

The Role and Transformation of Residential College as an Internationalisation Hub

Mohd Hairul Anuar Razak, Nor Huda Abdul Hamid, & Nurhazlini Rahmat
(Faculty of Applied Communication, Multimedia University)

Abstract - This research focuses on the internalisation of residential college in Malaysia, which is closely linked to globalisation. According to Zaid Ahmad (2006), globalisation creates a hub of dependency and sharing between countries. In this regard, internationalisation is linked to activities involving participation in the international environment and involvement with various parties in the quality educational settings. For instance, Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015 - 2025 (Higher Education) through its Shift 8 has emphasised on the roles that students can play in the enhancement of knowledge, capability of innovation, as well as the cultivation of first-class mind. The willingness to accept and openness are the two fundamental elements in the concept of internationalisation. With the opening of new markets, through innovative programmes and collaborations, the number of international students in Malaysia is expected to rise to 250,000 by 2025 (The Guardian, 2014). Therefore, students' development requires a comprehensive and balanced approach that consolidates scientific, academic and strategic managements. This is when the residential colleges play their roles in providing additional assistance in sustaining the expansion of internationalisation. Through the integration of local and international students' involvement and residential colleges' staff supporting roles, all parties involved will gain the privilege to learn and share knowledge from each other while establishing international cooperation. As mentioned by Nye, Joseph S. Jr. (1991), Malaysia needs to be more involved in its international relations as this is crucial for the establishment of a new dimension in the national education system. As we are aware, the internationalisation of education sector and the development of the education hub have become a new global trend. Thus, the competition becomes increasingly high. Therefore, in this paper, the authors discuss several aspects that can be considered in the establishment of residential colleges as a hub of internationalisation, which are: 1. The willingness to accept foreign students amongst residential college's students and staff. 2. The stability of financial provision. 3. The transformation of education and planning of activities. 4. The training and empowerment of students and management staff 5. The international network and collaboration.

Keyword - Internationalisation, residential college management, globalisation, educational hub, educational transformation, mobility and exchange programme

I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalisation, knowledge becomes a commodity moving in all countries. The development of knowledge-based human capital globally has led not only

to intellectual competition, but in many contexts including the sharing of knowledge without boundaries. Globalisation is seen as a human development platform for a change that occurs. In terms of the higher education system, it can be defined as "flow of technology, economy, knowledge, human, values and ideas that can be transformed along the boundaries" (Knight, 2002). Furthermore, globalisation is an important role in realising internationalisation. The dimensions of higher education are increasingly important and complex and in line with international convergence. This challenges can lead to new reformation in terms of opportunities, advantages, risks and challenges to internationalisation in higher education institutions (Knight, 2008). International academic mobility is one aspect of internationalisation especially in the context of which it relies on the number, scope and impact of such mobility (Bhandari & Blumenthal, 2009).

University residential college management plays an important role in ensuring that its residents are in a conducive state. The internationalisation in residential colleges environment has a major impact on the managements and students of a residential college. Various factors must be taken into account and it will affect many things. According to Jamaludin Mohaiadin (2005), a residential college plays a role in providing accommodation services that provide support, facilities and whatever needs to make academic progress and an effective learning process. The residential college also plays a role in the process of self-formation and student personality in self-development and leadership activities. In addition, with mobility programme activities can develop potential talents and abilities among the staff and students.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Internationalisation in education sector and education hub development has become a new global trend. Thus, the competition becomes increasingly fierce. The international students hub of Malaysia is among the highest in the world with international students. The number of registered high-ranking students has increased from 45,000 in 2007 to almost 100,000 in 2014. The National Transformation Program (NTP) Annual Report 2017 showed that international student enrolment, with 170,068 enrolments in higher learning institutions in 2017 as compared to 70,000

in 2010. This shows an increase of one hundred percent since the launch of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2007-2020 (PSPTN). Malaysia is on the right track to become an international students hub and efforts need to be continued to improve its position. International studies showed that only one-third of successful large-scale programme transformation and this study shows that poor resources or planning are not usually the main cause of failure but because of lack of resolution, timing, and commitment from top management (Keller, S & Price, C., 2011). Research indicates that only a third of large-scale transformation programmes has succeeded in delivering and sustaining results. Typically, education system reformation does not fail due to lack of resources, but it fails for common reasons such as insufficient will, time, and commitment from political and Ministry leaders; inability to stay the course under intense challenges from those opposed to change; paralysis in the face of polarising debates; resistance to change amongst stakeholders and institutions; or talent and capacity gaps within the Ministry.

Internationalisation has a widespread effect on all level of higher education and the main focus of this paper is to see the role of students' residential as a main medium for transformation. Various factors must be taken into account and those factors are as follow:

- a) Awareness of receiving international students and sending them abroad. Are residents of students' residential and management willing to accept international students? How to utilize students' residence as the primary medium to send our local students abroad?
- b) Facilities within the residential college area. What is the condition of the facilities? Does it services served international students accordingly? Are the systems appropriate to them?
- c) Integration between international and local students. It is recommended to use the method of integration for their accommodations. This will help to improve achievements of objective that is to expose them to globalisation and not merely focusing on structured activity only. Other than that, we also can specify the rooms for international students who wish to stay in the short term period (not a normal semester) and a number of local and international students per intake for a specific period of time.
- d) Provide training for administrative staff and local students in managing international students. This can be done by offering English communication course. Is it necessary to have dual languages for all forms and documentation purposes? Last but not least is about the preparations of receiving international students and to explain the uniqueness of our country to them.
- e) Educational transformation and student activities in residential colleges for international students.

In this study, the authors view the responsibility of the college as the act to identify the basic issues and to identify the appropriate situation for international students, as well

as activities involving internationalisation. Each individual receives various information from their environment and attempts to interpret such information based on their own understanding. Perceptions have great influence in determining individual and also community behaviours (Sarjit & Amir Zal, 2008). Hence, the initial perception of any residential college must be excellent. According to Mohamad Suhaimi (1994), students' accommodation cannot be a successful hub for internationalisation due to its prolonged failure. Therefore, it can only be viewed as a place for completion of educational process. Time allocation and rest area for students should be taken into account too. Zainal Ariffin (1996), added that the quality of life in residential college is one of the contributive factors to students' development which entails their accommodation, facilities, management, activities and also engagement.

3. COLLEGE AS A HUB FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

All higher education institutions in Malaysia must demonstrate the best example as a hub for internationalisation by improving the process, skills and culture, so that they can continuously develop towards transformation of the higher education system in Malaysia.

In order to achieve this objective, the writer argues that as a hub for internationalisation, residential colleges should play its significant roles.

3.1 The Management of College Residential

3.1.1 Willingness to accept students and oversea guests.

We have to be ready to accept students and visitors from outside as it is very important as we need to make an early arrangement and preparations for them.

3.1.2 Provide appropriate facilities and services.

This issue should be taken seriously as it would give different perception towards others especially to the residents themselves. For example, to provide large size of chair and bed for them as some of them have a large physical condition. Other than that, laundry facilities, pantry, water heater, dual language sign directions, telephone lines and international fax at the college office. A brief orientation approaches also helpful in enhancing international students' understanding of the systems used in residential colleges as well as helping them to familiarise themselves with new environment.

3.1.3 Provide training to respective staff in handling students and guests from overseas.

Communication and management trainings should be provided to the front desk staff at the main office as this would help them to facilitate students and also guests from overseas. In this case, the use of forms and documents must be in dual languages as it is involving international affairs. It is very important to facilitate their needs.

3.1.4 Budget Allocation and Management

Budget for sending our local students and staff abroad for this programme is very huge thus need to have strong financial resources as the planning and its implementation are in a long term of period. So, the financial resources must be self-regulated and should be based in the residential college.

3.1.5 The roles of principals, managers and fellows in creating international linkage with others.

The roles of principals, managers and fellows as a third party in managing and planning the programme is very important. Their roles are to develop, communicate and collaborate with other party as to ensure that the programme will be running smoothly. Therefore, all matters related to students and staff accommodation, students' activities, financial and decision making can be managed and done in a short period of time.

3.2 Student's level

3.2.1 Students able to plan some activities for the international students.

Students High Council is the key to foster empowerment of students development & soft skills. Responsibility and trust as a leader can be strengthened up by providing opportunities to them to organise and plan international activities in university campus. The experience of developing and carrying out international activities can foster awareness and gain experience and build up of skill-building skills. Therefore, with the cooperation between the students residential management & students High Council, both party should be given the opportunity and involved in international activity planning.

HLIs and University management also can play greater role to coordinate and monitor in supporting students development for internationalisation activities. In order to establish interaction & collaboration, all entities in HLIs need to integrate their activities with engagement of the students in academic, industry engagement, community service, sport and cultural programmes. In the end of result, students are able to apply their leadership, soft skills and diplomatic skill to balances and holistic graduates

(Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015 – 2025 (Higher Education)).

3.2.2 Foster the spirit of volunteerism.

Sincerely helping and genuinely collaborating are a noble practice and need to be learned among university students. On the topic of internationalisation, students must be trained to volunteer and become exemplary figures. In this case, the buddy system adaptation in the experiential learning aspect of the buddy needs to be adjusted and this must come from the students themselves to be happy to help students or overseas guests. The main purpose is to embrace the attitude of volunteers. Therefore, the students can aware of role and the spirit of volunteerism and creating a sincere attitude in helping others people.

3.2.3 Students are medium of information transfer and transmission

In the contexts of internationalisation, students can be considered as little ambassadors of any institution. Therefore, they must be able to deliver the accurate information and need to be able to deliver effective communication and presentation. Moreover, it is an appropriate approach to make students as focal point of information channel and transmission as communication among local and international students have been known to enhance better understanding, hence creating good perception and interaction among these students.

3.2.4 Preparation for abroad study.

In supporting students' opportunity and experience in the persuance of their study, many factors need to be considered and prepared. This includes the assistance on their departure day, support when they are abroad and arrangement on their home arrival. All these preparations include language classes, financial support, transportation service, lecture slots, credit transfer, activity schedule and other related matters. Mobility aspects also need to be considered as it a medium for students to know more about cultural, political, economic, social and educational aspect of their host country. In this aspect, lifelong learning plays an utmost role in ascertain these aspects are well presented to students. Having said so, the guidelines need to be created to ensure its application in the aspects of security, health, finance and academic. This is where university and its international office come into picture where they would be the responsible parties who will be actively monitoring students well-being during their learning endeavour, so that they would be able to apply the concept of learning process. The learning service will challenge students to apply what they have learned and not to only attain the real outcomes of learning that benefit their community, but also to deepen their understanding which will then contribute to their self-

development and community betterment (Eyler, J. and Giles, D., (1999).

III. CONCLUSION

In line with government's aspiration to achieve develop country through the implementation of Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025, it is important to widen our conceptual awareness of internationalisation. Thus far, the effectiveness of internalisation concept has been acknowledged. Although its roles in the aspect of life-long learning are yet to be recognised, but its contribution towards the transformation of education cannot be disregards. Internationalisation must be clear in the context of the students' residential as a hub and the medium of internationalisation. Students can be exposed to new cultures and through continuous interaction with international students from diverse countries, as well as to help create a better personality development and soft skills among university students and staff. Therefore, in order to sustain the positive impacts of intertionalisation the authors strongly suggest that factors such as localise contribution, volunteerism, community engagement and industry penetration should be considered at any residential colleges.

REFERENCES

- Bhandari, R., & Blumenthal, P., 2000. *Global student mobility: Moving towards brain exchange*. In R. Bhandari & S. Laughlin (Eds.), *Higher education on the move: New developments in global mobility* (pp. 1-14). New York: IIE.
- Civil Service Delivery Unit (CSDU) Prime Minister's Department, 2017. Annual Report 2017, 1, Retrieve from National Transformation Programme Annual Report 2017 http://www.mampu.gov.my/images/pengumuman/NTP_AR2017_ENG.pdfISSN 2600-8920
- Eyler, J. and Giles, D., 1999. Where's the Learning in Service-Learning? Jamaludin Mohaiadin, 2005. *Kampus Universiti sebagai Institusi "Living-Environment"*. Seminar Pengurusan Asrama Peringkat Nasional (SPARK). Hotel Century Mahkota, Melaka. 27 – 30 November 2005.
- Keller. S & Price. C., 2011. *Beyond Performance, How Great Organisations Build Competitive Advantage*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc
- Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, 2011. *Pelan Strategik Pengajian Tinggi Negara (PSPTN)*. Diperolehi pada 23 April 2014 daripada <http://www.mohe.gov.my/psptn>
- Knight, J., 2002. *Trade in Higher Education Services: The Implications of GATS*. London: Observatory on Borderless Higher Education.
- Knight, J., 2008. *Higher education in turmoil: The changing world of internationalization*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Ministry of Higher Education in Graduate Employability Blueprint, 2012. *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015 – 2025 (Higher Education)*
- Mohammad Suhaimi Jaafar, 1994. *Beberapa Isu dan Strategi Pembangunan Masa Depan Asrama Yang Kondusif*. Seminar Penyelidikan Asrama Peringkat Kebangsaan (SPARK 1994). Universiti Sains Malaysia. Pulau Pinang.
- Joseph S. Jr., 1991. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books.
- Sarjit. S. G & Wan Amir Zal W. I., 2008. *Perubahan nilai budaya belia Malaysia menuju Wawasan 2020*. Jurnal Pembangunan Belia. 1: 15 – 34. Institut Penyelidikan Pembangunan Belia Malaysia.
- The Guardian, 2014. Top 20 countries for International students. Access from <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2014/jul/17/top-20-countries-international-students>.
- Zaid Ahmad et. al, 2006. *Hubungan Etnik di Malaysia*. Shah Alam: Oxford Fajar Sdn. Bhd.
- Zainal Ariffin B. Ahmad, 1996. *Kualiti Kehidupan Di Desasiswa : Satu Kajian Kes Dari Pembangunan Pelajar*. Seminar Pengurusan Asrama Peringkat Kebangsaan (SPARK 96) USM . Skudai : Universiti Sains Malaysia