ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF PRIVATE TERITARY EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA

Sheila C. Cheng

School of Foundation Studies, Asia-e University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia

E-mail: Sheila.cheng32@gmail.com

Jeffrey C.L. Chiang

Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, SEGi University, Kota Damansara, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia

E-mail:dr_j_chiang@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

It has been 62 years of nation building for Malaysia since 1957, and the tertiary education sector has been transformed tremendously. The legislative changes made in 1996 has changed the exclusiveness of public higher education delivery to their coexistence with the private higher education institutions. The higher education sector has been mushrooming into hundreds of public and private universities and colleges, operating together with approval of the Government. Over the last 40 years, this system has enabled a significant increase of Malaysians school graduates to have accessed to the tertiary education. The enrolment rates are approximately 44 per cent in comparison to 14 per cent in the 1970s and 1980s. Almost 1.3 million Malaysian youths are pursuing tertiary education now, of which 500,000 are enrolled in the 20 public universities and more than 600,000 are registered in PIHLs. The objective of this paper is to review and investigate the roles and contributions of private tertiary education to nation building in Malaysia, in the aspect of the human capital and economic development. This study adopts a qualitative approach with a focus on multiple cases of private institutes of higher learning (PIHL). The selected cases share a common characteristics in their alignment and compliance to the requirements as approved educational institutions in the country, and their pursuance to be sustainable and relevant to all stakeholders. The findings also show that PIHLs have contributed substantially to the nation's education sector, such as prudent spending in quality facility, offering specialized courses, reduce burden of the Government and collaborate well with reputable international universities. Further to that, graduates from the PIHLs are able to bridge the gap of the increasing global demand for higher education, and the needs for a highly skilled workforce for the knowledge economy.

Keywords: nation building, private education, human capital, economic development

1. INTRODUCTION

The authors of this paper would like to refer readers to a recent article piece written entitled "Harmonizing public and private higher education" by Siti Hamisah Tapsir (2019), the Director-General of Department of Higher Education, Education Ministry. She was quoted as saying, "The provision of public and private higher education has enabled a greater number of Malaysians to have access to tertiary education. Over the last 40 years, the system has significantly increased tertiary enrolment rates to approximately 44 per cent of Malaysians between the ages of 17 and 23, compared with only 14 per cent in the 1970s and 1980s."

This brings us to the point that both the public and private education sectors have played major roles in enabling many generations of young Malaysians graduating with tertiary education degrees allowing them to apply and contribute their knowledge and skills in the workplaces, hence helped to elevate our nation's economy to what it is now – which is exactly what the term nation building is all about.

One of the reasons for the flourishing of private institutes of higher learning (PIHLs) was mainly due to the rise in tuition fees in overseas universities such as USA, UK and Australia - the usual countries where many Malaysian parents sent their children to for their higher education prior to the 1997 Asian economic crisis. The dwindling value of Malaysian ringgit currency in comparison to those in many western countries has been a major factor in reduction of Malaysian students going overseas for their studies; and even resulted in many returning students because their parents could not afford the sudden rise in the tuition fees and living expenses overseas. Hence, many PIHLs were established by various entrepreneurs in the private sector to meet the rising demand. In the words of Marimuthu (2008), "In order to meet the demand for places in higher education, the Government increasingly sought the involvement of the private sector in higher education."

This paper highlights the differences in the models of operation and financial management of both public and PIHLs, and then focus on the roles and contributions of PIHLs in providing access to higher education for thousands of young Malaysians over the decades since its independence. From the qualitative study approach undertaken, the selected models of PIHLs are analyzed to reveal what are the distinguishing features and characteristics of these PIHLs which have built, trained and moulded the enrolled students into useful citizens which in turn become the human capital to fulfill its economic development into a high-income nation status. Besides, graduates from the PIHLs also bridges the gaps of the increasing global demand for higher education, and the needs for a highly skilled workforce for the knowledge economy. This is very important in the era of Industry Revolution IR 4.0.

Four main trends are discussed in this study: Teaching and Learning Innovations, Contributions to Society, and the Economic Reality of Private Education. These will have some impacts on the four elements that affect education policy and practices: Employability, Quality Assurance, Academia, and English Language Competency, which will form the mainstays in pursuing successes envisaged in the Malaysia's Education Blueprint 2015-2025.

2. CURRENT SCENARIOS OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA
2.1 Stakeholders of Private Higher Institutions of Learning (IHLs)

There are hundreds of private universities and colleges in Malaysia. Every institution and programme in Malaysia is trying to distinguish itself from others to meet the demand of students. As of November 2018, there are 20 public universities and 47 private universities in Malaysia. Besides that, there are 34 university colleges and 10 foreign university branch campuses too (StudyMalaysia.com, 2018). In comparison of student enrolment, the breakdown between public

and private higher education institutions in Malaysia are as follows: 618,000 in public IHLs, and 524,000 in PIHLs (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025). This shows that the private higher education is a major sector in the education of university graduates coming out into the workforce now.

Many high school graduates and their parents place importance and priority in securing the right education for a brighter future and a better career prospects. Hence the decision on which university to study is one of the important decisions they will make in their life. The decision might be influenced by many criteria such as the reputation of the university, the entry requirement of the course against achieved academic results, career goals, tuition fees, facilities, friends and family influence, and many more (Foo & Jamil, 2019; Fernandez, 2010; Padlee, Kamaruddin & Baharun, 2010; Sia, 2010; Wagner & Fard, 2009).

Besides the customers (in the form of students and parents), the other main stakeholders in the running of an IHL are the lecturers, industry players and the management or owners of the IHL itself. These stakeholders want the university to be doing well, churning out good employable graduates, and to the owners, good credit in fee paying as well. The Malaysian Quality Agency (MQA) is the Government agency that governs the quality of education programme delivery in the local universities, both public and private – so they are also one of the stakeholders.

Malaysia has evolved from a production-based to knowledge-based economy in order to stay relevant and compete in the global marketplace. Thus, this paper will give some insights into the current trends in Malaysian higher education and how these affect education policies and practices as well as the performances of the IHLs.

2.2 Selected Case Studies

The following PIHLs have been selected as case examples for our study into the business side of operation as well as the entrepreneurship in bringing about success in their operational performances. And these performances shall be measured by their achieved student enrolment numbers and university ranking, where applicable. These selected cases cover a range of non-profit, profit and foreign-local joint venture

Case 1: Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, (abbreviated UTAR), is a non-profit, private university in Malaysia known for graduating several notable alumni in the Malaysian Chinese community. The institution was established in June 2002 through the UTAR Education Foundation, a non-for-profit organization. The university consists of 9 faculties, 3 academic institutes, 3 academic centres and 32 research centres. It is ranked top 100 in the Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2018 and top 600 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2020, placing it 2nd in Malaysia only after University of Malaya. UTAR is one of the Premier Digital Tech University that recognized by Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC). (https://utar.edu.my/)

UTAR admitted 411 students in June 2002 for its first intake. As of 2016, the university has grown to an enrolment of 20,490 students. At the start, the university offered only eight honours degree programmes but now offers more than 110 programmes, including foundation, undergraduate as well as postgraduate degree programmes. (https://utar.edu.my/History-of-UTAR.php)

Case 2: Monash University is one of the top-ranking universities in Australia, it was ranked at #59 overall by QS World Rankings 2018/2019. The Malaysia campus, located in the central of Sunway township, was opened in 1998. It was the first foreign university in Malaysia. Monash University also has a branch university in Italy, South Africa and a research academy in India. Monash University Malaysia is currently home to approximately 7,000 undergraduate and

postgraduate students. Monash University Malaysia is famous in Business, MBBS and Engineering subjects. Living up to its name, the university also received accreditation from the Australian Medical Council (AMC) for the MBBS programme. It is the first program fully accredited by the AMC that taught outside of Australia and New Zealand (https://www.monash.edu.my/about).

Case 3: UCSI University is a comprehensive university based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Emerging as the top private university in Malaysia, UCSI is ranked the top 2% of the world's universities, #481 in 2019 and #442 in 2020, according to the QS World University Rankings. UCSI stands out as the only private university in Malaysia to make the top 500. UCSI is also ranked the world's best young universities under 50 years old in 2019. UCSI has also been distinguished as Asia's fastest rising university (QS University Rankings: Asia 2018). UCSI offers a wide range of disciplines, which include, but are not limited to medicine, pharmacy, engineering, IT, applied sciences, business, architecture, music, social sciences, creative arts and hospitality, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. A number of faculties stand out for their track record like the Institute of Music which is ranked as one of the world's top 100 music schools. UCSI currently has 15,000 student population. (https://www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/).

Although the selected three PIHLs have different business models and emphasis of operations, they shared a common characteristics in their alignment and compliance to the requirements as approved educational institutions in the country, and their pursuance to be sustainable and relevant to all stakeholders. Table 1 summaries some key features of the three selected PIHLs.

Table 1 – Summary of the three selected case studies

	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, (UTAR)	**UCSI University**	**Monash University (The Malaysia campus)**
Nature of organisation	Non-profit	Profit-oriented	Joint-venture
Year of establishment	2002	1986	1998
Facilities	9 Faculties, 3 Academic institutes, 3 Academic centres and 32 Research centres. (https://utar.edu.my/History-of-UTAR.php)	7 Faculties 2 Institutes (https://www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/)	8 Schools (https://www.monash.edu.my/about)
Programmes	110	>100	43
Student population	Over 26,000 (https://www.topuniversities.com/universities/universiti-tunku-abdul-rahman-utar/undergrad)	15,000 – 17,000 (UniRank https://www.4icu.org/reviews/14632.htm)	Approximately 6,000 (Malaysia campus) (https://studymalaysia.com/where/profile.php?code=monash)
Ranking	511-520 (2020)	Top 500 (2020)	#75th (2020)
	(https://www.studymalaysia.com/education/top-stories/qs-world-university-rankings-2020)		

3. MILESTONES ACHIEVED BY THE SELECTED PRIVATE HIGHER INSTITUTION OF LEARNING IN MALAYSIA

3.1 Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)

In July 2001, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), a prominent organization in the Malaysian Chinese community as well as a component political party which is part of the Coalition Government of Malaysia, received an invitation from the Malaysian Ministry of Education to establish a university. Tun Dr. Ling Liong Sik, the then President of the MCA, chaired a committee that drew up a framework for the establishment of the university.

Another committee was formed to compile the necessary documents to receive approval from the local authorities. The second committee was led by the then Principal of Tunku Abdul Rahman College (TARC), a tertiary education institution also established by the MCA, and it included the Head of the School of Business Studies of the University College, who became the founding Dean of the UTAR Faculty of Accountancy and Management.

The university also established the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, and the Faculty of Information Communication and Technology. Tun Dr. Ling Liong Sik was appointed Council Chairman of UTAR and the then Principal of TARC became the first President and CEO of UTAR.

In June 2002, UTAR opened its doors to the pioneer batch students on its first campus located in Section 13 of Petaling Jaya, on a premises previously owned by the publisher of a local daily called The Star newspaper.

Through the three newly established faculties, the university offered its first eight honours degree programmes. At that time, the Faculty of Accountancy and Management hosted more than 6,000 students and was described as the largest business faculty in a Malaysian private university. However, due to space constraints and the popularity of the courses, the intake was required to cut-off at a remarkably high intake requirements and many were disappointed having their application rejected. This ultimately resulted in market-driven high calibre graduates strongly demanded by the industry.

An official ceremony was held to launch UTAR on 13 August 2002 at the main hall of the Tunku Abdul Rahman College (TARC. Attending the ceremony was the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad. The prime minister also officiated the university groundbreaking event at its new campus at Kampar, in the state of Perak.

Over the years since then, various other Faculties were established such as Faculty of Science, Faculty of Engineering and Green Technology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Institute of Chinese Studies, and many more. The University is essentially financed and operated by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Board of Governors.

The university also has extensive academic partnerships with other Malaysian institutions and dozens of universities in United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, Russia, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Spain, Poland and many others. (https://utar.edu.my/).

The institutional model adopted by UTAR is very similar to that of its sister college TARC, now upgraded to Tunku Abdul Rahman University College (TARUC). They are run not really for profit but to bring benefits to the Chinese community which has been sidelined in enrolment into public universities due to the established quota system adopted nationally.

They relied extensively on donations in cash and in kind from individuals and members of the public, in particular successful Chinese business tycoons and other well-known charity organisations, both nationally and internationally. The fact that there are many successful graduates from UTAR contributing to the national economy and development makes this business venture and model a very successful enterprise albeit not intended to generating huge income and profits.

3.2 UCSI University

UCSI was founded in 1986 by Dato' Peter Ng as a computer training institute in Petaling Jaya. It soon relocated to new premises in Kuala Lumpur to cater to growing student numbers and more academic programmes were offered.

UCSI was accorded college status in 1990 by the Ministry of Education (Malaysia), university college status in 2003 and full-fledged university status in 2008, becoming Malaysia's second private university. The institution was formerly known as Sedaya. Partnering with more than 4,200 companies, UCSI runs one of Malaysia's widest university-industry networks, providing students and staff with internships, job opportunities, knowledge transfers and joint research arrangements. It is Malaysia's fourth best university in the 2019 QS Graduate Employability Rankings. Graduate outcomes are prioritised and the university counts among its alumni three Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia inductees, business leaders and some of Malaysia's most acclaimed musicians and performers like Dennis Lau and Joanne Yeoh.

The university is also a firm advocate of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. UCSI is the first and only private university in Malaysia to be recognised as a regional centre of expertise by the United Nations University - the academic and research arm of the UN.

UCSI's main campus is located in Kuala Lumpur. It runs two other campuses in Sarawak and Terengganu. More than 10,000 students study at the university and its alumni hail from more than 110 nations.

UCSI University has seven faculties and two institutes that offer more than 100 academic programmes. They are in areas of, Applied Sciences, Business and Information Science, Engineering, Technology and Built Environment, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Medicine and Health Sciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Social Science and Liberal Arts, Music, and Creative Arts and Design. (www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/)

3.3 Monash University Sunway Campus

In the early 1990s, Monash University established a partnership with Sunway University. Under this arrangement, Malaysian students would enroll and spend their first year in Malaysia, before transferring to one of Monash's Australian campuses to complete their degree. This is the concept of twinning and credit transfer for students to further their education abroad, if the partner university is overseas. (https://www.monash.edu.my/)

Demand increased for these places rapidly and the potential to expand the program was clear. Monash itself had ambitions to develop a comprehensive international campus from the beginning. However, this proposal was complicated for the Malaysian Government, which was hesitant to allow a foreign university to establish itself in Malaysia. Nonetheless, as the strength of Monash in Malaysia grew, the case for a Monash campus became increasingly persuasive. This was way before the concept of international university branch campus took root in Malaysia.

In early 1996, it was reported that the Australian Prime Minister had been involved in the signing of a memorandum of understanding to establish the campus. (THE, 1996). On 23 February 1998, the Malaysian Government formally invited Monash to develop a comprehensive campus, making it the first foreign university in Malaysia. In July of that year, Monash University's newly founded Malaysia campus opened its doors to its first intake of 261 students. Since then, the campus has expanded rapidly. It developed postgraduate courses within a few years, and began to expand its research capacity.

By 2007, it had 3,300 students, and had established a new, purpose-built, fully independent campus. The University has stated that it intends the campus to eventually hold around 10,000 students and that it will develop its research strengths to make it a research hub of South-East Asia.

The institutional set-up adopted by Monash University is very different from Taylors in that they are already a well-established university entity in Australia. The Monash University is their branch campus, but has many linkages and shareholdings with the Sunway Group which owns the neighbouring Sunway College then, but is now upgraded to Sunway University as recognized by the Ministry of Education.

The university and its Malaysian shareholding partners were able to establish the branch campus successfully, by leveraging on its famous branding in Australia, touting the high quality of tertiary education offered. The institutional model adopted is that of a high end product which can command a premium fee for students of well-to-do background, or having established sponsors or scholarships to finance their education for the duration of their study at Monash University branch campus in Sunway.

Funding support from the Sunway Group was crucial in conjunction with investment from Monash Australia in kind, in particular the usage of Australian academics and well-established degree programmes already in place. The Sunway Group principally financed the infrastructure and facility. The marketing and publicity campaigns for students are jointly well managed by both sides.

It was a successful partnership by both sides that have managed to give rise to the first international branch campus for an Australian University in Malaysia. In the years since then, various other universities from Australia, UK, China and India have followed suit adopting similar models used by Monash University. Its present student population now is more than double of what they had in 2007, at more than 6,500.

In short, while pursuing to be sustainable and relevant to all stakeholders, the three selected PIHLs have contributed substantially to the nation's education sector, not only with prudent spending in quality facility, offering specialized courses, collaborate with reputable international universities, striving excellence and emerge to be the world class IHLs, but also produced thousands of successful graduates to bridge the demand of the nation's human capital. Hence, reduce the financial burden of the Government.

4. IMPACT ANALYSIS OF SELECTED INSTITUTIONS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

The experiences and achievements by the selected IHLs will be discussed in detail here on four key aspects: Globalization, Teaching and Learning Innovations, Contributions to Society, and the Economic Reality of Private Education. In addition, the objectives attained shall also be highlighted into four elements which are Employability, Quality Assurance, Academia, and English Language Competency. These four elements will form the mainstays in pursuing successes as envisaged in the Malaysia's Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Grapragasem, 2014).

4.1 Globalization

With the introduction of the Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI) Act in 1966, it paved the route for well-renowned foreign universities to set up branch campuses in Malaysia; and among them are Monash University (our case study), Curtin in Miri, and Swinburne in Kuching, all from Australia. From UK, Nottingham University was the first – which was followed by a few more illustrious universities such as Herriot-Watt, Southampton and Reading Universities. Xiamen University from China was set up in Putrajaya in 2015. Besides bringing a diverse international flavours and choices to local Malaysian students, they do provide a globalized outreach and viewpoints. What more, they also attract numerous international students from nearby regions and also from afar. Other private institutions also opened up their doors to more international students,

for example SEGi University has enrolled foreign students from more than 80 countries around the world.

Originally, the PHEIs were established mainly to reduce the migration of local students overseas, but they have also managed to attract thousands of foreign students to study in Malaysia over the last few decades. According to APAIE (2018), there were more than 103,000 international students enrolled in private universities at end of 2017 compared just over 33,000 in public universities. Hence it is fair to say that, the PHEIs are the institutions that are doing far more in practicing globalization in higher education in Malaysia as well as promoting Malaysia as an international hub of higher education regionally. Refer to Figure 1 below.
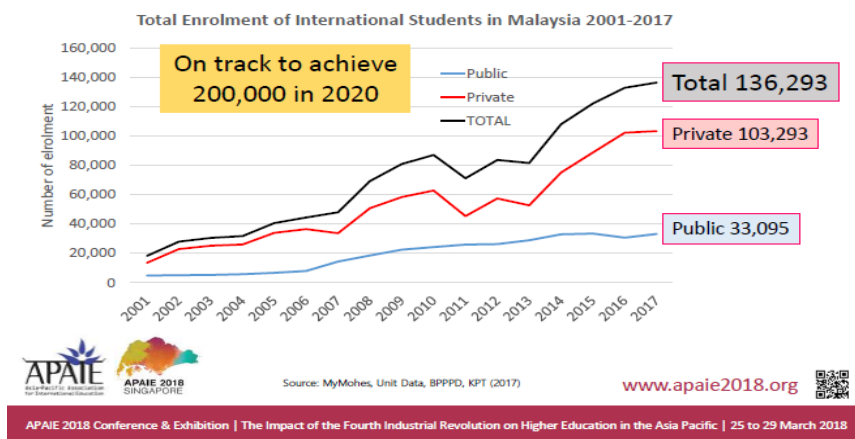

Figure 1 – Trend on international students' enrolment in public and private IHLs in Malaysia
(Source : Yahaya, 2018, ppt, p.18**)**

On top of that, the estimated amount spent by a foreign student studying in Malaysia is about RM45,000 annually, including tuition fees and living expenses (StudyMalaysia.com, 2017). This actually adds up into the national economy in terms of wealth growth and national prosperity.

On the four key elements; the first on employability. By going full steam on globalization, the PHEIs have actually enhanced the employability of our graduates through their direct interaction and networking with their foreign classmates and counterparts, insofar as their communication skills and understanding of foreign cultures and work habits. On the quality programme and delivery, the fact that many of the PHEIs have international collaborations with well-established foreign universities especially those branch campuses like Monash Sunway, has in turn raise the level of benchmarking in programme development and accreditation. This also linked back to the quality of the academia in terms of teaching and research. A number of these PHEIs have strong linkages with the industry through the diversification of their parent group, such as Sunway, Taylors and even SEGi universities. These linkages do play a major role in quality of teaching and research in tandem with the expectation of the market needs, by producing graduates with the right qualifications, soft skills, and right attitude to face industry and national economic challenges. All of the PHEIs used English Language as the only medium of instruction in delivery the academic

programmes, and this practice gave them the edge over some of the public universities who still adopt the usage of the national Malay Language as mode of instruction.

4.2 Teaching and Learning Innovations

The PHEIs by their nature are competitive and driven to profitability. Their survival is based on student enrolments and chargeable tuition fees. Hence all PHEIs have the need to be technology-driven in providing ease and convenience for students to access web-based teaching materials and active online interaction with lecturers, besides physically attending regular lectures and tutorial classes.

Effective teaching and learning needs an effective delivery system. Textbooks and physical reference documents are no longer considered as an important element of knowledge acquisition. In most PHEIs, learning activities are done through electronic media, whereby information and communication technology (ICT) has become the main means of imparting knowledge and gathering information in higher education. ICT has actually changed students' learning behaviour, helping to move teaching and learning emphasis from content-centered curricula to competency-based curricula, and from teacher-centered to student-centered forms of delivery (Oliver, 2002). The use of virtual classrooms, e-learning and blended learning are slowly gaining momentum, and the PHEIs are among the practitioners now in order to remain competitive and to stay relevant in gaining student enrolment.

Starting on the first element employability. Graduates who are familiar with updated technology in teaching and learning enables them to be techno- and gadget-savvy and in demand by employers who wants skilful technocrats in the present digital age. Nowadays, the quality of programme delivery goes hand in hand with top notched facilities. PHEIs were forced to invest in upgraded teaching classes and laboratories, in line with Education Ministry's MQA's strict guidelines on programme accreditation. All these spending have brought tangible benefits in attracting many good students seeking quality study programmes. Through these developments, the academics also upgraded on their teaching and research skills, to keep up with the expectations of students in teaching and learning delivery. Competency in communication and language skills will also be enhanced by the use of new and enhanced teaching methods, which allows students to seek information much more quickly, literally at their fingertips. Technology-savvy students can pick up language skills and knowledge much more easily compared to their forefathers.

4.3 Contributions to Society

It is obvious that the PHEIs as represented in the three case studies presented earlier, have contributed tremendously to the National Education Policy, which stated clearly as such:

Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort toward further develop 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 a devotion to God. Such an 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 high levels of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large. (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013-2025).

The contributions of the PHEIs towards graduate employability through linkages with industry players by way of the internship programmes, which are built into the curricula study helps in a big way in providing skills training and work experience for students. The incentive to carry out progressive improvements in teaching and facility provisions in the premises goes a long way in ensuring quality assurance in delivery to students. Lecturers and researchers also stand to gain

as part of the key performance index toward their teaching evaluation and research outputs – which builds up their career and professional development as productive and active academic in their fields. The PHEIs have contributed greatly as a source of lifelong learning because of their postgraduate programmes which cater to the working adults, and also to enhance skills needed nowadays in the digital age, by running soft skills programmes such as ICT, language competency and communication ability.

4.4 Economic Reality of Private Education

The PHEIs operate as private entities and they are expected to place high priority in operational profits in order to recoup their direct business investments, albeit over a long term period. In the three selected case studies, their mode of business operation are distinctly different and unique from each other, but they still have the priority in generating income for their business survival – that is the economic reality of private education. But at the same time most if not all the PHEIs also offer scholarships and funding assistance to needy and deserving students coming from low-income families.

From the above findings, we can adjudge that UCSI and UTAR were very cost-conscious and tend to take low-risk ventures. While UCSI took about 20 years to realize its potential to establish a full fledge university, UTAR took a shorter route. The reason being the financial resources at hand in UTAR, and the lending hand of donors and keen friendly investments into UTAR by way of the education-conscious Chinese community willing to help out their own. On the other hand, UCSI as a private entity on its own, it relied on the foresight and courage of its owner to take some calculated risks along a path that paved the way for them to success, although the journey was a longer one.

As for Monash campus, its success was the shortest among the selected three because it had a well-established base to work from due to its long partnership with the Sunway Group in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, it is still a courageous step to be the first international branch campus for an Australian university in Malaysia. Its success paved the way for other international universities to set-up similar branch campuses all over Malaysia.

All of the above case studies into private universities has shown that the landscape of private university as the vehicle of education for school graduates has totally changed the mindset and expectations of all stakeholders principally the students and parents. They stood to benefit by having the opportunity to study locally at affordable costs and having quality education at their doorsteps.

It can be seen here that the income generated by the PHEIs in the ventures into private education has indirectly benefitted the society as a whole. Most of the income gained from the enterprise are ploughed back to build up their business entities and operation. Students stand to gain foremost by their ability to have gainful employment upon graduation, knowing that they have received quality assured qualifications befitting their aspirations, learning from well-qualified academic lecturers well versed in areas needed in the industry, as well as picking up required linguistic and communication skills for their lifelong learning.

5. CONCLUSION

The authors have given a useful insight by painting a realistic picture of how the private universities in Malaysia have been operating and contributing to national development – based on the typical three operating models depicted. All three of them, which are UTAR, UCSI and Monash Sunway have their distinctive features and differing operation modes, but nevertheless they played

a major role in contributing to the nation development and manpower needs through capacity building.

The four key aspects in their contributions have been presented clearly which are, globalization, teaching and learning innovations, contribution to society and economic reality of their existence. And in describing these four key aspects, the authors have elaborating clearly on the issues related to four elements beneficial to students, which are, employability, quality assurance, academia and language and communication competency.

In final conclusion, private university education may take various forms but they would normally fall under the above three broad categories. Their differing paths to eventual success tell us that private university if managed properly and well, will definitely be a major contribution to the nation in terms of providing viable and affordable higher education options to students and parents coming from different segments of the society.

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