

## Transformation of Higher Education: A Stakeholder Perspectives in Private Islamic Higher Education Institution (IPTIS) in Malaysia

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### Abstract

*The mushrooming of private higher education institution in Malaysia is not new. To date, there are 391 private institution registered under Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) and there are 11 private Islamic higher education served on the basis of providing religious content of curriculum along with the academics line. Most of the private Islamic higher institution has catching up with the trends when they transform the status from college to university college, making the transformation absolutely essential. The transformation however, bring the nerved of urgency to change the institution, thus in order to transform, the institution should take immediate action by improve the areas mentioned by participants. The study carried out to explore and find a specific variable on transformation particularly as perceived by various stakeholder in one of the Private Islamic Higher Education Institution in Southern Malaysia. There are 24 stakeholder involved in the structured interview session. The findings served substantial information for the administrator particularly for the whole institutional stakeholders to transform in the four areas of improvisation as excerpt from the participant. The findings delineates the reputation of the institution as well known Islamic Higher Institution in the state and it explicates the areas of improvisation for the institution transformation.*

*Keywords: Transformation, Islamic institution, stakeholder*

JEL Classification: I20 .

### 1. Introduction

There are various consumers of Higher Education namely as students, parents, society and authorities. There are a lot of consequences in various industries resulted from customer satisfaction. The consequences are alarming to the reputation and sustainability of the institutions (West-Burnham, 2010). There are wide spectrums of transformation in higher education and some put priorities in teaching and learning, service quality, governance, academic

identity. Thus, this study are conducted to oversee the perspectives of stakeholder in the need of why and how transformation is needed.

1.0 Ministry of Education Malaysia has come out with several guidelines in promoting transformation in Malaysian universities or Malaysian higher education institutions. There are 4 cluster complimented the kits of improvisation in university transformation includes enhancing university board of governance and effectiveness, strengthening academic career pathways and leadership development, enhancing university income generation, endowment and waqf and enhancing academic productivity and cost efficiency (MOHE, 2017<sup>abcd</sup>). The changes in students preferences are the great antecedents that affect higher education system (Kogan, Bauer, Bleiklie, & Henkel, 2006). There are no '1 size fit it all' approach, but effortless, any higher education institution might use the recommendation and kits to improve their institutions.

### **Private Islamic Higher Education Institution (IPTIS)**

The development of IPTIS in Malaysia shifted the National higher Education paradigm when government of Malaysia keen to visualise Malaysia as a center of Higher Education development in Asian region. This new dimension sparked from the need to put Islam as a way of life especially in producing the reliable Islamic professionals to contribute back to the society (Kutty, 2003). The rapid growth of IPTIS facilitated government strategy for Islamic development in Malaysia (Ghazali, 1990). Islamic development can be seen from the establishment of Islamic University, Islamic bank, Islamic insurance, Syariah court (Islamic court) and etcetera (Kutty, 2003).

The college under study has specific objective to produce a knowledgeable and skilful graduates along with refine acts and manners with holistic education. The college has been established since 1997 and it is among the oldest Islamic college in Malaysia. Few strategies has been outline to reform the institution such as:

#### **Mission and Vision**

To produce knowledgeable Muslim scholar and become the recognised Higher Education institution at international level.

#### **New perspective of Islamic Education**

This college aims to remain their original courses with improvisation towards:

- Produce 35% ulama' ( muslim scholar) and 65% human capital for employability
- Produce professional Muslim for different fields (Financial,banking etc).

Institution of choice

First, target for students employability and second, become institution of choice with enrolment of local and international excellent students.

### 1.0 *Aims of the study*

The aims of this study was to find out and gain understanding on the transformation criteria tells by participants. The aims are scrutinises of the study were as:

1. To explore the transformation requires for the institution as perceived by the stakeholder in the Islamic Private Institution in Malaysia
2. To gain understanding on the particular transformation as perceived by the stakeholder in the Islamic Private Institution in Malaysia

### 1.2 *Significance of the study*

This study is expected to help the management and also educators of this Private Islamic Institution to look into the areas of transformational process and improve the areas lacking for the sustainability of the institution.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *History of Higher Education in Malaysia*

Colonisation era as sparked by British, witnessed that education system in Malaysia is vernacular in orientation in which the enrolment of schooling system influenced by race (Nordin & Hussin, 2014). During British invasion, they had practice 'divide and rule' policy purposely to discourage racial integration, thus Malaysian education system are much alike vernacular in nature at the beginning. In 1941, Japan has taken over Malaya and the education system has shifted towards propagating love and loyalty to Japanese emperor. After World War II, Japanese lost it battle between British and Malaya and we successfully claimed our independence on 1957. The strategy of education system has been formulated since before independent with Cheeseman Plan in 1946 followed by Barnes Report in 1950, Fenn-Wu report 1951, *Ordinan Pelajaran* 1952 followed by *Penyata Razak* in 1956, *Penyata Rahman Talib* 1960 and National Philosophy of Education (Nordin & Hussin, 2014).

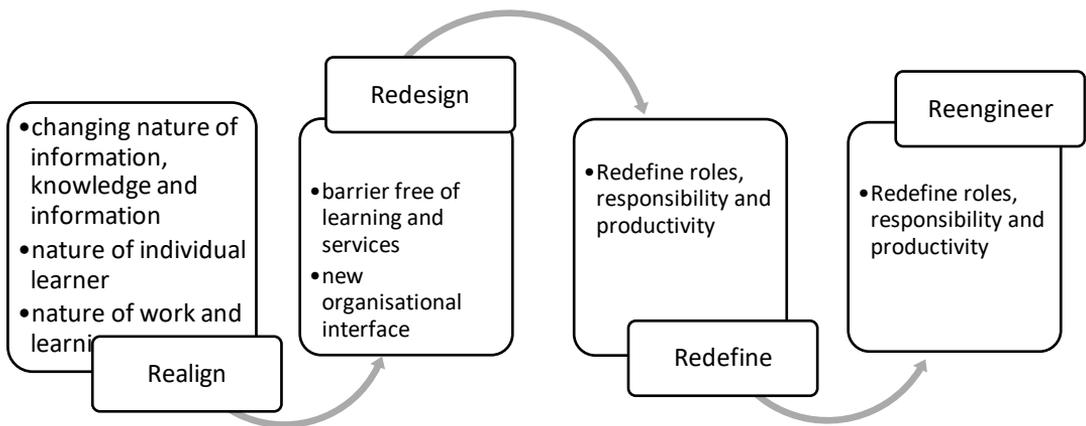
2.2 Ministry of Education (MOE) Malaysia has been established to respond for the need of building a human capital that is reliable based on National Philosophy of Education and they are accountable to oversee, restructure, formulate and implement all regulations related with public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) in Malaysia ( Nordin & Hussin, 2014). Since the reshuffle of the cabinets in 2015, MOE has scrutiny it's role, segregate their task

and manage all the institution at higher learning acted as Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia (MOHE, n.d.).

2.1.1 Transformation Model of Higher Education

New strategies must be adopted to guarantee a sustainable and successful future of institution especially in the fast pace of education, economic and digital changes (Bill & Melinda, 2014). There are four components in the transformation model in higher education and it is illustrates in the table 2.1 as follows:

Figure 1.1: Transformation process (Dolence & Norris, 1995)



There are four components in the transformation process for higher education. This study emphasise on the application of realign component particularly on the nature of individual learner. Individual learner need new interfacing technology with greater efficiency and adaptability, thus institution must configured efficiency in security, record keeping and control and change the concept of classroom centered into network learning environment (Dolence & Norris, 1995)

2.1.2 The factors of transformation in Higher Education

The transformation bear a significant meaning of process that ensures an organisation is appropriate to the context in which it operates (West-Burnham, 2010). The change in education spur queries and people might ask, why and how education should transform. Gardner (2006) explicates two (2) drive of transformation in education such as the obsolete of current practices and second, the way how world are changing. Malaysian Higher Education landscape

has changed since the shift of production based economy to knowledge based economy. These changes are drove from globalisation factors that creates more demand on more efficient human capital and skilful employees (Shariffuddin, Razali, Shaaidi, & Ibrahim, 2017; (Grapragasem, Krishnan, & Mansor, 2014)

2.2 Transformation guidelines from Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia

Situations of sustainability on higher education institution raise red flag to Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia to ensures the continuance excellence in their public university. They produce four kits to transform HEI’s and it is hope that the private Islamic higher education institutions can adopt and adapt what’s best for them. The transformation guidelines are as follows:

**Table 1.1: University transformation programme (UniTP), (MOHE, 2017<sub>abcd</sub>)**

Series of the practical guidance	Cluster	Strategies
Green Book Enhancing University Board Governance and effectiveness	1-Administration and Governance 2-Funding and financial management 3-Admission, intake plans and curriculum 4-Human Resource Management	1-Approve university strategy, appoint leaders, change organisation (merge departments), monitor quality 2-Approved procurement decision (facilities, services) 3-Determine number and student profile, student admission, discipline & suspension 4-Appointment and dismissal of staff, set pay schemes, design staff development
Orange Book Strengthening academic career pathways and leadership development	1-Resources 2-Recruit 3-Reward 4-Retain	1-Explore talents (academics, professional, practitioner), expand global sourcing 2-enhance SOP for recruitment 3-Review talent value to ensure competitiveness 4-Create more opportunities for professional development
Purple Book Enhancing university income generation endowment and waqf	Set new ways of generating incomes	1-Academic and research programmes 2-research and commercialisation of ideas 3-financial management and investment 4-corporate alliance for business ventures 5-endowment 6-Waqf 7-Fundraising

Silver Book Enhancing academic productivity and cost efficiency	1-Academic productivity 2-Best practices	1-Type of programs offered and degree level offered 2- iGOT (Offers more broad-based programs, allows students to complete unavailable classes at other universities, ensure application process in transparent and robust) 3-Redesign individual delivery, administrative process and structures and optimise procurement and instructional input
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### Transformation of Higher Education Institution in Malaysia

There is numerous transformation strategies has been carried out to reform the higher education institution. The transformation strategies explicates as follows:

**Table 1.2: Transformation of HEI’s in Malaysia (Shariffuddin et. al., 2017)**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Cluster</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
APEX university	Governance	-share institutional autonomy with government -Free from government control to empower university autonomy
Research and comprehensive university	R&D and T&L	-Research commercialisation in UTM -Fund allocation based on university functions -Improve teaching and learning
Polytechnics, College Universities and community colleges	Strengthen curriculum and content	-strengthen the role of polytechnics in providing nations with competitive knowledge and skills

1.1 Transformation of Islamic Higher Education Institution in Malaysia

There are ten (10) university, college university and college based on Islamic education in Malaysia either fully owned by state government with facilitation from Islamic Religious Council or establish from the aspiration and inspiration of state government. In decades, some of the institution has transform themselves become more reliable and preferred institution. The transformation are illustrates as table 1.3 :

**Table1.3: Transformation of Islamic Private Higher Education Institution in Malaysia**

Former Name	Current	Transformation
Kolej Universiti Insaniah (KUIIN)	Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS)	i. Massive enrolment of local and foreign students
	Owned by State of Kedah	ii. More courses ranging from foundation to postgraduate studies (more than 40 courses)
		iii. Establishment of niche centre (research centre, centre of postgraduate studies, engineering and nursing centre, foundation centre)
		iv. Establishment of UniSHAMS branch campus in Kuala Ketil and Sungai Petani)
Kolej Islam Darul Ridzuan (KISDAR) to Kolej Universiti Islam Sultan Azlan Shah (KUISAS)	Universiti Sultan Azlan Shah Malaysia (USAS)	i. Annual grant from federal government to help the start-up of the university
	Owned by state of Perak	ii. Merging of faculty for specialisation
		iii. Course are accredited by MQA (Malaysian Qualification Agency) and JPA (Civil Service Department)
		iv. Professional educator in teaching and learning
Kolej Islam Pahang Sultan Ahmad Shah (KIPSAS)	Kolej Universiti Islam Pahang Sultan Ahmad Shah (KUIPSAS)	i. Improvisation of infrastructure
	Owned by State of Pahang	ii. Largest library for Arabic reference
Kolej Teknologi Islam Antarabangsa Melaka (KTIAM)	Kolej Universiti Islam Melaka (KUIM)	i. Integration of Islamic education with science and psychology discipline
		ii. Rebranding the Islamic centric image college into a diversify discipline (Islamic,

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Owned by State of Melaka	iii.	academic and vocational) Have niche area programs in psychology and offers postgraduate studies
	iv.	Internalisation policy-enrolment of international students

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Note: Data of UniSHAMS retrieved from <https://insaniah.edu.my/portal/info-unishams/sejarah-penubuhan>

Data of USAS retrieved from <https://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/06/150963/kuisas-now-universiti-sultan-azlan-shah>; <http://www.malaysiacentral.com/education-directory/universiti-sultan-azlan-shah-usas/#sthash.kiUWSBiC.dpbs>

Data of KUIPSAS retrieved from <http://www.malaysiacentral.com/education-directory/kolej-universiti-islam-pahang-sultan-ahmad-shah-kuipas/#sthash.SkUvKXLZ.dpbs>

Data of KUIM retrieved from <http://www.malaysiacentral.com/education-directory/kolej-universiti-islam-melaka-kuim/#sthash.cwllafk3.dpbs>

### 3. Methodology

Preliminary study has been conducted involving a survey towards 70 samples and it is found that 43% of students have intention to further their studies at the same institution with conditional terms. The conditional terms includes changes for the institutions if they reform any of the mentioned areas particularly on service quality. Results of the study drive the needs to search for details in the transformation of the institution. In relations, to have better understanding, multiple stakeholders are involved in the interview session.

#### 3.1 *Research Design and Sampling*

This study employed qualitative research design with semi-structured interview. This study take place in one of the Private Islamic College in Malaysia as one of the subsidiaries of State Government. The institution offers various courses particularly in Islamic education such as Syariah and Usuluddin courses, Muamalat (Banking and finance) courses, Tahfeez courses, Islamic education courses and Early Childhood education courses.

Interview has been conducted between the period July 2018 and August 2018. The participant involved in this study includes 24 participants with different cluster of stakeholders. There are:

- Students Semester 1-semester 6 (18 students with different courses)
- Outsider (3 outsider who have knowledge about the institution)
- Lecturer (3 lecturer who served the institution)

To ensure validity and reliability of the study, several type of methods are employed to increase trustworthiness. The methods conducted are as follows:

- Familiarity test (conducted among the enumerators to ensure it is natural question and to avoid biased, negative or positive statement in interview question)
  - Interview question is formed based on systematic review of different article journal
  - One experts in education checked the content and informed consent agreement
  - 24 enumerators are hired for data collection and data analysis process
  - Interview protocol has been informed to the participant. Interview protocol is a form designed by the researcher that contains the structure for the interview process; it is inclusive of sufficient questions, mental frameworks, triangulation and serving as a predictor for new insight ( Yin, 2011 ;Creswell, 2009)
  - Interview session is recorded and videotaped using audio and video recorder
  - Data analysis process is conducted for 3 rounds with 2 cycle to ensure rigorousness in findings

## 4. Findings and Discussion

This study explicates view of the stakeholder about the institutions and the details of redesign in transformation process involving the new organisational interface with learner. Findings of this study generates two themes namely the image of the college and areas of improvisation for institution to transform.

### 4.1 *Religious centric institution*

The themes presented, explicates stakeholder perception on the image of the institution. It was found that many participants particularly from public, have common understanding about what the institution offers and the religious centric image the institution has. The public perceived this Islamic private institution have a good image as religious centric institution as excerpted:

“ this institution is private education institution on the basis of Islamic teaching. The institution has aims to instilled Islamic education within the institution ” (P24)

“this institution is Islamic institution to gain depth knowledge on Islam” (P22)

“this is more Islamic college like teaching Syariah, Usuluddin, Islamic Banking. This is private institution right? That is all I know” (P23)

Undeniably, participants especially public, have solid information on the institution identity which is Islamic centric education. While many Islamic College has done transformation in terms of discipline integration, this institution only offers an array of courses limited to its discipline. It is said that the identity is a central symbolic and instrumental significance that reflects the uniqueness and public reputation (Kogan et al., 2006). The achievement of identity seems as traditional rewards to distinguish themselves from predecessor and rival and this is a traditions of identifying themselves.

### 4.1 *Areas for improvisation for institution transformation*

The lecturer and public response are practically ambiguous as they might not experience all the institution services subjected to the nature of their position. 24 participants particularly students of the institution delineate detail explanation on the transformation requires as :

**Table: 4.1: The perspectives of areas for improvisation for institution transformation from stakeholders view**

Current practices	Transformation requires	Excerption
<p>Obsolete information delivery (online system):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Examination result</li> <li>-fees payment</li> <li>-attendance system</li> <li>-Institution website</li> </ul>	<p>Students particularly demand more effective and efficient online systems</p>	<p>“the institution should inform students on study loan and <i>Kad Siswa</i>” (P4)</p> <p>“for me, the administration part especially in terms of information delivery, is lacking” (P5)</p> <p>“the website should be upgrade for people to access the institution information” (P10)</p> <p>“I see in terms of payment when students not aware they have been blacklisted, and the record system for fees payment cannot be trace” (P14)</p>
<p>Insufficient facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-lack of projector</li> <li>-lack of printer and computer</li> <li>-inconvenient prayer hall, cafeteria, sports center, library, pedestrian pavement, hostel, language laboratory</li> <li>-lack of bus</li> </ul>	<p>Students demand for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-more projector, printer and computer</li> <li>-a big space for prayer hall and cafeteria</li> <li>-Prepare sports facility ie: sports equipment, park</li> <li>-more functional facilities. ie: library with more books and bigger space, a language laboratory with computer, hostel with tighten security</li> <li>-Add more busses</li> </ul>	<p>“I think facility in this institution especially on the projector should be added to ease students in presentation. Furthermore, they should add more bus for students to get on the class on time” (P6)</p> <p>“if possible, please installed ATM machine in the institution and enlarge the café size for the students convenient” (P18)</p> <p>“hopefully the prayer hall will be enlarge because it is too stuffed inside there” (P17)</p>
<p>Improvise teaching and learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-highlight the contribution to society</li> <li>-Experience lecturer</li> </ul>	<p>These are few things could help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Emphasise more on the curriculum/ students activities based on CSR orientation</li> </ul>	<p>“ if it is possible, organise more outside programs for students to gain knowledge and experience” (P16)</p> <p>“add more qualified lecturer who is PhD holder” (P1)</p>

to taught courses	-mode of teaching should be more flexible with more qualified lecturer	
-Free bridging for Arabic and English Language	Maintain and sustain the programs	“here, the bridging course is free. It is up to students to equipped themselves with the skills in communication” (P22)
-Fast track for middle east degree		
-leeway to enter workforce (employability assures in the states)		“we produce 60-70% graduates to enter workforce, while 30% for Islamic sector” (P22)
		“ graduate from the institution can further their studies in Jordan, Indonesia and they also produce teacher for Islamic school” (P4)
		“ graduate can apply for international university in Jordan, Egypt others” (P5)

There are four current practice has been excerpted from participants. The current practice are obsolete information delivery, insufficient facilities and teaching and learning. Besides all the areas that need improvisation, one areas need to be maintained and sustained which is the skills kit equipped to students and leeway to enter workforce.

P4, P5, P10 and P14 stated the inefficiency of the institution in terms of the delivery of information. As P4 mentioned about ‘*Kad Siswa*’, the use of one card would better facilitate students for an array of service such as identification card, library card, vending card and parking card in which colleges and university should upgrade themselves by improving the automation (Dolenece& Norris, 1995). Meanwhile, P5 and P14 urged the institution to change the manual system into more automated system such as record system for fees payment.

Second themes explicates details on insufficient facilities experienced by participants such as lack of projector, printer, computer and inconvenient prayer hall, cafeterias, sport center, hostel and bus. Quality education demands a

process of continuous improvement by systematically and collectively evaluating and refining the system, practices and culture of education institutions in order to meet the needs of the customers (Akareem & Hossain, 2016). Services of quality have a significant implication on academic achievement and student motivation (Basheer & Ahmad, 2012). Cash (1993) condition of the classroom has a significant relationship towards students' achievement.

The third theme explicates the areas that need improvisation in terms of teaching and learning. The excerpt delineates participant demand the students activities to be conducted based on community engagement. Besides, participant demand to have more qualified lecturer with PhD qualification. The degree of students' response to knowledge sharing showed a positive relationship between trust and confidence. This is particularly true when students believe that the knowledge and information received from the lecturers are credible and trustworthy. It is vital that the lecturers maintain a good reputation in providing trustworthy and reliable services to the students. For example, accurate and consistent responses are encouraged by the lecturers as well as guaranteed services to be delivered to the students (Basheer & Ahmad, 2012)

As excerpted, the fourth theme explicates the areas need to be sustained and maintained by the institution particularly on the graduates employability and the free bridging programs of Arab and English language.

## 5. Conclusion and recommendation

The study fulfill the need of the aims on the exploration of the transformation requires for the institution as perceived by the stakeholder in the Islamic Private Institution in Malaysia and gain understanding on the particular transformation as perceived by the stakeholder. The administrator, state government and stakeholder could steer the transformational process from the four areas of improvisation particularly addressing the needs of students who are the most important stakeholder in the institution. Since the areas of improvisation are inclined towards participants excerption on the redesign process, includes new organisational interface with learner, it is recommended for future study to adopt transformation process model to complement the

changes . Thus, the scarcity of literature on the transformation in the higher education institution could be added.

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