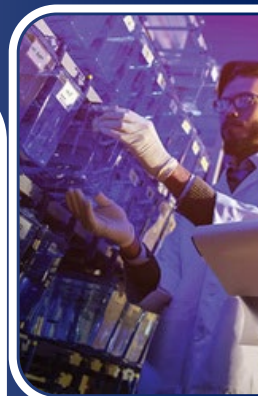


1st EDITION UiTM GLOBAL PENANG Newsletter

GLOBAL INSIGHTS: NAVIGATING UNIVERSALITY WITH UiTM PULAU PINANG



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UiTM Global @ Office of International Affairs,
Academic Affairs Division,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Pulau Pinang Branch,
Pulau Pinang,
Malaysia.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION UiTM-USU SRP RESEARCH GRANT 5th September 2023

***Saiful Bahri Mohd Kamal, Azila Azmi, Suria Sulaiman, Angayar Kanni Ramaiah, and Norshamshina Mat Isa**



The participants of the FDG and UiTM-USU research team members

On 5 September 2023, a group of researchers from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Pulau Pinang Branch, and Perlis Branch were invited to Medan, Indonesia, for a focus group discussion (FGD) with industry professionals. The FGD was part of a collaborative research project between UiTM and the **Faculty of Law at Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU)**. The research is funded by the UiTM Strategic Research Partnership (SRP) Grant and the USU TALENTA Grant. Several stakeholders in the tourism sector in Medan were identified and interviewed during the FGD. This FGD was also held in conjunction with the **'Academic Nexus Programme (ANP): Catalysing Research Collaboration through USU-UiTM,'** which was held from 4 to 10 September 2023. This FGD is an ongoing research activity that began in March 2023. Before the FGD, the initial investigation was conducted in USU, Samosir, and Parapat between 12 and 17 March 2023. The data collected during the visit has been published in two WOS-indexed proceedings.

The UiTM visiting research representatives and SRP team members, led by Associate Professor Dr. Azila Azmi, included team members Dr. Suria Sulaiman, Angayar Kanni Ramaiah, Saiful Bahri Mohd Kamal and Norshamshina Mat Isa, were present during the FGD, while the research team in Medan led by Prof. Dr. Ningrum Natasya Sirait from the **Faculty of Law at Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU)**. The FGDs provided an opportunity for the researchers to acquire a wealth of knowledge and experience from the participants, which consisted of USU academicians, travel agency representatives, and government tourism officers in Medan. Some of the prominent academicians among the participants included Professor Dr. Isfenti Sadalia, the Dean of Faculty of Vocational at USU, Professor Ir. Nurlisa Ginting, the Head of Monitoring for Center of Sustainable Tourism (MCSTO) at USU, and Professor Dr. Robert Sibarani, the Chief of Research Institute at USU.



The UiTM SRP research team members





Prof. Dr. Robert Sibarani sharing his perspective on the Penang homestays

Besides meeting the KPI for the SRP grant, the main objective of the FGD was to identify the critical success factors for a community-based homestay program in Medan and Penang. The session covered a wide range of matters relevant to community-based tourism, such as participants' expectations for the homestay program in Penang, participants' perceptions of critical success factors that influence the success of the Penang homestay program, participants' perceptions of the homestay product, participants' perceptions of the pricing structure for homestay accommodations, as well as the market potential of Penang homestays in Medan. The FDG session started at nine o'clock in the morning and ended at five o'clock in the afternoon. It was held at the Postgraduate Office, Faculty of Law building. Prior to the FGD, Associate Professor Dr. Azila Azmi presented a brief overview of the homestay programme in Penang, which included a presentation on the extensive categories of homestays as well as a list of well-known homestay destinations in Penang, including available activities and packages available within the destinations. Following the presentation, participants were briefed on the interview protocol for the FGD. The FGD session went well, and after the FGD, an honorarium and gifts were given to the participants as a token of appreciation. Currently, the researchers are in the process of analysing the interview data, and the results of the FGD are expected to be published in an indexed journal.



The briefing during the FGD session

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