

## UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS: UiTM JOHOR BRANCH CHAPTER

Muhammad Majid<sup>1\*</sup>, Mohamad Faizal Ramli<sup>2</sup>, Nur Huda Jaafar<sup>3</sup>, Faridah Najuna Misman<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Industry, Community and Alumni Network (ICAN, BPJI&A),

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Business & Management,

<sup>3</sup>Strategic and University Transformation Unit (USTU),

<sup>4</sup>Research, Industry Networking and Alumni Division (BPJI&A),

Universiti Teknologi MARA Johor Branch

\*muhdmajid@uitm.edu.my

### ABSTRACT

The principal goal of business is to maximise shareholder value and to generate returns to their investors. However, Academic institutions, such as UiTM, have diverse aims. In general, UiTM has a mission of becoming a Globally Renowned University of Science, Technology, Humanities, and Entrepreneurship. Universities and industry collaborations are on the rise. Collaborations benefit institutions such as UiTM, industry partners and community immensely. This is because collaborations foster crucial synergies and initiatives that increase the potential of all parties. For businesses, partnering with institutions provides access to knowledge and research that stimulates innovation, expands their resources, and bolsters their competitive advantage. On top of that, collaborations with industry partners provide academic institutions with effective means to stay abreast of changing market and industry dynamics and to comprehend the current requirements and desires of industry players. In addition to the extensive participation of industry participants, community-university partnerships are also crucial since the business environment is always changing. UiTM Johor Branch has taken the initiative to cooperate both locally and internationally with business, government, the non-profit sector, and the community to address existing and upcoming challenges.

**Keywords:** University-Industry involvement, University-community involvement, Globally-Renowned-University

### 1. INTRODUCTION

UiTM has set a five-year strategic goal which the ultimate aims are to be the Globally Renowned University (GRU) by the year 2025. Globally marketable University is a theme towards achieving GRU. UiTM has a different wave or theme every year and for the year 2023 the theme is “globally marketable”. To achieve this goal, the management of UiTM believes it does not only rely on academic quality, however UiTM should be comprehensive in all other matters including industry and communities’ engagements. The engagements with the industry and communities will give a synergy to UiTM. In addition, the primary objective of business is to maximise shareholders’ value and the profit-driven businesses are required to provide returns to their investors. On the other hand, from the point of view of academic institutions like UiTM, the profit is not exclusively measured in monetary

terms but importantly, it benefits the primary stakeholders, such as students and staff.

The vision is to establish UiTM as a Globally Renowned University of Science, Technology, Humanities, and Entrepreneurship by 2023 without ignoring ESI values which are Excellence, Synergy, and Integrity, (UiTM 's website). Yet, this could not be achieved without having strategic partnerships with the industry players.

Therefore, UiTM Johor Branch has taken many initiatives to establish strategic partnerships not only with the local companies but also with the international companies or institutions.

Universities and industry collaborations are on the rise. Between 2012 and 2016, the number of academic-industry partnerships reported more than doubled. In addition, according to the report, the number of papers co-authored by a research institution and an industry collaborator is rising steadily on a global scale. It was reported that 76223 papers were co-authored in 2015 while 83999 were co-authored in 2019 (Elsevier, 2021).

Collaborations benefit institutions such as UiTM and industry partners immensely. This is because collaborations foster crucial synergies and initiatives that increase the potential of both parties. For businesses, partnering with institutions provides access to knowledge and research that stimulates innovation, expands their resources, and bolsters their competitive advantage. Collaborations with industry partners provide academic institutions with effective means to stay abreast of changing market and industry dynamics and to comprehend the current requirements and desires of industry players.

In addition to the extensive participation of industry participants, community-university partnerships are also crucial. It has been argued by Groulx et al. (2020) that the comprehensive concept of university–community partnerships is necessary for the creation of sustainability initiatives. Additionally, researchers addressed the advantages of university–community partnerships. Consequently, this paper will discuss the perspectives of community stakeholders regarding the functions and activities that serve as the basis for effective university–community partnerships at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Johor Branch.

As the business environment is continually evolving, UiTM Johor Branch has taken the initiative to collaborate locally and internationally with business, government, the non-profit sector, and the community to address current and future challenges.

## **2. STRATEGIC METHOD**

### **2.1 UiTM Johor Branch context**

In line with UiTM's main agenda, Universiti Teknologi MARA Johor Branch (UiTM CJ) aims to become a global-class institution towards Globally Renowned University (GRU) in the fields of Science, Technology, Humanities and Entrepreneurship by the year 2025.

This campus aims to help students to shape and achieve their true potential in intellectual, physical, and human development. The management places great emphasis on the welfare, health and safety of the students and staff “*This matter is a responsibility that must be shared by all parties on this campus*” (Zainon, 2023). The executive management (JKEN) of UiTM CJ has taken great roles in supporting the university GRU agenda. All divisions at UiTM Johor are responsible for planning and taking action

to make the GRU agenda a reality. As one of the most important divisions at UiTM, the Research, Industry Networking, and Alumni Division (BPJI&A) UiTM Johor Branch has been tasked to engage with the industry key players and communities.

As of May 2023, UiTM Johor Branch has two campuses, Segamat and Pasir Gudang, with a total of 9,607 students and land areas of 541.53 acres and 200 acres, respectively (according to the UiTM Johor website).

*2.1.1 The Industry and Community Network (ICAN), a unit under the Research, Industry Networking and Alumni Division (BPJI&A) UiTM Johor Branch.* This unit plays a role, among others managing and establishing professional networking between the campus and the industry partners and communities.

In addition, the unit is responsible for looking for opportunities and entering a memorandum of understanding with the industry partners. The aim of having an MOU is to establish a strategic partnership with the industry players. Other than that, this unit is also responsible for establishing harmonious relationships intertwined between the university and the industry.

ICAN is also responsible to strengthen the cooperation between academia and industry as well as the community with the goal of making UiTM a Globally Renowned University in 2025.

## **2.2 Process**

The information presented in this article is not the typical "research data." Relatively, this paper shares the perspectives of partners and interested parties who participated to promote a highly engaged university - industry & community from the perspective of UiTM Johor Branch.

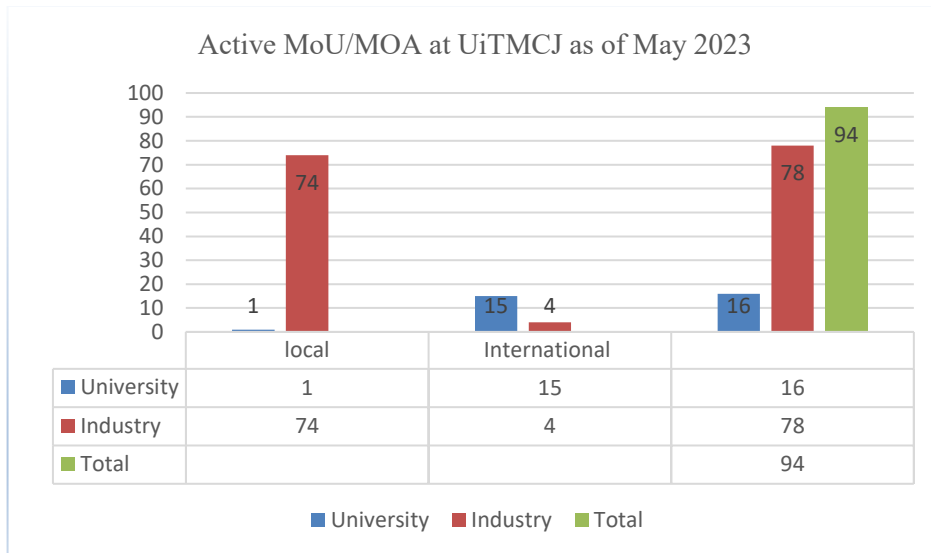
A few measures have been implemented to ensure the university's continued competitiveness. Among the initiatives are memorandum of understanding (MoU) and agreement (MoA) collaborations with major industry players and universities. Currently, the entire UiTM system has nearly 1800 active MoU partners (ICAN's Website, 2023). Despite this, as of April 2023 UiTM CJ has 94 MoU/MOA collaborators, with 16 local and international universities and 78 industry partners. With these MOU and MOA initiatives, the university particularly students and academic staffs have received many advantages. For example, in the teaching and learning activities, the students can learn from the industry's experts. As a result of these partnerships, UiTM Johor has a high rate of graduate employability (GE).

In 2022, UiTM CJ has reported 60 community-based projects. This is one of the highest that has been reported. UiTM CJ believes that in the year 2022, many community-based projects have been conducted but due to time constraint only 60 projects have been reported. However, in 2023 UiTM CJ is expecting more projects to be organized and reported.

### 3. FIGURES AND DISCUSSION

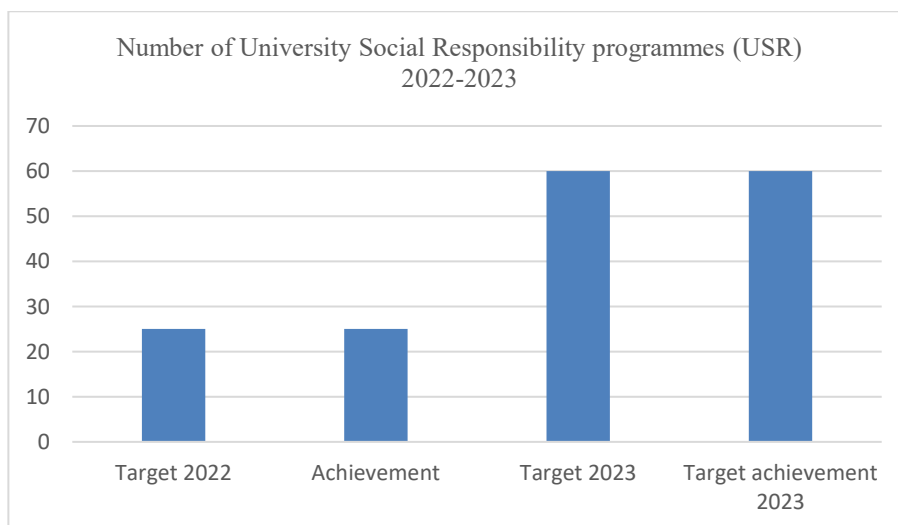
Figure 3.1 shows the number of active MoU and MoA between UiTM CJ and the partners. As of May 2023, UiTM CJ has 94 active partners. Among the partners there are 19 international partners where 15 are the international universities partnership and 4 industry partners.

Local industry partners are the highest number with 74 partnerships or 78.7% followed by international partners with a total of 19 partnerships or 20%.



**Figure 3.1.** Active MoU/MoA at UiTM CJ as of April 2023

Meanwhile, Figure 3.2 shows the number of university social responsibility programs reported in the year 2022 and number of expected achievements for the year 2023. Even though the target increased by 240%, UiTM CJ is expected to achieve the target that has been set. The target and achievement for the year 2022 was 25 projects respectively. The number of projects that have been reported in the year 2022 was 40 projects but only 25 projects were accepted and met the requirements set by Centre of Network Community (CNC) UiTM Shah Alam. In addition, the target and expected achievement for the year 2023 is 60 projects.



**Figure 3.2:** Number of University Social Responsibility programmes (USR)

Figure 3.3 shows the number of graduate employability at UiTM CJ from 2018 to 2021. It was reported that the graduate employability at UiTM CJ as one of the highest among UiTM branches in Malaysia for 4 constitutive years.

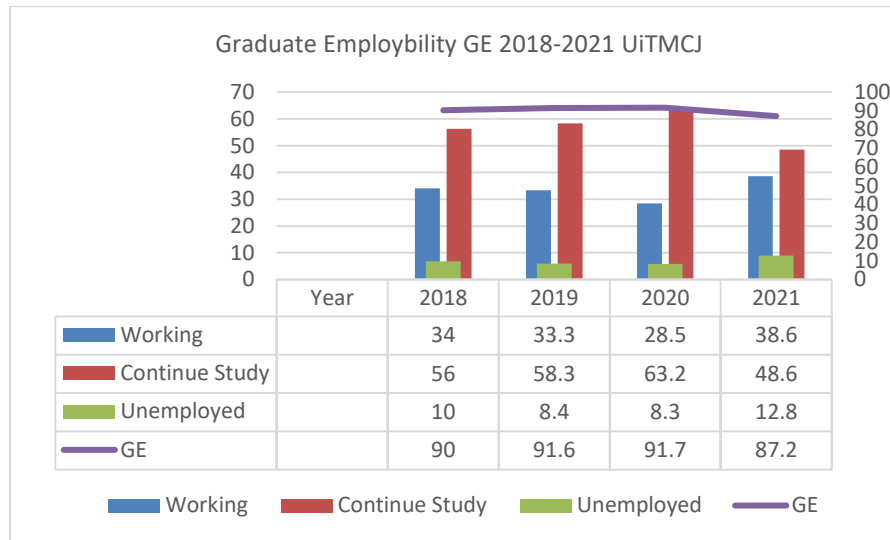


Figure 3.3: Graduate Employability 2018-2021 UiTM CJ in Percentage (%)

### 3.2 Discussion

To remain relevant and competitive, collaborations between universities and industry partners are crucial. Several studies have been conducted on this topic, for example a study by Awasthy et al. (2020) proposed a comprehensive holistic framework to address many aspects of university-industry collaboration to enhance effectiveness and to attain success.

Another study also discussed the importance of university-industry collaboration (Luthen, 2018) whereby the researcher highlighted that in the last decade, there has been an explosion in the number of research deals between companies and universities.

According to the Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities, collaboration is one of the most essential components of a national innovation system. Collaborative university-industry research and development benefits universities, industry, and the U.S. economy. Collaboration can accelerate the rate of discovery and its application to pressing societal issues (APLU, 2019). A number of studies (Curwood et al., 2011; Maruyama, 2011; Walsh, 2006; Walsh, 2021) have been conducted on the topic of establishing effective community-university partnerships, which is another crucial aspect of collaboration.

Furthermore, with reference to figure 3.3, graduate employability at UiTM CJ is one of the highest among UiTM campuses. This success may be attributable to ongoing efforts to collaborate with industry actors and communities. Numerous studies (Gul, 2019; Jollands, 2016; Tran, 2016;), among others, have found a correlation between graduate employability and collaborations with industry leaders.

UiTM CJ has already partnered with public listed firms in Malaysia and globally and has plans to collaborate with even more public listed companies in the coming years. UiTM CJ has also signed understandings and agreements (MoU) with international institutions and organizations in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, Singapore, Türkiye, Japan, and many more.

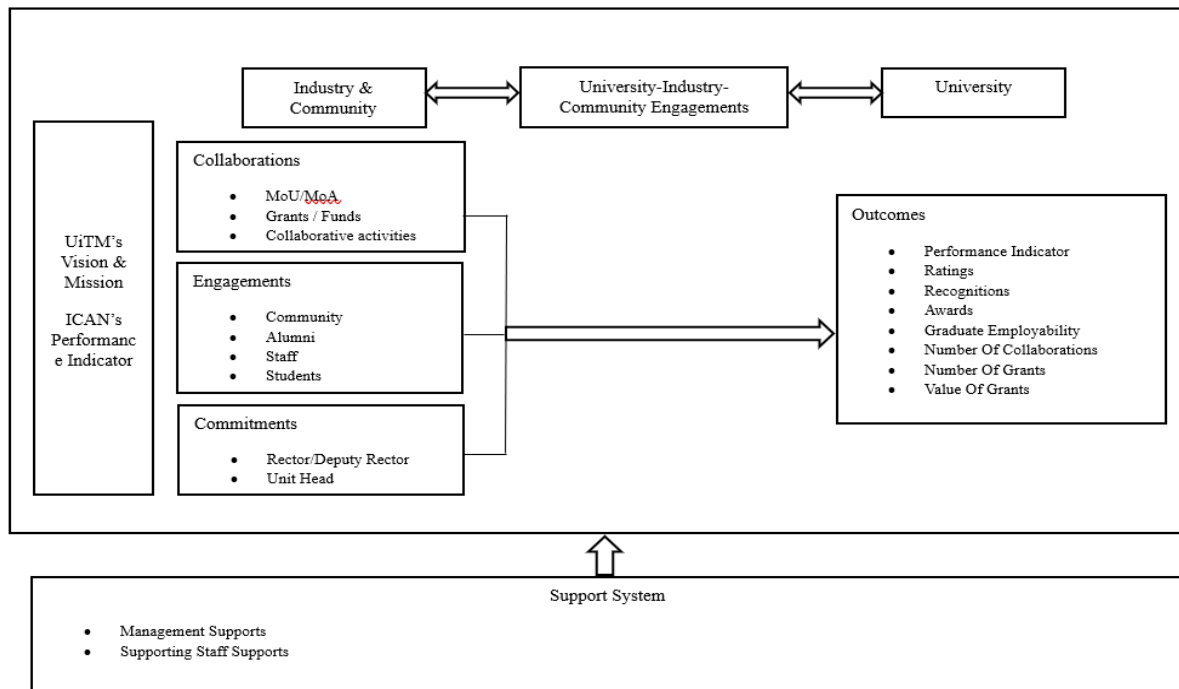
In addition to this, at least forty (40) memorandums of understanding (MoU) have been signed solely on the Digital Marketing 2u1i-programme at UiTM CJ. As part of this program, students will undergo a two-year academic program at the university and a one-year "hands-on" internship program within the partnered-organizations.

UiTM CJ's efforts towards University-Industry-Community engagements have been recognized with several awards, such as the MeTIC 2022 - Special Award of ICAN Deputy Vice Chancellor (Anugerah Khas TNC ICAN), MeTIC 2023, Best Industrial Collaboration Award, Community Program Award: Sustainable Program, Best Knowledge Transfer Program Award and Best Graduate Employability (GE) Program Award – UiTM CJ Trading Room. These are just a few awards that have been bestowed upon the UiTM Johor Branch.

Figure 3.4 represents The Industry and Community Network (ICAN), UiTM Johor Branch's current practices. ICAN assists the university in coordinating engagements between the university, industry, and the community. In addition, among ICAN's essential practices are collaborations, engagements, and commitments.

When it comes to collaboration, these activities include engagement with the external parties such as establishing memorandums of understanding or agreement (MoU/MoA), obtaining grants, joint research, knowledge transfer programs, industry attachment, and any other related collaborative activities. In the interim, engagements should be fostered among the community, alumni, faculty members, and students.

Other than that, the commitments of the Rector, Deputy Rectors, and Unit Coordinator are necessary to ensure that the current practices contribute towards desired outcomes. These practices contribute towards achieving the key performance indicators, rating, recognition, awards, graduate employability, number of collaborations, grants, and grant value. Moreover, another attribute which is vital towards achieving desired outcomes is the support systems, particularly the management and staff support. These are essential to ensure that the current practices implemented are in line with the performance indicators. Hence, it helps to contribute towards achieving the vision and mission of UiTM.



**Figure 3.4** Current Practices of ICAN, UiTM Johor Branch

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It is envisioned that this initiative would assist UiTM Johor Branch in remaining competitive; commitments from all stakeholders are essential to guaranteeing the success of these initiatives. UiTM Johor Branch in the direction of becoming Globally Marketable University 2023 and Globally Renowned University by 2025.

*"Just because we fail in a struggle does not mean we should cease trying. Failure is the first step to learning, however. Embrace a small amount into every endeavor that will be made in the future with the intention of advancing religion, race, and nation. We are included in the group of individuals who contribute to the development of the ummah at UiTM, so we hope that through this virtuous intention, God will abundantly multiply our reward - Amanat Rektor UiTM CJ 2023 (Zainon, 2023)".*

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors of this publication would like to extend their gratitude to the following individuals, who have each made important contributions to the creation of this paper: Associate Professor Dr. Saunah Zainon (Rector UiTM CJ), Dr. Faridah Najuna Mismam (Deputy Rector RIL), Associate Professor Dr. Akmal Aini Othman (Deputy Rector Academic), Senior Management (JKEN) of UiTM CJ, ICAN Coordinator, the committee-members of ICAN-UiTM CJ, Ts. Dr Nur Huda Jaafar (USTU), The winners of Anugerah MeTIC 2022 & 2023, Staff at BPJ&A UiTM CJ UiTM Johor Branch.

## REFERENCES

- Academic-Corporate co-authored publication growth 2015-2019 (Updated: January 27, 2021) Retrieved from <https://www.elsevier.com/research-intelligence/university-industry-collaboration> Retrieved on 26 May 2023
- APLU (2019), Driving U.S. Competitiveness Through Improved University-Industry Partnerships. Retrieved from <https://www.aplu.org/wp-content/uploads/driving-us-competitiveness-through-improved-university-industry-partnerships.pdf> 25 May 2023
- Awasthy, R., Flint, S., Sankarnarayana, R., & Jones, R. L. (2020). A framework to improve university–industry collaboration. *Journal of Industry-University Collaboration*.
- Curwood, S. E., Munger, F., Mitchell, T., Mackeigan, M., & Farrar, A. (2011). Building Effective Community-University Partnerships: Are Universities Truly Ready? *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 17(2), 15-26.
- Groulx, M., Nowak, N., Levy, K., & Booth, A. (2021). Community needs and interests in university–community partnerships for sustainable development. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 22(2), 274-290.
- Gul, A. and Abbasi, B. A. and Senin, A. A. (2019) Employability: does university-industry linkages matters. *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology*, 8 (5). pp. 1401-1405. ISSN 2249-8958
- ICAN’s Website Parameter MoU/MOA Retrieved from <https://nilams.uitm.edu.my/senarai-mou-moa> on 20 May 2023
- Jollands, M., Clarke, B., Grando, D., Hamilton, M., Smith, J., Xenos, S., & Pocknee, C. (2016). *Developing graduate employability through partnerships with industry and professional associations*. Office for Learning and Teaching, Department of Education and Training.
- Luthen (2018) Why Companies and Universities Should Forge Long-Term Collaborations Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2018/01/why-companies-and-universities-should-forge-long-term-collaborations> 27 May 2023
- Maruyama, G., Adams, M., Gebauer, H., Kawase, M., Sheldon, T., Upadhyay, B., & Jones, R. (2011). Building Community-University Partnerships: Learnings from Practice for Institutions and Individuals Engaged in Urban and Other Partnerships.
- Tran, T. T. (2016). Enhancing graduate employability and the need for universityenterprise collaboration. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, 7(1), 58-71.
- Elsevier (2021) University-Industry Collaboration Retrieved from <https://www.elsevier.com/research-intelligence/university-industry-collaboration> retrieved on 23 May 2023.
- Walsh, D. (2006). Best practices in university-community partnerships: Lessons learned from a physical-activity-based program. *Journal of physical education, recreation & dance*, 77(4), 45-56.
- Walsh, M. E., Adams, S. M., Ferguson, S., Hearst, M. O., Jones, J. V., Wall, S., ... & Theodorakakis, M. (2021). Inquiry in Action: Reflections on the Implementation of Best Practices in Child-and Family-Focused University–Community Partnerships. *Journal of Education*, 201(1), 42-53.
- We are global (2023) <https://www.uitm.edu.my/index.php/en/we-go-global>. Retrieved 20 May 2023
- Zainon (2023) Mandat Rektor <https://johor.uitm.edu.my/> Retrieved on 24 May 2023