

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' SATISFACTION LEVEL TOWARDS THE MOBILITY PROGRAMME IN UiTM PAHANG

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the level of students' satisfaction towards the international mobility programme conducted by UiTM Pahang. This study focuses on 25 respondents who are the international mobility students from Universitas Islam Riau, Indonesia. The international mobility programme is conducted within one month, from 15th of July to 10th of August 2019. The objective of this paper is to get the students' feedback on the activities conducted throughout the programme. The collected data are analysed quantitatively, using the percentage and mean method. The results of this study show that students' satisfaction towards the international mobility programme conducted by UiTM Pahang indicates a high level of satisfaction. However, there is a moderate level of satisfaction on some issues, especially regarding the facilities around UiTM Pahang.

Keywords: facilities, international mobility programme, level of satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Student mobility programme is described as the movement of students from one country to another for studying or academic visiting. In Cambridge Dictionaries, students' academic mobility is defined as the ability to move freely or be simply moved. Academic mobility brings engagement and sense of fitting for the university students. Both engagement and sense of fitting involve engagement and sense of belonging to the host country, culture, local people, academic and local environment, language, accommodation, transport and communication. A previous study by Beaven and Golubeva (2016) indicates that the mobility of university students makes it possible to develop intercultural experiences for higher education students. The driving force for accepting and joining mobility programme is mostly based on the social networks of friendship and relationship. International students who have such kind of social networks from both friends and family, intentionally or unintentionally, tend to be involved in mobility programmes. The international students may explore the influence of intercultural adaptation and inquire into how they are influenced during their stay in other countries. Higher education providers for international students are required to support service provision regarding students' expectations and meet the actual needs of the students in order to obtain higher levels of students' satisfaction and their international experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Higher education industry is growing strong and has high competition level. In order to attract more prospects of international students to select our country as their preferred educational or visiting destination, satisfying the current international students will be the best and most effective way to promote Malaysian education. Therefore, it is critical to gauge the international students' satisfaction towards the mobility programme in higher educational institutions. According to the study of Mehdipour and Zerehkafi (2013), the development of student's satisfaction will be the primary focus for higher educational institutions because it will help the university to strategise more effectively. Basically, their satisfaction will be expressed as either positive or negative based on how far the students' expectations of the delivery of the services have been met by the university. If a negative attitude is formed, it will be difficult to achieve overall satisfaction and can result in complaints, decreased loyalty and negative Word Of Mouth (WOM) promotion (Kau and Loh 2006, Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002). On the other hand, if a positive attitude is expressed, the universities may be perceived as reputable. Therefore, it is critical for universities to manage students' perceptions of the

service performance in order to improve their attitudes towards the institution (Bagozzi, 1992). Universities will need to recognize the fact that international students who may have prior experience in a university service environment (compared to undergraduate students), are expected to evaluate an educational service differently, resulting in the formation of different attitudes towards the service performance in universities.

FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

A survey is conducted by involving 25 respondents who have participated in an international mobility programme from Universitas Islam Riau, Indonesia. The survey questions are divided into 2 sections, (i) the respondents' background; and (ii) the agreement values of the level of satisfaction towards the mobility programme in UiTM Pahang. The designed questionnaires on the agreement are evaluated based on the 5-point Likert Scale, which indicates scale 1 for strongly disagree and scale 5 for strongly agree (Table 1). The analysis of the responses is done using Microsoft Excel.

Table 1: Level of agreement

Level of agreement	Score
Strongly disagree	1.0 – 1.99
Disagree	2.0 – 2.99
Not sure	3.0 – 3.99
Agree	4.0 – 4.99
Strongly agree	5.0

The respondents' background shown in Table 2 reveals that the respondents involve male and female ranging from 15 to 25 years old and enroll in the university's degree programme.

Table 2: Summary of the Respondents' Background

Respondents' background		Students
		%
Gender	Male	45.5
	Female	54.5
Age	15 – 20	81.8
	21 – 25	18.2
Programmeme	Information Technology	27.3
	Management	36.4
	Islamic study	9.1
	Economic	18.2
	Psychology	9.1

Figure 1 reveals the analysis of the ability to understand and communicate using Malay and English languages. It clearly shows that language is not a constraint for them to participate in the international mobility programme. The survey on the ability to understand and communicate using the Malay language, for instance, shows that every respondent is at least able to understand the Malay language, even though they may not be able to communicate using the language.

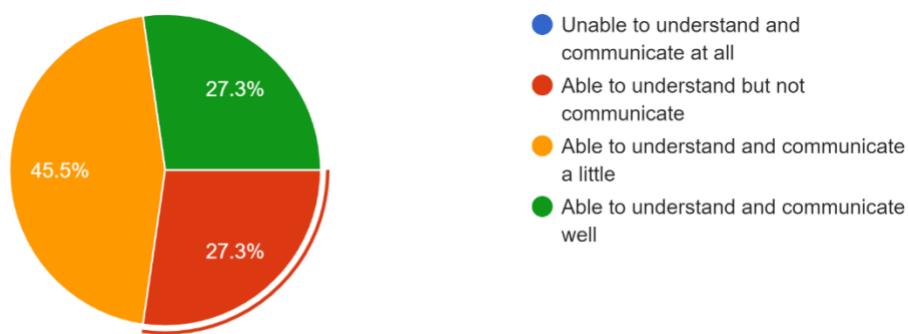


Figure 1: Ability to Understand and Communicate Using Malay and English

The next figure displays the percentage of ability to understand and communicate using the English language. It reveals that unlike the Malay language, some of them are not able to understand and communicate using the English language at all.

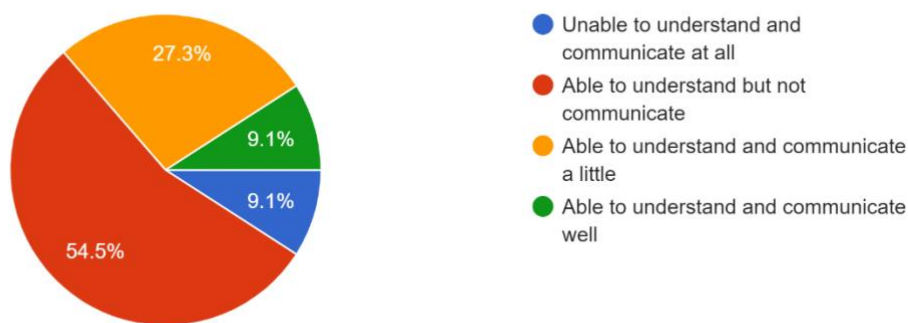


Figure 2: Ability to Understand and Communicate Using English

Figure 3 presents the analysis of the financial supports by departments, colleges or faculties. It shows that a majority of them gets little support, 27.3% is self-supported and none of them is fully supported. Hence, this may imply that financial support may not become their reason to join the programme.

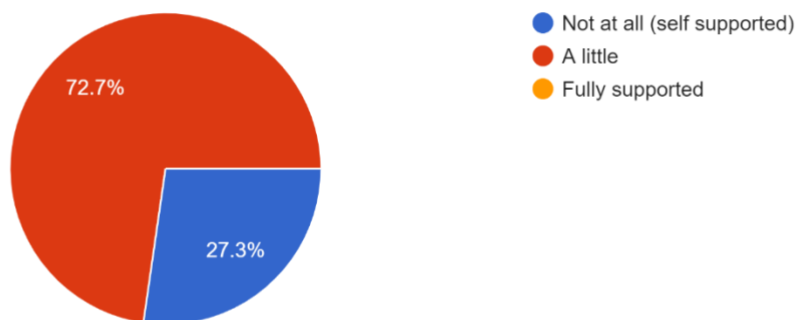


Figure 3: Financial Support Offered by Departments, Colleges or Faculties

The next figure identifies the respondents' reasons for the participation of the programme. It shows that only 27.3 % is voluntary as they intend to gain more experience in the learning process outside of their country.

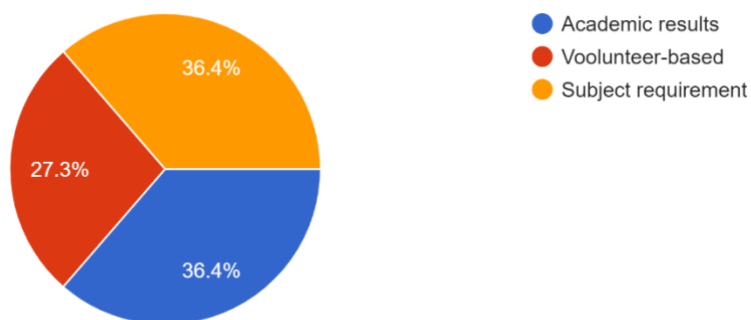


Figure 4: Reasons for Participation

The respondents are also asked about their frequency of participation in mobility programmes. Figure 5 shows that majority of them are first timers.

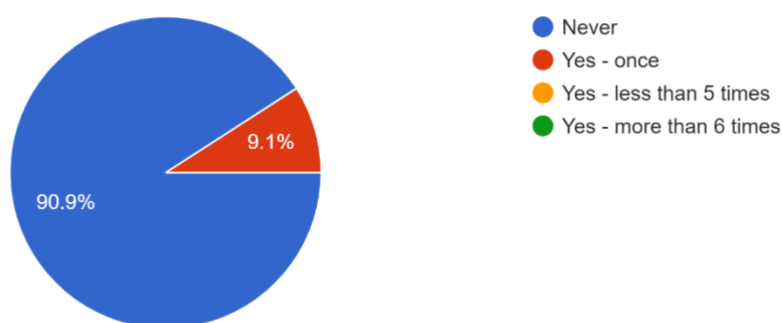


Figure 5: Frequency of Participation

The next part of the analysis aims to gain feedback on the level of satisfaction towards UiTM Pahang. Table 3 focuses on the mean score of the survey.

Table 3: Mean score of the survey

Question	Mean score	Level of agreement
1) Gain new knowledge of Malaysian culture.	4.18	Agree
2) UiTM Pahang will become an option to further studies.	3.64	Not sure
3) Learn more of the management systems in Malaysia (Felda, Felcra, etc.).	4.36	Agree

4) Learn more of the special dishes in Malaysia (nasi lemak, roti canai, tosai etc.).	3.91	Not sure
5) Fully satisfied with the activities conducted throughout the programmeme.	4.45	Agree
6) Facilities (rooms, hostel, toilets, laundry, cafe) provided are satisfactory.	3.82	Not sure
7) Staff and colleagues attached to the unit/faculty/organization are helpful and nice.	4.55	Agree
8) Easy to access all other facilities in UiTM Jengka.	3.73	Not sure
9) Will recommend UiTM Pahang to other friends and relatives.	4.09	Agree
10) Will return to Pahang, Malaysia as a holiday destination since Pahang has a lot of interesting tourism places (Taman Negara, Theme Park, etc.).	4.00	Agree
11) UiTM Pahang is peaceful as it is located in a suburban area.	3.36	Not sure
12) All other facilities (bank, mall, recreation area) around/nearby UiTM Pahang is conducive and easily accessible	2.82	Disagree

The analysis shows that the respondents totally agree and are satisfied with all the activities conducted throughout the programme. They agree that their participation helps in gaining new knowledge about Malaysian culture and knowledge on the management systems in Malaysia. In addition, they are satisfied with the department or unit where they are involved with. They also agree that they will recommend UiTM Pahang to their friends and relatives when they return to their hometown. However, they perceive UiTM Pahang as not an option for them to further their studies. This is because the facilities such as rooms, hostel, toilets, laundry, and cafeteria that are provided are not up to their level of satisfaction. They feel that it is hard to move around the campus due to the lack of the public transport which consequently, forces them to walk quite far from their place of accommodation. Besides, it is hard for them to access all other facilities around UiTM Jengka especially the bank, mall and recreation area. Their limited choice of food in UiTM Pahang as well as unwillingness to try more of the local dishes in Malaysia such as nasi lemak, roti canai, tosai etc further contribute to their uncertainties.

CONCLUSION

International mobility programme is a very good initiative as this will allow UiTM Pahang to be visible internationally. However, the facilities need to be improved to further enhance the reputation of UiTM globally. More things need to be taken into consideration if UiTM wants to be known globally, especially when it involves international students and international mobility programmes.

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