

# AN EVALUATION OF THE FACTORS THAT DRIVE FOREIGN STUDENTS TOWARDS PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA 2020

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## ABSTRACT

*The objectives of this study were to explore factors that Drive Foreign students on their decision making process on selecting Malaysia as their preferred institution to identify the international students' satisfaction factors towards the international programs in Malaysia universities to identify and compare satisfaction factors between public and private universities to propose the improvement on increasing satisfaction of the international students who are studying in the international program at Malaysia universities, and to attract more potential international students in the future. This study is quantitative research using satisfaction questionnaire data was collected from 155 foreign students studying in international programs in Malaysia universities. The choice of study destinations had shown some trend where preferences are towards the developed countries, such as Malaysia. Higher education industry is growing strong and has high competition level. In order to attract more prospect foreign students to select Malaysia. Therefore, it is critical to identify factors that drive foreign students' satisfaction toward international program in Malaysia higher education.*

**Key words:** foreign, students, factors, drive, satisfaction, international, program, Malaysia universities

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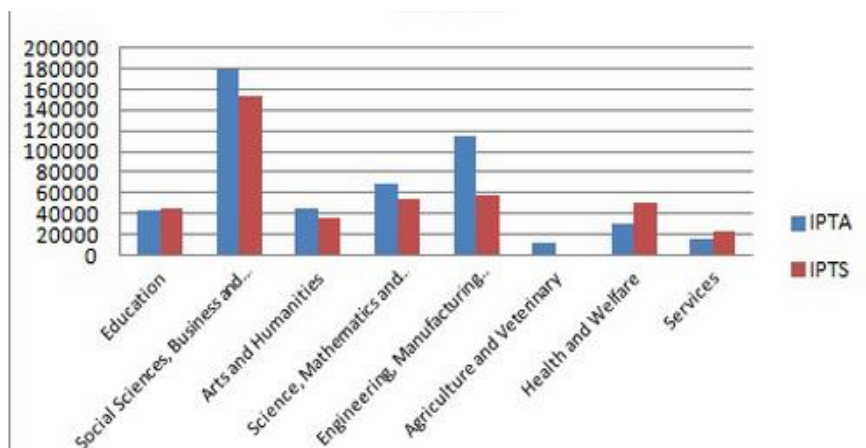
## 1. INTRODUCTION

The fact that higher education has become progressively more imperative to both the individual who pursues it and the global workforce towards output optimization has become explicit as it has a direct impact towards the global economy from a macroeconomic perspective. Higher learning ensures a higher level of versatility and competency of the

nation's workforce as it enhances the individual's capacity to approach work related factors with a higher degree of knowledge and confidence.

From a personal perspective, individuals who have the background of recognised higher education are certainly presented with better future opportunities pertaining to achieving a better societal status due to better levels of lifestyle than individuals who only have high school education (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013). Presently the increasing percentages of individuals who pursue higher education at international destinations has become exponential as employers make tertiary qualifications a mandatory criteria and expect individuals who are competent, agile, innovative and proactive. Weisbrod, Ballou, & Asch indicate that higher education in essence affects not only the individuals themselves, but also their family, organisations, governments which in turn has a significant impact on the economy itself (Weisbrod, Ballou, & Asch, 2010). Based on these factors and realising the demand for higher education, educational institutions are capitalising on the market and commercial education in Asia has been expanding at an exponential rate due to its commercial value and market position that enables institutions to provide better quality education at significantly lower costs.

The academic revolution has made countries such as Malaysia and Singapore preferred destination by students due to a myriad of reasons and among them as mentioned earlier is the perceived quality of education that is coupled with the lower cost primarily due to exchange rates. The fact that globalization has effectively removed barriers to knowledge or in other words 'unrestricted students seeking post-secondary education' from doing so has transformed the education industry (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009) into a 'red ocean' (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005) market over the last 3 decades which has inevitably increased the bargaining power of students due to the high percentage of substitutes and competitors in the market (Porter, 2008). International student mobility has grown leap and bounce in the past two decades. The demand for international education has increased and in tandem with the supply of international education providers. By investigating the determinants that make learning institutions attractive for knowledge seekers is critical not only to learners, but also to governments that promote education such as Malaysia and to the universities that have been established throughout Malaysia and There are almost 500 institutions of private higher education currently in operation in Malaysia, these include colleges, university colleges and universities. These institutions are helpful because they fill the gap caused by limited seating for potential students in government institutions of higher learning. A total sample of 373 students comprising students from secondary schools was used in this study. These students were in the British Equivalent and A levels of education. A questionnaire containing 46 statements was distributed randomly to the respondents during a motivation seminar at their respective schools. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS and AMOS software programme packages for Windows. Factor analysis was performed to extract and decide on the number of factors underlying the measured variables of interest. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was then used to examine the variables and the fitness of the proposed model. The results indicate a substantial positive effect of perception and promotion on the students' choice of private institutions for higher education. The results also reveal a significant positive effect of perception on influence and promotion on influence. Therefore, the findings of this study have a substantial effect on private institutions of higher education.



**Figure 1** Statistics of Higher Education Malaysia

IPTA (Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam) – Public Higher Learning Institutions

IPTS (Institut Pengajian Tinggi Swasta) – Private Higher Learning Institutions

Source: Ministry of Education Malaysia – MOE

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Higher education has become a prominent factor throughout the globe for populations and economies and recognising this, the Malaysian government has actively advocated Malaysia as a premier educational hub in the Asia Pacific region (Arokiasamy, 2011). Emerging economies have realised the huge potential of the education industry in the long term as an income generator and GDP contributor and have taken the appropriate initiatives to improve their educational offerings. This market positioning from a logical and general perspective should be essentially based on cost, quality and destination infrastructure and Malaysia has the criteria that is required for it to become a primary higher learning destination of choice.

However, the driving factors that make a destination a suitable for higher education is diverse. This research intends to examine 3 determinants and their correlation with the decision making process of students to pursue their higher education in Malaysia as a better option than other countries. Based on these factors this research analyses the variables that influence the decisions of students who make Malaysia their higher learning destination.

## 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To have a better perspective of how the quality of education affects the student's choice in higher learning destinations.
2. To understand the depth of the cost of learning and how it influences students to select Malaysia as a higher learning destination.
3. To evaluate the extent to which a country's infrastructure influences a student's decision on selecting a higher learning destination.

## 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does quality of education affect a student's decision?
- How far do cost factors influence a student decision towards selecting a higher learning destination?
- To what extent does the infrastructure of a country influence the decision making process of a student's choice in higher learning destinations?

## 5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mark Disney, who is the CEO (Asia) of London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) made a statement based on a report by the Malaysian Association of Private Colleges and Universities on the half a million students who are studying at private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia (2010), he stated, “Private education has been absolutely central to the development, stability and harmony of Malaysia for the past 25 years”, this statement is within the perspective that the private education paradigm provides vocational and business qualifications that is driving Malaysia towards becoming a legitimate regional educational hub . However the factors that drive the mechanics of the education industry has evolved as education approaches the boundaries of being a purely marketable and consumable product and according to (Kotler & Keller, 2011) consumers are influenced by 4 critical marketing elements when making a purchase, these elements which are known generally as the marketing mix (Product, Price, Place and Promotion) are supposedly the defining elements of the consumers purchase actions, although the marketing mix may seem relevant and even significant, considering that choosing a university is a costly decision that is akin to buying a house the decision making process for choosing a higher learning institutions becomes a complex process that branches from the primary fundamentals of the decision making process (Marwala, 2013), when the stakes are increased. The literature review will be focused on 3 primary factors (quality, cost and infrastructure) based on empirical evidence provided by previous research which will also look into sub-factors that make up the main independent variables in the study. The review will look into correlations that exist between these factors and how they may or may not be applied to the focus of the study objectively. A plethora of studies have been documented in the literature that focuses on education, and numerous factors have been identified in these studies. For example, the cost of education (Xiaoping, 2002), class size and achievements (Toth & Montagna, 2002), ethnicity and achievements (Fazia, 2001; Tomlinson, 1991; Gibson & Bhachu, 1988), attitudes towards extracurricular activity in an institution of higher learning (Belikova, 2002), and perceptions concerning the quality of education programmes (Zain & Nik-Yacob, 1995) are reported to influence the opinions of students as they select an institution. Some research studies have focused on the early process of choice formation, as well as the social, economic and cultural factors that shape educational aspirations (e.g., Yusof, Ahmad, Tajudin, & Ravindran, 2008). These studies have centred principally on the decision of whether to attend a university rather than on the specific reason students select a preferred institution or course (Williams, Clancy, Batter, & Girling-Butcher, 1980; 1993; Carpenter & Western, 1984; 1989; Hayden & Carpenter, 1990; Baldwin, Eley, Hor, Doyle, Kermond, Pope, Cameron, & McClelland, 1991; Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), 1993; 1994; Australian National Opinion Polls (ANOP), 1994; McInnis & James, 1995; Harvey-Beavis & Elsworth, 1998; Yusof et al., 2008; Paul, 2009; Wagner & Fard, 2009). Xiaoping (2002) raised a concern regarding the rise of tuition fees charged by most colleges and universities within and around Beijing. Obviously, the views from parents and academicians oppose one another. Parents fear that the rising education costs will deter higher education opportunities for their children, whereas the academicians support the increase in tuition fees because they often benefit from these increases indirectly through higher salaries. Yusof et al. (2008) emphasised that parents of prospective students consider financial assistance to students to be an important factor that influences them towards a particular institution. Similar to Xiaoping (2002), Yusof et al. (2008) also found that cost of tuition is a moderately important factor considered by parents in selecting a particular institution for their child. Supporting these findings, Joseph and Joseph (1998, 2000) and Wagner and Fard (2009) noted that the cost of education, value of education and content and structure or degrees offered are the three most

important factors that influence the choice of the students. Yusof et al. (2008) explicated that the availability of the required program is the top attribute in choosing a particular institution for higher education, which shows that the respondents were well-informed about their institution of choice and had previously decided on the programmes for which they wanted to apply or be admitted. The identical findings are also found in the literature from Baharun (2002) in which he concluded that students' selection of a university is mainly determined by types of academic programmes available, quality of education, administration standards, faculty qualification, and convenient and accessible location. In addition, there are several related studies reporting that, in Asian culture, the influence of family and friends plays a significant role on students' choice of higher education (see Joseph & Joseph, 1998, 2000; Pimpa, 2004; Chen & Zimitat, 2006; Yusof et al., 2008; Wagner & Fard, 2009). Recommendations from friends and relatives are considered to be "push" factors, as cited by McMahan (1992) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), in motivating a destination choice for students from Taiwan, India, China and Indonesia. Moreover, Pimpa (2004) highlighted family as the most influential factor for Thai students' choice of international education, whereas Chen and Zimitat (2006) noted the influence of family and friends of Taiwanese students as a major factor to study abroad. Broader research indicates that individuals will select a particular higher education institution if the benefits of attending outweigh the perceived benefits of attending other higher education institutions or non-college alternatives (Hossler, 1985; Wagner & Fard, 2009).

Among Malaysian students abroad, the top destination countries in 2010 were Australia (20,943), the United Kingdom (13,796), Egypt (8,611), the United States (6,100), and Indonesia (5,588), according to information supplied to the Institute of International Education by the Ministry of Higher Education.

### Enrolment of International Students according to Countries of Origin

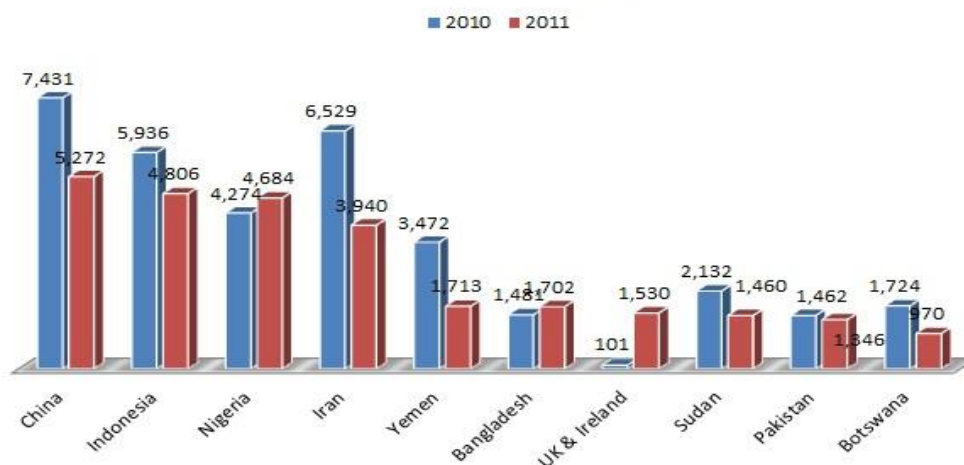


Figure 2 International Education

Based on Figures from the Ministry of Higher Education, total foreign student enrolment in Malaysia went down to 45,246 last year from 62,705 in 2010.

According to MOHE, aggregate data was based from survey respondents from both private and government higher learning institutions.

The literature reveals that there are many studies have attempted to investigate the students' satisfaction at higher educational institutions. Sumaedi have investigated the student satisfaction. They incorporated as independent variables student perceived service quality and

student perceived prices. Data was collected via questionnaire from 155 respondents. The findings indicated that service quality and perceived price have significant influence on student satisfaction.

## **6. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

According to (Bunoti, 2010), the quality of higher learning institutions is on the decline due to a variety of reasons, primarily due to commercialization and competition. This factor has been asserted by various scholars such as (Beso, et al., 2007), (Anderberg, Norden, & Hansson, 2009) and (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009) citing the fact that affiliation by private institutions to prestigious universities are being abused, this phenomenon purportedly is driven by institutions competing for students as opposed to students competing for places in higher learning institutions. According to a report by UNESCO the private sector is largely accountable for this current trend due to their ‘demand absorbing’ techniques which in simple terms mean giving access to students who are not qualified for public institutions which largely still maintain a high level of quality.

### **6.1. Quality Determinants - The Academic Profession**

The interdependencies between the objectives of higher education institutions and the academic profession has transformed and moved away from the ‘traditional academy’ principles due to commercialisation and monetization which has resulted in high outputs of PhDs and Masters holders in comparison to a decade ago, some who are still in their early 20s raising doubts about their credibility (The Economist, 2010).

### **6.2. Quality Determinants - Unqualified Student Enrolments**

Another factor that has attracted scholars towards the question of education quality is from the opposite perspective of ‘the quality of students’, the intense competition among private institutions has transformed the nature of admissions whereby admission into higher learning institutions has been based on the level of student affordability more than the student’s ‘quality’ (Phang, 2013) and (Finch, 1997). This phenomenon is largely due to the fact that recruiters in private institutions are being given allowances for enrolling students, undermining the objective of education itself, while in public institutions; corruption has taken root leaving students who are genuinely deserving at a disadvantage (UNESCO, 2015).

### **6.3. Cost of Education**

Higher education in countries such as Malaysia is deemed as a global public good, the escalating costs associated with higher education has been working against the initiative to make Malaysia the top destination to obtain a recognized degree at reasonable costs (Arokiasamy, 2011). The driving factors behind the escalating cost for students are perpetrated through monetization of 3<sup>rd</sup> parties such as home owners who charge exorbitant rentals to students, new visa regulations that have been introduced (private companies have been appointed to regulate visa applications and renewal processes), transportation (Car rentals) on top of the gradually rising tuition fees

### **6.4. Students as Consumers**

The current trend whereby students are largely viewed as revenue sources coupled with the commercialization of Universities that has transformed students into consumers of the knowledge products is discussed in depth by (Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion, 2009), the proposed argument emphasises on the aspects of this transformation which may lead into the

danger of converting the very essence of higher learning i.e. from a scholar that develops critical thinking into a consumer that has standard vocational training good enough to be injected into the workforce.

## 6.5. Transportation

Similar to telecommunications transport is also an infrastructural element that is critical towards economic progress for all industries and all levels of income as it not only supports the general economy but it also supports the general populace on a personal level of moving from one place to another conveniently, and cost effectively which is vital to the workforce and students. According to Tong, Yu and Roberts the impact of transportation on the economy can be transformative in positive sense. Transport logistics are a vital part of all industries as much as telecommunications and financial systems (Tong, Yu, & Roberts, 2014).

## 6.6. Medical

Another key issue that must be examined pertaining to the infrastructure of education destination is the medical facilities that are available. This element is vital towards enhancing the confidence of those who intend to travel to a particular destination for any purpose. In a sense the adequacy of medical related services demands the region to have the capacity to prepare and respond to acute and chronic threats to those who seek it. A developed infrastructure such as that in Malaysia has a capable and qualified workforce that is reinforced with up to date information systems. (Gregorio, Cavaco, & Lapao, 2014). According to (healthypeople.gov, 2015), the most vital components towards being a region that conforms to international health services/ standards are:

**Monitoring** the health status from macro and micro perspectives that would enable the 'system' to identify and resolve social health problems effectively and efficiently.

**Diagnosing and investigating** reoccurring health problems as well as health hazards within a commune.

**Informing, educating, and empowering** the general populace pertaining to health issues.

**Mobilisation and formation** of community partnerships objectively to solve health related issues.

**Development of policies and plans** that support the medical needs of individuals in any circumstance without discrimination

**Enforce** laws and regulations that protect the general populace and placing health before profits.

**Linking** individuals in need of health care to the relevant healthcare divisions and authorities.

**Ensure** a competent health care workforce is constantly available

**Evaluate** the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of all elements related to the health care industry.

## 7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

These fundamentals of this research has been formulated to extensively examine the decision making process underwent by international students who are enrolled in Malaysian higher learning institutions. The primary objective a described in Chapter 1 is to scrutinize and understand the influences of the 3 proposed variables which are the quality of education, the cost of education and the destination infrastructure. The research which is deemed as quantitative exploratory research was conducted in educational hotspots in various locations targeting foreign students who are presently pursuing a higher education qualification in

Malaysia. In order to arrive at more accurate results, the researcher utilized both primary and secondary data from reliable sources such as governmental agencies and education authorities (domestically and internationally) and in that sense was both quantitative and qualitative in format. This enables the researcher to extract significant and acceptable data which would then be analysed in order to arrive at a conclusion that would make the research relevant to knowledge seeking parties. The entire research design has been developed in a 10 phase format in order to ensure that the research is ‘conditioned’ within each phase before moving on to the next phase. The 10 phase theoretical framework is presented in 3.1 under the theoretical framework which is essential towards developing a hypothesis that could be empirically tested as well as, the study focuses on the choice criteria of international students enrolled in private higher learning institutions in Malaysia was conducted at a various location such as Kuala Lumpur. Due to limited access to all private higher learning institutions, judgmental sampling was used with the help of the associations representing Malaysia’s HEIs such as NAPIEI (National Association of Private and Independent Educational Institutions) and PKIBM (National Association of Indigenous Private Educational Institutions). The sampling unit comprised of international students from various countries studying in Malaysian private higher educational institutions in various degree programs. A total of 1500 questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents at six private HEIs. The institutions were chosen based on enrolment of international students. However, only 656 foreign students responded to the survey which is 43.7% response rate. This number was considered satisfactory for statistical analysis and representative of the population strata. The questionnaire was designed based on focus group meeting and secondary information from numerous studies such as Soutar and Turner (2002), Joseph and Joseph (1998 and 2000), and Leblanc and Nguyen (1999). After the pre-test activity, a final 48 variable item questions were used. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first section of the questionnaire asked respondents to rank the different dimensions on a scale of 1 (extremely unimportant) to 6 (extremely important). In the second part, respondents were asked about their profile or background such as country of origin, age, gender and types of studies. These measures were culled from the previous study of Rohaizat (2004).

### 7.1. Research Design – 10 Research Phases

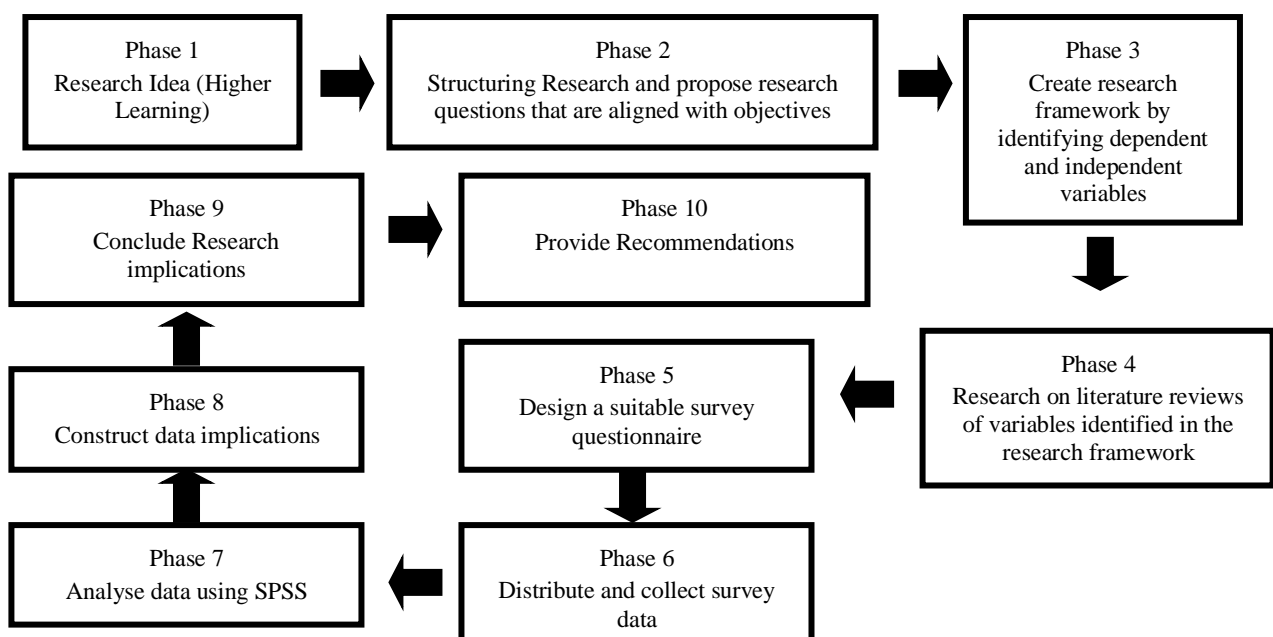


Figure 3 Research Phases

## 7.2. Primary Data and Secondary Data

The researcher uses both primary and secondary data to support the research findings. Primary data which is typically data which is extracted directly from a source (Curtis, 2008) is obtained from respondents who participate in the survey. The reason primary data is vital to the research is due to the fact that the data will provide a clearer perspective on how students who are already in Malaysia perceive the higher education paradigm of Malaysia. The primary data collected will be quantitative in format as quantitative analysis is crucial towards understanding research from a 'numeric' or quantifiable perspective. Secondary data on the other hand has been extracted from various sources which include but not limited to governmental agencies, universities, the internet, peer reviewed journals, books and other relevant sources that the researcher deems to be appropriate and justified (Weng & Ting, 2013).

## 7.3. Data Analysis Method

The data that has been collected via the survey exclusively designed for this research will be statistically analysed for reliability, validity and correlative elements between the proposed variables via the SPSS software in order to validate and valid and justify the collected data which will then be utilised towards formulating the conclusion and providing suitable recommendations that would be beneficial to higher learning institutions as well as future researchers. Although the analysis for the most part will be quantitative, the researcher will also consider qualitative analysis for relevant parts and present them in a quantitative format using tables, diagrams and process flows in order to obtain a better viewpoint on the proposed subject.

## 7.4. Pilot Study

In order to test the consistency and reliability among questionnaire items, a pilot study has been conducted on 30 respondents, prior to the main data collection. All the respondents were selected using a convenient sampling procedure. The first draft of the questionnaire distributed to the students who have been randomly selected. This would help the researcher to measure the estimated time a respondent takes to fill up the questionnaire as well as to whether the items are understandable to the respondents.

## 8. DATA ANALYSIS

Part 4 of the study focuses on the results that are obtained through the statistical data analysis software SPSS. The first section states respondent's profile pertaining to demographic information such as age, gender and ethnicity. Frequency and percentage were used to show the general distribution of the profile in respect of the respondent. Subsequently the integrity of measures was examined by using factor analysis and reliability analysis, followed by an analysis of the inter correlation between all the variables that have been studied, from which sets of descriptive statistics were derived showing the mean and standard deviation of the factors that have been presented. Towards the final part, the hypotheses from the proposed model were tested through hierarchical regression analysis with a summary of the findings presented at the end of the chapter. All respondents were foreigners who are still pursuing higher education in Malaysia (Klang Valley)

### 8.1. Overview of Data Gathered

Table 1 shows the sample of profile of the questionnaire survey. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed randomly and retrieved from the respondents that were completed in a satisfactory manner. The questionnaires were subsequently tested using the SPSS statistical

software in order to extract data and validate the reliability and correlation of the questions with regards to the proposed dependent and independent variables.

**Table 1** Sample Profile

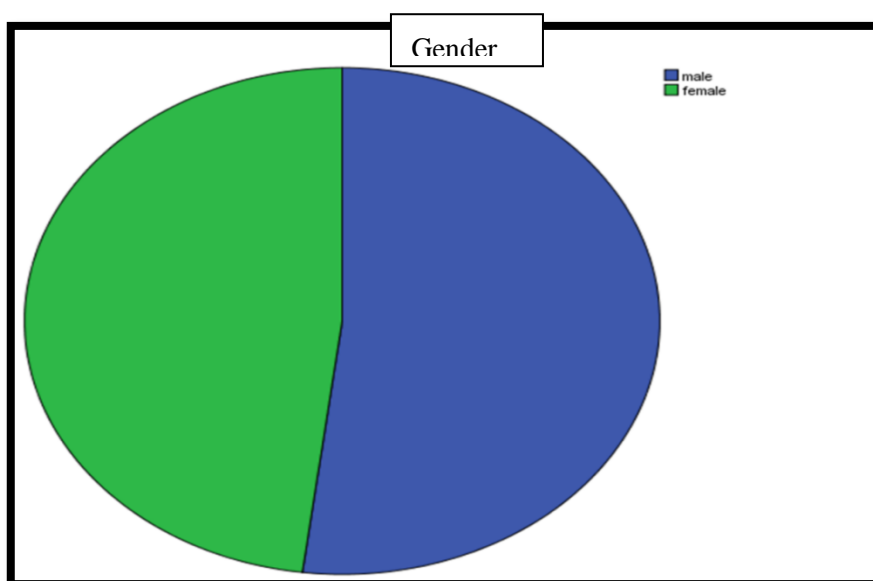
Number of Questionnaires Distributed	200
Number of Questionnaire Collected Back	200
Response Rate	100%

## 8.2. Descriptive Analysis

The summarizes all the demographic data of respondents including gender, age, region of origin, program of study, level of education and year of study. Based on the researcher's observation, out of the 200 random respondents, there were more male respondents (104) in comparison to female respondents (96). The results show that 52.0% of the respondents are male and the remaining 48.0% are female.

**Table 2** Gender Distribution

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	104	52.0	52.0	52.0
	female	96	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



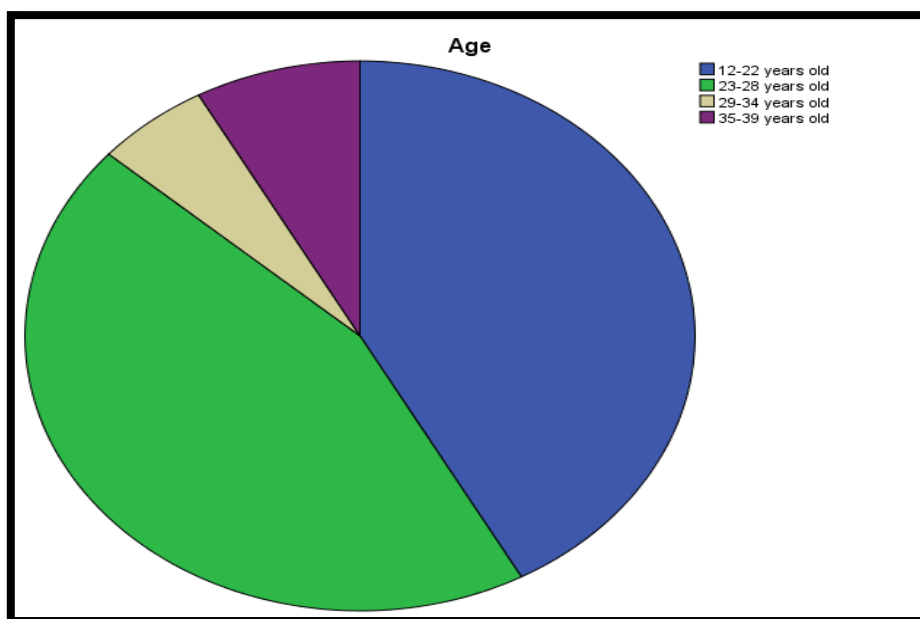
**Chart 1** Gender Distribution

### *Gender Distribution*

The survey results revealed that the majority of the respondents (84) were aged between the ages of 18-22 years old which accounts up to 42.0% of the total participants whereas the second largest group accounting for 44.5% or 89 respondents were aged between 23-28 years old, 5.5% (11) were aged between 29-34 years old, 8.0% (16) were aged between 35-39 years old.

**Table 3** Age Categories

		Age			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-22 years old	84	42.0	42.0	42.0
	23-28 years old	89	44.5	44.5	86.5
	29-34 years old	11	5.5	5.5	92.0
	35-39 years old	16	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



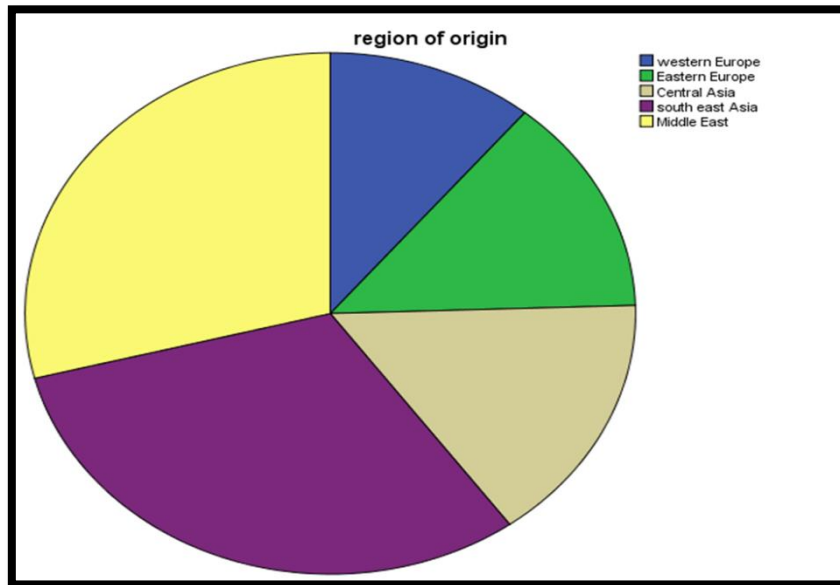
**Chart 2** Age Categories

Progressing towards the regions of origin (table 4), most of the respondents were predominantly from South East Asia (62) accounting for 31.0 % of the total count while 58 or 29.0% were from the Middle East. 31 participants were from Central Asia accounting for 15.5% while 27 respondents were from Eastern Europe (13.5%). The smallest group were from Western Europe (22) accounting for only 11.0% from the total respondents.

**Table 4** Region of Origin

		Region of Origin			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	western Europe	22	11.0	11.0	11.0
	Eastern Europe	27	13.5	13.5	24.5
	Central Asia	31	15.5	15.5	40.0
	south east Asia	62	31.0	31.0	71.0
	Middle East	58	29.0	29.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

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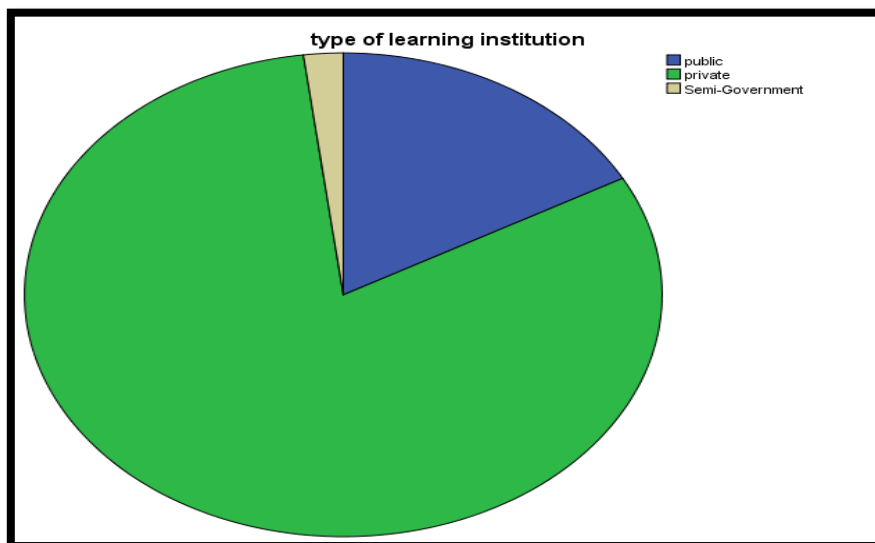
**Chart 3** Region of Origin

The survey also revealed that the majority of respondents 162 or 81.0% were studying in private learning institutions with only 34 (17.0%) of the respondents studying in public or government run learning institutions with the remaining 4 or 2.0% of respondents studying in Semi-Government learning institutions.

***Type of Learning Institution***

**Table 5** Type of Learning Institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	public	34	17.0	17.0	17.0
	private	162	81.0	81.0	98.0
	Semi-Government	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



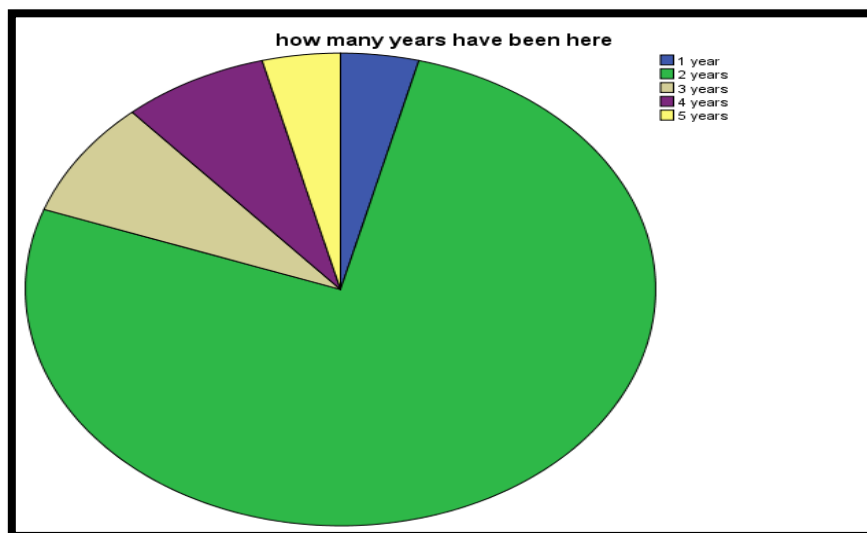
**Chart 4** Type of Learning Institution

As for the duration that the respondents have been in Malaysia, the survey results revealed that most respondents (153) have been here in Malaysia for two 2 years which accounted for 76% of the total respondents, with 16 respondents or 8.0% of the respondents having been in Malaysia for three 3 years. 15 of the respondents (7.5%) have been residing in Malaysia for 4 years. 8 respondents from the 200 respondents (4.0%) have been in Malaysia for five 5 years and the same number of respondents (8) have been in Malaysia for only 1 year.

**Table 6** Duration in Malaysia

How many years have been here

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 year	8	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2 years	153	76.5	76.5	80.5
	3 years	16	8.0	8.0	88.5
	4 years	15	7.5	7.5	96.0
	5 years	8	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



**Chart 5** Duration in Malaysia

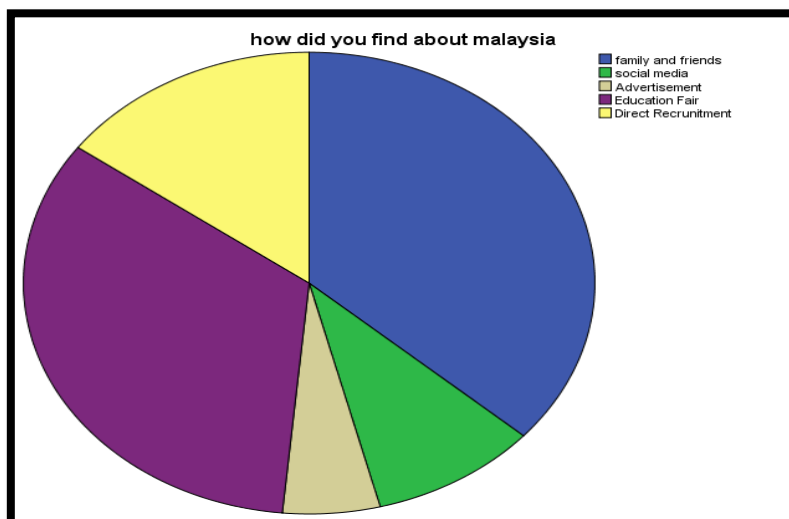
From an ‘informational perspective’ the researcher had proposed the question ‘how did you find out about Malaysia?’ to which the responses from the participants revealed that most of the respondents found out about Malaysia via family and friends which accounted to 73 (36.5%) of the respondents, another 67 respondents (33.5%) found out about Malaysia through education fairs, with another 30 or 15.0% of respondents were introduced to Malaysia by recruiters. 19 or (9.5%) of respondents found out about Malaysia via social media and the remainder 11 or (5.5%) of the respondents found out about Malaysia through advertisements.

**Table 7** Information Channel/ Media

How did you find about Malaysia

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	family and friends	73	36.5	36.5	36.5
	social media	19	9.5	9.5	46.0
	Advertisement	11	5.5	5.5	51.5
	Education Fair	67	33.5	33.5	85.0
	Direct Recruitment	30	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

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**Chart 6** Information Channel/ Media

**Table 8** Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	12-22	84	42.0
	23-28	89	44.5
	29-34	11	5.5
	35-39	16	8.0
	39 years and above	0	0
Gander	Male	104	52.0
	Female	96	48.0
Region of Origin	Western Europe	22	11.0
	Eastern Europe	27	13.5
	Central Asia	31	15.5
	South East Asia	62	31.0
	Middle East	58	29.0
Type of Institution	Public	34	17.0
	private	162	81.0
	Semi-Government	4	2.0
Years	1 year	8	4.0
	2 years	153	76.5
	3 years	16	8.0
	4 years	15	7.5
	5 years	8	4.0

### 8.3. Quantitative Findings

Quantitative data refer to data that is quantifiable or data that can be associated with numeric values and therefore critical towards research objectives. Quantitative data typically may range from simple counts pertaining to the frequency of occurrences to more complex data which require in-depth analysis and interpretation. Quantitative analysis techniques that researcher use such as graphs, charts and statistics allows the researcher to not only explore a subject matter, but also present, describe and examine relationships and trends within the data that is collected.

### 8.4. Reliability Analysis

Table 9 shows the Cronbach alpha and items of each independent variable which are quality of education; cost of education and the infrastructure of the country while the dependent variable has been cited as the student decision making process. The Cronbach's coefficients alpha values for the three independent variable factors revealed the following results:

- Independent Variable 1 - Quality of Education: The variables ranged from 0.845 and 0.846
- Independent Variable 2 – Cost of Education: The variables ranged from 0.803 and 0.816
- Independent Variable 3 – Destination Infrastructure: The ranged from 0.780 to 0.781

The dependent variable in correlation with the independent variables produced 0.874 as the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of scale should be above 0.7. Cronbach alpha values are, however quite sensitive to the number of items in the scale. According to (Sekaran, 1992) explained that reliability of a measure is established by testing for consistency and stability of data concept. Consistency of data shows the degree an item is independently measured of a concept. Reliability analysis was used to measure the goodness of data. This is to ensure that all items used in each variable are free from error, thus providing consistent results. Based on (Pallant, 2013) if the alpha is less than 0.7 thus the sample have to change or deleted. If the Cronbach alpha is greater than 0.7, it is deemed as consistent and valid

**Table 9** Reliability Analysis

Name of variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Quality of education	.845	.846	5
Cost of education	.803	.816	5
Infrastructure	.780	.781	5

## 9. RESEARCH DISCUSSION

From a general perspective, the research concluded that the quality of education and destination infrastructure (independent variables) have a significant impact on the decision making process of students choosing Malaysia as their higher learning destinations. However, during the course of the research the researcher did note explicit negative elements that are brewing from the fractures of the educational framework in Malaysia pertaining to lecturer conduct and immigration procedures. The recruitment of unqualified students is also another matter that should be considered seriously as it will inevitably reduce the quality of graduates that come from Malaysian higher learning institutions and the long term effects of this activity may result in a bad reputation that would take years to erase.

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