

Descriptive Study On Impact Of Foreign Student Enrolment In Malaysian Universities

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this paper is to analyse the impact of foreign student enrolment in Malaysian Universities. Acquiring an international academic degree is becoming an admirable attraction for students who chose to further their study overseas. It is a real pride holding an international degree certificates from country other than ones country of origin especially from developed countries. Although, a growing numbers of foreign students prefer to study in Malaysian universities due to the rapid growth and high investment on higher education following the continuous strategic advertisement to train and retain students, the quest continues. As development increases, more students now chooses to obtain these attractive foreign academic credential for the benefit of co-existence, cultural and social integration, change of environment, socializing with other international students and attracting friend from different nationalities. Therefore this paper analyses the impact of student enrolment in Malaysian universities by reviewing the previous studies and using the current students already enrolled in Malaysia universities as an insight. This paper generates data from previous studies on foreign universities student enrolment and then analysed their feedback on the impact of foreign student enrolment. Hence, four independent variables were studied. Cost implication, proper guidance, students finance, and university regulation. The discoveries of this research work will be relevant to developing market policy-makers of higher education in creating detailed management and marketing plans while aiming international students to study at universities, particularly in Malaysia.*

KEYWORDS: *Foreign students, familiarization, enrolment, Malaysia universities, higher education, choice of destination.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), states that there were about 2,455,250 students studying in a country other than their own countries in 2004, UNESCO (2006) whereas the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) submitted that more than 2.7 million students enrolled in higher education outside their country of citizenship in 2005, this is represented by a 5% increase in the reported total foreign students intake. OECD (2006).

In light of this, it is important to understand what factors impact foreign students' choice to study in Malaysia universities. This research seeks to analyse the following factors cost implication, proper guidance, university regulation.

This is one of the reasons higher education are always of high priority to both developing and developed countries. In his study, Verbik (2007) noted that Malaysia developed as an emerging contender in providing higher education services by possessing above 80,000 foreign students in 2009. As such, foreign students have focused their search on Malaysian universities lately, not just because of the affordable tuition fee, but to familiarize with international students, and the impressive educational growth in Malaysian universities. According to the "Global Education Digest 2010" UNESCO, Malaysia has become the first choice of destination for students from Sudan, Yemen, Maldives and Somalia in 2009. This has escalated the enrolment of foreign student which contributed to about RM 2.6 billion to national income in 2010 (Global Education Digest 2010).

Every nation's educational sector plays a significant role in the development of the country especially in this 21st century. Chandra (2011), noted that a country's education function is a very important tool for human capital development. Malaysia is progressing from a commodity-based to a knowledge-based economy which is driven by innovation, information, commercialization, and creativity. Higher education is one of the knowledge-based industries that sell information by providing informative facilities to all students. With this, the perception of the foreign student about Malaysia universities becomes high. However, the foreign students are also faced with the challenges of enrolment. Hence this study affords a broad understanding on the impact of

the foreign students' enrolment in Malaysia Universities by analysing the variables. According to Wagner and Fard (2009), policy makers and institutions should maintain the reasonable education costs as advantage to promote their academic programs worldwide. The findings of this research are beneficial to the school vendors, the universities and future researcher by exploring the factors in deciding the foreign students' enrolment.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The business of enrolling foreign student is now changing due to the increasing number of opportunities to study abroad and the high level of competition among universities to enrol foreign students. Similarly, to get the best foreign students, Malaysian universities are applying strategic approaches to succeed in more foreign student enrolment as this would boast her higher education internationally. Several researches have been conducted in the past on foreign student enrolment, but, foreign student enrolment is still affected by numerous factors. This study focuses on the cost implication, proper guidance, students finance, and university regulation as it affects the foreign student enrolments. It will also highlight how variables affect the foreign student enrolment either positively or negatively.

This paper will help both the foreign students and the Malaysian university in foreign students' enrolment. Although there are presently few studies in Malaysia that focuses on understanding international students' needs and why they choose Malaysia as their study base. In his research, Engelke (2008) acknowledged that there is connection between underlining student's needs and a higher institution's attractiveness to foreign students. Hence, it is important to fill the gap by examining the factors that impact the foreign students' enrolment especially by reviewing past studies and from the students' viewpoint and thereby try to contribute other strategies for foreign student's enrolment.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The main purpose of this research study is to examine and to analyse the impact of foreign student's enrolment in Malaysia universities and to possibly figure out other recommendation on the enrolment policy that could attract and retain more foreign students. As the enrolment for foreign student increases internationally, there is the need to understand better the factors that inspires foreign students to make their choice for the destination they want to study. Although some researcher have stressed on some significant elements in decision making. This research seek to add more suitable factors to consider in the enrolment of foreign students and this research will be beneficial to the marketers, the universities and future researcher in exploring the factors in deciding the foreign students' enrolment.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research is carried by the following research objectives

- i. The relationship between cost implication and foreign student enrolment.
 - ii. The relationship between proper guidance and foreign student enrolment.
 - iii. The relationship between university regulation and foreign student enrolment.
 - iv. The relationship between students finance and foreign student enrolment.
- a. To identify, measure and analyse the level of foreign student enrolment in accordance with the influenced factors with the collection of data and information within foreign university students in Malaysia.
 - b. To establish valid conclusions and recommendation with the identification of impacts both negative and positive on student enrolment in Malaysia universities.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Student enrolment

Students in every nation are no doubt knowledge shoppers who seek to improve not just academically, but also seek best enrolment and immigration regulation in this increasing competitive global setting. Most country's migration policies insist on high-skilled and qualified student migrants. However, foreign student look out for fast application/ enrolment process, confidence of being enrol, access to business or job opportunities upon graduation, protection, and the course of vetting the foreign student's enrolment processes are being delayed. As such, in order to draw more foreign student enrolment, a lot of interesting studies have been carried out in the past to examine the factors that influences foreign student's decision to choose the destination of their study around the world. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) claimed that there are six main factors influencing the choice of study destination which includes; (i) knowledge of the host country, (ii) personal recommendations, (iii) cost of study and living, (iv) overall environment, (v) geographic location and (vi) social connection. The universities in a country are one of the elements that portray the image and popularity of a country as it imposes great influences on foreign students' decision. Similarly, Throsby (1999) sees it differently. He indicated in his

research that a great number of students make their choice of study destination based on the reason for decreasing air travel cost, improving international communication networks, broadened global labour markets, and other educational opportunities. However, Russell et. al., (2010) mentioned that students choose to study overseas because it is a mandatory portion of their degree course. But, Bodycott (2009) claimed students often take facilities, accommodation and scholarships availability into account when they make decision. Cubillo et. al., (2006). Lay and Maguire (1981) explained that the most influential factor that decides how students choose the institution is to evaluate the reputation of the universities. Keling (2007) reconfirmed that students often judge the reputation of specific institutions before selecting their final destination. Joseph and Joseph (2000) stated that cost related issues is important for student enrolment. Indeed Cost is another crucial factor for foreign students as most of the time, the cost of tuition and living expenses become a huge burden for some mid-class family. Not only that, Maringe (2006) also detected that costs are considered as factor to decide study destination, but also Ivy (2010) argued that economic limitation place an impact on students' decision, probably because increasingly high education costs will prevent some family to consider a number of top ranking universities in developed countries. Therefore students tend to choose countries with good facilities and affordable tuition fee. Fernandez, (2010) admits that students are more sensitive to institutions with high quality courses, but affordable cost.

There are some internal factors that influence the impact on foreign students' enrolment, such as university regulation proper guidance, and delay in application procurement. Opinions from friends and peers normally influence the mind of those applicants to consider their study destination (Hayden, 2000). While Yusof et al., (2008) noted that the availability of certain programs is a power factor for new students to decide specific university.

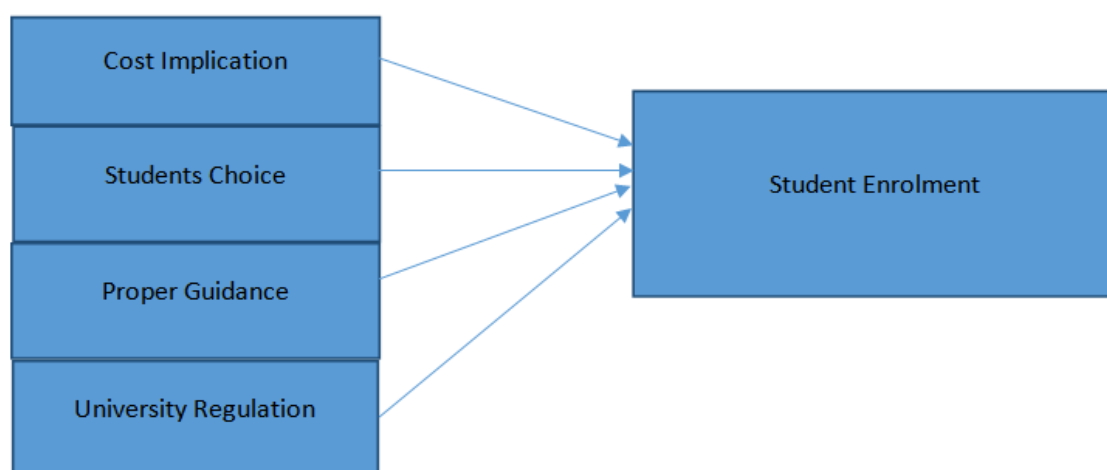


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework: Foreign Student Enrolment

According to Lesleyanne, H. (2014) foreign student education is a large, growing, and lucrative industry in many developed countries. He noted that the foreign student help in maintaining the domestic institutions competitiveness which helps to represent a valuable pool of skilled immigrants in case the government wishes to employ them into their labour forces. As a result of this competitiveness, countries in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are innovating widely with policies to attract and retain foreign students. That is why some countries like Malaysia are constantly reviewing their immigration policies and are setting targets for foreign student enrolment. Scholars like Fadli, F. et. al. argued that foreign student is to quadruple from 1.8 million in 2000 to 7.2 million in 2025 attributing the key factor to liberalisation and globalisation of higher education. These initiatives reveal that Malaysian is committed in enrolling more foreign students into the local institutions.

VI. COST IMPLICATION

Cost implication simply means the amount to be paid by the student to enrol into the institution apart from the necessary academic documents. This cost implication usually, is one of the first things the foreign student considers. Every foreign student that applies for any desired university is expected to pay some form of enrolment fee before being admitted in the university. To support the variables, Ancheh (et al 2007) and Fernandez (2010) has noted that students are cost-conscious, they prefer to apply in institutions of higher education that offers them quality courses at affordable low cost.

Given that there is increasing competition in the search for foreign student, many institution have started to consider how they might implement and strengthen the cost implication to enrol in their institutions. This is important for foreign students as most families consider the cost implication before sending their children to foreign universities. Cost implication largely plays a roll to motivate both students and parents particularly. When tuition is high, it might halt the application. High value of currency can also be an impact on student enrolment. For example, the high value of certain currencies, like the UK pound (£) and US dollar (\$) most prominent amongst them, could arguably dissuade foreign students enrolling in high cost countries, when they can get same education from other developing countries. (Especially students from some countries with low exchange rate against dollar or pound).

Indeed, a study recently published by Zhang Shua& Dai Lang (2017) concludes that cost of tuition fee is the top five factors among others which influences the international students' decision to study in Malaysia. The study added that the University of Malaya and other universities including colleges should have to reconsider their tuition cost policies including student lodging on campus to make cost a competitive gain to attraction of foreign students. Another report was by New Zealand's Ministry of Education and Education New Zealand, which is a parasolencouraging the export of the nation education hub. It stated that the cost of higher education was amongst the top factors influencing the decision to study inthe country. No doubt, if government and institution of higher education upholds a moderate and rational tuition cost, it will draw foreign student and promote the institutions internationally. In summary, cost of tuition contributes as one of the most influential factors offoreignstudent's enrolment in Malaysia universities.

VII. PROPER GUIDANCE

Basically, proper guidance is the act of helping one appropriately with sensitive data in the right way to access the information needed. Although, this is usually based upon building trust relationship with the person. Proper guidance is an important aspect that influences foreign student's enrolment. According to Mghweno P. E. et el (2013). Guidance and counselling services are very significant tools in human growth especially throughout youthful stage which is characterised by continues change involving social, physical, spiritual, moral, and intellectual change. Guidance is and expertise or device given to students on issues such as career exploration, career change, personal career development and other related issues Wikipedia, (2013). Student's career choice in this study is based on the impact of foreign student's enrolment in Malaysian universities.

Of guidance and counselling, Bark B. G. (2003), noted that it is the supports made available by trained personnel to any individual of any age to help him to achieve his own life activities, develop his own points of view, make his own decisions, to and carry his own burden. In the past, several studies have reported different achievement of guidance and counselling services for student seeking foreign admission. Many years ago, a survey conducted in Kenya reveals that most student have a vague understanding of what it really entails as student do not understand its role Ndegwa, (2013).

Without proper guidance foreign student are often confused on how to apply, when to apply, who to trust and the site that is not fake.

They face complicated problems when they are not properly guided on the steps to take on enrolment. Without proper guidance foreign student can be manipulated by some fake agents or individuals who might access their information over the phone or through their documents and use them for their personal gain. Some fall prey to phishing the act of sending an email to a user falsely claiming to be an established legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the user to give in private data that could be used for identity theft. This is common online, with email spoofs. On the study conducted to access the influence of guidance and counselling services and its influence on student's school life and choice, Mghweno P. E. et el (2013) concludes that the impact of life and attitude towards studies was moderately perceived by students in selected schools, could be attributed to the untrained personnel who offer services. It is therefore important to employ proper guidance in the course of choosing foreign universities.

VIII. UNIVERSITY REGULATION

This can mean different thing to different people even though all universities tends to work with the government to ensure quality and effective approach consistently across the country. Both foreign students and local students are subject to the rules and regulation of the university which is approved by the senate of the institution and must be signed by all students upon enrolment. It is the responsibility of universities implements some regulation which governs them. For example, academic and non-academic affairs, testing the student's academic proficiency upon arrival, studying the local language for a semester, developing on the teaching excellent framework, management of academic standards and grades, and updating foreign student's visa validity as therules and regulations of the Malaysian Immigration Department, which states that all foreign students' (full-time and foreign exchange students) are required to have a valid Student Pass in order to study in

Malaysia. The government agencies responsible are the Malaysian Immigration Department, Malaysian diplomatic missions abroad, Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS, 2016).

IX. METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this conceptual paper, more than 40 articles were reviewed generally, but not limited on the influence of foreign student enrolment. Hence, this review includes several research studies within Malaysia and other countries through a number of trusted websites, databanks, and conference proceeding papers. Although in this study, a lot of acknowledgement is attributed to the local research paper as it discusses about related subjects at present and the continuance of study which hence cover up the impact of foreign student's enrolment in Malaysian universities. Subsequently, this study will convert some foreign students in Malaysian universities as respondents

X. FINDINGS

The critical finding on the research conducted reveals that initially, in light of constant awareness, universities around the world became mindful of the importance of foreign student enrolment. Hence, measure to effectively enrol foreign student becomes competitive. Not just enrolment, universities are now moving further to ensure that enrolment is not just easy for qualified foreign student, but students also hope achieve their careers and the experiences they were looking for and probably gain employment and rights to residency. From the review, some factors are directly affecting the foreign student enrolment in Malaysian universities, while others have indirect impact. For example, cost implication may directly affect the foreign student enrolment. This is because without strong finance, it is relatively impossible to enrol into foreign universities. Cost implication is likely to compel foreign students to apply to a university other than his/her first choice university or country destination. Other impact of foreign student enrolment in Malaysia universities according to the previous study demonstrated that slow student visa processing, university regulation, and challenges of continuous demand for supporting document by Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) are factors influencing the foreign student's enrolment in Malaysian universities.

XI. RECOMMENDATION

According to the study, given that increasing competition in the market for foreign students, countries including Malaysia should seek to review their laws in student visa procurement and translating proper information to the foreign student in the course of their advertisement. It is important that foreign students seek for proper guidance before concluding on the choice of the university and country destination. This will enable them to evaluate the countries and institutions properly before embarking on enrolment. Universities should also consider how they might implement or strengthen their strategic approaches to foreign student enrolment having identified other elements that could influence foreign student enrolment.

XII. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the current review of the previous study laid the groundwork for future study. With the increasing demand of foreign student and the competition involved in the enrolment of foreign student, this study makes it easier to understand the impact of foreign student's enrolment in Malaysian universities as this will enable both Malaysian universities and researcher to develop a conceptual framework that will assist foreign students enrolment in future research.

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