment in Percentage

No	Countries	%	Year
1	American		
	United States	26.1	2007
2	Western Europe and Developed		
	France	16.6	2006
	Finland	10.5	2006
	Australia	3.5	2008
	United Kingdom	0.0	2006
3	East Asia		
	South Korea	80.1	2006
	Japan	77.4	2007
	Taiwan	71.9	2004
	Hong Kong	59.0	2007/8
4	Southeast Asia		
	Indonesia	71.0	2007
	Philippines	65.2	2005/6
	Cambodia	58.0	2006
	Malaysia	50.9	2004
	Lao PDR	32.4	2004/5
	Vietnam	10.4	2005
	Thailand	9.9	2007
	Myanmar	0.0	2005
5	Latin America		
	Chile	77.6	2007
	Brazil	74.6	2007
	Colombia	49.6	2005
6	Others (with huge population)		
	India	30.7	2005/6
	China	19.9	2008

Source. <http://www.albany.edu/dept/eaps/prophe/data/international.html>

For-Profit Private Higher Education and Diverse Quality Concern

Types of Private Higher Education Institution

Private higher education was initially viewed as those not founded, owned, managed and financed by the government. However, based on the recent development of public-private partnership, private higher education may be funded by the government but not managed by the government. For this study, official judicial status of the institution is used to distinguish between the private and public institutions. Hence, the primary distinction between the private and public institution is whether the

institution is owned and governed by government or private entity. The most recent development of private higher education is the for-profit institution, where the most important distinction of this type of private higher education institution is the entrepreneurship or business-oriented operation with profit-oriented motive. Without government or public funding, for-profit private higher education institutions have to stand on their own. Hence, profitability and business sustainability are crucial.

Chapter One has discussed the typology of private higher education, which includes elite and semi-elite, culturally and religiously affiliated, and demand-absorbing. Private higher education institution can be categorised also according to its motive of establishment and type of ownership. According to Kinser and Levy (2006), and Levy (2009), there are generally three (3) types of motive of establishment and five (5) types of private ownership. The three types of motive are non-profit, for-profit and public-private partnership. The non-profit institutions are normally academically elite, with some semi-elite and serious non-elite types. The for-profit institutions tend to be at the exploitative end of the non-elite type. They tend to target the non-traditional and non-privileged groups such as working adults. Their primary and possibly only source of income is tuition, and they rarely obtain any public financial support. Their governance is business-oriented with power and authority concentrated in the board of directors and chief executives rather than faculty senates. The primary difference between the non-profit and for-profit ownership is that the owners of non-profit institution do not share the profit generated by the institution while the owners of the for-profit institution do (Sanyal & Johnstone, 2011). Hence, this caused the concern that for-profit institution may have compromised quality for profit in order to fulfil the expectation of the owners to maximise profit sharing.

The five types of ownership are family-run, other type of proprietary, business owned (corporate universities), publicly traded and international chains such as Laureate. A common characteristic among these types of ownership is profit-oriented.

Characteristics of For-Profit Private Higher Education and Diverse Quality Concern

According to Johnstone (1999), the change towards privatization may be viewed in the dimensions as summarized in following Table 2.5. On the left hand side of the spectrum is the high “publicness” institution, which is publicly owned and can be altered or even closed by the government; and on the extreme right hand side of the spectrum is the high “privateness” institution, which is also known as for-profit private. Next to the for-profit private category is the private non-profit category. The mission of for-profit private institutions serves the private interest of students, clients and owners with the primary goal being to maximize profit and growth; as compared to the mission of the publicly owned higher education institutions serving the public mission as decided by the government or the faculty. Comparatively, the mission of the private non-profit mainly serves the students’ private interest but with clear public accountability and the owners do not share the profit generated by the institution.

The source of revenue or funding for for-profit private institution is totally private, primarily from tuition; as compared to the source of revenue for public institution which is tax payers or public revenue. The for-profit private institution operates like a business and is managed like a corporate entity; as compared to publically owned institution managed through academic norms with shared governance and antiauthoritarianism. Even though Sanyal and Johnstone (2011) commented that the for-profit private sector has limited control by the government as compared to the public sector, Geiger (1988) argued that mass private higher education is highly controlled by

the government, which is similar to the scenario of the private higher education in Malaysia.

Table 2.5

Privatization in Higher Education as Direction or Tendency on Multiple Dimensions

Dimension	High “publicness”	←————→		High “privateness”
Mission or Purpose	Serves a clear “public” mission as determined by the faculty or the state (government)	Mission is avowedly both public and private, but as defined by faculty	Mission is mainly respond to student’s private interests, mainly vocational	Mission serves private interests of students, clients and owners
Ownership	Publicly owned: can be altered or even closed by state	Public corporation or constitutional entity	Private non-profit: clear public accountability	For-profit private
Source of Revenue	All taxpayer or public revenue	Mainly public but some tuition or “cost sharing”	Mainly private but public assistance to needy students	All private revenue: mainly tuition-dependent
Control by Government	High state control, as in agency or ministry	Subject to controls, but less than other state agencies	High degree of autonomy; control limited to oversight	Controls limited to those over any other businesses
Norms of Management	Academic norms; shared governance antiauthoritarianism	Academic norms, but acceptance of need for effective management	Limited homage to academic norms; high management control	Operated like a business; norms from management

Source. Johnstone (1999); Sanyal and Johnstone (2011)

Geiger (1988) argued that there are three (3) basic structural patterns of public-private differentiation observed in different countries, with American as an exception (refer to the following Table 2.6). There are: (a) mass private and restricted public sectors, (b) parallel public and private sectors, as well as (c) comprehensive public and peripheral private sectors. Geiger (1988) also argued that in the mass private sector, the government tends to assume the regulator and enforcer role to ensure minimum standards are upheld among the private institutions through government regulation. The

mass private sector is primarily tuition dependent, and is primarily engaged in teaching and not research activities. It tends to have high orientation towards marketplace and has relatively low orientation towards academic attainment and external patronage. Geiger (1988) also argued that mass private sector may benefit from a differential policy with lessened government regulation towards the stronger institutions and maintain the regulation to ensure meeting minimum standards among the weaker institutions. The characteristics of the mass private higher education described by Geiger (1998) appear to be consistent with the private higher education in Malaysia, even though the enrolment in private higher education sector in Malaysia is around 40 percent.

Table 2.6

Dominant Tendencies of Different Structural-Functional Types of Private Sectors

	Mass private	Parallel private	Peripheral private	U.S. private
State authority	high [min. standards]	high [high standard]	low	low [indirect]
Financial constraint	tuition dependent	publically supported	private resources	pluralistic support
Orientation towards:				
Academic attainment	low	high	low	highest for research
Marketplace	high	low	high/low	highest for urban service university
Patronage	low	low	low/high	highest for liberal arts colleges

Source. Geiger (1988)

Despite the observation that the for-profit private institution operates like a business and is responsive to market needs and competition, Reisberg (2011, p. 136) argued that it is “a myth in vogue that a competitive higher education market would be a powerful incentive for institutions to improve the quality of their activities.” According to Reisberg (2011), the misconception is caused by the assumption that people (students and parents) have access to good information and use it to make thoughtful and rational choices. Reisberg (2011) further argued that competition and market forces may

actually have negative effects, where they divert the funds to enhance the image or prestige of the institution in the marketplace that do not have real impact on the institutional academic performance.

This concern is supported by a study conducted by Alam and Khalifa (2009) through a survey on five private universities, ten private colleges and twenty-five coaching centres in Bangladesh. The study revealed that private universities spent twenty-seven (27) percent of their total budget on marketing activities, colleges spend eighteen (18) percent and the coaching centres spent fifty-one (51) percent. The marketing expense led to higher tuition cost. Even though Tavares and Cardoso (2013) affirmed that students at Portuguese higher education do make rational choice in choosing an institution, competition may negatively affect the private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality because of the need to maintain profitability.

In conclusion, profit-orientation, financial constraint and diverse levels of quality are the key issues facing private higher education around the world, especially in underdeveloped and developing countries including Malaysia (Sanyal & Johnstone 2011). This is mainly characterised by its uniqueness, education in business setup. Hence, this study aims to understand how the for-profit private higher education institution conceptualises quality, how the private higher education institution has driven educational quality in terms of the processes involved and the key challenges experienced, in order to identify the key institutional contributing factors, which are expected to be highly influenced by its unique characteristics.

The following sections review the literature on the conception of quality in higher education, as well as the external and institutional influences towards quality, including leadership and strategic management.

Quality in Higher Education

Defining Quality in Higher Education

The understanding of quality has evolved over time. At the 1998 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, the extensive range of activities within the context of quality has been agreed. It was also agreed that stakeholders should be an integral part of the institutional evaluation process for the purpose of review and enhancement of quality.

Quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions, and activities: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment. (UNESCO, 1998, p. 11)

After 10 years, as provided in 2007 UNESCO-CEPES report, cited by Altbach et al. (2010b), quality is seen as a dynamic and contextual concept.

Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multi-level, and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an educational model, to the institutional mission and objectives, as well as to the specific standards within a given system, institution, programme, or discipline. Quality may thus take different, sometimes conflicting, meanings depending on (i) the understanding of various interests of different constituencies or stakeholders in higher education (e.g., students; universities; disciplines; the labour market; society; a government); (ii) its references: inputs, processes, outputs, missions, objectives, etc.; (iii) the attributes or characteristics of the academic world worth evaluating; and (iv) the historical period in the development of higher education. (Vlasceanu et al., 2007, p. 68)

In 1993, Harvey and Green argued that there are five (5) ways to define quality. The first way of defining quality is from the exceptional perspective. This is a traditional concept of quality which is linked to the idea of “excellence”, usually operationalised as exceptionally high standards of academic achievement. Quality is achieved if the standards are surpassed.

The second way of defining quality is from the “perfection or consistency” perspective. This perspective focuses on the process and it sets specifications that it

aims to meet. Quality in this sense is summed up by the interrelated ideas of zero defects and getting things right first time. It is not often applied to a learning situation where no one wants students to be all the same. It does, however, have relevance in areas such as consistency of academic judgement and reliability of management information.

The third way of defining quality is from the “fitness for purpose” perspective. It judges quality by the extent to which a product or service meets its stated purpose. The purpose may be customer-defined to meet requirements or, in education, it is usually institution-defined to reflect the institutional mission or educational objectives, or indeed defined by external professional bodies. Fitness for purpose is often allied with another so-called definition of quality “fitness of purpose”, which evaluates whether the quality-related intentions of an organisation are adequate. It provides a check on fitness for purpose. Such fitness of purpose is not a definition of quality per se.

The fourth way of defining quality is from the “value for money” point of view. It assesses quality via return on investment or expenditure. At the heart of the value-for-money approach in education is the notion of accountability. Public services, including education, are expected to be accountable to the funders. Increasingly, students are also considering the value for money of their own investment in higher education.

The last way of defining quality is from transformation perspective. This view is rooted in the notion of “qualitative change” where it sees quality as a process of change, which in higher education adds value to students through their learning experience. Education is not a service for a customer but an ongoing process of transformation of the participant. This leads to two notions of transformative quality in education: enhancing the consumer and empowering the consumer. The following Table 2.7 summarises the five ways of defining quality in higher education.

Table 2.7

Five Ways of Defining Quality in Higher Education

Way	Description
Exceptional	This is a traditional concept of quality linked to the idea of “excellence”, usually operationalised as exceptionally high standards of academic achievement. Quality is achieved if the standards are surpassed.
Perfection or Consistency	It focuses on the process and sets specifications that it aims to meet. Quality in this sense is summed up by the interrelated ideas of zero defects and getting things right first time. Often thought not to apply to a learning situation where no one wants students to be all the same. It does, however, have relevance in areas such as consistency of academic judgement and reliability of management information.
Fitness for Purpose	Judges quality by the extent to which a product or service meets its stated purpose. The purpose may be customer-defined to meet requirements or (in education) is usually institution-defined to reflect institutional mission (or course objectives), or indeed defined by external professional bodies. Fitness for purpose is often allied with another so-called definition of quality “fitness of purpose”, which evaluates whether the quality-related intentions of an organisation are adequate. It provides a check on fitness for purpose. Such fitness of purpose is not a definition of quality per se.
Value for Money	Assesses quality via return on investment or expenditure. At the heart of the value-for-money approach in education is the notion of accountability. Public services, including education, are expected to be accountable for the funders. Increasingly, students are also considering the value for money of their own investment in higher education.
Transformation	This view sees quality as a process of change, which in higher education adds value to students through their learning experience. Education is not a service for a customer but an ongoing process of transformation of the participant. This leads to two notions of transformative quality in education: enhancing the consumer and empowering the consumer.

Source. Harvey and Stensaker (2008)

Harvey (2002) also argued that due to massification of higher education, value-added transformation should be the core focus of the concept of quality in higher education. This is mainly due to the increased participation rate of the cohort joining higher education and the increased diversity in the quality and standard of students joining the higher education system. Harvey (2002) also expressed his concern that minimum progress has been made on developing value-added quality indicators.

Harvey (2002) also highlighted that there is an obvious employability agenda across countries and the pressure is on higher education to be responsive to (a) employer

demands, (b) government economic requirements, (c) student expectations of graduate abilities. For private higher education in Malaysia where the students are mostly funded by parents, employability is also an expectation of the parents and this is from the return on investment point of view. In 2008, Harvey and Stensaker commented that most of the attention is given to fitness for purpose and value for money approaches recently.

Senge et al. (2000), as cited in Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007), highlighted that ideally, any model for management in any organization can only succeed if it represents the shared values of the stakeholders. They further argued that ‘value for money’, ‘excellence’, ‘fitness for purpose’ and ‘consistency’ are the criteria for quality in higher education of the four key stakeholders, namely ‘providers of resources’, ‘users of products / services’, ‘users of outputs’ and ‘employees of sector’ (refer to Table 2.8).

Table 2.8

Stakeholder Criteria for Quality in Higher Education

Generic type	Stakeholder representative group	Value expectation	Criteria for quality
Providers of resources	Funding bodies	Appropriate returns on investments	Value for money
Users of products / services	Students (student and perspective)	Competitive advantage for their careers	Excellence
Users of outputs	Employers	Competent workers	Fitness for purpose
Employees of sector	Academics and administrators	Respect, as evidence by remuneration and recognition	Consistency (or perfection) in organisational behaviours norms

Source. Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007)

According to Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007), the stakeholder criteria for quality in higher education covers four out of the five ways of defining quality in higher education according to Harvey and Stensaker’s (2008). Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007) further argued that the fifth interpretation, quality as transformation of students, is a meta-quality concept that ties in the other concepts. According to Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007), when students are transformed, it exceeds the resource provider’s

basic expectation of value for money, meets the requirements of “excellence” from students, satisfies the “fitness for purpose” of a competent worker for employers, and attests to the motivation in staff through consistent policies. Therefore, it was argued that “transformation”, as an interpretation of quality, is central to developing the educational quality model in higher education.

In a paper on how quality culture relates to quality, Harvey and Stensaker (2008) argued that the different notion of quality can be interpreted differently depending on the quality culture. The following Table 2.9 provides the possible way of viewing quality from the elitist and democratic notion of culture.

Despite the effort and research to define quality in high education, Reisberg (2011, p. 131) argued that “One of the enormous challenges confronting the quality issue is defining quality in higher education.” Hence, one of the research objectives of this study is to explore the understanding of the private higher education institution on educational quality.

Table 2.9

Intersection of Quality Definitions and Elite and Democratic Concepts of Culture

Quality	Culture	
	Elitist	Democratic
Excellence	Creating an environment in which the best prosper irrespective of others	Developing a set of shared, lived understandings of how to project, support and aspire to excellence
Consistency	Making sure that areas of high reputation perform consistently	Everyone takes responsibility for ensuring their own work meets expectations and specifications
Fitness for purpose	Specifying an elitist purpose and ensuring everything conforms to it	A common understanding of purpose and how to achieve it
Value for money	Using reputational leverage to attract money from high profile resources and ensuring that it is spent effectively, or at least to the satisfaction of donors	Developing an internalised set of values that ensures resources are used efficiently and effectively
Transformational	Ensuring that top-graded students are prepared (enhanced and empowered) for significant graduate jobs and that top researchers are fully supported and enabled to attract and deliver major research projects	A stakeholder-centred approach that endeavours to enhance and empower students and researchers: prioritising the development of participants in the learning and knowledge development process

Source. Harvey and Stensaker (2008)

Quality and Purpose of Education

In the literature review paper regarding the understanding of educational quality in low income countries focusing on primary education, Barrett, Chawla-Duggan, Lowe, Nikel, and Ukpo (2006) drew from Chitty's (2002) three concepts of schooling. The concept of schooling can be viewed as the concept of education, and it contributes to different understanding of quality. The concepts are: (a) schooling for human fulfilment, (b) schooling for preparation for the world of work, and (c) schooling for social progress and social change, which are summarised in the following Table 2.10.

Table 2.10

Three Concepts of Schooling

Purpose of schooling	Educational paradigms (Hart & Robottom (1993); Sauvé (1996))	Illustrating quotes/ references
Schooling as human fulfilment	Humanist educational paradigm	"...if only our schools can successfully educate every individual child in self-confidence, independence and autonomy, then society can with confidence be left to take care of itself. The good society will be automatically produced by the creation, through education, of good individuals. Education, it is held, cannot directly change society; it must do so indirectly, by creating the kind of individual who will then possess those qualities which are prerequisite for the realisation of the good society..." Hargreaves, 1982:93)
Schooling as preparation for the world of work underlined by the belief of a " <i>direct and indisputable correlation between educational reform and economic prosperity</i> " (Chitty, 2002:3).	Rational educational paradigm - 'human capital theory' Consequently, performance in school and school career became 'tools' and selection criteria for vocational careers and scarce work and study places (von Hentig, 1996:50). Education as having instrumental value.	"Education itself, which under the sway of Enlightenment thought came to be seen either as a moment in the progressive unfolding of freedom, as in France, or as means of promoting national health, as in Germany, is now reduced to performativity, to training and skills... thus emancipatory reason gives way to technocratic rationalization... Increasingly within a market-led world, managerial solutions are sought to contemporary dilemmas." Lyon (1999:54/55)
Schooling as an essential element of social progress and social change	Education as a tool for transformation or social engineering. Education as being about developing "desirable abilities in people", which includes functioning within an existing society, but also to use this functioning and one's ability for working towards changing / improving / envisioning it. Multiple discourses concerned with the idea that "all education systems have social functions and consequences" (Chitty, 2002:4).	Dewey (quoted in Chitty, 2002:5) points out that "the conception of education as social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind". O'Brien (2004:1) in the tradition of Paulo Freire, argues that education is not a neutral instrument. It either functions as an instrument that "brings conformity to the present system of logic" by integrating young people into it or an instrument that "provides resources necessary for students to transform their world" in a critical and creative way. Education equips "young people with both the ability and the determination to improve society according to changing needs" (Dewey, cited in Chitty, 2002:5)

Source. Barrett, Chawla-Duggan, Lowe, Nickel, and Ukpo (2006)

The three concepts of schooling are consistent with the three schools of thought on the concept of national development from Alam et al. (2009b), as discussed earlier. They are the (a) economist's perspective, (b) sociologist's perspective and (c) human needs theorists' perspective.

After reviewing the literature regarding the understanding of educational quality in low income countries, Nikel and Lowe (2010) proposed a new framework with seven conceptual dimensions. They are effectiveness, efficiency, equity, responsiveness, relevance, reflexivity and sustainability (refer to the following Table 2.11). Three of the dimensions, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance, are similar to the 'exceptional', 'value for money' and 'fitness for purpose' ways of defining quality from Harvey and Stensaker (2008).

Table 2.11

The Intellectual Foundation and Systemic Applicability of the Dimensions of Quality

No	Dimension	Central concern	Remark
1	Effectiveness	The impact of education- at all levels... the extent to which stated educational goals are achieved	Not all outcomes are measureable and does not take into consideration of value-added
2	Efficiency	The maximising of resource use..., rate of return	Not all outcomes are measurable
3	Equity	The contribution of education to increasing or decreasing social justice	Was associated with issue of access
4	Responsiveness	The recognition of individuality (or diversity) and response to efforts to 'become oneself'	May require additional resources
5	Relevance	The goals (content and competencies) and the means of achieving them to meet the needs of the nation, the community and the learner's life context	Identification of needs is a complex and often contradictory process
6	Reflexivity	The contribution to a learner's personal orientation in a rapidly changing world of increasing uncertainty	-
7	Sustainability	The take up of responsibility for global environment changes and the uncertainty of future generations' well being	-

Source. Nikel and Lowe (2010)

In conclusion, the evolution of the conception of educational quality for the past twenty years has been focusing on the benefit to the key stakeholders, students, employers and society. However, for-profit higher education has a strong business motive. The conception on quality thus far may not resonate with its for-profit nature. Hence, the concept of educational quality in the setting of a for-profit private institution was explored in this study.

The 2007 UNESCO-CEPES report, as cited in Altbach et al. (2010), recognised that quality is related to the contextual setting, which includes among others, external expectations and the institution's mission and objective. The following sections review the external and institutional influences towards the quality of private higher education, including leadership and strategic management.

External Influences towards Quality of Private Higher Education

As cited in Middlehurst (1997, p. 187), according to the open-systems theory developed by Von Bertalanffy (1968) amongst others, “organisations are ‘open’ to their environment and must achieve an appropriate relationship with that environment if they are to survive and prosper”. Hence, the educational quality of a private higher education institution is influenced by its external environments, including the external stakeholders' expectations, increasing unit cost of instruction, higher education financing mechanisms, external quality assurance framework and mechanisms.

External Stakeholders' Expectations

Private higher education institutions exist to address the needs of their external stakeholders and this is consistent with the concept of quality. Private higher education serves multiple stakeholders. Government, a principle stakeholder, may welcome private higher education institutions to share the pressure of ever-increasing demand for access and funding constraint, as well as to enrol students who would otherwise study

overseas, to minimise brain drain and loss of foreign exchange. At the same time, for developed and developing countries, private higher education can be a source of income by attracting international students. However, governments are concerned that the private sector may not be able to meet the policy criteria of equity, access and quality, besides offering programmes favoured by the market. Hence, governments around the world impose various regulations, standards and quality assurance mechanisms to ensure private higher education institutions address the government's expectations.

Even though students and parents expect access to higher education to be widened through private higher education to reduce the parents' financial burden to send their children to study overseas, parents and students are concerned if private institutions' tuition is worth the investment. They are concerned about the reputation of the private institutions and whether their degrees are respected in the market place. Ultimately, students and parents would like assurance that the education and the certificate will lead to a good job.

Employers favour industry-oriented programmes where the skills of graduates are aligned to industry needs. This will reduce the cost to re-train the graduates at the workplace. In short, employers expect private higher education to be very industry oriented, which many private institutions have leveraged on to ensure their graduates' employability.

Increasing Unit Cost of Instruction

A challenge faced by higher education worldwide is that the real cost of higher education per full-time equivalent student has grown substantially (Archibald & Feldman, 2008; Johnstone, 2011a; Johnstone & Marcucci, 2007; Lee & Healy, 2006). The increase in cost has posed additional challenges to private higher education institutions to achieve financial sustainability in terms of profit and growth. Archibald

and Feldman (2008) had discussed two explanations for the rise of unit cost in higher education.

The first is because of the increasing productivity and wages in other industries such as manufacturing industry, a result of technological advancement. However, “productivity” growth in higher education is commonly perceived as lower quality. For example, increasing the faculty to student ratio may reduce the personal attention to each student and may reduce the passing rate too.

The second explanation is because of the increasing revenue received by higher education institutions. Higher education institutions, especially public sector and non-profit private sector, tend to spend all their revenue, so the revenue is possibly the only constraint on cost. In the long run, the revenue received by higher education is influenced by society’s attitudes toward the value of higher education. It is also influenced by the changes in technology, labour market wages, prices of purchased goods and services and competition within the industry.

Archibald and Feldman (2008) attempted to explain the relationship between quality, unit education cost and technology of service delivery, through the following Figure 2.3. As highlighted by Archibald and Feldman (2008), technology in this context refers to “the entire currently understood process (or menu of ways) by which higher education services are delivered by universities. The two (2) lines reflect that the higher the quality, the higher the unit cost, unless there is an improvement to the technology of service delivery.

Hence, this study explores the challenges faced by private higher education in the quest for educational quality, which may include the need to manage the increasing unit cost and the need to maintain profitability.

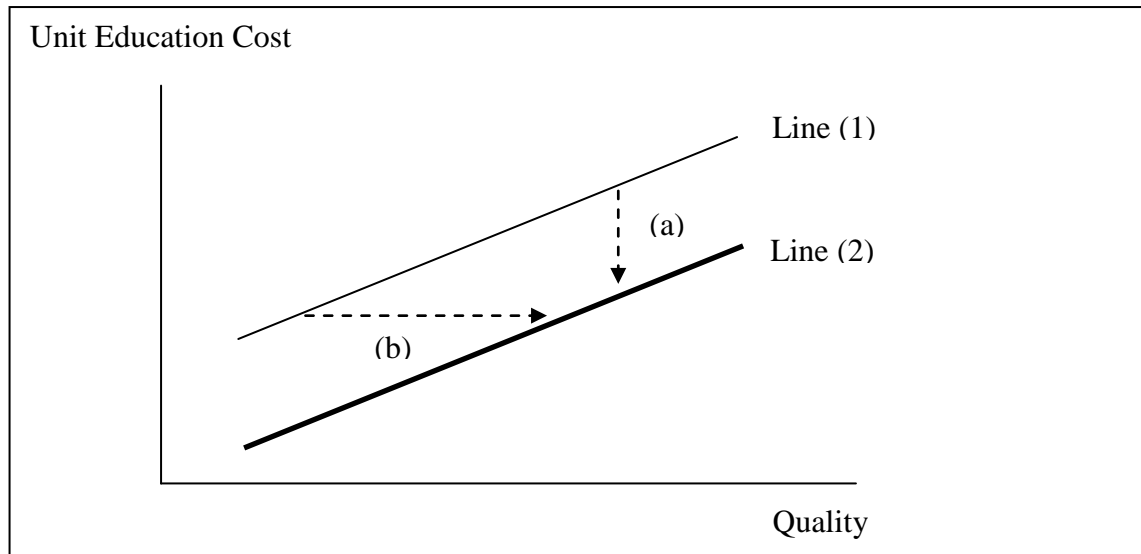


Figure 2.3. Education Cost and Quality

Source. Archibald and Feldman (2008)

Higher Education Financing Mechanisms

Harvey and Williams (2010) are of the opinion that “the link between funding and quality is another contentious area”. They argued that acknowledging the institutional diversity while agreeing to the incentive funding and the criteria to be met between the funding body and the institutions is important. Brown (2012) highlighted the importance of having more systematic data or understanding of the impact of funding changes on quality, after reflecting the UK experience in student funding for higher education.

Kaiser, Vossensteyn, and Koelman (2001) in their research on ten (10) countries reflected on the impact of the funding mechanism on the quality of teaching. Kaiser et al. (2001) argued that two key funding mechanisms are input versus output funding, and supply versus demand-side funding. The following sub-sections make reference to the work of Kaiser et al. (2001).

The funding mechanisms that may have positive impact on private higher education are performance-based funding, which is a type of output-oriented funding,

and demand-side funding. Performance-based funding is based on what has been achieved, such as quality and graduate employability. Private higher education typically does not receive fixed allocation of government funding. Through performance-based funding, it is possible for private higher education institutions to receive government funding as long as the private institutions perform above the standard set by the government. This type of funding has positive and direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning of private higher education institutions.

Demand-side funding happens when the higher education institutions receive the funding from the demanding party, which is the student or parent, where the funding may come from the students or parents themselves, or from the government. The students use the money (or voucher) to buy the education they want from their choice of institution. The rationale behind demand-side funding through students is to create a sense of responsibility among students to spend the money critically and efficiently as well as to ensure the institutions offer programmes aligned to the market and student needs. One popular type of demand-side funding is the student support systems, such as government grant and scholarship, student loan and voucher. Another possible source of demand-side funding is industry or employer. A recent alternative of funding mechanism highlighted by Kaiser et al. (2001) is funding through contracts or earmarked budgets used to steer specific innovations or purposes. This type of funding is expected to have impact on private higher education to be more responsive and innovative.

External Quality Assurance Regulatory Framework

Most of the countries around the world quality assured their higher education through regulation framework that includes the following areas (Fielden & Varghese, 2009; Lemaitre, 2009). Higher education institutions must obtain approval or license to set up a new institution and campus. The criteria for approval of new licence are

normally made known to the institutions. In addition to the licence to set up a new institution or campus, the government normally controls the power of the institutions to award qualifications especially undergraduate and postgraduate degree through conferring different status of institution. Higher education institutions must apply and obtain approval from the government or quality assurance agency before offering a programme. The criteria for programme approval are normally made known to the institutions. Government also grants operating incentives to institutions achieving certain level of quality and standard. Tax relief is another mechanism of awarding institutions that meet a certain level of quality and standard. The government or quality assurance agency may regularly monitor and collect information on financial and academic performance through quality audit, rating and other mechanisms, which are discussed in greater detail in the following section.

In conclusion, appropriate regulatory framework is crucial for quality assurance especially in the era of massification through private higher education. Mok (2009) concluded that higher education in China is facing critical governance issues that raise doubt in its quality assurance due to lack of comprehensive regulatory framework to govern the diverse educational market after the rise of private / *minban* higher education.

The various external quality assurance and improvement mechanisms or performance models used in higher education are discussed in the following section.

External Quality Assurance and Improvements Mechanisms

In 2008, Chalmers, Lee, and Walker reported on various international and national (Australia) quality teaching and learning performance models, or quality assurance and improvement mechanisms, that recognise and reward quality of teaching and learning at individual, institutional, national and international levels. Five performance models that use a variety of performance indicators were reported. The

performance models are (a) quality audit, (b) accreditation, (c) performance funding and performance budgeting, (d) performance reporting, (e) surveys and tests.

According to Chalmers et al. (2008) quality audits are collaborative efforts through self-review by the auditee and verification of self-report by an external review team. The review team makes recommendations for improvement and follows up the progress. Accreditation is a process of evaluation whether a programme or institution can be recognised as meeting the appropriate (minimum) standards. According to Harvey (2004) as cited in Chalmers et al. (2008), the major difference between accreditation and quality audit is that accreditation requires the applicants to prove their fulfilment of the accreditation criteria, while audit presumes the auditee is functioning properly and it is the responsibility of the external review to prove otherwise.

Performance funding is typically used by the government to reward exemplary performance on indicators that reflect government priorities. Performance budgeting includes a longer list of indicators that reflect the institutional performance that is directly linked to the funding decision. Performance reporting refers to reporting the institutional performance to the government on selected indicators of the government's interest with no financial implication. Hence, it is less controversial than performance funding.

According to Chalmers et al. (2008), "surveys gather information on the experience and perceptions of the key stakeholder, students, teachers, and employers, and are proxy measures of quality of teaching and learning in higher education institution". Tests provide independent evidence of growth and development in the students gained through the learning experience at the higher education institution, which is often referred to as "value added".

Higher education in Malaysia has practiced programme accreditation, institutional audit, and quality rating loosely tied to incentive at the moment. Graduate

survey, named the Tracer Study, and employer survey, are also part of the quality assurance and improvement mechanisms.

Concerns with External Quality Assurance Drive

Concerns have been expressed by the higher education institutions after experiencing the various external quality assurance mechanisms implemented by the government. In an empirical study on the academics' perception regarding the impact of quality assurance at two "new universities" in the UK, a majority of the interviewees felt that quality assurance initiatives, such as quality audit, have limited their professional judgement and academic autonomy, resulting in more control and less trust (Hoecht, 2006). According to Hoecht (2006), the key principle of quality assurance is demonstrating accountability and the concern is that audit seems to focus more on the quality of the control system rather than the quality of the education. As a result, the academic may learn to play the game by using the language of the auditor and providing the "correct answer", which may result in a sense of certainty without significant quality improvement. Another concern relates to extended need of documentation and "box-ticking" at the expense of resources that may be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Hence, there is a call for a quality system for learning and innovation rather than quality system for management control. This system has to be trust-based instead of control-based.

Stensaker, Langfeldt, Harvey, Huisman, and Westerheijden (2011) reported another in-depth study regarding the impact of external quality assurance on higher education in Norway based on the perception of students, staff and management. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that the different forms of quality assurance (audit, accreditation, evaluation) targeting at institutional and programme levels are mainly aimed at controlling. The findings showed that the impact of the different forms of quality assurance is almost the same. The findings also indicated that evaluation seems

to be more relevant to the institutional leadership and administration than for the staff and student. The report highlighted concerns regarding commercially based rankings which are getting more attention as an alternative source of information regarding quality. The report also questioned the cost and benefit of external quality assurance, and argued that the quality assurance mechanisms may increase bureaucracy and regulation rather than improving teaching and learning quality. Another concern is that the students seem to be least informed about the effects of quality assurance while the efforts are meant to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

A general concern is that external quality assurance mechanisms focus on accountability and may encourage compliance and not continual improvement. Harvey and Williams (2010) described this as the “tension between improvement and accountability”. Comparatively, internal quality assurance is more empowering and encourages true reflection and review under the spirit of continual improvement. Harvey and Newton (2004) suggested that if external quality evaluation is to fulfil its transformative role, trust in higher education has to be re-established and the focus has to be on internal processes and motivators. Hence, this study focuses on the institutional contributing factors towards quality. The following section discusses the literature regarding the institutional level influences on quality.

Institutional Influences on Quality

This section starts with the institutional comprehensive framework for quality, then focuses on the output in terms of graduate attributes. The role of leadership and strategic management in driving quality as well as the challenge faced by mid-level management in the quest for quality are discussed after that.

Institutional Framework for Quality

Various efforts have been made to identify institutional systemic models and indicators or influences of educational quality over the years. Boyle and Bowden (1997) proposed an integrated model and principal elements for educational quality assurance based on the “fitness for purpose” definition of quality (refer to the following Figure 2.4). According to the model, the key output elements are:

- quality improvements (evidence based) in student learning (programmes)
- evidence for accountability requirements, including knowledge of quality

The key enabling or process elements are:

- vision, values and strategic goals (including plans)
- programme quality assurance system and processes
- faculty development programme
- assessment of student learning (processes and information on outcomes)
- faculty / personnel evaluation system

The key support platform includes:

- support groups, structures, policies and resources, and their QA systems

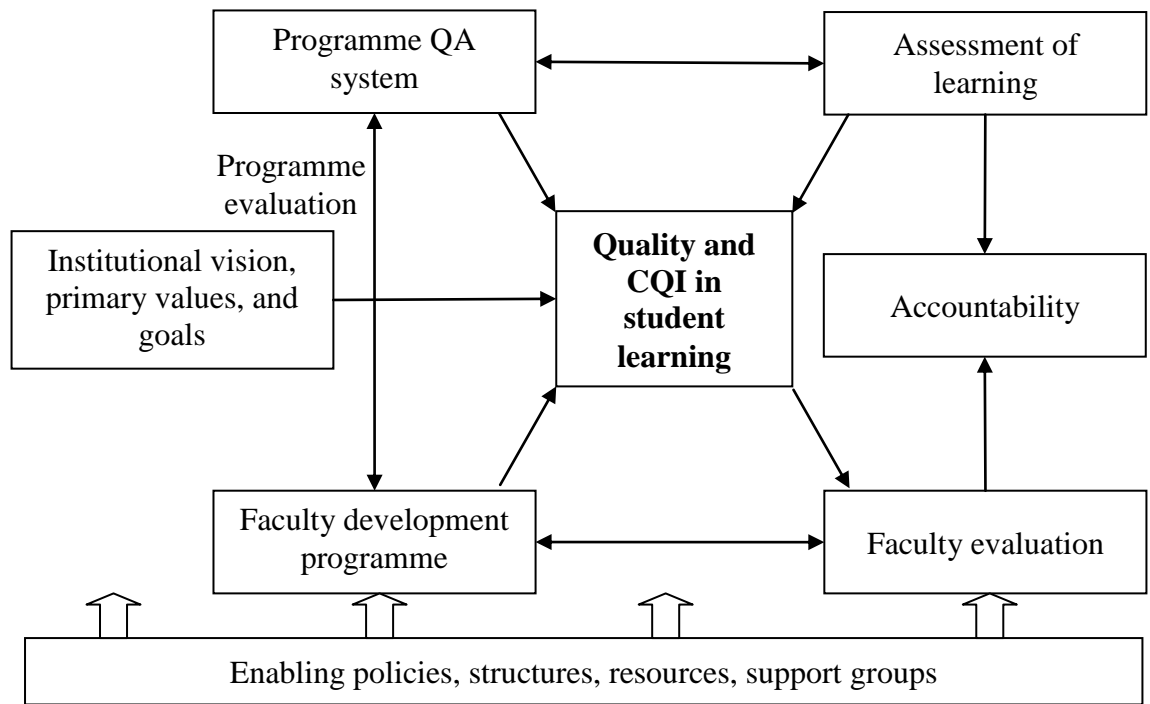


Figure 2.4. Model and Principal Elements for Educational Quality Assurance

Source. Boyle and Bowden (1997)

Mckinnon, Walker, and Davis (1999) led a project to develop a comprehensive benchmarking manual for Australian universities to compare their performance, to ascertain the performance trends and to initiate continual improvement. The benchmarks include lagging (outcomes), leading (performance drivers or enablers) and learning (rate of change) indicators. The benchmarks cover the following areas:

- governance, planning and management
- external impact
- finance and physical infrastructure
- learning and teaching
- student support
- research
- library and information services
- internationalization

- staff

Chalmers (2008b) led a national project to identify and implement teaching and learning quality indicators in Australian universities to recognise and reward quality teaching in higher education. According to Chalmers (2008b), the rationale behind performance models and indicators in higher education is to ensure students receive education that prepares them for employment and that the nation is supported with skilled workforce for national development. Chalmers (2008a) highlighted the following possible quality indicators covering input, process, output and outcome dimensions (refer to the following Table 2.12).

Similar development was experienced in the UK where the desire to improve the quality of higher education has led to adoption of various quality performance indicators in the quality management process (Rodgers, 2008). In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education introduced rating mechanisms for quality of teaching and learning in 2007. Started for public universities, it was extended to cover all public and private university and university colleges in 2009 and was named the SETARA rating. The quality indicators cover three domains, input, process and output.

Table 2.12

Quality Indicators for Input, Process, Output and Outcome Dimensions

Dimension	Indicator	Sub-indicator (examples)
Input	Admission standards	Student entrance score
	Enrolment rates and student composition variables	Percentage of international students
	Staff composition variables	Academic staff diversity
	Effectiveness, management and organization of higher education systems	Strategic focus, risk management, financial viability activities
	Resources / infrastructure	Student / staff ratio, resource/student ratio
	Income / financial resources	University revenue
	Expenditure	Expenditure per full time student, expenditure on library and computer resources
Process	Support services	Adequacy of student access and support, financial scholarship, operational student organizations, social and physical extra-curricular activities
	Mission statement	
	Visionary leadership, academic innovation and creativity	
	Student engagement (in teaching and learning)	
	Faculty engagement	
	Student-centred teaching and learning	
	Assessment of student learning	
	Class size	
	Remedial activities and their effectiveness	
	Access rate, participation rate, retention rate, progress rate / success rate, attrition rate, completion rate, graduation rate	
Output	Graduate full-time employment	Graduate starting salaries
	Graduate participation in further studies	
	Graduate ready for advanced practice	
	Graduate satisfaction	Overall satisfaction, good teaching satisfaction, generic skills satisfaction
Outcome	Employer satisfaction	Employer satisfaction
	Stakeholder satisfaction	
	Learning outcomes	Motivation for life-long learning, student achievement scores, student participation
	Student literacy level	
	Graduate competencies	

Source. Chalmers (2008a)

The institutional level quality indicators (refer to Table 2.13), which are also the influences towards quality, may be assessed from the admission standard, faculty quality and adequacy, facilities, relevancy and currency of the curriculum, employability of graduates and employer feedback (Alam, 2009a; Boyle & Bowden, 1997; Cao, 2007; Chalmers, 2008b; MOHE, 2010b; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005).

Table 2.13

Institutional Framework for Quality of Higher Education

Domain	Category	Dimension	Indicator (examples)
Input	Student	Admission standard	Minimum qualification requirement, average admission result
	Faculty	Faculty qualification and composition	Percentage of faculty with PhD qualification, faculty to student ratio
	Facilities	Facilities	Dedicated campus, specialised equipment to student ratio
Process	Governance	Administration	Existence of governance system
	Curriculum	Curriculum content	Relevant, comprehensive, challenging, current
		Curriculum provision or teaching and learning	Level of student satisfaction
		Assessment	Valid, reliable and transparent
		Accreditation or recognition	Percentage of programme with accreditation status
Output	Quality of Graduates	Employability	Level of participation in internship, mobility programme, extra-curriculum activities
			Mastering of core competencies and soft skills, percentage of graduate being employed within six months upon completion of studies
			Level of employer satisfaction
		Alumni satisfaction	Level of alumni satisfaction

Source. Adapted from Alam (2009A), Boyle and Bowden (1997), Cao (2007), Chalmers (2008b), MOHE (2010b), and Wilkinson and Yussof (2005).

According to the framework, the ultimate testimony of graduate quality comes from the feedback of the “end user”, the society, the employer or industry, as well as the “consumers” themselves, the graduates. In addition, the quality of education is also

reflected in or influenced by the process, in terms of curriculum content, curriculum provision or teaching and learning, assessment and support services. Finally, the quality of education is also reflected in or influenced by the quality of student being attracted, quality of faculty, quality of facilities as well as quality of governance.

Since the ultimate measure of quality is based on the feedback from the end users, it is important to review how the institutions have defined their graduate attributes, which the graduates should demonstrate.

Generic Graduate Attributes

The quality of graduate is the most important indicator of the educational quality of higher education. “One way in which universities have sought to articulate the outcomes of a university education is through a description of the attributes of their graduates” (Barrie, 2006). According to Barrie (2006), “various forces acting on higher education globally have fueled the re-emergence of universities’ claims of graduate attributes over the past twenty year”. The most important force is the call for universities to produce more employable graduates (Barrie, 2006). Litchfield, Frawley and Nettleton (2010) echoed that “government, employers and professional societies want university graduates who are better prepared for employment”.

As cited in Barrie (2006), Bowden et al. (2000, p. 217) argued that:

Graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future.

Barrie (2006) also highlighted that generic graduate attributes in Australia have broadly been accepted as the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates. However, in a study at one Australian university, Barrie (2006, p. 238) concluded that academics have different ways of understanding the concept of graduate attributes.

When six professional societies in Australia were interviewed for their understanding of the professional attributes required of a contemporary graduate, eleven work-ready graduate attributes were identified (Litchfield et al., 2010). Six key attributes were identified across all professional societies, and they are ethics and professionalism, a global perspective, communication capacity, ability to work well in a team, ability to apply knowledge and creative problem solving and critical thinking skills (Litchfield et al., 2010, p. 521). Feast (2001) administered a questionnaire to a group of 161 tertiary business students regarding the importance and value that students place on a graduate quality framework at the University of South Australia. The findings confirmed that “students felt the graduate quality framework was important and contributed to their chances of employment in their chosen careers” (p. 157).

Literature highlighted the importance of leadership and strategic management in driving quality improvement, and these are discussed in the following sections.

Leadership

Buckland (2009, p. 531), Johnstone (2011b, p. 185), Rojas and Bernasconi (2011) highlighted that the challenges confronting higher education in all countries and especially higher education in developing countries such as Malaysia, are formidable and call for effective leadership and governance. The challenges include the impact of the globalization process, preserving professors as intellectual community, commitment to areas of knowledge generally perceived as having lower value in the short term such as culture, adapting to changing organization of knowledge and adapting to changing opportunities that the changing world brings (Morshidi et al., 2012).

Leadership has been defined in different ways. Bryman (1992, p. 2), as cited in Middlehurst (1997), described that a common understanding of leadership is “a process of social influence whereby a leader (or group of leaders) steers members of a group towards a goal”. Jeroen (2007) echoed the understanding of leadership. According to

Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011, p. 16), Birnbaum's definition of leadership shared similar perspective, which is "leadership involves moving others towards a shared perception of reality, towards a common understanding of where the organization is and where it should be going, and towards an increased commitment to those ends (1992, p. 16). Morshidi et al. (2012, p. 517) argued that "leadership guides and creates unity out of disorder". Concisely, leadership is about leading change through proper alignment of shared goals (Johnstone, 2011b, p. 180).

Studies since the 1990s have concluded the important role played by leadership in driving the quality agenda. After a survey of 160 colleges and universities, Horine and Hailey (1995, as cited in Kim, 2010) concluded that "a lack of commitment by senior leadership was identified as one of the key barriers to implementing systematic quality improvement in higher education". In the model for comprehensive educational quality assurance proposed by Boyle and Bowden (1997), they highlighted the importance of institutional vision, primary values and strategic goals, which are reflections of leadership.

Gordon (2002) argued the importance of effective strategy and leadership in responding to external quality assurance. He highlighted that evidence gained over the past decade of quality assurance in higher education, pointed to the importance of strategy and the need to align leadership with ownership, and internal culture with quality culture. Bogue and Hall (2003, p. 263, as cited in Kim, 2010) argued that:

The final guarantor in realizing the promise of quality is a "heart first" attitude in which a concern for quality constitutes the premier leadership call on the attitudes and actions of every person on the campus-from professors to president, from custodian to counsellor, from director to dean. What we know will always be a servant to what we believe, and if we believe in the promise of quality, every action of the campus, whether educational or administration, will serve that promise and be measured by that standard. Every policy, every personality, every practice, and every performance will stand muster before the call for quality.

Sorensen and Moen (2005, p. 15, as cited in Kim, 2010) argued that, "Effective leadership is essential for continuous quality improvement". Osseo-Asare et al. (2005)

suggested that, “the underpinning strategic quality management concepts and principles, and Total Quality Management, TQM-driven models, such as the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model, is the premise that leadership through processes is required if excellent performance results are to be delivered”. According to the model as captured in the following Figure 2.5, leaders drive people, policy, strategy, partnership and resources in order to achieve people, customer and society results. They also cited that according to Kanji and Tambi (2002, p. 42), leadership is central in all TQM implementations in higher education institutions and seems to be the most critical factor for its success.

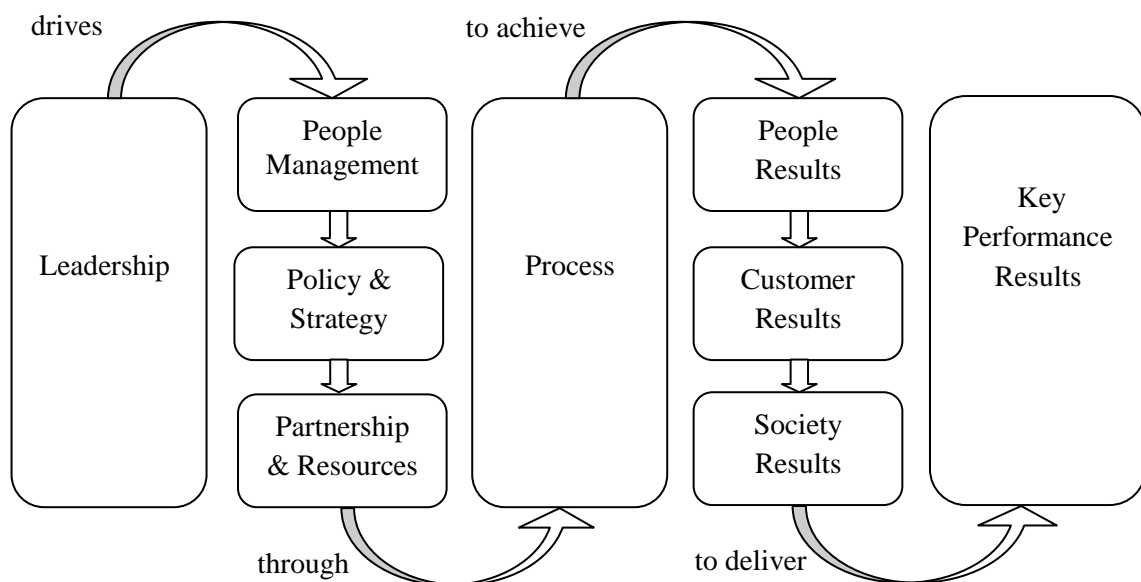


Figure 2.5. The Premise Underpinning Strategic Quality Management, TQM, and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model
Source. Osseo-Asare, Longbottom and Murphy (2005)

In addition, literature also emphasised the importance of leadership at different levels. Middlehurst (1997) argued that, “external and internal changes affecting higher education require institutions, and the system as a whole to redefine missions, purposes and practice. Achieving significant change of this kind, however, requires leadership at many levels.” Similarly, Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011, p. 17) suggested that:

... successful planning and implementation cannot rely on the leadership of one person (institutional leader such as university president, chancellor or vice-chancellor). Strategic planning requires capable and appropriately empowered leadership at all operational levels and in all sections or department of the institution. Unless all the leaders in all the organizational units and other influential formations on campus are successful in creating a commitment to the initiative, a plan that is impressive on paper may fail to achieve its goals.

Hence, leaders at the institutional and faculty levels are the primary participants of this study.

In addition to the importance of leadership at different levels, literature also cited the importance of financial management in implementing strategies such as quality improvement. In a study by Kim (2010) on twenty-five (25) leaders at five (5) non-profit, small private universities in Southern California, all the participants acknowledged “the importance of effective leadership in transforming, promoting and enriching the quality of education at small private institutions” (p. 152). The study also concluded, “Finance is the most critical challenge that non-profit, small private higher education institutions have faced in promoting a high educational quality, especially in the current economic crisis”. The main income of the institutions is student tuition. Similarly, in a study by Drotos (2012) on twenty-five (25) existing Arizona community college presidents, they defined successful community college presidents in leading their institutions as:

serving their communities through an understanding of the mission, vision and values, as well as demonstrating an understanding of what the communities want and expect from the college. Maintaining a stable and sound financial portfolio and achieving both short-term and long-term goals instituted by their boards were equally important to success. (p. 100)

The studies showed that ensuring financial stability and sustainability is a very important responsibility of leaders in private higher education institutions and it has direct influence on the effort of driving educational quality. This argument is supported by Altbach (2011, p. 4) who stated that university leaders are now playing the roles of

chief executive officer and academic leader. The financial dimension was explored in this study, as it is highly relevant to a for-profit private higher education institution.

Literature has also highlighted various effective leadership behaviours to drive quality improvement. Through literature review, Osseo-Asare et al. (2005) argued that there are different bases for effective leadership in terms of leadership-staff relationship in different organizational contexts, namely position-influence, influence-behaviour and power-influence. The position influence basis argued that leadership operated through a formal or informal position. Influence-behaviour basis argued that effective leadership influences the intended staff behaviour that leads to team results. The power-influence basis argued that leaders can influence staff behaviour through rewarding, coercive, legitimate, referent or expert power.

From the research through survey of quality managers from 42 UK higher education institutions, Osseo-Asare et al. (2005) provided a conceptual framework for effective managerial leadership practices for achieving and sustaining academic quality. The key area is the mission, vision, values and principles of the leader at chancellor and deanery levels. The framework suggests that effective leadership in higher education is about communicating a clear statement of mission, vision, values and principles, as well as successful implementation of core processes with the help of empowered staff. Bryman (2007) reviewed the literature on leadership effectiveness in higher education at departmental level, mainly in universities from the UK, USA and Australia. The study identified 13 forms of leader behaviour for departmental effectiveness. Various researchers (Bolden et al., 2012; Bryman, 2007; Gibbs, Knapper, & Piccinin, 2009; Lumby, 2012; Yukl, 2013) have identified common effective leadership behaviours in higher education institution as summarised in Table 2.14.

Table 2.14

Effective Leadership Behaviours in Higher Education Institution

Leader behaviours (Yukl, 2013, pp. 406-407)	Similar leader behaviours in relevant main literature
Help interpret the meaning of events	Articulate a clear and appealing vision (Yukl, 2013, pp. 323-326) Creating and communicating vision (Lumby, 2012) Engage hearts and minds through academic values and identity (Bolden et al., 2012) Setting teaching expectations (Gibbs, Knapper, & Piccinin, 2009) Clear sense of direction/strategic vision (Bryman, 2007)
Create alignment on objectives and strategies	Explain how the vision can be attained (Yukl, 2013, pp. 323-326) Identify teaching problems and turning them into opportunities (Gibbs, Knapper, & Piccinin, 2009) Preparing department arrangement to facilitate direction set (Bryman, 2007)
Build commitment and optimism	Act confident and optimistic; express confidence in followers; lead by example; use dramatic, symbolic actions to emphasize key values (Yukl, 2013, pp. 323-326) Establish credibility and trust; identify teaching problems and turning them into opportunities; articulate convincing rationale for change; recognising and rewarding excellent teaching and teaching development (Gibbs et al., 2009); Creating a positive/ collegial work atmosphere in the department; communicating well about the direction the department is going; allowing opportunity to participate in key decisions / encouraging open communication (Bryman, 2007)
Build mutual trust and cooperation	Lead by example (Yukl, 2013, pp. 323-326) Establish credibility and trust (Gibbs et al., 2009) Acting as a role model/having credibility; being trustworthy and having personal integrity; be considerate; treating academic staff fairly and with integrity (Bryman, 2007)
Strengthen collective identity	Strengthening shared identity by promotion of values to manage performance (Bolden et al., 2012) Marketing the department as a teaching success (Gibbs et al., 2009) Advancing the department's cause with respect to constituencies internal and external to the university and being proactive in doing so (Bryman, 2007)
Organize and coordinate activities	-
Encourage and facilitate collective learning	Building a community of practice (Gibbs et al., 2009)
Obtain necessary resources and support	Supporting change and innovation (Gibbs et al., 2009) Providing resources for and adjusting workloads to stimulate scholarship and research (Bryman, 2007)
Develop and empower people	Building a community of practice; supporting change and innovation; involving students (Gibbs et al., 2009) Making academic appointment that enhance department's reputation; providing feedback on performance (Bryman, 2007)
Promote social justice and morality	Being trustworthy and having personal integrity (Bryman, 2007)

Sources. Bolden et al., 2012; Bryman, 2007; Gibbs et al., 2009; Lumby, 2012; Yukl, 2013

Reflecting on the university leaders required in Malaysia, Morshidi et al. (2012) argued that “the most precious and intangible quality of leadership is trust”. They further elaborated that trust has been cited as the most important ingredient for “organizational integrity capable of inspiring followers and promoting change”. Hence, leadership strategies or behaviours must promote trust and respect, and communicate credibility and integrity; the most critical leadership strategy is to create shared values, goals, visions or objectives among the community members being led.

In view of the important role played by the leaders in driving quality within a university, the primary participants of this study include the institutional leaders and faculty leaders, namely the deans. Their experiences in driving educational quality within a for-profit private higher education institution were studied. The following section will discuss how leaders may lead quality improvement through the strategic management processes.

Strategic Management

Driving the quality agenda can be viewed from the strategic planning perspective where the quality agenda can be the strategic goal or one of the strategies. “Strategic planning has become a vital activity for all universities as funding has shrunk and become more responsive and competitive” (Shattock, 2000, as cited in Buckland, 2009, p. 530). Kotler and Murphy (1981, p. 471) defined strategic planning as “the process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the organization and its changing marketing opportunities”. They outlined a model that higher education institutions can adopt in carrying out strategic planning (refer to the following Figure 2.6). The model explains that the institution must first analyse its environment for threats that may cause its extinction and opportunities that may support its growth. Then it must analyse its resources for strengths and weaknesses to identify its differential advantage, which may be in terms of quality. These analyses provide insights for

formulating the ‘mission’, ‘objectives’ and ‘goals’ that the institution wants to achieve within the planning cycle. Kotler and Murphy (1981) defined the three terms as follows: “Mission is the basic purpose of an organization, that is what it is trying to accomplish; objectives is a major variable that the organization will emphasize, such as student enrolment, alumni giving, reputation; and goal is an organizational objective that is made specific with respect to magnitude, time and responsibility.” The process continues with strategy development where the most cost-effective strategy is selected to achieve the goals. For effective strategy implementation, the organization and system designs must be aligned. Organization design refers to the structure, people and culture; the system design refers to the information and control systems.

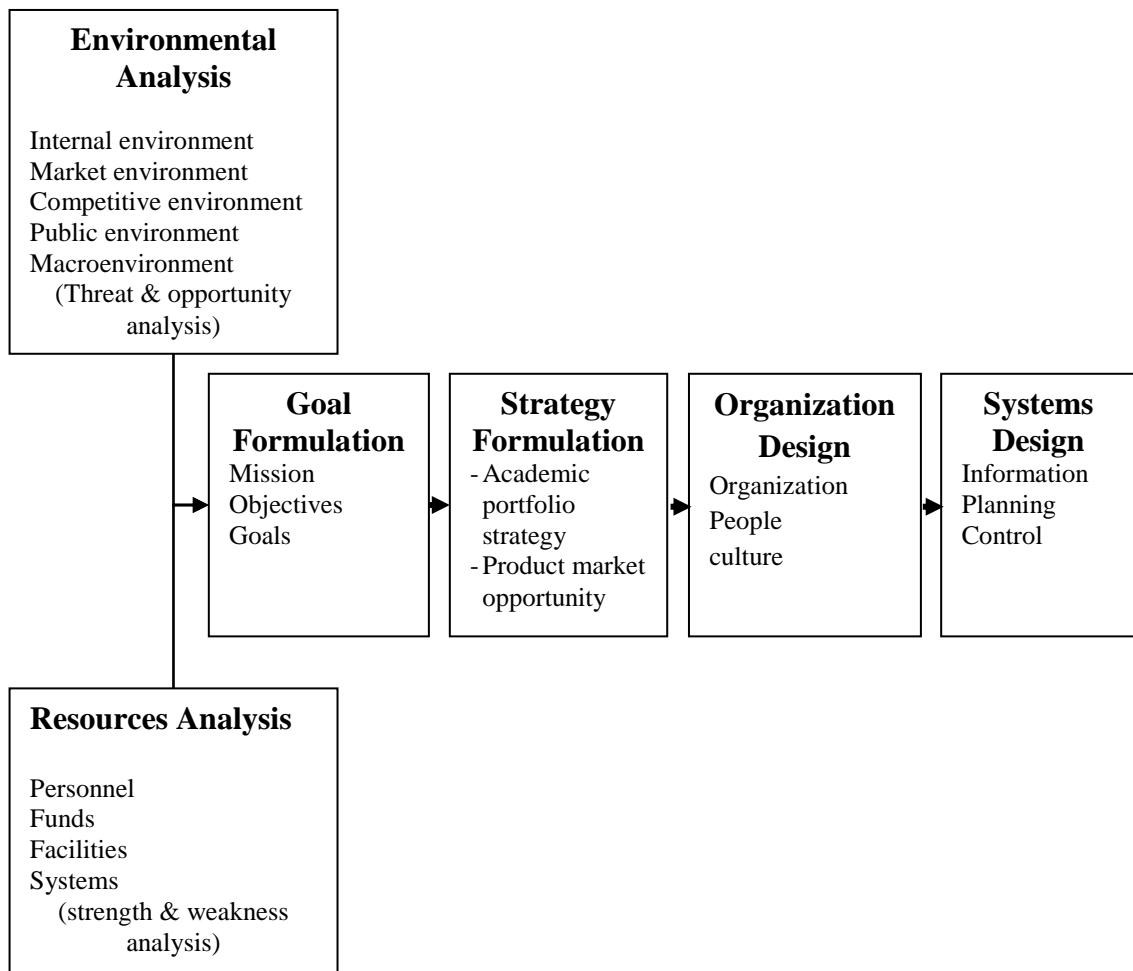


Figure 2.6. Strategic Planning Process Model

Source. Kotler and Murphy (1981)

Kotler and Murphy (1981) further described that the process mentioned above has to be completed not only at the top management level, but at the faculty and department levels too. The overall goals are normally driven from the top down, but the implementation plans are normally developed from the bottom up. Hence, faculty and department leaders, as well as other staff are normally involved in the planning process to solicit their insights and to gain their support for the goals and strategies.

After more than a decade, Johnson et al. (2008), as cited in Jasper and Crossan (2012), shared similar opinion that strategic management has three distinct elements: strategic analysis, strategic choice and strategy implementation. Similarly, Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011, pp. 9 - 10) suggested that the strategic planning process allows the leaders to explore current institutional values, missions and goals within the current setting of the institution, internal and external environment as well as resources. Having this understanding is a very important starting point to think about the desired future, including the changes required. This process also allows common understanding development and consensus building regarding the current situation as well as the desired change.

In order to fully understand the concept of effective strategic planning, one must understand the concept of strategy itself (Helen, 2007). Chaffee (1985) has identified three models of strategy, namely the linear model, the adaptive model and the interpretive model. The key features have been summarised in the following Table 2.15. Chaffee (1985, p. 94) further explained that:

In linear strategy, leaders of the organization plan how they will deal with the competitors to achieve their organization's goals. In adaptive strategy, the organization and its parts change, proactively or reactively, in order to be aligned with consumer preferences. In interpretive strategy, organizational representatives convey meanings that are intended to motivate stakeholders in ways that favor the organisation.

Chaffee also highlighted that the relationships among the three models could be seen hierarchically (p. 94), where the adaptive strategy would incorporate linear strategy

and interpretive strategy would incorporate both adaptive and linear strategies (p. 95). In Chaffee's 1984 study, she analysed 14 small private liberal arts and comprehensive colleges in the USA that had experienced rapid decline in total revenue, with equal number of those that made the greatest recovery and those that continued to decline, using the adaptive model and interpretive model. Chaffee (1984) concluded that, "turnaround management in private colleges is most effective when participants think of the organization simultaneously as an organism and as a social contract. Effective strategies that integrate both the models have to attend to the institution's exchange with its environment and to the participants' sense of meaning and satisfaction as a result of the interaction and relationship with the institution".

Table 2.15

Summary of Strategy

Variable	Linear Strategy	Adaptive Strategy	Interpretive Strategy
Sample definition	"... determination of the basic long-term goals of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals" (Chandler, 1962, p. 13)	"... concerned with the development of a viable match between the opportunities and risks present in the external environment and the organization's capabilities and resources for exploiting those opportunities" (Hofer, 1973, p. 3)	Orienting metaphors constructed for the purpose of conceptualizing and guiding individual attitudes of organizational participants.
Nature of organization	Profit-seeking business	Entity, organism	Social contract
Nature of strategy	Decisions, actions, plans; Integrated	Achieving a "match"; Multifaceted	Metaphor; Interpretive
Focus of strategy	Means, ends	Means	Participants and potential participants in the organization
Aim of strategy	Goal achievement	Coalignment with the environment	Legitimacy
Fundamental organizational issue	What do we want to achieve and how?	What are we going?	Why are we together?
Strategic behaviours	Change markets, products	Change style, marketing, quality	Develop symbols, improve interactions and relationships
Associated terms	Strategic planning, strategy formulation and implementation	Strategic choice, strategic predisposition, strategic design, strategic fit, strategic thrust, niche	Strategic norms
Associated measures	Formal planning, new products, configuration of products or business, market segmentation and focus, market share, merger/acquisition, product diversity (profit and productivity)	Price, distribution policy, marketing expenditure and intensity, product differentiation, authority changes, proactiveness, risk taking, multiplexity, integration, futurity, adaptiveness, uniqueness	Measures must be derived from context, may require qualitative assessment
Associated authors* (examples)	Chandler, 1962 Drucker, 1974	Hofer, 1973 Kotler & Murphy, 1981	Van Cauwenbergh & Cool, 1982 Chaffee, 1984

Source. Chaffee (1984, 1985)

Note. * Refer to Chaffee (1985) for a comprehensive list.

In Helen's study in 2007, she sought to understand the role of the School of Education deans at a catholic university in the USA, implementing an initiative of the university's strategic plan as well as to understand how the adaptive and interpretive models of strategic development help to understand the strategic behaviour of the deans. Helen (2007, pp. 67 - 68) also concluded that the interpretive model proved to be more powerful in understanding the dean's leadership and strategic behaviour as compared to the adaptive model. The strategic behaviour may include driving the quality agenda.

The Strategic Management Process Model from Rahimnia Alashloo et al. (2005) argued that a leader considers external and internal factors, as well as the institutional culture and mission in order to select the strategies (refer to Figure 2.7). The leader then addresses the implementation issues and carries out performance evaluation to further enhance the strategies. From this model, it is obvious that the leader of an institution has to consider both the external and internal factors in formulating or selecting its strategy, including strategy related to the quality agenda.

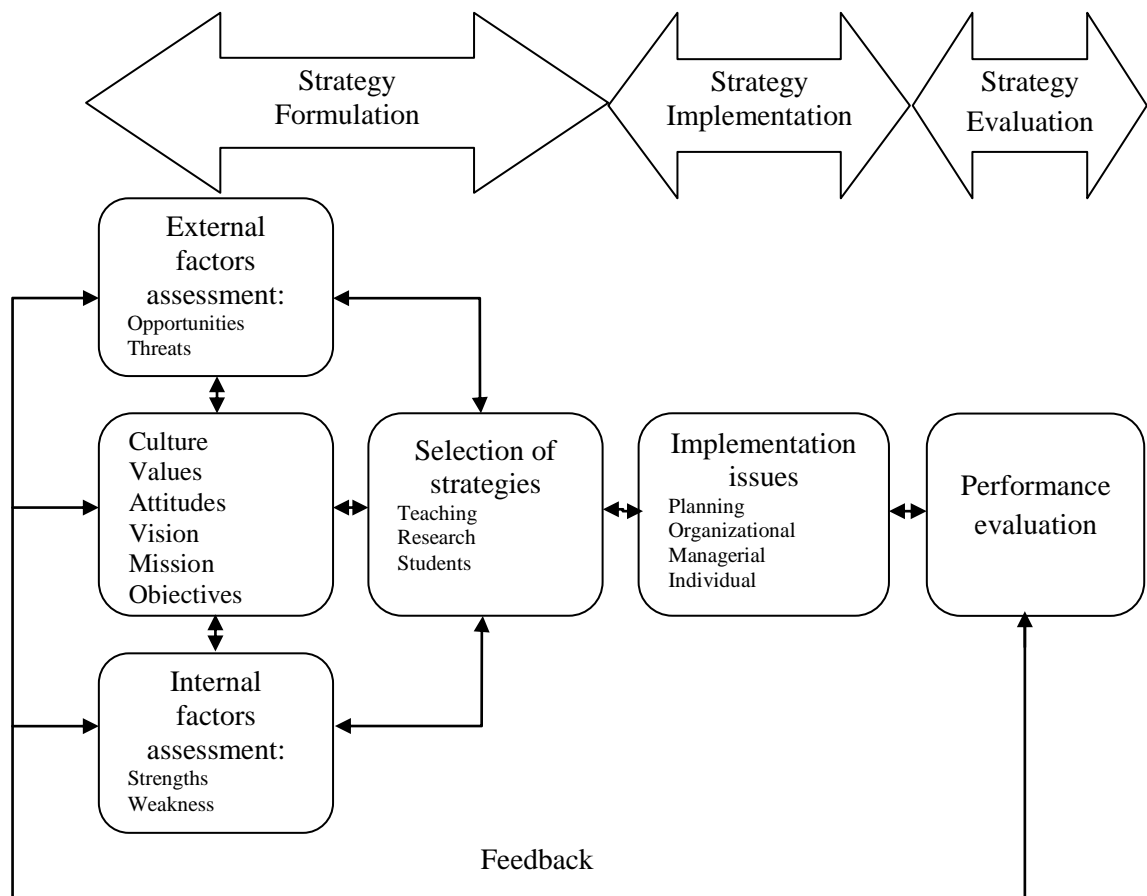


Figure 2.7. Strategic Management Process Model

Source. Rahimnia Alashloo et al. (2005)

The strategic planning process proposed by Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011) is similar to the model from Rahimnia Alashloo et al. (2005), with the exception that Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011) highlighted the importance of aligning financing planning to the strategic plan in order to ensure the strategic plan is properly funded. In addition, through the studies on the higher education section of Iran, Rahimnia Alashloo, Polychronakis, and Sharp (2009) also found the major impeters towards strategy implementation in the higher education sector of Iran, which is summarised in the following Figure 2.8. The impeters are categorised under planning consequences, organizational, managerial, individual and environment impeters.

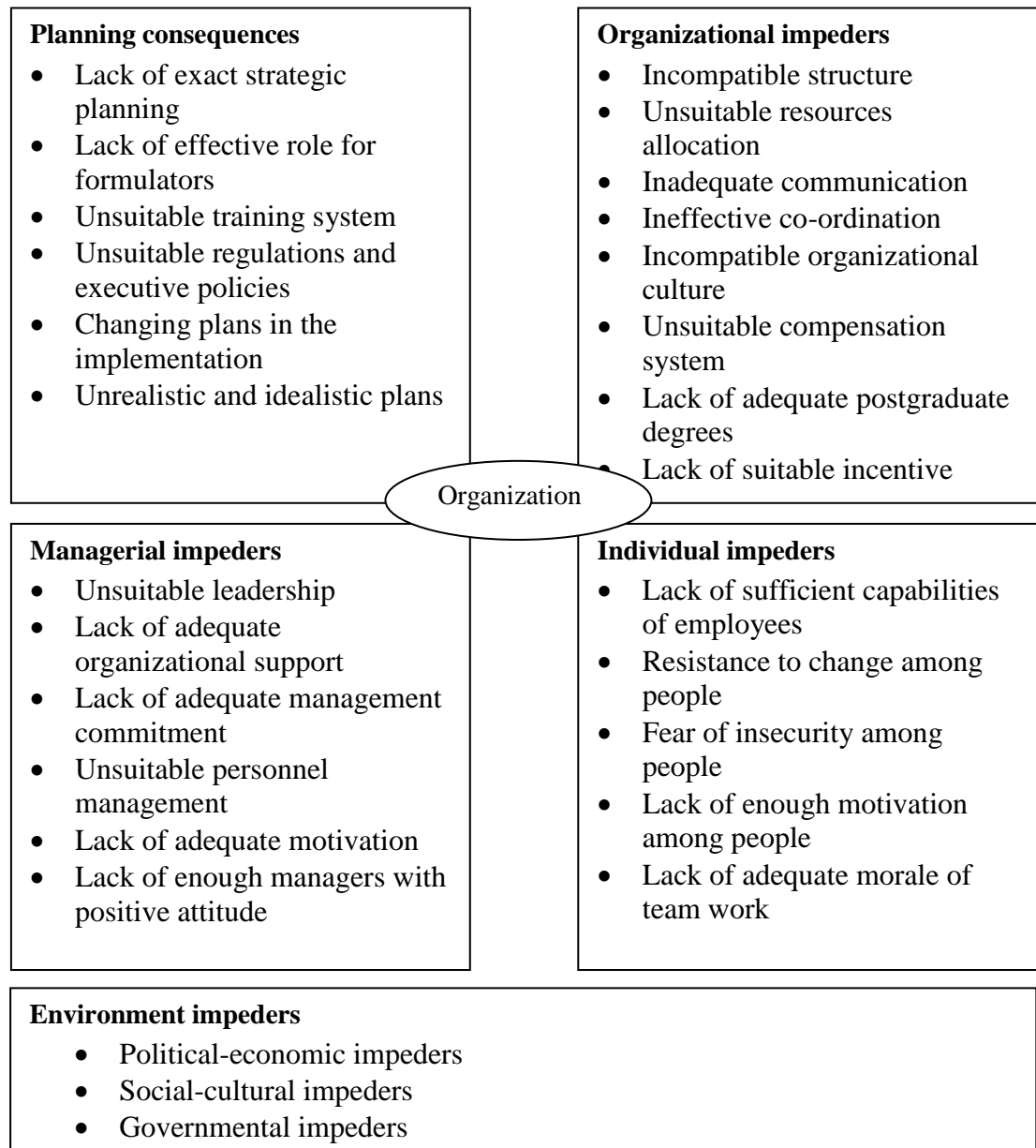


Figure 2.8. A Conceptual Framework to Impeders of Strategy Implementation in Higher Education Context

Source. Rahimnia Alashloo, Polychronakis, and Sharp (2009)

Similarly, in an article “Leading change: why transformation efforts fail”, Kotter (1995) argued that transformation may fail if a leader fails to carry out the following nine steps. The first step is to create a sense of urgency through examining the institution’s competitive realities and identifying the potential crisis or major opportunity. A leader does not act alone; he or she needs to form a powerful guiding coalition with enough power to lead the change effort. Change will not happen without

a clear vision and strategy to achieve it. Extensive communication regarding the new vision and strategy is needed to draw commitment and use the guiding coalition to role model the behaviour expected. A leader must empower others to act by removing barriers and encourage risk taking. A leader must create short-term wins to further encourage the team. The leader must use the increased credibility to produce more change. A successful change must be institutionalised. Success must be celebrated so that the feeling of “arriving” can draw commitment for future change.

More specifically, the challenges facing mid-level management, the faculty leaders, are discussed in the following section.

Implementation Challenge of Mid-level Management

Mid-level management, as represented by the Dean or Head of Department, is responsible for effective implementation of the university senior management’s strategies in the quest for educational quality. Research has highlighted the challenge of mid-level management in fulfilling managerial expectation focusing on profitability and academic expectation focusing on quality, which are normally competing (Bray, 2008; Bryman & Lilley, 2009; De Boer & Geodegebuure, 2009; Mercer & Pogolian, 2013; Mok, 2008; Montez, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 2002). Bryman and Lilley (2009) described this phenomenon as “stuck in the middle”. During the implementation of the university strategies in the quest for educational quality, deans may be torn between the university senior management requirements for managerial efficiency and effectiveness, and academics’ expectations for autonomy and collegiality (Bryman & Lilley, 2009; Vilkinas & Ladyshevsky, 2011). Deans may be required to convey the “cabinet decision” and to fulfil the senior management targets (De Boer & Geodegebuure, 2009), and to manage or influence the academic staff’s perception of the institution’s identity, which will influence the staff’s responses (Kodeih & Greenwood, 2013). In order to effectively address the different and often conflicting expectations from the university

senior management and the academics, the deans are expected to have both academic expertise and management competency (De Boer & Geodegebuure, 2009), which they are seldom being trained for (Bray, 2008), especially among the newly recruited deans.

In conclusion, existing studies have argued various institutional influences towards educational quality. It is the objective of this study to understand the experience of a for-profit private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality, with the institutional and faculty leaders as the primary participants.

Private Higher Education in Southeast Asian Countries

Growth of Private Higher Education

Southeast Asia consists of ten countries, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao DPR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Higher education in Southeast Asia has expanded drastically in the last few decades due to the ever-increasing social demand for access as a result of population growth, democratization of access to secondary education and the wealthier society. In addition, higher education is perceived as an avenue for social mobility, vehicle for human capital development for social and economic development especially in the knowledge-based economy, as well as promoting national unity and social harmony.

Many developing countries from Southeast Asia rely on private higher education to increase the access to higher education to the “massification” level. The countries regard a highly educated workforce as crucial for national development and think that higher education benefits the students and their families more than the society in general. Hence, the students and their families should pay for higher education. This gives rise to the private higher education in those countries to absorb excess demand that otherwise cannot be met by the public sector (Lee, 2006a).

Similar to the global trend, the key types of private higher education institutions in Southeast Asia are semi-elite, culturally and religiously affiliated institutions, and demand-absorbing. There is no elite category of private higher education institution in Southeast Asia. In terms of number of institutions, “demand-absorbing” is the largest and fast growing sub-sector (Levy, 2009). “Demand-absorbing” institutions are non-university and mostly for-profit. Their primary role is to absorb the excess demand that is unmet by public sector. Within this category, there is a range of institutions from “garage” or “shop lot” institutions, some regarded as diploma mills to “serious demand-absorbing” institutions. Comparatively, it has lower level of quality and status, and normally focuses on low-cost and high-demand fields of studies aligned with the labour market. Semi-elite institutions on the other hand, offer higher educational quality and are more serious in teaching. They enjoy higher status, can afford to charge higher tuition fee and be more selective in admission. They tend to raise their international profile and normally are more western-oriented.

The rapid and massive expansion of higher education in this region is accompanied by increasing concern over quality (Lee, 2006a). To address the quality concern, the countries have initiated various policy and strategy changes.

Enhancing Quality

The profit-orientation and financial limitation of most of the private providers raise the concern that the quality of higher education have been compromised. This is particularly true in the Southeast Asia region (Lee, 2006a), even though it is not unique to this region or to the private sector. For example, Murray and Dollery (2006, p. 487) highlighted that “the quasi-corporatization of the higher education sector (in Australia) has raised concerns that quality may be sacrificed in lieu of revenue maximization”.

Quite a number of countries, namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand, use legislation to regulate the development of private higher

education. The countries also established a quality assurance framework to monitor the higher education institutions and programmes. However, countries such as Brunei, Lao PDR and Myanmar still do not have their quality control mechanism (Lee, 2006a).

As highlighted by Lee (2006a), a study by Stella in 2004 showed that external quality assurance is a recent phenomenon in this region. National quality assurance agencies were established to provide programme accreditation service as part of their quality assurance framework, as listed below.

- a) Cambodia: The Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC) was established in 2000.
- b) Indonesia: The National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN) was established in 1994.
- c) Malaysia: The National Accreditation Board was established in 1996 and was later replaced by Malaysian Qualifications Agency in 2007.
- d) Philippines: The Accrediting Agency for Chartered Colleges and Universities in Philippines (AACCUP) was established in 1989 and the Philippines Accrediting Association for Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) was established in 1957.
- e) Thailand: The National Educational Standards and Quality Assurance (NESQA) was established in 2000.
- f) Vietnam: The Quality Assurance Unit was established in 2002.

Barr (1993, p. 80, as cited in Tooley, 1998) highlighted that government can play its role in education in terms of provision, funding and regulation. As a result of privatization, the role of government in higher education has changed from provider to regulator. The roles as provider are to allocate resources, especially funding. The roles as regulator are to provide oversight of new and emerging institutions through institutional licensing and programme accreditation, to steer towards producing

outcomes consistent with the national priorities as well as to provide legislative interventions.

Even though governments have made conscious effort towards quality assurance and enhancement, there is still a growing concern on the diverse level of quality within the region. Malaysia, one of the early movers towards massification of higher education through extensive growth of private higher education serves as a good reference within the Southeast Asian countries. Hence, it is the purpose of this study to explore the conception on quality and the experience of the private higher education in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality in terms of the processes involved and the key challenges faced, in order to identify the key institutional contributing factors to educational quality.

Conclusion

The role of private higher education has become more prominent in supporting national development. Private higher education not only absorbs the excess demand for higher education and shares the financial burden of higher education, it is now an equally important sector that trains the human resources needed by a country. However, there is still a concern on the diverse level of quality of this sector, partly due to its for-profit motive and financial limitation (Altbach, 2005; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005; World Bank, 2002). Hence, fully understanding the nature of private higher education, how quality is being conceptualised and driven, as well as the challenges experienced in order to identify the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality are timely and highly needed. This study can contribute to addressing the diverse quality concern through formulation of appropriate policy framework, in order to support the growth and contribution of this sector to the marketplace and the nation. In this Chapter, the characteristics of the for-profit private higher education, the conception of quality, the key external and institutional influences

towards quality, as well as the quality concern among Southeast Asian countries have been reviewed. Even though higher education in Malaysia experienced similar trend, its unique characteristics need to be explored in greater depth for better understanding of the phenomenon, which may impact the conduct of the research. The next chapter discusses the higher education context in Malaysia in greater detail.

CHAPTER 3

COUNTRY CONTEXT: MALAYSIA

Introduction

This research chooses Malaysia, a developing country experiencing massification of higher education through private higher education since the 1990s, as the research context. It is important to have a clear idea of its unique characteristics that may impact the research design and the research itself. In this chapter, the country's background, current setting of private higher education, diverse quality issue experienced by private higher education as well as policies and strategies implemented are discussed.

Background of the Country

The government of Malaysia consists of the central or federal government at the top tier, the state governments at the middle tier, and the local authorities at the bottom tier. As cited in Lee (2006b), education, along with other public services such as health, defence, and finance, fall under federal government jurisdiction. The federal government Ministry of Education (previously known as Ministry of Higher Education) monitors higher education in Malaysia.

Malaysia has successfully diversified its economy from dependence on raw materials exports into an emerging multi-sector economy, especially in the sectors of manufacturing, services, and tourism. Today, Malaysia is a middle-income country with a relatively open state-oriented and newly industrialised market economy.

Malaysia's population comprises many ethnic groups. Malays make up the majority of the population at 50.4 percent; and other *Bumiputra* (indigenous) 11 percent of the population; 23.7 percent of the population are of Chinese descent, and those of Indian descent comprise 7.1 percent.

After twelve years of independence, the government realised that national unity was still fragile. The government decided to take constructive action to foster shared values that are embraced by all citizens of the country. As a result, *Rukunegara* (National Ideology) was formulated as national philosophy and shared values. The preamble to the *Rukunegara* is as follows:

Our nation, Malaysia is dedicated to: Achieving a greater unity for all her people; maintaining a democratic way of life; creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation shall be equitably distributed; ensuring a liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural tradition, and building a progressive society which shall be oriented to modern science and technology.

The five principles of the *Rukunegara* are as follows:

1. Belief in God
2. Loyalty to the King and Country
3. Upholding the Constitution
4. Sovereignty of the Law, and
5. Good Behaviour and Morality

In 1991, the aspirations and goals of the country were formulated into what is known as VISION 2020, with the ultimate objective that Malaysia becomes a fully developed country by 2020. It has also defined the meaning of “fully developed country” as well as the core values to be upheld by the country in its unique way, which says “Malaysia will be a united nation, with a confident Malaysian society, infused by strong moral and ethical values, living a society that is democratic, liberal and tolerant, caring, economically just and equitable, progressive and prosperous, and in full possession of an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient” (Malaysian Government, 1991).

In 2009, the meaning of “fully developed country” was refined through the government’s New Economic Model. The government aims for Malaysia to become a high-income nation that is both inclusive and sustainable by 2020. The target for high

income is USD 15,000 to USD 20,000 per capita by 2020, with all communities fully benefit from the wealth of the country as well as meeting the present needs without compromising future generations (refer to Figure 3.1).

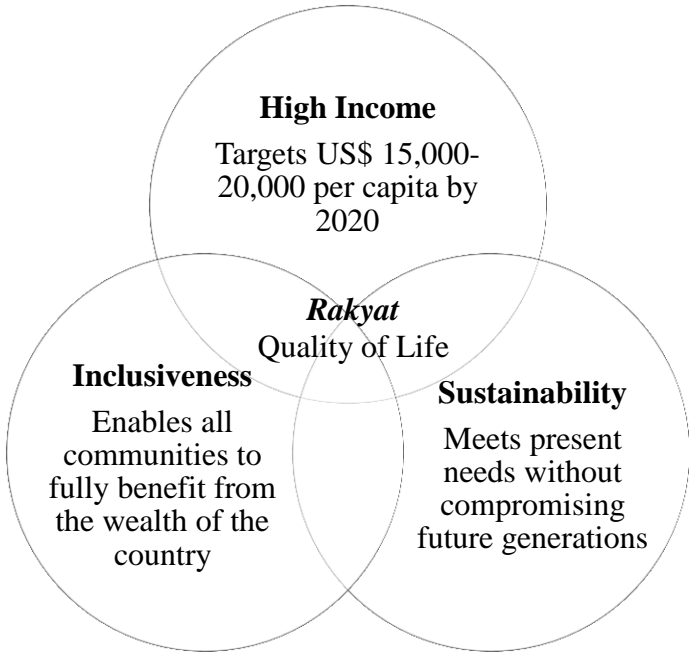


Figure 3.1. New Economic Model for Malaysia

In order to achieve the New Economic Model objectives, an Economic Transformation Programme has been formulated by the National Economic Advisory Council in 2011. The Economic Transformation Programme is fully supported by the Tenth Malaysia Plan 2011-2015 (Malaysian Government, 2010) where the strategies include creating a private sector-led economy and supporting innovation-led growth. In addition, education has been identified as one of the National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) to generate income for the country.

It is recognised that an education system that nurtures creative and analytical human capital is crucial for ensuring the success of the transformation programme. An important step is to develop world-class education institutions with world-class leadership, particularly universities. At the same time, the role of private higher education has moved to centre stage to support the economic transformation programme and Malaysian's VISION 2020.

This chapter provides an overview of higher education in Malaysia, followed by a more detailed discussion on the private higher education sector focusing on the diverse quality issue faced on the journey towards becoming a centre of higher education excellence.

Higher Education in Malaysia

At present, the higher education sector in Malaysia has diverse types of institutions in both the public and private sectors serving the need of national development. Under the public sector, there are universities, TAR College, polytechnics and community colleges. Under the private sector, there are universities, university colleges, foreign university branch campuses and colleges. In terms of number of institutions, the private sector outnumbers the public sector due to the drastic growth after the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act was approved in 1996. Enrolment in the private sector has grown significantly at the same time and, as shown in the following Table 3.1, around 40 percent of students enrolled in private sector in 2011 (MOHE, 2012a).

The higher education gross enrolment ratio (access of cohort 17-23 years old to higher education) in Malaysia rose from 7 to 26 percent from 1990 to 2000. It is estimated that the ratio has increased to around 36 percent in 2009 (UNESCO, 2009). The targets of the Ministry of Education Malaysia are by 2020, an estimated 50 percent of the cohort 17-23 years old will pursue higher education and 33 percent of the workforce will have higher education, especially in the field of science and technology (MOHE, 2007a). This massification of higher education strategy is in tandem with the national goal to become a developed country by 2020.

Table 3.1

Number of Higher Education Institutions and Enrolment in Malaysia, 2011

Types of institutions		Number of institution	Enrolment (No. of student)
A	Public institutions		
1	University	20	508,256
2	TAR College	1	23,632
3	Polytechnic	30	89,292
4	Community college	70	6,319
	Sub-total	121	627,499
	Percentage (%)	25	59.4
B	Private institutions*		
1	With university status	36	202,714
2	Branches from foreign university with university status	4	8,107
3	With university college status	15	40,651
4	Without university status	310	177,501
	Sub-total	365	428,973
	Percentage (%)	75	40.6
	Total	486	1,056,472

Note. * The information is based on 87.69% of private institutions provided complete data.

Source. MOHE (2012a)

The majority of the enrolments in the public and private sectors are at bachelor's degree and diploma levels (refer to the following Table 3.2). Compared with the private sector, public sector has more postgraduate enrolments.

Table 3.2

Student Enrolment by Qualification Level, 2011

No	Type of qualification	Public institutions	Private institutions*
1	PhD	22,594	5,950
2	Master's Degree	53,267	14,317
3	Postgraduate Diploma	1,924	5,629
4	Bachelor's Degree	299,179	180,065
5	Advanced Diploma	6768	2,881
6	Diploma	205,468	171,197
7	Matriculation / Certificate	33,876	23,828
8	Professional	2,018	3,292
9	Others^	2,791	44,788
	Total	627,885	451,947

Note. ^ Inclusive of Pre Session and Pre Diploma Levels

* The information is based on what has been provided to MOHE. It is based on 87.69% of private institutions that provided complete data.

Source. MOHE (2012a)

Social science, business and law are the most popular fields in both public and private sectors (refer to the following Table 3.3). They are followed by engineering, manufacturing and construction fields, which are highly needed for national development. Generally, the private sector contributes in the similar fields as compared with public sector.

Table 3.3

Student Enrolments by Field of Study, 2011

No	Field of study	Public institutions	Private institutions*
1	Education	42,824	34,409
2	Arts and Humanities	47,701	36,543
3	Social Sciences, Business and Law	213,122	152,816
4	Science, Mathematics and Computer	80,167	53,814
5	Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	177,371	57,235
6	Agriculture and Veterinary	11,637	1,328
7	Health and Welfare	30,473	49,780
8	Services	22,890	23,732
9	Basic Programmes	1,314	19,316
Total		627,499	428,973

Note. * The information is based 87.69% of private institutions provided complete data.

Source. MOHE (2012a)

An important indicator of educational quality is the quality of academic staff in terms of their highest qualification (refer to the following Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

Number of Academic Staff by Highest Qualification, 2011

No.	Highest Qualification	Public Universities [^]		Private Institutions*	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	PhD	8,650	29.6	2,431	9.2
2	Masters	16,017	54.9	11,481	43.4
3	Bachelors	4,221	14.5	10,031	37.9
4	Diploma	170	0.6	1,678	6.3
5	Others	140	0.5	817	3.1
Total		29,198	100.0	26,438	100.0

Note. * The information is based 87.69% of private institutions provided complete data.

[^] Excluding TAR College, polytechnic and community college

Source. MOHE (2012a)

Most of the academic staff in public universities have PhD and master's degree qualifications. Comparatively, most of the academic staff in private institutions own master's and bachelor's degree qualifications. This is consistent with the level of qualifications offered by the institutions. Quality of academic staff is still a concern and the government has set a target that 60 percent of academic staff in public universities must have PhD qualification. This target has been indirectly imposed on private universities and university colleges through the rating mechanism (MOHE, 2010).

Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)

The Malaysian Qualifications Framework was approved and published in 2007 (MQA, 2007). MQF is “an instrument that develops and classifies qualifications based on a set of criteria that is agreed nationally and benchmarked with international practices, and which clarifies the academic levels, learning outcomes and credit system based on student academic load”. MQF integrates and links all national qualifications awarded by higher education providers. It also provides education pathways that enable individuals to progress in higher education (refer to the following Table 3.5).

Table 3.5

Malaysian Qualifications Framework: Qualifications, Levels and Minimum Credit

MQF Levels	Sectors		Lifelong Learning	Minimum Credit
	Skills	Vocational and Technical	Higher Education	
8			Doctoral Degree	No given credit value
			Research Masters	No given credit value
7			Fully or Partly Taught Masters	40
			Postgraduate Diploma	30
			Postgraduate Certificate	20
6			Bachelors Degree	120
			Graduate Diploma	60
			Graduate Certificate	30
5	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma	40
4	Diploma	Diploma	Diploma	90
3	Skills Certificate 3		Certificate	60
2	Skills Certificate 2	Vocational and Technical Certificate		According to skills and levels (for Skills Certificate 1-3)
1	Skills Certificate 1			

Source. Malaysian Qualifications Agency (2007)

Private Higher Education in Malaysia

Emergence of Private Higher Education

Like in many other countries, higher education in Malaysia, both public and private sectors, has also grown drastically in the past two decades and there is a tremendous increase in student enrolment in higher education. The total number of students enrolled at the tertiary level, in both the public and private sectors as well as in overseas institutions, doubled from about 230,000 in 1990, to about 410,692 in 2000, and to about 1,189,505 in 2010 (refer to Table 3.6). For the private sector, the most

significant growth of private higher education happened in the 1990s and the early 2000s, after the legislation framework, the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act, was approved in 1996. The enrolment in 1990 was only 35,600, which is less than one third of the total enrolment in Malaysia. It increased to 230,391 in 2000, which is six and a half times compared to 1990. In 2010, the enrolment increased to 541,629, which is around 49 percent of enrolment in higher education in Malaysia, excluding those studying overseas (MOHE, 2011a).

Table 3.6

Student Enrolments in Higher Education, 1990 – 2010

Types of Institutions	Enrolment (%)		
	1990	2000	2010
Public Institutions	122,340 (53.0)	167,507 (40.8)	568,622** (47.8)
Private Institutions	35,600 (15.4)	230,391 (56)	541,629 (45.5)
Overseas Institutions	73,000 (31.6)	> 12,794 (3)*	79,254 (6.7)
Total	230,940 (100)	> 410,692 (100)	1,189,505

Note. * The number is 12,794 in 1998

** Public Higher Education Institutions, including polytechnic and community college

Source. For 1990, Lee (2002); for 2000 and 2010, MOHE (2011a)

At the same time, the number of private higher education institutions has expanded greatly. The number of private universities has increased from 5 in 2000 to 23 in 2010, and the number of university colleges has also increased from 0 in 2000 to 21 in 2010. The growth of private colleges was significant in the 1990s and in the 2010s, and the number is settling at 403 (refer to Table 3.7).

Table 3.7

Number of Higher Education Institutions, 2000 – 2010

Types of Institutions	2000	2010
Public Institutions		
a) University	11	20
b) Polytechnic	11	27
c) Community College	0	70
Sub-total	22	117
Private Institutions		
a) With University Status*	5	23
b) Branches with University Status (Difference from *)	0	24
c) Branches from Foreign University with University Status	3	5
d) With University College Status	0	21
e) Without University Status	632	403
Sub-total	640	476

Source. MOHE (2011a)

The growth of private higher education in Malaysia is mainly due to the increasing social demand for access. This is partly contributed by the eleven (11) years of free primary and secondary education, the growing affluence of Malaysian society, as well as the belief that higher education is an important mechanism for social mobility (Lee, 2004a; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006). For Malaysians, higher education is always being perceived as an avenue for social mobility, where the graduates tend to have better opportunities to gain jobs offering better salary, and to live a more luxurious life (Lee, 2004a; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006).

Apart from this, higher education has been used by the state as a vehicle for promoting national unity by narrowing the social disparity gaps (Lee, 2004a; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006). After achieving independence, the state intended to redress social equity through the New Economic Policy, which was implemented in 1970. Access to higher education was viewed by the state as a means to restructure Malaysian society, which is to eliminate the identification of ethnic community with economic functions. As a result, the government implemented the ethnic quota admission policy² whereby

² The ethnic quota admission policy has been replaced by admission based on merit (MOHE, 2007a).

student admission to public university was based on ethnicity (Lee, 2004a; Selvaratnam, 1985). As a result, there is a significant outflow of students to overseas universities. The situation is further worsened by the increase of tuition fee for foreign students in the traditional overseas destinations such as the United Kingdom, United States and Australia, as well as the financial crisis that hit the Asian region in 1997 (Lee, 2004a; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005). As a result, the demand for access to higher education in Malaysia has increased.

On the other hand, in Malaysia, higher education is often perceived by the state as an instrument for human capital development, to generate professionals and knowledge workers in support of economic growth and nation building (Lee, 2004a; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006). In addition, it also provides world-class facilities for innovative research and consultancy services that support the knowledge-based economy (Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006). Hence, the government does intend to widen access to higher education especially in science and technology, in tandem with the direction of the country to be a developed and industrialised nation.

In addition, the government was the main provider of higher education in the past. With the massification of higher education, the government encountered tight budgetary constraints in sustaining this expansion. Furthermore, governments around the world, including the Malaysian government, believe that higher education benefits the individual and family more than the society as a whole. Hence, the individual is supposed to bear a bigger portion of the funding as compared to government. Due to the inability and unwillingness of governments to fund the expansion of higher education, private higher education has moved to play a more prominent role in the higher education sector in Malaysia (Lee, 2004a; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006).

Current Setting of Private Higher Education in Malaysia

Private higher education institutions in Malaysia can be broadly categorised into for-profit and not-profit institutions. Over the years, private higher education institutions in Malaysia have evolved into multiple modes of ownerships. For-profit institutions are set up and owned by a single proprietor, private company (such as Taylor's University), consortium of company (such as INTI International University), public-listed company (such as USCI University) and government-linked corporations (such as Multimedia University, Tenaga National University and Petronas University of Technology).

Non-profit institutions are set up and owned by foundations, philanthropic organizations, and through community financing (Lee, 2004a). Some universities have strong linkages with political parties (such as Tunku Abdul Rahman College, University of Tun Abdul Razak and AIMST University).

In addition, over time, the private higher education institutions have diversified status with different limits of degree awarding authority. University is authorised to award its own undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. University College is authorised to award its own degree too but it is an interim status for the institution to be ready to becoming a university. College, on the other hand, only has authority to confer its own award up to advanced diploma level.

Other distinctions between private university and private college include the level of research engagement, staff qualifications and fee charged (Tan, 2002). In addition, the private universities and university colleges are considered semi-elite teaching universities, as compared to the private colleges that are non-elite and play the demand-absorbing role (Sivalingam, 2006).

The private sector has a huge number of private colleges. However, the enrolment among the private colleges is relatively small, compared to the private universities and university colleges. Hence, the more established private universities and

university colleges enjoy economies of scale to grow their institutions (refer to Table 3.8).

Table 3.8

Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia (2009-2010)

Category	No. of institution		No. of enrolment		Enrolment per institution, 2010
	2010	2009	2010	2009	
With University Status*	23	20	148,872	135,413	6472.7
Branches with University Status (Difference from *)	24	22	60,073	53,865	2503.0
Branches from Foreign University with University Status	5	5	17,010	16,919	3402.0
With University College Status	21	20	93,638	87,055	4459.0
Without University Status	403	393	222,036	191,125	474.3
Total	476	460	541,629	484,377	-

Source. MOHE (2011a)

Some of the institutions offer a wide range of programmes (generally called full-fledged university) such as Taylor's University, Sunway University, UCSI University and INTI International University. Some are specialised in certain niche market to avoid direct competition with the majority. For example, Multimedia University, Tenaga National University and Petronas University of Technology focus on engineering and technology programmes. International Medical University focuses on medical and health sciences related programmes. There are also virtual universities providing distance learning such as Asia e-University and Universiti Tun Abdul Razak. Last but not least, there are open universities that provide accreditation of prior experiential learning such as Open University Malaysia and Wawasan Open University. The private institutions are very responsive to the market through institutional differentiation and innovation in their programme offerings. The most popular discipline offered by most of the private institutions are business, computing and information technology (IT) and engineering. The following Table 3.9 provides more detailed information on the range of disciplines offered by key selected private institutions.

Table 3.9

Programmes Offered by Private Selected Universities (as at August 2011)

Name of university	Architecture	Business	Communication	Computing & IT	Dentistry	Design / Creative Arts	Education	Engineering	Health Sciences /Pharmacy	Hospitality & Tourism	Languages	Law	Medicine	Nursing	Psychology	Science
Monash University,		•	•	•				•	•				•			•
Sunway		×	×	×				×	×				×			×
University of		•	•	•			•	•	•							×
Nottingham,		×		×			×	×								
Malaysia																
Curtin University,		•		•				•								•
Sarawak		×														
Swinburne		•		•				•								•
University of								×								×
Technology,																
Sarawak																
Taylor's University	•	•	•	•		•	×	•	•	•		•	•			×
		×						×		×						
Sunway University		•	•	•		•				•				•	•	
		×		×												
UCSI University	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
		×						×	×							×
INTI		•	•	•		•		•	•	•						
International		×						×								
University																
LimKokWing	•	•	•	•		•										
University of		×		×												
Creative																
Technology																
International					•				•				•	•	•	•
Medical University													×			×
Multimedia		•		•				•				•				•
University		×		×				×								
Tenaga National		•		•				•								
University		×		×				×								
(UNITEN)																
Petronas University		•		•				•								•
of Technology								×								

Note. • refers to undergraduate programmes offered; × refers to postgraduate programmes offered

Source. Compiled by the researcher through the information available at the websites of the respective universities, 2011

As in other countries, the survival of private higher education institutions in Malaysia depends on their ability to innovate and experiment with different kinds of programmes of study so that they can offer more choices to their customers. The private higher education institution programmes can be broadly categorized into the following three groups (Lee, 2004b; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005):

Internal programmes

Internal or homegrown programmes are based on curriculum and examination set by the institutions themselves. Institutions with university status are only allowed to offer internal programmes with limited professional programmes.

Transnational education programmes

As mentioned earlier, private colleges do not have the authority to confer degrees. To overcome this constraint, many establish collaborative relationships with foreign universities or local universities to offer their different types of degree programmes. Student can study at the private colleges and eventually receive the awards from those overseas or local universities. These programmes include twinning programmes, credit transfer programmes, external degree programmes and distance learning programmes. Sohail and Safed (2003) conducted a study on private higher education in Malaysia, targeting local students pursuing their higher education through twinning arrangement. They commented that the collaboration between the local and overseas institutions in twinning programmes has created mutual benefits. The collaboration promotes a common standard in the institutions and helps to ensure the international academic and professional standards are maintained at the local institutions (Sohail & Safed, 2003, p. 179).

Programmes leading to qualifications awarded by external examination bodies

Many of the private institutions also offer preparatory programmes for external examinations set by local or overseas examination bodies or boards. The curricula,

examination as well as the award are offered by the examination bodies. Upon passing the examination and fulfilling the criteria, students receive the awards from the examination bodies. Some examples of the qualifications are from Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants in UK (ACCA), Technical and Further Education in Australia (TAFE), and A-level programme from the UK.

Most of the private institutions are located in and near the Kuala Lumpur City and in the Klang Valley where there is a larger market of potential students and a larger pool of trained academic and non-academic staff. In recent years, a few institutions have opened overseas branch campuses, such as INTI International University and Limkokwing University of Creative Technology.

The tuition of the popular programmes at private universities varies depending on the level of qualification (e.g., postgraduate, degree, diploma or foundation programme), type of programme (e.g., science or social science) and type of institution (e.g., foreign branch campus, university or college). It ranges from 10 thousand to 20 thousand Malaysian Ringgit per year (around 3 to 7 thousands USD) for degree programme, as compared to 1 thousand to 10 thousand Malaysian Ringgit per year (around 3 hundred to 4 thousand USD) at a public university. The tuition for private higher education is around 3 to 10 times higher than the government subsidised public university tuition in Malaysia.

Private higher education has attracted 45,246 international students, equivalent to 64 percent, compared with 25,855 in public universities, equivalent to 32 percent. The international students in the private sector originate from China (7 percent), Indonesia (7 percent), Nigeria (7 percent), Iran (6 percent), and other countries over the world (MOHE, 2012a).

The private higher education institutions with university status operate from purpose-built campuses because it is one of the criteria for upgrading to university

status. However, many smaller scale colleges still operate from rented shop lots and hence raised a concern over compromised quality. Building a purpose-built campus requires a huge investment from the owner and this is unaffordable by most of the private colleges due to lack of scale.

The Role and Return of Private Higher Education

As discussed earlier, the growth of private higher education in Malaysia primarily is to absorb the excess demand not met by the public sector. However, this scenario has changed recently. The private sector is now playing a more prominent role in national development especially with around 40 percent of enrolment currently in the private sector. As mentioned earlier, the Malaysian government has identified education as one of the National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), spearheaded by the Malaysian Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Prime Minister's Department Malaysia, 2012).

The Role of Private Higher Education in Economic Development

The private sector is very responsiveness to the labour market or industry need and hence able to fulfil the diversified demand for higher education much quicker than the public sector (Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005). Even though most of the programmes offered by private higher education institutions in Malaysia are those with high demand and low start up cost, such as business administration, accounting and IT, the graduates produced are highly relevant to the market or industry needs. Graduates from private higher education in Malaysia are generally perceived to have better command of English and better communication skills. Private higher education in Malaysia has another important role to play. It supports the government's aspiration to make Malaysia an international hub of higher education excellence by attracting quality international students to the country. Higher education is an important economic sector that helps the country to earn foreign exchange. The private higher education sector

primarily uses English as the medium of instruction and hence it is more attractive to foreign students compared with the public sector that uses *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malaysia's national language). In short, private higher education in Malaysia plays an important role in developing human capital as well as attracting foreign exchange to support the country's economic development.

The Role of Private Higher Education in Social Development

Overall, private higher education in Malaysia is more profit-oriented and business-minded compared with its public counterpart. This is partly because most of the private higher education institutions are owned by entrepreneurs and businessmen. It is also partly due to their source of funding mainly from tuition, paid by the parents or students. Hence, the private higher education sector has not been playing an active role in social development as compared to the public sector. As highlighted by Fauziah and Chan (2008), one of the concerns regarding the role of private higher education institutions in Malaysia is that they are very market driven and do not play an active role in creating a wholesome society that is not only technocratic but also make up of people with soul. It is crucial that the private sector also plays its part in social development, so that graduates from the private sector are ready to play an active role in society, in addition to the workplace.

The Role of Private Higher Education in Addressing Individual Human Needs

Admission to private higher education institutions in Malaysia is purely based on merit. Selection of programme is also 100 percent based on individual interest, capability and personal will. Hence, private higher education sector has provided a very important opportunity for students to be admitted to the programme of their choice. On the other hand, public higher education in Malaysia admits students according to their academic results and the human resource need of the country. The programmes being offered by public universities to students may not be their first or second choice. As a

result, there is a possibility that graduates from private higher education are more motivated to practice what they have learned since that is their choice in the first place. However, private higher education tuition is generally much higher than the public higher education, partly because private higher education is not subsidised by government. Even though some private higher education institutions do offer some scholarships, the programmes are still mainly affordable by those with higher income. Comparatively, since public universities enjoy public funding, their tuition fees are much lower and they are more accessible by those from the lower income group. However, since the introduction of National Higher Education Fund Corporation³ (PTPTN) loan in 1997, less well-off students can apply for study loans from the PTPTN and start the repayment after graduation. This loan is applicable for all higher education institutions' internal programmes. With this new policy, the private sector is playing a more active role in social mobility.

In conclusion, since around 40 percent of enrolment in higher education of Malaysia is in the private sector, it has a prominent role to play in terms of supporting national development, similar with public higher education. However, it may play its role slightly differently as it has more autonomy and can be more responsive compared with its public counterpart. Since the primary source of funding for the majority of private higher education institutions is still tuition, they may be more driven by short term gain instead of the long-term needs of the nation and society. Hence, the diverse quality issue facing private higher education in Malaysia is discussed in the following section.

³ The National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) was established under the National Higher Education Fund Act 1997 (Act 566) and was effective from 1st July 1997.

Diverse Quality Issue Facing Private Higher Education in Malaysia

While private higher education growth in Malaysia is encouraging, the expansion of private higher education is accompanied by a diversification of educational institutions and programmes of study (Lee, 2004a). Hence, there is an on-going concern that the level of quality of private higher education in Malaysia is diverse and there is also fear that educational quality has been compromised for profit and growth (Altbach, 2005; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005; World Bank, 2002), despite the various policies and strategies implemented, which will be discussed in the following section. This is also evidenced by the “sustainability audit” on selected private higher education institutions initiated by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia in 2013 (MOHE, 2013a). This is also reflected by the national rating result for quality of teaching and learning on (a) public and private universities and university colleges and (b) private colleges (MOHE, 2010, 2011b, 2012b). Empirical study on student satisfaction with private higher education revealed some of the concerns in detail (Hoque, Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak, & Mosa Fatema Zohora, 2013; Sohail & Safed, 2003). While some of the private universities are considered semi-elite teaching universities, most of the private colleges are non-elite and play the demand-absorbing role with comparatively smaller enrolment. Overall, most of the private institutions have limited research engagement and small percentage of staff with PhD qualifications (Tan, 2002).

Literature argued that for-profit private institutions may have compromised quality for profit and growth. This is mainly due to most of the private higher education institutions in Malaysia being self-financed and adopting a commercial approach to higher education (Lee, 2004a; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005). Morshidi (2006) also argued that limitation of funding among the private higher education institutions is an important factor that limits the quality of private higher education in Malaysia. The commercial

approach and financial constraint of private higher education, especially those funded by private investors, poses a challenge for the institutions to achieve a balance between academic quality expectation and financial sustainability.

In order to ensure long-term sustainability of private higher education and its contribution to the nation, it is important that the diverse quality concern be addressed. While quality is still a concern, certain for-profit private institutions have established good quality reputation (Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004). Hence, this study aims to provide greater insights on the experience of a successful private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality, including the conception of quality, the processes involved and the challenges faced, in order to identify the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality. The greater insights will contribute to knowledge, inform policy making and sharing of good practices that support the development and contribution of private higher education to national development.

Policies and Strategies Implemented for Quality

The following are the policies and strategies that have been implemented by the government and the institutions to assure and improve educational quality, especially those implemented after 1996. The various policies and strategies have positive influence in addressing the diverse quality issue facing private higher education in Malaysia, even though the issue persists.

Education Purpose and Goal

Education purpose and goal have been defined. In the Education Act 1996, the National Philosophy of Education for all levels has been expressed clearly as follows:

Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such as effort is designed to produce Malaysian

citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards and who are responsible and capable of achieving a higher level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large.

In addition, the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 has specific provision regarding higher education:

Whereas higher education plays an important role in realising the vision towards academic excellence and professional and technical enhancement whilst meeting the manpower needs of the nation.

And where as it is imperative to facilitate and regulate private higher education institutions so as to ensure its healthy development and the provision of quality education ...

Legislative Framework

Four (4) important acts and amendment to the existing act were approved in 1996. They shaped the new landscape for the higher education sector that exists until today. The four acts are the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996, National Council on Higher Education Act 1996, National Accreditation Board Act 1996 as well as Universities and University Colleges (Amendment) Act 1996. The acts provide the necessary regulatory framework for the liberalization and privatization of higher education to meet the social and economic needs of the country. The National Accreditation Board Act 1996 was replaced by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) Act 2007. Under the new Act, MQA is the single national quality assurance agency for higher education in Malaysia, for both the public and private sectors.

The legislative framework deserves a more detailed discussion and will be discussed further in the next section.

Ministry of Higher Education⁴

In 2004, in order to allow more focus on higher education development, the higher education portfolio was transferred under a newly established Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). Prior to this, higher education matters were under the purview of the Ministry of Education through the Department of Higher Education, which was established in 1995. MOHE was mandated to continuously improve the standards to produce quality graduates that meet the needs for a skilled workforce, and to make Malaysia a regional and international hub of higher education excellence. Apart from the universities and university colleges, polytechnics and community colleges were brought under the jurisdiction of the MOHE. The separation of the Malaysian education ministry into two separate ministries must be seen as an attempt to improve efficiency in the management of education in Malaysia (Morshidi, 2006).

The MOHE has also established its vision and mission. The vision is “To achieve the National Vision to make Institutes of Higher Education in Malaysia internationally recognised centres of excellence for knowledge acquisition”. The mission statement says, “The Ministry of Higher Education is fully committed to provide opportunities in higher education by undertaking to offer quality programmes in order to produce a workforce which would be acknowledged as competent, knowledgeable, and able to meet domestic and international demand.” In order to support this new Vision and Mission, MOHE conducted strategic planning, which is discussed in the following section.

Strategic Planning

In 2006, a Report by the Committee to Study, Review and Make Recommendations Concerning the Development and Direction of Higher Education in

⁴ The Ministry of Higher Education has been combined with the Ministry of Education in 2013.

Malaysia: Towards Excellence, for the MOHE, was published. The Committee put forward 138 recommendations under 5 categories:

1. Excellence in teaching and learning
2. Excellence in research and development
3. Excellence in the capacity of institutions of higher education (IHE) to make contributions to the economy and society
4. Excellence in the capacity of IHE to fulfil their core functions
5. Excellence in initiating the democratisation of education by ensuring access and participations of all Malaysians irrespective of race, colour or political loyalty

In 2007, the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) formulated the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2007-2020 and Action Plan 2007-2010. In 2011, it introduced its Action Plan from 2011 to 2015. The Strategic Plan and Action Plans lay down strategies and actions to support the realization of Malaysian's VISION 2020, specifically the development of human capital with first class mentality in order to support the need of the knowledge-based economy. The vision of this Strategic Plan is that Malaysia will become an international centre of higher education excellence. Both public and private higher education sectors are expected to play their roles in supporting this vision. The four (4) phases of the Strategic Plan are Laying the Foundation in Phase One (2007-2010), Strengthening and Enhancement in Phase Two (2011-2015), Excellence in Phase Three (2016-2020) and Glory and Sustainability in Phase Four (Beyond 2020). The corresponding priorities of the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia under the four phases are summarised in the following Table 3.10. Three of the important priorities in Phase 1 are "widening of access and increasing equity", "improving the quality of teaching and learning" and "strengthening of higher education institutions".

Table 3.10

The Four Phases of the National Strategic Plan and MOHE's Priorities

Phase	Years	Name of Phases	MOHE Priorities / Strategic Thrusts
4	Beyond 2020	Glory and Sustainability	
3	2016-2020	Excellence	Human capital with first class mentality
2	2011-2015	Strengthening and Enhancement	1) World class higher education institutions 2) R&D centres of excellence 3) Versatile graduates
1	2007-2010	Laying the Foundation	1) Access and Equity 2) Quality of Teaching and Learning 3) Research and Innovation 4) Strengthening of Higher Education Institutions 5) Internationalisation 6) Lifelong Learning 7) Delivery Systems of Ministry of Higher Education

Source. MOHE, 2007a

Widening access is crucial to ensure sufficient skilled and knowledgeable workers to support the k-economy and innovation of the country. The targets are to increase access from 29 percent in 2003 to 50 percent by 2020, as well as 33 percent of the workforce then are with higher education qualification. Increasing access requires extra funding and the private sector is expected to play a more active role to support the funding required. In order to ensure the quality of higher education is maintained and enhanced in tandem with the widening of access, another important priority is improving the quality of teaching and learning. The targets are by 2020, graduates from Malaysia are competitive globally, curricula are excellent and a pool of 50,000 workforce with PhD qualifications is produced. The strategic plan also recognised that the higher education institutions, both public and private, have to be strengthened in order to produce human resource with first class mentality. The target is to have few Malaysian universities to be recognised as being among top universities in the world.

Qualifications Framework

In 2003, a national consultation seminar was held to establish a national qualifications framework that would integrate, rationalise, justify and bring together all qualifications offered on a national basis into a single interconnected system. The Malaysian Qualifications Framework that serves as a platform for quality assurance in public and private higher educational institutions was adopted in 2007. In addition, the National Council on Higher Education recommended the establishment of a single quality assurance agency to oversee the implementation of the Malaysian Qualifications Framework. As a result, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) was formed legally through the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act in 2007.

Quality Assurance Agency

Until 2007, quality assurance for public and private higher education sectors was governed by two separate entities, namely Quality Assurance Department under the Ministry of Higher Education for public higher education, and the National Accreditation Board for private higher education. In 2007, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 was approved by the Parliament to chart the way for the establishment of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), a single national quality assurance agency to implement the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). As a result, both the Quality Assurance Department and the National Accreditation Board were dissolved and their functions were taken over by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency.

Quality Assurance Framework

In line with the objective of the country to be a centre of higher education excellence, in order to produce human resources with first class mindset, the MOHE and MQA recognise the importance of levelling up the quality of the Malaysian public and private higher education institutions. Hence, in 2008, the MQA introduced the Code

of Practice for Institution Audit (COPIA), in addition to the Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA). The COPIA provides the guidelines on areas that a higher education institution should review during its self-review process. In addition, it also covers how the self-review portfolio prepared by the institution is verified and validated through an institutional audit coordinated by the MQA. It is the MQA's objective that the institutional audit or evaluation serves as an important mechanism to provide quality assurance and drive enhancement initiatives among the higher education providers.

In addition, various guidelines to good practices have been launched to share good practices among the higher education institutions. In order to strengthen the standard of academic programmes, Programme Standards for various disciplines that outline the specific requirements for programme design have been launched too.

Association of Private Colleges and Universities

In 1997, the Malaysian Association of Private Colleges and Universities (MAPCU) was registered. The association's membership is made up of key private colleges and universities in Malaysia. Operating in "smart partnership" with the Government, MAPCU serves to harness the full potential of the private higher education industry in Malaysia. The association objectives include promoting and co-ordinating the development of Malaysia's private higher education industry, enhancing courses and programmes quality and delivery by its members, identifying and studying problems arising in the industry and implementing solutions in cooperation with relevant Government agencies and professional bodies (MAPCU, n.d.).

Licensing Control

As required by the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996, approval from the Minister of Education is required for establishing private higher education

institutions. In addition, only university, university college and foreign branch campuses have the authority to grant degree awards. Colleges can only grant awards up to advanced diploma level.

Programme Approval

According to the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996, approval from the Minister of Education is also required before a new programme can be offered by any private higher education institution. Approval of a new programme requires the minimum standard to be fulfilled.

Programme Accreditation

All the higher education institutions are encouraged to apply for programme accreditation from the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). Programme accreditation is granted according to the Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation from the MQA.

Benchmarking and Rating Mechanisms

To strengthen the higher education institutions, the Ministry of Education extended the SETARA rating initiative to include private institutions in 2009 (MOHE, 2010). SETARA rating covered only the public institutions in 2007. This rating has been repeated in 2011 (MOHE, 2012b). The SETARA rating initiative rated the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning of all the universities and university colleges in Malaysia.

In addition, in 2011, the MOHE initiated discipline-based SETARA rating, named D-SETARA rating, to rate the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning for selected disciplines (MOHE, 2013b). This rating is expected to be repeated with different disciplines. Moreover, separate rating exercises have been implemented for all colleges and polytechnics respectively in 2011 (MOHE, 2011b).

Through rating, the government intends to extend indirect funding (e.g., government sponsored students, competitive research grants) and to grant more autonomy to the top rated institutions (e.g., eligible to apply for self-accreditation status).

Differential Policy by Level of Institution

In 2009, in order to strengthen and grant more autonomy to higher education institutions, the Ministry of Education initiated the self-accreditation status initiative. Nine selected universities were awarded self-accreditation status after an institutional audit. With the status, the universities can award programme approval and accreditation to their own programmes without going through MQA, except for professional courses. This status will be extended to all eligible top-rated institutions.

Public-Private Partnership

Due to corporatization of public universities, they allow private colleges to offer their programmes through “twinning” arrangement. This is a form of quality assurance for private colleges by the public universities. In addition, private colleges engage professors from public universities as external examiners, which is another form of quality assurance mechanism.

Stakeholders of Quality Assurance

The following Figure 3.2 presents the stakeholders participating in the quality assurance of private higher education in Malaysia. The Ministry of Higher Education establishes the legislative framework and strategic plan for the higher education sector. The Malaysian Qualifications Agency ensures the Malaysian Qualifications Framework is implemented, ensures quality assurance through establishing standards and guidelines, programme accreditation and institutional audit. Professional bodies are actively involved in programme accreditation for professional programmes. The industry that

employs the graduates has the responsibility to ensure clear requirements are communicated to the higher education institutions. Students receiving the education are responsible for ensuring the education is relevant and of high quality. In Malaysia, like private higher education, the public sector is actively involved in the quality assurance activities of the sector, such as establishing the standards and guidelines, programme accreditation and institutional audit of both public and private sectors.

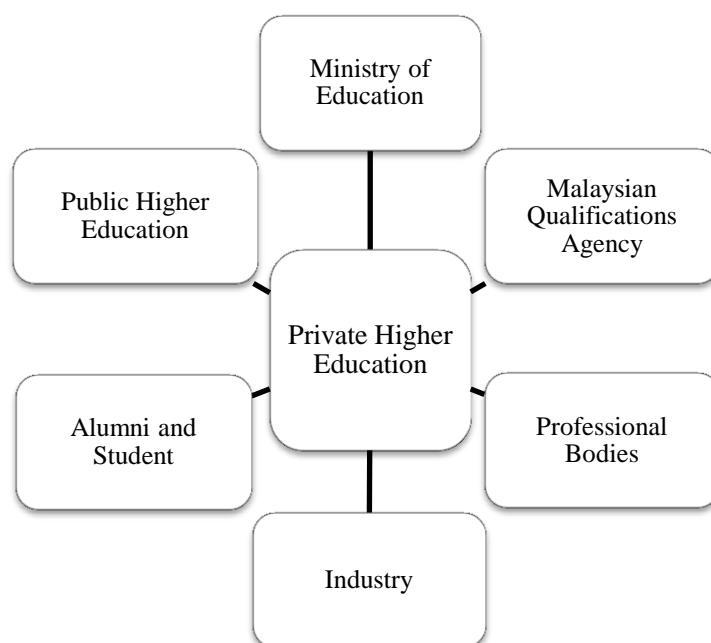


Figure 3.2. Stakeholders Participating in the Quality Assurance of Private Higher Education.

The Malaysian Legislative Framework on Higher Education

The following four legislative Acts approved by the Malaysian Parliament in 1996 provide the necessary regulatory framework for the liberalization and privatization of higher education to meet the social and economic needs of the country (Morshidi, 2006). They are Universities and University Colleges (Amendment) Act 1996, National Council on Higher Education Act 1996, Private Higher Educational Act 1996 and National Accreditation Board Act 1996. In 2007, National Accreditation Board Act was replaced by Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act to further strengthen the quality and

standard of higher education in Malaysia through the full implementation of Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF).

Universities and University Colleges Act

According to the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 (Act 3) is:

An Act to provide for the establishment, organization and management of Universities and Public University Colleges and for matters connected herewith.

In 1995, the Universities and University College Act 1971 was amended to lay the framework for all public universities to be corporatized (Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006). The Universities and University Colleges (Amendment) Act 1996 was passed to empower public higher education institutions with greater administrative and financial autonomy. The act seeks to corporatize the management and the administration of public higher educational institutions so that these institutions would become not only efficient but accountable (Lee, 2004a; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006).

National Council on Higher Education Act

In 1996, The National Council on Higher Education Act was passed reflecting the government's intention to put in place a single governing body to steer the direction of higher education development in Malaysia, private and public. The main function of this council is to plan, formulate and determine national policies and strategies for the development of higher education. Its role is to oversee the public and private sectors so as to ensure better coordination in institutional missions and academic offerings. The government would like the private sector to complement and supplement the public sector efforts. Since the establishment of this Council, there has been a gradual shift from state control toward state supervision in the relationship between the Malaysian government and higher education. (Lee, 2004a)

According to the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, National Council on Higher Education Act 1996 (Act 546) is:

An Act to establish the National Council on Higher Education and to provide for its function relating to higher education and for matters connected herewith.

Among the functions of the National Council on Higher Education are:

- to plan, formulate and determine national policies and strategies for the development of higher education;
- to co-ordinate the development of higher education;
- to promote and facilitate the orderly growth of institutions of higher education;
- to determine policies and set criteria for the allocation of funds to higher educational institutions;
- to determine policies relating to the entry of students to higher educational institutions;
- to determine policies and set guidelines on matters pertaining to the salary structure and personnel management system of Universities and University Colleges established under the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971;
- to determine policies and set guidelines on fee structure;
- to determine policies and set guidelines on the areas or courses of study to be undertaken by higher educational institutions;
- to determine policies and set guidelines on the conduct of any course of study or training programme by higher educational institutions jointly, or in association, affiliation, collaboration or otherwise, with any University or institution of higher educational or other educational institution or organization within or outside Malaysia;

- to determine policies and set guidelines on the involvement in business activities by Universities in accordance with the powers conferred under the Universities and University Colleges Acts;
- to take such actions or do such things as it deems fit or necessary to carry out its functions powers effectively.”

Private Higher Educational Institutions Act

The Acts that have the most direct impact on private higher education institutions are the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act and the National Accreditation Board Act, both of which were passed in 1996. The first Act defines the government’s regulatory control over all private higher educational institutions (PHEI). Under this Act, approval must be obtained from the Minister of Education before a PHEI can be set up, or before any programme can be offered in any particular institution. Private universities can only be established at the invitation of the Minister. Foreign universities are allowed to set up branch campuses in the country, but they can only do so at the invitation of the Minister. Furthermore, all courses must be conducted in the national language but with the approval of the Minister, some courses may be taught in English or Arabic. In addition, PHEIs must teach the certain compulsory subjects as decided by the Ministry of Education. The rationale for teaching the compulsory courses is to establish a Malaysian educational identity. This Act allows the government to have a tight control on the kinds of PHEIs that can be established and the kinds of programmes that can be offered (Lee, 2004a).

According to the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 (Act 555) is:

An Act to provide for the establishment, registration, management and regulation, and the quality control of education offered by the private institutions of higher learning.

The Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 was amended in 2003 in response to challenges in the provision of private higher education. Specifically, the amended act provides for the establishment and upgrading of private universities, university colleges and branch campuses of foreign universities in Malaysia. Several private higher educational institutions were subsequently upgraded to university colleges.

National Accreditation Board Act

The National Accreditation Board Act 1996 (Act 556) led to the establishment of the National Accreditation Board or Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN) in Malay, to monitor and control the standard and quality of all the educational programmes offered by PHEIs. LAN has two primary functions, namely to ensure that all programmes offered by the PHEIs meet the minimum standards as determined by the board, and to award certificate of accreditation to the certificates, diplomas and degrees conferred by PHEIs. The criteria for determining achievement of minimum standard level requirements and that of accreditation are based on the course of study, teaching staff, syllabus of all subjects, available facilities, management systems and rationale for conducting the course of study. All PHEIs are required to obtain approval to run courses and meet the minimum standards set by LAN. However, application for full accreditation is optional.

According to the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, the National Accreditation Board Act 1996 (Act 556) is:

An Act to establish the National Accreditation Board and to provide for its functions and power and for matters connected herewith.

Among the functions of the Accreditation Board are:

- i) to formulate policies on the standard and quality control of:-
 - o courses of study; and

- certificates, diplomas and degrees
- ii) to set, monitor, review and oversee the standard and quality:
 - courses of study; and
 - for accreditation of certificates, diplomas and degrees;
 to determine the level of achievement for the national language and the compulsory subjects specified in the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 as prerequisites to the award of certificates, diplomas and degrees; and
- iii) to advise and make recommendations to the Minister for his approval of courses of study to be conducted by private higher educational institutions with regard to the suitability of arrangements relating to the educational facilities relevant to the courses of study; and the standard and quality assurance of the courses of study.

As mentioned earlier, National Accreditation Board Act has been replaced by Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act in 2007. Despite the various efforts, diverse quality in private higher education is still a concern in many developing countries, including Malaysia (Middlehurst & Woodfield 2004; Sivalingam 2006).

Conclusion

Private higher education in Malaysia has grown drastically since the approval of legislative framework, namely the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act in 1996. In 2011, around 40 percent of the total higher education enrolment was in the private sector. The role of private higher education in Malaysia is not only to absorb the excess demand unfulfilled by the public sector. It plays a prominent role in educating competent human resource for national development. In addition, it also plays important roles to attract international students and support the realization of Malaysian's goal to be a centre of higher educational excellence.

Under the Tenth Malaysian Plan (2011-2015), the government plans to improve the quality of private higher education institutions through performance-based funding by expanding the Rating System for Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (SETARA) to cover private universities and college universities, and at the faculty or discipline level. It is obvious that quality is still a major concern of many stakeholders in private higher education (Middlehurst & Woodfield 2004; Morshidi, 2006; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006; Sivalingam 2006; Tan, 2002).

Through an extensive research in Malaysian private higher education in 2002, Tan (2002, p. 265) stressed the importance of conducting study to develop a model to address Malaysian private higher education as both a private and a public good. Morshidi (2006) supported the argument that “while the public higher education institutions were funded by government, private higher education is faced with severe financial constraints which seriously limit its ability to provide quality education.” He further argued that failure to provide quality education by the private sector will hinder the achievement of national development and the goal to be a developed country by 2020.

Hence, a study on the conception of quality and experience of private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality, including the processes involved and the key challenges experienced, in order to identify the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality is needed and timely. First-hand in-depth understanding is needed to support the formulation of a more relevant policy to address the diverse quality issue and to support the growth and contribution of private higher education to national development and the realization of Malaysian’s goal to be a developed country by 2020.

The next chapter presents the research methodology to conduct the research and answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In Chapter One, the research objectives and research questions have been presented. The study aims to understand the conception of quality, the process and the key challenges faced in the quest for educational quality at a private higher education institution in Malaysia, so that the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality can be identified. This chapter focuses on explaining the research methodology of this study. Wellington (2003), as cited in Chau (2009), stressed that “no one can judge the value of a piece of research without knowing its methodology”. Methodology refers to the nature of research design, including the adopted philosophical worldviews, research methods, research approaches and research procedures, as represented in Figure 4.1 (Bryman, 2004; Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2009). Hence, this chapter presents the rationale for selection of research method and approach, which is qualitative case study, how the characteristics of qualitative research have been fulfilled, how the concerns on validity, reliability and ethics have been addressed and the different phases of study. It also discusses the research procedures, including the case selection procedures, data collection procedures, data analysis and validation procedures before concluding the chapter.

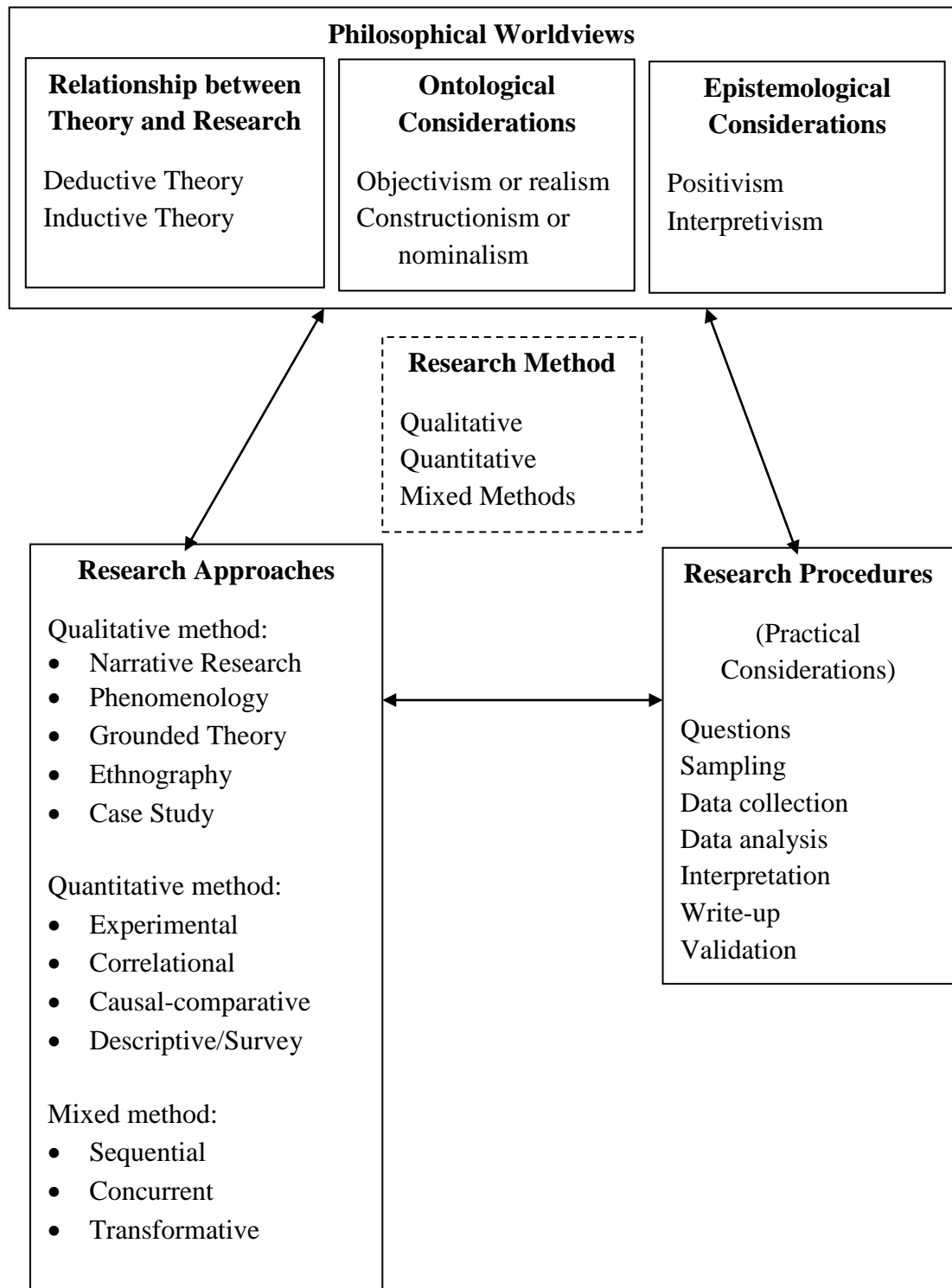


Figure 4.1. A Framework for Research Design

Source. Adapted from Bryman (2004), Cohen et al. (2007) and Creswell (2009)

Rationale for Qualitative Research Method

This section presents the rationale for selection of qualitative research method based on the research objectives and research questions, which represent the philosophical worldview adopted by the researcher (Bryman, 2004; Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2007, 2009). The philosophical worldviews take into consideration the relationship between theory and research, ontological and epistemological perspectives adopted by a researcher for the research (Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2007, 2009).

This study aims to collect data to understand the phenomenon being studied as well as to answer the research questions through contributing to theory building and not testing. Hence, it is based on an inductive and not deductive approach, as represented in Figure 4.2. Using inductive approach, theory is an outcome of an empirical inquiry, which is different from deductive approach that utilises existing theory to guide empirical inquiry (Bryman, 2004).

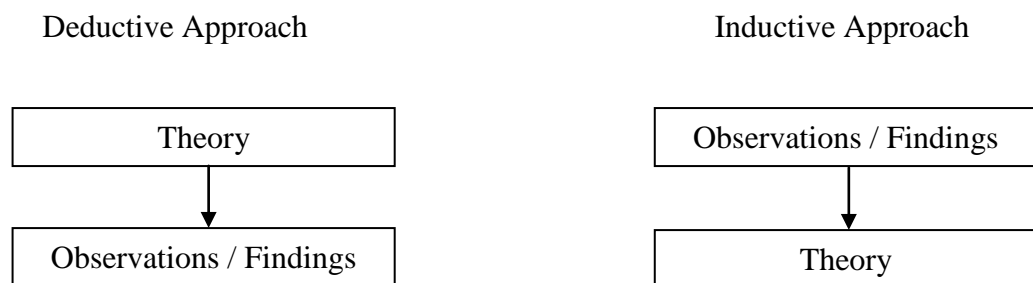


Figure 4.2. Deductive and Inductive Approaches to the Relationship between Theory and Research

Source. Bryman (2004)

In terms of ontological consideration, focusing on the nature of reality, this study adopts the stance that realities are social constructions that are continually developed by the beliefs and actions of the social actors within them (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Reality is subjective and multiple (Creswell, 2007, 2009). Hence, constructionism paradigm is adopted in this study. It assumes that the social reality is

created by the social actors, which is different from objectivism or realism that assumes there is a social reality “out there”, external to the social actors (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 7; Creswell, 2007, 2009). In terms of epistemological consideration, focusing on the relationship between the researcher and that being researched, this study aims to understand the subjective meaning of human behaviour. Human act based on the meaning they attach to the acts and the acts of others. In order to understand human action and their social world from their point of view, the researcher reduces the distance between herself with that being researched through spending time in the field (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Hence, interpretivism paradigm supporting the inductive and constructionism paradigms is adopted in this study.

In summary, the researcher adopts an inductive approach, constructionism ontological and interpretivism epistemological orientation in this study. Qualitative research method adopts the inductive approach that emphasises theory generation, focuses on how individuals interpret their social world and views social reality as a continually emerging and changing outcome of the individuals within it (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Hence, qualitative research is the most suitable research method for this study. The researcher intends to learn from the participants from a for-profit private higher education institution, who is a subject expert, of its experience in driving educational quality. The learning takes place through the emic perspective in the natural setting. This exploration is an emergent process and is inductive in nature. This study intends to “discover how different people interpret the world in which they live” and theories are “sets of meanings which people use to make sense of their world and behaviour within it” (Cohen et al., 2007). In short, qualitative research method is the most suitable method to serve the research objectives and answer the research questions of this study, which represent the philosophical worldview adopted by the researcher

(Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). The schema outlining the methodology of this study is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Schema Outlining the Methodology

Philosophical Worldview					
Relationship between theory and research	Ontology	Epistemology	Research method	Research approach	Research procedures
inductive	constructionism	interpretivism	qualitative	Case Study -Single case embedded design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research questions • Sampling • Data collection through interview, document analysis and observation • Data analysis • Validation • Interpretation • Write-up

Quantitative research method is not suitable for this study because it adopts a deductive stance focusing on testing theory, incorporates practices of natural scientific model and positivism paradigm, and views social reality in an external and objective manner (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Different from qualitative research, quantitative research method aims at “discovering the universal laws of society and human conduct within it” and theory is viewed as “a rational structure built by scientists to explain human behaviour” (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2007, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Hence, quantitative research method is used to “tests or verifies theories or explanations” (Creswell, 2008, 2009). The fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Fundamental Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Research Method

No	Aspect	Qualitative	Quantitative
1	Principle orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Inductive; generation of theory	Deductive; testing of theory
2	Ontological orientation	Constructionism or nominalism	Objectivism or realism
3	Epistemological orientation	Interpretivism	Natural science model; positivism in particular
4	Role of social science	Discovering how different people interpret the world in which they live	Discovering the universal laws of society and human conduct within it
5	Theory	Sets of meanings which people use to make sense of their world and behaviour within it	A rational structure built by scientists to explain human behaviour
6	Research objectives	Understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore • To describe • To understand a central phenomenon 	Explaining <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To describe • To test or examine the relationship among variables

Source. Adapted from Bryman (2004), Cohen et al. (2007), Creswell (2008, 2009) and Merriam (2009)

In addition, mixed methods is not suitable for this study. Mixed methods adopt a pragmatic worldview, drawing from both qualitative and quantitative philosophical worldviews (Creswell, 2009). However, the research objectives and research questions of this study aims to understand the perspective and experience of private higher education institution and do not intend to statistically test or verify any theories or explanations.

Adopting qualitative research method, the most relevant research approach to address the research objectives and to answer the research questions, case study, is justified in the following section.

Rationale for Case Study Approach

This section justifies the rationale for selecting the case study approach. As highlighted in the 2007 UNESCO-CEPES report, as cited in Altbach et al. (2010b), quality is a contextual concept. The concept of quality cannot be well understood without understanding the context. Hence, case study is the most suitable strategy of inquiry because the researcher intends to conduct an empirical inquiry to explore the contemporary phenomenon of educational quality at a private higher education institution in depth within its real-life context, focusing on the “how” and “why”, bounded by time, activity and site of the research (Yin, 2009). In addition, the researcher intends to collect detailed information using multiple sources of data or evidence (e.g., interview, observation, document analysis) to converge in triangulation and over a sustained period (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). The outcome of this study is thick description of the experience of private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality.

Since this study focuses on the best practices, an extreme exemplary private higher education institution is selected based on the criteria described in the following section. One of the rationales for a holistic single case study is where the case represents an extreme case (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 549; Yin, 2009, p. 47). In addition, this study involved two exemplary faculties of the selected university in order to collect in depth data at faculty level. Hence, the most suitable case study design is holistic single-case embedded design (Yin, 2009, pp. 46-53). The main unit of analysis is the institution and the embedded units of analysis are the two faculties. The research context is the higher education sector in Malaysia.

The findings from this case study are generalised to develop theory through analytic generalization, which is different from quantitative research where the findings about samples are generalised to make inference about a population through statistical

generalization (Yin, 2009, pp. 38-39). Most importantly, analytical generalization can be used whether the case study involves one or several cases (Yin, 2009). This is because the additional cases are meant to replicate the research and are not meant to be additional ‘samples’ of the research (Yin, 2009). In order to ensure the quality of this case study, construct validity is assured through utilising multiple sources of evidence, establishing chain of evidence and having key informant (the Vice-Chancellor in this case) review the draft case study report. Internal validity is assured through doing pattern matching and explanation building, as well as using logic models. External validity is assured using conceptual framework in this case study. Reliability is assured using case study protocol and developing case study database using NVivo version 10 software (Yin, 2009, pp. 40-45).

The other qualitative research approaches, namely narrative research, grounded theory and ethnography (Creswell, 2007), are less suitable for this study. Narrative research approach is suitable for “exploring the life of an individual” (Creswell, 2007). Grounded theory approach is suitable for theory development based on the data from the field (Creswell, 2007). Ethnography approach is suitable for understanding a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology approach is reasonably suitable for this study that aims to understand the essence of human experience (Creswell, 2007). However, it does not emphasize the time, activities and site boundary as stressed in case study approach (Creswell, 2007).

The following section discusses how the key characteristics of qualitative research are fulfilled and how the concerns for qualitative research are addressed.

Fulfilling the Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is one of the two most commonly used research approaches in social science research. According to Creswell (2009), “qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a

social or human problem”. The process of qualitative research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s or natural setting and from the emic perspective, through purposeful sampling or purposeful case selection, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data, with the findings that are not meant to be generalised to a larger population. The final report has a flexible structure with thick description. The worldview of this research is multiple realities and multiple participant meanings.

The major characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009) have been fulfilled in this study. This study focuses on understanding and learning the meaning that the participants attach to the central phenomenon, quest for educational quality, and not the frequency or cause and effect of the phenomenon of interest. In this study, the participant is the subject expert, with the experience and knowledge of pursuing educational quality that the researcher wants to learn from. This study focuses on the meaning from the participant’s perspective and not the meaning imposed by the researcher or the meaning expressed in the literature. Data were collected in the field at the site, the private university, where the participant experiences the phenomenon under study, through face-to-face interaction over time, which is for a year in this study. The participant was not brought to a lab under contrived condition nor being asked to answer any instrument prepared. In this study, the researcher is the instrument. The researcher collected data through interviewing participants, observing activities and analysing documents. The researcher used protocols to assist in data collection but did not use any other instruments such as questionnaire or test. Understanding the research process is emergent in nature, the initial plan for research was not tightly prescribed to allow changes when more and more data were collected and analysed. In order to understand the meaning and to obtain holistic perspectives of the phenomenon, the researcher has

involved in a prolonged engagement with the site and participants for a year until the point of saturation. From the data collected, the researcher built the patterns, categories of information, themes to describe the phenomenon of interest bottom up, by organising the data into increasing abstract units of information. The findings of the study are thick in description in order to provide comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Through this study, the researcher developed a complex picture or holistic perspectives of the phenomenon under study. A visual model representing the central phenomenon is developed to present the holistic picture.

The most common criticisms of qualitative research are biased, small scale, anecdotal and lack of rigor (Anderson, 2010). The quality of qualitative research is highly dependent on the skill of the researcher and is more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases. Hence, it is important for the research to be conducted properly so that it is unbiased, in depth, valid, credible and rigorous (Anderson, 2010). The following section presents how the rigor of this study is assured.

Addressing Validity, Reliability and Ethics

Merriam (2009) also highlighted that being able to trust the research result is especially important to professionals in applied fields, such as education, where practitioners intervene in people's lives. The trustworthiness depends on the extent to which the validity, reliability and ethics are addressed in the conduct of study (Merriam, 2009). This section explains how validity, reliability and ethics have been addressed in this study.

The terms "validity" and "reliability" of the study are commonly used in quantitative research but they are addressed differently in qualitative research. Validity includes external validity and internal validity. External validity refers to the extent the research findings can be generalized to a larger population or applied to other situation; internal validity refers to the extent the research findings accurately represent the

phenomena; reliability refers to the reproducibility of the findings (Anderson, 2010; Merriam, 2009).

External Validity

A common critique of qualitative research is that the findings of the study cannot be generalised (external validity) due to the scope of the study. In fact in qualitative research, a single or small number of non-random sample is selected purposefully because the researcher wishes to understand the particular phenomenon or case in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many (Merriam, 2009). However, the insights learned may be transferable to other cases in similar context. In addition, the findings may be generalised through analytical generalisation to develop theory and not statistical generalisation to make an inference to the larger population.

To enhance the transferability of this study results to similar context, the following strategies have been taken, as suggested by Merriam (2009).

- a) Rich and thick description is provided so that the readers can identify how closely their situations match this research situation and decide whether findings can be transferred.
- b) Embedded single site design using two embedded units of analysis to identify potential variations so that the readers can apply the results to a greater range of situations.

Internal Validity

A common issue in qualitative data analysis is to assess the extent to which claims are supported by convincing evidence (Anderson, 2010). Internal validity is a critical concern because the researcher plays a prominent role in data collection, data analysis and data interpretation. To address this concern, this study implemented the following strategies, as suggested by Merriam (2009).

- a) Multiple data sources including interview (from different participants), observation (from different times and places) and document analysis, were triangulated in this case.
- b) Member check was practiced where the transcripts of the taped interviews were sent back to the interviewees to confirm the interview findings throughout the study. Summary of the key findings was confirmed with the interviewees in the subsequent interview too. In addition, the overall key findings were reviewed by the key informant, the Vice-Chancellor of the institution, for potential rival explanation.
- c) Peer evaluation where the input of supervisors and colleagues is used to verify the findings throughout the study.
- d) The researcher made conscious effort to be clear about the biases and assumptions she may bring to the study.
- e) Prolonged engagement is practiced where the researcher gathered data over a period of one year at the research site with repeated interviews, observations and document analysis of the same phenomenon.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the research findings can be replicated if a similar study were to be conducted. Reliability is based on the assumption that there is a single reality and the repeated study will produce similar results (Merriam, 2009). This assumption is based on traditional experimental (quantitative) research that focuses on discovering the causal relationships among variables. However, human behaviour is never static (Merriam, 2009). In addition, qualitative research is based on the worldview of multi-realities. Hence, achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not possible.

According to Merriam (2009), Lincoln and Guba suggest thinking about the “dependability” or “consistency” of the results obtained from the data, whether the

results are consistent with the data collected. This study implemented the following strategies to address the concerns mentioned above, as suggested by Merriam (2009) and Yin (2009).

- a) The researcher has explained her position regarding the assumptions and theory behind the study, the basis for selecting participants and the social context from which data were collected.
- b) Triangulation has been conducted using multiple sources of data collection, including interview (from different participants), observation (from different times and places) and document analysis.
- c) The researcher provided an Audit Trail describing in detail how data were collected using the various protocols, how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry.
- d) All the data collected were organised using NVivo version 10 database software.

Ethics and Role of Researcher

The researcher of this study has been working with a private higher education institution in Malaysia since 2006. Since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and the data may be filtered through the researcher's particular theoretical position and biases (Merriam, 2009), the researcher has tried to be nonbiased, accurate and as honest as humanly possible in conducting this research. The researcher has made conscious effort to maintain her objectivity throughout this study and to ensure internal validity. The efforts include member checking, peer reviewing, having key informant review the key findings of this study for potential rival explanation (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). The researcher also reflects throughout the study and the reflection is recorded in a reflective journal as part of the audit trail (refer to Appendix T). Biases that cannot be controlled or avoided are discussed in the report.

In addition, the highest ethical standard has been maintained throughout the study. The researcher obtained the permission to conduct the study at the institution prior to conducting the study. The permission is to collect data through interviewing the institutional and faculty leaders, heads of departments, lecturers and student, observation on campus and obtaining relevant documents for analysis. During interview, the researcher explained to the participants the purpose of the study, that anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved and that the participants are volunteers who may withdraw from the study at any time and with no complications. The researcher ensures the confidentiality of the institution and participants. Pseudonym is used throughout the thesis. Information that may reveal the participants' identity is intentionally removed or generalised. The researcher also informed the participants that they will receive a copy of the report.

Phases of Study

This study consists of four phases. Phase one is for preparation of research. Research is designed based on literature review as presented in Chapter One and Two; research context, higher education in Malaysia, is explored as presented in Chapter Three; research methodology, including the relevant research method, was designed as presented in this Chapter. Phase two is for gaining access to the site and conducting a preliminary data collection using the interview, observation and document analysis protocol. The protocol, especially the interview protocol, was refined after the preliminary data collection. Phase Three is for data collection. On-going data analysis was conducted and finally this report is prepared in Phase Four. The four phases and corresponding key research activities are summarised in the following Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Phases of Study

Phase	Duration	Research activities
1	January 2011 – April 2012	Preparation of research: - Research design - Literature review - Country context - Methodology
2	May 2012 – July 2012	Access to site, preliminary data collection and refinement of data collection protocol
3	August 2012 - September 2013	Data collection
4	August 2012 – November 2013	Data analysis and report writing

Research Procedures**Case Selection Procedures****Selection procedure for private higher education institution.**

In order to answer the research questions, purposeful sampling is used. According to Creswell (2008), “in purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon”. The standard used in choosing participants and site is whether they are “information rich” (Patton, 2002, p. 169).

Diverse educational quality of for-profit private higher education is a long debated issue in developing countries including Malaysia. Various quality assurance mechanisms have been enforced on the private higher education institutions in Malaysia since the passing of the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996. Lately, certain for-profit institutions manage to evolve and establish good quality reputation while the others are still being perceived as demand-absorbing. This study aims to understand the successful experience of a private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality and the key institutional factors contributing to quality. Hence, an extreme exemplary for-profit private institution is selected for this study. This study

aims to learn how and why the institution has successfully transformed itself and achieved high educational quality, recognised by the Ministry of Education Malaysia. According to Creswell (2008, p. 215), “Extreme case sampling is a form of purposeful sampling in which you study an outlier case or one that displays extreme characteristics. Researchers identify these cases by locating persons or organizations that others have cited for achievements or distinguishing characteristics”. Yin (2009, p. 47) also highlighted that one of the rationales for a single case study is where the case represents an extreme case. Hence, an exemplary, comprehensive for-profit private higher education institution, which has successfully transformed from a college to a university college and a university, rated as “Excellence” in teaching and learning by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, has been selected. The following section outlines the process of case selection in detail.

In order to identify an exemplary institution as a case to answer the research questions, the private higher education institutions in Malaysia are analysed from the following characteristics:

- a) ownership and for-profit motive
- b) their experience and status, i.e. university transformed from college
- c) quality standard achieved,
- d) programmes offered.

The private higher education institutions in Malaysia can be categorised according to different types of ownership. Generally, they can be categorised into local private investors, foreign private investors, foreign university branch campuses and public listed which mostly are for-profit, as well as those funded by government-linked corporations and political parties, which mostly are not for profit. For this study, the focus is on higher education institutions owned by the local private investors and are for-profit because they represent the majority of private higher education institutions in

Malaysia and they possibly face the greatest financial limitation in driving educational quality.

This study focused on private universities which have successfully transformed themselves from being private colleges, to being private university colleges, and then to being private universities. The reason is the experience of this type of institution can serve as a role model for the many private colleges that are still being perceived as “demand absorbers”. In addition, only institutions that have achieved the Ministry of Education’s criteria for university are awarded the university status. Hence, private university acts as a benchmark for higher education institutions with other status. This is also aligned with the focus of the government to elevate the quality of the private university, in order to be a hub of higher education excellence.

The 2009 and 2011 Rating System for Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (MOHE, 2010, 2012b), SETARA, provides a good measure of the quality standard of teaching and learning at the undergraduate level in universities and university colleges in Malaysia. The SETARA rating instrument covers three generic dimensions of input, process and output to assess the quality of teaching and learning. The input dimension addresses talent, resources and governance. The process dimension focuses on curriculum content, delivery, assessment and some relevant supporting activities. The output dimension focuses on the quality of graduates, including feedback from the graduates and employers. The SETARA exercise classifies its rating into six tiers, ranging from Tier 1 as Weak to Tier 6 as Outstanding. Since no institution is rated at Tier 6, the selected sample is rated at Tier 5 Excellence rating in 2009 and 2011. In addition, Discipline-based Rating System for Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (MOHE, 2013b), D-SETARA, was introduced in 2011, covering (a) medicine, pharmacy and dentistry, (b) health sciences, (c) engineering, and (d) hospitality and

tourism. The institution selected in this study has leading discipline as rated in the D-SETARA rating.

Lastly, the private higher education universities can be divided into full-fledged comprehensive universities and the specialised universities. For this study, a full-fledged comprehensive university is chosen as it represents the majority of the universities in Malaysia.

After considering the criteria above, very limited private universities fulfil all the criteria. A comprehensive for-profit private university funded by local private investors has been chosen to participate in this study.

Selection procedure for faculties.

In order to understand the implementation experience at faculty level and to maximize the potential variations in terms of good practices, two exemplary faculties from different disciplines have been selected as embedded unit of analysis. Faculty 'A' offers science and technology related programmes; Faculty 'B' offers social science related programmes. The selected faculties have achieved national and international recognition for their educational quality in the last five years, managed to sustain as leading faculties within the for-profit private universities, and managed to increase their enrolments multiple folds. These selection criteria are to enable the learning of good practices and to identify the key enabling factors.

Based on the selection procedures, the main unit of analysis, the institution, and the embedded units of analysis, the two faculties, were selected.

Selection procedure for lecturers.

In order to obtain a true picture at the ground, lecturers were selected for interview. Since this study aims to understand the good practices and enabling factors, lasting and top performing lecturers were selected. It is believed that lasting and top

performance lecturers possess rich information regarding why the institution is successful in achieving high educational quality.

Data Collection Procedures

In order to answer the research questions, detailed information was collected from the multiple sources through observation, interview and document analysis. The research questions are supported by guiding questions as described in the following Table 4.4.

Research question number one focuses on understanding the meaning of educational quality to the institution. In order to answer this research question, observation of the campus environment, facilities, services and activities, has been conducted to provide an overall impression about the understanding of the institution. In addition, observation during the relevant meetings and discussion sessions provides more in-depth understanding. The collected data were triangulated with data collected through interviewing the Vice-Chancellor, administration heads of departments, Deans, lecturers as well as President of Student Council and parent. The different participants provide information from senior management, middle management, lecturers, student's and parent's perspectives. In addition, the data were triangulated with data collected through document analysis. The documents that have been analysed include the institution's profile (website), strategic plan and policy, annual report, corporate presentation, prospectus, graduate satisfaction survey report, employer survey report, industry advisory panel minutes of meeting and so forth, focusing on the institution's vision, mission, values, educational goals (graduate capabilities) and quality policy.

Research question number two focuses on understanding the institution's process of establishing goals, formulating strategies and implementing the strategies in the quest for educational quality. In order to answer this research question, observation

during the key relevant meetings and discussion sessions provides an in-depth understanding. Those include the institution's strategic planning and review meeting, Senate meeting, Deans and Heads of Departments meeting, staff satisfaction survey result sharing session, and so forth, focusing on the goal, strategies and implementation process. Additional data were collected through interviewing the Vice-Chancellor, Heads of Teaching and Learning, Head of Student Affairs, Deans and lecturers. Interview with the President of Student Council provided additional supporting information. Again, the different participants provide information from senior management, middle management, lecturers' and student's perspectives. Document analysis provides crucial information too. The analysed documents include the institution's profile (website), strategic plan, policy documents, annual report, corporate presentation, archived news, prospectus, curriculum, graduate satisfaction survey report, employer survey report, industry advisory panel minutes of meeting, external examiner's report and so forth.

Similar data collection methods and sources were carried out for research question number three and four. The following Table 4.4 summarises the data collection methods and sources to answer the respective research questions.

Table 4.4

Research Questions, Data Collection Procedures and Sources

No	Research questions	Guiding questions	Data collection procedures and sources
1	What does 'educational quality' mean to a private higher education institution in Malaysia?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does 'educational quality' mean to you? 2. How this understanding comes about? 3. What are the indicators of high 'educational quality'? 4. Who are the key stakeholders of this private higher education institution? 5. What does quality in higher education mean to the different stakeholders? 6. How does the understanding of the stakeholders towards the meaning of quality in higher education come about? 7. What is a leader in private higher education accountable for in terms of educational quality? 8. What must a leader of private higher education institution do in driving educational quality? Why? 	<p>Observation</p> <p>Campus environment, facilities, services, activities, strategic planning and review meeting, Senate meeting, Deans and Heads of Departments meeting, Staff satisfaction survey result sharing session</p> <p>Interview</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Vice-Chancellor b) Heads of Teaching and Learning c) Head of Student Affairs d) Deans e) Lecturers f) Student Council g) Parent <p>Document analysis</p> <p>Institution profile (website), strategic plan and policy, annual report, corporate presentation, prospectus, graduate satisfaction survey report, employer survey report, industry advisory panel minutes of meeting etc. focusing on the institution's vision, mission, values, educational goals (graduate capabilities) and quality policy</p>

No	Research questions	Guiding questions	Data collection procedures and sources
2	How has a private higher education institution in Malaysia established goal, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies in the quest for educational quality?	<p><i>Establishing goal related to quality:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have you considered in establishing the quality goal of your institution? Quality goal refer to the vision, mission, values and stance towards quality. 2. What were the external (outside the institution) factors that you have considered? Why? [e.g., external stakeholders' expectations, market condition etc.] 3. What were the internal (within the institution) factors that you have considered? Why? [e.g., business leadership, strength and weakness including faculty and financial position etc.] 4. Have you considered your personal belief, vision, mission, values and stance towards quality and profit-making? Why? 5. Have you considered the role of leader in private higher education in establishing the quality goal for your institution? If yes, in what ways? <p><i>Formulating the strategy:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have you considered in formulating the strategy to drive quality education in your institution? [e.g., academic portfolio, product market opportunity etc.] 	<p>Observation</p> <p>Strategic planning and review meeting, Senate meeting, Deans and Heads of Departments meeting, Staff satisfaction survey result sharing session and so forth focusing on the goal, strategies and implementation process</p> <p>Interview</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Vice-Chancellor b) Heads of Teaching and Learning c) Head of Student Affairs d) Deans e) Lecturers f) Student Council* <p>Document analysis</p> <p>Institution profile (website), strategic plan, policy documents, organization chart, annual report, corporate presentation, archived news, prospectus, curriculum, graduate satisfaction survey report, employer survey report, industry advisory panel minutes of meeting, external examiner's report etc.</p>

No	Research questions	Guiding questions	Data collection procedures and sources
		2. What is the strategy that has been formulated? What does it covered and why? <i>Implementing the strategy:</i> 1. What are the processes or steps involved in implementing the strategy and why? 2. How the stakeholders involved in the process? 3. Have you considered the role of leader during strategy implementation? If yes, in what ways?	
3	What are the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality?	1. What were the challenges experienced in establishing the quality goal? How the challenges come about? 2. What were the challenges experienced in formulating the strategy to drive the educational quality? How the challenges come about? 3. What were the challenges experienced in implementing the quality strategy? How the challenges come about?	<p>Observation</p> <p>Strategic planning and review meeting, Senate meeting, Deans and Heads of Departments meeting, Staff satisfaction survey result sharing session and so forth</p> <p>Interview</p> <p>a) Vice-Chancellor b) Heads of Teaching and Learning c) Head of Student Affairs d) Deans e) Lecturers f) Parent* g) Student Council*</p> <p>Document Analysis</p> <p>Institution profile, annual report, archived news etc. focusing on challenges experienced</p>

No	Research questions	Guiding questions	Data collection procedures and sources
4	What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality? 2. What have the institution done right in achieving the educational quality? 3. Why are those contributing factors? 4. Why do you stay in the institution? 	<p>Observation Strategic planning and review meeting, Senate meeting, Deans and Heads of Departments meeting, Staff satisfaction survey result sharing session and so forth</p> <p>Interview <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Vice-Chancellor b) Heads of Teaching and Learning c) Head of Student Affairs d) Deans e) Lecturers f) Parent* g) Student Council* </p> <p>Document Analysis Institution profile (website), strategic plan and policy document, annual report, archived news, minutes of meeting, curriculum etc. focusing on key enabling factors</p>

Note. * refers to supporting participants who provide supporting information for the research question.

Phases of the data collection and on-going analysis.

In order to collect in depth data within its real-life context for this case study, field work at the site, a selected private higher education institution in Malaysia, has been conducted from August 2012 to September 2013. Prior to that, the researcher gained access to the research site (refer to Appendix B, C and D), carried out preliminary data collection and refinement of data collection protocol (refer to Appendix E, F, G and H). Three rounds of data collection have been conducted within one year.

The first round of data collection was carried out from August 2012 to December 2012, taking five months. It started with an observation at the research site focusing on the campus environment, facilities and services provided, the Deans' offices and the activities on campus. It is followed by analysing publically available documents, including the institution's profile at the website, annual report, newsletters, archived news, prospectus and so forth. The findings through observation and document analysis contribute to the interview that follows. Interview started with the President of Student Council and a parent of the institution's student in order to understand their expectations and to obtain a true picture of their experiences "on the ground". It is followed by interview with the Deans of the two selected faculties and Head, Student Affairs to obtain more insights from the middle management team. More observations were conducted during the Deans and Heads of Departments meeting. The findings of the first round of data collection have informed the subsequent round of data collection.

The second round of data collection includes observation at key relevant meetings that represent the true picture in action. In addition, the Deans, lecturers and Vice-Chancellor were interviewed to obtain more in-depth insights into the phenomenon under study from the perspectives of the different hierarchies of staff. It also provided additional opportunities for the participants to express and clarify their

experiences and points of views. Furthermore, strategic and operational levels of confidential documents, reports and minutes of meeting were analysed to understand the experience of the institution.

The third round of data collection took three months. This additional round of data collection is to ensure the relevant experiences of the participants are fully explored. More focused data were collected, as informed by the analysis of data collected earlier. Observation of relevant meetings were carried out. Interview with additional lecturers and Heads of Teaching and Learning were conducted after analysing the previous data collected. Follow-up interviews with the two Deans were conducted. Additional documents were analysed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the institution's experience. Finally, the key findings of the study were reviewed with the Vice-Chancellor during the last interview for potential rival explanation.

Throughout the data collection, dedicated protocols were used and on-going data analysis was conducted before the next round of data collection. In addition, in order to ensure validity of the research, member checking was conducted after each interview, peer debriefing was carried out at least once every three months, clear audit trail was documented and on-going data triangulation among the various data collection techniques within session and between sessions have been conducted. The reflection of the researcher throughout the research is recorded in a reflective journal as part of the audit trail (refer to Appendix T). The various phases of data collection and research tools are summarised in the following Table 4.5

Table 4.5

Phases of Data Collection and Research Tools

Round	Duration	Research steps	Research tools
-	Before data collection: May-July 2012	Access to site, preliminary data collection and refinement of protocols	
1	August-December 2012	<p>Observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus environment, facilities, services, activities <p>Document Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publically available documents, institution profile (website), annual report, newsletter, prospectus etc. <p>Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of Student Council • Parent • Deans • Head, Student Affairs <p>Case-Session Analysis</p>	<p>a) Observation Protocol</p> <p>Document Analysis Protocol</p> <p>a) Interview Protocol</p> <p>b) Transcription</p> <p>Case-session report and/or reflective journal</p>
2	January-June 2013	<p>Observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings <p>Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deans • Lecturers • Vice-Chancellor <p>Document Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic plan, policy documents, organization chart, corporate presentation, curriculum, graduate satisfaction survey report, employer survey report, industry advisory panel minutes of meeting etc. <p>Case-Session Analysis</p>	<p>a) Observation Protocol</p> <p>a) Interview Protocol</p> <p>b) Transcription</p> <p>Document Analysis Protocol</p> <p>Case-session report and/or reflective journal</p>
3	July-September 2013	<p>Observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meetings <p>Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deans • Lecturers • Heads, Teaching and Learning • Vice-Chancellor <p>Document Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff survey report, minutes of meeting etc. <p>Case-Session Analysis</p>	<p>a) Observation Protocol</p> <p>a) Interview Protocol</p> <p>b) Transcription</p> <p>Document Analysis Protocol</p> <p>Case-session report and/or reflective journal</p>
-	After data collection	Final Analysis	

Observation.

Observation is a process of gathering open-ended first-hand information by observing people, process and places at the research site (Creswell, 2008). Observation was used in this study to collect actual information as it happens in the natural setting, which is especially important to avoid information not presented accurately and completely through other method such as interview. Observations conducted in this study include the campus environment, facilities, services and activities, as well as meeting and discussion sessions, which have been presented in the previous section. The data collected are limited by the right to access. Semi-structured observation protocol was prepared in advance to ease the recording of the information observed (refer to Appendix G). During the observation process, descriptive field notes and reflective field notes were recorded for analysis purpose (refer to Appendix K). Observations conducted in this study are listed in the following Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Observation Conducted

No	Name of Observation	Annotation	Duration (hours)
1	Campus Facilities and Services 2012	The facilities and services provided to staff and students on campus.	1
2	Faculty A Dean's Office	Display at Dean's office.	0.5
3	Faculty B Dean's Office	Display at Dean's office.	0.5
4	Faculty A Student Project Exhibition	End of semester exhibition of students' projects.	0.5
5	Deans and HODs Meeting 2012-2013	Monthly senior management meeting that discusses academic and non-academic strategic matters. 5 meetings were observed.	3 (per meeting)
6	2014 University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop 2013	Annual senior management workshop that discusses the university's priorities and targets for the following year.	8 hours
7	Senate Meeting 2013	Senate meeting that deliberates and approves academic matters such as policy change, appointment of visiting and adjunct appointments, appointment of external examiner, student results and graduate list.	3
8	Staff Survey 2012 Result Sharing Session 2013	Sharing session regarding the outcomes of the institution's staff survey focusing staff's expectation, experience and other feedback, conducted by an independent party.	1.5
9	Academic Policy Committee Meeting 2013	Meeting that deliberates proposal for new and changes to academic policies, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and attended by representatives from various faculties.	2

Interview.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted in this study, guided by the interview questions and interview protocol (refer to Appendix E and F). The researcher asked the participants general and open-ended questions and recorded their answers. The researcher then transcribed the interview for data analysis (refer to Appendix J). The interview is one-to-one so that the participant could speak comfortably without hesitation and without influence by other participants. In order to

encourage the participants to answer openly and honestly, participants were informed that anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved and that as volunteers they may withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions. During interview, the researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the study, their right to anonymity and their right to withdraw anytime, in order to encourage them to express their opinions openly and honestly. Each interview lasted not less than an hour so that the participants have sufficient time to express themselves. Open-ended questions allowed the participants to voice their experiences freely and not to be influenced by the researcher or previous research findings. Interview was used in this study to elicit information that cannot be obtained through observation. In addition, more in-depth information had been obtained through interview by asking more specific questions. However, the researcher is mindful that interview may provide information that has been filtered by the participants and the presence of the researcher may affect how the interviewee responds. Hence, the researcher has upheld her independence and objectivity in conducting the interview to ensure her presence does not affect the interviewee's responses.

Literature has argued the importance of effective leadership in driving quality improvement (Boyle and Bowden, 1997; Gordon, 2002; Osseo-Asare et al., 2005; Kim, 2010). Middlehurst (1997) as well as Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011) further argued the importance of leadership at many levels in order to achieve significant change. Hence, interviews with the Vice-Chancellor, Deans and lecturers from the institution were conducted. In order to answer the research questions, the Vice-Chancellor, Deans of the two selected faculties, six selected lasting and top performing lecturers, relevant administrative Heads Departments, President of Student Council and a parent have been interviewed as presented earlier. The interviews conducted are summarised in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Interview Conducted

Participant code	Designation	Number of interview	Duration per interview (average hour)
VC	Vice-Chancellor	2	1
VP-SA	Vice-President, Student Affairs	1	1
HOD-1	Head, Teaching and Learning (Teaching)	1	1
HOD-2	Head, Teaching and Learning (Learning)	1	1
Dean-A	Dean, Faculty A	4	1.5
Dean-B	Dean, Faculty B	3	1.5
Lec-1	Lecturer A-1	1	1
Lec-2	Lecturer A-2	1	1
Lec-3	Lecturer A-3	1	1.5
Lec-4	Lecturer A-4	1	1
Lec-5	Lecturer A-5	1	1
Lec-6	Lecturer B-1	1	1
Par	Parent	1	1
Stu	President, Student Council	1	1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>20</i>	

Document analysis.

Document is the third source of information in this study. The documents analysed include public as well as private and confidential records obtained from the research website, research site and participants to understand the central phenomenon. Approval from the research site and participants was obtained before the documents were collected during the study. Document analysis protocol (refer to Appendix H) was used to facilitate analysis. The key documents analysed are listed in Appendix M with an example provided in Appendix L. The researcher is mindful that certain information captured on the documents, such as minutes of meeting, cannot be verified for accuracy.

Data Analysis and Validation Procedures

As highlighted in the earlier section, on-going analysis through continual reflection about the data was conducted throughout the data collection exercise, as summarised in the following Table 4.8. The reflection of the researcher throughout the research is recorded in a reflective journal to support the data analysis (refer to Appendix N). The data management and analysis were supported by a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package, NVivo version 10 software, for more efficient data management and analysis. In order to identify the emerging themes, preliminary analysis or open coding was conducted (Creswell, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldana, 2009). Refer to Appendix O, P and Q for examples. After that, axial coding was conducted to triangulate data from different sources (interview with different participants, observation at different times and places, and document analysis) to form categories of data (refer to Appendix R). Then, a more detailed analysis was conducted, where important themes to answer the research questions were identified (refer to Appendix S). Since this research involves multiple faculties or embedded units of analysis, the findings from the different faculties were compared and contrasted for similarities and differences. The relationships of the multiple themes have been identified to form a model. The model is used for interpreting the meaning of themes and descriptions in order to contribute to understanding the central phenomenon and the research problem. The steps involved in data analysis are summarised in the following Figure 4.3.

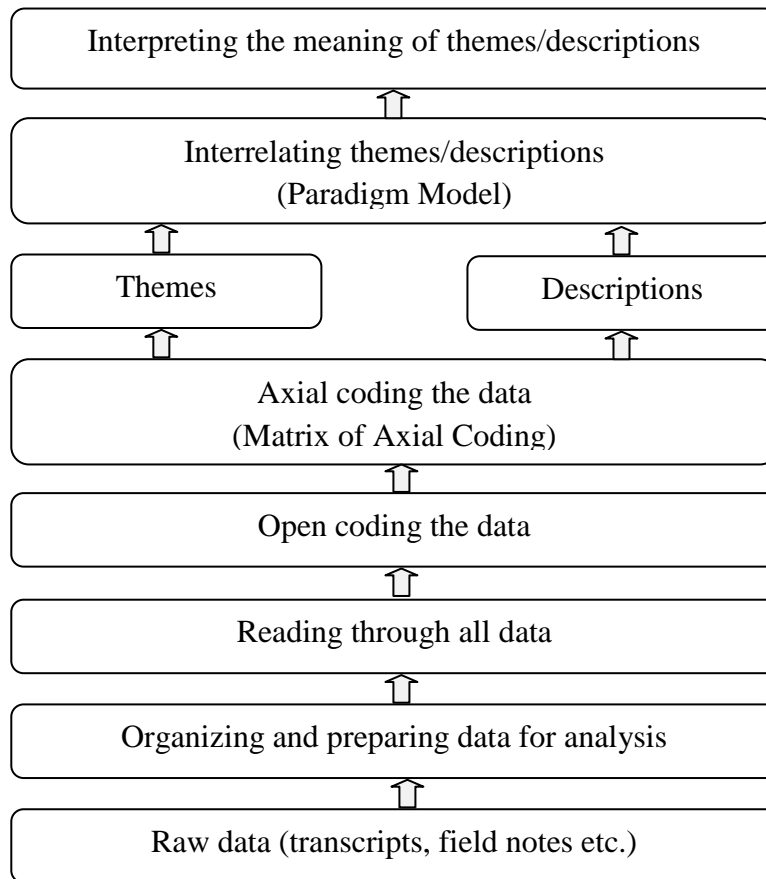


Figure 4.3. Data Analysis in Qualitative Research

Source. Adapted from Creswell (2009, p. 185).

The findings are validated throughout the study through member checking, where the interview transcripts were re-confirmed with the participants after each interview. Summary of data collected from the previous interview was re-confirmed with the participant at the beginning of the subsequent interview. In addition, the overall key findings were reviewed by the key informant, the Vice-Chancellor of the institution, for potential rival explanation (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009; Yin, 2012). Discussion with peers, especially the supervisors, was conducted regularly regarding the process of study, the congruency of the emerging findings with the raw data and the tentative interpretations. Details of the methods, procedures and decisions made during the study have been recorded and reported clearly in this report. Refer to Appendix T for a summary of audit trial. Finally, triangulation has been conducted among the sources of

data and between the different rounds of data collection to ensure validity of the findings.

Table 4.8

On-going Analysis and Validation

	Duration	Research steps	Research tools	On-going analysis	Validation
-	Before data collection: May-July 2012	Access to site, preliminary data collection and refinement of protocols			
1	August-December 2012	Observation	a) Observation Protocol	a) Re-read and fill in the gap b) Narrative form that provide a holistic picture c) Key idea and what else to collect	a) Member checking b) Peer debriefing c) Audit trail d) Triangulation among different sources of data within session
		Document Analysis	Document Analysis Protocol	Key information	
		Interview	a) Interview Protocol b) Transcription	a) Preliminary analysis of the transcription b) Preliminary categories and verbatim statement c) Key idea and what else to collect	
		Case-Session Analysis	Case-session report and/or reflective journal	Narrative form that provide a holistic picture of the session	
2	January-June 2013	Observation	a) Observation Protocol	a) Re-read and fill in the gap b) Narrative form that provide a holistic picture c) Key idea and what else to collect	a) Member checking b) Peer debriefing c) Audit trail d) Triangulation among different sources of data within session
		Interview	a) Interview Protocol	a) Preliminary analysis of the transcription	e) Triangulation

Duration	Research steps	Research tools	On-going analysis	Validation
3 July-September 2013		b) Transcription	b) Key idea and what else to collect	among different sources of data, between sessions
	Document Analysis	Document Analysis Protocol	Key information	
	Case-Session Analysis	Case-session report and/or reflective journal	Narrative form that provide a holistic picture of the session	
	Observation	b) Observation Protocol	a) Re-read and fill in the gap b) Narrative form that provide a holistic picture c) Key idea and what else to collect	a) Member checking b) Peer debriefing c) Audit trail d) Triangulation among different sources of data within session
	Interview	a) Interview Protocol b) Transcription	a) Preliminary analysis of the transcription b) Key idea and what else to collect	e) Triangulation among different sources of data, between sessions
	Document Analysis	Document Analysis Protocol	Key information	
	Case-Session Analysis	Case-session report and/or reflective journal	Narrative form that provide a holistic picture of the session	
- After data collection	Final Analysis			

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodology of this study. It starts with the framework for research design, justifying the rationale for choosing qualitative research case study using single-case embedded design. Strategies taken to address the concerns of qualitative research, validity, reliability and ethics, have been discussed. The phases of this study, research procedures, including the case selection procedures, phases of data collection and data collection procedures are rationalised. It also outlines the data

analysis procedures and strategies for validating the findings. The next chapter will present the data collected through this study utilising the three sources of data collection.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Introduction

Diverse educational quality has been a concern expressed towards the private higher education institutions, especially the for-profit institutions. In order to understand how private higher education institutions in Malaysia conceptualise quality and have driven educational quality in terms of processes involved and key challenges faced, to identify the key institutional contributing factors, four research questions have been presented in Chapter One. Data were collected at a purposefully selected exemplary university through one-year fieldwork and analysed according to the procedures described in Chapter Four. In this Chapter, the triangulated findings are presented as a combination of data collected through interview, document analysis and observation, in accordance with the four research questions:

1. What does educational quality mean to a private higher education institution in Malaysia?
2. How has a private higher education institution in Malaysia established goals, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies in the quest for educational quality?
3. What are the key challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality?
4. What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality at a private higher education institution in Malaysia?

Overall, interpretive commentary is interpolated between particular and general description to clearly present the connection between the details and the abstract argument (Merriam, 2009).

Overview of Findings

The following sections present an overview of findings in terms of the conception of educational quality and the strategic management framework of educational quality at the for-profit private higher education institution.

Conception of Educational quality at Private Higher Education

A model explaining the conception of quality at the for-profit private higher education institution has emerged from the findings of this study, as shown in the following Figure 5.1. Despite the differences in perspective, the majority of the staff view quality from the transformation perspective. This includes the lecturers, the Deans, the administrative heads of departments and the institution leaders. In addition, the staff views the transformation perspective as encompassing other perspectives, including fitness for purpose, value for money and exceptional to certain extent. However, the business owner and institution leader, who are accountable for the financial sustainability, place a stronger emphasis on value for money perspective. This is consistent with the institution's for-profit nature. The concept of value for money reflects the need for educational quality to be able to justify the tuition paid. It integrates the business motive and educational quality, consistent with the for-profit private higher education context (i.e., academic in commercial setup).

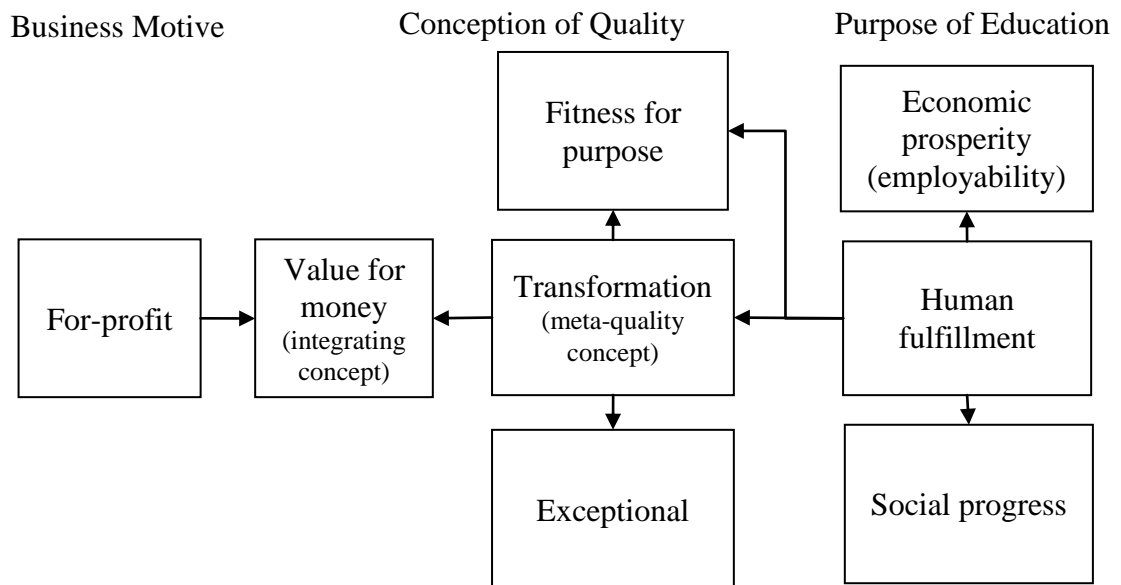


Figure 5.1. Conception of Educational Quality at Private Higher Education

To the key stakeholders, namely parent, student, sponsor and employer, value for money means that there is a reasonable return for their investment, reflecting the educational quality. For a private higher education institution, value for money conception is consistent with its business motive. It serves as an incentive for providing high quality education that attracts more targeted customers who are willing and able to pay. This value for money conception of quality has influenced the goal and strategy of the for-profit private higher education institution, where its core strategy is “premium quality, premium price”.

Surprisingly according to the findings, the concept of purpose of education has a strong influence on the conception of quality in the for-profit private higher education institution. The Deans of the institution argued that purpose of education should inform the conception of quality. They further argued that the primary purpose of education is for human fulfilment, meaning to educate for life and not just for employment, despite the fact that the institution is more industry oriented. They believe that through addressing this purpose, other purposes of education, which include developing human

capital for economic prosperity and social progress, are addressed as well. This perspective views education as both public and private good.

In summary, the findings of this research have linked the purpose of education and business motive to inform the conception of quality, which is a more relevant and comprehensive approach to the mass for-profit higher education sector especially in the developing countries.

Strategic Management of Educational Quality at Private Higher Education

A model explaining the strategic management process of educational quality specifically at for-profit private higher education institution has emerged from the findings of this study. It is shown in the following Figure 5.2, Model for Strategic Management of Educational Quality. A critical concept in the model is the importance of integrating the business for-profit motive with the purpose of education in order to assure and enhance educational quality. This is due to the unique context of for-profit private higher education, where financial sustainability is a primary concern. The findings show that proper integration of educational quality and for-profit motive may ensure long-term quality and profitability of private higher education. The findings suggested the concept of value for money strategy as a way of integrating educational quality and for-profit motive. The strategies may include utilising the most current and relevant curriculum, instructional models and techniques, and so forth. The concept argues that adding the value appreciated by the targeted stakeholders as value for money may strengthen the institution's competitive advantage to attract more quality students and staff. This leads to further enhancement of the institution's quality and profitability.

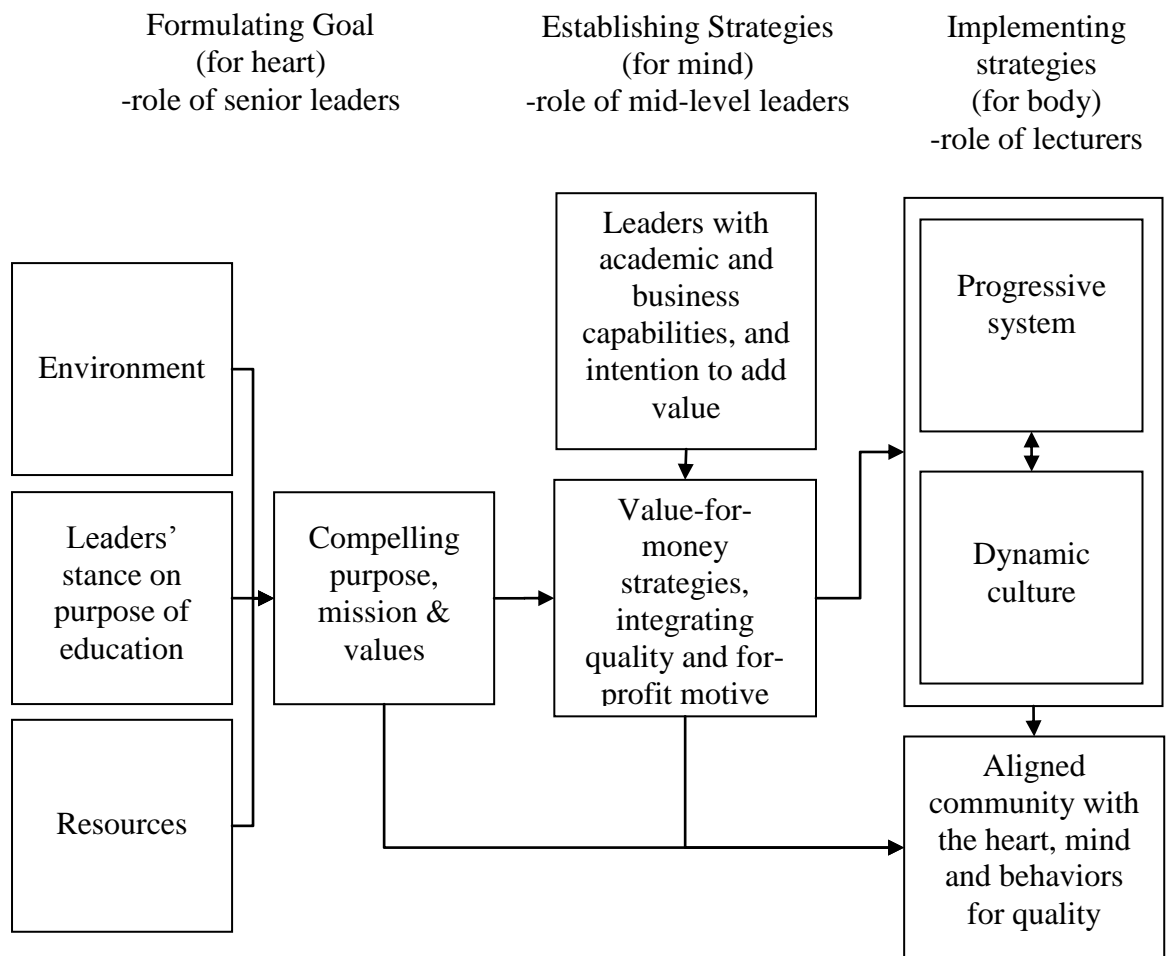


Figure 5.2. Model for Strategic Management of Educational Quality at Private Higher Education

A critical consideration of this concept is the importance of communicating the value added so that the targeted stakeholders appreciate it. This supporting concept is summarised in the following Figure 5.3, which is a supporting model, Value-for-Money Process Cycle.

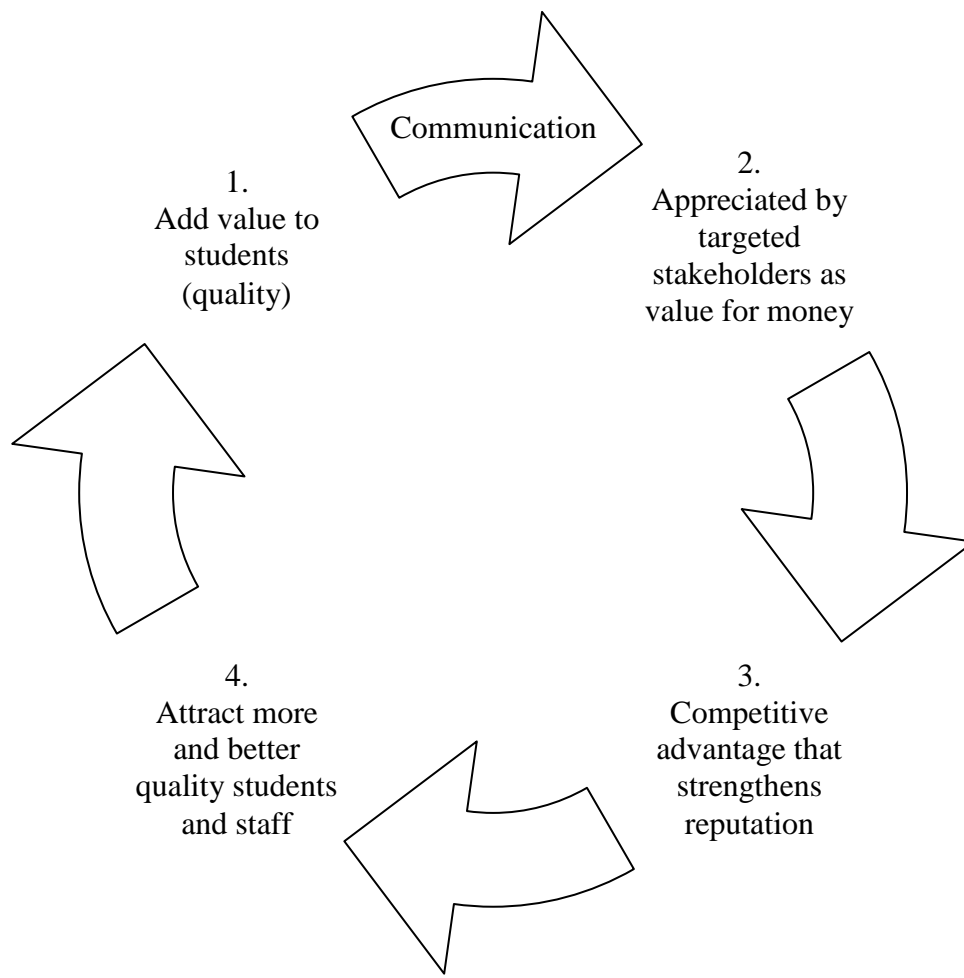


Figure 5.3. Value-for-Money Process Cycle

However, the findings also show that despite being a for-profit institution, the institution is fundamentally an academic institution. The primary concern of the academic community is the purpose of education and educational quality. At the same time, the business owner has the pivotal influence towards the direction of the institution. Hence, the Model for Strategic Management of Educational quality shows that the stance of the business owner concerning the purpose of education and educational quality is the most crucial and fundamental contributing factor reflected in the established purpose, mission and values. The business owner serves as the role model for the university community. This is supported by the findings that the lasting and top performing staff are those who are inspired and aligned by the purpose, mission

and values of the institution. Otherwise, the staff may not stay or not do their very best to add value to the students. In addition, the model also shows that the established purpose, mission and values are influenced by the changing business environment and the institution's available resources.

The findings also show that the lecturers focus on adding value to students without concerning much about its implication to business. The institution and faculty leaders are the ones translating the value adding strategies to business competitiveness. The business competitiveness attracts more quality students and staff and that ensures the long-term quality and profitability of the institution. Hence, the model highlights the importance of having leaders with academic and business capabilities. In addition, the findings show that the lasting and top performing lecturers appreciate leaders who lead by example. Since the lecturers are expected to add more value to students, this expectation must be role modelled by the leaders through their intention and behaviour to add values, as described in the model.

Moreover, the model describes that the university's strategies for quality improvement must be supported by a dynamic culture and progressive system. The dynamic culture and progressive system align the staff behaviour towards living the purpose and values, as well as achieving the mission concerning educational quality through the value-adding strategies. As shown in the model, through the compelling purpose, mission and values, value adding strategies, dynamic culture and progression system, the community is aligned with the heart, mind and behaviour towards educational quality.

The key factors highlighted above are the key institutional factors that contribute to educational quality, overcoming the challenges experienced by the private higher education institution. Refer to Matrix Coding at Appendix S for examples of excerpts supporting the development of the themes.

Case Description

The following sections describe the profile of the chosen university, faculties and participants, as well as the rationales for their selection.

Profile of the University

As described in Chapter Four, case selection is based on the research objectives and research questions. The selected private university is a unique exemplar of the private universities and colleges in Malaysia due to its success in transforming from a small private college to a semi-elite university, started with few hundreds of students and recently with more than ten thousand students. The selected case is a comprehensive university, offering a wide range of undergraduate programmes and selected range of postgraduate programmes. The university won many national awards and some international awards over the years. Malaysians perceive it as a premier university. Its tuition fee is among the highest in the country. More importantly, the university was rated twice with Tier 5 Excellence rating in quality of teaching and learning by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (formerly known as Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia) among the public and private universities and university colleges in 2009 and 2011. The university is an exemplar of many private demand-absorbing colleges in Malaysia.

The university is entirely owned by local private investors. After receiving its initial investment from shareholders, it is financed through its academic activities. It is believed that a completely self-financed local private university faces greater financial challenge as compared to private university funded by corporation and foreign university branch campus. As a teaching institution, its funding is undergraduate tuition dependent. As expected by its students, it is marketplace and industry oriented. This is reflected in its mission statement. However, there is evident effort in research as affirmed by the national rating for research capability and output.

As described in the Constitution of the University, it is governed by a Board of Directors. As described at the University's website and organization chart, it belongs to an education group of companies led by a Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The university is led by a Vice-Chancellor. Its purpose statement concentrates on developing human potential for the global community. This reflects education purpose that focuses on private good with the intention to contribute to public good.

This exemplary for-profit private University is selected for this study to understand its conception of educational quality, its experiences in terms of processes involved and key challenges faced, in order to identify the key contributing factors at the institutional and faculty levels in the quest for educational quality, leveraging on the strategic management framework. This would contribute to the diverse quality concerns especially among the for-profit private higher education institutions.

As an embedded case study, two exemplary faculties within the University, as described in the following section, are selected to support this study.

Profile of the Selected Faculties

Of the two faculties, Faculty coded as 'A' offers programmes in the area of science and technology while 'B' offers programmes in the area of social science. Both faculties experienced crisis when the newly recruited Deans took over the leadership position, during the critical moment of transformation from a college to a university college and to a university. Despite this internal crisis, both faculties have achieved national and international recognition for their educational quality in the last five years, and managed to sustain as leading faculties within the for-profit private universities. Enrolments of the faculties have increased multiple folds since the Deans took over the leadership positions too. In recognising their contribution to the faculties and the university, the Deans of the two faculties were awarded Excellence Award by the University. These are the critical criteria for the selection. As mentioned in the Chapter

Methodology, the criteria for the selection of lecturers are the lasting top performers as recognised through their promotion supported by the Dean.

Profile of Participants

The following Table 5.1 outlines the profile of the participants at university level and faculty level in terms of their years of working experience with the university and their qualifications. Other participants who have indirectly participated through the observation of meeting are the business owner cum Group Chief Executive Officer and Group Finance Head.

Table 5.1

Profile of participants

No.	Identity	Designation	Faculty / Department	Years of Experience with the University	Qualification
1	VC	Vice-Chancellor, Professor	-	5	PhD
2	HOD 1	Vice-President	Student Affairs	16	Master
3	HOD 2	Head	Teaching and Learning	14	PhD
4	HOD 3	Head	Teaching and Learning	12	Master
5	Dean 1	Dean, Professor	Faculty A	15	PhD
6	Dean 2	Dean	Faculty B	(8 years as Dean)	Master
7	Lecturer 1	Lecturer, Associate Professor	Faculty A	7 (as Dean) 8	PhD
8	Lecturer 2	Lecturer	Faculty A	4	PhD
9	Lecturer 3	Lecturer	Faculty A	4	PhD
10	Lecturer 4	Lecturer	Faculty A	6	PhD
11	Lecturer 5	Lecturer, Associate Professor	Faculty A	6	PhD
12	Lecturer 6	Lecturer	Faculty B	8	Master
13	Student1	President	Student Council 2012	4	Degree student
14	Parent1	Parent	-	-	Master

The following sections present the findings according to the research questions.

Research Question 1: Understanding of the Meaning of Educational quality

The following sections present the findings answering research question number one. It starts with the multiple perspectives of different constituents of the university community and it is followed by the influences on the perspectives.

Multiple Perspectives of Different Constituents

The key constituents of a university community are the business owner, Vice-Chancellor, Deans, heads of departments and lecturers. The primary stakeholders that they serve are students, parents and industry employers. Most of the staff view quality as transformational or value adding to students so that the students are well prepared for their working life. This common intention is aligned with the university's current mission and one of its strategic thrusts as documented in the current university's Strategic Plan. Moreover, it is also aligned with the expectations from the students, parents and government (MOHE, 2007a). However, the different constituents of the university have slightly different perspectives regarding the conception of quality.

Lecturers.

Lecturers are primarily "academics". Most of the interviewed lecturers viewed educational quality from transformational perspective, in terms of students achieving the programme learning outcomes or students experiencing positive change in general. For example, when a lecturer was interviewed, he shared that in education, one should look at the output of the education system, whether the output is quality student (Faculty A, Lecturer 3, Interview 1). He further explained that quality refers to the graduate's capabilities. He highlighted that the university has a set of graduate capabilities that each graduate of the university is expected to demonstrate. Hence, he said that if most of the graduates acquire the capabilities as expected, then to him, the institution or faculty has delivered a high quality education .

Another lecturer shared similar view. He explained that educational quality is represented by a positive change in the student's attributes (Faculty A, Lecturer 2, Interview 1). He gave an example where he has a student who has changed from someone who would say "I can't do it, I fail", to someone who says "I am done". To the lecturer, seeing a positive change in the student, such as the change in the student's confident level, is very important to him. He further elaborated that with the positive change, the student is ready to work in the society. In his opinion, student with this positive attribute can be a good option for employers and possibly has a better chance compared with other graduates. The lecturer believed that the student can be an entrepreneur as well.

Most of the lecturers also attached their sense of achievement with being able to transform or add value to students and to prepare them for the working world or becoming an entrepreneur. This perspective is consistent with the fitness for purpose perspective too.

You don't live for yourself, you live for others, for improving things around the world. Not primary in my thoughts about how I can advance myself but how I can help others to advance, to improve. (Faculty B, Lecturer 1, Interview 1)

The intention of the lecturers is possibly best described by one of the lecturers when he described what educational quality means to him. "Two of us (lecturers) want to change the curriculum of the programme that we offer and it has to be good enough that we are willing to put our kids (children) through it. We think like that and many other colleagues also think like that" (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, Interview 1). The lecturer appears to think that if the quality is not good enough for his children, then it is just not good enough. This perspective has possibly influenced his behaviour to the extent that some of his students view him as their parent.

It is interesting to know that the intention of the lecturers are appreciated by the students as expressed by the President of Student Council during interview. He

highlighted that students do appreciate lecturers who genuinely want students to learn and have put in extra efforts to support the students.

My definition of good lecturer... (...) Lecturers really push you. When the performance goes down, they question the whole class. Every time after we have a practical session, we actually have a “sit down” session. The lecturers will review us, ask us what happen. It becomes a personal relation rather than “touch and go”. It becomes not just student-teacher. It becomes like a friend. My definition of good lecturer is the one who take the effort to know you, who take the effort to push you. (...) [Does your friend share similar opinion as you or you are the...?] No, my friends, quite a few actually share the same opinion. I always ask them what they think about the lecturers and they said the lecturers are good, they really push us. (Student Council, Interview 1)

It is interesting that none of the lecturers expressed their perspectives towards quality from value for money perspective, possibly because they are not expected to promote the programmes and to be accountable for the financial sustainability of the faculty. Another interesting finding is that two lecturers shared the various quality assurance mechanisms when they were asked about their understanding regarding educational quality. That may show a strong influence of quality assurance mechanisms within the faculties, creating an impression that good quality assurance means good quality.

Deans.

In the Deans’ opinion, the purpose of education informs the concept of educational quality. The Deans have slightly different opinion with regards to the purpose of education. The Deans believed that education is to prepare students for life, not just for employment. While the Deans appreciate the importance of employment, they do not think that is the primary purpose or role of education. “Our emphasis is on how to provide our students an education for life, so it is beyond employment actually,” said a Dean. The Dean calls “employment” as “by-product of education”. The Dean emphasised the importance of helping students to discover their vision in life (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3). In his opinion, the job is in a way to achieve the vision, which

possibly is financial security, rather than being the vision itself. To him, educational institution that works on helping students to discover their vision in life will definitely produce good graduates. The graduates will definitely get a good job, and get a good salary too. More importantly to him, the graduates will be the change agent when they play their role in the society and that is how a university could change the society as well. Hence, the Dean believed that students who are well prepared for life can definitely add value to other stakeholders including employers and society.

So through this (education) experience, the students, they now can have an opinion, they really know what they want (in life) and that is truly transformational. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)

Another Dean shared similar opinion, “The role of a university is not solely to cater for helping student to look after the employability (aspect). But to shape the society that it ought to be or it can be.” Both the Deans view the primary purpose of education is to change the society through the students, the change agents. This perspective supports that education is for public and private good.

Similar to the lecturers, the Deans primarily view quality from the transformational or value-adding perspective, which aims to bring out the best in the students to eventually add value at workplace and to the society. The perspective is also consistent with “fitness for purpose” concept of quality.

Quality education is an education that is capable of transforming an individual and also bringing the best out of this individual. It is an experience, that between entering and exiting, he or she should have realised new thing about him/herself and at the same time, brought some positive change into them. That will be to me quality education...the primary stakeholder of a university is the students... especially in a private setup... Society realises its full potential through the realisation of the full potential of the individuals. Once this happens, I believe the needs of other equally important stakeholders like the employers, sponsors whether the parent or government, will be satisfied too. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)

Another Dean shared similar opinion that “If we say we have done a good job, we have fulfilled the quality and standard of graduate that we aspire to churn out, it should be the kind of graduates that have a good mindset to tackle the challenges

ahead... the right kind of character to take up the leadership responsibilities.” This Dean also emphasised that the quality is derived from the purpose of education.

Compared to lecturers, the Deans indirectly commented the importance of being competitive. Partly due to the intensified competition, the need to stay competitive drives the faculties to embrace the spirit of excellence, which is part of the university’s core values. In addition, since the private university is self-financed through tuition, the Deans also highlighted the importance of the educational quality being perceived as value for money by their targeted stakeholders. This is in alignment with the finding that Deans are accountable for the profit and loss of their faculties, as documented in their position description document.

Due to the nature of competition, we will need to adopt the best survival practices. While if you are not a private (institution), even if you are not that good, you could be surviving by the virtue of getting help. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 2)

One of the Deans elaborated that if other institution is able to provide the same service or better, at the same price or cheaper, institutions that do not receive the government or other sponsors’ funding, such as this university, will be out of business. He further explained that if the public universities are able to provide opportunities to everyone and are cheaper than the private institutions, the private institutions will not survive. In addition, the Dean highlighted that when selecting among the private institutions, parents normally analyse based on the value for their money (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3).

Another Dean also shared that for a responsible private institution that strives to perform and stay competitive, there are stiff competitions. The institution has to be able to justify its education as value for money. To prove its commitment to educational quality, the institution has to be able to deliver well. Otherwise, the institution may not be able to maintain its reputation. In her opinion, over time, people can tell. Word of mouth is a very effective means to either help an institution to sustain its position or

cause the institution to decline. Hence, she believed that quality is very important for private institutions to stay competitive (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 3).

Heads of Departments.

The core perspective of the administrative heads of departments is very similar to the lecturers' and Deans', which is transformational. They also view quality from other perspectives guided by the institution's purpose and mission as well as the purpose of education, which is to contribute to the community. More specifically, they view educational quality as there is a positive change in the students' behaviour.

And I think the most important thing is that we make sure that the students, who is the ultimate receiver of our service, they benefit from it, in a very holistic way. There must be a change of behaviour, from the day that they come in and the day that they graduate, there should be a positive change in behaviour. Behaviour in terms of how they see their professional area, the discipline that they are in, as well as the community they are in. It's very important that they should have a very positive behaviour to contribute towards the community. (TLC, Head of Department 1, Interview 1)

Vice-Chancellor.

Different from the lecturers and Deans, the current Vice-Chancellor expressed the importance of quality from value for money perspective besides preparing students for working life, when he was interviewed and was observed during meeting. He further elaborated that value for money is primarily judged based on the institution's track record and the tuition to be paid by the parents and students (VC, Interview 1). Hence, during the University Priority Setting Workshop attended by the senior management team of the university, he raised the questions whether the university's quality meets the expectation of the students, parents and employers; and whether they are getting back their investments (U-O-3, Observation, University Priority Setting Workshop).

The need to justify value for money is expressed by the President of Student Council during interview too. In addition, value for money means getting a job, as acknowledged by a parent during interview.

My generation, students are the want-it-now generation. This university is having one of the most expensive fees in Malaysia. Students would say “I am paying this fee, you know?” (Student Council, Interview 1)

Even though I come out with that money (to pay tuition), but at the end of the day, he (the child) is happy, he can find a job. So, I’ve done my duty. (Parent, Interview 1)

The Vice-Chancellor is the ultimate person accountable for the financial performance of the university and he is directly accountable to the Board of Directors, as documented in the position description and observed in the University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop. He further elaborated that “it is critical for a private university to be able to balance between business and academic for sustainability”. Business entity needs “people” (customers) to pay for the service that it delivers. In his opinion, people are willing to pay if they feel that the product or service quality is good. For a private university, if students do not enrol at the university, its revenue will decline. When its profit decline, its benefit for staff will also decline. As a result, the staff will not want to stay at the university. Eventually, the institution will not be able to sustain.

He re-emphasised that for a private university, quality is the most important asset because that is how the university will market its educational service and back its branding and reputation. In addition, he believed that people respect institution that is able to produce good student (VC, Interview 1). Hence, the Vice-Chancellor stressed the importance of value for money from the targeted stakeholders’ perspective, namely the students, parents and employers. Consistent with the targeted stakeholders’ expectations, an important aspect of value for money is the international recognition of the qualification granted by the university. This is acknowledged by the Vice-Chancellor and the President of Student Council.

In addition, it is interesting that the Vice-Chancellor views quality from the academic and supporting services perspective, instead of educational quality only. This might be because the Vice-Chancellor is accountable for the complete experience of the students, inside and outside the classrooms.

Business owner.

As expressed during the recent strategic alignment meeting, the business owner, who is also the Group Chief Executive Officer, primarily views quality from the transformational perspective, namely from the holistic education perspective. This is consistent with the Deans' perspective that education is for life. However, the business owner also emphasised exceptional quality to ensure business competitiveness, which indirectly referred to value for money perspective as the university is charging premium tuition and has to justify it with premium quality. The exceptional quality perspective is consistent with one of the university's core values as documented in the university's website and Strategic Plan, as well as displayed on campus as observed during the campus observation.

To sum up, the triangulated findings show that the various constituents have slightly different conception of quality. However, the most consistent understanding among all constituents is the transformation concept of quality. This reflects a proper alignment of understanding about educational quality. In order to maintain its competitiveness, the leaders also view quality as value for money.

Influences on the Perspectives

Comparing the perspectives among the lecturers, Deans, Vice-Chancellor and business owner, transformational perspective appears to be consistently emphasized. The alignment appears to be influenced by the university's purpose and mission, as well as the external stakeholders' expectations, especially from the students, parents and

employers. The perspective is also influenced by the business context of the university where it is primarily tuition dependent. Hence, fitness for employment is still a key consideration for educational quality.

In one of the Deans' opinion, the parents are relatively clearer on what they want compared to the students. What the parents want is a job for their children. The Dean commented that parents will want the best for their children, based on what they think is the best. Based on his experience interacting with the local parents from Malaysia, majority of the current generation of parents want their children to be able to live a comfortable life through getting an employment. While the parents want their children to be good people and to be respected, the primary reason for higher education is to get a comfortable and stable job. According to the Dean, parents view that getting a degree from a reputable educational institution, of a good quality, as a first step to achieve this objective (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3). This finding is supported by another Dean and a parent during interview. Due to the importance of employability, the expectations of the employers become highly influential.

We are more industry focused simply because our market is more concerned about job employability...Basically, the primary concern (of students and parents) is whether "I will get a job easily". That's all. That is still the main concern. Of course, we have to tailor to the local market demand. (...) They (industry employers) shared with us their concern is that "can you (the students) use the knowledge that you (the students) have achieved (learned) from the university?". "Do you (the students) know how to apply it?" So, that is the way our industry expects, in a form of action. "Can you (the students) perform?" (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 2)

Nevertheless, as observed from the data, there is a growing emphasis on value for money when the role change from lecturer, the pure academic, to Dean, the mid-level management, to Vice-Chancellor, the university leader, to Group Chief Executive Officer, the business owner. This is possibly due to the increasing accountability towards financial performance and sustainability. The business owner, who has the

ultimate concern on the university's brand, also views quality as being exceptional, in alignment with the business strategy.

The data also show that leaders' personal belief on the purpose of education has great influence over their perspectives towards the meaning of educational quality. The Deans appears to have strong belief in the purpose of education from the human fulfilment perspective, which eventually will lead to economic prosperity through employment, and social progress. This belief appears to have influenced their behaviour, which translate into their expectation from the lecturers and the students' learning experience.

To sum up, the findings show that the meaning of educational quality is influenced by the understanding or belief of the different constituents or stakeholders in higher education with different interest or responsibility. It is also influenced by the nature of the institution, for-profit private institution that is tuition dependent. Hence, it is heavily influenced by the students', parents' and employers' expectations. As an established institution, the internal stakeholders are also influenced by the purpose, mission, strategies and core values of the university, which have been translated into the defined graduate qualities and learning outcomes.

Research Question 2: Strategic Management Process of Educational quality

The findings of this study show that the strategic management process of educational quality, including the process of establishing goals, formulating strategies and implementing strategies, are repeated during long and middle term planning as well as short-term or annual planning. The process is also repeated at university as well as faculty and departmental level. The university level planning identifies the overall direction, priorities, goals and strategies with regards to quality; the faculty and departmental level planning identifies the faculty and departmental level goals and operational plan to implement to strategies and to achieve the goals. The planning stage

is followed by implementation stage. The following sections describe the processes in more detail.

Key Influences on Strategic Management of Educational quality

Based on the documents analysed, observation and interview conducted, the key factors influencing the strategic management process include (a) the opportunities and threats in the environment, (b) strengths and weaknesses of the institution, as well as (c) the leaders' personal beliefs. In terms of opportunities and threats in the environment, the intensified market competition is viewed as a threat and a driving force for the institution to improve its quality. In addition, the technology advancement in sharing of knowledge is also being viewed as a potential threat and opportunity to be embraced. The recent change in government policy and the recent positive development in the private sector are viewed as opportunities as they have changed the public perception towards the quality of certain private higher education institutions. The expectations from the key stakeholders, especially from the industry, are viewed as opportunity to be embraced in curriculum development and delivery. The international agenda that is affecting higher education around the world is also being embraced as opportunity to provide an international experience for its students as well as producing students who are ready for the global job markets.

According to the agenda, the workshop will start with welcome address and presentation by the VC regarding the 2014 global and local higher education landscape. The VC and hence the university appears to consider the external environmental factors globally and locally in formulating their priorities and targets. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

In terms of external expectation, there is one from the authority and one from the industry. Authority means MQA, professional bodies. Industry means that those who are going to employ our "products", our graduates are our products. That is the most important thing, the most important measurement. (VC, Interview 1)

In considering the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, the institution focused on its core business, that is teaching and learning for undergraduate programmes, as well as its other important role as a university, that is to contribute to generating new knowledge through research. The institution's current reputation as a quality teaching university is being viewed as a strength that can be leveraged on. There is a clear intention to enhance its strength in terms of teaching and learning. However, lack of talent such as academic staff with PhD qualification, since the institution is still in the process of transforming, is being viewed as a weakness. As a young university, the level of research activities is seen as a weakness to be strengthened to further inform teaching. In addition, being a self-financed institution, having the financial resource to support its strategies is crucial. The institution appears to have very careful financial management to support its strategic goals and strategies implementation.

The agenda then continue with presentation by the Deputy VC focusing on enhancing the undergraduate academic experience. The core business of the University appears to be the undergraduate teaching and learning, which is in alignment with the student profile and funding profile of the university. This means that the University considers its internal core business in setting its priorities and targets. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

One of the Deans highlighted that "Talent is the enabler of all other priorities". (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

It is followed by a presentation by the Pro VC focusing on international research excellence. It appears to me that the University also emphasises research at international level, which is not very common for a self-funding for-profit private higher education institution. It appears to me that besides being a teaching university, this university would like the teaching to be informed by research and the university would also like to play its role in contributing to knowledge. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

"For a private institution, budget is very important. With budget, 'things' can happen. Hence, it is important to understand the priority and target before the budget is set", said the VC, emphasizing the importance of the workshop that will inform the budget preparation for the coming year. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

Last but not least, the personal belief of the business owner and university leader has direct influence on the strategic management process of educational quality. For example, during the University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop, the priorities of the Group CEO was presented as an important input for the university's following year priorities and targets setting. The personal belief or stance of the business owner and university leader is also reflected in the university's mission formulated with their direct input. As shared by one of the Deans when interviewed, the faculty is aligned to the university's mission which has strong emphasis on employability, even though the Dean wished to contribute beyond employability. The Dean wished to educate students to be willing to contribute their time for meaningful effort.

After that, the VC continued the presentation regarding the priorities of the Group CEO, the business leader, to ensure alignment, and before concluding with his personal wish list. (...) The six priorities of the Group CEO includes exceptional education quality, graduate with life skills, holistic education, talent and succession planning, profit and growth, as well as operational excellence for scalability. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

Establishing Goals

Establishing long and middle term goal.

Based on archival record and the institution's goal related policy, the current purpose statement of the institution was established a few years ago by the current Group CEO. The five to ten year mission of the institution changes at the different stages of the institution. For example, before achieving university status, the institution's mission was to become a university renowned for its teaching and learning as well as quality of its graduates. After achieving its university status, the institution's new mission focuses on delivering the value expected by its targeted external stakeholders, which is industry oriented. This is possibly due to the primary funding of the institution is from tuition. Parents and students expect good employment upon graduation as highlighted by the Vice-Chancellor, Deans, lecturers and parent during

interview. In addition, the institutions have formalised its core values too. One of the core values refer to “culture of excellence”, which is one of the concepts of quality. In addition to the Purpose, Mission and core values, the institution had also established a set of capabilities that students will acquire during their studies at the university, a few years ago. The set of capabilities include knowledge, skills, abilities or qualities that all graduates have to demonstrate by the time they graduate. The graduate capabilities statements have been updated recently to reflect the latest development in the industry and community locally and internationally, as evident in the document analysed and interview. It is very interesting to see that “embodying the university’s core values” is one of the capabilities being included during the recent revision. This reflects a clear intention to incorporate the core values as part of the graduate qualities.

It is interesting to note that the institution has purpose and mission statements but not vision statement. Since the purpose statement describes the reason for existence, it appears that having a compelling reason for existence is important to the business owner and the university leaders. Moreover, defining its graduate capabilities is possibly common among the Australian universities and it is interesting to know that a local university embraced this before the Malaysian Qualifications Agency released the Malaysian Qualifications Framework, codes of practice and programme standards. This is possibly due to the institution’s past experience working with Australian universities. This is considered a positive effect on quality as a result of the government’s policy that allows twinning arrangement between a local university and overseas universities. Good practices have been shared.

Establishing short-term goal.

In addition to the long-term goal described in the Mission statement, the short-term goals is established after the key long-term strategies and targets have been

established. The short-term goals are reviewed and re-established annually as evidenced by the university's Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop.

Formulating Strategies

Besides establishing the Purpose and Mission, the institution has also formulated an accompanying strategic plan that outlines the focus areas, strategies and targets. The strategic plan focuses on the following six areas: talent, teaching and learning, research and commercialization, industry, international outlook and system. The six areas can be viewed under three categories: (a) the university's key functions, teaching and learning as well as research and commercialization, (b) the key enablers, talent and system, (c) the relationships with its community, industry and international academic world. The university's core strategy regarding teaching and learning is "transformational teaching and learning", which is best described in the following excerpt from the current University Strategic Plan. The central idea is to create positive change in the students through teaching and learning, which is value adding in nature:

Transformative teaching and learning practices are centred on learner success, and involve learners and staff collaboratively creating learning and meaning that is increasingly self-directed and leads to change, while at the same time helping learners and academic staff to become lifelong learners. (current University Strategic Plan)

Based on interview, document analysis and observation conducted, the following are key themes that support the core strategy of teaching and learning to enhance the educational quality, guided by a set of graduate capabilities established by the institution.

Current and relevant curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

As highlighted by the Deans and lecturers, educational quality starts with having a properly designed curriculum. The curriculum must be effectively delivered to students with experiences similar to the real life working environment. Having proper

assessment system to provide timely and accurate feedback and to assess student's achievement of learning outcomes is crucial too.

Competent and passionate talent.

As highlighted by the lecturers, the most important role of lecturers is to engage and motivate students to be interested and committed to their learning. This required the lecturers to have certain competency. Most importantly, the lecturers need to be able to build a constructive relationship with students, who are mostly between eighteen and twenty-two years old.

Industry engagement.

The university believes that the industry partner plays a crucial role in ensuring the curriculum, especially the programme learning outcomes, and student learning experience are relevant. Industry is actively engaged through establishment of an industry panel, conducting talks by industry experts, industry visits and attachment, and so forth.

Global engagement.

Graduates are expected to have global perspective. In order to achieve this, international elements have been incorporated in the curriculum and student experience, and quite a number of the lecturers have international experience.

Facilities.

The Deans and lecturers have not extensively highlighted facilities, possibly because acquiring facilities require financial resource and it is not a challenging aspect for this institution.

Research.

The Vice-Chancellor believes that research can inform teaching. This is evident through the observation conducted and document analysis too. Hence, this is still an important priority for the institution.

Governance.

As highlighted by the Vice-Chancellor, good governance supported by effective and efficient processes is important for a university to function properly and to assure quality. Hence, this is another important priority.

Process of formulating strategies.

The university's Strategic Planning Guidelines outlines the strategic planning process, which is triangulated with the data collected through observation and interview. The Vice-Chancellor considers the following dimensions in formulating the strategic focus areas. The dimensions are:

- a) The University's Purpose, Mission and Core Values
- b) Data on the University's performance to date
- c) Informed perspectives from all senior staff
- d) Consultation with key internal and external stakeholders
- e) National needs
- f) International developments

For item (c), the archival record shows that a workshop with key senior management staff was conducted. For item (d), the archival record shows that dialogue with lecturers was conducted and survey was conducted for students. Once the strategic focus areas were identified, champions for each area were identified to collect ideas and to formulate the strategies and targets. The outcomes inform the university's strategic plan. The Vice-Chancellor presents the plan for the University Council's approval.

Implementing the Strategies

The university's Strategic Planning Guidelines outlines the strategic implementation and review process, which is triangulated with the data collected through observation and interview. Faculties and departments are to develop the operational plan to operationalize the university strategic plan and they may incorporate

additional relevant action plans. The operational plans inform the annual university budget. Once approved, the faculties and departments are to implement the operational plan, supported by the budget, and monitor its progress. The Vice-Chancellor, supported by the Strategic Management Office, monitors selected annual priorities monthly. The Vice-Chancellor, supported by the Finance Department, also monitors the annual budget as well as the university's profit and loss monthly too. The Vice-Chancellor and the senior management team review the university's performance and set the following year's priorities and targets during an annual workshop. The following year's priorities and targets inform the university's budget. The University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop observation and other relevant minutes of meeting confirm this.

Implementing strategies at faculty level.

Based on the data collected through documents, observation and interview, similar process is repeated at the faculty and departmental level. Comparing the two faculties, both faculties conduct annual workshop with lecturers to identify key priorities and targets of the following year. The faculties' priorities and targets inform their operational plans as well as the faculty budgets. Once the Vice-Chancellor approves the operational plan and budget, the faculties and departments monitor their implementation. The achievement of the targets mentioned in the plan and budget directly influence the Deans' annual performance appraisal. Reflecting on the processes at the university and faculty levels, the Deans appear to be expected to behave like a "Vice-Chancellor" of their faculties.

To sum up, the findings show that the institution has developed systematic processes or mechanisms to establish goals, formulate strategies and implement the strategies related to quality. However, the institution does experience challenges in the quest for educational quality.

Research Question 3: Key Challenges Experienced

This section presents the key challenges experienced by a private university in the quest for educational quality, which are external to the university, at institutional level and at faculty level, based on the triangulated data collected from the multiple sources of interview, observation and document analysis. A surprising finding of challenge faced at personal level is presented too.

Key Challenges External to the University

Market competition.

The triangulated findings show that recently in Malaysia, quite a number of local public and private institutions have been upgraded to university status. In line with the national aspiration to be an international hub of higher education, more world renowned foreign university branch campuses have been established as private universities in Malaysia. This recent development has further intensified the competition in the higher education sector. The intensity is felt by the university. The impact of the market competition is felt in terms of the need to put in extra effort to convince parents and students as they have more options now.

We never realise that Malaysia has more than sixty universities, public universities, private universities and university colleges, and about seven branch campuses. That means competition. Competition gives a better opportunity for students and parents to look at you in more detail. (VC, Interview 1)

We have lots of challenges coming from competitors not just from local but also from overseas branches. Now the government is encouraging all of them (foreign universities) to come in... [If] you don't do something now to prepare yourself better, you will not be able to continue to stand long and [stay] competitive. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 3)

It is an open economy...looking at Malaysian scene specifically, I think there are plenty of education providers and there are even foreign quite prestige providers as well. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)

However, the Vice-Chancellor viewed the challenge in attracting good students as an “internal challenge” rather than “external challenge” because it depends on the university’s strategies to convince the students. In order to sustain its position as one of the leading private universities, the university acknowledged that its educational quality has to be further differentiated and recognised as comparable with or better than the world-renowned overseas universities and foreign university branch campuses. That is possibly why the prospectuses of the programmes offered always have sections that highlight the achievements of the university for the past few years, the unique selling points of the faculties or programmes as well as the key achievements of the students. Without clearly recognised differentiation, the market may choose among the institutions depending on the tuition instead of quality.

The second challenge was how to make the course different. Because at that time, there were so many other options in the market. We have Australian foreign university branch campus, we have UK foreign university branch campus. The UK branch campus has moved into a much bigger campus. So, it was a very, very challenging time. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)

A Dean also highlighted that the current market is not able to differentiate the quality and value of different providers and as a result they become primarily driven by price. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

The impact is also felt in recruiting and retaining good academics, which is acknowledged by the Vice-Chancellor, Dean and lecturers. For example, one of the lasting and top performing staff shared that he was persuaded to leave the university to join other university for more than 15 times in less than four years. Another staff was offered a job without expiry date too.

(Since) I join this institution (for more than 3 years), more than 15 times people ask me to leave. More than 15 times. (By) External people (from other institutions). “Come, come to my university.” They keep persuading me. They say this is just a teaching university, not a research university. You are a researcher. Why do you want (to stay)? (Faculty A, Lecturer 2, Interview 1)

People who offered me a job, the offer is still valid, it has no expiry date. They said whenever I want to move, they are here. It seems like not easy

to get people...people that can serve the organization. (Faculty A, Lecturer 1, Interview 1)

Hence, the challenge in meeting both quality and profitability expectations is exacerbated by the intensified market competition for both student and staff.

Public perception.

Another challenge faced by the university before this was the public perception towards private sector generally and towards the university specifically. Private institutions are perceived to be profit-driven to the extent that one may compromise quality. In addition, when the institution was still a college, it offered pre-university, diploma and twinning programmes only. During the initial stage after its status was upgraded to university status, it faced challenge to convince the market that its own degree and post-graduate programmes are equally good. This experience is possibly common among institutions experiencing the status upgrading.

The perception on the institution is basically, we are kind of providing pre-university (and diploma) programmes. So, how to change the perception?! How to change the perception that the institution is also having degree programmes? How to get people to believe that we can offer master and PhD? That is the biggest challenge. (VC, Interview 1)

We may have a good reputation that we prepare the students well so that they can get another degree (through twinning programmes)...we are like preparatory faculty. We don't have our own (programmes). Even if we do good things... if we teach well, people will think this is the way the partner does it. So, it is very difficult to attribute anything to us. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)

This is a private institution, so private institution directly equals making money, that's what everybody will consider. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, Interview 1)

As acknowledged by the university, the situation has changed recently partly due to the change in government policy and the national rating that has acknowledged the quality of teaching and learning of the private sector generally and the university specifically. This possibly explains the amount of emphasis by the university towards national rating and international recognition.

I think the role of private education and the way it is perceived not only by the government but also by the community at wide is going to improve even further as we speak. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 2)

Key Challenges Experienced at Institutional Level

At the institutional level, the university experienced the following three greatest challenges in the quest for educational quality: (a) balancing quality and profitability, (b) aligning, retaining and capacity building of staff, (c) fragmented and rigid system.

Balancing quality and profitability.

The findings show that the greatest challenge of a for-profit private university in the quest for educational quality is to balance the quality and profitability expectations. The primary motive of business is return on investment while the primary purpose of education is for public good and private good. “Return on investment is expected by shareholders... sustainability and growth are dependable on the profitability of the university,” said the group finance head of the university during the university priorities and targets setting workshop. On the other hand, as described earlier, the interviewed Deans of this university believe that the purpose of education is for private and public good. However, the demand for profitability can become more pressing due to financial constraint. “The financial disciplines required to ensure the university’s sustainability and growth include the habit of attaching return on investment (ROI) to every expenditure”, said the group finance head stressing the importance of the return on investment mindset to a private university during the same meeting. The institution may engage in effort to increase revenue or decrease expenses when the projected profit is affected.

I think our university is cutting funding on presenting papers at other conferences, so it’s best that they (the lecturers) have this avenue to present their papers. (TLC, Head of Department 1, Interview 1)

The Vice-Chancellor openly acknowledged the importance of being able to balance between the business and academic expectations when interviewed and during

the university Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop in the presence of the senior management team. When the Vice-Chancellor explained this point, he said, “If we grow (the student number) and quality drops, we will suffer.”

Last but not least, the VC highlighted the great challenge in balancing between business and academic, where there is a need for new business model in higher education. He said, “It is critical to be able to balance these two (business and academic) for sustainability.” (...) The (University) priorities focused on the need for a new business model that addresses the need for consolidation of growth and quality. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

It is interesting that the concern for balancing quality and profitability is highlighted by the President of the Student Council during interview too.

When the university put the students first, the profit next, they will find the quality will naturally go up and the reputation will improve as well. (Student Council, Interview 1)

This private university is governed by its constitution approved by the Board of Directors and the Ministry of Education Malaysia (formerly known as Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia). As documented in the constitution of the university, the Vice-Chancellor is accountable for the overall performance of the university, overseen by a University Council. However, the Board of Directors, who represents the interest of the shareholders, appoints the Council members. Hence, the Vice-Chancellor is also accountable to the Board of Directors. This represents dual tracks of accountability, as a university and as a business entity, which illustrates the importance and challenge in balancing quality and profitability.

One of the interviewed Deans experienced the pain of his programmes being closed down during his initial years with the institution. He and his colleagues were laid off. The programmes were closed down due to lack of enrolment. This was to prevent the loss in some programmes from affecting the financial performance of the institution. Even though the interviewed Deans did not acknowledge openly but the enrolment is a key performance indicator of the Deans, as evidenced by the Deans’ job description. An ex-Deputy Dean acknowledged that the Dean is accountable for the faculty’s profit and

loss. He also expressed how the need to keep an eye on revenue and profit, as represented by the enrolment, might cause an institution to cut corners. Despite the pressure for maintaining profitability, he is impressed with the amount of effort invested by his faculty to help the students to learn and to be prepared for working life.

Actually, I'm very lucky that I'm not the Dean, and I'm not responsible for P&L (profit and loss of the faculty). The Dean is... For private institution, everything that you do is all about number (enrolment). Student number directly equals to revenue. If I'm constantly chasing (student) number, then my attention is not where I think it should be. And if you (are) constantly thinking about (student) number, you may cut corners. And, how you are going to build a track record if you constantly having one eye on (student) number. If I need to invest, to build capabilities in the students, I need to be relieved off (student) number. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, ex-Deputy Dean, Interview 1)

When the ex-Deputy Dean was asked whether the Faculty is still highly being pressurized on student number, he answered, "Yes, all the time until today." That means that there is still a need for the Faculty to contribute more revenue and profit to the university. The tension is exacerbated by the recently intensified market competition due to the increase in the number of local universities and foreign university branch campuses.

However, the findings also show that the responsibility to balance between quality and profitability is shouldered by the management team, the business owner, the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and the Deans, but not the lecturers. The rationale is to allow the lecturers to stay focus in delivering quality teaching, research, publication, community service and support to the university's activities.

When we talk about business and academic, how to balance these, I think the most important thing is that, the one who can really look at the balancing act is the management. I think for the academic staff, I think we do not put them (under) a lot of pressure from business perspective. We need to ask them to deliver high quality teaching, we need to ask them to deliver high quality research, publish in high impact journal and possibly to provide certain services to community, and also to provide some kind of support to the university's activities, but do not ask them to worry about how to bring the money to the university because it's not their roles. (VC, Interview 2)

Aligning, retaining and capacity building of staff.

The findings show that the second critical challenge is in aligning, retaining and capacity building of staff. The situation was critical especially during the transition period of becoming a university. As highlighted by the Vice-Chancellor during interview, “one of the internal challenges is how to get the right leadership for the faculties. How to bring (in) good Deans, or how to develop the present Deans to become better Deans. Not only Deans, but all the support systems (departments) in the organization. How we can create good leaders to move the faculties or departments, so that they meets all the external challenges and also the internal challenges.”

In addition, there is still a need to increase academic staff with PhD qualification to support the teaching and research initiatives and to align more academics to embrace the university culture in conducting research that will inform teaching.

Number one is people. At that time, not many qualified people, not many talents, not many people really understand what a university is. So, that was the biggest challenge, how to bring more people to join the university, to play like a university, not play like a college... I think as far as research is concerned, we have to get the buy-in from the staff, (regarding) the importance of research... they must see the value of this. That's why in our promotion criteria for Associate Professor and Professor, there are lots of measurements on research output... you must get the buy-in because you got to change the mindset of the people. They have not been familiar with this. To get the buy-in that research is important for us. (VC, Interview 1)

Retaining staff is another challenge because there are more options in the private sector compared to before. Staff can resign any time if they do not feel they are aligned with their leaders and if they view the opportunities outside as more attractive than the opportunities in the university. The two interviewed Deans experienced the misalignment before. The priorities and direction of the business owner and the previous university leader were not aligned with theirs.

Prior to me being the HoD (Head of Department) and also the changes in this university, many positive changes, I had partial alignment. I enjoy what I do but I was still seriously thinking once I get PhD, I am off. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)

The challenge in retaining staff is strongly felt by the Vice-Chancellor.

In the private (sector), I feel the pressure because I don't want to lose them (the staff). Once you put them at the wrong place (position), they say "bye, bye". You are going to lose a talent. (VC, Interview 1)

In addition, the challenge is felt by the lecturers too. For example, a lecturer shared his experience in working with 5 different Deans in 10 years, even though the most recent Dean has stayed for 6 years. In addition, some lecturers also shared their concern regarding the relatively high turnover among the academics; even though some other lecturers do not see this as a concern because there are good candidates to replace the resigned staff. The high turnover is partly due to the change in the management's expectation towards the lecturers, such as the most recent expectation in conducting research.

A lot (of lecturers) have left, this is not to imply because of the Dean, but a lot of the lecturers have left... many of the older staff have left and the new ones have come in and are here for a shorter period of time. The turnover was not worse than any other place that I know, but on a whole (it is a concern)... That (frequent change of leadership and strategic direction) might be a factor of the whole thing. (Faculty B, Lecturer 1, Interview 1)

This (high quality) is not easy to achieve when people keep changing, because this is a very challenging issue. You know that you need to spend a lot of time just to build a person to understand the rules, the standards, in terms of quality. And, he/she performs very well up to the standard that you want. And then, the person suddenly leaves the Faculty for whatever reason. He suddenly leaves the Faculty. Then, you need to compensate this. (Faculty A, Lecturer 4, Interview 1)

In short, aligning, retaining and capacity building of talents are the top challenges and priorities of the Vice-Chancellor and the interviewed Deans. This is possibly why one of the 6 strategic thrusts of the university, as documented in the current university Strategic Plan, is about attracting and retaining talents.

Fragmented and rigid system.

For historical reason, the institution offered overseas partner universities' twinning or franchise programmes before becoming a university. A challenge

experienced by the institution is the partner-oriented governance and quality assurance system. Before becoming a university, the different programmes at different faculties had different twinning partner universities from the UK, Australia and Europe. Those programmes adopted the curriculum and the governance as well as the quality assurance system of their partners. Hence, the system then is fragmented and rigid. In order to become a university, the institution has to offer its own programmes, having its own governance and quality assurance system in order to self-govern through a university-centralised system. This is a challenge highlighted by the current Vice-Chancellor when he took over the university leadership.

To put the governance in the right shape also is another challenge. We were offering somebody else's (partners') programmes. Their governance is different. So, to move to (our own) single governance is also something that we think we have to make it happen. Because without a proper governance, a university cannot run properly... I think the system was a bit like, we were doing something for other people. So, that's why the system was not properly 'uniformed'... lots of differences in the system that (make) you feel that... how to move, because they (the faculties) are always subject to external partners (system). (VC, Interview 1)

The Deans and the lecturers felt the same. Since the partners controlled the curriculum, the Deans and lecturers had limited influence over the programmes. The situation worsened when the programmes cannot be adapted to suit the local needs, which eventually led to student complaint.

At that time we were running twinning programme. The twinning partner called the shorts. So, to ask them to enhance the programme, it took us 2 years... That's why I was worried, because I foresee the programmes will not sustain well. That one (programme) will do very well in overseas, whether UK, US or Australia but not Asian region. True enough, within one and a half year, we received many complaints from students. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 1)

The Faculty may have some vision, but the rest (are) still strongly linked to (the) partner with a big presence in terms of procedures, policies etc. We look to them for what they were looking for, what they needed. (Faculty B, Lecturer, Interview 1)

As the university grows in size and complexity, the Vice-Chancellor thinks that building an effective, efficient and user-friendly system is important and is still a challenge that the university is trying to address using technology.

To sum up, the findings show that the key challenges at institutional level are balancing quality and profitability, aligning, retaining and capacity building of staff, as well as overcoming a fragmented and rigid system.

Key Challenges Experienced at Faculty Level

Challenges at the faculty level, presented in this section, are additional challenges experienced by the Deans and lecturers in the quest for educational quality. It is surprising that the two faculties' experiences are very similar despite belonging to different disciplines. As mentioned earlier, the interviewed Deans were recruited when the institution was experiencing the process of transformation to becoming a university. These newly recruited Deans experienced the following challenges during their earlier years in order to strengthen educational quality.

Resistance from academics.

The findings show that despite the selection and appointment by the university's senior management, the newly appointed Deans still face resistance from their fellow academics. The resistance causes difficulty for the newly appointed Deans to establish their credibility and to earn trust. The resistance also creates difficulty for the Deans to motivate the academics towards the institution's direction, as expected by the university's senior management.

So, that was the first time we had a so called exhibition. It was a huge gamble because most of the staff went against it. And the reason is it will take time, students will complain because it will add work, the student's performance is going to be affected negatively, more work on the staff and all these kinds of thing. So, I insisted and I had the support of only two people (staff). (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)

The situation worsened when the academics perceived that their “psychological contract” with the institution has been breached (Newton, 2002). For example, the senior management closed down programmes at Faculty A and dismissed the academics. The decision was due to lack of enrolment, even though the programmes were revived after that. Closing down programmes and laying off academics were regarded as necessary measures by the senior management especially in the private sector but were perceived as a breach of “psychological contract” by the academics. As a result, the academics had little sense of security and sense of belonging with the faculty. Comparatively, Faculty B had experienced frequent leadership change during the past four years before the new Dean was recruited from an external institution. Consequently, the academics felt very distant from the senior management, not knowing what was happening at the institutional and faculty levels, and became sceptical of the newly recruited Dean’s durability. As a result, the academics resisted both Deans’ leadership.

I felt that there was no sense of pride... initially. The group was... They were all segregated. Each has the so call... very individualistic. All they focused on was “me and my need”, “me and my want”. “So long as whatever you give me satisfies my need and my want, then I am OK”. “If it doesn’t, sorry, I don’t care where the faculty and the institution are going (heading), so long as I am not affected”. They are very calculative. Not willing to put in extra effort. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 1)

Programme lacks competitive advantage.

The findings also show that growth and profitability are crucial to the business owner or shareholders in a private institution to ensure sustainability. The number of students of the two faculties was comparatively small when the Deans took over as confirmed by the archived student record. Having experienced the lay-off, the Dean of Faculty A is committed to protecting the faculty from collapse again. He wanted to grow the enrolment through educational quality but the programme lacked competitive advantage then. As mentioned earlier, he faced challenges in competing with similar

programmes offered by other more renowned foreign university branch campuses then. Similarly, the Dean of Faculty B was also under pressure because her programmes were not in demand, caused by inappropriate programme offering by the previous Dean, who had limited relevant market and industry knowledge. The situation worsened when students started complaining about the programme quality, in terms of the relevance of their learning, as highlighted by the Dean and her experienced lecturer.

Only one programme, (name of programme is omitted), is solid, that one is good. But unfortunately the one is not going to be our main saleable product because I understand our local market does not know how to embrace (name of a discipline omitted) that well as compared to western countries. That's why I was worried, because I foresee that I will not sustain well. (...) True enough, within one and a half years, we received so many complaints, the students could tell, the programmes are not much different (not what they wanted). (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 1)

Misalignment between the Deans' and senior management's priorities.

A surprising finding is that despite being selected and appointed by the senior management, the Deans still face misalignment or conflict with the priorities and direction of the senior management. Being appointed as mid-level academic-manager and expected to address the business needs, the Deans still uphold their academic values. This created a sense of misalignment between their academic values and the managerial expectations. Both Deans faced challenges aligning themselves with the institution's priority, initially. The business owner and the institutional leader then appeared to be more business than academic minded. They appeared to emphasize more on profit and growth rather than education and research. As a result, the intention of the Dean of Faculty A then was to leave the faculty after completing his PhD. Likewise, coming from a public higher education institution, Dean of Faculty B was surprised by the amount of emphasis and investment in marketing and branding. "Everything was very... rather marketing oriented. Not so academic (oriented)... heavier investment on the branding exercise..." reflected by the Dean during interview.

Challenges Experienced at Personal Level

Another surprising finding is the challenge experienced by a Dean in managing his own life. When he was promoted to head the programmes, he was still a PhD student and just started his family. He was struggling among the multiple demanding roles with limited time, a head, a lecturer, a PhD student, a husband and a father. He will not be able to contribute effectively as head if he was unable to manage his multiple roles. This is possibly a common challenge among new leaders, but it may affect their effectiveness in driving quality improvement.

I think it was a personal challenge whether I really can do it or not. I was leading a triple lives. I was a PhD student, I was still teaching, pretty much teaching plus the administrative load, and starting a new family. So, there are quite a number of things happening at the same time that need your attention and time...For example, I didn't make progress on my PhD. It reached a stage that I was threatened that they are going to terminate my candidacy... It wasn't easy. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)

Research Question 4: Key Institutional Contributing Factors

After reviewing the conception of quality, the process of strategic management of educational quality and the key challenges experienced by the university and the faculties, this section presents the key institutional factors that have contributed to the institution's quest for educational quality. It provides insights regarding how the institution has managed to transform and sustain itself as a respected private university for educational quality in the country. The findings from multiple sources of data have been triangulated.

It is interesting to note that intensified market competition and changes in government policy, which are factors external to the institution, have impacted the institution positively. With reference to Figure 5.2, the key contributing factors at the institution level include: (a) compelling purpose, mission and values, (b) value-for-money strategies that properly integrate the educational quality and for-profit motive, (c) leaders with academic and business capabilities, and intention to add value (d)

progressive system and dynamic culture, (e) aligned community with the heart, mind and behaviour for quality. At faculty level, the key contributing factors are: (a) established credibility and trust, built commitment and alignment with academics, (b) quality as competitive advantage, (c) established common ground among the senior management, Deans and academics. The following sections present the findings in more detail.

Key Contributing Factors External to the Institution

Market competition.

In addition to viewing market competition as a challenge, the institution has also embraced market competition to drive the effort towards better educational quality. This is supported by the interviews with the Vice-Chancellor and Deans, observation and indirectly through the documents such as the university's strategic plan and the faculties' prospectus. According to the Vice-Chancellor, market competition encourages the students and parents to choose among the institutions based on their expectations. The Vice-Chancellor elaborated that the expectations include (a) value for money, whether the track record of the institution justifies the fee, (b) student's learning experience, (c) conduciveness in terms of whether the students will be safe and whether the learning environment is healthy for the students. Hence, the Vice-Chancellor stressed that quality is pivotal for the institution to compete and be the preferred choice of the students and parents.

When we have competition, that gives a better opportunity for students and parents to... to go out and look at you in more detail. Number one, value for money. Number two, the... the experience that my kids are going to have. Number three, of course, conduciveness, whether they will be safe and whether there is a healthy atmosphere for my kids. (...) All these are very important to the parents. Value for money means track record and what is the fee like. (...) So, this element of competition. At the end of the day, it boils down to quality. (VC, Interview 1)

In the opinion of one of the Deans, competition forces the private higher education institutions, which do not receive funding from the government or other sponsors, to deliver the best quality education to their students in order to stay in the business. Hence, to the Dean, competition is an incentive for the private institutions to perform better in order to stay relevant to the market.

...this competition among the different universities, enabled by the fact that they are for-profit, will eventually force them to give the best quality for their customers, their students. I actually don't see that as negative impact at all. (...) If other (institution) is able to provide the same service or better at the same price or cheaper, those don't have the backing of government or other sponsors (such as private institutions), will go out of business. (...) So in that sense, it is extremely important as a matter of fact that there are (competition)... there is an incentive for the university to do better and so that it remains relevant to the market. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)

Another Dean highlighted that "We naturally don't allow ourselves to be left behind by our competitors. We want to continually improve ourselves." She also highlighted that perceived value for money is important for students. (Observation 3, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

It is clear that the institution viewed market competition as an enabling factor and a challenge at the same time, in the quest for educational quality. It appears that if an institution is able to compete through its value for money strategies (which will be discussed in the following section), market competition can be an enabling factor. Otherwise, it may pose additional challenge for the institution to balance between quality and profitability.

Government policy.

A surprising finding highlighted by one of the Deans is that the recent changes in the government policy that emphasise the important role played by the private sector is an important factor that makes him to continue to stay in the private sector and contribute to the nation.

The way the government is changing how they are looking at private (higher) education, how they are talking to us and saying that "you guys

are the future in terms of skill building and nation building” (have positively influenced the faculty). (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 2)

In addition, the recent government policy changes that allow private to compete for research grants, and encouraging public and private partnership have been viewed positively.

There will be more funding for research initiatives. There is an opportunity for more public and private partnership in alignment with the government’s direction to harmonise the two sectors. (Observation 3, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

When interviewed, the Vice-Chancellor also highlighted the importance of government policy in supporting the development of private higher education sector.

Key Contributing Factors at the Institutional Level

Compelling purpose, mission and values guided by the purpose of education.

The triangulated findings show that the fundamental institutional factor contributing to achieving better educational quality is having a community aligned through the purpose of education and commitment towards quality. When the lasting and top performing Deans, Heads of Departments and lecturers were asked about their source of motivation to continually improve and their reason for staying on, most of them point to the alignment between the university or faculty’s purpose and mission, and theirs. Few of them even refer directly to the purpose statement of the university.

[I sense a strong desire to continual improve what you do and to do it at the best benefit of the students.] Yes. [Where do you think that desire actually comes from?] We are supposed to educate (words were removed to ensure anonymity). [You have just mentioned the university’s purpose statement.] That’s it. [But there are people who can just read (say) it and without really do it. So, where does the desire come from?] Why I teach? If you teach, this is what you do. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, ex-Deputy Dean, Interview 1)

As highlighted by a Dean, it is the purpose and the role of a university that drives everything else, including the educational quality.

With the understanding on the purpose and role of a university, there comes the quality aspect. The understanding of quality will follow accordingly. It is the understanding of the vision, mission and the role (of a university) that drives everything. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 3)

Hence, the first key contributing factor is compelling purpose and mission, which is established by the business leader and the university leaders. The findings show that the involvement of the business owner is crucial in a for-profit private higher education institution.

Role of business owner.

Like other business entities, a Board of Directors represents the interest of the shareholders. The Board monitors the business performance of the university, which represents the performance of the Vice-Chancellor. In this study, the Group CEO is also the business owner and he represents the interest of the Board of Directors. The important role played by the Group CEO is clearly felt during the University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop. During the workshop, the Vice-Chancellor shared his “wish list” which included “business continuity: profit before tax and revenue growth as set by the Group CEO”. Hence, the stance of the business owner with regard to educational quality has pivotal influence in a for-profit private institution.

Interestingly, as commented by a lecturer, an ex-Deputy Dean, education requires long-term strategic plan as the impact of education can only be seen over a longer period. Hence, the long-term commitment of the business owner to quality is crucial. As mentioned earlier, one of the challenges faced by the Deans initially was misalignment with the business owner and the previous university leader’s priority and direction. One of the Deans had considered leaving the university because of this.

During interview, the Deans acknowledged the positive change in the business owner and the credibility of the new university leader, which becomes their reasons to stay. For example, when interviewed, a Dean shared that “During the recent university strategic alignment workshop, the Group CEO of this university shared from his heart

sincerely, even though he is not an academician... He defined what he meant by exceptional education quality.” The Group CEO shared his key priorities as “exceptional education quality”, besides “profit and growth to achieve the mission of the university”. The Dean elaborated that establishing a compelling purpose and mission is the most important way to demonstrate commitment towards quality. It appears that the Group CEO’s act has established his credibility and earned the trust and respect from the Deans.

It is the commitment or ‘heart for quality’ that drives the rest of the steps, with quality. Without commitment, it is hard to expect quality. So, when a person (university leader) sets a goal (for education quality), it tells me that this person is committing himself to be measured. That is the character of a person who values quality, and who voluntarily hold himself accountable for quality. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 3)

The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the importance of support from the Group CEO too during the interview. “We are very fortunate. We have the company (Group CEO) that is willing to support in terms of the learning experience, facilities and e-learning and so on.”

Even though the business owner of the university was described as not an academician, the staff appear to be inspired by his commitment towards educational quality. When the Group CEO took over the position around ten years ago, he formalised his long-term commitment towards quality by establishing the education group’s core purpose and core values, as shared in the university website. Through interviewing the staff, the core purpose and values appear to have shaped the commitment of the university staff towards educational quality.

Compelling purpose and mission by the VC and Deans.

The Vice-Chancellor describes the compelling purpose or mission as the “biggest bait” that aligns and motivates the staff to work very hard.

That is the biggest ‘bait’. If you want to become a university, this is what you got to do. Everyone agreed. That is how you ‘fish’ the staff to be with you. We worked very hard because we want to be a university. So

that really put things together. (There is a) Common goal. (Vice-Chancellor, Interview 1)

The two Deans described the compelling purpose or mission as “shared dream” and “common goal”, which serves the same purpose, to align and motivate staff. When asked, one of the Deans described the goal of the faculty as “to change the world through changing the country, through changing this university, by changing the faculty”. Nonetheless, the two interviewed Deans strongly emphasized that the purpose or mission must be closely aligned to the purpose of education. This is further elaborated by the Dean as follows.

We adopt the purpose and mission of the university. We adopt the same. But, the way I look at it personally, being ‘highly employable’ (the university’s mission statement, which has been rephrased to ensure anonymity) is a by-product of producing very, very good professionals, professionals who are innovative and things like that. So the way I see the role of the faculty is how much value we really add to our students. We give the students the opportunity to stretch themselves and realise what they are capable of. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)

The recent annual staff survey result testified the same pattern. The survey was conducted by an independent company engaged by the university in order to ensure anonymity and the survey was responded by 74 percent of the employees. Of the responded staff, 95 percent expressed that they strongly agree or agree that the university’s purpose statement is “meaningful to them”. Of the responded staff, 87 percent indicated that they strongly agree or agree that the university’s purpose statement “motivates and inspires them”. In addition, “visionary” is the staff’s most frequently used word to describe the culture at the university, reported by the staff survey. (Refer to U-O-5, Observation, Staff Survey Results Sharing Session; and Document, Staff Survey Result 2013.)

Hence, establishing a compelling purpose and mission that demonstrates the business owner’s long-term commitment towards quality is the most fundamental contributing factor. It draws similar commitment from the staff, which fuels the

continual educational quality enhancement of the university, as will be elaborated in the following section.

Value for money strategy: Integrating quality and for-profit motive.

Even though facing the tension between the business and education objectives, the findings show that this for-profit private university appears to have managed to properly integrate its education purpose with its business motive through the concept of value for money. As mentioned earlier, to the Vice-Chancellor, value for money means whether the institution's track record justifies the tuition charged. "Are they (student, parent and employer) getting back their investment?" stressed the Vice-Chancellor.

The interviewed faculty leaders shared the same paradigm. One of the Deans highlighted that profit is very important because it enables the university to become a great university. Through providing better quality education and earning more profit, institutions can better reward their staff and give scholarship to deserving students. This opinion is possibly highly relevant to private higher education institutions because they do not receive funding from the government or other sponsors, and they primarily rely on tuition. Another interviewed Dean also highlighted the importance of value for money strategies because they contributed to positive word of mouth. She further stressed that word of mouth directly influences the institution's or faculty's business sustainability.

What I understand about the academic leadership and the non-academic (business) leadership, I agree also to a huge extent, is that profit is very important because it empowers us to do things. To my mind, being profitable and doing a great job is very much aligned. It makes a lot of sense to be a great university. Because this will render the product more valuable and also to make more profit and hopefully through this, the university can reward its staff better and also to give scholarship to deserving students better. I think that leadership does not have any dilemma in that sense. I personally don't see any contradiction as well. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)

The value for money paradigm suggests that the university views its business as providing quality (value for money) education that benefits the students primarily and

society too. In return, the university earns its profit. This fulfils its shareholders' expectation, offers rewarding career opportunities for its staff and ensures its business continuity. This university appears to have strong business motive and sense on purpose of education. This is a hybrid paradigm of for-profit and non-profit institutions. A paradigm primarily focuses on private good with intention of contributing to public good.

The paradigm is best reflected by its mission that evolves over time, as it grows through the different phases of maturity as a higher education institution. It used to focus on becoming a university, then to becoming a preferred choice of top employers and now to focusing on education for life. This also reflects a continuing effort to add more value to its primary stakeholders, students, parents, industry employers and for better market differentiation as the market matures.

In summary, the value for money paradigm of the university and faculty leaders harmonises the competing demand from the business and education expectations. This alignment appears to have set the baseline for the university to compete and move forward. Hence, being able to properly integrate education purpose with business motive is an important success factor in upholding educational quality at a for-profit institution. This paradigm requires a different form of leadership, governance and talent.

While the leaders emphasise the importance of integrating education purpose and for-profit motive, the lecturers do not appear to be involved this process. To the lecturers, their intention and focus is to add more value to students.

Having initiatives that differentiate us, where those initiatives put value back into the students. [It sounds to me as having initiatives that contribute to competitive advantage of the faculty, at the same time add a lot of value to the students.] Well, the intention of the initiative is to add value to the students and that's it. Whatever things else that gives us competitive advantage comes from there. [I see, so it's meant to add more value to the students.] That's it. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, Interview)

Leaders with academic and business capabilities, and intention to add value.

In order to address both business and education expectations, the findings show that it requires leaders who are responsive to both. The Vice-Chancellor of this university is assisted by the Senate (also known as Academic Board) for academic matters and by a management committee for non-academic matters. The Vice-Chancellor plays the role of academic head and business head of the university. He has both executive authority and academic leadership responsibility.

In order to ensure return on investment, key strategies of the university are normally top down strategies with measurable performance indicators for clear accountability. Implementation of the key strategies is closely monitored by the Vice-Chancellor's office. In order to ensure proper resource allocation to support the strategies, annual budgeting is practiced. Every year, the Vice-Chancellor and every Dean have to prepare their budgets based on the expected income and intended expenditure in the following year.

In order to ensure the faculty is responsive to the expectations of the external and internal stakeholders, the university is delegating more and more authority and accountability to the respective Deans. The Deans are expected to play a similar role of Vice-Chancellor at the faculty level. "Faculty's ownership of the profit and loss is the future direction in managing faculty's funding", as expressed by the group finance head. This practice resembles the practice of a business entity while maintaining the autonomy of faculties of a traditional university. With strong institutional and faculty level authority, alignment in this university is achieved through regular formal and informal two-way consultation. The importance of two-way communication was re-emphasized by the Vice-Chancellor during subsequent interview.

In alignment with the illustrated responsibilities of the Vice-Chancellor and Dean, a private university requires leaders who have both business and academic

appreciation and related capabilities. “Strong, demonstrable commercial and business development orientation with ability to enhance the financial base and generate new revenue streams” is part of the position description of the Vice-Chancellor. Similar expectation, “achieving the financial management target of the faculty” is part of the Dean’s position description.

The importance of this combination of capabilities may be illustrated by the effort to generate alternative revenue. This university’s revenue primarily depends on its undergraduate tuition. Intensified competition for students may affect the university’s profit margin. Hence, increasing alternative revenue has been this university’s priority for the past few years. It requires effort to increase the revenue through postgraduate programmes, continuing professional education, contract research and consultancy, transnational education and so forth. This effort requires leaders with both business and academic capabilities. The findings revealed that the university and faculty leaders are both academic and business oriented, as evidenced by the academic and business targets set and achieved.

Dynamic culture and progressive system.

The findings show that the institution’s ability to adapt, change and improve is crucial to quality enhancement. This ability is categorised as “dynamic culture and progressive system”, another key contributing factor of this study. Dynamic culture in this study refers to culture with continuous and productive activity or change (Merriam-Webster.com). And, culture refers to the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution (Merriam-Webster.com). The dynamic culture and progressive system is enabled by the spirit of meritocracy. Meritocracy refers to a system in which the talented are chosen and moved ahead on the basis of their achievement (Merriam-Webster.com).

As described by a lecturer, he experienced strong support and strong expectation from the faculty leader, which is fair in his opinion and that is the reason he chose to stay with the faculty. He provided an example that when he wanted to visit 3 countries in addition to attending a conference without budget, the Dean supported him by approving a special budget for him and at the same time, expected him to deliver something as an outcome of the visit.

You see, as a researcher, sometimes I need to (attend) conference but I don't have sufficient budget. I know this is important for me (and) I need to go to three countries at the same time. It is a waste for me to just go for a conference. I can't establish myself in that way, in just one conference. (I asked,) "Can I use business travel?" (My Dean said,) "Yes but you need to come back with something." I am fine if you want me to publish, I can. Because they also need to justify, so it is fair. Every time I request, there is a support, so this is the reason why I still stay back (with the faculty). (Faculty A, Lecturer 2, Interview 1)

In addition, the lecturer also described the dynamic culture in the following example, which sounds like the flexibility to adapt and change. The underpinning spirit of meritocracy can be observed too.

I can see the potential over here. Because you know, if you want to be promoted as Senior Lecturer, you need to have at least 7 years of experience. If you refer to the guideline. 7 years. I went for interview after 1 year. There are five categories (of criteria); I achieved four except one, that is the '7 years' (criterion). I get promoted. I appreciate (this). [The recognition?] No, not recognition. Sometimes you need the flexibility. [You appreciate the flexibility?] Yes, yes. If you say I need to follow A to Z 100 percent, (with) no exception then I will leave. I like to break through. I like to break through. If you always say that you have to follow this, this, this, maybe this is not the right place for me. If you don't give me the recognition or certain thing, you give me the flexibility, it is ok. If I want to do thing differently, (and someone says) "this, this, this, you cannot do". Then, there is no challenge at all, for me. It is not... I always look for improvement. I don't agree with "this is the thing that you need to follow the entire life". (Faculty A, Lecturer 2, Interview 1)

Another lecturer shared a similar opinion in a sense of "willingness to learn and incorporate best practices", which is supported by the sense of community where there is no fear, jealousy or other negative feelings that may hinder the willingness to learn and to adapt. In addition, the faculty appears to have good system or committee structure to consider and adopt good practices.

What I can say is that the faculty has the willingness to understand the best practices and also has the sufficient... has the required channels (committee structure) to put those practices in place. Let's say (a lecturer) knows that the current good practice or best practice is this, the faculty has the sufficient ability to incorporate those best practices in the programmes of the faculty. The faculty is benchmarking not (only) with other universities, (but) with the industry. Like the project-oriented learning, it was suggested by the faculty based on best practices, not in Malaysia, but in US, in the (name of a university has been omitted). We have started 2 years, 3 years back. (Faculty A, Lecturer 3, Interview 1)

At the administrative head of department level, similar opinion is shared, where the dynamic culture welcomes individuals who are willing to take up new challenges.

Hence, staff who are willing to take up new challenges have greater opportunities to grow and be promoted.

I see myself developing together with the university, that's all. I believe this institution has actually evolved from a very small institution, college to university college, and now university, and (it is) still growing. I started with the college as well, so I kind of like develop myself together with the university. Why do I stay for so long (14 years)? To be very frank, I did not stay in the same position for a very, very long time. After like a few years, I actually have the opportunity to move. It makes me learn new things and also (be) able to contribute back to the university, make new friends. I guess in this university, if someone is willing to take on new task, I'm sure no one will stop you from taking new task. It's just the willingness, whether you are comfortable with yourself. (TLC, Head of Department 1, Interview 1)

As described by the head of department, the management of this university appreciates individuals who are willing to take up new challenges. This is critical especially during the process of transformation, where there are new responsibilities and challenges that require individuals who are willing to take up the new responsibilities and challenges. The changes to the university and faculty organization structures over time are possibly the best illustration of this. These are evident through the different versions of the organization chart.

At the university level, the Vice-Chancellor highlighted the importance of having the right structure and the right talent to support the mission and strategies of the university, which is consistent with the information sighted on the organization chart over the years from 2009 to 2013.

I think the structure is supposed to support the mission of the organization. When you change the mission, when you change the approach, you must have the right structure to support. When I ask the university to put more energy in terms of internationalization, student mobility, (international) engagement and collaboration, we enhanced the student mobility office and we changed the portfolio of Prof (name of a Pro Vice-Chancellor is omitted) to global engagement. And when I want to pursue more on research and commercialization, I have to appoint a very senior person, that's why I brought in (the new) Pro Vice-Chancellor, Postgraduate and Research. And I want to bring in more postgraduate students, so I put Dr. (name of the Dean is omitted) as the Dean for the Graduate Studies. (VC, Interview 1)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who oversees the faculties, has demonstrated the consistent intention and behaviour. He changed the faculties' organization structure in 2012 by creating more leadership positions championing the different strategic priorities of the current University Strategic Plan, including the university's teaching and learning. In addition, the university placed a strong emphasis on having an effective system and technology to support and improve teaching, learning and research, which is supported by the observation and interview with staff. One of the lecturers provided an example that in alignment with the upgrade to a university status, the institution has formulated a policy to guide the programme review process. To him, having a clearly spelled out policy is important to ensure and improve educational quality.

A clear goal is for the University to develop and implement facilities and systems that support, sustain and improve excellence in teaching, learning and research. Well-designed, accessible and functional information technology and other systems are an inherent and vital part of modern higher education. (Document, current University Strategic Plan)

We are given the policy to review the curriculum periodically, every two or three years... which is a way to formalise the current way of doing (things) in a haphazard manner. Maybe certain modules we look at it, (but) we do not see the whole (programme). We do not have a working group who sits together to brainstorm about the whole programme. Those things have been spelled out and it serves as good guide. It is all extra effort and pain with the new policy but then they make sense in terms of maintaining quality and improving quality and tracking quality. More importantly, how we ascertain that the quality is carried out or there has been improvement to quality. No other way than documentation of some sort, either the outcomes or preparation. (Faculty B, Lecturer 1, Interview 1)

As highlighted by the Vice-Chancellor during the University Priorities and Targets Setting Meeting 2013, the future of higher education is to have “governance that supports flexibility and autonomy”. Having said that, the Vice-Chancellor also highlighted the importance of good governance that enhanced accountability, especially as the institution transforms from a college to a university college, and to a university, and as the institution grows in size and complexity.

We can see the accountability clearer (now). And we can see some authorities are functioning (according to) what they are supposed to be, like Senate. We can see slowly they are functioning. And, we can see the accountability according to the policy. That is very important. (...) People are more accountable now, they know they should report to this and that, get authority to endorse, to approve and so on, without making inconsistent kind of decision at the end of the day. (VC, Interview 1)

According to the documents reviewed, the university has established its internal quality management system, informed by the national quality assurance documents for higher education, professional bodies’ requirements, international good practices, and the purpose and mission of the university. Data collected show that the lecturers are familiar with the university’s quality assurance and improvement mechanisms and the system that have been implemented to drive continual quality improvement.

Programme outcomes and programme educational objectives, and for this “house of quality” we have CQI (Continual Quality Improvement) loop for each part. So for the learning outcome, at the end of each semester we receive feedback from the lecturers in their annual module review. Based on the policy, it has to be done once a year, but we run it once a semester. So as students and as staffs, we give the feedback about the student assessment (evaluation) of the people (lecturers), the student’s attainment of the LO (learning outcomes), and then they (lecturers) come out with the CQI and actions. So, once the semester is over, there is a CQI meeting. Which in this CQI meeting, it’s like a programme meeting, all the lecturers come, they present the CQI action based on student achievements, what they should do (so) that students achieve better result in the next semester. So, once the semester is over and the next semester starts, the Head of Programme (HoP) has to communicate these CQI actions with the lecturer of the following semester. If it is the same lecturer, he will use his own CQI from the file he or she has; but if the lecturer changes, the HoP has to communicate with the new lecturer, to make sure that this loop is ready closed, these feedbacks (CQI) are ready implemented. (Faculty A, Lecturer 3, Interview 1)

In this university, we have programme outcomes which is... we have 12 programme outcomes. All the subjects have learning outcomes. Those learning outcomes are linked to these programme outcomes. So at the end of the day, they (students) are supposed to achieve these programme outcomes to the highest level. (...) In the spirit of continuous quality improvement, previously we had only once, now we are going to have twice a year, industrial advisory panel meeting. We will meet up, we will discuss issues (that) we need to rectify in our programmes, and we will have inputs from the industry. (Faculty A, Lecturer 3, Interview 1)

Data collected show that the university's Academic Policy Committee, which reports to the Senate, and the Senate regularly review the institution's policies. In addition, various training programmes have been conducted for the staff professional development so that they are able to implement the policies. Furthermore, communication session regarding the university's governance and quality management system is included in the new academic staff induction programme and the new manager induction programme.

It is interesting that one of the lecturers, who was from a public university, commented on the differences between public and private universities from his personal perspective. He felt that there was less red tape in the private university compared with the public university where he used to work. This might be caused by private institution needs to swiftly adjust to the market need and competitive pressure.

So here, I don't see any limitation. As long as we want to work in a high quality system and we have justification, no one will stop you. But let's say in the public (universities), they have too many rules and regulations and you are a bit constrained within these regulations; but here if you want to do something, and this one (initiative) will benefit the institution, will benefit the students, you can go directly and discuss with the management, with the head of programme, with the Deputy Dean, with the Dean and we can run that activity, we can run that quality action. (Faculty A, Lecturer 3, Interview 1)

In summary, the lecturers appreciate the dynamic culture and progressive system of the university.

Aligned community with the heart, mind and behaviour for quality.

After establishing a compelling purpose and mission, the findings show that the community must be aligned through that purpose and commitment to quality, which is the next key contributing factor for better educational quality. The community includes the internal constituents and the targeted external stakeholders. The business owner, university leaders, Deans and heads of departments are to role model and the lecturers are the key persons to deliver. The students must be aligned to play their role and the employers must be aligned too in supporting the effort.

As mentioned earlier, when the lasting and top performing Deans were asked about their reasons for staying on at the university, the common answer is the alignment between their belief and values compared to the business owner's and university leader's. They felt that the business owner and the university leader truly appreciate academic or education, besides emphasising the importance of financial sustainability. Interestingly, when the lasting and top performing lecturers were asked the same question, the common answer is that they want to be part of a community that is equally passionate about education and embraces quality, as role modelled by the university and faculty leaders. Hence, the alignment starts with the role model demonstrated by the business owner, university leaders and faculty leaders, and is extended to the lecturers, students and employers. The strong alignment is also supported by the independent staff survey conducted in 2013 where 98 percent of the responded staff said that they are strongly committed to their jobs. The alignment contributes to the sense of community that helps in staff retention.

Alignment between Deans, business owner and university leaders.

As explained by a Dean during interview, "He (Group CEO) is the top leader of the institution and I am one of his employees. It just happened that our vision is aligned... I am so happy to be part of it and say 'Yes, I will work with this organisation.

I will join hand with you towards achieving that goal’.” On the other hand, academic staff can be discouraged by a leadership focusing on business aspect only. “From having people with only business mind to having full-fledged academician that really meets the (expectation of a) university ... contributes also to the staff satisfaction which no Dean in the world will be able to sustain on his or her own, if the organisation is going in a different direction”, expressed by a Dean during interview. Besides the alignment with the business leader, alignment with the Vice-Chancellor appears to be crucial too.

...again led by a full-fledged real academician who has really made it. And, people could look at that person as role model. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 2)

Thank goodness, we have a leader like the current Vice-Chancellor who is very knowledgeable, who knows well enough what it means by a university’s role. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 3)

Alignment between lecturers, Deans and university leaders.

When lecturers were asked about their experience in driving educational quality, there is a clear alignment between what they think is important and what the faculty is actually doing, despite the fact that they belong to a for-profit private institution.

A lot of things that we changed, we discussed “What does this mean to the students?” ... in terms of wanting to improve the standard and quality of the graduates that we produce. So a lot of thoughts, care, attention, love that we put in to what we do, for the benefit of the students. That I really, really think very highly of what the faculty is doing...This is a private institution, so private institution directly equals making money, that’s what everybody will consider. (...) I’ve seen a lot of changes into the curriculum that we are doing, and it’s all about preparing the students. I remember vividly going into the Faculty Board and we argued about how we should change certain things and it’s all about how to benefit the students. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, Interview 1)

Certain lecturers refer to their Dean as the source of inspiration and they are aligned with the direction of the faculty.

“Like the leader, like the unit”. If the leader is very strong, very passionate, the unit (will be) successful, following the leader. I am talking about the Dean. The faculty for him is priority number 1. That’s why he is really very passionate to go up with the Faculty to be number one not only in Malaysia but in Asia in general. (Examples of the Dean’s contribution are omitted.) he actually has contribution, you can find his hand in every activity. When the staff see it, they will not behave

differently. At least, they can follow what is required from them. (Faculty A, Lecturer 4, Interview 1)

It is evident that the lecturers who are involved in interviewing look for new lecturers who are aligned with what the faculty is doing. A Dean expressed the same opinion when interviewed too.

During the interview, we try to look at different angles, to see if the staff fits into the faculty or not. Because here, we practise outcome-based education, so the staff need to spend some time for the... I can say administrative job. They need to measure the attainment of learning outcomes, the programme outcomes, they need to participate in the happenings in the faculty. We have, let's say, competition (event), we have Open Day activity, marketing. Sometimes it happens that the staff doesn't feel those are important. So, they are good, but maybe they don't fit into our institution. (Faculty A, Lecturer 3, Interview 1)

Alignment through active communication.

The university's purpose, mission and core values appear to have been shared with the staff through multiple channels. The Group CEO and the Vice-Chancellor communicate it during the Strategic Management workshop of the university's New Manager's (Induction) Programmes started since 2010. The workshop is conducted for all new hires at managerial level and above. In addition, a similar induction programme is conducted for all new academic staff where the purpose and mission is shared; every new academic staff is assigned a mentor. The faculty studied has a dedicated training programme for new lecturers too. More importantly, the Dean or Deputy Dean is directly involved in conducting one of the training sessions.

Once a staff joins, he or she will be attached to a mentor. He will have in-house training about (names of the various training modules are omitted). We had training about teaching and learning by our Dean, or Deputy Dean. So, we have a number of in-house trainings in order to tell the staff what is the job description, what is the required quality that faculty is expecting from the staff. (Faculty A, Lecturer 3, Interview 1)

The information is also made known to the public through the university's website. During on-campus observation, the university's purpose, mission and core values statements are clearly displayed too. During the University Priorities and Targets

Setting Workshop, the Vice-Chancellor reminded the senior management team of the importance of upholding the purpose, mission and core values too.

Alignment between lecturers and students.

The findings also show the importance of alignment between the faculty's and the students' direction. A lecturer described this as "having good relationship with student", to the extent that students may see their lecturers as their parents. Since the university views educational quality from transformational perspective, without the positive response from the students, the effort from the lecturers may not have positive impact.

Do you know there are cases where students actually like the subject or the class because of the lecturer? They said, "I want to attend this because the lecturer is X. I just want to see what he is talking." That's why the relationship between the student and lecturer is very important. (Faculty A, Lecturer 4, Interview 1)

He (a student) writes his paper, I give comment. The last comment he says is (was) that "you are like my father." I said, "No, I'm like your uncle." [That sounds like a compliment.] It is. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, Interview 1)

As highlighted by most of the lecturers, the fundamental transformation happens when students are motivated to learn. Hence, a very important responsibility of the lecturers is to engage and motive the students to learn. Engaged and motivated students become part of the university's aligned community. The lecturers interviewed said they are motivated by students who are keen to learn too.

When you finish your class, students still want to stay in the class and ask more questions, this is when I see that this is (there is) actually a good quality of education. [And that gives you the sense of success and satisfaction because they are very motivated and very keen to learn.] Right. (Faculty A, Lecturer 4, Interview 1)

A semester fourth student recently wrote to me. He said, "I do not know whether to thank you or to hate you, you have taught me things that my mind cannot stop anymore. I can no longer stop my mind, it's constantly thinking". Things like that are what I want to do. [You would like the students to be influenced in that way.] That is correct. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, Interview 1)

The good intention of the lecturers is possibly influenced by the Deans, their role model, who enjoys having a positive impact on the students' lives.

Have a real impact on life, that is my real intention. So, my student is telling me "you are the nicest Dean ever". This is something that is extremely important to me. That's why I am willing to invest time in it. And, it is not only important, it is very enjoyable. My interaction with the students is not something that I do as part of my job. It is something that... if I can afford, I will do it for free. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)

A letter (dated 2012) from an alumnus of the earlier cohort in 2008-2009, testifies the impact of the lecturers. In the letter, the alumnus expressed his appreciation to the lecturers who have taught him before, for their guidance.

Alignment with industry employers.

The findings show that the mission of the university is closely linked to industry. Various efforts to engage the industry players have been observed based on the findings. There is an industry advisory panel for every faculty and industry experts have been invited to delivery talks to the students regularly; the students have regular visits to industry. In fact, industry attachment is compulsory for all degree programmes so that students gain real life industrial experience. The effort from the faculty appears to be well supported by the industry.

From the industry, they do share with us (their expectations), it is the character. The character and mindset as well. In fact they are aware that nowadays this issue emerges. So, they are prepared to invest on someone with good character not only with good skill set. That itself is not enough. In fact, it is in my IAP (Industry Advisory Panel) minutes, the last IAP that I have just mentioned. It is character that they are looking for. Therefore, I was very glad that they are aligned with our understanding. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 2)

A faculty under studied conducted a survey with the industrial supervisors of their students during industrial training in 2013. The survey report shows that 72 percent of the industrial supervisors intend to recruit their graduates. In addition, 78 percent of the industrial supervisors are satisfied with the quality, attitude and performance of the students.

An informal letter (dated 2013) from the faculty's previous twinning partner and the comment from the external examiner also testify to the sincere effort from the faculty to continually improve the programmes.

To sum up, the findings show that the key contributing factors at the institutional level include: (a) compelling purpose, mission and values, (b) value-for-money strategies that properly integrate the educational quality and for-profit motive, (c) leaders with academic and business capabilities, and intention to add value, (d) progressive system and dynamic culture, (e) aligned community with the heart, mind and behaviour for quality.

Key Contributing Factors at the Faculty Level

At faculty level, the focus is more on implementing planned strategies in order to achieve the university mission. The earlier section has shared the three key and similar challenges experienced by the newly recruited or promoted Deans. This section describes the key contributing factors from the earlier years when the Deans took over the leadership positions. The strategies implemented by the two Deans are very similar. They started with establishing their credibility and trust, to build commitment and alignment with academics. At the same time, they established quality as the competitive advantage for their programmes to ensure financial sustainability. Being able to establish common ground with the university leaders and academics is another key enabler.

Established credibility and trust, built commitment and alignment.

The findings show that newly recruited Deans appear to have great urgency to establish their credibility and to earn trust before they can expect the commitment and support from the academics towards the faculty and the institution's direction. The findings also show an effective way practiced by the Deans is by achieving immediate

success for the faculty, with or without the support from the academics. In this case, the Deans have to leverage on their academic-related competency. For example, the Dean of Faculty A proposed implementing a new teaching and learning method at the faculty. The Dean allowed the academics and students to choose whether to participate, initially, and he worked with those who would like to participate. With limited support from the academics, the Dean had to put in extra effort to ensure the new method was well received by the students. When asked why the success is crucial to establishing credibility and trust, the Dean explained that the success created confidence among the academics and the students that they could succeed even though they did not believe in themselves initially. The confidence developed coupled with his considerate approach earned the respect and trust from his academics and students. As mentioned earlier, one of the lecturers described his Dean as “very strong, very passionate leader”, and “the unit (will be) successful, following the leader” (Faculty A, Lecturer 4, Interview 1).

I see that the environment in terms of the management, the people around you, the facilities given and other things all encourage me to stay... Because again you see the impact of people (management staff and colleagues), good people who actually guide you from the beginning. Because of this, I feel I cannot deny and say, “I (want to) terminate my work and go to another place”. And because of this actually I want to stay. Because of these people I want to stay. (Faculty A, Lecturer 4, Interview 1)

Dean of Faculty B had similar experience.

They (the academics) did not know how much they have actually. When the Symposium was held and received quite good response, it helped to motivate the team. They started to realise how much they have. Right after that, we developed our first journal. Then they realised that it is possible by working as a team. As a team, they can achieve greater outcome and have greater impact to the faculty and the university. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 2)

The findings also show the importance of the Deans’ intention in supporting and adding more value to the academics. For example, both Deans put in effort in developing the academics. The effort is acknowledged by a long serving academic during interview: “I notice the Dean’s leadership is focusing on establishing the good

relationship to a point that academics will work with him not because of fear, just because of his character.” The Deans also created more leadership positions at the faculty level as opportunities for developing more future leaders. This is reflected by the changes to the faculties’ organization chart over the years. The lecturers acknowledged the Deans’ intention. When the academics were asked why they continue to stay at the faculties, they acknowledged the importance of committing to a shared dream or common goal and the sense of community within the faculties.

...more staff are being brought to the management team... little closer supervision and development of the second line leaders... especially bringing up those (academics) into the positions that we never had, the academic leadership position. (Faculty B, Lecturer 1, Interview 1)

A surprising finding is that one of the Deans chose to confront an academic’s bad behaviour, which created problems for the faculty. The confrontation caused the academic to withdraw and to eventually leave the faculty. This is not commonly practiced in higher education even though such bad behaviour “would not be tolerated in other sectors” (Bryman & Lilley, 2009). This uncommon behaviour might be due to the Dean’s previous working experience at a private business entity and the fact that a for-profit private higher education institution is behaving like a private business entity with regards to accountability and performance.

Quality as competitive advantage for growth.

The findings show that successful Deans must earn the trust from the senior management beside the lecturers. As mentioned before, the Deans are expected by the senior management to grow their enrolment in order to achieve the institution’s financial targets and economies of scale. In order to do so, they have to leverage on their business and academic related competencies to establish the competitive advantage for their programmes and to gain external recognition for their faculties’ educational quality. The findings show that both Deans achieved that primarily through focusing on the quality of curriculum, student learning experience, academics and linkages with the

international academic community and industry, while the senior management invested in the facilities. The findings also suggest that the Deans have successfully played their roles as academic leaders and as part of senior management concurrently. They align their effort in strengthening students' learning experience and outcome, as expected by the academics, with gaining external recognition, as expected by the central administration. For example, the Dean of Faculty A made it compulsory for students to submit an entry to either the institution's or international business plan competition, and to present a paper at the institution's or international conference as part of the requirement for graduation. The Dean of Faculty B also launched a student agency where students source for real industry clients to work with and the success was seen as recognition for both academics and students. Their effort has attracted better quality and more enrolment over time.

When we talk about internationalization, our standard also complies with international standards. Standard means that you need to be recognised, accredited by international community. For example, (...) Our (name of programme is omitted) now has been recognised by (name of an international accreditation body for the discipline is omitted). (VC, Interview 1)

The (name of Faculty A is omitted) has been accepted as an official collaborator in the (name of the international initiative is omitted) Initiative alongside great institutions such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), California State University, the University of Sydney and University of Auckland. (Name of the participating university is omitted) is the first and only Malaysian university that has, thus far, been accepted into this initiative, which is an innovative education framework for producing the next generation of (name of a profession is omitted). (Faculty A Prospectus 2012)

(Name of Faculty B is omitted) has excellent industrial links and works with industry professionals to ensure that students have real understanding of the world of (name of discipline is omitted) and possess the right skills required to excel in the industry. (Faculty B Prospectus 2013)

Even though existing leadership literature has discussed the importance of creating a clear sense of direction or strategic vision, it has been limited to delivering education as public good. The need to create business competitive advantage is possibly

new to the public sector but is very common in the for-profit private sector, which operates like a business entity.

However as mentioned earlier, the findings point out the importance of alignment between the Deans' and senior management's values in order to ensure the Deans' long-term sustainability.

Established common ground.

The findings show that successful and lasting Deans are those who have been able to establish a common ground between the managerial and academic values, which aligns the university's senior management, the Deans and the academics. The findings also show that being able to find alignment with the university senior management's priority is a critical step. Both Deans expected the senior management to appreciate the academic values, such as educational quality and research, as much as the managerial values that focus on financial performance. The findings suggest that the Deans are able to sustain in the institution because of the positive change at the senior management level. For example, the Dean of Faculty A acknowledged the positive change in the business owner and the credibility of the new university leader who is perceived as "a full-fledged academician". The Dean of Faculty B was also glad to know that the new vision of the business owner was aligned with her personal vision and the new university leader has strong belief in academic value. This is affirmed during the observation of the University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop and the interview with the Vice-Chancellor and the Deans.

At the same time, the Vice-Chancellor also emphasised the importance of balancing business and academic aspects for business sustainability. Being able to balance the two is pivotal to the success of the Deans also. The findings show that successful Deans manage to achieve the balance by first working with the academics to add value appreciated by the students and targeted external stakeholders, which

differentiates them. Through this, the faculties establish their competitive advantage and earn more external recognition. As a result, enrolment increases as demanded by the senior management. As explained by a Dean when interviewed:

I see the role of the Faculty is how much value we really add to our students... if we transform an individual, add value, the 'job' will happen... I believe our programme is one of the programmes that adds value and I want this to be felt by the students. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)

The interview with academics shows consistency with the Deans' intention.

(The critical success factor of the faculty is) having initiatives that differentiate us where those initiatives add value to the students... The intention of the initiatives is to add value to the students and that's it. Whatever 'thing' that gives us the competitive advantage comes from there. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, Interview 1)

The environment is important, and the people, in other words the management, you see people always support you, appreciate you for what you have been doing and (including) the promotion. (Faculty A, Lecturer 4, Interview 1)

The findings also show that the Deans understand that although the academics demand autonomy, they also appreciate the senior management's support and recognition regarding educational quality and research. Likewise, while the senior management needs to steer the institution through strategic direction and targets, they appreciate accountability and performance demonstrated by the academics. Consequently, Deans who have found the common ground and have sincerely added more value to the faculties, which include the academics and the university, are likely to be respected by the academics and senior management.

To sum up, the findings show that establishing credibility and trust, building commitment and alignment with academics, transforming quality as competitive advantage and creating common ground among the senior management, Deans and academics, are key factors contributing to educational quality at the faculty level.

Rival Explanation

There has been a concern that the perceived quality of for-profit private higher education institution might be a result of marketing and branding instead of real improvement in the student learning experience and quality of graduates. The private sector appears to use aggressive marketing and branding strategies to communicate its brand value, and to attract international and local students. The efforts have resulted in greater brand awareness and perceived brand value. Teenagers may be influenced by those strategies in assessing a university and a programme.

However, the most powerful marketing tool is word of mouth by the students who have experienced the educational quality and the employers who have experienced the graduate quality. Hence, the real educational quality will still reveal itself and cannot be advanced purely through marketing and branding effort.

Conclusion

The conception of quality and experience of a for-profit private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality in terms of the processes involved, the key challenges experienced and the key institutional contributing factors have been presented in this Chapter. The findings point to the importance of proper integration of educational quality and business motive to ensure long-term quality and profitability of private higher education. The next chapter discusses the findings of this study in comparison with the findings of existing studies presented in literature review and the chosen conceptual framework of this study.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Educational quality and business motive not only can co-exist but also can synergise if properly integrated and it may ensure long-term quality and profitability of private higher education. This is the core finding presented in Chapter Five. In Chapter Five, the research findings with regards to the conception and experience of a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality, the processes involved, challenges experienced and key contributing factors have been presented. This Chapter discusses the findings where the findings are compared and contrasted with the findings of existing studies presented in literature review and the chosen conceptual framework of this study, taking into consideration the country context.

Summary of Findings

From Chapter 5, the findings show that the successful private higher education institution has been able to link the business motive and purpose of education to the concept of quality through transformation and value for money concepts. Through understanding the strategic management process for educational quality, the greatest challenges in the quest for educational quality at a for-profit private higher education institution are: (a) balancing quality and profitability, (b) aligning, retaining and capacity building of staff, and (c) rigid and fragmented system. The findings also show that the key contributing factors are: (a) compelling purpose, mission and values, guided by purpose of education, (b) value for money strategies that properly integrated of education purpose and for-profit motive, (c) leaders with academic and business capabilities, coupled with intention to add value, (d) dynamic culture and progressive

system, and (e) aligned community with the heart, mind and behaviour for quality. In summary, the findings of this research suggest that educational quality and for-profit motive not only can co-exist but also can synergise if they are properly integrated.

Understanding of the Meaning of Educational quality

Conception of Quality and Different Constituents' Perspectives

The findings of the current study pertaining to the meaning of educational quality are in agreement with the report from the 1998 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education and 2007 UNESCO-CEPES report cited by Altbach et al. (2010b) that quality is a multidimensional concept and is contextual. The different constituents of the university community have different level of emphasis on the five ways of defining quality according to Harvey and Stensaker (2008). The most consistently emphasized is the transformation perspective, which supports Harvey's (2002) argument that this is due to massification of higher education, as happening in Malaysia, where it is not for the elite anymore. It is estimated that the higher education gross enrolment ratio in Malaysia has increased to around 36 percent in 2009 (UNESCO, 2009). Hence, the amount of value added through transformational education process is a more relevant concept reflecting educational quality in mass higher education, such as higher education in Malaysia.

In addition, the emphasis on transforming the graduates to be job ready or fit for purpose is similar to the argument by Harvey (2012). Harvey (2012) highlighted that this is caused by the employability agenda across countries, which emphasises the role of higher education in economic development of the countries. The same expectation has been communicated by the government of this country in order for the country to be a developed nation by 2020. In this study, the transformation perspective is viewed as

the meta-quality concept, encompassing other ways of defining quality, which is consistent with the idea of Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007).

The emphasis on value for money concept of quality by the senior and middle management of this study further supports the recent argument by Harvey and Stensaker (2008). This is possibly due to the self-financing and for-profit nature of the private higher education institution, limitation of government funding to sustain the growth of higher education, as well as the intensified market competition.

However, surprisingly, the Deans in the study disagreed that the primary purpose of education is for employability despite that being the current mission of the university. They argued the purpose of education from the human fulfilment perspective, which, to them, leads to employability or economic prosperity and social progress. They have integrated the three purposes of education by Barrett et al. (2006) and Alam et al. (2009b). This perspective is consistent with the perspective that education is for public and private good (Altbach et al., 2010b, p. 12). The perspective of Deans is indirectly consistent with the “World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action”, adopted by World Conference on Higher Education, UNESCO (1998), that the mission of higher education is to contribute to the sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole. The Deans’ perspective is consistent with the Malaysian National Philosophy of Education, documented in the Education Act 1996. This surprising finding possibly explains why the institution is recognised for its educational quality besides its financial sustainability. The Deans are committed to educating their students towards a meaningful and successful lives, which include owning a career.

Influences on the Perspectives

The findings of this study are consistent with those reported by Vlasceanu et al. (2007, p. 68) that the meaning of educational quality is influenced by:

- a) the understanding of various interests of different constituencies or stakeholders in higher education (e.g., students; universities; disciplines; the labour market; society; a government);
- b) its references: inputs, processes, outputs, missions, objectives, etc.;
- c) the attributes or characteristics of the academic world worth evaluating; and

In a for-profit private setup such as in this study, the core constituencies are the students, parents, disciplines, labour market and the universities; society and government play a distant role except in the case for programme accreditation. The university's purpose, mission and graduate capabilities have direct influence on the perspective of the university staff. The latest development globally has directly impacted on their perspective too, in terms of purpose of education and the graduate attributes. As the higher education sector and the institution in this study experience the different stages of maturity, its perspective towards quality changes too. Hence, the concept of quality is highly influenced by the context. Understanding the context is important to the understanding of an entity's perspective on quality.

In summary, the findings of this study pertaining to the meaning of educational quality and the influences on the perspectives are consistent with existing studies. This is surprising because the existing studies mainly focus on public higher education institutions while this study focuses on a for-profit private higher education institution. It was expected that the for-profit motive may have influenced the institution and resulted in difference conception of quality. However, the consistency in findings possibly explain why this for-profit private higher education institution managed to transform itself and being perceived as an reputable private higher education institution in the country.

Strategic Management Process of Educational Quality and the Key Enablers

The findings of this study support the generic concepts of strategic planning and strategic management from Johnson et al. (2008, as cited in Jasper & Crossan, 2012), as well as Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011, pp. 9 - 10). The model for strategic management of educational quality emerged from the findings corroborates with the Strategic Quality Management Model from Osseo-Asare et al. (2005), the generic Strategic Management Process Model from Rahimnia Alashloo et al. (2005) and the generic Strategic Planning Process Model for higher education from Kotler and Murphy (1981, p. 471). The similarities include the importance of analysing the environment and resources to formulate the goal and establish strategies, as well as the importance of coherence and relevant system and culture to support the implementation.

However, the emerged model has specific extended constructs relevant to for-profit private higher education institutions concerning educational quality, compared with the existing literature and the chosen conceptual framework of this study. The existing higher education literature has not actively discussed the specific extended constructs according to the best knowledge of the researcher. That includes the importance of the business owner's stance regarding quality, value for money strategies that integrate the business motive and educational quality, leaders with academic and business capability, progressive system and dynamic culture in alignment with the business-like management style of private higher education institution. In addition, the emerged model highlights the importance of aligned community, which Kotler and Murphy (1981) did not highlight. This is mainly because of the existing higher education literature regarding strategic management process has not actively taken into consideration the unique context of a for-profit private higher education institution, which is an educational institution and a business entity at the same time.

The importance of “compelling purpose, mission and values” in quality assurance and enhancement is in agreement with existing literature of the past two decades (Bogue & Hall, 2003, p. 263, as cited in Kim, 2010; Bolden et al., 2012; Boyle & Bowden, 1997; Bryman, 2007; Drotos, 2012; Gibbs, Knapper, & Piccinin, 2009; Kim, 2010; Lumby, 2012; Osseo-Asare et al., 2005; Yukl, 2013, pp. 323-326). The primary reasons of having compelling purpose, mission and values for quality enhancement are (a) to create a sense of direction and meaning, (b) to build trust and commitment, as well as (c) to strengthen collective identity, that are crucial to align the “heart” of the community (Bogue & Hall, 2003, p. 263, as cited in Kim, 2010; Bolden et al., 2012; Bryman, 2007; Morshidi et al., 2012, p. 517; Yukl, 2013, pp. 323-326).

The “compelling purpose, mission and values”, as well as “value for money strategy” emerged from this study are consistent with the findings from Helen (2007) and Chaffee (1984, 1985). As Helen (2007) and Chaffee (1984, 1985) argued, “effective strategies integrate both the adaptive and interpretive models to attend to the institution’s exchange with its environment and to the participants’ sense of meaning and satisfaction as a result of the interaction and relationship with the institution”. The “value for money strategy” responds to an institution’s exchange with its environment; the “compelling purpose, mission and values” attends to the staff’s sense of meaning and satisfaction as a result of the interaction and relationship with the institution.

Besides that, the important role played by the senior leaders and mid-level leaders as highlighted in the emerged model further support the ideas from Bogue and Hall (2003, p. 263, as cited in Kim, 2010), Hayward and Ncayiyana (2011, p. 17) and Middlehurst (1997). In addition, the importance of leaders’ business capability besides academic capability supports the recent findings concerning leadership of higher education (Drotos, 2012; Hayward & Ncayiyana, 2011; Kim, 2010). This is possibly due to the funding constraint experienced by higher education institutions recently

(Johnstone, 2011) and the intensified market competition partly due to the proliferation of higher education institutions.

In summary, the generic ideas of this study pertaining to the strategic management process of educational quality and the key enablers are consistent with the existing studies. However, the model emerged from this study has specific constructs unique to for-profit private higher education, which have not been actively discussed in the higher education domain. The specific constructs include the importance of the business owner's stance regarding quality, value for money strategies that integrate the business motive and educational quality, as well as the importance of leaders with both academic and business capabilities.

Key Challenges Experienced

The overall findings of this study regarding key challenges experienced by the for-profit private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality are consistent with existing literature. Acknowledging that the challenges experienced might be influenced by various factors, such as the type, status and size of the institution and the institution's operating environment, this discussion aims to highlight the unique challenges experienced by a for-profit private institution compared with existing literature.

Existing higher education literature has not actively discussed the challenge in balancing quality and profitability, except the recent literature (Pitcher, 2013), even though there has been an on-going concern that the for-profit motive may have caused the for-profit private higher education institution to compromise quality for profit (Alam, 2013; Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2010b; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004; MOHE, 2006, pp. 74-77; Morshidi, 2006; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006; Pitcher, 2013; Sivalingam, 2006; Shah & Nair, 2013; Tan, 2002). This is mainly due to most of the private higher education institutions in Malaysia being self-financed and adopting a

commercial approach to higher education (Lee, 2004; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005). Morshidi (2006) also argued that limitation of funding among the private higher education institutions is an important factor that limits the quality of private higher education in Malaysia. The recent literature from Drotos (2012), Johnstone (2011) and Kim (2010) did highlight the financial or funding challenge as a critical challenge faced by higher education institution nowadays.

The key challenge in aligning staff is consistent with findings from Kotter (1995) as well as Rahimnia Alashloo et al. (2005). In addition, the challenges of incompatible system and resistance from academic staff are also consistent with findings from Rahimnia Alashloo et al. (2005). These challenges become apparent when an institution is experiencing transformation. This is the situation of the selected case, experiencing the transformation from a college to a university with degree awarding authority and research responsibility.

The challenge caused by competing managerial and academic values faced by mid-level leaders, the Deans, is consistent with the findings from existing literature (Bray, 2008; Bryman & Lilley, 2009; De Boer & Geodegebuure, 2009; Mercer & Pogolian, 2013; Montez et al., 2002). However, the finding contradicts with the finding from Mercer and Pogolian (2013), conducted in the Russian context for public university. This is possibly due to the different culture of the public university in Russia.

On the other hand, in order to effectively address the different and often conflicting expectations from the central university administration and the academics, the deans are expected to have both academic expertise and management competency (De Boer & Geodegebuure, 2009), which they are seldom being trained for (Bray, 2008), especially among the newly recruited deans. The assumption that best performing academics are naturally good administrators may need to be challenged.

In addition, the challenge in developing competitive advantage for academic programme has not been actively discussed in the higher education literature. This is possibly because the need to develop competitive advantage is more commonly found in a private business entity than in a university, which is traditionally viewed as serving the public good.

In summary, most of the findings of this study pertaining to the key challenges experienced are consistent with the existing studies. However, the existing literature on higher education has not actively discussed the challenge in balancing quality and profitability partly because it is a new phenomenon. In addition, the challenge in developing competitive advantage has not been actively discussed in the higher education literature possibly because higher education is traditionally being viewed as serving public good.

Overall Discussion

As mentioned at Chapter 1, Statement of Problem, the diverse quality concern especially among the for-profit private higher education is possibly best described by Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2010b, p. 81) that “For-profits are not academically elite institutions, though some may have semielite characteristics. Yet, many for-profits are exploitative institutions, taking advantage of unmet demand and delivering a poor-quality education.”

However, the findings of this study through an exemplary or extreme case study show that educational quality and for-profit motive can co-exist, and can synergise if properly integrated. The integration must happen at the conception and strategic management levels. The proper integration may ensure private higher education’s long-term quality and financial sustainability as well as its contribution to national development.

While many studies have been conducted at Asian countries highlighting the concern on private higher education quality (Alam, 2008, 2009a,; Lee, 2006a; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004; Mok, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013; Morshidi Sirat, 2006; Muhamad Jantan et al., 2006; Sohail & Safed, 20013; Tan, 2002; Tilak, 2009, 2010; Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005), there is limited discussion regarding how the quality concern can be addressed at the private higher education institution level. Hence, the findings of this study provide some insights on how the private higher education quality concern may be addressed from an institutional point of view.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research findings concerning the perspective and experience of a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality, challenges experienced and key contributing factors, have been discussed with reference to the findings of existing studies presented in literature review and the chosen conceptual framework of this study. This next chapter concludes by presenting the summary, implications and limitations of research as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The Chapter presents an overall summary of the research, highlights the implications of the research, discusses the limitations of the research, and outlines the recommendations for future research. It concludes with the contribution of this research.

Summary of Research

Diverse educational quality of private higher education, especially in for-profit private higher education, is a long debated issue in developing countries including Malaysia. Various quality assurance mechanisms have been enforced on both for-profit and non-profit private higher education institutions in Malaysia since the 1990s. Lately, certain for-profit institutions manage to evolve and establish good quality reputation while the others are still being perceived as demand-absorbing.

Aiming to contribute to the knowledge in addressing the diverse educational quality issue in the private higher education sector, a qualitative case study was conducted. The research focuses on understanding the perspective of private higher education institution in Malaysia on educational quality, its experience in terms of the processes involved in the quest for educational quality and the key challenges faced, in order to identify the key contributing factors. The research was conducted through a strategic management conceptual framework since driving educational quality can be a form of strategic management.

An in-depth qualitative holistic single case embedded study was conducted in a selected exemplary for-profit private university in Malaysia. Two exemplary faculties from science and social science related disciplines within the university were selected for collection of more detailed implementation data. One-year field work was conducted

to collect data from multiple sources, using observation, document analysis and semi-structured interview, which are supplemented by previous years' archival data. The key participants are the Vice-Chancellor, Deans, academics and heads of administrative departments. The data were analysed with the support of NVivo software. Data from multiple sources were triangulated to identify the themes that answer the research questions.

The findings show that a for-profit private higher education institution does face multiple challenges in the quest for quality, especially in terms of balancing quality and profitability. The challenge is caused by return on investment motive of for-profit private higher education institutions and the need to ensure business sustainability. Hence, fulfilling the business objective is as important as the educational quality for a for-profit institution especially given the financial constraints and intensified competition.

The study suggests that educational quality and business motive not only can co-exist but also can synergise if properly integrated. Moreover, proper integration of educational quality and business motive may ensure long-term quality and profitability of private higher education. Extended and specific models have been developed based on the findings and were used to answer the research questions. The findings have been discussed with reference to the existing studies in the previous chapter. The implications of the findings are discussed in the following section.

Implications of Research Findings

Aiming to contribute to the critical discussion on diverse quality issue at for-profit private higher education, the implications of the research findings for theory, policy and practice are discussed.

Implications for Theory

Conception of quality for private higher education.

The findings of this study have significant implication on the conception of quality in for-profit private higher education. For-profit private higher education has to fulfil the business motive and education purpose. The emerged model from the study has contributed to an extended conception of quality where the value for money concept of quality has integrated the for-profit motive and the purpose of education through the transformation concept of quality. In addition, the transformation concept of quality is relevant to mass private higher education partly because the students are not from the elite group only. Hence, the ability to transform or add value to the students from diverse background determines the value of the institution. Hence, this emerged model serves as an alternative way of understanding the concept of quality and it is suitable for for-profit private higher education especially in developing countries. The model should inform the strategic management of educational quality for for-profit private higher education. Hence, being able to integrate the for-profit motive and purpose of education through the concept of quality may ensure proper alignment of the community, which may contribute to long-term quality and profitability of private higher education.

Strategic management of educational quality for private higher education.

The findings of this study have important implications for the model of strategic management of educational quality in for-profit private higher education. The findings show that being able to integrate the business for-profit motive with the purpose of education is crucial in order to assure and enhance educational quality in for-profit private higher education. This is, again, due to the unique context of for-profit private higher education, where financial sustainability is a primary concern of the business owner. The emerged model for strategic management of educational quality for for-profit private higher education suggests the value for money strategy as a way of

integrating educational quality and for-profit motive. To make this happen, it requires leaders with long-term commitment towards quality, as well as leaders with academic and business capability. The model also shows the importance of aligned community with the heart, mind and behaviour for quality. In summary, the emerged model provides specific constructs relevant to for-profit private higher education. Mostly importantly, the model shows how proper integration of educational quality and for-profit motive may ensure long-term quality and profitability of private higher education, in addressing the diverse quality concern of private higher education especially in developing countries.

Implications for Policy

The private higher education sector in Malaysia is now playing a more prominent role in national development. Around 40 percent of enrolment in 2011 is in the private sector. Education is also one of the National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP). It is estimated that private higher education institutions in Malaysia contribute RM 1.3 billion annually to the national economy (MOHE, 2007a). A large amount of the contribution is through international students. Despite the important role played by the private sector, diverse quality is still an issue. This concern not only affects the quality of graduates needed for national development, it affects the reputation of the Malaysian higher education as a preferred choice of targeted international students. Similarly, diverse quality is also a concern among most of the countries in Southeast Asia, and some other countries in Asia that rely heavily on for-profit private higher education to massify their higher education.

Based on the research findings, the following are policy suggestions to the ministry of education, quality assurance agency, professional bodies, as well as other

individuals and entities involved in policy making for higher education in Malaysia and other countries, in addressing the diverse quality concern.

Role of authorities.

The institutional strategic management model for educational quality is applicable at the sectorial level due to the similar challenges experienced by the higher education sector. An important contributing factor is the alignment of community through the compelling purpose, mission and values, value-for-money strategies as well as progressive system and dynamic culture. This requires the relevant authorities to play a strategic, collaborating and enabling role through various incentives and collaborative effort, in addition to being a regulator and enforcer. This role can be executed through the policy suggested in the following section. In a nutshell, without support from higher education institutions and the relevant stakeholders such as the students, professional bodies and industry employers, the diverse quality concern at higher education may persist.

Performance-driven funding or incentive.

The need to earn its own funding is the private sector's fundamental source of motivation for innovation and quality enhancement. This means that the private sector is responsive to the source of funding or other forms of incentive. Government, with the funding at hand, can provide incentives to private institutions to innovate and enhance their educational quality through performance-driven funding, such as research grant. Currently, most of the government funding is allocated to public institutions. An alternative way of providing incentive to the private sector is to encourage collaboration between public and private sectors. The dynamic culture of private institutions and the more established culture of public institutions may complement each other so that the government funding is used in the most efficient and productive manner.

Risk-based governance and quality assurance.

Reflecting on the diverse quality concern in the private higher education sector, it is time to adopt a risk-based approach towards private higher education governance and quality assurance. The type or level of governance and quality assurance activities should be guided by the level of potential risk of the various categories of institutions. The activities include new programme approval, new programme accreditation, approval for changes to programmes and so forth. This will unleash certain resources for more productive initiatives, allow certain matured institutions to have more autonomy and accountability to contribute to national development, and enable more focused governance and quality assurance activities at certain sub-sectors according to the potential risk level.

Transparent and competitive environment.

One critical issue emerged from the findings is that for-profit private higher education institutions may not be willing to invest resources in enhancing educational quality if they cannot foresee the return on their investment. This means the private institutions, through the value for money education, require stakeholders (students, parents, sponsors and industry employers) who are able to differentiate the quality level, as well as willing and able to pay premium prices for better quality. The implication to policy makers is that they can play a role by creating an ecosystem where the educational quality can be differentiated and good quality is appreciated and rewarded. This includes ensuring a competitive and transparent market where higher education institutions can compete fairly by differentiating themselves through value for money education. More specifically, the following initiatives may be considered:

- a) issuing licences more strategically, for more established and reputable institutions
- b) creating a culture and system where transformation quality is valued, and

- c) discouraging low value-adding institutions to stay through publishing relevant information to the market.

Leader selection and development programme.

The findings also highlighted the importance of institutional and faculty leaders with academic and business capability, as well as the intention to add value. The implication is the importance of proper selection process as well as training and development programme to develop leaders for the higher education sector. The selection process is applicable for the public sector; the institutional Board of Directors and senior management select the leaders in the private sector. The training and development programme should be applicable for both sectors to encourage sharing of good practices.

Implications for Practice

Implications to business owner and institutional leader.

An important implication of the extended conception of quality to institutional leader is the importance of being able to integrate for-quality and for-profit motives in order to ensure quality enhancement among the community of private higher education institutions. Institutions that are unable to integrate the two competing motives may constantly need to balance or resolve conflicts arising from the competing priorities, instead of focusing on enhancing institutional quality and profitability. As a result, the “zero-sum game” approach may cause the perception that for-profit motive has caused private higher education to compromise quality for profit.

The more specific model for strategic management of educational quality implies that for-quality and for-profit motives not only can co-exist but can synergise if they are properly integrated through the value for money strategy. This requires leaders with academic and business capability, who can establish strategies to enhance the

quality and translate that into business competitiveness for profitability. This has direct implication in the selection and professional development of leaders (Mercer & Pogolian, 2013; Morshidi et al., 2012). On the other hand, the emerged model also points to the importance of the stance of the business leader towards quality in a for-profit private institution. Besides the environment and resources, this stance of the business owner directly influences the formulation of the purpose, mission and values of the institution. Most importantly, the business owner and institutional leader role model the desire and effort to add more value to their targeted stakeholders. Through the effort, they create an aligned community with the heart, mind and behaviours to deliver quality and drive quality enhancement.

Reflecting on the greatest challenge experienced by the private institution in balancing quality and profitability, there is a pressing need for the institution to diversify its sources of revenue so that it is not too tuition dependent. The alternative revenue may include revenue from non-traditional markets such as continuing professional education, consultancy, commercialisation and so forth.

Implications for faculty leaders.

Two faculties were studied to obtain more in-depth understanding on the strategic implementation for quality enhancement at faculty level. The findings highlight the importance of capable faculty leaders with both academic and business capability as well as the good intention to add more value to stakeholders in order to earn respect and trust. Leveraging on the capability, faculty leaders are to develop quality as the faculties' competitive advantage. In addition, faculty leaders must create a progressive system and dynamic culture within the faculty to align the community (lecturers, administrative staff, students and industry employers) to assure and improve quality. Again, this finding points to the importance of proper dean selection as emphasised by existing studies (Mercer & Pogolian, 2013; Morshidi et al., 2012). It

also implies the importance of providing specialised training for this important position to better prepare faculty deans for the challenges ahead. As deans are normally selected by the senior management and approved by the business owner, it is important that they are respected by the academics too in order to drive quality enhancement.

Implications for lecturers.

The findings show the importance of passionate and competent lecturers, who are aligned to the institution's purpose, mission and values, in order to drive quality enhancement. This again points to the importance of proper recruitment, development, alignment and retention of good lecturers. The lasting and top performing lecturers shared the importance of institutional and faculty leaders to lead by example, to create a strong sense of community and to nurture a dynamic culture appreciated by the lecturers.

Methodological Reflection

The findings of this study shows that with proper research design guided by a solid conceptual or theoretical framework, a holistic single case study with embedded design can contribute to theory development through analytical generalization as highlighted by Yin (2009). In addition, allocating resources to collect in-depth data for a single embedded case as in this study is more important compared to collecting broad replicated data from different institutions. This is because the rich in-depth data provide stronger support for the triangulated findings hence enabling theory development.

Limitations of Research

Limitation of research is discussed in this section to help the reader get a sense of what the study findings mean. The limitations discussed are mostly beyond the researcher's control that may affect the findings of the study.

Researcher's skill and experience.

As an “insider” in the private higher education sector in Malaysia, the accumulated knowledge and experience has eased the understanding of the data in the case study. The researcher has tried to be as objective as possible so that the researcher's past experience would not influence the data collection and data analysis. Despite the conscious efforts described under the Methodology section, as a novice researcher, this was to a certain extent a limitation. During the initial stage of data collection, the researcher had sometimes asked leading questions based on personal experience and missed certain opportunities to probe further especially on sensitive information such as challenges experienced. However, after conducting a few interviews, the researcher gained the experience to be objective, not to be influenced by personal experience and tended to probe further for sensitive information.

Private sector's concern on confidentiality of information.

This study focused on a for-profit private higher education institution, which has a strong concern on revealing confidential information that may negatively affects its reputation. This affects the data collection efforts to a certain extent. The researcher has put in efforts to build trusting relationship with the participants and to promote openness in sharing of experience. However, the researcher does note the carefulness of certain participants in sharing of sensitive information, possibly due to concern of confidentiality of information. Hence, information about the challenges experienced by the case was obtained to the best possible effort; this may be a limitation to some degree.

In addition, reflecting on the data collected, it is observed that data regarding challenges faced by the institution are primarily collected through interview. Limited data were collected through document and observation. This is possibly due to the sensitivity of the information, which is normally not recorded nor shared openly in a business setup. This is a limitation to a certain extent.

In conclusion, the researcher does not claim this study as reflecting the “whole truth”. It serves to provide a foundation or model for future studies. It is argued that the findings, discussions and recommendations for future research benefit not only private higher education in Malaysia, but private higher education in other developing countries experiencing similar concerns.

Recommendations for Future Research

Reflecting on the implications, limitation and delimitations of the study, the following are the recommendations for future research.

Strategies of inquiry.

Since this is an exploratory study to understand how and why certain institutions succeed in quality transformation while others do not, an exemplary single case study with embedded design has been conducted (Creswell, 2008, p. 215; Yin, 2009, pp. 46-53). While single case is sufficient for analytical generalization to develop theory, the robustness of the findings can be increased through replications with more cases (Yin, 2009). Hence, future studies through literal and theoretical replications are recommended for enhancing educational quality in for-profit private higher education.

In addition, further studies on different types of for-profit private higher education institutions are recommended. This will enable the development of comprehensive approaches to manage the diverse educational quality of the for-profit private higher education sector with diverse types of institutions.

Areas of study.

Further work on how a for-profit private higher education institution can diversify its sources of revenue and manage its financial resource is suggested. The ability supports the sustainability of the for-profit private higher education sector.

More detailed studies to address the challenges in staff alignment, retention and capacity building or professional development in private higher education are timely in view of the importance of competent and passionate staff in assuring and enhancing educational quality.

In view of the important role played by the university and faculty leaders, exploring how the leaders' knowledge and life experiences shape their leadership behaviours and strategic management decisions is an important area for future research. This may contribute to proper selection and formulation of professional development programmes for the leaders.

At the sectorial level, further studies regarding how the authorities can implement the policies suggested are needed. With better understanding, more relevant and effective policies can be implemented so that the diverse quality issue in private higher education sector can be addressed.

Conclusion

Diverse educational quality and compromising quality for profit have been concerns expressed on the for-profit private higher education institutions despite various efforts in implementing quality assurance. The findings of this study show that educational quality and business motive not only can co-exist but also can synergise if properly integrated and it may ensure long-term quality and profitability of private higher education. The findings are supported by an extended model on conception of quality, as well as a specialised model on strategic management of educational quality for the for-profit private higher education. The insights of this study contribute to the existing literature in the area of quality assurance and enhancement in private higher education, in formulating relevant policies for addressing the diverse quality concern and encouraging good practices for higher education institutions in the quest for educational quality.

A PhD work needs to demonstrate work of substance, original investigations, contribution to knowledge and written to publishable standard. The study has explored a current and major concern of private higher education in Malaysia and other developing countries with mass private higher education, with limited literature in addressing the concern. Data have been collected through one year of fieldwork using proper methodology. The findings have contributed to the better understanding on the conception of quality and experience of private higher education in the quest of educational quality, the key challenges experienced and the key institutional contributing factors. Extended and specialised models have been presented to explain the central phenomenon. It has also provided constructive suggestions in addressing the problem. The thesis has been written with reasonable care to ensure it is up to a publishable standard.

Private higher education is playing a more prominent role in national development. By exploring the diverse quality concern and a for-profit private higher education institution's successful experience in the quest for educational quality, this study has contributed to the literature on quality and sustainability of private higher education and its contribution to national development.

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LIST OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN MALAYSIA

I. List of Private Universities (as of 2012):

- 1) Universiti Kuala Lumpur-Malaysian Institute of Industrial Technology (UniKL-MITEC)
- 2) Raffles University Iskandar Malaysia
- 3) AIMST University (Previously known as Asian Institute of Medicine, Science & Technology (AIMST))
- 4) Universiti Kuala Lumpur-Malaysian Spanish Institute (UniKL MSI)
- 5) Universiti Antarabangsa AlBukhary (AIU)
- 6) Multimedia University (MMU), Melaka Campus
- 7) Universiti Kuala Lumpur-Malaysian Institute of Chemical & Bioengineering Technology (UniKL-MICET)
- 8) Sekolah Klinikal Universiti Perubatan Antarabangsa (IMU)
- 9) INTI International University (Previously known as INTI University College)
- 10) University of Wales
- 11) Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN) Pahang
- 12) Wawasan Open University (WOU)
- 13) Quest International University Perak (QIUP) (Previously known as Premier International University Perak (PIUP))
- 14) Universiti Kuala Lumpur-Malaysian Institute of Marine Engineering Technology (UniKL-MIMET)
- 15) Universiti Kuala Lumpur-Royal College of Medicine Perak (UniKL RCMP) (Previously known as Kolej Perubatan DiRaja Perak)
- 16) Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP)
- 17) Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), Kampus Perak
- 18) UCSI University, Sarawak Campus
- 19) Al-Madinah International University (MEDIU)
- 20) Asia Metropolitan University (Previously known as Masterskill University College of Health Sciences)
- 21) Binary University of Management and Entrepreneurship (Previously known as Binary University College of Management and Entrepreneurship (BUCME))
- 22) Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL) (Previously known as Kuala Lumpur Infrastructure University College (KLIUC))

- 23) Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (Previously known as Limkokwing University College of Creative Technology)
- 24) Malaysia University of Science and Technology (MUST)
- 25) Management and Science University (MSU) (Previously known as Kolej Universiti Teknologi dan Pengurusan Malaysia (KUTPM))
- 26) Multimedia University (MMU), Cyberjaya Campus
- 27) Sunway University (Previously known as Sunway University College (SYUC))
- 28) Taylor's University (Previously known as Taylor's University College (Subang Jaya))
- 29) Universiti Kuala Lumpur - British Malaysian Institute (UniKL - BMI)
- 30) Universiti Kuala Lumpur - Institute of Medical Science Technology (UniKL - MESTECH)
- 31) Universiti Kuala Lumpur - Malaysia France Institute (UniKL-MFI)
- 32) Universiti Kuala Lumpur - Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology (UniKL MIAT)
- 33) Universiti Selangor (UNISEL), Kampus Berjantai Bestari (Previously known as Universiti Industri Selangor (UNISEL) - Kampus Berjantai Bestari)
- 34) Universiti Selangor (UNISEL), Kampus Shah Alam (Previously known as Universiti Industri Selangor (UNISEL))
- 35) Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN, Kampus Putrajaya)
- 36) Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (PINTAR Campus)
- 37) Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK) PINTAR Campus (Previously known as Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR))
- 38) Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) (Kampus Sungai Long)
- 39) Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) (Petaling Jaya Campus)
- 40) Manipal International University (MIU)
- 41) Perdana University
- 42) UCSI University, Kampus Kuala Terengganu
- 43) Asia e University (AeU)
- 44) Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation (Asia Pacific UTI) (Previously known as Asia Pacific University College of Technology and Innovation (Asia Pacific UCTI))
- 45) HELP University (Previously known as HELP University College)
- 46) International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF)
- 47) International Medical University (IMU)

- 48) Open University Malaysia (OUM)
- 49) UCSI University (Previously known as Kolej Antarabangsa Sedaya)
- 50) Universiti Kuala Lumpur - Institute of Product Design and Manufacturing (UniKL IPROM)
- 51) Universiti Kuala Lumpur - Kampus Kota (UniKL - Kampus Kota) Malaysian Institute of Information Technology (MIIT)
- 52) Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK)
- 53) Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) Kampus Kuala Lumpur

II. List of Foreign University Branch Campuses (as of 2012):

- 1) Curtin University, Sarawak Malaysia (CUSM) (Previously known as Curtin University of Technology, Sarawak Campus Malaysia)
- 2) Monash University Sunway Campus Malaysia (MUSM)
- 3) Swinburne University of Technology (Sarawak Campus)
- 4) Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed)
- 5) The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNIM)

III. List of University Colleges (as of 2012):

- 1) Southern University College (Previously known as Southern College)
- 2) Kolej Universiti Sains Kesihatan Masterskill, Kampus Pasir Gudang
- 3) INSANIAH University College, Alor Setar Campus (Previously known as Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kedah Darul Aman (INSANIAH))
- 4) International University College Of Technology Twintech (IUCTT) Kelantan Campus
- 5) University College of Islam Melaka (Previously known as Kolej Teknologi Islam Antarabangsa Melaka)
- 6) Kolej Universiti Antarabangsa Kejururawatan dan Sains Kesihatan KPJ (KPJIUC) (Previously known as KPJ International College of Nursing and Health Sciences)
- 7) Linton University College (Previously known as Kolej Linton)
- 8) Nilai University College (Previously known as Nilai International University College)
- 9) Shahputra University College (Previously known as Shahputra Kuantan City College)

- 10) Allianza University College of Medical Sciences (AUCMS) (Previously known as Allianza College of Medical Sciences (ACMS))
- 11) International University College of Technology Twintech (Sabah)
- 12) City University College of Science and Technology (CUCST) (Previously known as Unity College International (UCI))
- 13) Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences (CUCMS)
- 14) International Islamic University College Selangor (KUIS) (Previously known as Kolej Islam Selangor Darul Ehsan (KISDAR))
- 15) International University College of Arts and Science (I-UCAS)
- 16) International University College Of Technology Twintech
- 17) International University College Of Technology Twintech (IUCTT) Bangi Campus
- 18) KDU University College (Previously known as KDU College (Petaling Jaya))
- 19) Lincoln University College (Previously known as Lincoln College)
- 20) SEGi University College (Previously known as Kolej Segi)
- 21) International Universiti College Of Nursing
- 22) TATI University College (Previously known as Institut Teknikal Tinggi Terengganu (TATI))
- 23) BERJAYA University College of Hospitality (BERJAYA UCH)
- 24) Kuala Lumpur Metropolitan University College (KLMUC) (Previously known as Kolej Universiti Antarabangsa Cosmopoint)
- 25) MAHSA University College (Previously known as MAHSA College)
- 26) Twintech International University College of Technology, Sri Damansara Campus (Previously known as L & G Twintech Institute Of Technology)

Note: Different campuses with different licenses are listed as different institutions.



INSTITUTIONAL CONSENT FORM

Research Title: Institutional Factors that Contribute to Educational Quality at a Private Higher Education Institution in Malaysia

Researcher's Name: Thian Lok Boon (PHB 090003)

Supervisor's Name: Professor Dr. Gazi Mahabubul Alam and Datuk Dr. Abdul Rahman Idris

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and the nature and purpose of the research has been explained to me. I understand and agree that my institution will take part as a participating institution.

I understand the purpose of the research and my institution's involvement in it.

I understand that my institution may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect the institution's status now or in the future.

I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, the institution will not be identified and the individual identity will remain confidential.

I understand that the interview sessions will be audio-recorded.

I understand that data will be stored in the researcher's computer with password protection; only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and her examiners have access to it and the data will only be used for the purposes of the research and not shown to anyone else inappropriately.

I understand that I may contact the researcher or the supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Deputy Dean (Higher Degree), Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have read or been informed of the information about this study. By signing my name, I hereby represent my institution _____ to consent the participation in this study.



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Research Title: Institutional Factors that Contribute to Educational Quality at a Private Higher Education Institution in Malaysia

Researcher's Name: Thian Lok Boon (PHB 090003)

Supervisor's Name: Professor Dr. Gazi Mahabubul Alam and Datuk Dr. Abdul Rahman Idris

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and the nature and purpose of the research has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part as a participant.

I understand the purpose of the research and my involvement in it.

I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my identity will remain confidential.

I understand that I will be audio-recorded during the interview.

I understand that data will be stored in the researcher's computer with password protection; only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and her examiners have access to it and the data will only be used for the purposes of the research and not shown to anyone else inappropriately.

I understand that I may contact the researcher or the supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Deputy Dean (Higher Degree), Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signature _____

Date _____

I, _____ (print your name), have read or been informed of the information about this study. By signing my name, I hereby consent to participate in this study.



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research Title: **Institutional Factors that Contribute to Educational Quality at a Private Higher Education Institution in Malaysia**

This PhD research aims to explore your perspectives and experiences in the quest for educational quality at private higher education institution in Malaysia. Data will be collected through interviews with selected leaders, deans and academic staff, as well as documents provided and observations at the campus. As someone who has the experiences and knowledge about this institution, you are in a special position to provide the relevant information. The information you provide is very important.

During the interview, questions relating to how private higher education institution has driven educational quality may be asked. The questions may also involve your understanding regarding the meaning of quality in higher education, challenges experienced and strategies implemented in driving educational quality. The interview will normally last no more than one hour. Your candid responses are especially welcome. Follow up interview may be needed to seek further clarification and will normally not more than three rounds. The interview will be audio-recorded so that the researcher does not miss or misinterpret what you will say.

The researcher does not anticipate any risk in your participation other than you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions asked. The benefit to your institution of this interview will be the thesis.

The data will be stored in the researcher's computer with password protection. Your institution's name and your individual name will be treated in strict confidential and will not be identified in any publication or public statement for information obtained by this study unless your institution or you prefer the researcher to identify.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate in this research, please return the Institutional Consent Form or Participant Consent Form to the researcher. Even after you agree to participate or signed the informed consent document, you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

You may contact the researcher or the supervisor if you require further information about the research, and you may contact the Deputy Dean (Higher Degree), Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, if you wish to make a complaint relating to your involvement in the research. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

For further information about this study, please contact the researcher through the details below.

Researcher:

Thian Lok Boon (PHB 090003)

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

PhD student, Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy,
Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Supervisor:

Professor Dr. Gazi Mahabubul Alam

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Academic Performance Enhancement Unit, Office of the Vice Chancellor,
University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Second Supervisor:

Datuk Dr. Abdul Rahman Idris

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy, Faculty of Education,
University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Deputy Dean (Higher Degree):

Professor Dr. Moses Samuel

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE

Interviewees:

- a) Primary participants at the private higher education institution
 - i. University Leaders
 - ii. Deans
 - iii. Head of Departments
 - iv. Lecturers
- b) Secondary participants
 - a) Student
 - b) Parent

Research Objectives	Research Questions:
a) To explore the understanding of a private higher education institution in Malaysia on educational quality	1) What does educational quality mean to a private higher education institution in Malaysia?
2) To understand how a private higher education institution has driven educational quality	2) How has a private higher education institution in Malaysia established the goal, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies in the quest for educational quality?
3) To understand the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality	3) What are the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality?
4) To understand the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality	4) What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality at a private higher education institution in Malaysia?

A) Private Higher Education Institution Vice-Chancellor

Section 1: Background of the participant

Firstly, I would like to know your background and experience with higher education.

1. How long have you been in the current institution and the leadership role?
2. Prior to this institution, how many years have you been working with higher education and are they public or private higher education institutions? If you were in higher education leadership or managerial position, how long was that and what were the positions?
3. Have you worked with the industry before, for how long and in what position?

Section 2: Understand the meaning of ‘quality in higher education’ to the participants

1. May I know what does ‘quality in higher education’ mean to you? How this understanding comes about? What are the indicators of ‘quality in higher education’ to you?
2. Who are the key stakeholders of this private higher education institution?
3. What does quality in higher education mean to the different stakeholders?
4. How does the understanding of the stakeholders towards the meaning of quality in higher education come about?
5. What is a leader in private higher education accountable for?
6. What must a leader of private higher education institution do in driving educational quality and why?

Section 3: Understand how the participants have driven the educational quality

I would like to know your experience in driving educational quality at your institution.

1. How would you describe the scenario of the institution when you first took up the leadership position? [What were the programmes offered? What was the size of the institution in terms of student and staff number? How was the reputation of the institution?]

Establishing quality goal:

2. What have you considered in establishing the quality goal of your institution? Quality goal refer to the vision, mission, values and stance towards quality.
3. What were the external (outside the institution) factors that you have considered? Why? [e.g., external stakeholders’ expectations, market condition etc.]

4. What were the internal (within the institution) factors that you have considered? Why? [e.g., business leadership, strength and weakness including faculty and financial position etc.]
5. Have you considered your personal belief, vision, mission, values and stance towards quality and profit-making? Why?
6. Have you considered the role of leader in private higher education in establishing the quality goal for your institution? If yes, in what ways?

Formulating the strategy:

7. What have you considered in formulating the strategy to drive educational quality in your institution? [e.g., academic portfolio, product market opportunity etc.]
8. What is the strategy that has been formulated? What does it covered and why?

Implementing the strategy:

9. What are the processes or steps involved in implementing the strategy and why?
10. How the stakeholders involved in the process?
11. Have you considered the role of leader during strategy implementation? If yes, in what ways?

Section 4: Understand the challenges experienced

I would like to understand the challenges that you have experienced in driving educational quality at your institution as well as the strategies implemented.

1. What were the challenges experienced in establishing the quality goal? How the challenges come about?
2. What were the challenges experienced in formulating the strategy to drive the educational quality? How the challenges come about?
3. What were the challenges experienced in implementing the quality strategy? How the challenges come about?

Section 5: Understand the key contributing factors

I would like to understand the key factors contributing to educational quality at your institution.

1. What are the key factors contributing to educational quality?
2. What have the institution done right in achieving the educational quality?
3. Why are those contributing factors?
4. Why do you stay in the institution?

Others

5. What are the outcomes of the strategies implemented?
6. How would you describe the scenario of the institution now? [What are the programmes offered? What is the size of the institution in terms of student and staff number? How is the reputation of the institution? What are the key achievements? How is the employability of your graduates?]
7. What are your aspirations of the institution for the future?
8. What are the challenges ahead? Why? What can be considered in addressing the challenges?
9. What do you expect from the government, the Ministry of Higher Education or the Malaysian Qualifications Agency in order to support your aspirations?

Section 5: Others

1. Before we end this interview, are there any other thoughts or information about how you have driven the educational quality that you would like to share with me?

B) Private Higher Institution Dean

Section 1: Background of the participant

Firstly, I would like to know your background and experience especially with higher education.

1. How long have you been in the current institution and the leadership role?
2. Prior to this institution, how many years had you been working with other higher education institutions and are they public or private higher education institutions? If you were in higher education leadership or managerial position, how long was that and what were the positions?
3. Have you worked with the industry before, for how long and in what position?

Section 2: Understand the meaning of ‘quality in higher education’ to the participants

1. May I know what does ‘quality in higher education’ mean to you? How this understanding comes about? What are the indicators of ‘quality in higher education’ to you?

2. Based on your experience, what does 'quality' mean to this institution? What makes you say so?
3. Who are the key stakeholders of this private higher education institution?
4. What does quality in higher education mean to the different stakeholders?
5. How does the understanding of the stakeholders towards the meaning of quality in higher education come about?
6. What is a leader in private higher education accountable for?
7. What must a leader of private higher education institution do in driving educational quality and why?

Section 3: Understand how the participants have driven the educational quality

I would like to know your experience in driving educational quality at your faculty.

1. How would you describe the scenario of the faculty when you first took up the leadership position? [What were the programmes offered? What was the size of the faculty in terms of student and staff number? How was the reputation of the faculty?]

Establishing quality goal:

2. What have you considered in establishing the quality goal of your faculty? Quality goal refer to the vision, mission, values and stance towards quality.
3. What were the external (outside the institution) factors that you have considered? Why? [e.g., external stakeholders' expectations, market condition etc.]
4. What were the internal (within the institution and faculty) factors that you have considered? Why? [e.g., institutional leadership, faculty strength and weakness including faculty and financial position etc.]
5. Have you considered your personal belief, vision, mission, values and stance towards quality and profit-making? Why?
6. Have you considered the role of leader in private higher education in establishing the quality goal for your faculty? If yes, in what ways?

Formulating the strategy:

7. What have you considered in formulating the strategy to drive educational quality in your faculty? [e.g., academic portfolio, product market opportunity etc.]
8. What is the strategy that has been formulated? What does it covered and why?

Implementing the strategy:

9. What are the processes or steps involved in implementing the strategy and why?

10. How the stakeholders involved in the process?
11. Have you considered the role of leader during strategy implementation? If yes, in what ways?

Section 4: Understand the challenges experienced and strategies implemented

I would like to understand the challenges that you have experienced in driving educational quality at your faculty as well as the strategies implemented.

Challenges experienced:

1. What were the challenges experienced in establishing the quality goal?
2. What were the challenges experienced in formulating the strategy to drive the educational quality?
3. What were the challenges experienced in implementing the quality strategy?
4. How the challenges come about?

Strategies implemented:

5. What were the strategies implemented when faced with challenges during the establishment of the quality goal?
6. What were the strategies implemented when faced with challenges during the formulation of quality strategy?
7. What were the strategies implemented when faced with challenges during the implementation of quality strategy?
8. What are the outcomes of the strategies implemented?
9. How would you describe the scenario of the faculty now? [What are the programmes offered? What is the size of the faculty in terms of student and staff number? How is the reputation of the faculty? What are the key achievements? How is the employability of your graduates?]

Others

10. What are your aspirations of the faculty for the future?
11. What are the challenges ahead? Why? What can be considered in addressing the challenges?
12. What do you expect from the government, the Ministry of Higher Education or the Malaysian Qualifications Agency in order to support your aspirations?

Section 4: Others

1. Before we end this interview, are there any other thoughts or information about how you have driven the educational quality that you would like to share with me?

C) Private Higher Education Institution Lecturer

Section 1: Background of the participant

Firstly, I would like to know your background and experience, especially with higher education.

1. How long have you been an academic staff of this institution or this faculty?
2. Prior to this institution, how many years have you been working with other higher education institutions and are they public or private higher education institutions?
3. Have you worked with the industry before, for how long and in what position?

Section 2: Understand the meaning of ‘quality in higher education’ to the participants

1. May I know what does ‘quality in higher education’ mean to you? Why? What are the indicators of ‘quality in higher education’ to you?
2. Based on your experience, what does ‘quality’ mean to your faculty? What makes you say so?
3. Based on your experience, what does ‘quality’ mean to this institution? What makes you say so?
4. Who are the key stakeholders of this private higher education institution?
5. What does quality in higher education mean to the different stakeholders?
6. How does the understanding of the stakeholders towards the meaning of quality in higher education come about?
7. What is a leader in private higher education accountable for?
8. What must a leader of private higher education institution do in driving educational quality and why?

Section 3: Understand how the participants have driven the educational quality

I would like to know your experience with the current Dean in driving educational quality at your faculty.

1. How would you describe the scenario of the faculty when your current Dean first took up the leadership position? [What were the programmes offered? What was the size of the faculty in terms of student and staff number? How was the reputation of the faculty?]

Establishing quality goal:

2. May I know your involvement when the current Dean established the quality goal?
3. What have your current Dean considered in establishing the quality goal of your faculty? Quality goal refer to the vision, mission, values and stance towards quality.
4. What were the external (outside the institution) factors that your current Dean have considered? Why? [e.g., external stakeholders' expectations, market condition etc.]
5. What were the internal (within the institution and faculty) factors that your current Dean have considered? Why? [e.g., institutional leadership, faculty strength and weakness including faculty and financial position etc.]
6. Have your current Dean considered his/her personal belief, vision, mission, values and stance towards quality and profit-making? Why?

Formulating the strategy:

7. May I know your involvement when the current Dean formulated the strategy in driving educational quality?
8. What have your current Dean considered in formulating the strategy to drive educational quality in your faculty? [e.g., academic portfolio, product market opportunity etc.]
9. What is the strategy that has been formulated? What does it covered and why?

Implementing the strategy:

10. May I know your involvement when the current Dean implemented the strategy in driving educational quality?
11. What are the processes or steps involved in implementing the strategy and why?
12. How the other stakeholders involved in the process?

Section 4: Understand the challenges experienced and strategies implemented

I would like to understand the challenges that you have experienced with the current Dean in driving educational quality at your faculty as well as the strategies implemented.

Challenges experienced:

1. What were the challenges experienced in establishing the quality goal?
2. What were the challenges experienced in formulating the strategy to drive the educational quality?
3. What were the challenges experienced in implementing the quality strategy?
4. How the challenges come about?

Strategies implemented:

5. What were the strategies implemented by the current Dean when faced with challenges during the establishment of the quality goal?
6. What were the strategies implemented by the current Dean when faced with challenges during the formulation of quality strategy?
7. What were the strategies implemented by the current Dean when faced with challenges during the implementation of quality strategy?
8. What are the outcomes of the strategies implemented?
9. How would you describe the scenario of the faculty now? [What are the programmes offered? What is the size of the faculty in terms of student and staff number? How is the reputation of the faculty? What are the key achievements? How is the employability of your graduates?]

Others

10. What are your aspirations of the faculty for the future?
11. What are the challenges ahead? Why? What can be considered in addressing the challenges?
12. What do you expect from the government, the Ministry of Higher Education or the Malaysian Qualifications Agency in order to support your aspirations?

Section 4: Others

1. Before we end this interview, are there any other thoughts or information about your experience with regards to quality that you would like to share with me?

D) Student

Section 1: Background of the participant

Firstly, I would like to know your background and experience with this higher education institution.

1. Which programme are you studying now?

2. Do you hold any position at this institution (e.g., member of Student Council)?
3. For international student, may I know which country you are from?

Section 2: Expectation of the participant with regards to quality of higher education

1. May I know what have you considered in deciding which (country, for international student) institution or programme to enrol? [What do you expect with regards to quality?]
2. For international student, what makes you choose this country? Why not other country?
3. How do you get to know this institution? What makes you choose this institution? Why not other institution? Why not public university?
4. What makes you choose the programme?
5. What message did you get with regards to “quality” of the (country, for international student) institution, faculty or programme before you join the programme?
6. Who, if any, has influenced you in your decision? In what ways?

Section 3: Experience with regards to quality of higher education

I would like to know your experience at this institution.

1. Please share with me your experience with this institution, faculty or programme. [Does it fulfil your expectations? Any concerns?]
2. Please comment with regards to
 - i. Leadership / management of the faculty/programme
 - ii. Academic staff
 - iii. Facilities
 - iv. Programme-content, subjects
 - v. Teaching and learning
 - vi. Assessment
 - vii. Support services
 - viii. Readiness for further study or workplace
3. How would you describe the most important or valuable change in you as a result of this experience, if any?
4. What do you expect for this (country, for international student) institution, faculty or programme with regards to quality or your experience?

Section 4: Others

1. Before we end this interview, are there any other thoughts or information about your experience with regards to quality that you would like to share with me?

E) Parent

Section 1: Background of the participant

Firstly, I would like to know your background and experience with this higher education institution.

1. Which programme is your child studying now?
2. Which year or semester is your child in now?

Section 2: Expectation of the participant with regards to quality of higher education

1. May I know what have you considered in deciding which institution or programme to enrol? [What do you expect with regards to quality?]
2. How do you get to know this institution? What makes you choose this institution? Why not other institution? Why not public university?
3. What makes you choose the programme?
4. What message did you get with regards to “quality” of the institution, faculty or programme before you join the programme?
5. Who, if any, has influenced you in your decision? In what ways?

Section 3: Experience with regards to quality

I would like to know your experience at this institution.

1. Please share with me your or your child’s experience with this institution, faculty or programme. [Does it fulfil your expectations? Any concerns?]
2. Please comment with regards to
 - ix. Leadership / management of the institution/faculty/programme
 - x. Academic staff
 - xi. Facilities
 - xii. Programme-content, subjects
 - xiii. Teaching and learning
 - xiv. Assessment

- xv. Support services
 - xvi. Readiness for further study or workplace
3. How would you describe the most important or valuable change in your child as a result of this experience, if any?
 4. What do you expect for this institution, faculty or programme with regards to quality?

Section 4: Others

1. Before we end this interview, are there any other thoughts or information about your experience with regards to quality that you would like to share with me?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Instruction:

Interview must be audio recorded.

1. The purpose of the interview is to obtain information which cannot be gathered from survey/questionnaires as well as observation, especially the view/perspective of the research participants' knowledge and experience.
2. The interview must be carried out based on the prior observation at the particular site – the focus is directed towards the research participants revolving about the research topic and questions.
3. The questions given only serve as a guide. It gives space for issues/ideas/themes that may emerge during the visit or during observation and during the interviews.
4. The response of the research participants is used to guide the follow-up questions during the interviews.
5. Each question must be probed until saturation level, i.e. until no new matters emerge.
6. Use [R] for researcher and [P] for participants in your interview notes.

Name Organisation :

Name of participant :

Place :

Date/Day :

Time/Duration :

Research Objectives	Research Questions:
1) To explore the understanding of a private higher education institution in Malaysia on educational quality	1) What does educational quality mean to a private higher education institution in Malaysia?
2) To understand how a private higher education institution has driven education quality	2) How has a private higher education institution in Malaysia established the goal, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies in the quest for education quality?
3) To understand the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in the quest for education quality	3) What are the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for education quality?
4) To understand the key institutional factors contributing to education quality	4) What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality?

Interview script for getting started:

Good morning _____ ! Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to understand the experience of private higher education institution in Malaysia in driving educational quality, so that the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality can be identified. The research objectives are:

- a) To explore the understanding of a private higher education institution in Malaysia on educational quality
- b) To understand how a private higher education institution has driven educational quality
- c) To understand the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality
- d) To understand the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality

The experience and the model developed through this study will contribute to the policy review, policy formulation and implementation by the ministries, quality assurance agency, quality assurance professionals and higher education institutions. More specifically, the findings and discussions of this study will contribute through sharing of good practices to the private higher education institution's university and faculty leadership especially in developing countries.

I understand that you are very busy and I expect that this interview will take about 60 minutes. I would like to have your consent to record this interview. The interview record will be transcribed and sent to you for your review. The recording will be kept in a secured place and will be destroyed in five years.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time during the study. Your confidentiality will be strictly protected throughout the research process. A code (such as "Participant 1" or "Participant 2") will be given to your transcription. In the writing of the dissertation, pseudonym will be used for your name. Your name will not be mentioned in the dissertation unless you give me the permission to do so.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin the interview?

Guide to interview	Researcher's note - To monitor, follow up and keep track	Researcher's Comments
		Issues/ Reflection
<p>Part A: Getting started - Rapport building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Getting to know your participant - Participant's rights & confidentiality - Explanation of research objectives <p>Participant's background</p> <p>Part B: <i>Probing</i> Conversation based on your observation at research site. Give attention to the participant's response to guide you in the interviewing process.</p> <p>Part C : Concluding the interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information • Appreciation 		

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Reminder:

1. The objective/focus of observation is to get as much detail (thick description) as possible.
2. Avoid making a summary/evaluation when observing.
3. Record what is seen and what is heard, focus on the events / activities, people and place. Any comments/opinion etc., is noted as observer's comment.
4. This protocol is only a guide. Observer must give allowance for emerging issues/events/ideas.
5. Observer is also encouraged to write down question(s) to be asked in the interview. Questions that will provide researcher with more detailed clarification on the observation.

Background Information**Name of organization:****Name of participation / people involved:****Observation site:****Topic of observation:****Date/day:****Time:****No. of observation:****Name of observer:****Role of observer:**

Research Objectives	Research Questions:
1) To explore the understanding of a private higher education institution in Malaysia on educational quality	1) What does educational quality mean to a private higher education institution in Malaysia?
2) To understand how a private higher education institution has driven educational quality	2) How has a private higher education institution in Malaysia established goal, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies in the quest for educational quality?
3) To understand the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality	3) What are the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality?
4) To understand the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality	4) What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality at a private higher education institution in Malaysia?

Guidelines	Observation notes (which include observer's comment/s)	Observer's notes/reflection
Description of the following: 1. Place/surrounding, environment, ambience and facilities		
2. People- primary and secondary participants		
3. Events		
4. Activities		

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

Reminder

1. For each encounter (whether it is observation or interview) with the research participant, collect all necessary documents.
2. The document may be institution's portfolio, data and statistics, strategic plan, policies, annual report, graduates' employability and employers' profile or other materials used at the research site.
3. Obtain permission before making copies of the above documents. File up the documents.
4. Analyze the contents of the documents collected.
5. Summarize each document using the given guidelines.
6. Refer to the research questions when prepare the summary.

Guidelines

<p>Research Site</p> <p>Title of the document:</p> <p>Date of procurement:</p> <p>Types of document:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name and describe the document obtained. 2. Explain the situation/process of obtaining the document 3. Summarise the content of the document [refer to THE research question] 4. Significance of the document to the research objective/s. 	
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CASE-SESSION REPORT

(Case report incorporates the extended field notes, interview summary sheet and document summary sheet)

Reminder: After data analysis and summary sheet have been completed for the three protocols (i.e., observation, interview and document), the following are carried out:

1. Combine the three completed summary sheets to produce a story or report of the case.
2. During the writing, focus on the participant's experience regarding the phenomenon being studied.
3. The writing gives an impression to the reader regarding the experience of the participant, an overall impression of the site and other participant.
4. Every written idea/issue/theme is supported by examples found in the three protocols.
5. Refer to the research questions when the data analysis is conducted and when writing the report.
6. The writing of case report is done according to the guideline provided in the next page.

For every round of visit, the following documents are filed:

1. Observation Field Note
2. Interview Protocol
3. Transcription of the recorded interview
4. Evidence of document obtained from the site, and
5. Document Analysis of the document

Research Objectives	Research Questions:
1) To explore the understanding of a private higher education institution in Malaysia on educational quality	1) What does educational quality mean to a private higher education institution in Malaysia?
2) To understand how a private higher education institution has driven educational quality	2) How has a private higher education institution in Malaysia established goal, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies in the quest for educational quality?
3) To understand the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in the quest for educational quality	3) What are the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality?
4) To understand the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality	4) What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality at a private higher education institution?

Guidelines

<p>a. Focus / Case Report Title</p> <p>b. Data from the three protocols is combined to produce a story of the phenomenon / research topic.</p> <p>Can cover the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical condition of the site• Background of the participants• Activities related to the theme of this round of data collection. <p>c. Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary• Recommendation / issues	<p><i>(Write as many pages as needed to produce a thick description.)</i></p>
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INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION (EXAMPLE)

Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3 (FA-D-3)

Note: [] From researcher. Others, from participant.

Research Question 1

[Thank you very much for accepting this subsequent interview. As mentioned to you earlier, your participation to this research is 100 percent voluntary. If you don't mind, I would like to quickly summarise what you have mentioned in the previous interview. ...

As well as some of the factors contribute to your experience in transforming the faculty, changes to the leadership's mind set to be more academic-oriented... you have shared with me your experience in positioning your faculty... the project-oriented learning.. how to engage students in the journey. Those are the items that we have discussed earlier. I would like to continue by focusing on few additional items that I hope you don't mind sharing with me through this interview. To start with, may I know from your personal perspective, what does quality mean to you? When the word "quality" is mentioned... how do you see "quality"? What does "quality" mean to you personally?]

I believe "quality" is the ability to satisfy the needs or exceed them of stakeholders, in a consistent manner.

[Do you mind to elaborate further?]

If I buy a car from a quality manufacturer, I assume that this car will run very well.... If I have any issue, the manufacturer will take full responsibility for it. And they will support me though out the ownership of the car. This is from product point of view. That's why you go for a brand because normally you associate it with quality. You presume even you have not use the brand before, your perception is that this will give you a great experience, achieve your expectation and in the event there is an issue with

27 them, the manufacturer will help you with this. From an educational point of view, this
28 is slightly more complicated because it deals with people, people are different. So, if the
29 question is what quality education means to me personally, will be an education that is
30 capable of transforming an individual, enabling an individual and also bringing the best
31 out of this individual. So, education from a university perspective is not only about
32 knowledge, otherwise you would have borrowed the books and read them. It is an
33 experience, that between entering and exiting, he or she should have realise new thing
34 about him/herself and at the same time, brought some positive change into them. That
35 will be to me quality education.

36 [I see. I heard your perspectives, one about meeting stakeholders' expectation as well as
37 from transformational point of view where it really adds value to student and help them
38 to be the best that they can be. If you don't mind, may be let me touch a little bit more
39 about meeting stakeholders' expectation, the first point that you highlighted. So, in this
40 context of private higher education and from your personal experience as well, who do
41 you see as the relevant stakeholders.]

42 Definitely, the first stakeholder will be the students. They are the most important part of
43 the educational process. They are the reason for it, especially in the private setup, they
44 are the reason for it. Society at large is also a very important stakeholder. Society
45 realises its full potential through the realisation of the full potential of the individual.
46 Now, once this happens I believe the needs of others equally important stakeholders will
47 be also satisfied. This includes people like the employers, sponsors whether the parent
48 or government.

49 [You mentioned the primary stakeholder in the context of private higher education is
50 students. So, from your perspective and from your experience as well, what student
51 wants from us, I mean from the university and from your faculty?]

52 I think the students are not very clear on what do they want. I think parents are
53 relatively clearer and what they want is a job. I believe that education is beyond a job. A
54 job is a part of that. I don't think we should education people to get a job. I don't think
55 this should be the role of education otherwise ??? So, through this experience, the
56 students, they now can have an opinion, they really know what they want and that is
57 truly transformational. Yeah. This is part of the transformation. So someone says I have
58 a vision in life and the job is a way to achieve the vision and to achieve financial
59 security or whatever, rather than being the vision itself. I think that is really
60 transformational. An educational institution who works on this will definitely produce
61 good graduates, they will definitely get a good job, they will get good salary... But, they
62 will be the change agent when they join the society and that is how a university could
63 change the society as well.

64 [You mentioned about the importance of helping student to understand what they want,
65 their mission in life and that is the basic ingredient for student to get a job eventually as
66 well as make a difference in the society. At the same time, you also mentioned about the
67 intention of parent to really help the child to get a job, so may I hear your opinion about
68 that? The parent's intention, the reason why they pay... the reason why they send their
69 kids to your faculty or this university or generally for higher is to help their children to
70 get a job. What is your comment about it?]

71 My comment is parent will want the best for their children. The best is what they think
72 is the best. Currently the generation who are parents, from my experience and
73 interaction with them within the local Malaysian context which is very different from
74 other places, majority of them would want their kids to be able to lead a good
75 comfortable life, through getting an employment. So that is a primary objective.
76 Definitely they want them to be good people, and to be respected and all these things.
77 But the primary reason from parent point of view seems to be getting a good,

78 comfortable and stable job. And they see a degree from reputable educational institution,
79 of a good quality as a first step to achieve this objective. Yeah. As a matter of fact, I
80 think other stakeholders, maybe the government, they also use this as a very important
81 metric as a measurement of the success of education, that is graduate can get job easily,
82 as an indication that the educational institution did a very job.

83 [What is your opinion that the government also has similar view that a very important
84 measurement of success of a university is helping student to get a job?]

85 I personally speaking, if we transform an individual, add value, the job will happen. But
86 if getting the job becomes the primary motive of education, although it's good and
87 noble, it actually limits the potential of the goodness that education can add. So, if I
88 want to go to ... if my objective is only to go from KL (Kuala Lumpur, the capital of
89 Malaysia) to Seremban (a city on the south of KL), that is good if I am going south. But
90 if my objective is to go Singapore, by default, I can stop at Seremban if I want. So it is
91 really a journey and how high we aim. I know from quality point of view,
92 transformational experience is very difficult to measure. So this is really in a way when
93 it comes to student experience, it is the dilemma of quality. Because there are certain
94 things that you can easily measure, you can measure the mark easily, you can measure
95 the starting salary easily, you can measure whether a student can get a job or not easily,
96 but how would you measure if this individual is a better individual, that will become a
97 better parent, prepare even a better offspring so that the society will become a better
98 society. That's really something that I don't see getting a fair share of focus. Although
99 people talk about it, but we say what is measured is what gets done. That's why it leads
100 also the educational institution to tailor their missions around it, to satisfy the needs of
101 the industry. Yeah.

102 [You have mentioned a few points. You mentioned about better individual. How would
103 you describe a better individual from your personal point of view?]

104 OK. When we compare a society to society and if we say society A is more cultured, or
105 society A is capable of producing novel prize winners, society A is capable of
106 producing iconic artist, philosopher or authors. To my mind, that society will have a
107 higher percentage of individuals who manage to transform the environment. So a better
108 individual or a good individual is someone really could or have the potential to change
109 and improve and bring about innovation and higher value and higher cultural and
110 societal input. So, what is measured is we want very good degree, we can educate
111 everyone to become doctor, engineer, accountant and so on. Theoretically speaking this
112 is possible. You could put them through certain... But when you put this people
113 together, do you really have a society that is not to say superior but capable of moving
114 the humanity at large into a new level. So, I believe this can happen through education if
115 education focuses on things beyond employment.

116 [Interesting. I think this needs a little bit more thinking and possible another discussion
117 with you later. If you don't mind, may I explore another point? It seems to me that there
118 has been a very clear message from the ministry as well as from the parent that about
119 the important of employment. May I know from your personal opinion and personal
120 experience, why do you think this becomes such as an important agenda in this country
121 and for the parents as well?]

122 **Research Question 3**

123 I think from the government point of view, it is very clear. Because employment or
124 unemployment around the world is an indication of how good the economic is doing.
125 And, this also can lead to more stable, prosperous society that is easier to manage and
126 things like that. So, any government has a very clear interest to get everyone employed,
127 rather than having people asking for social security or asking for help from the
128 government. That is extremely clear. Likewise from the parent's point of view, they ...
129 may be there are people who have their own difficulty in live. Most of the people that I

130 speak to, they do not necessary come from very rich background, may be can trace their
131 parents and grandparents, they were quite poor, a bit of suffering and struggle. So, they
132 see that the fact that having a good job is an important thing. Now, it is extremely
133 important to stress that I do not challenge that this is an important thing. It is extremely
134 important because the economy needs to be able to have people who is employed and
135 people who pay taxes, and this will definitely help everyone. But the education role I
136 believe should be stretched a bit into something that may be difficult to measure, which
137 is how much are we really doing to bring the best out of people. Let me throw it like this.
138 If I give you student A, student B, Student C. Let's say student A, you can barely
139 educate him or her to get a degree and let's say we do that (help student A to get a
140 degree) and we do it brilliantly. We give them all the necessary support so that they
141 won't drop off, and we make sure they become an active member of a society. Let's say
142 that is student A. And student C has the potential to invent the next technology to
143 change the world, to make our dependent on hydrocarbon a history. Are we really
144 preparing this student C to achieve that potential? That's really the question that I am
145 not sure that the current education system is doing. It is difficult. The moment we start
146 talking about standard and quality, and conforming to the standard, we are standardizing.
147 Now this outlier, this person with unique capabilities that may even not be recognised
148 by the education system as capable, can we cater for that? That's really the issue. So,
149 the education system generally is for the average, for the normal individual within
150 statistically speaking, within the middle, it does a really good job actually. Even at the
151 weaker side, with a lot of support that normally a good university also do a good job to
152 raise the level. But do we really bring the best out of everybody, or at least those have
153 the potential to change the world. That to me is a question.
154 [This question that you have, is it for specially higher education in Malaysia or a general
155 comment?]

156 I think it is for education in Malaysia. Because I, I, I think one the challenges that we
157 have is that we are operating within an eco-system that may not necessary supports the
158 university to produce this. Let me give you an example. I walk through the commercial
159 block. If you go to the... where the security room is, towards the gym at commercial
160 block. You will see names of different artists. You have They put 6 or 7 artists, none
161 of them is Malaysian. I am not sure they cannot find an artist from Malaysia or they just
162 want to promote the Anglo-Saxon art. But if it is difficult for us to find within the eco-
163 system an outlier, a person who has really make it beyond everything, it is difficult for
164 the university to produce that. However, what I am thinking is if the university puts this
165 as its Mission, may be they can change the society rather than waiting... (for society to
166 change). In other part of the world, you could step out of the university and see, if you
167 are talking from engineering point of view, the chair where James Watt has sat, may be
168 from an artistic point of view, the place where Picasso used to draw. This actually helps
169 you as an individual to see that you are also capable of similar feat. We don't really see
170 it here because our education system is dependent also on copying the best model in the
171 world which may not be indigenous to us.

172 [Interesting. Wow, we have explored a lot about, I think your personal aspiration as well
173 as what a higher education can be when it comes to bring out the best in an individual
174 and how it can make a change in the society, which is very interesting and important. I
175 think the message that I hear from you is at the moment the focus of the Ministry of
176 Higher Education as well as the parents at the moment seems to focus on a lot on the
177 academic benefit of higher education which may not be going beyond of bringing out
178 the best of an individual and the impact on the society as a whole. That sounds to me
179 some of the concerns that you have when we talk about the quality of higher education.
180 May I right in saying that?]

181 Yes, you are right. I just want to re-iterate that the economy is very important and it will
182 definitely improve the standard of living and everything. This is not something that I am
183 not advocating not looking at it but just to stretch the standard of education to beyond
184 where we can measure things. This... some individuals may not be very comfortable
185 with.

186 **Research Question 1, 2, 3 and 4**

187 [In fact, just to share my understanding on some of the intention and possibly the
188 measurement of the Ministry of Higher Education, they are also aspired to have novel
189 prize winner. So, possibly that is the intention that they have, apparently... you also
190 understand that it seems to be a challenging task that the higher education eco-system
191 does not seem to nurture that kind of individual, even though that is actually one of the
192 indicators or measurements of the Ministry of Higher Education or the higher education
193 in Malaysia at the moment. It does not seem to be happening at the moment. May I
194 know how the way you see higher education from your perspective, been actually
195 transformed into the Faculty in terms of possibly the vision and mission of the Faculty?
196 How that perspective, your expectation, your understanding towards quality in higher
197 education been translated into the Faculty?]

198 Well, we... we adopt this purpose and mission of the University. We adopt the same.
199 But, the way I look at it personally, being a “top employer’s top choice” is a by-product
200 of producing very, very good engineers, engineers who are innovative and things like
201 that. So the way I... I see the role of the Faculty is how much value we really add to our
202 students and again through our project-oriented learning. We give the students the
203 opportunity to stretch themselves and realise what they are capable off, which is often
204 surprising to them and to me as well. Just to share with you the solar boat competition,
205 this happened on the 7 of July. We asked these first year first semester students to
206 design a boat that can cross the lake using solar energy. And, I was very, very worried

207 that I will end up boats that won't move. I was very, very concern and very, very
208 worried. And what happened, they exceeded my expectation in a way that we decided to
209 give everybody full mark for that component of the course, because they did well, even
210 the weakest one. All the boats work. All the boats completed the race. It was really
211 amazing experience. So, keeping that in mind, it just gives you an indication that you
212 could do few things differently and these students now think that they are capable of
213 doing bigger things. Now, let's say I have given them a much easier task, I think the
214 possibility for them to attain this may not happen, or may be happen at year 3 or year 4.
215 But now, they are empowered by themselves that they can actually do things and I am
216 sure when they go to semester two they will try things of higher sophistication and that
217 kind of things. So, this is how we continue doing our things which is project-oriented
218 learning which is really something that open huge potential and opportunity for us to
219 stretch ourselves, stretch our students and keep on bringing the best out of people that
220 we keep in touch with. When they do this, I am sure they will acquire teamwork,
221 communication and other skills that the industry is crying for or asking for. And I am
222 sure people trained in this environment will, should they decide, end up getting a job.
223 But at the same time, if someone chooses to change the world or want to do things on
224 their own, may be even they did not know before, at least now they know how much
225 they are capable of. That is really a revelation, it is a revelation. Even for me after doing
226 this for so long, when I push the envelope, I am thinking I may humiliate the Faculty in
227 front of everyone if the thing does not work. I am always surprised. And, guess what.
228 When this feat, that is considered impossible to achieve, it just sets a new benchmark.
229 We know that this is doable, we have done it. This is going to take us higher and higher,
230 further and further. So, this is something that I see that even from our perspective as
231 educators, help you see what may be we are capable of. May be we did not know that
232 we can do it. Compare this to the traditional way, you will be doing the same thing that

233 you know that can solve, you know that everyone can do it. May be you teach it
234 differently but that is the standard thing that people expect that you can do like two (2)
235 Mathematics.

236 [Thanks for a very interesting sharing. May be I can bring your attention to a point that
237 you briefly touch on just now that the mission of this University is “top employers’ top
238 choice university by 2016”, I understand that this is a new mission for this University.
239 How do you personally see this? What does this mean to you and possibly to your
240 faculty?]

241 It is a by-product of creating... so the individual that I hope... I can contribute to
242 making people who would be sought-after by the industry. I hope they will be sought-
243 after by the non-for-profit organization, I hope they will volunteer their time even for
244 course that may not be pioneered by the top employer but things that have a meaning.
245 So, the entire thing really revolves around giving meaning in what we are doing. So, if
246 we empower students so that they can find a meaning to... I have spoken to people from
247 the industry that said “Look, you have to tell your people that engineering is very boring.
248 When they come to my company, I am designing aeroplane wing and what do they have?
249 They will never see the aeroplane and what they see is number, number, number and
250 they keep on crunching numbers. This is just a small element of the aeroplane and they
251 will never see the aeroplane.” This is to me is a major flaw because this component if I
252 can show the engineer that this is important to the safety of the aeroplane, I think that is
253 what is important and to continue to focus on. So, to me that is to say that I subscribe to
254 the mission and again it is a by-product of a great education. But I also would like my
255 students to have options, to go on their own, to try new things and may be seek not to be
256 employed. I think these kinds of things are extremely important, empowering and
257 elevating rather than we all are put in a situation where there is a logical sequence for

258 life. That is you study, you graduate, you get a job, you know. And then, I don't
259 know... you get old and die. I don't think this is necessary the only logical sequence.

260 [It sounds to me that you would like the faculty to provide more opportunities and
261 options for the students, to enable the students to have more opportunities and options in
262 life, which may go beyond just being an employed staff [yes], which of course is one of
263 the option but not the only options. [yes] I would like to touch on another point that you
264 mentioned in the previous interview, about the importance of the leaders of the
265 university that focus a lot on academic aspects, beyond the business expectation. So, can
266 you share with me how you would describe the academic leader of this University,
267 specifically the vice-chancellor in terms of his mission, stance towards the future of the
268 University as well as on his perspective regarding being a private university, what is his
269 stance in terms of profit making?]

270 I think what I understand about the academic leadership and even from the non-
271 academic leadership, I agree also with a huge extend that profit is very important
272 because it also empowers us to do thing. To my mind being profitable and doing a great
273 job is very much aligned. As a matter of fact, it makes a lot of sense, from financial and
274 economic sense, to be a great university. Because this will render the product that we
275 are offering or any university is offering more valuable and also to make more profit
276 and hopefully through this, the university can reward its staff better and also to give
277 scholarship to deserving students better. I think that leadership does not have any
278 dilemma in that sense. I personally don't see any contradiction as well.

279 [Meaning to say, in your opinion you do see the leaders view providing quality
280 education does eventually will attract, having the university earning more profit and that
281 profit can be used to reward staff as well as to grant more scholarship. [Yes] Is that the
282 stance of the university as far as you know, how the university sees the relationship
283 between quality as well as profit-making?]

284 At the leadership level I believe it is, at the leadership level.

285 [OK. You also mentioned about the non-academic leader, I suspect you mean the
286 business leader, the owner of the University. [Yes] Do you see him having similar
287 stance?]

288 I think so to a large extent because I think the business leader or the owner is the one
289 who appointed the vice-chancellor at the end of the day and I think it is his vision. So, I
290 think... as I told you, it does not require a... If you are having a good company that
291 makes very good cars, that make a lot of business sense. Likewise, if you have a
292 university that has a very good reputation, produces quality graduates, have good impact
293 on the society, the government, the economy, I think that makes a big business sense as
294 well.

295 [There are concern that the profit-making motive... I think in your opinion it does not
296 stand in this university but there are general concern that for-profit making motive may
297 actually make university, specifically private university compromises when it comes to
298 quality... providing quality education. It sounds to me that you do not think this is
299 relevant to this institution.]

300 I think it shouldn't be relevant anywhere. It is an open economy. If you make cars and
301 you are the only company that makes car, then yes. You have the power to reduce the
302 quality and people have no choice but to buy the car. But if you have 10 or 20
303 companies making cars, I think the consumers will vote for the quality. Now, looking at
304 Malaysian scene specifically, I think there are plenty of education providers and there
305 are even foreign quite prestige providers as well. And this competition among the
306 different universities enabled by the fact that they are for-profit will eventually force
307 them to give the best quality for their customers, their students. I actually don't see that
308 as negative impact at all.

309 [Thank you very much for that comment. And, there is also a general concern about...
310 higher education is a very resource extensive industry. It requires a lot of investment,
311 huge investment. As compared to public university who has a lot more funding from the
312 government, private university or institution relies on the private investor, who may
313 have limited capital or financial resource. And as a result, there is a concern that it may
314 limit the growth and even limit the quality of education provided by the private higher
315 education. How do you see that relevant to this institution?]

316 I think I have mentioned this before I will say it again. The lack of resources often
317 drives innovation. So, if you don't have resources and you are not innovative, I think
318 very soon you will go out of business. Because if other is able to provide the same
319 service or better at the same price or cheaper, they definitely... those don't have the
320 backing of government or other sponsors, they will go out of business. So, it is quite a
321 simple economically situation. So at the end of the day, if the public university is able to
322 provide opportunity to everyone and it provides it cheaper than the private, the private
323 will go out of business. And, the private among themselves, again it is the cost benefit
324 analysis that people will do. This may sounds brutal or cold that you are higher
325 education and becoming a commodity. But if you think about it, it is a reality. People
326 who have enough resources and they think that education in America is better and they
327 can afford it, they go there. And, those who have less resources and think that
328 University A is better than University B, they will always go to University A. There is
329 no one that thinks that University B is better than University A but still goes to
330 University A if he or she can afford University B. So in that sense, it is extremely
331 important as a matter of fact that there are... there is an incentive for the university to
332 do better and so that it remains relevant to the market.

333 [I see. It sounds to me that affordability is a very consideration when it comes to
334 choosing a university as well as the value for the money that they pay, when you

335 mentioned about cost-benefit just now [yes], the amount of money they pay and the
336 return on investment. That seems to be a very important understanding that everyone
337 needs to have when it comes to private higher education. It is about cost and benefit,
338 which seems to be a bit different when it comes to public university.]

339 Actually, if you think about it, it is not different. The moment if the government now
340 funds the private in the same way, it will behave the same way. So, you see, we
341 response to incentive, both positive and negative incentive, economically rational
342 people. So, you can change the environment by just changing the incentive. What I want
343 to say is the same economical rule governs both the public and private. It is like when
344 you have access, when you don't have access, how would you behave. For example, if
345 the students, they want to build the car and there is a hundred (100) ringgit available so
346 you just need to use it. Do you think the student will seek sponsorship? I don't think
347 they will seek sponsorship. When this is removed, their behaviour will differ and they
348 will actually find way to achieve it. Yeah.

349 [So, when you say "response to incentive", it sounds to me that you are mentioning
350 about availability of financial resources and to the private, it will be the source of
351 funding as well.]

352 The incentive goes beyond the money. I give you an example. If we want to everyone to
353 behave very well on the road, we can put a strong incentive. For example theoretically
354 speaking, if you commit a traffic offence, you will be executed on the spot. That is an
355 incentive so that no one will do that. Or, if you say if you commit this, you will be fined
356 a very heavy fine, this will give you the behaviour that you want to have. So, incentive
357 can be through legal manner... there are many ways to give incentive, not necessary
358 only money. Yeah. So, this is from an economical point of view. When the economists
359 do experiment, they could do it on mice, they could do it on... and they claim that with

360 the right incentive, you could drive certain behaviour. So, if you are giving the incentive,
361 you can create the behaviour, theoretically speaking, the behaviour that you want.

362 [We can talk more about this. Just now you also mentioned about... I just want to probe
363 a little bit further a point that you mentioned just now about the influence of market
364 competition. It sounds to me that competition is a very important element when it comes
365 to providing quality education, because of that free market or competition in the market,
366 private education and eventually public as well, will have no choice but to really
367 provide high quality education in terms of the fee or the investment that we receive
368 from the parent or sponsors. So, it sounds to me that having the competition is very
369 important, and in fact it is a very important element.]

370 Yes, I actually just want to qualify... I think to my mind, the future of education is to be
371 free.

372 [Free in the sense...]

373 Free in the sense that the student won't be paying a fee. Free of charge for student. Yes.
374 But the university have to look for different business model so that they can achieve that.
375 So that will be the best situation where you can actually say that I am for profit and I am
376 making tones of money but I won't charge you as a student. Then you will come and get
377 the best education for free.

378 [It means the university will need to be able to source for funding from different
379 channels [yes] and not from students.]

380 I think that will really decouple... it will solve the issue of equity, it will solve the issue
381 of availability, it will solve the issue of... because currently you need to have a
382 threshold of income in order to come to a university if they are private. If the education
383 is free, the threshold will be very different. It could be an intellectual, it could be
384 different, there are certain skills... If we can, and that is my personal vision actually, if
385 we can use the student as workforce, if we can strike a smart partnership with the

386 employer who wants this and that, maybe we can through this, someone else will pay to
387 educate the student, or the intellectual product of the student can be sold out to educate
388 the student, or may be the intellectual product of one student if we can attract the right
389 student and one lecturer, they can pay for the education of ten students who are
390 supporting that. I believe there are different business model, yet to be implemented.
391 Don't forget, when you are under pressure, then innovation will kick in, then new things
392 will kick in, otherwise what is the incentive for you to change while change is one of the
393 most difficult things in life? So that is the key.

394 [It sounds like a very interesting idea and opportunity as well.]

395 I am sure it won't help you in your research because this is very different from the
396 average that you may get, so this is an outlier point out there. But that is OK. [Won't
397 help in my research?] I presume that when you talk to the majority of your samples,
398 they will represent totally different point of view. So, this is just one point outlier.

399 [I am not sure about that. But I do see this as a very unique opinion. May I know what
400 makes you think about this? What motivates you to think about this different option,
401 free education for students?]

402 I have been thinking what actually the Faculty stands for. I coin three things,
403 "(information on the 3 core beliefs is omitted)". So, these are the things that I really can
404 not remove any of that. These are the things that I believe when you put them together,
405 everything else will be taken care off. You do not need to add anything but you can not
406 remove anyone of that. [The fundamentals.] The fundamentals. And, recently... they
407 (the beliefs) sound like childish, so I put intellectual thoughts behind them, what do I
408 mean by that. (He read from a piece of paper with typed paragraphs.) So I say (about
409 300 words describing his 3 core beliefs were omitted). This is the reason may be why I
410 pick this (free education) to be the... really the vision and mission.

411 [Very interesting. Do you mind if I have this (the piece of document that he read from)?
412 I find it interesting to know that you have the dream which is big and different and have
413 a sense of meaning in what you do. May I know how is the time for you? Shall we stop
414 now? Yeah. I think I need some time to reflect on what we have just discussed and
415 before I can continue with the balance exploration and sharing that I need from you. So,
416 thank you very much for you time. [You are most welcome.] I got the sense that I will
417 need to talk to you again for further information and clarification. Thank you very
418 much.]

OBSERVATION FIELD NOTE (EXAMPLE)

Name of organisation: University A

Name of participant: Vice-Chancellor (VC), Deputy VC, Pro VCs, Deans and Heads
of Departments of the University

Observation site: Workshop venue, a five star resort hotel at Klang Valley.

Topic of observation: 2014 (Annual) University Priorities and Targets Setting
Workshop

Date/Day: 13 May 2013

Time/Duration: 8:00am-6:00pm (1 day)

No. of observation: 2

Name of observer: Researcher

Role of observer: To observe (researcher was invited to observe how university
priorities and targets are set)

Guidelines

After each observation, researcher:

1. Reads through the raw fieldnote.
2. Writes the expanded fieldnote by combining the raw data and researcher's reflective idea/thought/feeling, identified by **RRN** [researcher's reflective notes].
3. Does the following in writing the expanded fieldnote:
 - complete the sentences/sign etc. that were written during observation
 - complete the dialogue/verbatim statement
 - covers the topics observed during the site observation and other emerging issues
 - make sense of the observation so that there is a flow of idea/idea or a story about what have been observed.
4. Refer to the research questions when analysing and writing the expanded fieldnote.

Research Questions:

- 1) What does educational quality mean to a private higher education institution in Malaysia?

- 2) How has a private higher education institution in Malaysia established goal, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies in the quest for educational quality?
- 3) What are the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality?
- 4) What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality?

Field note

Background information about the workshop:

The 2014 University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop is a one day workshop for University A held at a five stars resort hotel at Klang Valley. According to the agenda that I was given, it will be attended by the Vice-Chancellor (VC), Deputy VC, Pro VCs, Deans and Heads of Departments of the University. Hence, it appears to me that this is a very important event for the University. In addition, having a senior management meeting or workshop at a five stars hotel appears to be a *corporate* or *business* oriented practice, which is not commonly practiced among the public universities, as far as I know. In view of the confidentiality of information discussed during the workshop, detailed information will not be provided through this observation.

According to the agenda, the workshop will start with welcome address and presentation by the VC regarding the 2014 global and local higher education landscape. The VC and hence the university appears to consider the 'external environmental factors' globally and locally in formulating their priorities and targets. The agenda then continue with presentation by the Deputy VC focusing on enhancing the undergraduate academic experience. The core business of the University appears to be the undergraduate teaching and learning, which is in alignment with the student profile and funding profile of the university. This means that the University considers its internal core business in setting its priorities and targets. It is followed by a presentation by the Pro VC focusing on international research excellence. This appears to me that the University also emphasises research at international level, which is not very common for a self-funding for-profit private higher education institution. This appears to me that

besides being a teaching university, this university would like the teaching to be informed by research and the university would also like to play its role in contributing to knowledge. The workshop will then be concluded with presentation by Group Finance Department regarding university financial sustainability. This agenda appears to me that maintaining financial sustainability is crucial for a self-funding university like this. It is interesting to know that financial sustainability is an important consideration for this University's priorities and targets setting for the following year.

Observation on site:

I arrived at the workshop venue at around 8am, which is still very early, and hence only 1 staff arrived before me. At around 8:30am, more staff arrived. At around 8:45am, the workshop venue is full with participants, who are part of the senior management team of the University. At 9:10am, the workshop started with the VC welcomed everyone and clarified the agenda and the expected outcomes of the workshop, which is to set the priorities and targets for the University in 2014. "For private institution, budget is very important. With budget, 'things' can happen. Hence, it is important to understand the priority and target before budget is set", said the VC, emphasizing the importance of the workshop that will inform the budget preparation for the coming year. [RRN: It sounds to me that this university has a careful financial planning and management. Availability of financial resource determines whether the strategic plan of the university can be realised. I can imagine there is a limit to the financial resource. Hence, carefully deciding the key priorities and targets for the university and then allocating the financial resource accordingly are important responsibilities of the senior management and they are very important processes of the university. The VC appears to be accountable for the University's performance, both academic and financial performance. I thought it might be interesting to take a look at the position description of the VC.]

The VC started with a presentation regarding the Landscape of Global and Local Higher Education. The presentation started with future landscape of higher education by year 2025. It is followed by the future landscape of higher education by year 2020. The presentation highlighted on the opportunities in terms of growth in student number at certain international market. It also highlighted the change to technology driven accessibility in higher education. It touched on inspiring teaching is to be informed by research and professional practices, the re-emphasis of civic responsibility, human value and holistic education. It also touched on the challenge to prepare students for the unknown jobs and career opportunity in the future. [RRN: This perspective is related to the conception on quality from fitness for purpose point of view.] It also emphasised the importance of research collaboration. In terms of university governance and management, it was predicted that the future direction is towards supporting flexibility and autonomy, where hiring cost will be cut, with more emphasis on transnational talents, and stronger need for professional management and leadership compared to traditional academic management and leadership. Policy making and improvement will be more data driven, and being able to innovate is key for survival. Last but not least, the VC highlighted the greater challenge in balancing between business and academic, where there is a need for new business model in higher education. He said, “It is critical to be able to balance these two (business and academic) for sustainability.”

After that, the VC continued the presentation focusing on 2014 outlook on higher education globally and nationally. Globally, the VC highlighted the focus on accessibility and equity or education for all, global mobility, transnational education, international recognition through quality assurance mechanisms, accreditation and qualification framework, as well as ranking and rating. The challenges for the higher education globally are to manage brain drain and brain gain (talents), technology advancement and cost for both private and public higher education sectors. Nationally

in Malaysia, the VC highlighted that the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act (Act 555) will be revised and there is a question of its impact. The impact of the latest practice of EMGS and immigration on internationalization agenda is to be assessed. The impact of the establishment of more foreign universities branch campuses in Malaysia is to be monitored. There is stronger competition for good students and good staff. The direction of SETARA, D-SETARA and MyRA is to be monitored. There will be more offshore activities. There will be stronger emphasis on the postgraduate education in the country. There will be more funding for research initiatives. There is an opportunity for more public and private partnership in alignment with the government's direction to harmonise the two sectors. [RRN: Through the presentation, the VC appears to be visionary and is aware of the global and national development in the landscape of higher education.]

The presentation is followed by an overall reflection on the international and national outlook, before highlighting the university's priorities for year 2014. The VC highlighted that there is a huge international market share at certain countries, as well as postgraduate students. Hence, the VC highlighted the importance of international visibility. The VC also highlighted the need for impactful integration with top industries. [RRN: This is in alignment with the mission of the university.] In addition, the VC emphasized the use of technology in teaching, learning and operation. The VC also highlighted the need to reflect on how to have more postgraduate students and researchers. The VC also highlighted the need for 'right' form of governance, to balance between the central steering and autonomy among the business group, university and faculty. The VC highlighted the need for conducive and innovative working environment. The VC highlighted the importance of brand, reputation and quality. [RRN: The VC appears to view quality in the context of branding and reputation.] The VC also emphasized the importance of answering the question, "Does

our quality meet the expectation of students, parents and employers?” The VC further elaborated, “Are they (student and parent) getting back their investment? Why post-SPM students choose other institutions?” [RRN: The VC’s questions reflect ‘value for money’ conception of quality. It also reflects the primary stakeholders of private higher education institution are students, parents and employers. I imagine as a for-profit private university, being able to justify value-for-money is crucial in order to ensure positive word of mouth and attracting more ‘customers’. Value-for-money in fact is also a perspective of the business owner or investor, which is return-on-investment (ROI), a different terminology to mean the same thing.]

From the understanding of the global and national development in higher education as well as his personal reflection, the VC presented the university’s priorities in year 2014. The priorities focused on the need for a new business model that addresses the need for consolidation of growth and quality. When the VC explained this point, he said, “If we grow and quality drops, we will suffer.” I imagine ‘suffer’ here refers to drop in student number or revenue due to negative word of mouth and the business may not be able to sustain long term. This is possibly a critical challenge of the university, to balance between growth and quality. Other priorities include (information was omitted). [RRN: It is interesting to note that “exceeding students and parents’ expectation” was highlighted again and again. This shows how important the students and parents are to the private institution. It is also related to the value for money and exceptional perspectives of quality.]

After that, the VC continued the presentation regarding the priorities of the Group CEO, the business leader, to ensure alignment, and before concluding with his personal *wish list*. [RRN: Integrating the Group CEO priorities in the University priorities can be viewed as ‘good alignment between the priorities of business leader and university leader’, which is a common practice in the corporate or business world, but which may

also be viewed as ‘an influence to the university academic autonomy’.] The six priorities of the Group CEO includes exceptional educational quality, graduate with life skills, holistic education, talent and succession planning, profit and growth, as well as operational excellence for scalability. [RRN: The priorities appear to have balance emphasis from academic and business perspectives. This may be a unique case because normally the business owner has stronger emphasis on the business aspect. I was informed that the Group CEO took over the business leadership position many years ago. In fact, the current VC is hired by him. I believe these are possibly important reasons for the university’s success in enhancing quality so far, being able to balance between the business and academic expectations, as well as having a Group CEO that ‘role model’ the importance of quality and not only profitability.]

The VC’s wish list for year 2014 includes areas about quality (information is omitted) and so forth. The VC also highlighted things to be observed. That includes finance, talents recruitment, retaining and development, return on investment expected by the students and parents, and the core values of the university. [RRN: The *VC’s wish list* and *list of things to be observed* show a clear integration of the business expectation and the academic expectation with strong emphasis on *value-for-money* or *return-on-investment* for its stakeholders. It is interesting to observe that the core values of the institution are being reminded by the VC during such an important meeting among the senior leaders. That reflects how important the core values are to the university.]

During the question and answer session, one of the Deans asked, “If VC is to choose the top 3 (priorities), what they are?” The VC responded, “I would like to hear from you, bottom up”. Another Dean commented, “If we were to move into holistic education, will other institutions move into the same direction, and we become one of the many. I suggest to understand our competitors and to carve a niche for ourselves.” The VC replied, “Holistic education has been an emphasis through the university’s Graduate

Capability initiative. It is about how we do it more.” That concluded the presentation session from the VC. [RRN: The presentation by the VC appeared to demonstrate that the VC is very visionary. His leadership style appears to be participative besides providing clear sense of direction. This might be another important reason of the university’s success in enhancing educational quality.]

After a short break, the workshop is continued by a presentation by the Deputy VC entitled Enhancing Undergraduate Academic Experience. The presentation includes steps to be taken to enhance the undergraduate academic experience. Some of the steps are making students intentional learners, taking student retention seriously, more flexibility in curriculum towards “lecturers teach less and students learn more” and so forth. [RRN: The Deputy VC appears to be very passionate with education and with enhancing the student learning experience. This can be viewed as an important way of enhancing the value-for-money education with return-on-investment for the students and parents, which is consistent with the emphasis by the VC.]

The workshop continued with a presentation by the Pro VC for Research, entitled International Research Excellence. The presentation started with the latest global agenda in terms of knowledge-based economy and followed by what it takes to create a world-class university. The Pro VC then shared the global trends that demand new approaches to research. He also highlighted the new expectations for universities in terms of research and what universities need to do in response to the new expectations. The presentation was ended with the expectations from the VC and the targets set for research performance. [RRN: The presentation appeared to me that the university is ambitious to play a larger role in research and that required the talents in the university to be ready for the change, from a teaching university to a research-informed teaching university.]

The workshop is continued with the next presentation by Group Finance Head, entitled University's Financial Sustainability and Growth. The presentation provided an overview of the world economic conditions. It was followed by the latest development in higher education from finance perspective. The presentation continued with the university's internal financial challenges, touching on the revenue and cost. He emphasised that "Return on investment is expected by shareholders." Related to that, the financial disciplines required to ensure sustainability and growth was discussed, including the need to attach 'return on investment' to every expenditure, and every faculty is to own its profit and loss. The Head also highlighted that "Sustainability and growth of the university are dependable on the profitability". He also mentioned that the university's business strategy is premium quality and premium price. Hence, he highlighted that increasing revenue is a better strategy than cutting cost in order to generate more profit or to at least maintain the current profit level. [RRN: It is interesting that not only the VC is accountable for the profit and loss of the university, the Deans are also accountable for the profit and loss of the faculties under their care. I think it is interesting to look at the position description of the Dean too.]

Before breaking for lunch, the VC briefed everyone the working session after lunch. The VC reminded everyone to keep the university's mission in mind while working on the priorities and targets for the University for 2014. The VC requested everyone to start by considering these two questions.

- a. What do you see the University's greatest strengths and primary weaknesses?
- b. What are the opportunities and threats ahead?

The VC then requested each group to propose 'Top 5 priorities, KPI, targets and actions for 2014'. The VC concluded by sharing a message that the university should 'not to be too complacent'. [RRN: The university appears to keep the Mission in mind during its strategic planning. It also considers the opportunity and threats in the environment as well as its own strengths and weaknesses.]

After lunch, breakout team discussion started. The discussion started with strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis for the University. It was followed by top priorities setting for 2014. There were 5 working groups and I can see active discussion within the groups with ‘noise’ clearly heard. Through the active interaction among the staff, I can sense the dynamic and vibrant within the room during the discussion.

After around 2 hours and 30 minutes of discussion, every group took turn to present the outputs of their discussion for around 10 to 15 minutes. Question and answer session happened at the end of each group presentation. It was observed that the overall key priorities centred around the following agenda:

- Internationalization – international recognition (including national rating), collaboration and learning experience
- Transformative teaching and learning – rating, technology, holistic education
- Research and innovation – research outcomes, postgraduate students, research grants
- Engaging industry – graduate employed at top employers, adjunct appointment for experts from industry
- System and structure – efficient system and processes
- Talents – attracting and retaining both staff and student

One of the deans highlighted that “Talent is the enabler of all other priorities”. He also highlighted that the current market is not able to differentiate the quality and value of different providers and as a result, students and parents are primary driven by price. Another dean highlighted that “We naturally don’t allow ourselves to be left behind by our competitors. We want to continually improve ourselves.” She also highlighted that perceived value for money is important for students. [RRN: This sounds like the ‘voice’ of for-profit private institution.]

Towards the end of the workshop, the VC gave a closing remark that the information provided will be summarised. And, the VC will provide the final version of priorities for all during the coming Deans and Heads of Departments meeting, which is a regular

monthly meeting focusing on strategic matters. The VC thanked everyone for their inputs.

[**RRN**: This workshop shows the conception of quality of the Group CEO and senior management team of this institution. It also demonstrated how institutional level strategic priorities and targets are established, with the involvement of the senior management team of the university and inputs from the Group CEO. The priorities are considered high-level strategies too. In addition, the key challenges and the key factors contributing to educational quality are observed too.]

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS (EXAMPLE)

Reminder

1. For each encounter (whether it is observation or interview) with the research participant, collect all necessary documents.
2. The document may be institution's portfolio, data and statistics, strategic plan, policies, annual report, graduates' employability and employers' profile or other materials used at the research site.
3. Obtain permission before making copies of the above documents. File up the documents.
4. Analyse the contents of the documents collected.
5. Summarize each document using the given guidelines, one summary for each document.
6. Refer to the research questions when preparing the summary.

Research Site: The University

Title of the document: Staff Survey Result 2013

Date of procurement: 20 September 2013

Types of document: Powerpoint presentation

1. Name and describe the document obtained.

The document provides a summary or highlights of staff survey result conducted in 2013, in power point presentation format. The survey was conducted over 2 weeks period and was administered independently by an international agency. The response rate from staff is 74%, which is large enough to be considered representative of the population.

2. Explain the situation/process of obtaining the document

The document was received from the university after the observation of the sharing session for the staff survey result conducted on 16 August 2013.

3. Summarise the content of the document. [refer to the research question]

The survey areas are:

- a) Motivation to join organization
- b) Recruitment experience

- c) Job related: the role, immediate manager / supervisor, team
- d) Career related: professional development, wellbeing, rewards
- e) Organization: immediate leadership, core purpose and core values
- f) Recommending the organization

3.1 Conception of quality:

- a) 90% of staff say that committed to culture of excellence, one of the core values, is evident in the institution. [This has direct link to the concept of quality.]
- b) 90% of staff say that being passionate in what they do is evident in the institution. [This possibly explain the commitment towards quality.]

Purpose of education:

The institution's purpose statement focuses on value adding to students so that they become leader in the community.

3.2 Strategic Management for Quality

- a) Establishing goal:
The survey result shows that 95% of staff day that the core purpose is meaningful to them and 80% of staff say the leadership team communicates a clear direction.
- b) Formulating strategies:
The survey result shows that 80% of staff say the leadership team communicates a clear roadmap.
- c) Implementing strategies:
 - i. Motivation to join organization (why and what kind of talent is attracted to the institution)
 - a. 67% (69% in 2012) say because the job description matched their skills / experience / interests [This reflects job level alignment.]
 - b. 52% (56% in 2012) say for the opportunities for personal/professional development. [This reflects the desire for development and dynamic of the talent.]
 - ii. Role:
 - a. 98% of academic and 99% of non-academic say that they have strong sense of commitment to my role within my workplace.
 - b. 97% (98% in 2012) of respondents say that they have the skills require to perform effectively in their roles.
 - iii. Immediate Supervisor:
 - a. 93% of respondents have a good working relationship with their immediate supervisors.
 - b. 86% of respondents say that their managers communicate effectively with them.
 - iv. Team:
 - a. 97% (95% in 2012) of respondents say they enjoy working with their immediate colleagues.
 - b. 97% (93% in 2012) of respondents say they are able to support each other in day-to-day work.

- v. Development:
 - a. 96% of respondents say that they have the opportunities to learn new skills at workplace.
 - b. 95% (97% in 2012) of respondents say that they actively seek out opportunities to gain new skills that help them to perform better in their role
- vi. Wellbeing:
 - a. 91% of respondents say that personal circumstances are dealt with compassionately.
 - b. 85% of respondents say that they are challenged and motivated by their workload. [This reflect the dynamic of the staff.]
- vii. Rewards: 79% of respondents say the bonus is fair but 59% say that the salary is fair. [This reflects the challenge of private sector to be seen as rewarding fairly, in conjunction with the level of performance expected, which may lead to turnover.]
- viii. Leadership (institutional):
 - a. 93% of staff respect their leadership team.
 - b. 84% say they lead by example.
 - c. 80% say that the leadership team communicates a clear roadmap and direction.
 - d. 85% say they sign up to the roadmap and direction communicated by their institutions leadership team
- ix. Core Purpose:
 - a. 95% (91% in 2012) of respondents say the core purpose statement is meaningful to them.
 - b. 89% (87% in 2012) say that it help them to align what they do with goals of the place of work.
 - c. 87% (88% in 2012) say that it motivates and inspires them in their job.
 - d. 87% (85% in 2012) say that it is an accurate reflection of what they think the organization does.
 - e. 80% (85% in 2012) say that it is an accurate reflection of what they do in the job.
- x. Core Values:
 - a. 75% to 90% of respondents say the various core values are evident in the working environment
 - b. 90% of staff say that committed to culture of excellence is evident in the institution. [This has direct link to the concept of quality.]
 - c. 90% of staff say that being passionate is evident in the institution. [This possibly explain the commitment towards quality.]
- xi. Recommending the organization:
 - a. 73% say they would encourage people to apply (actively or when asked)

- b. 98% say they would not discouraged others from working at the university.

3.3 Key Challenges

The survey result reveals some challenges faced by the institution. The survey results show that institution / manager:

- a) Could be more proactive in providing academic guidance to staff to improve in their roles, and providing opportunities to develop their research skill
- b) To provide more support when staff are under pressure and for them to have a positive work-life balance.
- c) To provide stronger rewards framework and clear bonus scheme.

3.4 Key Contributing Factors

- a) Great working environment with strong team culture and excellent team work
- b) The university has committed and confident workforce who have the required skills to perform effectively in their roles.
- c) Staff is proactive in learning new skills that allow staff to develop their roles.
- d) Staff practices the core values of the university, which is respect and care.

4. Significance of the document to the research objective/s.

The results show the importance of:

- a) Core purpose to inspire the staff
- b) Leadership team who lead by example
- c) Aligned team (leadership, manager and staff) with strong sense of commitment and team spirit
- d) Dynamic team with strong desire to learn and develop.

Sharing the result openly with staff shows that the institution is open in its communication, which is important in nurturing trusting relationship.

KEY DOCUMENTS ANALYSED WITH ANNOTATION

No	Name of Document	Annotation
	University	
1	University's corporate information webpage 2012-2013	Core purpose, mission, values, competitive advantages, graduate capabilities, teaching and learning, and so forth
2	Vice-Chancellor's (VC) Priorities 2013 document	Key priorities identified and monitored by the VC personally
3	University Strategic Plan (current)	Mission, six strategic thrusts, key priorities and performance indicators
4	University Annual Report 2011	Key achievements of the university in 2011
5	University Organization Chart 2012, 2013	Outline the various University senior positions, faculties and departments
6	Faculty Organization Chart 2013	Outline the faculty level senior position
7	Constitution of the University 2011	A formal document explaining how the University is governed. It is prepared in compliance to Private Higher Educational Institutions Act, 1996
8	University Alignment Workshop Agenda 2013	Agenda of a workshop that align the priorities of senior management team, including Deans and Heads of Departments
9	2014 University Priorities and Target Setting Workshop Agenda 2013	Agenda of a workshop to set the priorities and targets for the following year by the senior management team
10	University Graduate Capabilities (booklet) 2012	Outline the capabilities of graduates expected by the University
11	Graduate Tracer Study Result 2013	Survey result regarding fresh graduates' employment status and their level of satisfaction regarding their learning experience with the institution
12	Staff Turnover Presentation Slides 2013	Staff turnover information of the University
13	SETARA 2009 and 2011 Result	The university's rating result for quality of teaching and learning conducted for all university and university colleges in Malaysia
14	D-SETARA 2011 Result	The university's discipline-based rating result for quality of teaching and learning
15	Internship Report 2012	Internship report in terms of types of employers and employer satisfaction
16	Graduate Capabilities webpage 2012	University webpage regarding capabilities of graduates expected

No	Name of Document	Annotation
17	University Newsletter 2006-2012	Quarterly newsletter of the University highlighting key achievements and activities
18	Policies and Procedures Master List	List of policies and procedures available at the University
19	New Manager's (Induction) Programme 2013	Programme for inducting all new managers
20	New Manager's Programme – Governance and Quality Management System Module Presentation Slides 2013	Slides for the training regarding governance and quality management system for new managers
21	Senate Minutes of Meeting (examples)	-
22	Deans and HODs Minutes of Meeting (examples)	Minutes of meeting for Deans and Heads of Departments regarding academic and non-academic strategic matters
23	Strategic Planning Guidelines and Process	Outline the University strategic planning process
24	Academic Policy Committee Minutes of Meeting (examples)	Minutes of meeting for committee deliberating and endorsing academic policy
25	Staff Survey Results 2013	Results of staff survey conducted in 2013
26	Staff Survey Results Communication Email	Communication email to all staff regarding result of staff survey
27	VC's Position Description	Key result areas and key competencies of the position
28	Dean's Position Description	Key result areas and key competencies of the position
29	Lecturer's Position Description <i>Teaching and Learning Centre</i>	Key result areas and key competencies of the position
30	Training Calendar for Academic Staff 2013	Calendar of training for academic staff
31	New Academic Staff Induction-Academic Policies Presentation Slides 2013	Slides regarding academic policies for new academic staff
32	Teaching and Learning Newsletter 2013 <i>Student Affairs Department</i>	Highlights teaching and learning activities conducted
34	Department's Newsletter 2012-2013	Highlight student activities
35	Conference Organized the Department recently <i>Faculty A</i>	Programme of the conference
36	Faculty Self-Assessment	Self-review portfolio for programme

No	Name of Document	Annotation
	Report for Programme Accreditation 2012	accreditation
37	Faculty Prospectus 2011, 2012, 2013	Key programme related information for student enrolment purpose
38	Faculty Programme Guide 2011	Programme curriculum, rules and regulations for students' information
39	Faculty Industry Advisory Panel Minutes of Meeting 2012	Minutes of meeting with industry representative
40	Faculty Enhanced Programme Outcomes document 2013	Programme outcomes document that has been enhanced in 2013
41	Email from External Examiner 2013	Corresponding email with external examiner commending the commitment from the faculty
42	Email from Alumni 2012	Thank you email from alumni of the faculty received in 2012
43	Faculty's Core Belief-Dean's Write-up 2013	A write-up from the Dean regarding his core belief
44	Interview with Dean by a Radio Station 2012	Dean's interview record with a radio station
45	Faculty Annual Report 2012	Highlight key achievements and initiatives of the Faculty
46	Faculty Annual Report 2010	Highlight key achievements and initiatives of the Faculty
47	Student Industry Training Report 2012-2013	Students and employers' comments regarding the industry training
48	Faculty Newsletter 2010-2013	Key achievements and activities
49	2012-2013 Faculty Annual Report on Engagement with Industry <i>Faculty B</i>	Highlights industry engagement activities
50	Dean's Interview at University's Newsletter	Dean's interview record by the University's Newsletter
51	Industry Advisory Panel Minutes of Meeting 2010	Minutes of meeting with industry representatives
52	Faculty Presentation Slides 2010-2011	Outlines key initiatives and achievements of the Faculty
53	Faculty Programme Guide 2011	Programme curriculum, rules and regulations for students' information
54	Faculty Prospectus 2013	Key programme related information for student enrolment purpose

RESEARCHER'S JOURNAL ENTRIES EXAMPLE

11/29/2012 11:27 AM

When coding the data collected, I face challenges in differentiating strategies and implementation related information. I think the 'goal' is 'what to be achieved' or the 'outcome'. The 'strategy' is 'enabler' to achieve the 'goal'. The 'implementation' describes the detailed steps in implementing the strategy. For example:

- a) outcome: as described in the programme learning outcomes, addressing the (name of an international initiative is omitted)
- b) strategy: project-oriented learning utilising the concept of (name of an international initiative which is a type of pedagogy is omitted)
- c) implementation: staff to be trained on this, motivating staff and student to involve in project-oriented learning

12/15/2012 3:18 PM

I reflect on the nodes created so far and learned that factors influencing the establishing of goal should be under the "establish goal" tree node instead of a separate node because the "establish goal" tree node is to explain how "goal" has been established including factors that have been considered.

Most of the "challenges experienced" are during implementation, except for one during establishment of goal, which is personal alignment. In addition, the "strategies implemented" in addressing the "challenges experienced" is best to be categorised under the key steps of "establishing goal", "formulating strategies" and "implementing strategies", instead of a separate category after identifying the "challenges experienced". This will enable a smoother flow of story.

2 important things to do:

- a) code all sources to the new structure of codes
- b) ensure all code has related literature

12/16/2012 10:01 AM

Reflecting on the changes to the nodes yesterday, the corresponding research and research questions have to be updated.

The research objectives are:

- 1) To explore the understanding of the private higher education institution in Malaysia on educational quality
- 2) To understand how private higher education institution has driven quality education
- 3) To understand the challenges experienced by private higher education institution in driving quality education *as well as the strategies implemented (deleted)*

Aligned with the research objectives, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What does 'quality in higher education' mean to private higher education institution in Malaysia with regards to teaching and learning?
- 2) How has private higher education institution in Malaysia established the quality goal, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies to drive quality education?

- 3) What are the challenges experienced by private higher education institution in Malaysia in driving quality education?
- 4) *What are the strategies implemented by private higher education institution in Malaysia to address the challenges experienced in driving quality education?*
(deleted)

Based on the nodes established so far, the model is updated too. The changes include:

- a) the understanding of educational quality may become one of the factors, i.e. personal belief, that influences both the establishment of goal and formulation of strategies.
- b) the 3 categories of factors, external, internal and personal, includes not only the establishment of goal but also the formulation of strategies.
- c) the challenges experienced and steps taken to address the challenges happen during the implementation stage.

Comparing this finding with recent studies, the emerging model has moved from the Strategic Planning Process Model from *Kotler and Murphy (1981)* to the Strategic Management Process Model from *Alashloo (2005)*. Refer Model "Dean1 16Dec2012"

A different in the model is that Alashloo's model is bidirectional among the constructs and my is unidirectional. This worth more detailed reflection and analysis of data.

Action:

- a) to review in-depth the study from Alashloo (2005) which may inform this research further and to incorporate it into literature review.
- b) to refine the nodes in alignment with the revised model - half done, to continue with the directional analysis among the constructs.
- c) to add attributes to case (participants)
- d) to continue coding the sources that have not coded
- e) to review and benchmark coding of other project

I have created types of attribute under classification and case node for each participant, and have assign value of attributes to the case.

I think I have made mistakes.

a) Interview source

I think I should have only 1 interview record source for 1 participant. Meaning, even though I have conducted several rounds of interview, the record should be only under 1 file. With this, I can code the whole document as a case node. I have not linked the source to the case node yet.

Action: Must clarify before proceed!!

Answer: NO. Multiple sources can be linked to a single case by using "code sources at existing node" and choose "case node".

b) Document linked memo

The "protocol" document used for document type of source should be "document linked memo".

I should start using "node linked memo" too.

12/19/2012 10:47 AM

I have refined the description of the nodes. This process helps me to think through what the node stands for. Then, I generated a nodes summary report (with date) to capture this history that will help me in my thesis writing regarding how I arrive at those nodes.

I will meet my supervisor today to update him the progress of my data collection and data analysis.

Post-meeting with supervisor:

- a) Compare the finding with research questions: I have organised the nodes according to research questions
- b) Compare the findings with literature review: to create a table for comparison purpose
- c) Based on (b), the literature may need to be enhanced according to the findings.

12/25/2012 10:21 AM

I re-read on Pat's book on NVivo as part of my preparation for the coming workshop and has summarised my questions in a separate documents. Important points are:

- a) Must be able to justify the use of NVivo in qualitative research
- b) Must be able to use the data analysed for Chapter 5 Findings and Chapter 6 Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations
- c) I understand how to use case, at last
- d) The importance of creating linked memo for each node, including case
- e) I have prepared the Chapter 5, 6, 7 for information that I would like to transfer from NVivo to the chapters.
- f) Important learning:
 - sources: to keep sources of data (research data and literature)
 - nodes: to keep coded/deducted data, including cases (participants at individual, faculty, institutional level etc.)
 - classification: keep "attribute" data of cases, and "relationship types" info.
 - query: keep specific data pulled based on specific criteria
 - model: keep model created based on case, query, node & research questions

12/26/2012 9:07 AM

Since I have organised the raw data according to research questions in NVivo, I intend to continue analysing the data against the literature, as part of the preparation for Discussion chapter.

Based on the research questions and literature review, I have outlined the sections under Chapter Findings and Discussion. I intend to do a preliminary writing for the 2 chapters as part of my preparation for writing journal article.

After reflecting the data collected under Quality in Higher Education and the literature review (refer to Memo linked to Stakeholder node), I added 3 more nodes under Quality in HE. They are:

- a) Purpose of education
- b) Philosophy of education
- c) Role of Higher Education

The reason is the perspective of the institution with regards to the meaning of educational quality is affected by their paradigm regarding the purpose, philosophy and role of education, specifically higher education.

Meaning, I need to review the data to code it at the 3 new nodes. [Maintain Purpose of Education only and not the other 2. Have coded.]

After reflecting on the data collected under Process of Driving Educational Quality and the literature review, I think I need to continue coding the rest of data collected and then to collect more data from other Deans and VC. Generally speaking, I am on the right track.

I am just wondering if a paper can be generated from the data that I have collected so far. Maybe I can generate a paper with working title "Driving quality at a private higher education institution: A Dean's experience".

12/27/2012 8:13 AM

I found another interesting article discussing the multi-dimensional model of quality in education, which I have included in the literature review. Important points are:

- a) quality is influenced by the paradigm regarding the purpose of education, for human fulfilment, economic prosperity or social progress.
- b) the new framework has 3 dimensions similar to Harvey's idea and with additional dimensions, which can be considered in the data analysis.

Reflecting on the 3 new nodes created, I see similarity and may delete the nodes regarding 'philosophy of education' and 'role of higher education', and left with 'purpose of education'.

OPEN CODING FOR INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION (EXAMPLE)

Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3 (FA-D-I3)

Note: [] From researcher. Others, from participant.

Research Question 1

[Thank you very much for accepting this subsequent interview. As mentioned to you earlier, your participant to this research is 100% voluntary. If you don't mind, I would like to quickly summarise what you have mentioned in the previous interview... some of the factors contribute to your experience in transforming the faculty, changes to the leadership's mindset to be more academic-oriented, you have shared with me your experience in positioning your faculty, the project-oriented learning, how to engage students in the journey. Those are the items that we have discussed earlier. I would like to continue by focusing on few additional items that I hope you don't mind sharing with me through this interview. To start with, may I know from your personal perspective, what does quality mean to you? When the word "quality" is mentioned... how do you see "quality"? What does "quality" mean to you personally?]

I believe "quality" is the ability to satisfy the needs or exceed them of stakeholders, in a consistent manner.

[Do you mind to elaborate further?]

If I buy a car from a quality manufacturer, I assume that this car

Open Coding

- Quality as satisfying or exceeding needs of stakeholders consistently

will run very well.... If I have any issue, the manufacturer will take full responsibility for it. And they will support me throughout the ownership of the car. This is from product point of view. That's why you go for a brand because normally you associate it with quality. You presume even you have not use the brand before, your perception is that this will give you a great experience, achieve your expectation and in the event there is an issue with them, the manufacturer will help you with this. From an educational point of view, this is slightly more complicated because it deals with people, people are different. So, if the question is what quality education means to me personally, will be an education that is capable of transforming an individual, enabling an individual and also bringing the best out of this individual. So, education from a university perspective is not only about knowledge, otherwise you would have borrowed the books and read them. It is an experience, that between entering and exiting, he or she should have realise new thing about him/herself and at the same time, brought some positive change into them. That will be to me quality education.

[I see. I heard your perspectives, one about meeting stakeholders' expectation as well as from transformational point of view where it really adds value to student and help them to be the best that they can be. If you don't mind, may be let me touch a little bit more about meeting stakeholders' expectation, the first point that you highlighted. So, in this context of private higher education and from your personal experience as well,

- Perceived quality associated with brand

- Educational quality as transforming or value-adding

who do you see as the relevant stakeholders.]

Definitely, the first stakeholder will be the students. They are the most important part of the educational process. They are the reason for it, especially in the private setup, they are the reason for it. Society at large is also a very important stakeholder. Society realises its full potential through the realisation of the full potential of the individual. Now, once this happens I believe the needs of others equally important stakeholders will be also satisfied. This includes people like the employers, sponsors whether the parent or government.

[You mentioned the primary stakeholder in the context of private higher education is students. So, from your perspective and from your experience as well, what student wants from us, I mean from the university and from your faculty?]

I think the students are not very clear on what do they want. I think parents are relatively clearer and what they want is a job. I believe that education is beyond a job. A job is a part of that. I don't think we should educate people to get a job. I don't think this should be the role of education otherwise... So, through this experience, the students, they now can have an opinion, they really know what they want and that is truly transformational. Yeah. This is part of the transformation. So someone says I have a vision in life and the job is a way to achieve the vision and to achieve financial security or whatever, rather than being the vision itself. I think that is really transformational. An educational institution who works on this

- Student, the most important stakeholder. Education as private good.
- Society, another stakeholder. Education as public good.
- Human fulfilment leads to social progress.
- Human fulfilment leads to economic prosperity.
- Employers, parent and government, other stakeholders.

- Education for employment
- Transformational education for human fulfilment, lead to employment and economic prosperity.

- Education for human fulfilment and lead to social progress. Education for private and public good

will definitely produce good graduates, they will definitely get a good job, they will get good salary... But, they will be the change agent when they join the society and that is how a university could change the society as well.

[You mentioned about the importance of helping student to understand what they want, their mission in life and that is the basic ingredient for student to get a job eventually as well as make a difference in the society. At the same time, you also mentioned about the intention of parent to help the child to get a job, so may I hear your opinion about that? The parent's intention, the reason why they pay... the reason why they send their kids to your faculty or this university or generally for higher education is to help their children to get a job. What is your comment about it?]

My comment is parent will want the best for their children. The best is what they think is the best. Currently the generation who are parents, from my experience and interaction with them within the local Malaysian context which is very different from other places, majority of them would want their kids to be able to lead a good comfortable life, through getting an employment. So that is a primary objective. Definitely they want them to be good people, and to be respected and all these things. But the primary reason from parent point of view seems to be getting a good, comfortable and stable job. And they see a degree from reputable educational institution, of a good quality as a first step to achieve this objective. Yeah. As a matter of fact, I think other

- Parent's expectation-child to get a good job through receiving quality education

- Government's indicator for educational quality, employability

stakeholders, maybe the government, they also use this as a very important metric, as a measurement of the success of education, that is graduate can get job easily, as an indication that the educational institution did a very good job.

[What is your opinion that the government also has similar view that a very important measurement of success of a university is helping student to get a job?]

I personally speaking, if we transform an individual, add value, the job will happen. But if getting the job becomes the primary motive of education, although it's good and noble, it actually limits the potential of the goodness that education can add. So, if I want to go to ... if my objective is only to go from KL (Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia) to Seremban (a city on the south of KL), that is good if I am going south. But if my objective is to go Singapore, by default, I can stop at Seremban if I want. So it is really a journey and how high we aim. I know from quality point of view, transformational experience is very difficult to measure. So this is really in a way when it comes to student experience, it is the dilemma of quality. Because there are certain things that you can easily measure, you can measure the mark easily, you can measure the starting salary easily, you can measure whether a student can get a job or not easily, but how would you measure if this individual is a better individual, that will become a better parent, prepare even a better offspring so that the society will become a better society. That's really something that I don't see getting a fair share of focus.

- Purpose of education or measurement of educational quality should be transforming or value adding to individual, which will lead to employment
- Challenge in measuring quality through transformation of individual and value-added to society
- Limiting Institution's mission to satisfying industry needs.

Although people talk about it, but we say what is measured is what gets done. That's why it leads also the educational institution to tailor their missions around it, to satisfy the needs of the industry. Yeah.

[You have mentioned a few points. You mentioned about better individual. How would you describe a better individual from your personal point of view?]

OK. When we compare a society to society and if we say society A is more cultured, or society A is capable of producing novel price winners, society A is capable of producing iconic artist, philosopher or authors. To my mind, that society will have a higher percentage of individuals who manage to transform the environment. So a better individual or a good individual is someone really could or have the potential to change and improve and bring about innovation and higher value and higher cultural and societal input. So, what is measured is we want very good degree, we can educate everyone to become doctor, engineer, accountant and so on. Theoretically speaking this is possible. You could put them through certain... But when you put this people together, do you really have a society that is not to say superior but capable of moving the humanity at large into a new level. So, I believe this can happen through education if education focuses on things beyond employment.

[Interesting. I think this needs a little bit more thinking and possible another discussion with you later. If you don't mind,

- Better individuals are those capable of improving the society. Education as private and public good.

- Education should focus on transforming individual contributing to society progress

may I explore another point? It seems to me that there has been a very clear message from the ministry as well as from the parent that about the important of employment. May I know from your personal opinion and personal experience, why do you think this becomes such as an important agenda in this country and for the parents as well?]

Research Question 3

I think from the government point of view, it is very clear. Because employment or unemployment around the world is an indication of how good the economic is doing. And, this also can lead to more stable, prosperous society that is easier to manage and things like that. So, any government has a very clear interest to get everyone employed, rather than having people asking for social security or asking for help from the government. That is extremely clear. Likewise from the parent's point of view, they ... may be there are people who have their own difficulty in live. Most of the people that I speak to, they do not necessary come from very rich background. May be (we) can trace their parents and grandparents, they were quite poor, a bit of suffering and struggle. So, they see that the fact that having a good job is an important thing. Now, it is extremely important to stress that I do not challenge that this is an important thing. It is extremely important because the economy needs to be able to have people who is employed and people who pay taxes, and this will definitely help everyone. But the education role I believe should be stretched a bit into something

- Why government emphasizes employment

- Why parent emphasizes employment

- Employment is important

- Educational quality should be measured by amount of transformation or value-added in bringing the best out of people (human fulfilment)\

- Concern with standardization or uniformity in education

that may be difficult to measure, which is how much are we really doing to bring the best out of people. Let me throw it like this. If I give you student A, student B, Student C. Let's say student A, you can barely educate him or her to get a degree and let's say we do that (help student A to get a degree) and we do it brilliantly. We give them all the necessary support so that they won't drop off, and we make sure they become an active member of a society. Let's say that is student A. And student C has the potential to invent the next technology to change the world, to make our dependent on hydrocarbon a history. Are we really preparing this student C to achieve that potential? That's really the question that I am not sure that the current education system is doing. It is difficult. The moment we start talking about standard and quality, and conforming to the standard, we are standardizing. Now this outlier, this person with unique capabilities that may even not be recognised by the education system as capable, can we cater for that? That's really the issue. So, the education system generally is for the average, for the normal individual within statistically speaking, within the middle, it does a really good job actually. Even at the weaker side, with a lot of support that normally a good university also do a good job to raise the level. But do we really bring the best out of everybody, or at least those have the potential to change the world. That to me is a question.

[This question that you have, is it for specially higher education in Malaysia or a general comment?]

- Education should enable individuals to be the best they can be

I think it is for education in Malaysia. Because I, I, I think one the challenges that we have is that we are operating within an eco-system that may not necessary supports the university to produce this. Let me give you an example. I walk through the commercial block. If you go to the... where the security room is, towards the gym at commercial block. You will see names of different artists. You have They put 6 or 7 artists, none of them is Malaysian. I am not sure they cannot find an artist from Malaysia or they just want to promote the Anglo-Saxon art. But if it is difficult for us to find within the eco-system an outlier, a person who has really make it beyond everything, it is difficult for the university to produce that. However, what I am thinking is if the university puts this as its Mission, may be they can change the society rather than waiting... (for society to change). In other part of the world, you could step out of the university and see, if you are talking from engineering point of view, the chair where James Watt has sat, may be from an artistic point of view, the place where Picasso used to draw. This actually helps you as an individual to see that you are also capable of similar feat. We don't really see it here because our education system is dependent also on copying the best model in the world which may not be indigenous to us.

[Interesting. Wow, we have explored a lot about, I think your personal aspiration as well as what a higher education can be when it comes to bring out the best in an individual and how it can make a change in the society, which is very interesting and

- Education should bring the best out of individuals

important. I think the message that I hear from you is at the moment the focus of the Ministry of Higher Education as well as the parents at the moment seems to focus on a lot on the academic benefit of higher education which may not be going beyond of bringing out the best of an individual and the impact on the society as a whole. That sounds to me some of the concerns that you have when we talk about the quality of higher education. Am I right in saying that?]

Yes, you are right. I just want to re-iterate that the economy is very important and it will definitely improve the standard of living and everything. This is not something that I am not advocating not looking at it but just to stretch the standard of education to beyond where we can measure things. This... some individuals may not be very comfortable with.

- Economy prosperity is important but education should focus on human fulfilment.

Research Question 1, 2, 3 and 4

[In fact, just to share my understanding on some of the intention and possibly the measurement of the Ministry of Higher Education, they are also aspired to have novel prize winner. So, possibly that is the intention that they have, apparently... you also understand that it seems to be a challenging task that the higher education eco-system does not seem to nurture that kind of individual, even though that is actually one of the indicators or measurements of the Ministry of Higher Education or the higher education in Malaysia at the moment. It does not seem to be happening at the moment. May I know how the way you see higher education from your perspective, been actually

transformed into the Faculty in terms of possibly the vision and mission of the Faculty? How that perspective, your expectation, your understanding towards quality in higher education been translated into the Faculty?]

Well, we... we adopt this purpose and mission of the University. We adopt the same. But, the way I look at it personally, being a “top employer’s top choice” is a by-product of producing very, very good engineers, engineers who are innovative and things like that. So the way I... I see the role of the Faculty is how much value we really add to our students and again through our project-oriented learning. We give the students the opportunity to stretch themselves and realise what they are capable off, which is often surprising to them and to me as well. Just to share with you the solar boat competition, this happened on the 7 of July. We asked these first year first semester students to design a boat that can cross the lake using solar energy. And, I was very, very worried that I will end up boats that won’t move. I was very, very concern and very, very worried. And what happened, they exceeded my expectation in a way that we decided to give everybody full mark for that component of the course, because they did well, even the weakest one. All the boats work. All the boats completed the race. It was really amazing experience. So, keeping that in mind, it just gives you an indication that you could do few things differently and these students now think that they are capable of doing bigger things. Now, let’s say I have given

- Adopt university purpose and mission
- Education should be for life, beyond employment
- Role of Faculty to bring the best out of students through project-based learning

them a much easier task, I think the possibility for them to attain this may not happen, or may be happen at year 3 or year 4. But now, they are empowered by themselves that they can actually do things and I am sure when they go to semester two they will try things of higher sophistication and that kind of things. So, this is how we continue doing our things which is project-oriented learning which is really something that open huge potential and opportunity for us to stretch ourselves, stretch our students and keep on bringing the best out of people that we keep in touch with. When they do this, I am sure they will acquire teamwork, communication and other skills that the industry is crying for or asking for. And I am sure people trained in this environment will, should they decide, end up getting a job. But at the same time, if someone chooses to change the world or want to do things on their own, may be even they did not know before, at least now they know how much they are capable of. That is really a revelation, it is a revelation. Even for me after doing this for so long, when I push the envelope, I am thinking I may humiliate the Faculty in front of everyone if the thing does not work. I am always surprised. And, guess what. When this feat, that is considered impossible to achieve, it just sets a new benchmark. We know that this is doable, we have done it. This is going to take us higher and higher, further and further. So, this is something that I see that even from our perspective as educators, help you see what may be we are capable of. May be we did not know that we can do it.

Compare this to the traditional way, you will be doing the same thing that you know that can solve, you know that everyone can do it. May be you teach it differently but that is the standard thing that people expect that you can do like two (2) Mathematics.

[Thanks for a very interesting sharing. May be I can bring your attention to a point that you briefly touch on just now that the mission of this University is “top employers’ top choice university by 2016”, I understand that this is a new mission for this University. How do you personally see this? What does this mean to you and possibly to your faculty?]

It is a by-product of creating... so the individual that I hope... I can contribute to making people who would be sought-after by the industry. I hope they will be sought-after by the non-for-profit organization, I hope they will volunteer their time even for course that may not be pioneered by the top employer but things that have a meaning. So, the entire thing really revolves around giving meaning in what we are doing. So, if we empower students so that they can find a meaning to... I have spoken to people from the industry that said “Look, you have to tell your people that engineering is very boring. When they come to my company, I am designing aeroplane wing and what do they have? They will never see the aeroplane and what they see is number, number, number and they keep on crunching numbers. This is just a small element of the aeroplane and they will never see the aeroplane.” This is to me is a major flaw

- Employment as a by-product of great education, which is for human fulfilment

because this component if I can show the engineer that this is important to the safety of the aeroplane, I think that is what is important and to continue to focus on. So, to me that is to say that I subscribe to the mission and again it is a by-product of a great education. But I also would like my students to have options, to go on their own, to try new things and may be seek not to be employed. I think these kinds of things are extremely important, empowering and elevating rather than we all are put in a situation where there is a logical sequence for life. That is you study, you graduate, you get a job, you know. And then, I don't know... you get old and die. I don't think this is necessary the only logical sequence.

(Subsequent transcription has been omitted)

OPEN CODING FOR OBSERVATION FIELD NOTE (EXAMPLE)

Name of organisation: University A

Name of participant: Vice-Chancellor (VC), Deputy VC, Pro VCs, Deans and Heads of Departments of the University

Observation site: Workshop venue, a five star resort hotel at Klang Valley.

Topic of observation: 2014 (Annual) University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop

Date/Day: 13 May 2013

Time/Duration: 8:00am-6:00pm (1 day)

No. of observation: 2

Name of observer: Researcher

Role of observer: To observe (researcher was invited to observe how university priorities and targets are set)

Guidelines

After each observation, researcher:

1. Reads through the raw field note.
2. Writes the expanded field note by combining the raw data and researcher's reflective idea/thought/feeling, identified by RRN [researcher's reflective notes].
3. Does the following in writing the expanded field note:
 - complete the sentences/sign etc. that were written during observation
 - complete the dialogue/verbatim statement
 - covers the topics observed during the site observation and other emerging issues
 - make sense of the observation so that there is a flow of idea/idea or a story about what have been observed.
4. refer to the research questions when analysing and writing the expanded field note.

Research Questions:

- 1) What does educational quality mean to a private higher education institution in Malaysia?
- 2) How has a private higher education institution in Malaysia established the goal, formulated strategies and implemented the strategies in the quest for educational quality?

- 3) What are the challenges experienced by a private higher education institution in Malaysia in the quest for educational quality?
- 4) What are the key institutional factors contributing to educational quality?

Field note	Open Coding
<p>Background information about the workshop:</p> <p>The 2014 University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop is a one day workshop for University A held at a five stars resort hotel at Klang Valley. <u>According to the agenda that I was given, it will be attended by the Vice-Chancellor (VC), Deputy VC, Pro VCs, Deans and Heads of Departments of the University.</u> Hence, it appears to me that this is a very important event for the University. In addition, <u>having a senior management meeting or workshop at a five stars hotel appears to be a <i>corporate or business oriented practice</i>, which is not commonly practiced among the public universities, as far as I know. In view of the confidentiality of information discussed during the workshop, detailed information will not be provided through this observation.</u></p> <p><u>According to the agenda, the workshop will start with welcome address and presentation by the VC regarding the 2014 global and national higher education landscape. The VC and hence the university appears to consider the ‘external environmental factors’ globally and nationally in formulating their priorities and targets. The agenda then continue with presentation by the Deputy VC focusing on enhancing the undergraduate academic experience. The core business of the University appears to be the</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning involving senior management team of the university • Corporate practice at private higher education institution • Input to strategic planning-global and national development in higher education • Input to strategic planning-core business of teaching university, teaching and learning

undergraduate teaching and learning, which is in alignment with the student profile and funding profile of the university. This means that the University considers its internal core business in setting its priorities and targets. It is followed by a presentation by the Pro VC focusing on international research excellence. This appears to me that the University also emphasises research at international level, which is not very common for a self-funding for-profit private higher education institution. This appears to me that besides being a teaching university, this university would like the teaching to be informed by research and the university would also like to play its role is contributing to knowledge. The workshop will then be continued with presentation by Group Finance Department regarding university financial sustainability. This agenda appears to me that maintaining financial sustainability is crucial for a self-funding university like this. It is interesting to know that financial sustainability is an important consideration for this University's priorities and targets setting for the following year. The workshop will then be concluded with breakout team discussion and presentation.

Observation on site:

I arrived at the workshop venue at around 8am, which is still very early, and hence only 1 staff arrived before me. At around 8:30am, more staff arrived. At around 8:45am, the workshop venue is full with participants, who are part of the senior management team of the University. At 9:10am, the workshop started with the VC welcomed everyone and clarified the agenda

- Input to strategic planning-research, another core responsibility of a university

- Input to strategic planning-financial consideration

and the expected outcomes of the workshop, which is to set the priorities and targets for the University in 2014. “For private institution, budget is very important. With budget, ‘things’ can happen. Hence, it is important to understand the priority and target before budget is set”, said the VC, emphasizing the importance of the workshop that will inform the budget preparation for the coming year. [RRN: It sounds to me that this university has a careful financial planning and management. Availability of financial resource determines whether the strategic plan of the university can be realised. I can imagine there is a limit to the financial resource. Hence, carefully deciding the key priorities and targets for the university and then allocating the financial resource accordingly are important responsibilities of the senior management and they are very important processes of the university. The VC appears to be accountable for the University’s performance, both academic and financial performance. I thought it might be interesting to take a look at the position description of the VC.]

The VC started with a presentation regarding the Landscape of Global and Local Higher Education. The presentation started with future landscape of higher education by year 2025. It is followed by the future landscape of higher education by year 2020. The presentation highlighted on the opportunities in terms of growth in student number at certain international market. It also highlighted the change to technology driven accessibility in higher education. It touched on inspiring teaching is to be

- Linking strategies and budget

- Financial management

- Financial limitation

- VC’s accountability

- Input for strategic planning-global and national development in higher education

informed by research and professional practices, the re-emphasis of civic responsibility, human value and holistic education. It also touched on the challenge to prepare students for the unknown jobs and career opportunity in the future. [RRN: This perspective is related to the conception on quality from fitness for purpose point of view.] It also emphasised the importance of research collaboration. In terms of university governance and management, it is predicted that the future direction is towards supporting flexibility and autonomy, where hiring cost will be cut, with more emphasis on transnational talents, and stronger need for professional management and leadership compared to traditional academic management and leadership. Policy making and improvement will be more data driven, and being able to innovate is key for survival. Last but not least, the VC highlighted the greater challenge in balancing between business and academic, where there is a need for new business model in higher education. He said, "It is critical to be able to balance these two (business and academic) for sustainability."

- Challenge-balancing business and academic

After that, the VC continued the presentation focusing on 2014 outlook on higher education globally and nationally. Globally, the VC highlighted the focus on accessibility and equity or education for all, global mobility, transnational education, international recognition through quality assurance mechanisms, accreditation and qualification framework, as well as ranking and rating. The challenges for the higher education globally are to manage brain drain and brain gain (talents), technology advancement and cost

- Visionary leadership

for both private and public higher education sectors. Nationally in Malaysia, the VC highlighted that the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act (Act 555) will be revised and there is a question of its impact. The impact of the latest practice of EMGS and immigration on internationalization agenda is to be assessed. The impact of the establishment of more foreign universities branch campuses in Malaysia is to be monitored. There is stronger competition for good students and good staff. The direction of SETARA, D-SETARA and MyRA is to be monitored. There will be more offshore activities. There will be stronger emphasis on the postgraduate education in the country. There will be more funding for research initiatives. There is an opportunity for more public and private partnership in alignment with the government's direction to harmonise the two sectors. [RRN: Through the presentation, the VC appears to be visionary and is aware of the global and national development in the landscape of higher education.]

The presentation is followed by an overall reflection on the international and national outlook, before highlighting the university's priorities for year 2014. The VC highlighted that there is a huge international market share at certain countries, as well as postgraduate students. Hence, the VC highlighted the importance of international visibility. The VC also highlighted the need for impactful integration with top industries. This is in alignment with the mission of the university. In addition, the VC emphasized the use of technology in teaching, learning and

- Opportunity-market
- Strategy or priority-international visibility
- Strategy or priority-industry

operation. The VC also highlighted the need to reflect on how to have more postgraduate students and researchers. The VC also highlighted the need for ‘right’ form of governance, to balance between the central steering and autonomy among the business group, university and faculty. The VC highlighted the need for conducive and innovative working environment. The VC highlighted the importance of brand, reputation and quality. The VC appears to view quality in the context of branding and reputation. Hence, the VC emphasized the importance of answering the question, “Does our quality meet the expectation of students, parents and employers?” The VC further elaborated that “Are they (student and parent) getting back their investment? Why post-SPM students choose other institutions?” [RRN: The VC’s questions reflect ‘value for money’ conception of quality. It also reflects the primary stakeholders of private higher education institution is students, parents and employers. I imagine as a for-profit private university, being able to justify value-for-money is crucial in order to ensure positive word of mouth and attracting more ‘customers’. Value-for-money in fact is also a perspective of the business owner or investor, which is return-on-investment (ROI), a different terminology to mean the same thing.]

From the understanding of the global and national development in higher education as well as his personal reflection, the VC presented the university’s priorities in year 2014. The priorities focused on the need for a new business model that addresses the need for consolidation of growth and quality. When the VC

- Importance of quality for branding and reputation
- Quality for positive word of mouth
- Quality as fitness for purpose, expected by students, parents and employers.
- Quality as value for money
- Challenge-balancing growth and quality

explained this point, he said that “If we grow and quality drops, we will suffer.” I imagine ‘suffer’ here refers to drop in student number or revenue due to negative word of mouth and the business may not be able to sustain long term. This is possibly a critical challenge of the university, to balance between growth and quality. Other priorities include (information was omitted).

[RRN: It is interesting to note that “exceeding students and parents’ expectation” was highlighted repeatedly. This shows how important the students and parents are to the private institution. It is also related to the value for money and exceptional perspectives of quality.]

After that, the VC continued the presentation regarding the priorities of the Group CEO, the business leader, to ensure alignment, before concluding with his personal *wish list*. [RRN: Integrating the Group CEO priorities in the University priorities can be viewed as ‘good alignment between the priorities of business leader and university leader’, which is a common practice in the corporate or business world, but which may also be viewed as ‘an influence to the university academic autonomy’.]

The six priorities of the Group CEO includes exceptional education quality, graduate with life skills, holistic education, talent and succession planning, profit and growth, as well as operational excellence for scalability. The priorities appear to have balance emphasis from academic and business perspectives. This may be a unique case because normally the business owner has stronger emphasis on the business aspect. I was informed that

- Quality as exceeding students and parents’ expectation. Quality as value for money and quality as exceptional.

- Input for strategic planning – business owner’s priorities

- Stance of business owner, quality and business perspectives

the Group CEO took over the business leadership position many years ago. In fact the current VC is hired by him. I believe these are possibly important reasons for the university's success in enhancing quality so far, being able to balance between the business and academic expectations, as well as having a Group CEO that 'role model' the importance of quality and not only profitability.

- Business owner - role model the importance of quality not only profitability

The VC's wish list for year 2014 includes areas about quality (information is omitted) and so forth. It is interesting to see how quality is being emphasized for undergraduate students but quantity is being emphasized for postgraduate students. This might be due to the institution already have larger number of undergraduate students but smaller number of postgraduate students. This triggered by thought that growing the number might be critical for economies of scale. The VC also highlighted things to be observed. That includes finance, talents recruitment, retaining and development, return on investment (ROI) expected by the students and parents, and the core values of the university.

- Economy of scale through growing number

RRN: The VC's wish list and list of things to be observed show a clear integration of the business expectation and the academic expectation with strong emphasis on *value-for-money* or *return-on-investment* for its stakeholders. It is interesting to observe that the core values of the institution is being reminded by the VC during such an important meeting among the senior leaders. That reflects how important the core values is to the university.]

- Potential challenges: finance, talents, ROI for students and parents, core values

- Integration of business and academic expectations through value for money or return on investment

- Importance of core values

During the question and answer session, one of the Deans asked,

- VC-participative leadership

“If VC is to choose the top 3 (priorities), what they are?” The VC responded, “I would like to hear from you, bottom up”. Another Dean commented that “If we were to move into holistic education, will other institutions move into the same direction, and we become one of the many. I suggest to understand our competitors and carve a niche for ourselves.” The VC replied, “Holistic education has been an emphasis through the university’s Graduate Capability initiative. It is about how we do it more.”

That concluded the presentation session from the VC. RRN: The presentation by the VC appeared to demonstrate that the VC is very visionary. His leadership style appears to be participative beside providing clear sense of direction. This might be another important reason of the university’s success in enhancing education quality.]

After a short break, the workshop is continued by a presentation by the Deputy VC entitled Enhancing Undergraduate Academic Experience. The presentation includes steps to be taken to enhance the undergraduate academic experience, which is one of the strategic thrusts of the university. Some of the proposed steps are making students intentional learners, taking student retention seriously, more flexibility in curriculum towards “lecturers teach less and students learn more” and so forth. The Deputy VC appears to be very passionate with education and with enhancing the student learning experience. The proposed steps are important ways of enhancing the value-for-money education with return-on-investment for the students and parents, which is consistent with

- Competitive advantage

- Visionary leadership for quality

- Core business-undergraduate academic experience

- Strategies to enhance undergraduate learning experience

the emphasis by the VC.

The workshop continued with a presentation by the Pro VC for Research, entitled International Research Excellence. The presentation started with the latest global agenda in terms of knowledge-based economy and followed by what it takes to create a world class university. The Pro VC then shared the global trends that demand new approaches to research. He also highlighted the new expectations for universities in terms of research and what universities need to do in response to the new expectations. The presentation was ended with the expectations from the VC and the targets set for research performance. [RRN: The presentation appeared to me that the university is ambitious to play a larger role in research and that required the talents in the university to be ready for the change, from a teaching university to a research-informed teaching university.]

The workshop is continued with the next presentation by Group Finance Head, entitled University's Financial Sustainability and Growth. The presentation provided an overview of the world economic conditions. It was followed by the latest development in higher education from finance perspective. The presentation continued with the university's internal financial challenges, touching on the revenue and cost. He emphasised that "Return on investment is expected by shareholders." Related to that, the financial disciplines required to ensure sustainability and growth was discussed, including the need to attach 'return on investment' to every expenditure, and every faculty is to own its profit and

- Research teaching informs

- Input for strategic planning-economic and finance condition

- Input to strategic planning-financial resource

- Challenge-financial sustainability and growth

loss. The Head also highlighted that “Sustainability and growth of the university are dependable on the profitability”. He also mentioned that the university’s business strategy is premium quality and premium price. Hence, he highlighted that increasing revenue is a better strategy than cutting cost in order to generate more profit or to at least maintain the current profit level. [RRN: It is interesting that not only the VC is accountable for the profit and loss of the university, the Deans are also accountable for the profit and loss of the faculties under their care. I think it is interesting to also look at the position description of the Dean too.]

- VC and Deans are accountable to profit and loss

Before breaking for lunch, the VC briefed everyone the working session after lunch. The VC reminded everyone to keep the university’s mission in mind while working on the priorities and targets for the University for 2014. The VC requested everyone to start by considering these two questions.

- Input to strategic planning-university mission
- Input to strategic planning-SWOT

a) What do you see the University’s greatest strengths and primary weaknesses?

b) What are the opportunities and threats ahead?

The VC then requested each group to propose ‘Top 5 priorities, KPI, targets and actions for 2014’. The VC concluded by sharing a message that the university should ‘not to be too complacent’. [RRN: The university appears to keep the Mission in mind during its strategic planning. It also consider the opportunity and threats in the environment as well as its own strengths and weaknesses.]

- Strategic planning process.
- Private-need to maintain competitiveness

After lunch, breakout team discussion started. The discussion

started with strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis for the University. It was followed by top priorities setting for 2014. There were 5 working groups and I can see active discussion within the groups with ‘noise’ clearly heard.

Through the active interaction among the staff, I can sense the dynamic and vibrant within the room during the discussion.

After around 2 hours and 30 minutes of discussion, every group took turn to present the outputs of their discussion for around 10 to 15 minutes. Question and answer session happened at the end of each group presentation. It was observed that the overall key priorities centred around the following agenda:

- Internationalization – international recognition (including national rating), collaboration and learning experience
- Transformative teaching and learning – rating, technology, holistic education
- Research and innovation – research outcomes, postgraduate students, research grants
- Engaging industry – graduate employed at top employers, adjunct appointment for experts from industry
- System and structure – efficient system and processes
- Talents – attracting and retaining both staff and student

One of the deans highlighted that “Talent is the enabler of all other priorities”. He also highlighted that the current market is not able to differentiate the quality and value of different providers and as a result, students and parents are primary driven by price.

Another dean highlighted that “We naturally don’t allow ourselves to be left behind by our competitors. We want to continually improve ourselves.” She also highlighted that perceived value for money is important for students. [RRN: This

- Dynamic and vibrant discussion

- Priorities or strategic areas, including the enablers

- Key enabler-talent

- Importance of students and parents to be able to differentiate quality

- Competitive advantage

- Perceived value for money

sounds like the ‘voice’ of for-profit private institution.]

Towards the end of the workshop, the VC gave a closing remark that the information provided will be summarised. And, the VC will provide the final version of priorities for all during the coming Deans and Heads of Departments meeting, which is a regular monthly meeting, focusing on strategic matters. The VC thanked everyone for their inputs.

[**RRN**: This workshop shows the conception of quality of the Group CEO and senior management team of this institution. It also demonstrated how institutional level strategic priorities and targets are established, with the involvement of the senior management team of the university and inputs from the Group CEO. The priorities are considered high-level strategies too. In addition, the key challenges and enabling factors in the quest for education quality are observed too.]

- Decision making-VC to decide after consulting senior management team

OPEN CODING FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS DOCUMENT (EXAMPLE)**Reminder**

1. For each encounter (whether it is observation or interview) with the research participant, collect all necessary documents.
2. The document may be institution's portfolio, data and statistics, strategic plan, policies, annual report, graduates' employability and employers' profile or other materials used at the research site.
3. Obtain permission before making copies of the above documents. File up the documents.
4. Analyse the contents of the documents collected.
5. Summarize each document using the given guidelines, one summary for each document.
6. Refer to the research questions when preparing the summary.

Guidelines

Research Site: The University

Title of the document: Staff Survey 2013 Result

Date of procurement: 20 September 2013

Types of document: Powerpoint presentation

1. Name and describe the document obtained.

The document provides a summary or highlights of staff survey result conducted in 2013, in power point presentation format. The survey was conducted over 2 weeks period and was administered independently by an international agency. The response rate from staff is 74%, which is large enough to be considered representative of the population.

2. Explain the situation/process of obtaining the document

The document was received from the university after the

Open Coding

observation of the sharing session for the staff survey result conducted on 16 August 2013.

3. Summarise the content of the document. [refer to the research question]

The survey areas are:

- a) Motivation to join organization
- b) Recruitment experience
- c) Job related: the role, immediate manager / supervisor, team
- d) Career related: professional development, wellbeing, rewards
- e) Organization: immediate leadership, core purpose and core values
- f) Recommending the organization

3.1 Conception of quality:

- a) 90% of staff say that committed to culture of excellence, one of the core values, is evident in the institution. [This has direct link to the concept of quality.]
- b) 90% of staff say that being passionate in what they do is evident in the institution. [This possibly explain the commitment towards quality.]

Purpose of education:

The institution's purpose statement focuses on value adding to students so that they become leader in the community.

3.2 Strategic Management for Quality

- Quality as excellence

- Passionate staff

- Quality as value-adding

a) Establishing goal:

The survey result shows that 95% of staff day that the core purpose is meaningful to them and 80% of staff say the leadership team communicates a clear direction.

- Importance of purpose
- Communicating direction

b) Formulating strategies:

The survey result shows that 80% of staff say the leadership team communicates a clear roadmap.

- Communicating roadmap

c) Implementing strategies:

a. Motivation to join organization (why and what kind of talent is attracted to the institution)

i) 67% (69% in 2012) say because the job description matched their skills / experience / interests.

- Job alignment

ii) 52% (56% in 2012) say for the opportunities for personal/professional development.

- Importance of personal/professional development
- Dynamic staff

iii) 30% say because of salary.

- Salary

b. Role:

i) 98% of academic and 99% of non-academic say that they have strong sense of commitment to my role within my workplace.

- Committed staff

ii) 97% (98% in 2012) of respondents say that they have the skills require to perform effectively in their roles.

- Competent staff

<p>c. Immediate Supervisor:</p> <p>i) <u>93% of respondents have a good working relationship with their immediate supervisors.</u></p> <p>ii) <u>86% of respondents say that their managers communicate effectively with them.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship with supervisors Effective communication with supervisor
<p>d. Team:</p> <p>i) <u>97% (95% in 2012) of respondents say they enjoy working with their immediate colleagues.</u></p> <p>ii) <u>97% (93% in 2012) of respondents say they are able to support each other in day-to-day work.</u></p> <p>iii)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with colleagues Team spirit
<p>e. Development:</p> <p>i) <u>96% of respondents say that they have the opportunities to learn new skills at workplace.</u></p> <p>ii) <u>95% (97% in 2012) of respondents say that they actively seek out opportunities to gain new skills that help them to perform better in their role</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for professional development Dynamic team-desire to learn
<p>f. Wellbeing:</p> <p>i) <u>91% of respondents say that personal</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compassionate manager

<p><u>circumstances are dealt with compassionately.</u></p>	
<p>ii) <u>85% of respondents say that they are challenged and motivated by their workload. [This reflect the dynamic of the staff.]</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic team-challenged and motivated by workload
<p>g. <u>Rewards: 79% of respondents say the bonus is fair but 59% say that the salary is fair. [This reflects the challenge of private sector to be seen as rewarding fairly, in conjunction with the level of performance expected, which may lead to turnover.]</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair bonus • Average fair salary
<p>h. Leadership (institutional):</p> <p>i) <u>93% of staff respect their leadership team.</u></p> <p>ii) <u>84% say they lead by example.</u></p> <p>iii) <u>80% say that the leadership team communicates a clear roadmap and direction.</u></p> <p>iv) <u>85% say they sign up to the roadmap and direction communicated by their institutions leadership team</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Lead by example • Direction and roadmap • Alignment
<p>i. Core Purpose:</p> <p>i) <u>95% (91% in 2012) of respondents say the core purpose statement is meaningful to them.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of purpose

ii) <u>89% (87% in 2012) say that it help them to align what they do with goals of the place of work.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned to purpose
iii) <u>87% (88% in 2012) say that it motivates and inspires them in their job.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspired by purpose
iv) <u>87% (85% in 2012) say that it is an accurate reflection of what they think the organization does.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living purpose by institution
v) <u>80% (85% in 2012) say that it is an accurate reflection of what they do in the job.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living purpose through job
j. Core Values:	
i) <u>75% to 90% of respondents say the various core values are evident in the working environment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living core values
ii) <u>90% of staff say that committed to culture of excellence is evident in the institution. [This has direct link to the concept of quality.]</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of excellence
iii) <u>90% of staff say that being passionate is evident in the institution. [This possibly explains the commitment towards quality.]</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate staff
k. Recommending the organization:	
i) <u>73% say they would encourage people</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned staff

to apply (actively or when asked)

- ii) 98% say they would not discouraged others from working at the university.

- Aligned staff

3.3 Key Challenges

The survey result reveals some challenges faced by the institution. The survey results show that institution / manager:

- a) Could be more proactive in providing academic guidance to staff to improve in their roles, and providing opportunities to develop their research skill
- b) To provide more support when staff are under pressure and for them to have a positive work-life balance.
- c) To provide stronger rewards framework and clear bonus scheme.

- Professional development
- Research skill
- Work-life balance
- Rewards

3.4 Key Contributing Factors

- a) Core purpose that inspire staff
- b) Working environment with strong team culture and excellent team work
- c) Committed and competent workforce who have the required skills to perform effectively in their roles.
- d) Proactive staff in learning new skills that allow staff to develop their roles.
- e) Living core values of the university, which is respect and care.

- Inspiring purpose
- Aligned team
- Team spirit
- Committed and competent workforce
- Dynamic team-learning
- Living core values

4. Significance of the document to the research objective/s.

The results show the importance of:

- a) Core purpose to inspire the staff

- b) Leadership team who lead by example
- c) Aligned team (leadership, manager and staff) with strong sense of commitment and team spirit
- d) Dynamic team with strong desire to learn and develop.

Sharing the result openly with staff shows that the institution is open in its communication, which is important in nurturing trusting relationship.

AXIAL CODING USING NVIVO VER. 10 (EXAMPLE)

Challenge in Balancing Quality and Profitability Expectations

Definition: The challenge to maintain or improve quality, and at the same time to maintain or increase profitability, which may be difficult to maintain a good balance

<Internals\\Interview\\Faculty A - Lecturer 3\\FA-L3-I1 Lecturer3 Interview1> - § 1
reference coded [1.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.70% Coverage

In the public (university), if a student comes late, we can excuse the student from the class. We can kick the students out of the class. If you (lecturer) say something wrong, no one will ask question, no one will challenge you. Right? It is public and students are very quiet. But here in the private (university), maybe because they pay more, they really challenge the lecturers. If you say something wrong, they will tell (question) you. If you cannot deliver at the level that they want, you just have 5 minutes at the beginning of the class. If you lose these 5 minutes, within 5 minutes they assess the lecturer, if within 5 minutes they feel that what you teach does not have the value or you are not an experienced lecturer, the class will be so noisy. (This happens) usually after the first week. During first week in semester one, they just come from the high school (secondary school), they are afraid of lecturers. They come on time, there is no noise. From week two onwards, if you cannot control the class, if they feel that you are a bit stressed, you are new, they will challenge you.

<Internals\\Interview\\Faculty A - Lecturer 5\\FA-L5-I1 Lecturer5 Interview1> - § 2
references coded [9.55% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.28% Coverage

Actually I'm very lucky that I'm not the dean, and I'm not responsible for P&L (profit and loss). [The dean is.] The dean is. I don't control budget, I'm only partially responsible, should I say that way, for the profit and loss. In all these time, I and a lot of my colleagues hardly consider doing things for profit. But because of the pressure for profit, it forced us to think of alternative revenue. Which is a good thing, I think. And, it forced us to think about initiative like "can we educate for free?", which sounds like ridiculous, but the idea is that if we could build or prepare students, or a bunch of students who have good track records of producing good results, that we may one day be able to get industry to sponsor students' education. And by doing so, you could literally be relief off your concern for numbers (enrolment which reflects revenue). [Can you share with me why this concern is a critical concern and deserve a very important attention, in your perspective?]

For private institution, everything that you do is all about numbers (enrolment). If I'm constantly chasing numbers, then my attention is not where I think it should be. [Numbers mean revenue?] Student numbers directly equals to revenue. And if you constantly thinking about numbers (revenue), you may cut corners, just because of

numbers. And, how you are going to build a track record if you constantly having one eye on numbers. If I need to invest, to build capabilities in the students, I need to be relieved off numbers. So, we look at the URT, University Racing Team, a lot of money being spent on them and now we have a racing team, a group of students, who can design, build cars and race them. If we are concerned about numbers, those money being spent on them would not had gone into it (in the first place).

[It sounds to me that from the example you had just given is actually on how to justify the way to spend the money, and if the number is low, of course, there's not enough money to be justified in the first place.] That's right. [Then the question or the challenge might be, you need to build a track record so that you don't need to worry about money; but at the same time you need money to build the track records.]

That is correct, chicken and egg. So, you need to be relieved off those numbers, concern with the numbers, in the early stage while you build capability in your faculty. And once you have the name, the reputation, then everything is OK. [That sounds like the faculty may not be making the level of profit as expected initially.] Ya, it would be. [OK, and possibly to certain extent, might need the investment from the institution.] That is right. [Initially.] Initially. [Until the name is there and then the faculty can self-sustain and generate enough revenue for the faculty and possibly making more profit for the institution.] Right, the word I always use is conviction. You must have the conviction to put in the efforts to build the faculty. Build the faculty in terms of capability, in terms of reputation, and things like that.

[I think it's a fair question to ask, where do you see the faculty stands now? In terms of the need to invest, and also the contribution in terms of profit.] Like I say, I'm isolated from the budget, so I don't get the full feel of the pressure. [So, the dean possibly feels it more.] Yes. [Do you see the faculty... maybe another way to say is do you see the faculty at this point in time or before, highly (being) pressurized on numbers?] Yes, all the time. [Until today?] Until today. [That means that there is still a need to contribute more revenue and profit at this point in time.]

That is correct.

Reference 2 - 1.26% Coverage

[Do you like to quote me an example how that pressure is being dealt with maybe, in terms of the needs to meet the number and at the same time to ensure quality.] I see this indirectly in a sense that our initiative is to generate alternative revenue, and alternative revenue would then relieve us off some pressure from the student numbers. [So, that emphasis being put on the alternative revenue gives you the direct impression on the importance of...] Yes. [That sounds like a very important target for the faculty right now, the alternative revenue.] Yes.

<Internals\\Interview\\Faculty A Dean\\FA-D-I1 Interview1> - § 6 references coded
[1.42% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.16% Coverage

I think after a year or so, they decided to close the programme. So the first step was to move us back to the Campus, and the second step was to close the programme eventually.

Reference 2 - 0.15% Coverage

So when the programme was closing and everyone was given a letter to say that “thank you very much and we are closing the programme” and by then “we will pay you that much...”

Reference 3 - 0.08% Coverage

Meanwhile, the programme was being revived. So they are getting the people back.

Reference 4 - 0.32% Coverage

The whole thing took very short time. It was a turbulence time. Because they are sacking a lot of people and there is a very high level of unhappiness. And not only that, the staff of the Faculty requested the management to keep the programme and not pay them. They said “we take over the programme”. Because we thought the programme was good.

Reference 5 - 0.16% Coverage

For that specific campus, (name of staff was omitted) was employed as COO. When the student number started to drop, he actually didn’t do anything to rectify the situation.

Reference 6 - 0.54% Coverage

So, when we were moved back in preparation for closing down, because we have a group of student we have to... Yeah. So people feel when we go Open Day, there are some enquiries and we just keep quiet and say this and that. So, the Unit Coordinator at that time, proposed to Chief Operating Officer that we are not paid anything and we run the programme. From the fees, we get back our salary and then we pay the college. If we don’t get any student, they do not need to pay us. But they refused. They insisted on closing it down. Anyhow, after that, they revived it, and I came back.

<Internals\\Interview\\Faculty B Dean\\FB-D-I1 Dean-Interview1> - § 2 references coded [1.82% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.42% Coverage

Then of course later I realised that they were more profit-driven, very much profit-driven and also... But of course profit-driven is different, it is also relating to quality. In order to ensure that the profit is achieved, they make sure a lot of investment to help to enhance the quality part.

Reference 2 - 1.40% Coverage

Everything is very... rather marketing oriented. [Meaning?] Not so academic. [Do you mind to elaborate?] Yes, no doubt they focused on giving people the understanding that they have quality education to provide, but all the things that were carried out were more focusing... heavier investment is on the branding practices, exercise. [In terms of investment] Ok. That is one... what I understood then, was one way to, so call, to have better control over public perception towards quality... towards financial strength, how strong we are, because when people saw your ads (advertisement) a lot of time and it is big ads, it somehow gives people the impression that financially you are strong. I think

to a certain extent that helps, but only up to a certain extent. After some time, when we realised that in order to become a university, we have to be more than that. Just relying on the marketing strategy is not sufficient. It will not last us for long, for a longer journey.

<Internals\\Interview\\Faculty B Dean\\FB-D-I3 Dean-Interview3> - § 1 reference coded [1.73% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.73% Coverage

It is not the current Vice-Chancellor who does not understand. He understands. But it is still coming back to private sector. You see public sector is already doing that and gearing towards that. But their position and ours are different. They are funded by the government. They can afford to do so without worrying about the chunk of money that we need to depend on to survive. Whereas private sector, unfortunately we have to fund ourselves. So, we are having the fear and wondering whether we can depend on postgraduate (programmes) and survive still. That is the challenge. That is the greatest challenge of the institution, not faculty. Because of that institutional level challenge was not able to enable the faculty at faculty level, to aspire to go to the next height, you know, programmes, run it in a different way.

<Internals\\Interview\\Student Council 1\\SC-I1> - § 1 reference coded [2.23% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.23% Coverage

When the university put the students first, the profit next, they will find the quality will naturally go up and the reputation will improve as well.

<Internals\\Interview\\T&LC\\TED-HOD-I1> - § 1 reference coded [1.48% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.48% Coverage

The first one is for people to presenting their work. And furthermore, I think our university is cutting funding on presenting papers in other conferences, so it's best that they had this avenue to present their papers, that's also another objective, to have a platform for them to present, because our university is like very tough to get funding to present their papers. Ya, the budget cut in the university. So that's one. Then we thought that, that's good.

<Internals\\Interview\\VC\\VC-I1 Interview> - § 3 references coded [5.47% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.15% Coverage

Every time there is a meeting, they tracked about student number.

Reference 2 - 0.57% Coverage

But the challenge of having the mobility is finance, of course. Some students can't afford to go to France, England or Japan. It is costly. But some parents do, they can afford. So, let's get started with those who can afford to send their kids.

Reference 3 - 4.75% Coverage

I also, for business entity like us, for me at the Vice-Chancellor and for (name of the Group CEO is omitted) as Group CEO, we have to watch our revenue. We have to also watch our profit. What is the point of getting a growth of (percent is omitted) but profit only (percentage is omitted). That means you spend quite a lot, you know. So, you have to be parallel, the growth has to be parallel. Growth means good business. We also have to look at revenue generation. At the moment we only have one single window (source of revenue), student fee. We have to create multiple windows to generate revenue. (Detailed information is omitted.) Endowment, I don't think any people donate yet. And, we spent (amount of money was omitted) on scholarship. If the (amount of money is omitted) scholarship can be brought in from people who donate to us, "this is (amount of money is omitted) for you and I want you to help the poor students from any area, regardless of race, we support that. But they must be good, they must come from poor families, they should be an asset to the country." I don't think we have that. Endowment for Harvard (University), MIT, so huge. Cambridge (University) also so huge. (Detailed information is omitted.) I think on the business perspective, from the management point of view, we need to see the revenue and profit. From the activities and product point of view, we have to make sure the quality is good, that is very important.

<Internals\\Observation\\U-O-3 Observation University Priorities & Targets Setting Workshop> - § 2 references coded [3.45% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.27% Coverage

Last but not least, the VC highlighted the great challenge in balancing between business and academic, where there is a need for new business model in higher education. He said, "It is critical to be able to balance these two (business and academic) for sustainability."

Reference 2 - 2.18% Coverage

The priorities focused on the need for a new business model that addresses the need for consolidation of growth and quality. When the VC explained this point, he said, "If we grow and quality drops, we will suffer." [RRN: I imagine 'suffer' here refers to drop in student number or revenue due to negative word of mouth and the business may not be able to sustain long term. This is possibly a critical challenge of the university, to balance between growth and quality.]

<Internals\\Observation\\U-O-4 Observation Deans & HODs meeting> - § 2 references coded [28.15% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 21.38% Coverage

Agenda 4. Managing Profitability by Mr. (name is omitted)

The Financial Controller shared various ways to manage the revenue and cost. The following strategies are discussed. (Detailed information is omitted.)

[I sense that the University does emphasize the importance of managing cost and revenue to ensure profitability, which is important for a for-profit private higher education institution.]

Reference 2 - 6.77% Coverage

[In summary, this meeting discussed about qualities of graduate and holistic education, teaching and learning, university rating, managing financial performance and profitability, as well as operational matters in terms of timetabling. This meeting reflects the priorities and challenges experienced by this private higher education institution, to manage both education quality and profitability.]

MAIN CODING MATRIX (RESEARCH QUESTIONS, THEMES, CATEGORY, EXCERPTS AND DATA SOURCES) (EXAMPLE)

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
1	Conception of Quality						
	Conception of Quality	Exceptional	A traditional concept of quality linked to the idea of “excellence”, usually operationalised as exceptionally high standards of academic achievement. Quality is achieved if the standards are surpassed. (Harvey & Stensaker , 2007)	The six priorities of the Group CEO includes exceptional education quality, graduate with life skills, holistic education, talent and succession planning, profit and growth, as well as operational excellence for scalability. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)	Document Interview Observation Total	7 7 2 16	13 11 3 27
		Fitness for purpose – for employment	Judges quality by the extent to which education meets its stated purpose. The purpose may be customer-defined to meet requirements or (in education) is	This mission will guide us to achieve greater heights in producing top notch graduates for the industry; contributing toward socio-economic, nation building and betterment of society; and nurturing outstanding role models who can make an impact in the world's leading corporations. (University Annual Report 2011)	Document Interview Observation Total	7 12 0 19	11 47 0 58

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
			usually institution-defined to reflect institutional mission (or course objectives), or indeed defined by external professional bodies. (Harvey & Stensaker , 2007)	<p>“The student is ready. Ready to work in the society... I can tell that she can be a good option among few people going for interview (for employers). If she tells someone that she has done this (the project), she has better opportunity compared to others...Even (to be an) entrepreneur as well.” (Faculty A, Lecturer 2, Interview 1)</p> <p>“I think the most important for a lecturer is to know how to successfully give the students the knowledge so that they can use it for their future as (name of a professional is omitted).” (Faculty A, Lecturer 4, Interview 1)</p> <p>Lecturer</p>			
		Transformation	quality as a process of change, which in higher education adds value to students through their learning experience. Education is not a service for a customer but an ongoing process of	The University has embraced transformative teaching and learning as a bold, imaginative initiative that will produce better learning outcomes. Transformative teaching and learning practices are centred on learner success, and involve leaners and staff collaboratively creating learning and meaning that is increasingly self-directed and leads to change, while at the same time helping learners and academic staff to	Document Interview Observation Total	4 14 0 18	8 48 0 56

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)
			transformation of the participant. This leads to two notions of transformative quality in education: enhancing the consumer and empowering the consumer. (Harvey & Stensaker , 2007)	<p>become lifelong learners. (Document: University Strategic Plan-current)</p> <p>“Quality education means an education that is capable of transforming an individual, enabling an individual and also bringing the best out of this individual... Society realises its full potential through the realisation of the full potential of the individuals. Now, once this happens I believe the needs of others equally important stakeholders will be also satisfied. This includes people like the employers, sponsors whether the parent or government.” (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)</p> <p>“I have a student. She is emotional, easily cries if she fails. From someone does not know how to do (name of a skill is omitted), do not walk out to the street and exposed to the sun, she helped me to build (name of a product is omitted) in one semester. (She has) totally changed from someone “I can’t do it, I fail”, to someone who says “I am done.” (...) This is something that I (think is important) (...) student attributes, when you see the change in the student.” (Faculty A,</p>	

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				Lecturer 2, Interview 1)			
		Value for money	Assesses quality via return on investment or expenditure. At the heart of this approach in education is the notion of accountability towards funders. This is applicable to students at private setup because they pay their tuition. (Harvey & Stensaker , 2007)	“Value for money means track record and what the fee is like.” (VC, Interview 1) Does our quality meet the expectation of students, parents and employers? Are they (student, parent and employer) getting back their investment?” (VC, Observation during University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop) He (Group Finance Head) also mentioned that the university’s business strategy is premium quality and premium price. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)	Document Interview Observation Total	0 5 1 6	0 12 3 15
	Purpose of Education	Human fulfilment	“...if only our schools can successfully educate every individual child in self-confidence, independence and autonomy, then society can with confidence be	So someone (student) says I have a vision in life and the job is a way to achieve the vision and to achieve financial security or whatever, rather than being the vision itself. I think that is really transformational. An educational institution who works on this will definitely produce good graduates, they will definitely get a good job, they will get good salary... But, they will be the	Document Interview Observation Total	4 6 1 11	6 13 1 20

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
			left to take care of itself. The good society will be automatically produced by the creation, through education, of good individuals. Education, it is held, cannot directly change society; it must do so indirectly, by creating the kind of individual who will then possess those qualities which are prerequisite for the realisation of the good society..." (Barrett, Chawla-Duggan, Lowe, Nickel, & Ukpo, 2006)	change agent when they join the society and that is how a university could change the society as well. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3) "our emphasis is on how to provide our students an education for life, so it is beyond employment actually" (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 4) if we transform an individual, add value, the job will happen. But if getting the job becomes the primary motive of education, although it's good and noble, it actually limits the potential of the goodness that education can add (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)			
		Economic prosperity	Schooling as preparation for the world of work underlined by the belief	This mission will guide us to achieve greater heights in producing top notch graduates for the industry; contributing toward socio-economic, nation building and betterment of society; and	Document Interview	2 5	4 8

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
			of a “direct and indisputable correlation between educational reform and economic prosperity” Human capital theory.- market-led world (Barrett, Chawla-Duggan, Lowe, Nikel, & Ukpo, 2006)	nurturing outstanding role models who can make an impact in the world's leading corporations. (Document: University Annual Report 2011) “Again, to be aligned to the new mission. Because we are more focusing on the industry. We are saying satisfying the top employers’ expectations, you know. So the top employers are basically from our local context here, we are more industry focus simply because our market is more concern about job employability.” (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 2)	Observation Total	0 7	0 12
		Social progress	Education as a tool for transformation or social engineering. Education as being about developing “desirable abilities in people”, which includes functioning within an existing society, but also to use this functioning and one’s ability for	This mission will guide us to achieve greater heights in producing top notch graduates for the industry; contributing toward socio-economic, nation building and betterment of society. (Document: University Annual Report 2011) “But, they (students) will be the change agent when they join the society and that is how a university could change the society as well.” (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)	Document Interview Observation Total	3 3 0 6	3 3 0 6

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
			working towards changing / improving / envisioning it. Multiple discourses concerned with the idea that “all education systems have social functions and consequences” (Barrett, Chawla-Duggan, Lowe, Nickel, & Ukpo, 2006)				
2	Strategic Management of Quality Process						
	Establishing goal	-	Developing a common direction and target	According to the agenda, the workshop will start with welcome address and presentation by the VC regarding the 2014 global and local higher education landscape. The VC and hence the university appears to consider the ‘external environmental factors’ globally and locally in formulating their priorities and targets. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)			
						Source	Reference
					Document	15	32
					Interview	14	101
					Observation	3	26
					Total	32	159
				The agenda reflects the important priorities of a for-profit private university, where the financial			

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				matter, academics matters covering the educational goals and teaching and learning, as well as branding and reputation. (U-O-4 Observation, Deans & HODs meeting)			
	Formulating Strategies	-	Creating systematic plan of action to achieve the goals	Transformative teaching and learning practices are centred on learner success, and involve learners and staff collaboratively creating learning and meaning that is increasingly self-directed and leads to change, while at the same time helping learners and academic staff to become lifelong learners. (current University Strategic Plan)			
				the workshop is continued by a presentation by the Deputy VC entitled Enhancing Undergraduate Academic Experience. The presentation includes steps to be taken to enhance the undergraduate academic experience. Some of the steps are making students intentional learners, taking student retention seriously, more flexibility in curriculum towards “lecturers teach less and students learn more” and so forth. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)			
					Document	41	129
					Interview	18	126
					Observation	3	6
					Total	62	261

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
	Implementin g Strategies	-	Executing the action plan to achieve the goals	The second challenge was how to make the course different, really. Because at that time, there were so many other options in the market. We have Australian university branch campus, we have UK university branch campus. So, it was a very, very challenging time. So, I thought of this project-oriented learning. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1) I remember the first idea of the (name of discipline is omitted) Exhibition... it came from him (the Dean). He told us in a small meeting that he was thinking of doing this type of thing at the end of the semester. So, the (number of) staff at that time... we had something like 10, may be less than 10, I don't remember exactly. Three of us supported him (the idea). (Faculty A, Lecturer 1, Interview 1)		Source	Reference
					Document	12	20
					Interview	14	84
					Observation	3	3
					Total	29	107
3	Key Challenges						
	External challenges	Market competition	Competition among the higher education institutions for students, the primary source of funding	We never realise that Malaysia has more than sixty universities, public universities, private universities and university colleges, and about seven branch campuses. That means competition. Competition gives a better opportunity for		Source	Reference
					Document	2	5
					Interview	10	17
					Observation	1	3

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data		
					<i>(From NVivo database)</i>		
				students and parents to look at you in more detail. (VC, Interview 1)	Total	13	25
				A Dean also highlighted that the current market is not able to differentiate the quality and value of different providers and as a result they become primary driven by price. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Meeting)			
				We have lots of challenges coming from competitors not just from local but also from overseas branches. Now the government is encouraging all of them (foreign universities) to come in... [If] you don't do something now to prepare yourself better, you will not be able to continue to stand long and [stay] competitive. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 3)			
				It is an open economy...looking at Malaysian scene specifically, I think there are plenty of education providers and there are even foreign quite prestige providers as well. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 3)			

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
		Public perception on private higher education	The way most people think about or understanding private higher education	<p>The perception on the institution is basically, we are kind of providing pre-university (and diploma) programmes. So, how to change the perception?! How to change the perception that the institution is also having degree programmes? How to get people to believe that we can offer master and PhD? That is the biggest challenge. (VC, Interview 1)</p> <p>We may have a good reputation that we prepare the students well so that they can get another degree (through twinning programmes)...we are like preparatory Faculty. We don't have our own (programmes). Even if we do good things... if we teach well, people will think this is the way the partner does it. So, it is very difficult to attribute anything to us. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)</p> <p>This is a private institution, so private institution directly equals making money, that's what everybody will consider. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, Interview 1)</p>	Document	0	0
					Interview	5	5
					Observation	0	0
					Total	5	5
Institutional	Balancing	The challenge to		Last but not least, the VC highlighted the great	Source	Reference	

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
	Challenges	quality and profitability	maintain or improve quality, and at the same time to maintain or increase profitability, which may be difficult to maintain a good balance	challenge in balancing between business and academic, where there is a need for new business model in higher education. He said, “It is critical to be able to balance these two (business and academic) for sustainability.” (...) The (University) priorities focused on the need for a new business model that addresses the need for consolidation of growth and quality. When the VC explained this point, he said, “If we grow and quality drops, we will suffer.” (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Meeting)	Document	0	0
					Interview	9	19
					Observation	2	4
					Total	11	23
				In summary, this meeting discussed about qualities of graduate and holistic education, teaching and learning, university rating, managing financial performance and profitability, as well as operational matters in terms of timetabling. This meeting reflects the priorities and challenges experienced by private higher education institution, to manage both education quality and profitability. (U-O-4, Observation, Deans and HODs meeting)			

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)
				<p>As a business entity, you need people to pay for the product that you deliver. People will come to you for the product if they feel that the quality is good. For private university, if students do not want to come to us, our revenue will go down... When our profit goes down, our benefit to staff will also go down. And staff will not want to stay. So, at the end of the day, an organisation may not last long. I think for an organisation like us (private university), quality for me is the most important thing because that is how you are going to sell your 'product', and also, how to back our branding and our reputation... People respect when you deliver good product, when you produce good students. (VC, Interview 1)</p> <p>Actually I'm very lucky that I'm not the dean, and I'm not responsible for P&L (profit and loss of the faculty). The dean is. (...) For private institution, everything that you do is all about number (enrolment). Student number directly equals to revenue. If I'm constantly chasing (student) number, then my attention is not where I think it should be. And if you constantly</p>	

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				thinking about (student) number, you may cut corners, just because of (student) numbers. And, how you are going to build a track record if you constantly having one eye on (student) number. If I need to invest, to build capabilities in the students, I need to be relieved off (student) number. (...) Chicken and egg. So, you need to be relieved off those numbers, concern with the numbers, in the early stage while you build capability in your faculty. And once you have the name, the reputation, then everything is OK. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, ex-Deputy Dean, Interview 1)			
		Aligning, retaining and capacity building of staff	To create staff with common commitment, to keep staff with the institution and to build the capability of staff	Number one is people. At that time, not many qualified people, not many talents, not many people really understand what a university is. So, that was the biggest challenge, how to bring more people to join the university, to play like a university, not play like a college... I think as far as research is concern, we have to get the buy-in from the staff, (regarding) the importance of research... they must see the value of this. (...) you must get the buy in because you got to	Document Interview Observation Total	1 10 1 12	1 39 1 41

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				change the mindset of the people. They have not been familiar with this. To get the buy-in that research is important for us. (VC, Interview 1)			
				A lot (of lecturers) have left, this is not to imply because of the Dean, but a lot of the lecturers have left... many of the older staff have left and the new ones have come in and are here for a shorter period of time. The turnover was not worse than any other place that I know, but on a whole (it is a concern)... (Faculty B, Lecturer 1, Interview 1)			
		Fragment and rigid system	Not cohesive and inflexible system	To put the governance in the right shape also is another challenge. We were offering somebody else's (partners') programmes. Their governance is different. So, to move to (our own) single governance, our own governance, is also something that we think we have to make it happen. Because without a proper governance, a university cannot run properly... I think the system was a bit like, we were doing something for other people. So, that's why the system was not properly 'uniformed'... lots of differences in			
						Source	Reference
					Document	1	1
					Interview	5	15
					Observation	1	1
					Total	7	17

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				the system that (make) you feel that... how to move, because they (the faculties) are always subject to external partners (system). (VC, Interview 1)			
				The Faculty may have some vision, but the rest (are) still strongly linked to (the) partner with a big presence in terms of any kind of procedures, policies etc. We look to them for what they were looking for, what they needed. (Faculty B, Lecturer, Interview 1)			
	Faculty Level Challenges	Resistance from academics	Reluctance of academic staff to, for example, embrace change, put in extra effort and work together	So, that was the first time we had a so called exhibition. It was a huge gamble because most of the staff went against it. So, I insisted and I had the support of only two people (staff). (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)			
						Source	Reference
					Document	0	0
					Interview	11	29
					Observation	0	0
					Total	11	29
				Because I felt that there is no sense of pride... initially. The group was... They were all segregated. Each has the so call... very individualistic. All they focused on is me and my need, me and			

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				my want. So long as whatever you give me is satisfying my need and my want then I am OK. If it doesn't, sorry, I don't care where the faculty and the institution is going, so long as I am not affected. They are very calculative. Not willing to put in more extra effort. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 1)			
		Programme lacks competitive advantage	Programme lacks advantage over its competitors to retain customers or to earn profits	<p>The second challenge was how to make the course different, really. Because at that time, there were so many other options in the market. We have Australian university branch campus, we have UK university branch campus. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)</p> <p>The only one programme, Journalism, is solid, that one is good. But unfortunately the one is not going to be our main saleable product because I understand our local market does not know how to embrace Journalism that well as compared to Western countries. [I see] That's why I was worried, because I foresee I will not sustain</p>	Document Interview Observation Total	0 5 1 5	0 7 1 6

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
		Misalignment between university and faculty leadership	Lack of common understanding or commitment between the leaders at university level and faculty level	<p>well.(...) True enough within 1 and a half year, we received so much complaint, the students could tell, it is not much different. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 1)</p> <p>So, moving from a college, to a university college, to a new university. From having people with only business mind at the heart to having full-fledged academician, really meeting the university (expectation)... all these enable lots of things to happen and contribute also to the level of satisfaction of staff which there will be no Dean in the world to be able to own his own or her own to be able to sustain the level of satisfaction or motivation of staff, if the organization was going in a different direction. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 2)</p> <p>Everything was very... rather marketing oriented. Not so academic (oriented)... heavier investment on the branding exercise. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 1)</p>	Document Interview Observation Total	0 4 0 4	0 10 0 10
4	Key Institutional Contributing Factors						
	Formulating goal	Compelling purpose,	Forceful and convincing reason for	Staff Survey 2013 Result: Core Purpose:		Source	Reference

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
		mission and values	existence, specific goal, beliefs	i) 95% (91% in 2012) of respondents say the core purpose statement is meaningful to them. ii) 89% (87% in 2012) say that it help them to align what they do with goals of the place of work. iii) 87% (88% in 2012) say that it motivates and inspires them in their job. (Document, Staff Survey Result 2013)	Document	3	4
					Interview	16	46
					Observation	1	2
					Total	20	52

[I sense a strong desire to continuous improve what you do and to do it at the best benefit of the students.] Yes. [Where do you think that desire actually comes from?] “We are supposed to educate (*words were removed to ensure anonymity*).” [You have just mentioned the university’s purpose statement.] “That’s it.” [But there are people who can just read (say) it and without really do it. So, where does the desire come from?] “Why I teach? If you teach, this is what you do.” (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, ex-Deputy Dean, Interview 1)

“That is the biggest ‘bait’. If you want to become

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				a university, this is what you got to do. Everyone agreed. That is how you ‘fish’ the staff to be with you. We worked very hard because we want to be a university. So that really put things together. (There is a common goal.” (Vice-chancellor, Interview 1)			
	Establishing Strategies	Value-for-money strategies	Strategies perceived by targeted stakeholders as value for money or there is good return on their investment, which integrate education quality and for-profit motive	Another dean highlighted that “We naturally don’t allow ourselves to be left behind by our competitors. We want to continually improve ourselves.” She also highlighted that perceived value for money is important for students. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)			
				As a business entity, you need people to pay for the product that you deliver. People will come to you for the product if they feel that the quality is good. For private university, if students do not want to come to us, our revenue will go down... When our profit goes down, our benefit to staff will also go down. And staff will not want to stay. So, at the end of the day, an organisation may not last long. I think for an organisation like us (private university), quality for me is the most			
					Document	0	0
					Interview	10	23
					Observation	2	3
					Total	12	26

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				important thing because that is how you are going to sell your ‘product’, and also, how to back our branding and our reputation... People respect when you deliver good product, when you produce good students. (VC, Interview 1)			
				What I understand about the academic leadership and the non-academic (business) leadership, I agree also to a huge extent, is that profit is very important because it empowers us to do things. To my mind, being profitable and doing a great job is very much aligned. It makes a lot of sense to be a great university. Because this will render the product more valuable and also to make more profit and hopefully through this, the university can reward its staff better and also to give scholarship to deserving students better. I think that leadership does not have any dilemma in that sense. I personally don’t see any contradiction as well. (Dean 1, Interview 3)			
		Leaders with academic and business	Leaders with capabilities relating to educational and	<i>Staff Survey 2013 Result:</i> Leadership (institutional): i) 93% of staff respect their leadership team.	Document	Source 3	Reference 3

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
		capabilities and intention to add value	scholarly activities, as well as commercial activities, with the aim to add value to the institution, staff or students.	ii) 84% say they lead by example. iii) 80% say that the leadership team communicates a clear roadmap and direction. iv) 85% say they sign up to the roadmap and direction communicated by their institutions leadership team. (Document, Staff Survey Result 2013)	Interview	6	14
					Observation	2	2
					Total	11	19

The financial disciplines required to ensure sustainability and growth was discussed, including the need to attach ‘return on investment’ to every expenditure, and every faculty is to own its profit and loss. The Group Finance Head also highlighted that “Sustainability and growth of the university are dependable on the profitability”. (U-O-3, Observation, University Priorities and Targets Setting Workshop)

VC Position Description:

Knowledge and Skills

1. Strong and demonstrable commercial and business development orientation with the ability

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)
				<p>to enhance the financial base and generate new revenue streams</p> <p>2. Good knowledge and understanding of the higher education environment, nationally and internationally and the major influences on institutional success (Document, VC Position Description)</p> <p><i>Dean Position Description:</i></p> <p>Key Result Areas / Responsibilities</p> <p>1.Positioning the faculty within the core business of the university with regard to teaching, research and community interaction</p> <p>2. Drawing up a business plan for the faculty</p> <p>3. Achieving the financial management target of the faculty</p> <p>And so forth.</p> <p>Key Competencies</p> <p>1. Academic leadership</p> <p>2. Strategic thinking</p> <p>3. Financial management (Document, Dean Position Description)</p> <p>I know of people (student), at least one or two,</p>	

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				<p>who picked us over an Australian university branch campus because of that. They actually could go to the branch campus, and we know their mark is good enough. But because we have the project-oriented learning and because we have this (name of student activity is omitted), and we have this exposure starting year 1, they have picked us. So, it is a very important element. The moment we lose it, we will stand no chance. Because it will be just like the others, minus the name. The others at least have the name. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 1)</p> <p><i>Staff Survey 2013 Result:</i></p> <p>Professional Development:</p> <p>i) 96% of respondents say that they have the opportunities to learn new skills at workplace.</p> <p>ii) 95% (97% in 2012) of respondents say that they actively seek out opportunities to gain new skills that help them to perform better in their role.</p> <p>Wellbeing:</p> <p>i) 85% of respondents say that they are challenged and motivated by their</p>			
	Implementin g strategies	Dynamic culture	A way of thinking, behaving, or working that reflects active and productive change and improvement				
						Source	Reference
					Document	12	19
					Interview	11	46
					Observation	0	0
					Total	23	65

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)
				workload. [This reflects the dynamic of the staff.] (Document, Staff Survey 2013 Result)	
				To me I like to work in a dynamic environment. So here, I don't see any limitation. As long as we want to work in a high quality system and we have justification, no one will stop you... if you want to do something and this will benefit the institution, will benefit the students, you can go directly and discuss with the management and we can run that activity, we can run that quality action. (Faculty A, Lecturer 3, Interview 1)	
				So eventually, I think the future of education in the country lies at the private education because it can be purely based on merit. It is also something that due to the nature of competition, we will need to adopt the best survival practices. While if you are not a private, even if you are not that good, you could be surviving by the virtue of getting help or... you know what I mean. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 2)	
		Progressive	System that develops	A clear goal is for the University to develop and	Same as above

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)
		system	over time responding to the current and future needs	<p>implement facilities and systems that support, sustain and improve excellence in teaching, learning and research. Well-designed, accessible and functional information technology and other systems are in inherent and vital part of modern higher education. (Document, University Strategic Plan-current)</p> <p>Programme outcomes and programme educational objectives, and for this house of quality we have CQI (Continual Quality Improvement) loop for each part. So for the learning outcome, at the end of each semester we receive feedback from the lecturers in their annual module review. Based on the policy, it has to be done once a year, but we run it once a semester. So as students and as staffs, we give the feedback about the student assessment of the people, the student at attainment of the LO (learning outcomes), and then they come out with the CQI and actions. So, once the semester is over, there is a CQI meeting. Which in this CQI meeting, it's like a programme meeting, all the lecturers come, they present the CQI action based</p>	

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)
				<p>on student achievements, what they should do (so) that students achieve better result for next semester. So, once the semester is over and the next semester starts, the Head of Programme (HoP) has to communicate these CQI actions with the next lecturer. If it is the same lecturer, he will use his own CQI from the file he or she has; but if the lecturer change, the HoP has to communicate with new lecturer, to make sure that this loop is already closed, these feedback is already implemented. (Faculty A, Lecturer 3, Interview)</p> <p>What I understand, we are given the policy to review the curriculum to review the curriculum periodically, every two or three years... (Participant was thinking what to say next) which is a way to formalise the current way of doing in a haphazard manner. Maybe certain modules we look at it , we do not see the whole (programme), we do not have a working group who sits together to brainstorm about the whole programme. Those things have been spelled out and it serves as good guide. It is all extra effort</p>	

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
				and pain with the new policy but then they make sense in terms of maintaining quality and improving quality and tracking quality, more importantly how we ascertain that the quality is carried out or there has been improvement to quality. No other way than documentation of some sort, either the outcomes or preparation. (Faculty B, Lecturer 1, Interview)			
		Aligned community for quality	Community with common commitment towards quality	<p><i>Staff Survey 2013 Result:</i></p> <p>Core Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) 90% of staff say that committed to culture of excellence is evident in the institution. ii) 90% of staff say that being passionate is evident in the institution. [This possibly explains the commitment towards quality.] <p>Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) 98% of academic and 99% of non-academic say that they have strong sense of commitment to my role within my workplace. ii) 97% (98% in 2012) of respondents say that they have the skills require to perform effectively in their roles. 	Document Interview Observation Total	2 14 2 18	8 49 5 62

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)
				<p>Immediate Supervisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) 93% of respondents have a good working relationship with their immediate supervisors. ii) 86% of respondents say that their managers communicate effectively with them. <p>Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) 97% (95% in 2012) of respondents say they enjoy working with their immediate colleagues. ii) 97% (93% in 2012) of respondents say they are able to support each other in day-to-day work. (Document, Staff Survey Result 2013) <p>Two of us (lecturers) want to change the curriculum of the programme that we offer and it has to be good enough that we are willing to put our kids (children) through it. We think like that and many other colleagues also think like that. (Faculty A, Lecturer 5, Interview 1)</p>	
	Faculty	Established	Leader who has earned	They (the academics) did not know how much	

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
						Source	Reference
	level contributing factors	credibility and trust, built commitment and alignment.	the trust and commitment from members towards common goals.	they have actually. When the Symposium was held and received quite good response, it helped to motivate the team. They started to realise how much they have. Right after that, we developed our first journal. Then they realised that it is possible by working as a team. As a team, they can achieve greater outcome and have greater impact to the faculty and the university. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 2)	Document Interview Observation Total	1 9 0 10	1 61 0 62
		Quality as competitive advantage for	Advantage in terms of quality to win the competition for more	I see that the environment in terms of the management, the people around you, the facilities given and other things all encourage me to stay... Because again you see the impact of people (management staff and colleagues), good people who actually guide you from the beginning. Because of this, I feel I cannot deny and say, "I (want to) terminate my work and go to another place". And because of this actually I want to stay. Because of these people I want to stay. (Faculty A, Lecturer 4, Interview 1) When we talk about internationalization, our standard also complies with international standards. Standard means that you need to be	Document	36	98

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data (From NVivo database)		
		growth	quality students and staff	<p>recognised, accredited by international community. For example, (...) Our (name of programme is omitted) now has been recognised by (name of an international accreditation body for the discipline is omitted). (VC, Interview 1)</p> <p>The (name of Faculty A is omitted) has been accepted as an official collaborator in the (name of the international initiative is omitted) Initiative alongside great institutions such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), California State University, the University of Sydney and University of Auckland. (Name of the participating university is omitted) is the first and only Malaysian university that has, thus far, been accepted into this initiative, which is an innovative education framework for producing the next generation of (name of a profession is omitted). (Faculty A Prospectus 2012)</p>	Interview	10	26
					Observation	2	2
					Total	48	126
		Established common ground	Consensus in terms of priorities built among the university leaders, faculty leaders and lecturers.	...again led by a full-fledged real academician who has really made it. And, people could look at that person as role model. (Faculty A, Dean, Interview 2)			
						Source	Reference
					Document	0	0
					Interview	8	16
					Observation	0	0

RQ	Theme	Category	Definition	Examples of Excerpt	Sources of Data		
					<i>(From NVivo database)</i>		
				Thank goodness, we have a leader like the current Vice-Chancellor who is very knowledgeable, who knows well enough what it means by a university's role. (Faculty B, Dean, Interview 3)	Total	8	16

AUDIT TRIAL

No	Research Stages	Steps	Evidence
1	Preparation for Data Collection	Prepare: i. Letter of Consent ii. Observation Protocol iii. Interview Protocol iv. Interview Questions Guide v. Document Analysis Protocol	i. List of participants ii. Signed Letter of Consent iii. Observation Protocol iv. Interview Protocol v. Interview Questions Guide vi. Document Analysis Protocol
2	Data Collection	i. Document Analysis ii. Observation fieldnotes iii. Interview audio recording	i. List of key documents analysed ii. 54 document analysis iii. 13 observation field notes iv. 20 interview audio records
3	Preparation for Data Analysis	i. Expanded fieldnote ii. Transcribe audio records of interview	i. Expanded fieldnote ii. Transcriptions of interview
4	Data Analysis	i. Open coding ii. Axial coding using NVivo software iii. Themes identification and description preparation iv. Model development	i. Researcher's journal ii. NVivo project file iii. More than 500 references made from the sources of data iv. A total of 30 categories v. A total of 12 themes and description of themes vi. 2 models and 1 sub-model emerged from themes and descriptions
5	Writing Report	i. Preparation of storyline ii. Thesis writing	i. Storyline ii. Report