

Fostering Global Talent among Students in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia via Study Abroad Programme

Memupuk Bakat Global dalam Kalangan Pelajar Universiti Teknologi Malaysia melalui Program ke Luar Negara

FASIHAH MOHD JASLAN, MOHD ARIFFIN ABU HASSAN, NUR IZZATI ADNAN & NOR HANIZA SARMIN

ABSTRACT

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) is continuing its quest to become the nation's top educational institution which is translated in one of the six Key Focus Areas (KFAs) in UTM Global Plan 2020 namely Global Prominence and Branding. As a one of the leading research universities in Malaysia, UTM also plays an important roles to produce a top-notch talent, attracting, developing and retaining high skilled individuals to propel into the future. Study Abroad Programme via UTM Outbound Mobility Program is one of the tools to produce global talent among students in UTM. This programme plays a crucial roles in ensuring UTM becoming one of the internationalized university in Asian region in achieving Malaysia Higher Education agenda to become an Education Hub in 2025. This study abroad programme comprises of both inbound and outbound. For UTM Outbound Mobility program, it is comprises of short term program and long term program including Global Outreach Program (GOP), International Invitation Program (conference, seminar, competition etc.) (IIP), Summer School Abroad (SSA), Research Internship Abroad (RIA) and Student Exchange Program (SEA). One of the initiatives is by encouraging at least ten percent of the total number of UTM students to experience cultural immersion via global education agenda by going abroad. This initiative will give value added elements to the students' lifelong learning.

Keywords: Global talent; Study abroad; Global prominence; Global education; lifelong learning

ABSTRAK

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) sentiasa berusaha untuk menjadi institusi pendidikan tinggi negara yang terulung yang diterjemahkan dalam satu dari enam bidang tumpuan utama dalam Pelan Global UTM 2020 iaitu Keterlihatan Global dan Penjenamaan. Sebagai sebuah university penyelidikan yang terkemuka di Malaysia, UTM juga memainkan peranan penting untuk menghasilkan pelajar yang serba boleh dan berkemahiran tinggi di masa hadapan. Program keluar negara merupakan salah satu kaedah untuk melahirkan bakat global dari kalangan pelajar UTM. Program ini memainkan peranan penting dalam memastikan UTM menjadi salah satu universiti bertaraf antarabangsa di rantau Asia bagi mencapai agenda Pendidikan Tinggi Negara untuk menjadikan Malaysia sebagai Hub Pendidikan menjelang tahun 2025. Program keluar negara ini terdiri daripada program mobiliti inbound dan outbound. Untuk program mobility outbound, program ini merangkumi program jangka masa pendek dan jangka masa panjang seperti program lawatan akademik keluar negara atau Global Outreach Program (GOP), program jemputan di peringkat antarabangsa atau International Invitation Program (conference, seminar, competition etc.) (IIP), program musim panas di luar negara atau Summer School Abroad (SSA), program penyelidikan atau latihan industry di luar negara atau Research Internship Abroad (RIA) dan program pertukaran pelajar atau Student Exchange Program (SEA). Salah satu inisiatifnya adalah dengan menggalakkan sekurang-kurangnya sepuluh peratus daripada jumlah keseluruhan pelajar UTM untuk menghayati kepelbagaian budaya melalui agenda pendidikan global dengan keluar negara. Inisiatif ini akan memberi nilai tambah kepada elemen pembelajaran sepanjang hayat para pelajar.

Kata kunci: Bakat global; program keluar negara; keterlihatan global; pendidikan global; pembelajaran sepanjang hayat

INTRODUCTION

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) Global Plan 2020 was introduced in 2012, two years after the university was awarded as a Research University. Strategically, the UTM Global Plan 2020 mark

UTM's initiatives in confronting current challenges with realistic and doable approach by entailing the strategic roadmap of the university in emphasizing the positive approach to empower and inspire the UTM community to strive and thrive in facing the current and future challenges.

The rationale for the introduction of this plan is the need for UTM to project its name at the international level. This is as an addition to the plan of strengthening the human capital and expertise of the university in order to compete at the national and global levels. The UTM Global Plan 2020 is designed and founded through three major phases of implementation such as follows:

1. Phase 1: 2012-2014 Global University Alignment;
2. Phase 2: 2015-2017 Implementation of High Impact Programmes; and
3. Phase 3: 2018-2020 Strategic Transformation and Advanced Research (STAR) Programme Implementation.

These phases are depicted in Figure 1. Phase 1 under the UTM Global Plan 2020 was designed to provide a university intellectual ecosystem, while developing UTM's reputation among the international academic community through the process of internationalization. UTM's aspiration in Phase 1 was formulated under the university tagline "innovative• entrepreneurial• global". In Phase 1, UTM has launched the very first UTM Outbound mobility Program which is Global Outreach Programme (GOP) that encourages students to run short term mobility programmes abroad with a minimum assistance of RM1,000 for students.

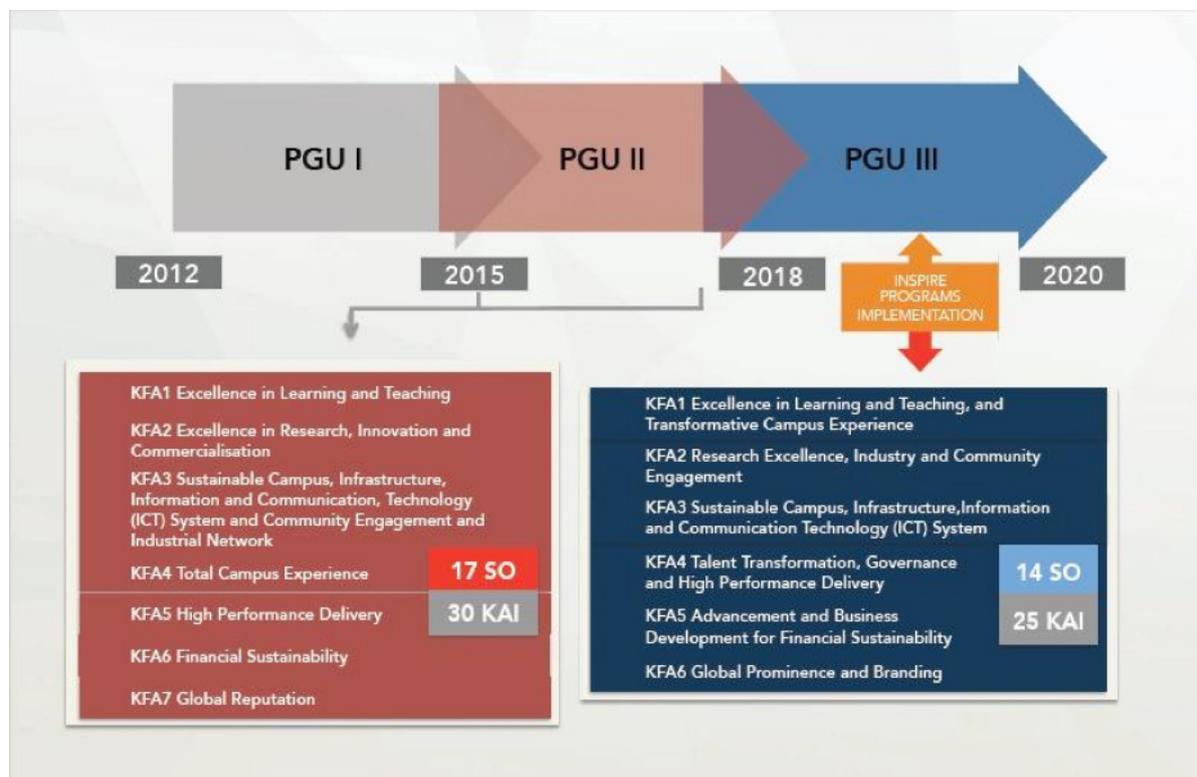


FIGURE 1. The three phases of UTM Global Plan 2020

Through this scheme, many students had been exposed to the conventions of academia, cultural diversity and customs and differences in international perspectives that open their minds. Implementation of this international mobility programme also supports the aspiration of UTM to produce competent graduates who are globally competitive and contribute to the development of international community, as well as provide an opportunity for the university to collaborate more closely with international institutions and agencies. Phases 2 and 3 of UTM Global Plan 2020 focuses

on the strategic initiatives, implementation of high impact programmes and action plans based on knowledge, innovation, creativity and exceptional skills. The High Impact Programmes implemented will strengthen and enhance UTM's position not only as a leading Research University in Malaysia, but also in QS World University Rankings. The programmes implemented will also drive the university's aspiration in producing graduates with holistic entrepreneurial mind set, in addition to developing sustainable academic facilities and campus infrastructure, stimulating

the university's graduate-focused agenda, and enhancing UTM's global strategic alliances and reputation in the international arena. The resulting synergy will be able to support the nation's development as a whole, thus assisting the country in attaining the status of high-income nation. For Phase 3, six (6) Key Focus Areas (KFAs) have been identified, namely:

1. KFA 1: Excellence in Learning and Teaching and Transformative Campus Experience;
2. KFA 2: Research Excellence, Industry and Community Engagement;
3. KFA 3: Sustainable Campus, Infrastructure, Information and Communication (ICT) System;
4. KFA 4: Talent Transformation, Governance and High Performance Delivery;

As a blueprint of the University, the UTM Global Plan 2020 is a one of the important catalyst for UTM to facing future challenges especially in maintaining the sustainability of the university without sacrificing the quality and accessibility of higher education. This also focuses on improving the quality of human talent for both students and staff which in line with the tagline of University for society.

The purpose of this paper is to share the ongoing initiatives and practices in fostering global talent among students in UTM via a high impact program of UTM Outbound Mobility Program which is Study Abroad Programme where participated students are hoped to be able to develop their assets of skills and capabilities in order to keep growing in tandem of global talent within the identity of global citizen.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In line with the changing nature of the workplace, Malaysian higher learning institutions are currently confronted with issues pertaining to graduates' lack of ability to communicate confidently and fluently in English and to adapt effectively to the requirements of the workplace (Wahiza, Azwan Shaiza & Normazidah 2016).

We are living in a continually changing world where the need to prepare future-ready and globally-aware graduates has become essential across the Higher Education sector (Dean Hristov & Vianna Renaud 2018). Study Abroad Programme is one of the significant programmes that provides opportunities for students to develop their global

talent. The ideal Study Abroad Programme gives a value added to the participants via opportunities of cross countries knowledge transfer, skills and well verse experiences throughout the program which will assist the students to adapt in the new challenging global environment. In our increasingly globally connected world, student would remiss to overlook the opportunity to reap the benefits of studying abroad that include but not limited to the fostering of intercultural competence, increased appreciation of language learning, intensified global citizenship/ engagement and academic gains upon returning (Chang 2017). Students who are appropriately exposed to and immersed in other culture stand to gain much personally, academically and professionally.

For an effective implementation, study abroad create inclusive global talent among students of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) since this programme brings in the international dimension which can be classified as new approaches to the students within the perspective of global education. Study abroad has also becoming an important element in global education since this program have short- and long- term career impacts. Besides that, the quality of education and advancement of science in technology in foreign countries enable students to gain new knowledge that is not offered by local universities (Yusuf, Tee & Kew 2016). The likelihood of questions about study abroad arising during job interview seems to depend on whether the individual or team conducting the interview was personally interested in destination, the experience or the related skill development (Farrugia & Sanger 2017). However, while this activity in international education expands, surprisingly, research on study abroad, student mobility and international student exchange still appears relatively infrequent in the leading comparative education journals (Streitwieser, Emily Le & Val Rust 2012).

In addition to the tangible of world economic contribution, not all UTM students are able to afford going abroad. The factors in the general student population, which influence a student's decision to study abroad include (in no particular order): limited commitment to international education, inadequate preparation in foreign languages and lack of knowledge of other cultures; curricular requirement on campus; limited support service on campus and abroad; and inadequate information on opportunities for education abroad (Meid 2003). To those who have participated, they also actually encountered a wide range of issue when they live and study abroad

which generally related to language difficulties, adaptation to a new learning system, psychological problems such as homesickness, discrimination, and feeling isolated, as well as socio-cultural problems with healthcare and financial system (Tseng & Newton 2002; Alghamdi & Otte 2016). Other issues include financial difficulties, depression and culture shock (Khoo, Abu & Hornby 1994; Leong & Chou 1996; Lin & Yin 1997). Therefore, understanding international students' experiences, including the challenges they face and factors that facilitate adaptation, is significant to institution of higher education that are actively working to attract and retain international students, as these institutions have a responsibility to offer proactive support to meet the social, academic and practical needs of these students (Hartshorne & Baucom 2007; Ozturgut 2013; Lee & Ciftci, 2014; Milian et al. 2015).

Thus, UTM plays an important role to encourage students to go abroad via strategic initiatives of having bilateral agreement with partner universities across the world as well as being a part of strategic alliances which create an agreement between two or more organizations to cooperate in a specific business activity, so that each benefits from the strength of the other and gains competitive advantage (Isoraita 2009). These initiatives indirectly will be counted as one of the elements that contributes to position UTM in Global University top ranking. Although there is disquiet about the impact of the rankings and some instances of critique of the methods (particularly in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and nation where performance was worse than expected, there have been few concerted efforts to discredit the rankings process, which appears to have secured public credibility (Marginson & Wende 2007).

UTM MOBILITY PROGRAMMES

The UTM Mobility programmes was first officially launched on 2009 with the ultimate goals to provide students with an opportunity to study and live in a new country, to enhance their international experience via international exposure and to develop a cross-cultural competencies since UTM are committed to prepare students for a future in which they will become a global ready graduates and next will become a global citizens. This program comprises of the Outbound Mobility and Inbound Mobility Programme. The maximum duration of mobility

program is one (1) year. Thus, for each mobility program, it is classified according to the duration of the program. There programs are classified into two type of program based on the period of the program which is short term program for program duration less than three (3) months and a long term program for program with duration of three (3) months and above. Besides the duration of the program, the UTM Mobility program also being classified according to the objectives of the program.

UTM INBOUND MOBILITY PROGRAMME

UTM welcomes students from all around the world to study at UTM. At the moment, UTM is offering a total of four (4) types of inbound mobility programmes. The programmes are provided to international students in line with the agenda "Bring UTM to World, Bring the World to UTM". UTM Inbound Mobility program is also divided into two different parts which are short-term program and long-term programme. For the short-term programme, UTM provides the UTM Student Academic Visit Programme which provides opportunities for a group of students to spend one (1) to seven (7) days in UTM to experience the unique Southeast Asian cultures, to study the global issue or to get access to extraordinary learning opportunities. Under the short-term programme, UTM also offers UTM Malaysia Tropical Educational Experience (UTM MyTrEE) Summer School, a two to three weeks programme that offers a number of interesting courses which incorporate theory and practice, blended with the local culture and social activities.

For the long-term programme, UTM provides opportunities for students outside Malaysia to study at UTM for the minimum of duration of one semester to the maximum of two semesters with or without credit transfer under UTM Student Exchange Programme. The student from abroad also have the opportunity to join UTM Research Internship programme which allow students to pursue their research study at UTM for one to two semesters.

The trend for student mobility between 2009 to 2019 was analysed. As shown in Figure 2, the trend for UTM Inbound Mobility Programme is increasing due to the higher demand from UTM partner universities and the same trend also goes for UTM Outbound Mobility Programme. The increasing is due to the models of UTM Mobility Programmes that were implemented over the years.

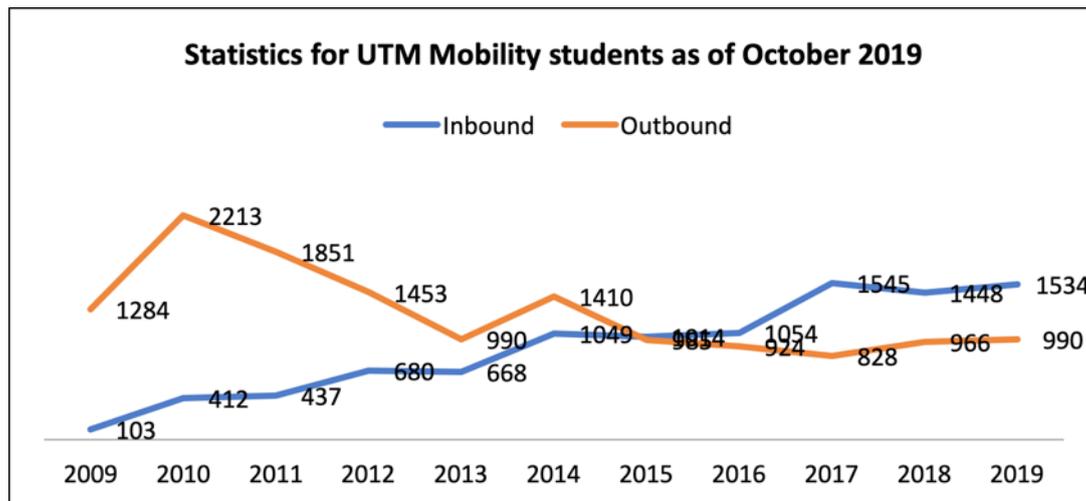


FIGURE 2. Statistics for Inbound and Outbound Mobility Programmes as of October 2019

UTM OUTBOUND MOBILITY PROGRAMME

UTM outbound mobility programme was initiated as early as 2009. At the moment, UTM is offering a total of five (5) types of outbound mobility programmes which allow UTM student to go abroad and join academic programmes in universities, institutions or organizations in all over the world. The opportunities offered includes short-term and long-term programs. For short-term programme, UTM offered three (3) different types of programs which is Global Outreach Program (GOP), International Invitation Program (IIP) and Summer School Abroad (SSA).

For Global Outreach Programme (GOP), this program provides platform for students to experience various cultures in other countries within duration of one to two weeks in order to gain new academic, cultural and international experience. UTM usually encourage students to set for a 7 days program including departure day and return day where the total academic program must not be less than a 3 days. Since this program usually as a kick off program for student to join a long-term mobility program, thus UTM always suggested to the students to include at least one academic program with UTM partner universities. For this program, it is also compulsory for the students to ensure that the program must consist or mixture of five (5) elements of immersion such as below:

1. Field – based exercise, apply leading ideas in managerial practice
2. Interaction with communities and business leaders
3. Engage in short- term consulting projects for local organisation

4. Corporate Social Responsibilities
5. Participation in cultural activities and historical country visit

For International Invitation Programme (IIP), this program allows UTM students to participate in a program offered by institution/ organisation/ society with the theme as follows:

1. Academic Program : Seminar, Conference, Paper Presentation, Student Project Competition
2. Cultural: Cultural Exhibition and Conference, Historical and Cultural Tour
3. Student Development Activity: Courses and Workshop

The invitation usually received from the host organiser or the host institution.

Summer School Abroad Programme (SSA) which usually designed by other universities outside from Malaysia to provide educational opportunities in 4 to 8 weeks during summer holiday abroad for UTM students. This program usually conducted with content related to the environment, local community, heritage and tradition.

For long-term programme, UTM offered a total of two (2) programmes which are Study Abroad or Student Exchange and Research Internship Abroad Programme. Study Abroad or Student Exchange Programme allows students to spend maximum one to two semesters at universities abroad and take courses in regular semester with credit transfer opportunities. Research Internship Abroad Programme allows students to join research study or internship under the supervision of an academic staff at universities or industries abroad from all over the world.

UTM MOBILITY PROGRAMME USING DIFFERENT MODELS

BILATERAL AGREEMENT

One of the top enabler of UTM Mobility program is via Bilateral Student Exchange Agreement. Bilateral Student Exchange Agreement is one of the models that was used by UTM to enable the mobility program for both inbound and outbound. It is an official agreement signed between UTM and foreign higher education institutions around the world. This agreement allows for the reciprocal exchange of students for the purpose of earning credit towards a degree and for period of one semester to one academic year. Students who undergo the mobility programme under this model are usually responsible only for the living expenses during the mobility commencing period. The participating students pay their tuition fees to their home universities while studying at the partner university. This bilateral agreement model not only can be implemented in the scope of student mobility, but this model can also be extended to high level cooperation and academic exchange. UTM currently holds over 300 active bilateral agreements including student exchange agreement from many different countries over the seven continents.

Bilateral agreements on student exchange enable studying for one or two semesters abroad on the basis of pre-agreed study programme. Each bilateral agreement of student exchange contains detailed terms which specify the number of exchange students per academic year, their level of studies, financial agreements and length of exchange period. Usually, the tuition fee for exchange students is waived at the host institution. However, the cost of accommodation, food, transportation, health insurance, visa etc. are the responsibility of the exchange student. However, some partner institutions may offer free accommodation. The agreement usually remain in force for a period of between three (3) years to five (5) years and can be renewed upon mutual agreement of the two institutions.

CONSORTIA OR GLOBAL ALLIANCES IN NICHE AREA (MULTI – LATERAL PARTNERSHIPS)

Consortia or Global Alliances in Niche Area (Multi-lateral partnerships) is the second model which is used as an enabler for UTM Mobility programme for both inbound and outbound. University

accounting to send students to participate in UTM Mobility Program through networks, alliances and consortia since it is one of the growing feature of the higher education landscape. Consortia or Global Alliances is one of the preferred enabler of the student mobility program by the students since each of the Consortia or Global Alliances has their own mission and therefore, the activities that take place through each of these networks vary and sometimes specific according to the set mission and objectives. Considering this global competition, global alliances represent a curious form of cooperation. However, they all share a one similar characteristics which is they represent something more strategic and substantial than a specific memorandum of understanding or student exchange agreement via the bilateral models. Via the range of difference activities offered by the each of the Consortia or Global Alliances, these Consortia or Global Alliances provide the framework and channels that make internationalisation a reality for the students via the impactful student mobility program which usually act as the signature program in each of the Consortia or Global Alliances.

To participate, usually members of consortia are required to pay a certain amount of membership fees to allow them to enjoy the benefits. For exchange program, members of the consortia are allowed to send exchange students among them without having into mutual bilateral or institution to institution agreement between the particular members. Since most of the Consortia or Global Alliances involving members across several continents, which encourage the creation of global networks bring together the participants of mobility programs from different contexts and cultures to address international issues and challenges of study abroad program. Consortia or Global Alliances also usually act best as a medium to encourage universities in different parts of the world to share their best practices on range of issues for study abroad program such as student experience in terms of their welfare and well-being, credit transfer process the curriculum design for mobility program.

The participated student will also be exempted from paying the tuition fees at the host universities and will only commit the amount of tuition fees at their home university. They are still responsible for the cost of accommodation, food, transportation, health insurance, visa etc. UTM is currently a member of 26 consortia showed in Figure 3. One of the active consortia for UTM Exchange Program for

both inbound and outbound is ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS). UTM has been exchanging more than 100 students in and out since AIMS was first implemented in 2011. This type of

model has been used to support, strengthen and facilitate individual institutions in research; build “primary partnership” in selected regions with a focus in specific disciplines.



FIGURE 3. UTM Consortia or Global Alliances in Niche Area (Multi-lateral Partnerships)

RESULTS ON THE UTM OUTBOUND MOBILITY ALUMNI SURVEY

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the study abroad program, a survey was conducted among the UTM Outbound Mobility Alumni with the objectives to get to know their feedback on the study abroad programme especially before and after they participated in the program. The survey was analysed based on responses from a total of 172 students who have participated in UTM Outbound Mobility Programme since between the year of 2016 -2018. The respondents consist of two major groups in which are 59% of them already graduated from UTM and officially become UTM alumni and the rest are still continuing their studies at UTM after returning from the study abroad programme (current active students of UTM). From the 59% of the alumni, there are Engineers and Assistant Engineers, Assistant Professor, Research Executive, Consultant, Software Developer, Town Planner, Chemist Executive and Executive in various fields.

MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS THAT MOTIVATES STUDENTS TO JOIN STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMME

Since the number of students going abroad for the high impact mobility program (long – term mobility program) is increasing, it is important for UTM to

determine the motivational factors for UTM students to participate in this program. This is important since UTM also plays a major roles in preparing a programs which should be in line with the identified factors. This motivational factors also will be one of the reasons for UTM to design a program and incentive in order to encourage more students to study abroad. Figure 4 shows the scoring marks on the identified motivational factors that motivates UTM students to join Study abroad Programme. Based on the survey conducted, the results revealed that the first motivational factor for students to join study abroad programme is actually because they believed that they may be or become an independent or self –reliant person by joining this program. This followed by the second factor which is to experience a different learning practices and teaching methods. The third factor is to meet new people abroad and do networking. The fourth factor is to improve and widen their career prospect and enhance their employability abroad. Surprisingly, the last factor that motivate the students to join the study abroad program is to learn or improved their foreign language. Thus, nothing ever becomes real till the student themselves experienced it. This is because study abroad program can give the most valuable lessons to the participants in their once in life time a life changing experience.

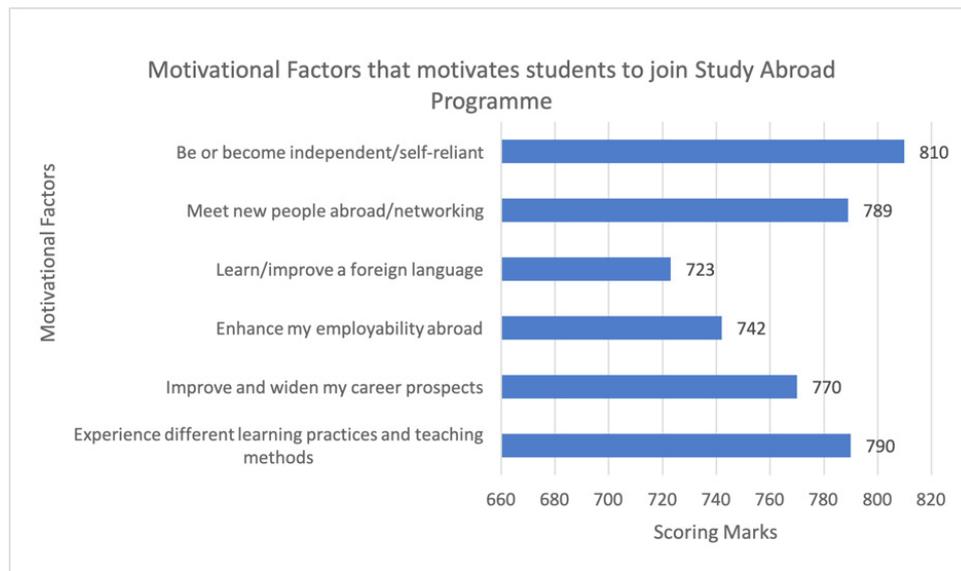


FIGURE 4. Scoring Marks on Motivational Factors that motivates UTM students to join Study Abroad

FOSTERING GLOBAL TALENT: STUDENTS' ABILITY TO ADAPT WITH NEW STUDY ABROAD ENVIRONMENT

The aims of the survey were not only to get to know the motivational factors that lead the students to join the study abroad programme, but the survey also aims to know the ability of the students as well as their readiness to adapt with the new environment and the new academic environment during the study abroad programme. 96% of the respondent agreed that they have the ability to tolerate with the new situations. This is then followed by 95% of the respondent agreed that they are able to adapt to a new knowledge of the new situations. The same number which is 95% of the respondent also agreed that they are able to manage stress during the study abroad programme. 94% of them also agreed they are able to be responsible during this programme followed by 93% agreed that they are able being cooperative to look and process information during the programme. 84% of the respondent agreed that they are able to gained the knowledge of foreign countries and cultures and 78% are able to communicate with domestic foreign language.

This result showed high percentage of UTM students who participated in study abroad programme have demonstrated that they managed to adapt well with the new study abroad environment. Adaptation is a crucial phase during the program and it is involved of seven (7) stages of adaptation especially when it is the first time the student experiencing of going abroad. The seven (7) identified stages are culture shock, overwhelming enthusiasm, non – stop student parties (which is very new to

them), motivation and inspiration, fear and panic, homesickness and the adaptation. As long as the students managed to deals with each of the stages in the adaptation phase, they will definitely be fine.

This is an important findings for UTM since the student adaptation capabilities during the study abroad program will give further impact in the re adaptation process when the students return back to Malaysia or UTM specifically. This is due to the fact that they have to deal with different group of people within a short period of time and this definitely will give them challenges in communication with people around them via academics activities and sociocultural settings. With the experienced that have gained abroad, they are returning as the UTM Ambassador who will continuously sharing their journey and experience abroad in order to encourage other students to foster their global talent by becoming next global citizen via their participation in UTM Mobility Program.

FOSTERING GLOBAL TALENT: IMPROVING SKILLS DURING STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMME

One of the aims of study abroad program is actually to improve the skills of the participants of this programme via the international experience. This is in line with the national agenda to foster global talent by producing more global citizens. The international experience gained is believed will give a huge boost to the participant self-confidence and is believed will help to stand out in the job market through the collective skills gained during the program.

Figure 5 shows the scoring marks on skills that UTM students improved by their mobility

period abroad. 98% of the respondent agreed that study abroad programme has improved their ability to interact and work with people from other backgrounds and cultures. The same figures also agreed that study abroad improving their confident level and self-reliant. 97% of the respondent agreed that study abroad programme improving their communication skills, skills of adaptation to the new environment and improving their knowledge of the host country's culture, society and economy. Next, 95% of the respondent agreed that study abroad improving their planning and organisational skills as well as their decision making skills. This followed by total of 94% of the respondent agreed that they are improving their teamwork skills, critical thinking skills and improving the development of sense of other citizenship, gaining country-wide perspectives beyond the national horizon. 92% of the respondent agreed that study abroad program

has improved their analytical and problem-solving skills. Other than that, 90% of the respondent agreed that study abroad improving their specific skills that are required in specific working sectors. Lastly, 81% of the respondent agreed that study abroad has successfully improved their computer or digital skills. The last part of the survey proven that study abroad has foster a global talent when 100% of the respondent agreed that this program give advantages to their current career.

This findings support the fact that student will gain valuable skills during their study abroad program. The study abroad program help them to develop personally, professionally and academically by gaining new transferable skills, broaden their horizon and fostering the global skills to becoming a global citizen in order for them to succeed in today's full of challenge worlds.

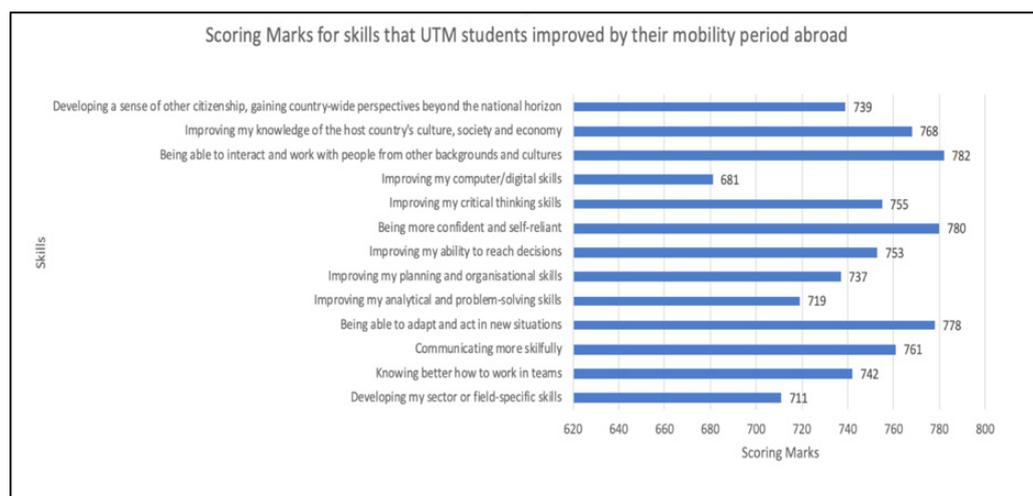


FIGURE 5. Scoring Marks on Skills that UTM Students Improved By Their Mobility Period Abroad

FOSTERING GLOBAL TALENT: TESTIMONIALS ON COMMENTS AND SUGGESTION FROM THE RESPONDENTS

To support the findings, the survey also request the respondent to share how the UTM Mobility program help them in their career. The feedback is impressive as one of the respondent said that the program widens the student perspective and exposes them to different cultures. It helps in enhancing their reasoning skills and increasing their confidence in speaking up. The program also helps them to think more broadly and beyond national horizon. Not only that another positive feedback received with focus on their English proficiency level. Study abroad is said to be of the reason that helps them to improve their language skills and compatibility to work with foreign workers. Thus, these boost their confidence

level in presenting some works especially to superiors, improve their professionalism in term of their behaviours and attire.

After the programme, some of them learned a lot about the important in organizing and planning as per results of their study abroad program in Singapore. Not only regarding planning, the whole program has helped them to boost their confidence since the program require them to have presenting on their study outcomes in a room of foreigners which later assisting them to be part of the large networks in and outside Malaysia. So of them also respond that they becoming more matured into a more independent and responsible citizen since they've been given the opportunity to travel alone and indulge themselves into a whole new culture and lifestyle. The program is said has also broaden their view upon the community of the world as they have gained vast

knowledge and experience during their time abroad. It has been indeed an amazing experience to be a student in a foreign country which also of the reason they being promoted within a short time of working period with their company. This is said due to the value or knowledge implemented after the mobility programmes which actually help them to present themselves differ from other candidate.

The survey also require the respondent to give advice on how University can enhance our study abroad program so that it can increase graduate employability. There are few suggestion which can be put into consideration such as the suggestion for University to give more opportunities in visiting industries and private sector areas via international industrial linkages compared to the higher education institution so that the student can meet the demand from the industry side. By this way, it will helps to increase the employability rates and explicitly articulate the relevant graduate employability skills in the learning outcomes for every subject.

The next suggestion is for the University to expand the collaboration across the globe especially with partner institution or consortia which can provide a full scholarship or sponsorship for the study abroad program and ensuring the utilisation of the given quotas or slot. Not only that, some of them also suggested for the University to provide full financial support for prestigious or selected program, which usually involved research or project presentation and proposal while most of that kind of event require high participation fee. These kind of programmes allow student to acquire longer term benefit that can be directly relevant to their study field or future career and also give a long term impact for the institutional cooperation.

CONCLUSION

The student's development via study abroad program at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia is vital in order to foster global talent to produce a global ready graduates. According to the results, it is illustrate that Study Abroad should be one of the necessary program for the UTM students specifically and recommended program for the other university students in order to ensures the growth of individuals, institutions, nations and society both now and future. Study abroad will gave added value to the participants as they have gained different sets of skill through a different set of environment during this period. The values of gained impact from the study abroad program are continuous through

decades via its potential to developing national and regional identity, national citizenship identity and global citizenship identity.

It is proven that skills gained during study abroad program are major contributor to the skills that later will be implemented in their work place once they have successfully graduate and employed. Via study abroad program, participants are linked to different people which lead them to develop a certain competencies such as high competencies in intercultural awareness, increased in their international knowledge and turn them to be a committed global citizen which responded to the global issues. This is via the exchange of perspectives and good values as well as be more appreciative with the differences between and similarities among cultures and countries all around the world.

Thus, University are encourage to send most number of students they could as it is proved that in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia that study abroad is one of the tools that can be used to foster the global talent among students. This can be one of the reasons to produce more global citizens.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge UTM International (UTM-I), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia for the provision of data and information used in this paper.

REFERENCES

- Alghamdi, H. & Otte, S. 2016. The challenges and benefits of study abroad. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6(5): 16-19.
- Bernhard, T. & Streitwieser, E. L. 2012. Research on study abroad, mobility, and student exchange in comparative education scholarship. *Research in Comparative and International Education* 7(1): 5-19.
- Chang, A. 2017. Call me a little critical if you will: counter stories of Latinas studying abroad in Guatemala. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* 16(1): 3-23.
- Farrugia, C. & Sanger, J. 2017. Gaining an employment edge: the impact of study abroad on 21st century skills & career prospects in the United States. *The Power of International Education*: 1-22.
- Hartshorne, R. & Baucom, J. 2007. Issues affecting cross-cultural adaptation of international graduate students. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching* 2(2): 78-87.
- Hristov, D. & Renaud, V. 2018. Developing students as global citizens through the global talent programme. In *Diversity Abroad Quarterly: Winter 2018 Edition: Global Education in an Age of Nationalism*, edited by Comp, D., Moore III, J. L., Webster, N. & Sommer, K. O. Florida: Diversity Abroad.

- Išoraitė, M. 2009. Importance of strategic alliances in company's activities. *Intellectual Economics* 1(5): 39-46.
- Khoo, P. L. S., Abu, M. H. & Hornby, G. 1994. Counselling foreign students: a review of strategies. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* 7(2): 117-131.
- Lee, J. Y. & Ciftci, A. 2014. Asian international students' socio-cultural adaptation: Influence of multicultural personality, assertiveness, academic self-efficacy, and social support. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 38: 97-105.
- Leong, F. T. L., & Chou, E. L. 1996. Counseling international students. In *Counseling Across Cultures*, edited by Pedersen, P. B., Draguns, J. G., Lonner, W. J. & Trimble, J. T., 210-242. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lin, J. G., & Yin, J. K. 1997. Asian international students' adjustment: Issues and program suggestions. *College Student Journal* 31(4): 473-484.
- Marginson, S. & Wende, M. 2007. To rank or to be ranked: the impact of global rankings in higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 11(3/4): 306-329.
- Meid, J. S. 2003. Asian Americans: factors influencing the decision to study abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 9(4): 71-110.
- Milian, M., Birnbaum, M., Cardona, B. & Nicholson, B. 2015. Personal and professional challenges and benefits of studying abroad. *Journal of International Education and Leadership* 5(1): 1-12.
- Omar, W. 2019. *Memacu Kegemilangan Pendidikan Tinggi Berpaksikan Kemanusiaan Buku Perutusan Tahun Baharu Naib Canselor 2019*. Malaysia: Penerbit UTM Press.
- Ozturgut, O. 2013. Best practices in recruiting and retaining international students in the U.S. *Current Issues in Education* 16(2): 1-20.
- Tseng, W. C. & Newton, F. B. 2002. International students' strategies for well-being. *College Student Journal* 36(4): 591-597.
- Wahi, W., Nizam, A. S., Che Musa, N. 2016. Unfolding Workplace Skills through Oral Progress Report Activity (OPRA). *Akademika* 86(2):99-110.
- Yusof, N. N., Tee, L. T. & Kew S. R. 2016. Challenges experienced by Malaysian students abroad. *Jurnal Personalia Pelajar* 20(2): 1-9.

Fasihah Mohd Jaslan (correspondent)
 UTM International
 Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
 Johor, Malaysia
 E-mail: fasihah@utm.my

Mohd Ariffin Abu Hassan
 UTM International
 Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
 Johor, Malaysia
 E-mail: mariffin@utm.my

Nur Izzati Adnan
 UTM International
 Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
 Johor, Malaysia
 E-mail: izzatiadnan94@gmail.com

Nor Haniza Sarmin
 UTM International
 Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
 Johor, Malaysia
 E-mail: nhs@utm.my

Received: 12 January 2019
 Accepted: 12 June 2020