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## **HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE FROM MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE**

ROHAIZAT BAHARUN  
MAIMUNAH ALI  
SITI FALINDA PADLEE

### **INTRODUCTION**



Internationalisation and globalisation concepts in higher institution is now well established as a global phenomenon, especially in the major-English speaking nations such the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (see Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). Majorities of the higher institutions recognize that they need to market themselves in a climate of educational international competition. As the competition among them in the higher level and intensive activity, they increasingly behave as business entity by adopting more business strategies. In recent years, they have to promote the acceleration of international linkages, brand campuses, single purpose programs and other forms of transnational education and quality of education for the customers. HEIs that are able to learn about customers, competitors and regulators stand a better chance of sensing and acting upon events and trends in the marketplace (Tippins and Sohi, 2003). However, the task for all activities mentioned above is not always easy to remain competitive in the eye of customers at global environment. Other variables such as government intervention, international law, different custom procedures, variety of languages, foreign exchange, different costs, different behaviour and life styles became the challenges for higher institutions to providing a quality



and sustainable education program. Paramewaran and Glowacka (1995) in their study of university image found that, higher education institutions (HEIs) need to maintain or develop a distinct image to create a competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive market. In a number of countries, governments have been at pains to stress the economic benefits resulting from higher education (Yorke, 1999). As we know, the education market is worth hundreds of billions of dollars in today's markets, and every week sees a new joint venture announced by traditional or new players all over the world, as they jockey for position in this increasingly global market. Malaysia in the 1980's recognized that it would be unable to educate its own 6 percent of its population through its own institutions and began to partner with international institutions to supplement its system of higher education (Lenn, 2000). Further more in recent years, this move has led to the government invited foreign universities to operate on Malaysian soil. With the move, the government made another important decision, to turn Malaysia into an educational hub in the region. For both public and private HEIs, they have to take more ownership and responsibilities for the overall products and services that they offered to the customers. Therefore, many HEIs already adopted some form of business strategies especially in marketing for their strategic activities in their operations.

For the higher education industry, students can become one of the potential campus customers. However in the literature, there is little agreement on the identity of the higher education customer. The concept of customer is not clearly defined, which makes higher learning institutions difficult to manage from a marketing point of view (Navarro, Iglesias and Torres, 2005). The stakeholder concept rather than customer is popular in business analysis and has been suggested for educational analysis (Schmidt, 2002: p.37). This is not the main objective of this paper to discuss further on this issue. The main step focus of this study is the selection of a higher learning institute by the students. In the choice criteria, the student cum customer must decide which higher learning institutes to attend while undergoing various amounts of influence by mass media, parents, peers, location,

cost and other variables. These phenomena have encouraged HEIs to place greater emphasis on student recruitment. Because of the importance associated with the choice criteria and how to influence the potential student's decision-making process, various initiatives have been instigated. In Malaysia recently, international students can be considered a new group of students who went to higher learning institutions in order to enroll in higher education studies outside their own country. Thus, a considerable segment of higher learning institute customers are currently demanding a kind of education that may be different from the local Malaysian students. In the new environment, HEIs especially private HEIs must identify these "new" customers and determine their needs in order to be able to adapt and serve them. This strategy is considered important as a survival for the private HEIs and to achieve the satisfaction of the students and lastly toward the loyalty to the HEIs in this competitive environment.

This paper aims to examine, for international students and first time university attendees, the degree to which various information sources are consulted when selecting a higher education institution, and, the relative reliability and credibility placed on them by international students in Malaysia. The paper is organised as follows. First, an overview of higher education industries in Malaysia and all over the world is discussed. Next, the study's methodology and results are presented. The paper concludes with a discussion of conclusions, study limitations and future research directions.

## **REVIEWS**

Higher education is of obvious importance in supporting national economic objectives for every country in the world and the development of the indigenous labour force, including the direct raising of extra-national incomes. (Yorke, 1999). In the US, education is the second largest export market behind agriculture and the second largest domestic industry behind health care (Abeless, 2001). In

Malaysia, beside the government funded HEIs, there are a quiet number of HEIs from subsidiaries of major conglomerates and some of these HEIs are listed in the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE now rename as Bursa Kuala Lumpur), as their roles are understandably entrepreneurial in nature. According to the Prime Minister's Department (2006), the enrolment of foreign students into Malaysia HEIs is 50,280 for year 2005. The Government of Malaysia plays a strong role as a regulator to Private HEIs. According to Tan (2002), there are four national goals to be realized in the restructuring of private HEIs:

1. to produce the necessary human resources for the country
2. to export higher education
3. to stem the flow of higher education students offshore in order to reduce the outflow of Malaysian currency
4. to enroll 40% of a student age cohort in higher education by the year 2020 to realize the aim to make Malaysia a developed, industrialized country.

By the mid-1990s, there were two major types of private HEIs in Malaysia, the single discipline college and the comprehensive course delivery college. The majority of the private HEIs were developing into the latter category, engaged with comprehensive course delivery (Noran and Ahmad, 1997). Mostly, private HEIs in Malaysia located in Klang Valley and the state of Selangor. To date, there are 16 private universities and college universities and 4 brand campuses of reputable foreign universities from Australia and United Kingdom. Table 1 shows the list of the private universities, college universities and foreign brand universities in Malaysia.

Names	Country (year of establishment)
International Medical University	Malaysia (1999)
International University College of Technology Twintech	Malaysia (2003)
University College of Technology and Management Malaysia	Malaysia (2001)
Kuala Lumpur Infrastructure University College	Malaysia (2003)
Limkokwing University College of Creative Technology	Malaysia (2003)
Multimedia University	Malaysia (1999)
Kuala Lumpur University	Malaysia (2001)
University of Technology Petronas	Malaysia (1999)
Universiti Tenaga Nasional	Malaysia (1999)
Universiti Tun Razak	Malaysia (1999)
University College Sedaya International	Malaysia (2003)
University Tun Abdul Rahman	Malaysia (2001)
Selangor Industry University	Malaysia (2000)
Malaysia Open University	Malaysia (2000)
Malaysia Science and Technology University	Malaysia (2000)
Asia Institute of Medical, Science and Technology	Malaysia (2001)
Monash University	Australia (1998)
Curtin University of Technology	Australia (1999)
University of Nottingham	United Kingdom (2000)
FTMS-De Montfort University	United Kingdom (1999)

**Table 1:** List of private universities, college universities and foreign brand universities in Malaysia

The policy of liberalization and democratization of education introduced by Malaysian government, cause the increase of international students in Malaysia since 1996, after the government introduced the Higher Education Act. It is proved by the number of international students enrolments in Malaysia have increased rapidly from 32 in 1970 to 126 005 in 1999(Mohamad, Zahiruddin and Mohd, 2003). In 2004 only, there are about 39 763 international students enrolled in the Malaysia private HEIs (Habhajan, 2004). Why are international students attracting to study in Malaysia? According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) there are many factors that influence students to choose international education such as a lack of access to higher education especially in Asia and Africa, a commonality of language and availability of technology-based programs. For countries such as Australia, France, the UK and USA, the quality management in education is a major focus of attention (Baldwin, 1991; Marceau, 1993; Harman, 1994; Lindsay, 1994 and Edmond, 1995). In other study done by Mazzarol and Hosie (1996), an education agent had recruited many of the students for study in Australia, and friends were the most commonly cited source of information about HEIs. While in Malaysia, the quality management system philosophy is applied due to encourage students to pursue studies within the country (Sohail, Rajadurai and Nor, 2003).

As competition increases in the education industry, public and private schools increasingly view students as consumers. Students, themselves have a “membership” relationship with the education service (Lovelock, 1983). Students are considered themselves to be the main decision makers. In another word, foreign students are more demanding for better value of their money and becoming more selective in choosing an educational institution. Therefore, criteria of choice of study destination have been widely researched and come out with different results. As a result, the main works regarding choice criteria within the HEIs environment likewise show the multi-dimensional nature of this concept. Thus, the main studies performed within HEIs show the dimensions presented in Table 2. The variety of variables shown in Table 2 creates difficulties when attempting to

develop an ideal concept for this study. Table 2 shows the summary of recent studies on choice of criteria of study destination from different sample of students.

Author	Targeted population & country	Summary
1. Joseph & Joseph (1998)	Tertiary students in the North Island of New Zealand	5 factors – cost of education, degree, physical aspects, facilities & resources.
2. Leblanc and Nguyen (1999)	The random sample of 700 students from business school in Canada.	6 factors- satisfaction value, epistemic value, image, emotional value, price and quality and social value.
3. Joseph and Joseph (2000)	The random sample of 200 students from Indonesia	5 factors – course & career information, physical aspects & facilities, cost of education, degree & value of education.
4. Soutar & Turner (2002)	Western Australian school leavers (the major group who enrolled the state's tertiary institutions)	4 factors - course suitability, academic reputation, job prospects and teaching quality.
5. Mohamad, Zahiruddin & Mohd (2003)	International student who study in public & private of Malaysia institutions	4 factors – course characteristics, country characteristics, administrative processes & cost.
6. Rohaizat (2004)	The senior and junior students in Malaysian public universities.	5 factors- reputation of education, programmed structure, conducive facilities and resources, choice influencers and customer orientation.

7. Navarro; Iglesias and Torres (2006)	Spanish University's students from five major disciplines	5 factors – teaching methods, administration, teaching staff, enrolment and infrastructures
8. Yamamoto (2006)	Turkish University's students from four faculties	5 factors – examination score, university ranking, course advisors, parents and personal preference

**Table 2:** Summary of studies on choice of criteria of study destination

From the observation done in the Table 2, among potential determinant dimensions of choice criteria are aspects such as accommodation, library, laboratory, cafeterias, student union building. These aspects could be encompassed with facilities or infrastructures dimension. Academic staff element such as teaching quality, staff qualification, teaching quality, medium of instruction, reputation, image appear as a potential dimension in teaching and learning quality. HEIs with large faculty and facilities may attract more students (Tang, Tang and Tang, 2004). Cost factors also are highlighted, which would include tuition fee, cost of living, price of services, etc. As prices for tuition rise, enrollment rates tend to fall (Leisie and Brinkman, 1987). The four grouping refers to the environment surrounding the students such as campus life, safety, campus design, social life and people surrounding the HEIs compounds. Support services such as medical, children kindergarten, bank, counseling, financial support, career guidance also were highlighted by the researchers. A decision-making process by the potential student is often influenced by “significant others” such as friends, parents, counselors, other students, teachers and university admission officers, internet, mass media and sometime the league tables. Employers, parents and stakeholders in general are now far more aware of instructional ratings (Veloutsou, Paton and Lewis, 2005). Majority of these dimensions normally can be controlled by the HEIs and could be considered the important choice

criteria by the international students.

Gender and age are the two most studied areas regarding demographic factors bearing on the international students' adaptation (Sam, 2000). The current international students have been raised with the ideal of gender equality not only in the public arenas of education and employment but also in their home by their parents. In a study about student satisfaction in HEIs, Aldemir and Gulcan (2004) found that a great majority of female students expressed satisfaction with the faculty, against male students. Similarly, it has been found that female students use more intensively the information source to collect information about their future university studies (Veloutsou, et.al, 2005) The Joseph, Yakhou and Stone (2005) study indicated, for example, that one of the overriding concerns of women is safety and they would place campus safety as a high priority in selecting the HEIs. Men on the other hand, appear to place more importance on such items as scheduling and sports. However, Wang and Bu (2004) indicated that there was no significant gender difference in their beliefs regarding the relative advantages and disadvantages of domestic versus global careers. A study in Malaysia done by Sohall, Rajadural and Nor Azlin (2003) found that the award of ISO 9002 has been a reason for enrolling in the universities by overwhelming number of female respondents.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study reported in this article was part of a study of the choice criteria for international students, which enrolled in the private higher learning institutions in Malaysia before September 2004. This study was conducted over a period of four months in a variety of locations such as Kuala Lumpur, Shah Alam, Ipoh, Cyberjaya and Melaka. Although this study is not the pioneer study in Malaysia, however this study relied on methodologies that are highly and consistently accepted in many researches in other countries. At the beginning,

the selected HEIs were sourced from the database provided by the Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia. However, due to limited access to all private higher learning institutions and less cooperation from them, the method of sampling procedure was changed to non-probability sampling, the combination of judgment and preference sampling was used by the helping of the associations representing Malaysia HEIs such as NAPIEI (National Association of Private and Independent Educational Institutions) and PKIBM (National Association of Indigenous Private Educational Institutions). The sample of this study involves a number of international students from various countries who are studying in Malaysian private higher educational institutions. A complete set of questionnaire had been distributed to selected sample of six Malaysian Private Higher Educational Institutions. The institutions are chosen based on their highest enrolments of international students. However, only 656 foreign students responded to the questionnaire, which had been sent to the six private higher learning educations. These were considered satisfactory for statistical analysis and representative of population strata. In addition to information supplied in the questionnaires, numerous opinions, personal experiences, views and recommendations with regard to the future development of private higher institutions and government policies were also received from these international students.

The instrument used in this research is questionnaire. The preliminary step in instrument design involved a series of focus groups consisting of educational providers and overseas students attending colleges and universities in Malaysia, to assess the appropriateness of the choice criteria found in a Malaysian study.

The questionnaire is designed based on preliminary works data, focus group meeting, and by instrument adopted from numerous studies such as Soutar & Turner (2002), Joseph and Joseph (1998 and 2000), and Leblanc and Nguyen (1999). Three criteria was applied in developing the questionnaire, which included (1) test administration between 10 to 15 minutes, (2) eliminations of variables with apparent low predictive value and (3) a questionnaire easily understood by the

students. After the pre-test activity, a final 48 variables item questions were ready to use. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. In first section of the questionnaire asked respondents to rank the different dimensions on a scale of (1) Extremely not important; (2) Very not important; (3) Not important; (4) Important; (5) Very important; and (6) Extremely important. In the second part, the respondents were asked their profiles or background such as country origin, age and type of study.

## DATA ANALYSIS

656 responses were received and used for further analysis. The data obtained via the questionnaire were analysed using the SPSS statistical program. The analysed sample comprises mainly men (65.5 per cent). Majority of the sample (94 per cent) comprises students who are below 25 years of age. The students from Southeast Asia are the largest population in the sample (32 per cent) and the lowest came from North America, Europe and Oceania (2 per cent). With regard to their program enrollment, 376 of the students were enrolled in degree program (56.4 per cent) and only 6.4 per cent of them were enrolled in post-graduate program. The rest of the surveyed students were enrolled in pre-diploma and diploma level.

The most important items	Importance	The least important items	Importance
1. Entry qualification	4.98	1. Education expo	4.20
2. English usage	4.94	2. Exchange rate	4.19
3. English language	4.94	3. Sport recreation	4.17
4. Specialized field	4.83	4. Information in Internet	4.11

5. Academic staff	4.83	5. Friends	4.04
6. Clean facilities	4.81	6. Printed media	4.00
7. Career advisor	4.81	7. Electronic media	3.99
8. Visa	4.72	8. Beautiful	3.81
9. Religion	4.71	9. Relatives	3.75
10. Internet facilities	4.68	10. Outskirts	2.93

**Table 3:** Summary of means

As explained in the methodology, the international students were invited to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements regarding the variables mentioned in the questionnaires. Their responses are presented in Table 3. Table 3 shows the item by the most important and the least important items. The summary of means in Table 3 shows that from the 48 variables, the students place a great deal of importance on all the items. Rankings were determined by means of summary statistics. Most of the items have a mean score range from 4 to 3 except one item which is “outskirts” with mean 2.93. It is indicated from the 10 most important items, that item “entry qualification”, “English usage” and “English language” are the most important criteria of choice whereas item “outskirts” is the least important criteria of choice to be chosen by international students.

After determining the mean analysis, a factor analysis was performed. Factor analysis is a data reduction technique that can help determine a smaller number of underlying dimensions of a large set of inter-correlated variables (Absher and Crawford, 1996). Factor analysis was used to assess the nomological validity of the choice criteria, while discriminant validity of the choice criteria was examined through the rotated factors scores across all of the identified factors (Joseph and Joseph, 2000).

Table 4 reveals the factor loadings identified by each of the

samples from international students involved in this study. Factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to determine the underlying dimensions of 48 criteria of choices. This analytic technique is very common and found to be used in about one in six journal articles over a three-decade review (Aron and Aron, 1994). According to Gilbert, et.al (2004: 376), although no one method of factor analysis is universally endorsed as the preferred one, different approaches are used based on particular situations. All factors with eigenvalues or latent roots of 1.0 or greater are considered significant and reported. Items were removed if factor loadings were less than of 0.40 (Hair et al. 1998). However, in this study items with factor loadings of 0.5 and above are only taken (based on previous studies) and followed suggestion made by Nunnally (1978) and Gilbert et.al (2004). For the purpose of interpretation, each factor comprised of variables that loaded 0.50 or higher on the factor. Furthermore, alpha was used to identify the reliability of identified factors. The scale for reliabilities were determined by the non-standardized Cronbach alpha which is reported to be preferred method (Morgan and Greigo, 1998) and is the most widely used for reliability's scale (Aron and Aron, 1994).

The naming of a factor-loading matrix is a highly arbitrary decision of the researcher (Aron and Aron, 1994). In this study, the interpretation of the factor-loading matrix in this study was straightforward. The seven factors are quality learning environment, decision influencers, customer focus, and cost of education, facilities, location and socialization. The first of these components that explains 36.7 per cent of the variance reflects quality of the program. The second of the components that explains about 7 per cent of the variance and includes aspects related to words of mouth. The aspects pertaining to the customer orientations are included in the third components. This component explains about 4 per cent of the variance. The fourth component explains 3 per cent and groups together the items related to cost of education such as tuition fee, accommodation fee, exchange rate and availability of the funding. The fifth component, facilities, groups together the items related to the internet/computer facilities, sport facilities, design of the building and campus and clean and tiny

environment, which explains also 3 per cent of the variance. The last component is the socialization, which includes the university location at urban area and availability of part-time jobs. In all seven factors explained 57 per cent of the total variance. Thus, a model with seven factors may be adequate to represent the data because the result of the analysis can be considered satisfactory since they do not exceed 60 per cent of the explained variance recommended in social sciences (Hair, et al., 1998).

After determining the factor structure, a reliability test of the detected underlying scales was performed. The results showed reliabilities of between 0.91 and 0.52 for the six factors, which are considered sufficient (Nunnally, 1978) except for the last factor. The alpha coefficients for the factors show that the majority are highly reliable and acceptable, which alpha scores of exceeded 0.5, the threshold recommended by Nunnally (1978) for exploratory research. The results for the factor analysis also showed that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) score is 0.756 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value was significant (Chi square = 5675.15,  $p < 0.05$ ). This KMO value shows the sampling adequacy was acceptable and the distribution of value is adequate for conducting factor analysis.

Besides analysing the factor analysis on each of the item, it was also important to rank the factors according to their importance as selected by the international students. The respondents were asked to rank the different dimensions in order of importance. The results of importance of dimensions could also be used as to support and prove the factor analysis results. The factors have been ranked according to their percentage. The rank order as shown in Table 5 reveals that 66.4 percent of "learning environment & political" is the most important factor to be chosen by international students followed by choice of influence (54 percent), concern for student (48 percent), cost of education (24 percent), facilities (24 percent), location (12 percent) and general (12 percent). If we revised the factor analysis results, we could see that the results from both factor analysis and importance of dimensions were similar. It concludes, indirectly, the result of importance of dimensions was supporting the results of

factor analysis.

	Factors						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Quality Learning environment</b>							
Qualification	0.692						
Staff	0.691						
English usage	0.684						
University reputation	0.657						
Courses offered	0.624						
Course duration	0.618						
Specialized field	0.611						
Visa	0.610						
Political stability	0.601						
Entry requirement	0.560						
G2G collaboration	0.555						
<b>Decision influencers</b>							
Relatives		0.721					

Printed media		0.709				
Electronic media		0.708				
Education expo		0.681				
Internet		0.679				
Friends		0.660				
Education agent		0.620				
Parents		0.598				
Responsiveness of university		0.505				
<b>Customer focus</b>						
Regulations			0.659			
Community accepted			0.643			
Culture			0.620			
Campus life			0.615			
Religion			0.590			
Carrier advisor			0.587			
International students' advisor			0.539			
English language			0.525			

<b>Cost of education</b>							
Cost				0.716			
Funding				0.844			
Exchange rate				0.565			
Accommodation				0.538			
<b>Facilities</b>							
Design/layout					0.730		
Clean					0.630		
Sport recreation					0.516		
Internet facilities					0.512		
<b>Socialization</b>							
Urban area						0.652	
Part-time jobs						0.510	
<b>Location</b>							
Outskirts							0.625
Beautiful							0.556
Eigenvalue Cumulative of variance explained Cronbach's alpha	17.637	3.021	2.118	1.315	1.239	1.115	1.083
	36.744	43.037	47.450	50.190	52.771	55.093	57.093
	0.9132	0.9014	0.8696	0.7350	0.7805	0.5204	0.3006

**Table 4:** Factor analysis of foreign students' choice of criteria of study destination

Rank	Factor	Percentage
1	Learning environment & politics	66%
2	Choice of influence	54%
3	Concern for student	48%
4	Cost of education	24%
5	Facilities	24%
6	General	12%
7	Location	12%

**Table 5:** Importance of dimensions

Factors	Male	Female	p-value
Quality Learning environment	4.66	4.69	0.472
Decision influencers	4.12	4.16	0.002*
Customer focus	4.52	4.61	0.351
Cost of education	4.35	4.40	0.159
Facilities	4.46	4.51	0.001*
Socialization	4.32	4.42	0.521
Location	3.42	3.27	0.125

Note: \* Significant level at 0.01

**Table 6:** Comparison of means between Male and Female

As indicated in Table 6, significant differences were noted between how males and females responded. Female respondents attach a higher perceived importance to six from seven factors

mentioned in Table 6. The comparison of means between male and female students did not reveal any significant differences except for two items “decision influencers” and “facilities”. This shows that females place more importance in these items than their male counterparts. However, there is no clear explanation as to why female students evaluated the HEIs differently on the factors listed above.

## CONCLUSION

It is important to recognize the needs of the students in meeting their expectations. To achieve the nation’s goal to become a regional education hub, the higher educational institutions especially the private institutions must identify what is the choice of criteria most preferred to international students. Therefore, it requires the ability of institutions to market and promote with these various choices of criteria to attract them. This research highlighted several aspects relating to student’s criteria of choice of study destination. Through this study the researcher determines that five items such as “qualification”, “English usage”, “English language”, “specialized field” and “staff” was considered important by the international students. Findings also highlighted differences between males and females. Sample indicates that females placed more importance in information provided by people around them and on facilities provided by the HEIs than their male counterparts. As overall, if Malaysian private educational institutions want to develop strategies to attract foreign students, they should know student needs and wants and develop strategies to satisfy those needs. The failure to react will result in losing sustainable competitive advantage both in local universities and overseas markets.

Further more, by identifying the aspects of choice criteria, the HEIs could attract potential international students by providing the items mentioned above through effective marketing strategies by internal or external marketing activities. It makes sense to adapt a marketing policy to suit the specific requirement culture of prospective

students in these countries. Selecting a higher education institution for study or attendance is a momentous decision that may shape the life and success of a student's career and their family. According to Joseph and Joseph (1998), the items selected by the international students should be concerned by the HEIs for market positioning strategy and strengthen their offerings in these areas. As mentioned in the findings, the items that are related the most to the pure service such as quality education, cost, facilities provided by the HEIs are the key aspects that determine the decision making process by the international students and also will determine their satisfaction and lastly will become the words of mouth elements for the potential and new students. The items mentioned above are aspects directly controllable by the HEIs as empirically verified in this study. On the students' side, they are facing stiff competition for admission to their own nation's best HEIs. There are limited spots for undergraduate students on HEIs in their country because the demand is very high. Study at the foreign country and foreign HEIs are one of the alternative. Lastly, students and their parents have to find the good fit between HEIs and the students so that they will ensure the completion of the university degree.

Finally, the study has accomplished its basic task in that we are better informed as to which choice criteria students prefer and perceive to be reliable to consider. In spite of the importance of the results obtained, it is important to highlight some of the limitations of the study, which further research will endeavour to remedy. The samples are limited to international students at the selected private universities in Malaysia. This could limit the generalization of the research findings. Further research could use a larger range of students with a more diversified background. Consequently in future studies, the choice criteria of selecting HEIs should be analysed from the perspective of the various stakeholder groups such as parents, secondary school students, employers which interact with the HEIs. In writers' opinions, it would be necessary to corroborate the results obtained in this study and other studies and expand the results to other elements that make up the current offers by the HEIs all over the world. Another interesting area would be a comparative analysis

between purchase intention for prospective students at the particular regions and purchase decision by the international students.

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