UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

Public Interest Centre of Excellence

International Teaching Aid Competition 2023

Reconnoitering Innovative Ideas in Postnormal Times

iTAC 2023

iTAC 2023
INTERNATIONAL TEACHING AID COMPETITION
E-PROCEEDINGS

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63. ***ELECTROCHEMISTRY TOOLKIT*** **425**
Dani Asmadi Ibrahim , Amal Hayati Jamali, , Noor Fatihah Zulkeply, Mohd Muazzin Mohd Yasin

64. ***ENHANCING STUDENT MASTERY OF SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT (SVA) THROUGH SVnoes*** **431**
Nursyuhada Zakaria, Sharifah Amani Syed Abd Rahman, Nadzrah Sa'adan, Maisarah Noorezam, PM Dr Aminabibi Satanihpy @ Saidalvi

65. ***FLIPPED LEARNING IN SCIENCE EDUCATION: USING HORMONE IN ACTION (POULTRY EDITION) AS A LEARNING TOOL*** **436**
Khairunnisa binti Othman, Norlizayati Ramlan, Aishah Zarzali Shah, Ruslan Achok, Puteri Noor Safura Megat Mahmud, Dr. Eric Lim Teik Chung

66. ***E-COMIC: SAVING MONEY MADE FUN*** **444**
Aqilah Husna binti Shah Rullnizam, Muhammad Harrith Daniel bin Asrul Efandi, Muhammad Mirza Haziq bin Aidil, Nur Syamimi binti Mohd Musa, Noorain Mohd Nordin

67. ***UiTM STREET LAW: A DIGITAL TEACHING AND LEARNING PLATFORM*** **450**
Haswira Nor Mohamad Hashim, Noraiza Abdul Rahman, Fazlin Mohamed Zain, Anida Mahmood, Nor Akhmal Hasmin, Mazlina Mohamad Mangsor, Mohd Nazim Ganti Shaari

68. ***UNI-ABODES: HOUSE RENTAL APPS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS*** **457**
Muhammad Ibrahim bin Faridon, Nur Faeizah binti Mohd Shafee, Nur Fareeha binti Zuharzam, Nor Azrin Shamira binti Noor Jamal, Munirah binti Mohamed

69. ***"GROCERY EMPIRE" Board Game*** **464**
Nur Syahirah Binti Saharudin, Nur Fifie Afiera Binti Mohammad Faizal, Fariha Binti Nasharudin, Masyitah Ellysa Binti Mazlan, Ahmad Syafiq Bin Abdul Wahid , Wan Nurhafizah Fatin Binti Wan Mohd Yasin, Dr. Juan Rizal Bin Sa'ari

70. ***PENGGUNAAN MOMENT KIT BOARD SEBAGAI ALAT BANTU MENGAJAR BAGI KURSUS SAINS KEJURUTERAAN DI POLITEKNIK*** **470**

PREFACE

iTAC or International Teaching Aid Competition 2023 was a venue for academicians, researchers, industries, junior and young inventors to showcase their innovative ideas not only in the teaching and learning sphere but also in other numerous disciplines of study. This competition was organised by the Special Interest Group, Public Interest Centre of Excellence (SIG PICE) UiTM Kedah Branch, Malaysia. Its main aim was to promote the production of innovative ideas among academicians, students and also the public at large.

In accordance with the theme "Reconnoitering Innovative Ideas in Post-normal Times", the development of novel ideas from the perspectives of interdisciplinary innovations is more compelling today, especially in the post-covid 19 times. Post-pandemic initiatives are the most relevant in the current world to adapt to new ways of doing things and all these surely require networking and collaboration. Rising to the occasion, iTAC 2023 has managed to attract more than 267 participations for all categories. The staggering number of submissions has proven the relevance of this competition to the academic world and beyond in urging the culture of innovating ideas.

iTAC 2023 committee would like to thank all creative participants for showcasing their innovative ideas with us. As expected in any competition, there will be those who win and those who lose. Congratulations to all the award recipients (Diamond, Gold, Silver and Bronze) for their winning entries. Those who did not make the cut this year can always improve and join us again later.

It is hoped that iTAC 2023 has been a worthy platform for all participating innovators who have shown ingenious efforts in their products and ideas. This compilation of extended abstracts published as iTAC 2023 E-Proceedings contains insights into what current researchers, both experienced and novice, find important and relevant in the post-normal times.

Best regards,

iTAC 2023 Committee
Special Interest Group, Public Interest Centre of Excellence (SIG PICE)
UiTM Kedah Branch
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UNI-ABODES: HOUSE RENTAL APPS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT
UNI-ABODES is an innovative app specifically designed for university students to find a house or apartment to rent. With just a few taps on their smartphones, students can now browse through a wide range of housing options, compare prices and amenities, and connect with potential landlords or roommates. Students are having difficulty finding a place to live before the semester begins. Due to the limited space available in the hostel, they are compelled to find a place to rent outside of it. Aside from that, looking for house rentals can be a time-consuming procedure, and most students are clueless about where to look for rental housing. Our app's objective is to provide university students with a reliable and friendly platform to meet their requirements. The novelty of this app is that it is designed to be tailored to a specific user demographic, which is university students, by considering factors such as location, budget constraints, roommates' preferences, and proximity to campus. Besides, it caters to university students' requirements in Malaysia. This app significantly reduces the time and effort required by university students to find rental properties. Additionally, these apps allow students to focus more on their studies, and by accessing house rental apps, it can be a centralised platform to easily search and explore a wide range of rental listings. UNI-ABODES has the potential to be commercialized by considering the demand for student housing and integrating value-added services within the app that cater to the specific needs of university students, such as cleaning services and the use of Google Maps as a location search tool.

Keywords: apps, house, rental, university, students

BACKGROUND

Technology has become an integral part of our daily lives in today's fast-paced digital era. With mobile advances come plenty of programmes (apps) that are predicted to have a wide range of effects on customers, including sociability, entertainment, productivity, creativity, finance management, education, travel, and health and fitness, among others (Odoom, 2022). From ordering food to booking travel accommodations, there seems to be an app for nearly every aspect of our existence. Finding adequate housing alternatives, particularly for university students, is one area where apps have had a huge impact. Finding a new home to live during the transition to college or university can be difficult and time-consuming. UNI-ABODES is the mobile application that helps the university students around Malaysia to find their rental house due to the lack of space provided by the hostel for the students to live at the time to save their finances. UNI-ABODES understands the unique requirements and challenges faced by students when searching for housing options, such as affordability, proximity to campus, and safety.

UNI-ABODES applications offer many features to the students in helping them find the ideal rental properties that they want. UNI-ABODES is very user-friendly for the first timer using the apps that allows students to easily search for available rental properties and navigate through various options. There are some features that UNI-ABODES offers, such as advanced search filters, where UNI-ABODES provides a menu to apply search filters. Students can apply search filters such as location, rent range, number of bedrooms, amenities, and lease period to identify properties that fit their needs. Students can also use the filters for selecting states and university campuses to find rental houses close to the campus. In addition, each rental listing on UNI-ABODES includes detailed property information, including descriptions, rental costs, amenities, floor plans, and high-resolution photographs. This enables students to learn about rental houses and make informed judgments before visiting or contacting property owners.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

When a new semester begins, most students will need to rent a house or a room because they did not get into a hostel. According to Sinar Daily (2002), university students who need to rent a house or room may encounter several specific problems such as limited budgets and distance from campus. Many university students have limited financial resources. They may need part-time jobs, student loans, or parental support to afford rent, especially in high-demand locations near institutions. Besides that, competition for housing is undeniably high as university towns often have a high demand for rental properties due to the student population. This can result in intense competition among students for limited available housing options, leading to increased rental prices and limited choices. Students who are staying in the room have to pay more than students staying in the living room. Moreover, some affordable housing options may be located far from the university campus, requiring students to commute long distances (Sinar Daily, 2022). This can impact their daily routine, study time, and involvement in campus activities.

Furthermore, when the house is too full, students find it impossible to concentrate due to the noise, but they can't afford to rent a bigger place.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of UNI-ABODES is to make the process of locating student housing easier by ensuring that students have access to affordable housing that is secure and pleasant so that they can focus on their studies while also reducing the amount of money they spend on housing. In addition, the purpose of this platform is to provide a user-friendly interface that simplifies the process of finding, renting, and managing accommodation for students. This will allow students to find a rental house that is reasonably priced and located near the university campus.

NOVELTY

There were various house and room rental applications that existed for the past few years such as Speedhome, iBilik and RoomHub. However, there were no applications that were specifically created to be accessed and used by university students. For students to use UNI-ABODES they were required to verify their student card since the student card was the only item that can be proof that they are still studying in universities. Therefore, UNI-ABODES strictly can be accessed by those students since this application was specifically targeted at university students. In addition, UNI-ADOBES was one of the applications that sorted all the nearest rental houses available around the users' university or campus. By using UNI-ABODES, students can choose a few types of house selection such as landed and high rise. There are also options available for students that only search for a room to rent. Users also can directly chat with the house owner to ask anything regarding the rental house. All the information including the price, specifications and the distance of the rental house or room from campus about the house were available in this application. Thus, this application was considered distinctive with other applications where they have their own point-of-parity. UNI-ABODES is a one-stop application for university students which helps and ease them to find and discover an affordable place to live while studying.

COMMERCIALIZATION POTENTIALS

According to Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir (2019), approximately 1.3 million Malaysian youths are pursuing tertiary education both in public and private universities. However, each university has a very limited space for their residential college which forces students to find their own rental house. Therefore, UNI-ABODES application is specifically

created for university students in Malaysia. Since UNI-ABODES was the first application that provided a rental house and room accommodations for university students, this application has the potential to cater all their target users to use this application in searching for a rental house. UNI-ABODES has the potential to be commercialized by considering the demand for student housing and integrating value-added services within the app that cater to the specific needs of university students, such as cleaning services and the use of Google Maps as a location search tool. Digital transformation and innovation work together to create new organizational and administrative processes that add value and boost financial and market performance (Gerasimenko and Razumova, 2020).

BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY

A rental app for university students in Malaysia will bring a lot of benefits towards society. First and foremost, this app will improve access to affordable housing for university students. Malaysia has a significant student population and finding affordable and suitable housing can be challenging. A rental app specifically designed for university students can help streamline the process and provide a platform where students can easily find affordable rental options. This improves access to housing and reduces the financial burden on students and their families. Besides that, safety is a crucial concern for students living away from home. As a rental app, UNI-ABODES will verify listings and provide reviews and ratings for landlords and properties to help ensure a safer living environment for students. This contributes to the overall well-being of students and helps alleviate concerns for parents and guardians. Moreover, UNI-ABODES can have a positive economic impact on the local community. By facilitating easier housing searches, the app encourages students to stay in the area, contributing to the local rental market and supporting local businesses. This can also lead to increased demand for services, such as transportation, grocery stores, and entertainment, benefiting the local economy. Finally, by providing a reliable platform for students to find suitable housing, UNI-ABODES will indirectly support their educational journey. A stable living arrangement can reduce stress, provide a conducive study environment, and improve overall well-being, leading to enhanced academic performance and success.

FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY

Based on a survey conducted, researchers were successfully collected 40 respondents from questionnaires regarding the UNI-ABODES App. The survey consists of four sections that depict the respondents' profile, followed by perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and lastly, customer satisfaction. Every section has various questions and starting from section B until D, the questionnaire is given and answered by using linear scales 1 to 5 that illustrates the

agreement to disagreement of respondents toward UNI-ABODES development.

Table 1. Table of Frequency

Item	Frequency	% of Strongly Agree
Overall, UNI-ABODES App service is very useful	12/40	30
Overall, I think the features of UNI-ABODES App service are easy to use.	15/40	37.5
Overall, I am satisfied with UNI-ABODES App service	13/40	32.5

Table 1 shown an opinion about the UNI-ABODES app service. For question overall, UNI-ABODES app service is very useful, it stated 12 respondents (30%) are strongly agreed. While 15 students (37.5%) strongly agree think the features of UNI-ABODES app service are easy to use. Next, 13 students (32.5%) strongly agree satisfied using the apps. Even though it is not a strong level of agreement, it still indicates a certain level of contentment with the service.

CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

To conclude, by acknowledging real issues happening around students, researcher hope that the establishment of UNI-ABODES can help to resolve the house rental issues among students. Researchers wish that by existing this app can ease the process of finding the right house rental for students and can be fully utilized among the users. All the features included in the app are made to make it easier for students to access with only a single tap. By UNI-ABODES development, researchers are expecting the app can be used continuously for a longer period of time for students. Therefore, students do not need to struggle to find a right house rental during their studies period and still can meet their short-term obligations.

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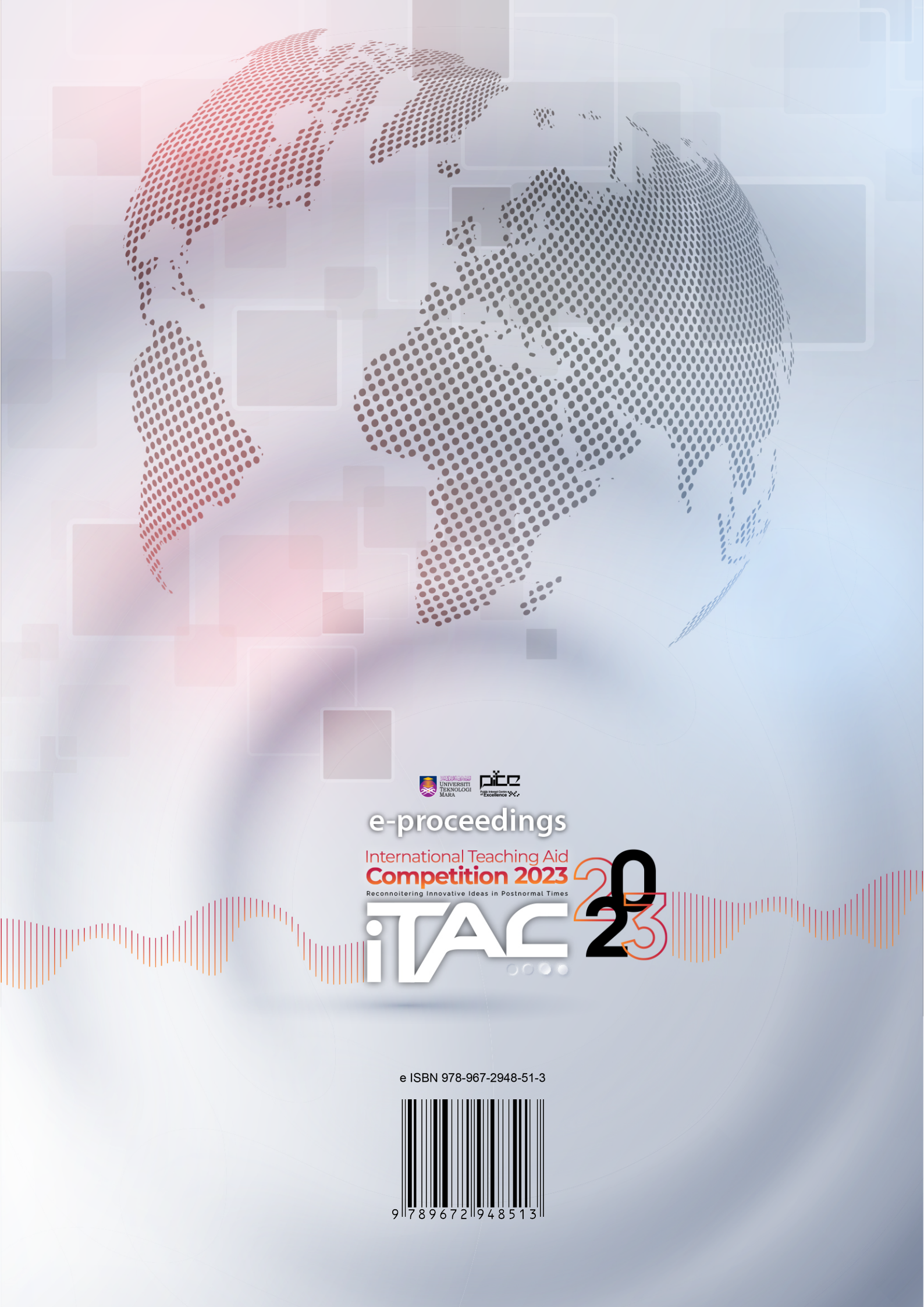

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