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Academics' Engagement in the Internationalisation of Higher Education at Public Universities in Malaysia

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Abstract

Set within the context of an aspiring higher education hub in Southeast Asia, the thesis aims to discover the engagement of academics in the internationalisation of higher education at Malaysian public universities. Five sub-areas of academics' internationalisation form the basis of the inquiry: the conceptualisation of internationalisation, the forms of engagement, the rationale for engagement, the support and the impact of the engagement on the academics. The study adopted the qualitative research approach to explore these dimensions of the academics' engagement in internationalisation as part of their professional lives. Two qualitative data collection methods (individual in-depth interviews and an online focus group) were utilised to encourage the participants to articulate their views, accounts, practices, and needs. Seventeen academics employed at six Malaysian public universities were interviewed, and eleven also participated in the Facebook-based focus group.

The analysis of the findings revealed six main categories in explaining the Malaysian academics' engagement in the internationalisation at public universities within the national higher education system. Regarding the conceptualisation of internationalisation, it was discovered that there are diverse interpretations of the internationalisation concept. Next, although there are similarities in their internationalisation activities or strategies, the rationales for internationalisation for their engagement in these activities are found to vary and sometimes conflicted with the state-level motivations. While the supports required by the academics in their internationalisation effort were funding, leadership and collegial, the findings on challenges hampering their internationalisation engagement revealed issues related to leadership, governance, financial management, and shortcomings stemming from research-publication and student management. Their engagement also was discovered to have impact on the academics' role and individual self.

Framed within the literature on the internationalisation of higher education and the academic profession, the discussion on the findings led to a few emerging themes, including the agency of academics in the internationalisation of higher education, misalignment between academics and institutional engagement, and internalisation of

neoliberalism through academics' internationalisation engagement. By exploring the academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education within the Malaysian higher education system, the study managed to capture the voice of academics who are indeed significant actors in universities. The implication of the study calls for further and meaningful reflection on how Malaysian public universities and the higher education system internationalise by taking account of academics' perspectives.

Acknowledgement

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Chapter One: Introduction

The internationalisation of higher education encompasses strategies and processes of incorporating intercultural and international elements in the higher education system and its operation. This thesis reports on a doctoral research project in the area of internationalisation of higher education that was conducted to explore the internationalisation of higher education as understood, experienced, and enacted by Malaysian academics. The first section of this introductory chapter describes the background of the research, the research aims and objectives, the research questions, and the contributions made by this study. This chapter ends with a summary, a conclusion, and an overview of the thesis structure.

Background to the Study

In the pursuit of quality higher education, many higher education systems and universities worldwide have embraced internationalisation, which is central to developing a knowledge society (Stigger, 2018). Internationalisation of higher education has long been regarded as axiomatic to higher education excellence (Urban & Palmer, 2013), and academics are deemed instrumental to university internationalisation (Green & Olson, 2003; Altbach, 2009; Childress, 2018).

Similarly, in Malaysia, internationalisation has been recognised as one of the main drivers of the transformation of Malaysian higher education (Sirat, 2009; Trent, 2012). With the country's ambitious aspirations to be a hub of higher education by the year 2020 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007) and then proceed to host 250,000 international students by 2025 (Ministry of Education, 2015), internationalisation initiatives have been further intensified through the state and sectoral and institutional imperatives.

Historically, it was not clear when the internationalisation of Malaysian universities actually began. It could arguably be as early as the establishment of the first public university, the University of Malaya, in 1962 when Malaysia (then Malaya) was under British colonisation. For the purpose of the context of the study, the timeline concerned

is within the period when internationalisation policy was first formally introduced into the Malaysian higher education system to the present.

For the past thirty years, the Malaysian higher education system has undergone tremendous development, and one of the most progressive areas is internationalisation (Abd Aziz & Abdullah, 2014). Nevertheless, emphasis on internationalisation policies and the intensity of related activities at the state and institutional levels (Morshidi et al., 2007) has yet to be reflected in similar productivity in the development of research on the topic (Abd Aziz & Abdullah, 2014). Focus on higher education theoretical and empirical work on internationalisation in Malaysia has mainly considered internationalisation policies and frameworks (Azman & Da Wan, 2020; Tham, 2013), international students (Abdullah, Abd Aziz, & Mohd Ibrahim, 2014; Saad et al., 2013; Mohd Faiz, 2011), and intercultural competence (Chia, 2009; Ibrahim, Muslim, & Buang, 2011; Yee, 2014).

In the literature review section (Chapter Two), I will present the spectrum of studies on internationalisation in various contexts to offer an overview of the research development in this area. Focus is also given to the discussion of studies within Malaysian contexts to establish the need for research on the internationalisation of higher education involving academics in this area of higher education studies. Chapter Three is dedicated to describing the research site and context for an overview of the country, the higher education system and state-level internationalisation policy.

Aims and Objectives

The idea to conduct the present research on academics' engagement in internationalisation also emerged from the need for internationalisation support that my colleagues and I experienced. As a group of academic staff of various job designations and scopes, each of us is responsible for being involved in, initiating, and supporting internationalisation imperatives by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (henceforth MoHE) and the universities we are attached to. However, we often find that we have to determine how ourselves. Due to various challenges in fulfilling this aspect of the call of duty, the need to reflect on current support systems, practices, attitudes, and perceptions arises.

Therefore, the study aims to explore academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education. It focuses on their perceptions, experiences, practices, and needs within public universities in Malaysia. The following are the research objectives:

1. To explore academics' understanding of the internationalisation of higher education in the context of Malaysian public universities.

2. To gain insights on academics' engagement in the process of internationalisation with regard to the planning and implementation of the internationalisation agenda for Malaysian public universities.

3. To gather academics' views that could assist in aligning institutional internationalisation plans to departmental, teaching, and research agendas to allow for better engagement of academics in internationalisation.

4. To examine the impact of the internationalisation of higher education on the academics' professional roles and identities.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions that guided the data collection and analysis:

1. In what ways do academics engage in the internationalisation of higher education? (RQ1)

2. What are their rationales for engaging in the internationalisation of higher education? (RQ2)

3. What support do academics want in their engagement with the internationalisation of higher education? (RQ3)

4. How does their engagement in internationalisation impact the academics? (RQ4)

In light of these research questions, the data collection methods were designed to initiate conversations about and explore the discourse around the internationalisation of higher education in Malaysia concerning academics' engagement from the academic participants' perspectives.

Contribution of the Study

This study represents an effort to explain an educational phenomenon (internationalisation) at a micro (individual) level as part of the reaction to the internationalisation of higher education at the macro (state) and meso (institutional)

levels. By focusing on academics' perspectives and the local context, as mentioned above, the present study makes a few minor yet necessary contributions to the knowledge in this area, particularly on academics' engagement and the internationalisation of academia in the Malaysian context, as well as the knowledge regarding online research methodology, which will be described in the following section.

Insights into higher education internationalisation in a specific local context
The study contributes to research on internationalisation to further highlight academics' voices in the discourse of the internationalisation of higher education since there has only been a limited reference to academics' perspectives (Ryan, 2011), especially in Malaysian contexts (Abd Aziz and Abdullah, 2014). This is perhaps due to previous studies' tendency to tune into the voice of students, leaders, and policymakers in this area. However, it has been long established that academics are instrumental to a university's internationalisation (Childress, 2009, 2018). By featuring academics' perspectives on how internationalisation has impacted their practices, roles and identities, the conclusions generated through this study could be utilised to inform the internationalisation of higher education institutions through the evaluation of current policies and practices.

In Malaysia's case, the study's findings could serve as a reflection and evaluation of how the internationalisation of higher education policies, especially the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education and public universities' internationalisation policies, are being interpreted and materialised by one of the main actors in the internationalisation process. For example, the Malaysian Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015-2025 clearly states that internationalisation and academics are the main thrusts that need to be strengthened. The study has unveiled the contradictions between the rhetoric and reality of the academics' engagement and agency of internationalisation in Malaysian public universities.

Studies into the internationalisation of higher education in the Malaysian context have seen somewhat limited growth compared to the rapid development of internationalisation policy and practice in Malaysia itself. Within this body of scholarship and research, studies focusing on transnational education, cross-border student mobility, and international student experience have seen greater development than in the area of academics' engagement. As both students and academic staff are at the core of the

internationalisation process, a shift in the limelight to academics' endeavours is of value in terms of our understanding of the fast-changing realities of the internationalisation of higher education in Malaysia. The insights gained from this study should also enhance the knowledge of the internationalisation of higher education from a Malaysian, that is, a non-Western or, specifically, part of the Southern perspective.

The research provides valuable information and insights into improving the planning and implementation of national and institutional internationalisation agenda for Malaysian public universities. Aligning institutional internationalisation plans to departmental, teaching, and research agendas based on academics' feedback is critical to ensure better involvement of academics in the internationalisation of higher education as a transformative process. It also offers insights that could potentially support the improvement of current frameworks or policies for internationalising Malaysian public universities, operating in a rapidly changing context and within a national policy striving to make Malaysia the regional hub for higher education.

In addition, considering that the concept of internationalisation is still very much evolving with ongoing debates on its meaning (Buckner & Stein, 2020; de Wit et al., 2015; Knight, 2014, 2021), multidimensional nature (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Proctor, 2018; Stein et al., 2016), and worth (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2012; Brandenburg, & de Wit, 2015; de Wit, 2020), this study contributes to the development of the discourse by offering a better understanding of how academics interpret and practise internationalisation given their values, the situations they are in, the resources they have access to, and finally the challenges they have to deal with in their professional domain. Furthermore, the insights generated as the result of the study could help conceptualise, operationalise, and strategise internationalisation initiatives that are context-sensitive at the micro-level to better support the engagement of academics in the internationalisation of higher education. In other words, this study can be regarded as an effort towards research-based decision-making processes regarding policy and practice in higher education internationalisation.

Expansion of The Changing Academic Profession discourse
The following contribution of the study is to the enhancement of knowledge of the academic profession. Large-scale research projects on the academic profession have been conducted extensively, some even longitudinally. For instance, the global

Changing Academic Profession (CAP) and the Academic Profession in the Knowledge-based Society (APIKS) and regional Academic Profession in Europe: Responses to Societal Challenges (EUROAC) have contributed significantly towards developing the academic profession as an established body of knowledge within the science of the profession. Although the aim of the present study is not to try to solve problems in this area or theorise about the academic profession, it makes an effort to explain the "regularities in the objects" (Amaral & Magalhães, (2007), as cited in Carvalho (2017), the study is analysing, in this case, the participants' internationalisation engagement. While it may not be as significant and generalisable as the major global and regional-scale studies mentioned above, the study does provide further insights into the Changing Academic Profession discourse in the Malaysian context by focusing specifically on the internationalisation dimension of the academic profession. This study also contributes to the discourse of the wider, implicit globalisation agenda, with emphasis on changing academic work (Turner & Robson, 2009), focusing on the Malaysian context. With the spotlight on this specific context, it has shed light on the unique identity of public university academics who are also regarded as civil servants in one of the world's most top-down higher education systems.

Social media as a research tool

The use of social media as a research method is gaining increasing attention (Snelson, 2016), with platforms such as Twitter and Facebook being used to recruit participants, for online surveys, as well as focus groups and as research sites (Orth et al., 2020). However, data on higher education research employing social media as a platform for a focus group involving academics as participants is relatively scant. The present study's contribution in this regard is to explore the possibilities of utilising Facebook, a prevalent social media network, to explore academics' views and experience in the area of internationalisation engagement. The description of the procedures, ethical issues, and cultural challenges could provide valuable insights to fellow researchers who wish to consider using social media as a research tool or, more specifically, Facebook, with academics in a specific cultural context. The study proves that Facebook, in particular, can be used as a platform for closed, focus group discussion involving academics as a qualitative data generation method, though many practical, ethical, and cultural issues need to be considered, which will be described in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Thesis Structure

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter is the literature review section. Chapter Two maps out the relevant theoretical and empirical works on the internationalisation of higher education in general and some key debates in this area. A review of the literature in the research focus area: academics as professionals and their international engagement are also discussed in this part of the thesis. In light of the theoretical aspects and current research trends in this area, I subsequently present the rationales for researching academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education in the Malaysian context.

Chapter Three comprises a detailed description of the research context in terms of the geographical, demographical and historical information of the country. The second part of this chapter notes the historical and organisational background of Malaysia higher education system with the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia being central to its development. The progress of the internationalisation of higher education as driven by the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia and an overview of its public university division where the study is contextualised are also presented to provide a comprehensive illustration of the context of the study.

The methodology proposed for the project will be presented in Chapter Four, which consists of detailed descriptions of the methodologic features, research approach, procedures related to participant recruitment, data collection work that took place in Malaysia as well as online, and justifications for the decisions taken throughout the development of the study. This chapter will also include my reflection on the data collection and analysis journey as the researcher.

The findings of the research are presented in two chapters. Chapter Five illustrates the findings for the first and second research questions, which reveal the conceptualisation of internationalisation by the participants, their underlying reasons or rationales for their engagement and also the strategies and activities they perform as part of their engagement in internationalising universities. The findings related to the other two research questions: i) support received and required, which led to the revelations of the challenges they faced

in internationalisation, and ii) the impact of their involvement in the process on their academic professional and individual self, are presented in Chapter Six.

Chapter Seven discusses the findings of the present research in the Malaysian context concerning the larger, current discourse of internationalisation of higher education at the global and national levels. Emerging and intersecting themes that run across the findings of all four research questions are reviewed in light of the theories of and in relation to prior studies in this area.

This report ends with a more concise presentation of the summary of the research as a whole, the main conclusions, the limitations of the study and, finally, the implications and some suggestions for future research in the area of academics' perspectives on the internationalisation of higher education.

Summary

To summarise, in this introductory chapter, I have outlined the background of the study, which briefly highlights the focus of the study, the internationalisation of the academia in a Malaysian context. The research's purpose, guiding questions, and contributions to enhancing the knowledge in the internationalisation of academia from academic professionals' perspectives have also been presented in this section. Finally, I briefly laid out an overview of the content of the entire dissertation in terms of each subsequent chapter's outline. Next, Chapter Two is the literature review section, in which I will discuss the theoretical framework, previous empirical work and the debate on tertiary education's internationalisation and the academic profession.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter discusses the internationalisation of higher education and its relation to the academic profession. It explores some key definitions, rationales, and models of the internationalisation of higher education. A review of relevant empirical work in the internationalisation of higher education globally and in Malaysian contexts is presented to give an overview of the research trend in this area within various contexts and the context of the present study.

The following section is dedicated to the nature of the academic profession in the context of a university, the notion of academic engagement and a discussion on what it is like for academics internationalising in neo-liberal higher education systems. Concerning the theoretical discussion on internationalisation at the individual level, I also discuss academics' Sanderson's work on the internationalisation of the academic self (Sanderson, 2008, 2011). The section on the debate on internationalisation and the changing reality of the academic profession highlights how some of the key conceptual themes in both areas, internationalisation and the academic profession, play out and overlap in the discourse of the engagement of academics in the internationalisation of higher education. Research on academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education is also featured towards the end of the chapter.

An Overview of the Internationalisation of Higher Education

Defining Internationalisation of Higher Education

The internationalisation of higher education, also widely referred to as international education, is often associated with international and intercultural features of higher education as opposed to its local and ethnocentric aspects. In the scholarship of higher education, the definition of internationalisation of higher education has undergone an evolutionary change for the past three decades. International higher education scholars' attempts to define the internationalisation of higher education demonstrate that the concept is extensive, diversely utilised (Knight, 2004b), multi-dimensional (Knight, 2003, 2004b; Stier, 2004; Tham, 2013) and "multi-stranded" (Turner & Robson, 2008, p.12).

An example of this ongoing, gradual, and progressive evolution is evident in Jane Knight's widely cited definitions of the internationalisation of higher education. Initially, she defines internationalisation as "the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution" (Knight, 1994), and later incorporates the "global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2003, p.2).

In both Knight's definitions, process denotes continuous and developmental effort while the international-intercultural-global triad is inclusive of both diversities, locally and worldwide (Knight, 2004b). The shift from the institutional level, in the first definition, to postsecondary education, in the second one, also generalises tertiary education, inclusive of national and sector levels, as the site for internationalisation instead of 'the institution' initially (Knight, 2004b).

Due to the complexity and rapid changes in higher education systems around the world and as a result of continuous reflection on the phenomenon of internationalisation by international education scholars through a Delphi Panel exercise, de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron-Polak (2015) proposed a revised version of Knight's (2004) internationalisation interpretation as follows,

> "The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of postsecondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society." (de Wit et al., 2015, p.29)

Compared to Knight's definitions, the revised definition by de Wit et al. (2015) highlights the importance of the purpose of internationalisation, which is for a better quality of education experience for the institutional communities and the public good. It is also important to note that, here, internationalisation is explicitly intended as a means towards improving the quality of education rather than a goal in itself (de Wit & Hunter, 2015).

On the contrary, Van der Wende (1997) proposes an alternative purpose of internationalisation,

any systematic effort aimed at making higher education "responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economy and labour markets" (Van der Wende, 1997, p.18).

In this interpretation, internationalisation serves as a strategy to face the challenges of globalisation and seems more detached from being institutional-based. This definition raises the question of the aims of internationalisation of higher education in light of the functions of a university, as it is "an intrinsic component of the academic mission of universities" (Childress, 2018). Is responding to globalisation the primary purpose of higher education and a university?

Prior to the views of internationalisation as a process (Knight, 2004b) and a response (Van Der Wende, 1997), internationalisation of higher education has been described as institutional-based, international-oriented activities, programmes and services (Arum et al., 1992). Later, in 2011, as part of the shift to the process approach in conceptualising the term, Hudzik (2011) defines internationalisation as a commitment. The concept of 'comprehensive internationalisation', which is introduced by Hudzik, offers a broader yet more detailed meaning of internationalisation which emphasises the role of various members of the higher education system in the integration of international elements through various aspects of a university,

> Comprehensive internationalisation is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. […] Comprehensive internationalisation not only affects all of campus life but the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations (Hudzik, 2011, p.6).

In Knight's (1997; 2004) and Hudzik's (2011) definitions, incorporating international and intercultural components into the aims and functions of higher education within the system is explicit and central to this concept. In comparison, the nature of the effort and what it encompasses is not clear in the definition by Van der Wende (1997). Nevertheless, what is highlighted instead is the need for higher education institutions to respond and adapt to or act upon the rapidly changing and increasingly challenging social and economic global environment. In my opinion, responding to the dynamic result of

globalisation as part of internationalisation purposes is inevitable; however, how universities respond and react to external phenomena is more critical and needs the utmost attention. Responses in the form of internationalisation initiatives and rationales are perhaps best suited to the main purpose of a university and the goals of higher education. The sense of internationalisation as a means towards better education and for the betterment of society beyond the institutional walls, as proposed by de Wit & Hunter (2015), should be seen as more befitting the real purpose of a university.

In addition, comparing all the conceptualisations, through these terms - process, commitment and systematic effort, it can be implied that internationalisation is an intentional, strategic and continual planned initiative, not just a set of generic, tokenistic international activities carried out without specific aims.

However, intentional, strategic and continuous may not be sufficient for universities and a whole higher education system of a nation for the internationalisation process to be effective in enhancing higher education quality (de Wit & Hunter, 2015) and in shaping institutional ethos (Hudzik, 2011). Turner and Robson go beyond aims and activities in conceptualising internationalisation by drawing on Bartell (2003) and advocating for the internationalisation process to move from 'symbolic' to 'transformative internationalisation' (Bartell, 2003), as stated,

> Transformative internationalisation is as much about values of international reciprocity within the institutional ethical and belief system as it is about skilful teaching and learning practices, requiring individuals to move from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative position.' (Turner & Robson, 2008, p.125-126)

Indeed, internationalisation should be transformative and reciprocal if ethnorelative position becomes the aim of the integration of intercultural and international constituents that is at the core of higher education internationalisation. Such an internationalisation concept emphasises the inculcation of intercultural competencies inclusive of international students and local cultures. Very often in practice, it is expected that international students and staff acquire the academic and the local cultures at the host university or country, which is contrary to reciprocity. Therefore, Turner & Robson (2008) call for a critical reflection on how mainstream pedagogical approaches are practised in the name of internationalisation. They also propose reciprocity in higher education, which emphasises actors of higher education internationalisation to be more

open to diversity, more willing to learn from each other and more reflexive, thus realising transformative internationalisation (Turner & Robson, 2008).

As presented above, the dynamics in theorising internationalisation reflect the rapidly changing scenario of higher education internationalisation, which permeates universities globally. Although it has been noted that internationalisation could carry various meanings to different people and has become more of a buzzword to suit different purposes, for it to be useful in advancing higher education in a specific context, internationalisation needs "a working definition in combination with a conceptual framework for internationalisation of higher education (de Wit, 2002).

For the purpose of the research, the internationalisation of higher education, according to Hudzik's (2011) comprehensive internationalisation definition, is felt to be useful in exploring the engagement of academics in internationalisation. As the actual process of internationalisation of higher education takes place in universities (Knight, 2004b) and the engagement to internationalisation by the actors within universities affects the institution (Proctor, 2016), Hudzik's comprehensive internationalisation highlights that internationalisation is not only a process but also a commitment enacted, which could be viewed as echoing the notion of engagement.

In fact, the definition also covers both the university and the broader higher education system and penetrates much deeper layers of institutions' communities, including academic staff. While Knight (2004) focuses more on the local higher education level and Van der Wende (1997) on the global scale, Hudzik (2011) emphasises the impact of internationalisation commitments on the immediate campus community as well as beyond institutional physical and functional borders. This reflects the experience that academics have through their engagement in the internationalisation of higher education, which will be reported later in the thesis.

Frameworks for the Internationalisation of Higher Education

Following the discussion on internationalisation concepts and conceptualisations, to further understand what internationalisation of higher education entails, it is helpful to examine a few frameworks and forms of internationalisation of higher education from the

literature. Knight (2010), as cited in Knight (2012), illustrates the two pillars of internationalisation as shown in Figure 2:
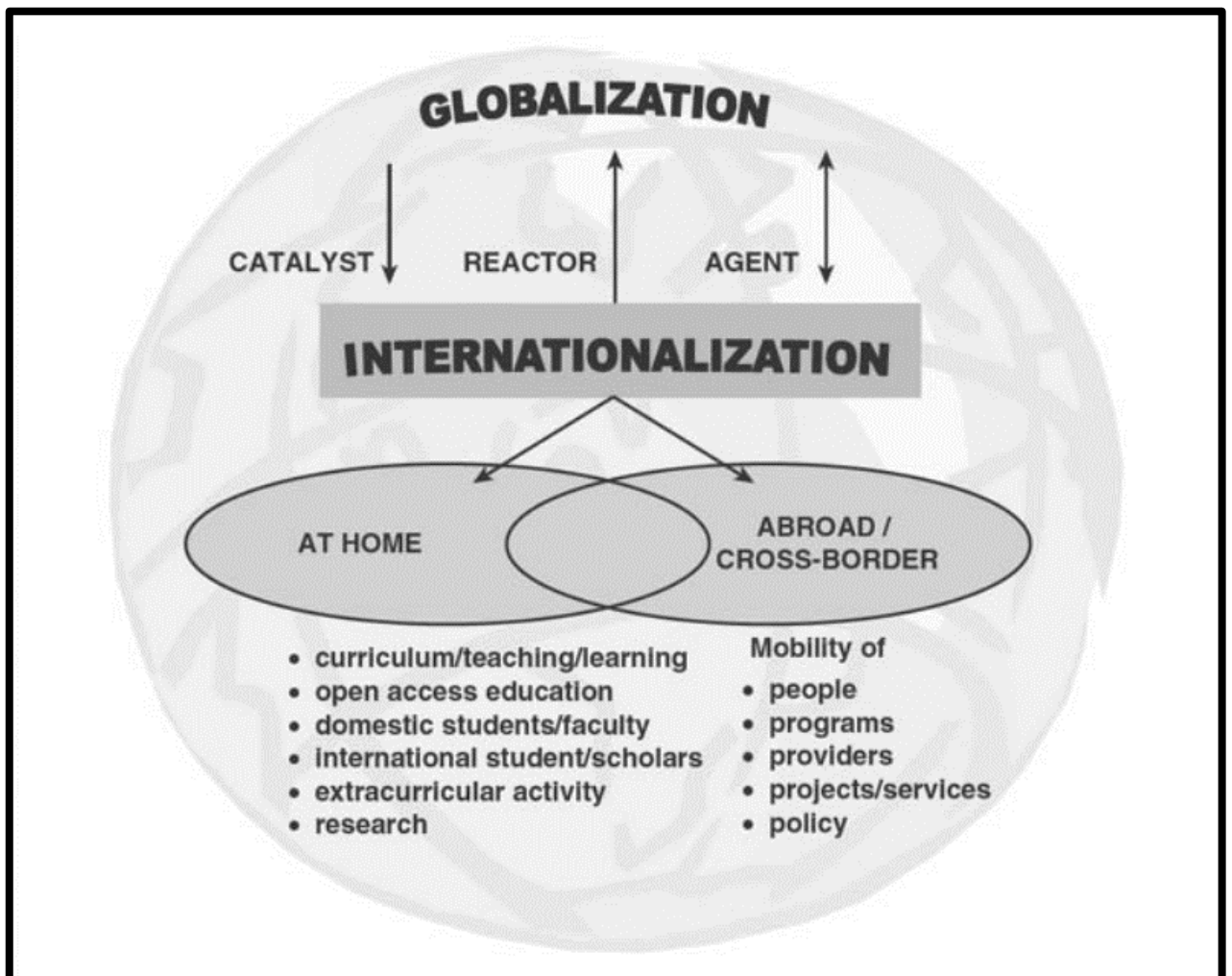
Figure 1: Two Pillars of Internationalisation: At Home and Abroad/Cross-Border
Source: Knight (2010), as cited in Knight (2012, p.10)

Figure 1 shows the categorisation of internationalisation activities at the institutional level into two groups. Firstly, cross-border internationalisation refers to all forms of education programmes which involve crossing national boundaries. For example, all forms of mobility activities involving students and both academic and administration staff to travel to a different country are part of internationalisation abroad. Movement of academic and training programmes, content, policy and resources from the country of origin to a hosting country are also categorised as in the same group. Partnerships in research which involves student or staff exchange, visiting scholars, study abroad programmes and transnational education, are some examples of cross-border internationalisation activities.

On the other hand, internationalisation at home (henceforth, IaH) consists of the collection of activities that are campus-based that develop students' knowledge about the world, international understanding and intercultural skills through teaching and learning activities or academic study programmes. Those involved in internationalisation at home are mainly the campus community members, such as local and international students and staff. Integration of international and intercultural elements into extracurricular activities and research is also included under the realm of internationalisation at home.

To further understand what IaH means, according to Beelen and Jones (2015), internationalisation at home is,

> "…the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments" (p. 76)

While this definition emphasises internationalisation for all domestic students, Nilsson (1999) specifies that international and intercultural integration in learning opportunities includes students who are not involved in cross-border internationalisation programmes for various factors, as it is expected that in a university, only a small minority of students, especially local ones, have the opportunity to join mobility abroad programmes. This could form an elitist group (de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron-Polak, 2015) and lead to the marginalisation of those who do not have access to cross-border internationalisation to international and intercultural experiences through tertiary education. Therefore, IaH is an important dimension of higher education internationalisation because of its benefits in internationalising the experiences and outlooks of the non-mobile majority of a university community, especially home students (de Wit et al., 2015). Besides, I could also be seen as a progressive means to a goal and holistic internationalisation process (Paige, 2003) apart from being more inclusive compared to internationalisation abroad initiatives.

A major component of IaH is the internationalisation of curriculum (henceforth IoC), but what is an international curriculum? OECD, in a report by IDP Education Australia (1995), defines Internationalised Curricula as,

> Curricula with an international orientation in content, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally/socially) in an international and multicultural context and designed for domestic students as well as foreign students. (p.1)

Clifford & Montgomery (2017) explain the different levels of IoC, which range from weak structure to transformative internationalised curriculum. They urge for holistic development of internationalised curricula and "the anti-globalisation and transformative approaches" (p.1148). Similarly, although the content is central to the definition given by OECD above, the call for transformative IoC has grown stronger over the past decade (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Clifford & Montgomery, 2015, 2017; Leask & Carroll, 2011; Robson & Wihlborg, 2019).

For academics, IoC is an integral part of academics' engagement in internationalisation. As the 'sole actor' responsible directly for teaching and learning, IoC is a laborious and complex endeavour which requires leadership and collegial support as well as resources that are consistent with an institutional internationalisation policy. Besides academics' beliefs, action plays a significant role in successful IoC (Van Der Wende, 1997).

The basis of internationalising higher education, which includes the concepts, dimensions, rationales, values and ideologies underpinning internationalisation, needs to be critically reflected on. Therefore, the following sections attempt to examine a few available rationales and the underpinning ideologies of the internationalisation of higher education.

Rationales for the Internationalisation of Higher Education

Why internationalise higher education? Scholars such as Jane Knight, Philip Altbach and Hans de Wit, among many others, have contributed extensively to the literature on internationalisation rationales (Altbach & Knight, 2007; de Wit, 2002; Knight, 2004; Knight, 2021; Knight & de Wit, 2018). In the internationalisation of higher education, rationales are "motivations for integrating an international dimension into higher education" (de Wit, 2002, p.224). Rationales also represent the 'driving force' (Knight, 2004) or reasons for having internationalisation policies, strategies and engagement in place either at national, state, institutional and individual levels. Some examples include personal development, teaching and research quality enhancement (Proctor, 2016). These

motivations are often reflected in the planning and implementation of internationalisation strategies, policies, and activities (Knight, 2012).

Similar to definitions, rationales for internationalising higher education also vary (Childress, 2018; de Wit, Hunter, Howard & Egron-Polak, 2015; de Wit, 2002; Knight, 2004; Stier, 2004; Svetlik & Lalić, 2016), dynamic (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2012), overlapping and evolving (Knight & de Wit, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to be aware of and understand the motivations for internationalising because, with the changing global higher education environment, actors in higher education are faced with many challenges related to internationalisation impacts that shape global and national higher education development. In recent years, for instance, the COVID-19 pandemic, wars, environmental sustainability, nationalism and racism are examples of global phenomena affecting how higher education systems worldwide function. How the actors and stakeholders of higher education respond to these challenges and how this, in turn, shapes internationalisation initiatives often relate to the "why" of internationalisation.

One of the widely referred works on rationales for the internationalisation of higher education is by de Wit and Knight (1995), who identify four types of motivations driving internationalisation, namely, economic rationales, political rationales, academic rationales, and social and cultural rationales (de Wit, 2002; Knight, 1997, 1999, 2004). Economic rationales include more market-driven motivations such as graduate employability, revenue generation, economic gains and competitiveness (de Wit, 2002; Hudzik, 2011). Maintaining political diplomacy for the purpose of national security and peacekeeping through higher education internationalisation initiatives has also been identified as a political rationale (Childress, 2018). Academic rationales include mutual knowledge sharing through collaboration, partnerships in teaching and research for the improvement of higher education quality (Knight, 1999). Inculcating intercultural understanding, respect for others' culture, appreciating one's national identity (Qiang, 2003) and developing global citizenship form the social and cultural rationales which emphasise the development of self with relations to others for the benefit of the common world and future (Nussbaum, 2002).

Arguing that the underpinning ideologies of the rationales for internationalisation are equally diverse, Jonas Stier (2004) offers a framework for assessing ideologies underlying

internationalisation policies and rationales. Illustrating the interpretation of and approaches to internationalisation, Stier (2004) suggests three divergent ideologies, namely, educationalism, idealism, and instrumentalism, that underpin higher education internationalisation policies and strategies. He points out that these ideologies lead to different understandings of the term 'internationalisation' and, more importantly, result in different practices (Stier, 2004).

Resembling a combination of the academic, social, and cultural rationales (de Wit & Knight, 1999), the educationalist approach to internationalisation places greater importance on the value of learning itself in a broader and deeper sense. The focus of educationalism is on the learners' learning experience. The goals of internationalisation based on educationalism include enriching the learning experience, gaining new perspectives and knowledge about others in the world and for the learner's personal development, especially in terms of cultural competence. These are hoped to be achieved through self-reflection and exposure to the cultures of others as the result of an internationalised curriculum and learning process. To illustrate this, the revised definition by de Wit et al. (2015) explicitly set the primary motivations for internationalisation as "in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society" (de Wit et al., 2015, p.29), which should be the prioritised rationales of internationalisation. However, the educationalist approach to internationalisation also has its weaknesses, as there is a risk of "academicentrism" (Stier, 2004), which means one higher education system or its actors feeling superior over others by way of quality, for example. Another possible criticism of the educationalist's perspective is the tendency to assume that education alone is the best solution to global problems.

According to Stier (2004), idealism renders internationalisation as "good per se" (p.88) which implies that educational, international collaboration would result in a just and equal world, free from economic, social and pollical disparities. Among others, the aim of an idealist rationale for internationalisation promotes helping the underprivileged, the poor and the less fortunate around the world. Inculcating intercultural tolerance and unity among the human race is also another feature of idealism in internationalisation motivations. The drawbacks of idealism, however, lie in the deep belief that internationalisation is "inherently good" (Ilieva et al., 2014, p.880) and that its perspective

could be ethnocentric (Stier, 2004). Engaging with internationalisation with the belief that it is fundamentally beneficial in its own right is flawed as the literature in this area has continuously revealed that internationalisation can be disruptive as well (Bamberger et al., 2019). Furthermore, Stier (2004) also criticises the contradiction in idealism, where pluralism is often suppressed and select dominant cultures are promoted in the name of internationalisation.

Instrumentalism as an ideology underlying internationalisation rationale, on the other hand, views internationalisation as a tool or means to achieve practical goals and is often economic-driven. Common examples of internationalisation initiatives driven by instrumentalism include international student recruitment and transnational education as income-generating activities. Incorporating international elements in higher education for employment or graduate marketability is also another example of instrumentalist ideology. Scholars warn of the danger of exploitation of international students and academics for the sake of economic gains by higher education systems and institutions when instrumentalism-based internationalisation rationales are dominant (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; Stier, 2004).

In addition to the awareness of diversity in the primary motivations for internationalisation, it is equally vital to understand that rationales influence how actors in higher education internationalise and that this could have different impacts (Hans de Wit, 2002). Such understanding is particularly useful as a ground for reflection in reviewing and assessing internationalisation efforts and providing better support for internationalisation initiatives. An example of the endeavour to understand interpretations and rationales of internationalisation is a study conducted by Clifford & Montgomery (2014) which contends the interpretation and practice of institutional delivery of global citizenship curriculum in the name of internationalisation and questions the purpose of higher education. Despite institutional policy statements promoting global citizenship education through internationalisation, the study found that there was a gap between the rhetoric and practice in meaningfully delivering the global citizenship curriculum. This raises the need for careful examination of internationalisation motives and practices. As internationalisation is often regarded as axiomatic to good quality higher education (Harris, 2009), problematising internationalisation for the purpose of reflection and improvement as such is paramount (Knight & de Wit, 2018).

One of the most pertinent observations made by some scholars in international education is the shift of rationales of internationalisation from political and academic ones to the rationales that have been more economic-driven for the past 30 years (Clifford & Montgomery, 2014; de Wit, 2017; Knight & de Wit, 2018; Naidoo, 2018; Stein & McCartney, 2021). They also expressed the need for serious reflection on this change as it may result in adverse consequences of internationalisation. As Knight (2014) reiterates,

> The critical question is whether internationalisation has evolved from what has been traditionally considered a process based on the values of cooperation, partnership, exchange, mutual benefits and capacity building to one that is increasingly characterised by competition, commercialisation, self-interest and status-building. Have the values related to economic, political and status-related rationales trumped the importance and values related to academic and social-cultural purposes and benefits of higher education internationalisation? (Knight, 2014, p.75)

The idea that internationalisation needs to be transformative also resonates well with the purpose of the present research. While the foci of higher education research vastly promote a greater understanding of how internationalisation affects students, it is also essential to gain some insights into how internationalisation engagement, as experienced by academics, could be transformative. Do academics view internationalisation as a useful mechanism for international and intercultural reciprocity? Does internationalisation mean embracing reciprocity in their profession and workplace ethos?

To conclude the overview of the internationalisation of higher education as presented above, the varied definitions, forms and rationales of internationalisation of higher education that are available in the literature as theorised by international higher education scholars and discussed above illustrate the breadth, depth, and complexity of the internationalisation of higher education. Having reviewed these three aspects of the internationalisation of higher education, it seems that conceptualising internationalisation requires careful consideration of various facets of internationalisation, including the philosophies underpinning each definition, motivation and model. This is because the dynamically changing world of higher education due to globalisation demands us to continuously and critically reflect on how we understand internationalisation, how we engage with it and how we affect and be affected by it.

Research on the Internationalisation of Higher Education

Internationalisation, while taking centre stage within the higher education discourse (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011), has been given different priorities by various parties in different contexts. Given the multifaceted nature of internationalisation (de Wit & Hunter, 2015; Knight, 2015; Kehm, 2011), which ranges from international student recruitment to mobility, international collaboration to transnational education and internationalisation of curriculum, some aspects of internationalisation are bound to be given more empirical attention than others.

A considerable amount of research in the internationalisation of higher education has focused on regional (International Association of Universities, 2012; Frolich & Veiga, 2005), national (Altbach, 1996; de Wit et al., 2015; Childress, 2006), institutional internationalisation strategies (Childress, 2009; Svetlik & Braček Lalić, 2016), international students' experience (Trahar & Hyland, 2011; Montgomery, 2010) and student mobility (Teichler, 1999; Deardorff, 2006; Hyland et al., 2008). These research foci are consistent with the findings of the following literature review analysis on the internationalisation of higher education.

Yemini and Sagie (2016) conducted a systematic screening and analysis of the internationalisation of higher education literature, which examined 7,000 scholarly, peer-reviewed articles published from 1980 to 2014. Their study revealed that intercultural and multicultural issues, as well as internationalisation at-home activities, have gained prominence recently. However, having a closer look at the topics within internationalisation at home in their study, one could observe that research has been mainly on the cultural issues related to students and about supporting students. There is very little mention of studies researching academics' internationalisation issues or activities, hence echoing the call for more in-depth research on international research, teaching and learning core activities (Kehm, 2011; Leask, 2015).

More work investigating academics' experience and practice is timely if we were to reflect on how internationalisation has affected and will affect higher education. Perhaps more work, such as the one conducted by Douglas Proctor (2016), could contribute greatly to this reflection. Proctor's (2016) work on academics' motivations and drivers reveals a

disconnect between what institutions say is important and what academics do. It was found that in the Australian context, as reported in his study, the predominant focus of internationalisation is on international aspects of research, which is similar to most research on the same area but in different contexts. Other findings include, institutional and disciplinary contexts clearly influence international dimensions of academic work. Regarding academics' engagement in internationalisation, the study also reveals that individual agency is also a key influence in internationalisation engagement among academics. Reasons such as prior personal or professional experience and desire for career advancement are the important motivations for academics' engagement; however, what is unique about the Australian context, as proven by the study, is that distance and isolation, in particular, could motivate or hamper academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education.

The call for greater emphasis on campus-based internationalisation initiatives to prepare graduates for globalisation is another evidence of the need for more empirical data in this area, as stated by Knight (2012),

> "Universities thus have the responsibility and challenge to integrate international, intercultural, and comparative perspectives into student experience through campus-based and virtual activities in addition to international academic mobility experiences."

There also seem to be gaps between policy statements, the direction in the implementation of policies and the practice of actors in internationalisation (Ryan, 2012; Abd Aziz & Abdullah, 2014). This is also emphasised by de Wit & Jones (2012),

> The discourse of internationalisation does not always match reality in that, for too many universities, internationalisation means merely a collection of fragmented and unrelated activities rather than a comprehensive process.

For years, the research in international higher education has been predominantly focused on student experience and mobility as well as being contextualised in Anglophone countries with exceptions to European countries and China (Proctor, 2018). Besides contexts, in recent years, the area of internationalisation has also seen more emerging trends in international higher education research. One is ethical concerns within the higher education community (Altbach & de Wit, 2018). This call for emphasis on integrity in internationalisation strategies is crucial, especially in the competitive environment of global higher education (Inan et al., 2014).

Geographically, studies focusing on academics and internationalisation in recent years have mainly been contextualised in the Anglo-Saxon and European countries (Altbach, 1996; Childress, 2010; Green & Whitsed, 2015; Hyland et al., 2008; Green & Mertova, 2016; Svetlik & Braček Lalić, 2016). Research situated in the Eastern context, especially, has been rather scarce; as Altbach (2002) acknowledges, "the voices discussing internationalisation are largely Western" (p.30). Although he also provides an exception of a scholarly work with an Indian perspective, and now there are emerging voices from the East (Huang, 2006; Mok & Chan, 2016; Mok, 2013; Abd Aziz & Abdullah, 2014), empirical work featuring academics' voices from these regional systems of higher education is still lacking.

Finally, in recent years, more work has been seen to shift from why internationalise to how to internationalise (Buckner & Stein, 2020), which is an important trend that gives rise to an emerging niche area in higher education called Critical Internationalisation Studies.

Research on Malaysian Contexts

Compared to the scholarly work on internationalisation, research on the internationalisation of higher education in the Malaysian context has not really reflected how research has developed globally in the field of higher education internationalisation research, as discussed above. Despite an increase of in-depth studies looking at internationalisation practices and implementation globally, studies contextualised in Malaysia are rather limited and tend to focus on international students, student mobility, transnational education, and internationalisation policies. With Asian countries emerging as important players in higher education (Ilieva & Peak, 2016) and Malaysia's ambitious target to be a higher education excellence hub (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007), more research on the internationalisation of higher education in Malaysia is timely.

Despite having a quite established and rapidly developing higher education landscape, research on international higher education contextualised in Malaysia can be considered emerging and has yet to mature compared to other Asian international higher education providers such as Hong Kong and Japan (Kim et al., 2017). In a comparative study on academic publications patterns of Asian-based researchers from Hong Kong, China,

Japan and Malaysia in the field of international higher education from 1980 to 2013, it was highlighted that research on Malaysian contexts shifted its focus from teaching-learning to policy-based in the mid-2000s (Kim et al., 2017). The authors concluded that this could be in response to the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in 2007 after years of being under the purview of the Ministry of Education. The establishment of MoHE has also led to the introduction of various new higher education policies, including its strategy towards becoming an international higher education hub in the region.

Moving into the academic profession, studies on the role and involvement of academic staff in relation to the internationalisation process within the Malaysian public university context are scarce, too, and the focus is more on the macro rather than the micro level of internationalisation activities. An example of empirical work in this area is a case study conducted by Tham and Kam (2008), comparing the conception of internationalisation and the challenges faced by Malaysian public and private higher education institutions. The research revealed different conceptions and challenges. For example, in terms of conceptions, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia has a more comprehensive view (Hudzik, 2011) of internationalisation, while Multimedia University sees it as a response to globalisation. In this study, Tham and Kam (2008) also found that all participating universities perceive funding as a major obstacle to internationalisation, whereas other challenges each participating university faces vary. Such findings call for closer attention to the different needs of each institution in internationalisation. Equally important is a further examination of the needs of key actors of internationalisation activities.

Empirical work on the ways in which internationalisation activities at the macro level affect the individuals within the system is also hard to find. An important piece of research (Wan et al., 2016) investigating academics' perceptions of the initiatives taken by Malaysian public universities to encourage publication in top-tier international journals revealed that the management's influence over academics' publications is limited, as expressed by the academic participants. Such insight into an aspect of internationalisation engagement from an academics' perspective is valuable in understanding academics' motivations and barriers to internationalisation.

There are some studies on Malaysian academics within the academic professionalism topic that did not intend to focus on internationalisation. However, internationalisation did feature in the findings. For instance, Mohd Noor's work (2013) on the job satisfaction of Malaysian public university academics found that internationalisation is one of the issues that led to dissatisfaction among academics. The respondents of this mixed method study revealed that the academics linked internationalisation to work overload.

The scarcity of research on the internationalisation of the academia and from academics' perspectives seems to be inconsistent with the intensity of development on internationalisation activities in Malaysian higher education (Knight & Sirat, 2011; Abd Aziz & Abdullah, 2014), thus calling for further investigation of the impact of internationalisation on the academic profession.

Furthermore, supporting academic staff is becoming more crucial in the era of globalisation as academic professionals are increasingly confronted with the pressure to increase their international engagement as an outcome of it. For example, the eagerness of some East Asian nations, including Malaysia, to become regional hubs for higher education and to compete in the ranking tables has forced academics to intensify their commitment to international research collaboration, academic publication and community engagement activities and as Mok (2013) argues, at the expenses of teaching and learning.

In mapping the development of the internationalisation of higher education in Malaysia, Abd Aziz and Abdullah (2014) suggest that further investigation, particularly on campus-based internationalisation in Malaysia, is necessary. They also note the need for clearer guidance and direction in the implementation of internationalisation strategies, especially for actors in this process, such as academics. Similarly, de Wit and Jones (2012) also emphasise the urgency for alternative perspectives and voices in internationalisation because internationalisation has always been regarded as a Western phenomenon (Altbach, 2002), with developing countries on the sidelines.

The Academic Profession

In this section, I will briefly examine a few definitions of academics and explore academics' role and engagement in the internationalisation of higher education.

Who are academics? The concept of 'academic profession' seems somewhat multi-dimensional and elusive (Fanghanel, 2011; Shattock, 2014) in the literature. Many scholars, such as Ramsden (1996), give brief descriptions or insinuate that there is a definition, and several write about the academic profession without actually detailing what they mean or how they define the academic profession. According to Ramsden (1996), as cited in Cuthbert (1996), academic staff is defined as "those whose primary employment function is teaching and/or research" (p.26). While another definition of the academic profession is "occupations conducting interventions derived from scientific knowledge of mechanisms, structures, and contexts" (Brante, 2011, p.17). Although internationalisation is not explicitly mentioned in those definitions, academics' role, engagement and agency in this area is indeed fundamental, and I explore these in the preceding sections.

Academic staff is central to the university (Altbach, 2009; Childress, 2018; Proctor & Gengatharan, 2014), and faculty engagement drives successful internationalisation (American Council on Education, 2003). However, effective engagement of academic staff in the process of internationalisation remains a challenge (IEAA-EAIE Report on Leadership Needs in International Higher Education in Australia and Europe, 2014). As the engagement of academics in higher education internationalisation is the focus of the research, it is essential to examine what engagement, more broadly, means.

Haworth and Conrad (1997) state that engagement could possibly be a determining factor in the quality of higher education. Viewing the theory of engagement concerning academic quality, they emphasise that the involvement of and investment by students and staff are critical to a mutually supportive teaching and learning environment. They also note positive outcomes in professional growth and development among students due to learning from "committed scholar-teachers" (Haworth & Conrad, 1997, p.31). This implies that engagement comes in the form of involvement, investment and commitment made by academic practitioners. Here, engagement can also mean committing one's

attention, time, energy and resources. Besides, academics' engagement could also include their practice and conduct, which are also the results of personal decisions which happen at the individual level and are shaped by individual values.

In discussing academics' engagement in internationalising universities, Proctor (2016) highlights academics' agency as a driving factor of the internationalisation of higher education, as found in his study on the Australian context. Academics' agency is based on their tacit knowledge and practices. In internationalisation, the agency can be articulated through rhetoric, imperatives such as key performance indicators, opportunities and support, as well as challenges in internationalising higher education. Academics can have cumulative effects on their engagement in internationalising academia. Webb (2005) emphasises the agency of the actors within higher education institutions, such as administrators, academics and students in internationalising higher education as he believes that "only through the creative utilisation of the imagination and agency of those who comprise the university" (Webb, 2005, p.117) internationalisation could be transformative.

In addition, many studies suggest that academics' agency is well recognised as critical for successful internationalisation. For example, Henson et al. (1991) conducted a national survey and showed that over 90% of the responding institutions suggested that faculty are one of the "most important contributors to internationalisation. Faculty international competence and the translation and utilisation of this competence in university programs is very important" (p. 8). On the other hand, discussion about the practical impacts of internationalisation on the academic community remains contentious and talks less about the lived experience of academics, academics' identities and work (Vaira, 2004). Perhaps, a pertinent question to ask concerning the internationalisation of higher education is how much freedom academics have in deciding or acting on internationalisation the way they want to. Are they controlled by the structure within universities and the system or by their agency in internationalising themselves, teaching, research and services?

Framework for Academic Internationalisation

Sanderson's Framework for Internationalisation of the Academic Self

This study concerns the internationalisation experience and engagement of the actors, particularly academics within higher education institutions, where the foci include their understanding, rationales, initiatives, challenges, and impacts. Seeking an appropriate definition to be used for this purpose has been quite challenging as many definitions of internationalisation are mainly intended for macro (national and sector) or meso (organisational) levels (Sanderson, 2008). Scholars who emphasise within-institutional level internationalisation have argued that even Knight's (1999 and 2004) most widely cited definition offers rather a general description of internationalisation (Enequist, 2005; Sanderson, 2008; Liddicoat, 2003) where the departmental and academics' roles in internationalisation are not captured in these definitions despite the emphasis on the significance of faculty and academics as the agents at the ground where the actual development of internationalising the university takes place (Knight, 2004). Sanderson (2008) argues that

> "… currently favoured theory that focuses on internationalisation at the organisational level is largely limited in terms of dealing with the substance of how staff, themselves, might "become internationalised" […] A consolidated body of theory on how academic staff might internationalise their personal and professional outlooks, however, is not evident at this stage." (Sanderson, 2008, p. 281)

In his claims, Sanderson (2008), while acknowledging the usefulness of both Knight's (1997) and later the remodelled Knight's (2004) working definitions and conceptual frameworks of internationalisation of higher education at the state and organisational level, points out the limitation of the utility of the conceptualisation in providing a guiding foundation for internationalisation at actors' individual, within-institution level. As the main actor in internationalisation, academics' role particularly warrants a conceptual framework that details the humanistic and existential features of internationalisation of higher education (Sanderson, 2008), such as the pedagogical practices, curricula (Liddicoat, 2003), interculturality and student communication (Eisenchlas & Trevaskes, 2003). Therefore, Sanderson, 2008 suggests the foundation of the internationalisation of the academic self as a guide for "teachers to internationalise their personal and

professional outlooks." (p.276). It draws on Cranton's (2001) principles of authenticity in teaching in higher education combined with the idea of cosmopolitanism which forms the construct for teachers to deal with internationalisation.

Figure 3 shows the extent of Knight's (2004) depth dimension of the reach of internationalisation which comprises the national, sector and institutional levels. With the proposition for the conceptual framework for the internationalisation of the academic self, Sanderson (2008) suggests four more levels to be included, which are global and regional levels to form the supranational level and a further extension to the within-institution level, which consists of faculty or departmental and individual levels. The present study intends to utilise the within-institution level part in Figure 3 (Sanderson, 2008) to explain academics engagement in the internationalisation of higher education because it may be evident that there is a connection between components of the depth dimension of internationalisation which links organisational goals with what how academics internationalise their professional domains (Sanderson, 2011).
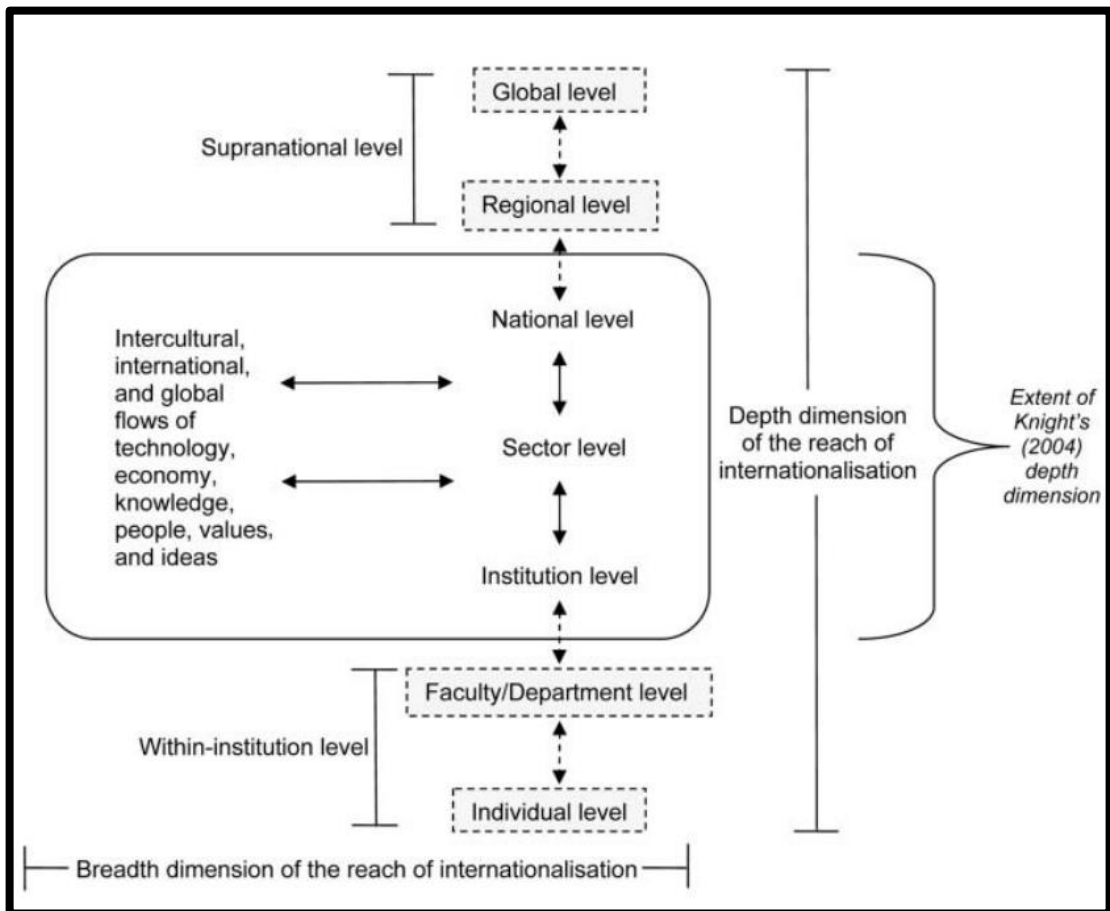
Figure 3: The Depth and Breadth Dimensions of the Reach of Internationalisation in
Knight's (2004) Definition
Source: Sanderson (2008, p.279)

In the context of the present study, Sanderson's (2008) ideas about the within-institution level, which consists of faculty or departmental level and individual level, seem relevant because to explore the engagement of the participants in internationalising the university, understanding how the individual academic self (personally and professionally) perceives, rationalises and acts upon internationalisation is necessary. This also includes understanding how they make sense of themselves as whole-person in relation to internationalisation. Consequently, to understand how academics engage themselves in the internationalisation process (Knight, 2004) at the organisational level, the intricacies of how they perform internationalisation as a-whole-person academic need to be explored, and Sanderson's (2011) conceptual framework for the internationalisation of the self explains the minutia of internationalisation at the individual level, particularly the internationalised teacher.

Following that discussion on the foundation of internationalisation of the academic self and responding to the question of how an internationalised academic teaches, Sanderson (2011) proposes the Profile, a set of criteria that can be observed among teachers who possess internationalised personal and professional outlooks. Again, the Profile (Sanderson, 2011) is supported by Teekens (n.d), Biggs's Level 3 teaching (2003) and Cranton's (2001) notion of the authentic teacher (as cited in Sanderson (2011). The internationalised teaching practice consists of the seven following dimensions, as suggested by Sanderson (2011, p. 665-666),

> (1) Have some basic knowledge of educational theory.
> (2) Incorporate internationalised content into subject material.
> (3) Have a critical appreciation of one's own culture and its assumptions.
> (4) Have some knowledge of other countries and cultures but a preference for being open to and appreciating other worldviews.
> (5) Use universal teaching strategies to enhance the learning experiences of all students.
> (6) Understand the way one's academic discipline and its related profession (e.g. physiotherapy) are structured in a range of countries.
> (7) Understand the international labour market in relation to one's academic discipline.

From the seven characteristics, it can be seen that Sanderson (2011) emphasises the importance for individual academics to deeply understand oneself, engage with one's own culture as well as to accept cultural differences and respect that other cultures have 'a pivotal place' (Sanderson, 2008, p. 282).

Nevertheless, Sanderson (2008) also discusses a few shortcomings of the concept, referring specifically to its underlying cosmopolitanism ideology. While cosmopolitanism aligns with internationalisation because it promotes appreciation of other's cultures, Sanderson is also quite sceptical of the extent of individual desire and commitment in genuinely reflecting on self and appreciating others. In other words, there is a danger of superficial practice in the act of internationalising as opposed to meaningful attitudinal change within the academic self. There is also a risk of 'banal cosmopolitanism' (Matthews and Sidhu, as cited in Sanderson (2008), where academics do not truly develop deep cosmopolitanism despite having engaged in internationalisation activities such as mobility programmes, internationalisation of curriculum and interaction with international students, colleagues or counterparts. Besides, he also flags that it is a mammoth task to permeate the "ethic of cosmopolitan in individual and social institutions" (Sanderson, 2008, p.298), especially when this is not explicitly advocated by the education system.

In relation to the present study, I find the above personal and professional characteristics, as conceptualised in the Profile, useful in guiding the research into academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education, which focuses on the academic self and within-institution context. Although there are weaknesses, it is worth considering the Profile as the lens in understanding and explaining internationalisation engagement at the individual, whole-person level as intended in this study.

Childress' Model and Typology for Faculty Engagement in Internationalisation

Another important research on academics' internationalisation is a case study by Childress (2010), comparing the engagement of academic staff in internationalisation at two universities, Duke University and University of Richmond, in the USA, that evidenced a strong commitment to internationalisation. Her research presents a model for

engaging academics in institutional internationalisation strategies called the Five I's of Faculty Engagement in Internationalization by Childress (2010), as depicted in Figure 4 below. The five I refer to are five elements essential for successful academics' engagement, namely intentionality, investments, infrastructure, institutional networks and individual support, which are derived from the findings of the case study on the two universities involved.

Childress also introduces the Typology of Strategies for Faculty Engagement in Internationalisation (Childress, 2018)**.** The typology categorises strategies to encourage academics to engage in internationalisation into three types; "teaching, research and service", with each one could be conducted in all three locations; "on campus, off campus-regionally and off campus-abroad" (Childress, 2018). Drawing from the case study findings, Childress reveals that opportunities for engaging in internationalisation, in the form of resources and programmes, were created for the academics working in these universities as part of the comprehensive approach for academic-led internationalisation at the universities. The study concludes that understanding academic staff's perception, practice, and needs within a specific physical, social or political context could lead to positive academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education.
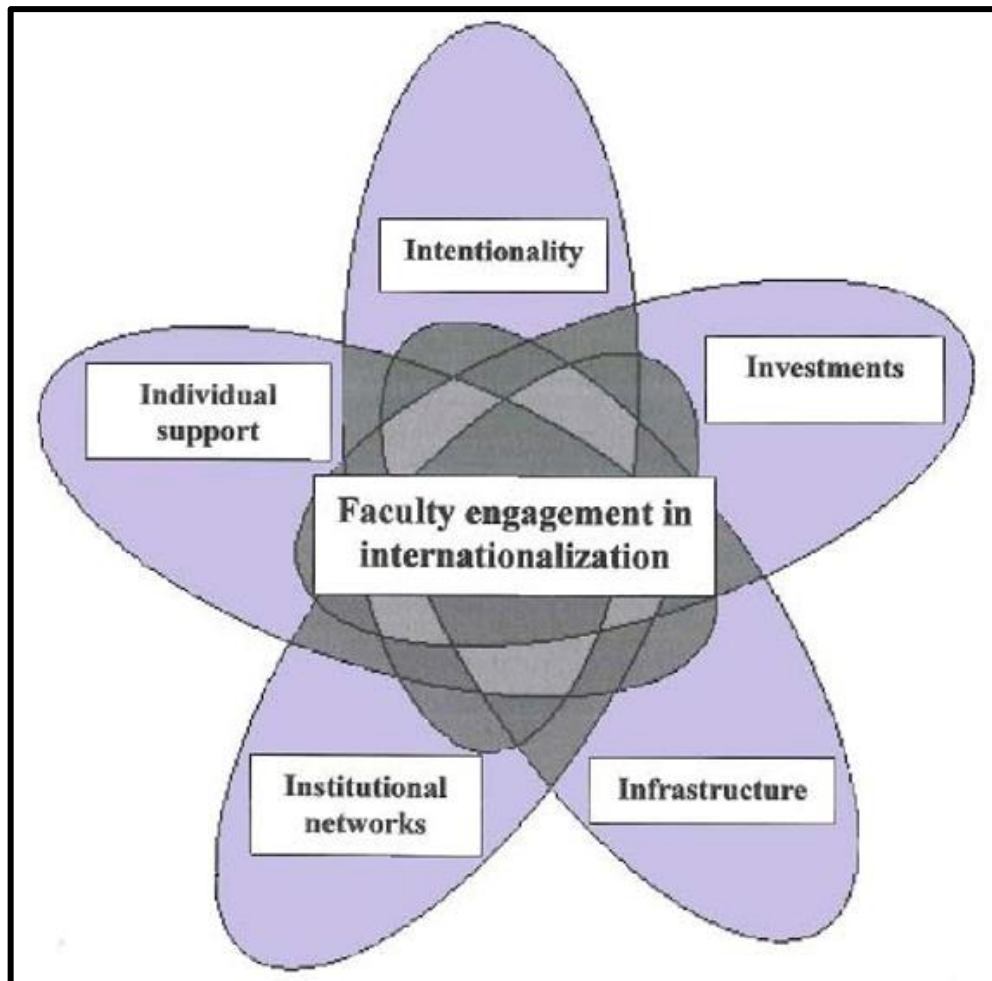
Figure 4: Five I's of Faculty Engagement in Internationalization by Childress (2010, p.139)

Both the model and the typology, as proposed by Childress (2018), are indeed useful in providing a guide for higher education institutions that wish to implement effective strategies in supporting academics in their internationalisation engagement. However, the model and typology should not be implemented as is in any universities. Duke University and the University of Richmond are two very unique American institutions, and so are other universities around the world, with each own organisational culture, ethos, practices and financial resources. Therefore, context is key to the adoption of both the model and typology, as she emphasises that the strategies should be tailored to the "unique institutional needs"(Childress, 2020, p.144).

Research on Academics' Internationalisation Engagement

The internationalisation of the academia, while deserving more empirical attention than ever, has been the focus of several studies, which contributed significantly to understanding the academic profession in relation to internationalisation. For example, a number of studies have revealed that internationalisation has a positive impact on higher education quality in terms of academics' professional development (Teichler, 2004; Green & Mertova, 2016), academics' personal motivations and institutional rationales for internationalisation diverge (Friesen, 2012). In addition, research on academic communities also found that they are directly involved (Childress, 2010) and expected to play a leading role in the internationalisation of higher education (British Council, 2013; Fielden, 2007). Also, institutional internationalisation strategies place the responsibility to catalyse the internationalisation agenda on academic staff (Warwick & Moogan, 2013).

More work on academic staff and internationalisation was conducted by Hyland et al. (2008) on the internationalisation experience of students and staff in the United Kingdom, while Leask's work (2009) was on improving local and international interaction using informal and formal curricula. Bell (2014) investigated academics' engagement in IoC in terms of their readiness and level of acceptance and raised the issue of teachers' beliefs and practices and advocated for the importance of pedagogy in IoC. In addition, the Changing Academic Profession (CAP) 2007 survey focuses on the internationalisation element of the academic profession with participation from academics from nineteen national higher education systems. This worldwide survey provided detailed findings regarding academic mobility and international research collaboration activities. However, little insight into how individual academics understand internationalisation and engage with it within the various domains of their profession.

In reviewing works on internationalisation and the academic profession, in my view, equally important is the awareness that functioning as academics in the world of academia is demanding, complicated, rather unsettling and ever-changing (Fanghanel, 2011). This is also echoed by Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2009), who warn the world about the risks of misprioritising in higher education as they said:

> Higher education worldwide focuses on the "hardware"-buildings, laboratories, and the like - at the expense of "software"- the people who make any academic institution successful. (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2009) p. 89).

Numerous studies identify issues facing academics in their profession in relation to neo-liberalism's influence on the global and local higher education systems. How do these issues intertwine with how academics engage in internationalisation, based on past studies and the debates surrounding this theme? The discussion in the following section examines a few features of neoliberalism in higher education, such as the marketisation of higher education and new managerialism, which directly link to challenges facing academics in relation to internationalisation.

Being Academics in the Neo-liberal Age

The Marketisation of Higher Education

Before the world was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic at the end of 2019, education abroad had always been the main activity of internationalisation compared to internationalisation at home initiatives. For example, study abroad, student and staff mobility programmes, and transnational education often feature as internationalisation activities. Higher education authorities, education funding bodies and universities around the world invest heavily in such education abroad initiatives. Internationalisation at home, including global citizenship education, internationalisation of the curriculum and intercultural programmes for local or home students, remain at the periphery in many countries.

The prioritisation of education abroad over internationalisation at home has led to a global scale of marketisation of higher education that promotes fierce competition among higher education providers (Naidoo, 2018). This shift of rationales of internationalisation from educationalism and idealism, which promote knowledge exchange and cooperation, to extreme instrumentalism ideology, has led to inequality as the result of internationalisation. For academic staff, market-driven internationalisation activities only favour the minority that has the means to enjoy education abroad as these programmes require strong financial support and sometimes a proven track record of academic and research performance. This means international engagement that is mobility-oriented would only allow a small number of academics to participate. Programmes such as staff exchange and scholarships for sabbatical programmes abroad are normally not accessible to all staff.

The marketisation of higher education leads to students being regarded as 'consumers' and the marketisation of academics where academics are to act as 'entrepreneurs' (Hall, 2019; Green, 2016). When university education has such goals, universities have ceased to focus on educating students for the sake of engaging them with academic knowledge solely towards developing employable graduates. This resulted in various issues, such as a loss of respect for academics and a threat to academic freedom.

New Managerialism in the Academia

In the neoliberal higher education age, higher education systems and universities turn to new managerialism in managing finance, resources and staff, which is often referred to as 'human capital'. The marketisation of higher education, together with new managerialism, has also led to the measuring and quantifying of targets, goals and outcomes. Therefore, with quantifiable key performance indexes, measurable outcomes, and return-on-investment comes stringent monitoring, which some termed as 'auditions'. Furthermore, it also leads to the intensification and extensification of academic work.

In a neo-liberal university, the impact and stakes of research and publication activities on academics are also unprecedented as individual academics and a university's success are strongly linked to their publication in high-impact journals in their respective disciplinary (Marginson, 2014). This leads to the high self-interest as an instrumentalist rationale in publishing and conducting research that drives academics to research and publish for the sake of prestige, popularity of self, and university and country competitive gains.

The Internationalisation Debate

As discussed in the section on the research in the area of higher education, the discourse of internationalisation of higher education has shifted from collaborative knowledge sharing to market-based internationalisation activities and rationales with much emphasis on rankings, the marketisation of higher education, competition, standards and graduate employability skills.

Equally important are those who are involved in this process. The pivotal role in academics have in shaping the intellectual agenda and the curriculum of universities they serve made them the most significant actors in the internationalisation of higher education (Altbach, 2009; Childress, 2018; Turner & Robson, 2008)

The present study examines the academic participants' interpretation of higher education internationalisation in the Malaysian context. While bearing in mind the definitions and conceptualisations of internationalisation provided by Knight (2004), Hudzik (2011), Stier (2004) and other scholars, I think it is important to be open about how academics on this side of the world conceptualise and operationalise internationalisation according to their perspectives. It is because, as discussed above, internationalisation is multi-dimensional and has various meanings. Thus, exploring how academic practitioners in the context of the study interpret internationalisation could be valuable in understanding their engagement in it. Consequently, perhaps, it is also critical to question if similar understandings of the core elements of internationalisation cascade down to the community of a university, especially those who are considered the main actors in the mobilisation of the internationalisation agenda, such as the management and the staff. How, then, do they translate these into actions? What impact does internationalisation have on them and the students?

Universities worldwide are increasingly facing the demands to meet the changing expectations of a dynamically transforming labour market, which has fuelled the ongoing, current debate on the real purpose of a university. Over the past thirty years, these demands by employers, which in turn affect the choice of both local and international students in selecting universities and higher education systems that would prepare them for the employment market, which seems to be changing due to globalisation and internationalisation. National and international ranking and rating tools for universities are being regarded as the ultimate guide for seeking top or excellent universities which could best prepare students to be employment-ready graduates.

As early as 1996, Bill Readings made a bold yet profound observation about the modern university in his book, "The University in Ruins". Contextualised in the American higher education system, Readings (1996) described the University as a corporate-type institution striving for strategic planning, multicultural marketing, globalisation of the

university and accounting-based accountability in the pursuit of excellence. He challenged the notion of excellence that the University subscribes to as a response to globalisation and in the name of internationalisation and viewed it as a meaningless ideal that is based on the economic and market-oriented criteria, which are also blindly applied to all aspects of the University (Readings, 1996).

After more than two decades since "The University in Ruins", one cannot ignore the stark resemblance of the University, as illustrated by Readings (1996), to today's internationalised universities globally. Many universities around the world, too, strive for a similar notion of excellence in this millennium, which is also marked by intellectually superficial but conveniently quantifiable and tangible, accounting-based standards of university ranking and rating. The accounting standards are often achieved through a successful evaluation against a set of tick-boxes that include return-on-investment, input-output, number of international students, graduate employability, international visibility, facilities built, accreditation earned, numbers of degrees and graduates churned out and impact factor matrices of the academic work and the competitions won.

Readings (1996) was not the only one to raise the alarm about universities losing sight of what quality and excellence should mean in higher education. de Wit & Leask (2019) also express concerns about how internationalisation success is measured, as they reiterated,

> The continued focus of many governments on the international ranking of institutions as a measure of their international success and the emphasis within institutions on measuring success in internationalisation by narrow and shallow quantitative measures, such as the percentage of students who are mobile, the number of classes taught in English and the percentage of revenue earned from international sources, are troubling. Collectively, are we not perpetuating and even creating new forms of inequality between institutions, nations and social groups through a continued focus on internationalisation strategy and practices focused primarily on a small number of students, an elite group who are mobile, within an elite group who have access to higher education?

On the other hand, there are also some unintended consequences of impact metrics and university ranking have on the academia and higher education as the result of the competitive higher education environment. Publish or perish imperatives and competition

among academics and universities could lead to academic fraud, dishonesty and bullying. By subjecting themselves to impact metrics and university ranking, universities in Malaysia and MoHE hoped to improve the quality of research, academics and graduates. However, recently, Malaysia has been shocked by the news of alleged academic fraud by a professor who was accused of claiming a doctoral student's work to be his own and publishing it. Academic dishonesty, plagiarism and fraud are potential risks of introducing KPIs and metrics, which exacerbate the problem of higher education quality that the Malaysian government is trying to solve.

Rationale for Researching Academics' Engagement

The study focused on academics as the main voice in this research as it intended to focus on academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education. One of the reasons for this was because the main function of a university is the acquisition and creation of knowledge by way of purpose, function and delivery of higher education (Knight, 2004). This function places research, pedagogy and curriculum at the heart of the higher education agenda. As internationalisation should be materialised in all these aspects of a university (Hudzik, 2011), this confirms the academic community's role as the main actor in designing, delivering, improving, assessing and deciding on curriculum and pedagogy. On top of their teaching roles, another major responsibility of the academic profession is knowledge creation, which touches on aspects of research and publication. Furthermore, academics' professional domains also include the university-community-industry commitment (Fielden, 2007). However, scholars in the internationalisation of higher education have noted limited data on academics' internationalisation engagement and studies conducted from academics' perspectives (Abd Aziz & Abdullah, 2014).

Secondly, another justification for further research on academics' internationalisation experience and activity was, they are not only one of the driving forces that affect the internationalisation process but are also affected by it. Academics' voices, hence, should be included in the understanding of the process of internationalisation (Ryan, 2011). In order to understand the realities concerning the impact of internationalisation, it is essential to investigate the rationales, practices and experiences of key actors in the implementation of internationalisation, especially academics, whose engagement and commitment are vital. After all, a commitment that is transformed into action to integrate

international and comparative perspectives in all aspects of higher education is at the core of the definition of comprehensive internationalisation (Hudzik, 2011).

Another reason for the great need for the voice of academics to be investigated in the internationalisation of higher education research is previous studies mainly focus on students' perspectives and those at managerial and policy-making levels. Mobilising support for academics and their commitment to the internationalisation agenda has also been identified as critical factors in the implementation of institutional internationalisation strategies (Childress, 2006; Friesen, 2012; Green & Mertova, 2016). Hence, the initiatives to support academic practitioners to engage in the internationalisation of higher education effectively should happen by design and not by chance. How this can be appropriately done suggests more studies on the engagement of academics in higher education internationalisation.

Two main aspects specified in the definition of comprehensive internationalisation (Hudzik, 2011) are teaching and research, which again emphasise the vital role academics play in the internationalisation of higher education process. These roles in research and teaching come with great responsibility and demands on academics. Research collaboration, for example, while regarded as axiomatic to internationalisation, presents a set of challenges to academics (Papatsiba, 2013). In addition, the main role of a university in the development of knowledge and scholarship, its relations to internationalisation and the role academics play in internationalisation are very interconnected because at the core of university internationalisation is the curriculum (Shailer, 2006) and research (Wan et al., 2016). Equally important is how academics develop their global competence to be good models for students (Barker et al., 2011). Thus, in-depth research that sheds light on the academic community, which is instrumental to research and knowledge creation (Wan et al., 2016; Papatsiba, 2013) and in designing, developing and implementing curriculum (Leask, 2008), is important.

In relation to academics' role and impact, Altbach (2014) has observed that while academics' roles, position and impact have greatly evolved globally, the academic profession has weakened, and there is a loss of power and authority. With globalisation as a challenge and internationalisation as part of the responsibility, the academic community needs greater understanding and unwavering support to drive

internationalisation to positively impact global graduates as well as knowledge creation. The significant role of academia in quality higher education is strongly advocated by Altbach (2015) when he warns the sector about neglecting academics in its pursuit of excellence:

> No university can achieve success without a well-qualified, committed academic professional. Neither an impressive campus nor an innovative curriculum will produce good results without great professors. Higher education worldwide focuses on the "hardware"—buildings, laboratories, and the like—at the expense of "software"—the people who make any academic institution successful (p.15).

As advocated by Altbach above, focusing on the 'software' or the 'people' could include providing clear direction and support for these actors in internationalising universities. In mapping the development of the internationalisation of higher education in Malaysia, Abd Aziz & Abdullah (2014) suggest the need for "clearer directions with regard to implementation of internationalisation activities" (p. 500).

Taking into consideration the extensively diverse and dynamic landscape of global higher education (de Wit & Jones, 2012), it is also worth asking which kind of internationalisation initiatives best support academics in which contexts, be it national, sectorial, institutional and professional. Svetlik and Braček Lalić (2016) also question the specific internationalisation activities that affect academics' professional development. This is possibly a pertinent issue to be explored in research on academics' engagement in internationalisation because academics are potential drivers of internationalisation.

In addition, the call for greater emphasis on campus-based internationalisation initiatives to prepare graduates for globalisation further highlights the need for more empirical data in this area. Knight (2012) reiterates that it is the universities' responsibility to enhance students' intercultural and international competence through campus-based and virtual activities in addition to academic physical mobility activities. Thus, research that sheds more light on how universities empower academics to develop students' intercultural and international competence is timely.

In conclusion, based on the rationales discussed above, research exploring how academics perceive and engage with the internationalisation of higher education is perhaps valuable.

It is not only for the development of knowledge in this area but to further inform professional development of academics in internationalising higher education towards building the quality of higher education that caters for the needs of globalised citizens.

> … internationalisation in higher education is at a turning point, and the concept of internationalisation requires an update, refreshment and fine-tuning, taking into account the new world and higher education order. (de Wit, 2014, p.97)

The urgency for alternative perspectives and voices in internationalisation is also advocated by de Wit and Jones (2012),

> The international higher education context is rapidly changing. 'Internationalisation' like 'international education' was until recently predominantly a Western phenomenon in which the developing countries only played a reactive role. Now the emerging economies and the higher education community in other parts of the world are altering the landscape of internationalisation. This shift from a western, neo-colonial concept, as 'internationalisation' is perceived by several educators, means incorporating other emerging views".

Abd Aziz and Abdullah (2014) highlight the value of the voice of the staff, including academics who are directly involved in internationalisation at the operational level,

> "The empowerment in implementing internationalisation activities should start from the bottom-up, especially among institutional staff […] Their insights, if amplified, would inform decision-makers on the appropriate strategies and institutional arrangements to be formulated that are of a better fit to current realities in respective institutions". (p.500)

The "real process" of the internationalisation of higher education happens more and is enacted at the meso and micro levels of higher education systems (Knight, 2004). For more meaningful engagement in the internationalisation of higher education, it is important that academics feel supported and recognised for their hard work, 'winning hearts and minds to the process of internationalisation requires innovative approaches to professional engagement' (Turner & Robson, 2008, p.82)

The elusiveness over what internationalisation means has been a continuous concern for a while since the 1960s and was still relevant thirty years after that (Arum et al., 1992). With the development in recent trends in international higher education research, as reported by several studies, it is still very much the current debate of this area. Perhaps

the key difference in terms of how internationalisation is being understood now lies in contextualisation. Different parts of the world, for instance, the East, has been suggested to perceive internationalisation differently from the West (Yang, 2002). Within a particular national context, how internationalisation is projected at the state level and how an institution in a particular context defines internationalisation could influence the ways the institution and the actors within it internationalise higher education. Therefore, it is important to understand who academics are in the internationalisation process, what they know and believe in, and how they enact internationalisation because they, as a whole-person, design and deliver the teaching and learning experience with their beliefs and perceptions about themselves and other (Cranton, 2001).

In relation to what encompasses the engagement of academics, in this study, the term will be perceived as the commitment that they make in various forms that transforms into actions, the activities academics are involved in, and the experience they have in relation to internationalisation within their professional domain. For example, teaching and learning activities, research, supervision, administration, student activities and community activities. I was also interested in the emotional engagement that academics have in relation to their activities, which becomes the vehicle for engagement to internationalisation. Therefore, this study attempted to explore their attitude towards perceived barriers and drivers in their international involvement.

Seeking to explore academics' engagement from their perspectives places the emphasis on academics' voices. Getting insights on the engagement of academic staff in the internationalisation of higher education is important as academics are considered the main actors in research, teaching and learning, while what they do within their professional domain has a direct impact on the learning process and learners in universities (Altbach, 1996; 2015).

Another justification for studying academics is that they are the 'producers of producers' (Larson, 1977). They belong to a profession that is regarded as 'the key profession' (Perkin, 1969), 'meta-profession' (Carvalho, 2017) and also 'key forces in institutional transformation and the internationalisation of knowledge' (Childress, 2010, p.27). Referring to their role as knowledge producers, Brante (2011) placed academic professionals as superior to other professional groups. Therefore, the understanding of

the development of this profession, considering their agency and power in higher education and education in general, is paramount.

Conclusion

This chapter casts an overview of the definitions of the key concepts and the discourse within the area of internationalisation of higher education that are related to the study. By exploring the theorised conceptualisation of the internationalisation of higher education by international education scholars, it has been demonstrated from the literature that the various and divergent interpretations, as well as the multi-pronged rationales, could result in diverse practice and impact of this global higher education initiative.

The discussion on the rationales and models reveals the shift from educationalist rationales and models of internationalisation in the past to the stronger influence of instrumentalist or economic-driven ones in recent years. The debate themed around internationalisation perpetuating neoliberalism through the marketisation of higher education and new managerialism flags the concerns and the need to reflect on how higher education systems internationalise. However, when COVID-19 hit the world in 2020, the pandemic led to the call for more ethical and value-driven internationalisation, with the rise of Critical International Studies as an emerging niche in this area. Scholars of Critical International Studies warn us that the internationalisation of higher education is losing its way or reaching a turning point and need to rethink internationalisation and advocate value-based internationalisation, which promotes genuine inclusivity and is more educational-driven.

This chapter also explores the academic profession, the nature of the job and the roles an academic typically play in the process of internationalisation. I also include the discussion on what it means to be academics engaging in the internationalisation of higher education in the era of globalisation and why it matters to academics. This debate illustrates the response to the adverse impacts of internationalisation, especially on academia, through knowledge hegemony, academic imperialism, epistemic inequalities and hyper-performativity expectations. These impacts, which have been linked to hyper-performativity issues, academic frauds and threats to academic freedom, call for urgent checks and balances on how internationalisation affects the actors in higher education.

Academics, as described in the discussion on internationalisation, is undoubtedly a significant player in higher education's internationalisation, an actor with strong agency but less understood and heard.

The review of previous work on academics' engagement in internationalisation in the global and Malaysian contexts suggests that, while the studies are significant in enriching the higher education discourse, many (Childress, 2010; Proctor, 2016) centre around the Global North contexts. As the internationalisation of higher education affects the whole world and not just the Global North, more work is needed to provide more insights from other parts of the world. The next chapter aims to provide insights into the context of the study through an overview of the Malaysian model of higher education internationalisation.

Chapter Three: The Research Context

This chapter describes the context of the study which is nested within the Malaysian higher education system. It is important for researchers to examine the context of the study to gain deeper understanding of the conditions and circumstances that may influence how participants views reality, thus leading to more nuanced insights of the phenomenon understudy.

I will start with an overview of the geographical, demographical, socio-cultural, socio-political, and socio-economical aspects of Malaysia. The Malaysian higher education system features in the second part of the chapter. This includes descriptions of historical background of the Malaysian higher education system, MoHE's organisational structure and the evolution of the internationalisation of higher education in Malaysia since the 1980s, mainly focusing on the public sector.

An overview of Malaysia

The name 'Malaysia', which translates to 'Land of the Malays', originates from the term 'Malay', combined with the Latin-Greek suffix '-sia"/-σία' (Room, 2004, p.221). Malaysia has been identified by different names throughout history, namely, 'Tanah Melayu', 'Malaya' and 'Federation of Malaya' (Suarez, 1999). Geographically located in Southeast Asia, it consists of thirteen states and three federal territories. The South China Sea separates the country into two geographical regions, Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia, which in on the Island of Borneo. Malaysia's total land area is about 330,345 km² (Ahmad, Lockard, Bee & Leinbach, 2020). The capital of Malaysia, which is also the largest city is Kuala Lumpur. However, since 1999 the administrative centre of the country is Putrajaya. Tucked in the centre of Southeast Asia, the country shares its borders with Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Brunei Darussalam, with which Malaysia actively collaborates in various ways, including in higher education, as the result of their proximity and similarities in culture.

The political history of Malaysia dates back as early as 1400 AD with the Sultanate of Malacca. Ever since then, the country has gone through dynamic changes in terms of geopolitical territory. Strategically located at the meeting point of the East Asian and the

Middle East, then, the Malaccan Sultanate that ruled the Malay Land used to be a politically powerful government and a significant centre for trade and religious missionary (Department of Information Malaysia, 2016). Unfortunately, the year 1511 marked the beginning of the colonial history of Malaya when Malacca was occupied by the Portuguese. Since then, Malaya was continuously colonised by a few other Western empires namely the Dutch in 1641, the British in 1824 and later in 1941 by the Japanese until 1945.Compared to the other colonisers, British ruled Malaya the longest until its independence in 1957. It is during the British invasion especially in the 1920s and 1930s, citizens of Malaya had started to receive formal education, either from local schools and institutions or the Middle East, which was believed to cultivate the spirit of nationalism among the Malayan people to later fight for the independence of Malaya from the British empire. The Malays, Chinese and Indians in Malaya at that time were driven to unite in their effort to demand independence which later resulted in the London Agreement that was signed on 8 February 1956 and led to Malaya's independence on 31 August 1957. On 16 September 1963, a country which consists of four British colonies, namely Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak, called Malaysia was formed. However, in 1965, Singapore separated from Malaysia to form an independent and sovereign country. (Department of Information Malaysia, 2016).

This colourful history of Malaysia has resulted in Malaysia often dubbed as 'a melting pot of cultures' and arguably as 'ethnic salad bowl' (Yusof & Esmaeil, 2017). Malaysia is indeed a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual nation. According to Department of Statistics Malaysia (2023), currently Malaysia has a population of approximately 3.4 million people. The main ethnic groups are the Bumiputera, which consists of Malays and other indigenous people (70.1%), Chinese (22.6%), Indians (6.6%) and others (0.7%) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023). Recording a total of 2.1% annual population growth rate from the year 2022 to 2023 due to international migration, Malaysia also hosts around three million non-citizens.

Through its constitution, the Malaysian government grants the citizens the freedom to profess and practise any religion (Husin & Ibrahim, 2016). However, Islam is proclaimed as the official religion of the Malaysia (Bari, 2005). The majority of Malaysians are Muslims (63.5%) while the number of Buddhists are recorded at 18.7% and followed by those who believe in Christianity (9.1%) and Hinduism (6.1%). The remaining 9% belong

to other religious groups such as Confucianism and Sikh (Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 2020).

From the composition of the Malaysian population from very diverse ethnicities and nationalities, there are about 134 other languages that have been identified as living languages daily spoken used by Malaysians throughout the country (Simons & Fennig, 2017). Malay language is the national language of the country and used widely for mass communication, for official purposes in government departments operations (Yaakop & Aziz, 2014) and spoken by most Malaysians. Although the official language of Malaysia is Malay, English Language has been positioned as a prominent second language in Malaysia and continues to be a significant second language in the constitution (Azman, 2016) as the language is also widely used in official functions.

Malaysian Higher Education System

To illustrate the Malaysian higher education system, an overview of its historical and structural aspects will be presented and set against specific features of the system that are essential to understanding the context in relation to the focus of the research, academics' engagement in internationalisation.

Historically, the Malaysian higher education system has strongly influenced British academic tradition (Lee et al., 2017), partly due to its 'colonial genesis' as discussed in the first part of this chapter. The first public university, the University of Malaya, was established in 1949 during the British colonisation of Malaysia (then known as Malaya). The term "public university" in Malaysian context, refers to a group of universities that are established, governed, and funded by the Malaysian government under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Higher Education (henceforth MoHE). After gaining independence from the British in 1957, tertiary education started to develop rapidly following the legal amendment of the law governing higher education in Malaysia, which led to the establishment of more universities and colleges. The twentieth century witnessed the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education for the first time in 2004, intending to systematically and strategically structure and support the growth of Malaysian higher education.

In terms of the environmental structure, Malaysian higher education consists of public and private institutions, mainly universities, college universities, colleges, polytechnics, and community colleges. With a population of 31.5 million in 2019, the enrolment of Malaysians between the ages of 17 and 23 to tertiary education has significantly risen from 14 per cent in the 1970s and 1980s to roughly 44 per cent over the following 40 years. Among 1.3 million of Malaysia's youth are pursuing either undergraduate or postgraduate programmes, with 500,000 studying at 20 public universities and more than 600,000 at private colleges, universities, or university colleges (Tapsir, 2019). This is the testimony of Malaysia's commitment to providing post-secondary education access to its populace as the result of having enjoyed the most considerable portion of the annual national development budget.

There are currently 20 public universities, and they are formally categorised by MoHE into Research universities, Comprehensive universities and Focused universities, based on their main functions, study programme offered, funding allocated and postgraduate-undergraduate student ratio. Although these universities are governed and highly funded by the Government of Malaysia and offer qualifications at pre-university, undergraduate, postgraduate and professional levels, the categorisation not only prescribes their student recruitment number and field of studies. It also implies differences in terms of size, funding, infrastructure, structure, culture and system. Malaysian public universities are government-owned but at the same time semi-governed by statutory bodies and regulated under Article 30 of the Universities and University Colleges Act (AUKU). As they are also heavily funded by the Malaysian Government, they are also subjected to relatively strict governance, similar to other public departments. However, being a statutory body, a public university is also autonomous in a few ways, including staff recruitment, budget management, and academic matters.

Regarding the categorisation of Malaysian public universities, Research universities are research-driven and currently, five public universities have been given the status. They are mainly five of the six oldest universities in Malaysia and were established between 1949 and 1975. Comprehensive universities refer to universities that offer a wide range of study programmes with higher intake of undergraduate students compared to postgraduates. While there are only four Comprehensive universities, the largest group of Malaysian public universities (11 in total) is categorised as Focused Universities. These

universities specialise in areas of studies such as technical, education, management, and Islamic studies.

Research, while it used to be a secondary agenda before the start of the twentieth century, has since become of utmost priority. For the last two decades, the MoHE has intensified its research initiatives and is now seeing the fruit of its labours in this regard. Malaysia's success in this regard was commemorated in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) (henceforth MEB (HE), (Ministry of Education, 2015), as illustrated in Figure 2:
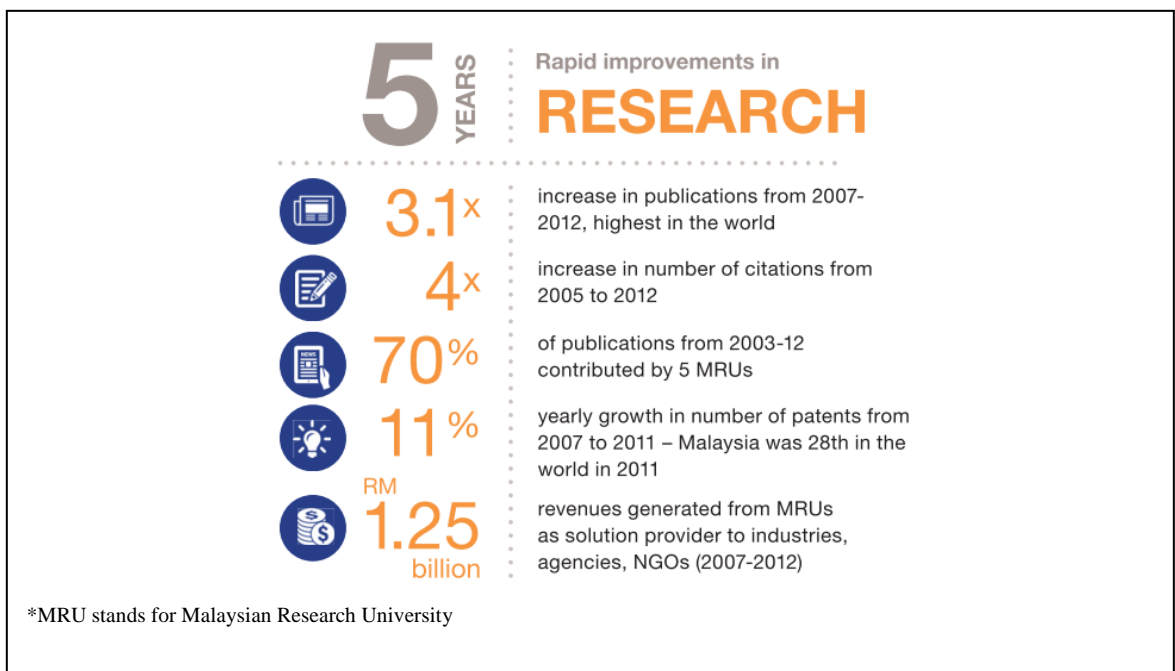
Figure 2: Malaysia's achievements in research between 2005 and 2012

Source: Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) (Ministry of Education, 2015, p.3)

Another noticeable feature of the modern Malaysian higher education system and its mainstream discourse is that it can be seen as Western-centric, as evidenced by the extensive importation of Western pedagogical practices, ideas and standards, and in the outflow of Malaysian academics to be trained in Anglophone countries for postgraduate programmes. The semester and grading system for all university degree qualifications, for instance, are also very similar.

The Western-Euro influence on the Malaysian higher education landscape and the MoHE's aspirations for Malaysia to be a regional hub for higher education and the home to top-ranked higher learning institutions made the associated context unique and intriguing for higher internationalisation study. However, although it has been recognised that academics play a vital role in the transformative internationalisation of higher education (Robson, 2011a), very little research has been conducted into how they actually engage with the process. Therefore, I chose to explore the accounts of actors of internationalisation, the academic staff, contextualised within the Malaysian higher education public sector, focusing on their international engagement.

The Internationalisation of Malaysian Higher Education

Comparable to many national and supra-organisational authorities that directly and indirectly impact institutional policies and strategies (Crăciun, 2018), the Malaysian government, through the MoHE, has played significant roles (Wan & Sirat, 2018) in the internationalisation of Malaysia's higher education institutions, particularly the public universities. With a clear aspiration to become a regional hub and have top-ranking universities, the internationalisation initiatives have been the main drivers of Malaysian higher education development.

A significant expansion of the Malaysian Higher Education System occurred after the Malaysian Government introduced the Private Higher Educational Institution Act (henceforth, the PHEI Act) in 1996, which is regarded as a "catalyst in reforming and restructuring" (Koo & Pang, 2011), p. 239). The Act represented the Malaysian Government's attempt to provide better access to higher education and curb the depletion of Malaysian currency spent on scholarships for Malaysians to study abroad. Within a decade of the enforcement of the PHEI Act, many private universities and colleges, including international branch campuses, were established, and transnational education activities flourished (Koo & Pang, 2011) and turned the Malaysian higher education landscape into what it is today.

The establishment of MoHE also marked the most significant episode of the internationalisation of Malaysian higher education with the introduction of the National

Higher Education Strategic Plan in 2007, in which the MoHE crystallised the ambition of the government to make Malaysia an international hub for higher education.

In terms of internationalisation, outlined through the national higher education policies, for the past thirty years, the Malaysian higher education system, as governed by the MoHE, has had a series of significant agendas; among them was to develop "a world-class university system; making Malaysia a regional hub, and transforming Malaysia into a knowledge-based economy" (Sidek et al., 2012, p.131). Later, in 2015, these aspirations were revised and renewed with more precise targeting as mentioned in MEB (HE) (Ministry of Education, 2015, p.7),

> The Ministry's aspiration covers three aspects: quality of graduates, quality of institutions, and overall system quality. On the quality of graduates, the Ministry aspires to increase the current 75% graduate employability rate to more than 80% by 2025. On quality of institutions, only one of Malaysia's universities is currently in the Top 200 QS global rankings. By 2025, the Ministry aims to place one university in Asia's Top 25, two in the Global Top 100, and four in the Global Top 200. Finally, on quality of the overall system, the Ministry aspires to raise its U21 ranking for research output from 36th out of 50 countries to the top 25, and to increase the number of international students in HLIs (*higher learning institutions*) from 108,000 today to 250,000 students in HLIs and schools by 2025.

As one can observe from the statement of agendas above, the highly ranked higher education top-provider aspiration has triumphed over these series of the MoHE's ambitions over recent years, and by 2015 Malaysia had become more determined about its higher education goals. In relation to internationalisation, based on the statement above, MoHE seems to regard that universities or HLIs, as inherently international, and a key site for internationalisation.

In my view, Malaysia seems not to be explicit about the model of internationalisation it is adapting. I attempted to conceptualise this by examining two main higher education policy documents that are currently in use, as well as other evidence in the literature. A closer look at the two policy documents concluded that Malaysia proactively plans for internationalisation of higher education and shows that internationalisation is more of a means rather than a goal in itself. The Ministry strategically plans, and put in place policies, departments and mechanism for internationalisation at the state and institutional

levels. At the state level, the Internationalisation Policy 2011 was launched, and later further refinement of internationalisation policies was made with the launched of Malaysian Education Blueprint (Higher Education) (henceforth MEBHE) in 2015. In the policy documents, internationalisation is seen as facilitating excellence in research and that the university is an agent of change in the internationalisation process with the aim of contributing to the quality of life and ensuring 'prominence for Malaysia' internationally.

From both policy documents, it can be concluded that internationalisation in the Malaysian higher education system is driven internally by policies that are politically and economically motivated. With the aspiration to recruit 250 000 international students by 2025, this goal is very much student centric. This is risky and "only sustainable if international students continue to choose Malaysia as a preferred destination of study" (Zin, 2013, p.243).

It is important to also note that past and current political climate in Malaysia has had huge influence on the Malaysian higher education development. This is evident with the establishment and abolishment of MoHE and its reestablishment in the recent years. Issues facing Malaysian HE such as funding cuts, massification of HE, corporatisation are also the result to the political turbulence that are affecting Malaysia economically. That means substantial decline in government funding. Besides funding, control over government servants' conduct including academics in public universities on social media has affected academic freedom among Malaysian academics.

Malaysia is also undergoing significant transformation, as MEBHE places strong emphasis on internationalisation. Malaysian higher education internationalisation dynamics has been observed to have a strong influence from the economic-based networking model (Munusamy and Hashim, 2019). However, the global shift from educational and cultural rationales for internationalisation towards more political and economic in the late 20th century was of great concern (de Wit, 2017). This phenomenon was also evident in Malaysian internationalisation landscape with Malaysian government aspiring to be regional and global higher education hub as expressed through the NHESP in 2009, the Internationalisation Policy in 2011 and latest in 2015 through the MBEHE.

Internationalisation is made one of the eight main thrusts in the Malaysian transformation strategies. Internationalisation targeted as means of improving higher education quality to be at par with renown world class universities, Malaysian government aspires to be the hub of higher education excellence (Tham and Kam, 2008). In response to this aspiration that is mandated through the Internationalisation Policy 2011 and later MEBHE 2015, higher education institutions have engaged in internationalisation in various ways and intensities for different reasons. For example, public universities internationalising as part of academic development (Tham and Kam, 2008).

Universities are competing in various institutional, research and management ranking tables locally (SETARA, MyRa, Autonomi etc) and internationally (U21, THES, QS) which is the result of the Ministry imperative which made it almost compulsory for all public universities specially to participate. Therefore, it is imperative to highlight some comparison between Malaysian and British higher education contexts in relation to academic governance. Due to globalisation affecting the higher education systems globally, both countries share some issues regarding how academics are affected by the new managerialism. However, the extent and nature of the impact of new managerialism in Malaysian and British higher education systems and universities do differ.

Regarding quality of higher education, the Ministry states its aspirations in MEB and consistently relate international universities ranking to quality. Close references are made to a few renowned ranking systems for example, Universitas 21 (U21) Report and QS World University Ranking throughout its discourse in relation to quality of higher education. For instance, a firm declaration is made on how the Ministry plan to appraise its aspiration of quality in terms of the quality of the system, institutions and graduates. For quality of the system, the Ministry aims "to be ranked in the top 25 countries for research output based on U21 rankings, with 250,000 international students by 2025" (MoHE, 2015, p.3). On the quality of the institutions, the Ministry also sets its target to be ranked high in Asia as well as the world in QS World University Rankings. The Ministry justifies these aspirations on the importance of rankings in positioning Malaysia at global higher education arena and gaining global recognition for Malaysian universities' graduates. (MoHE, 2015).

The actors of higher education system highlighted in the aspiration for quality in MEB is none other than the academic community as stated in the policy document:

> The Ministry acknowledges that the true merit of a university is not based solely on rankings, but also on its culture of knowledge development, and the depth and vibrancy of its academic community. (MoHE, 2015, p.3).

Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

The research aims to explore how academic staff at Malaysian public universities engage in the internationalisation process happening with the local higher education system. In the previous chapters, I have described the purpose, focus, research questions, context and the review of relevant literature on internationalisation of higher education globally and those involving Malaysian contexts.

An elaboration on the methodology, methods and justification for the methodological decisions made for the present study takes place in this chapter. This occurs by presenting the research paradigm and research design followed by the justification for these methodological choices and the philosophical considerations in deciding on the conceptual framework. Moving on, I describe the participants, the criteria for their recruitment, and the later the data collection, analysis methods and the ethical considerations made. Finally, I include a section on selected reflection as the researcher on my experience in conducting the research particularly on the issues that have shaped the methodological journey of the research.

At this point, it is useful to remind the readers again about the research questions that have guided the data collection and analysis choices:

1. In what ways do academics engage in the internationalisation of higher education? (RQ1)
2. What are their rationales for engaging in the internationalisation of higher education? (RQ2)
3. What support do academics want in their engagement with the internationalisation of higher education? (RQ3)
4. How does their engagement in internationalisation impact on the academics? (RQ4)

The Research Paradigm

Methodology concerns the knowledge that deals with method selection and application. Silverman (2014) describes methodology as "the choices we make about cases study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis in planning and executing a research

study (p.54). An alternative definition of methodology is "…the activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use." (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007, p.33). In designing the study, it is understood that methodology and methods are two distinctive terms. While methodology is conceptualised as the overarching framework which consists of choices made on the research design, sampling, data collection and data analysis methods, the term method refers to specific techniques chosen for a few aspects of the methodology.

In making methodological decisions when designing research, employing data collection and data analysis methods, it is essential for researchers to start by considering the ontological and epistemological perspectives to establish the frameworks that guide their research. Ontology is defined as "what reality is like and the basic elements it contains" (Silverman, 2014, p.53) or as the understanding the nature of reality (Cohen et al., 2011). Bryman views ontology as the nature of reality, what creates a reality and that it can be learnt from a perspective (2012). Ontological consideration also involves reflecting on whether one perceives reality as external and tangible 'fact' or the result of individual cognition and is socially constructed through experience (Creswell, 2003). As the researcher of the present study, I view reality comprises individual experience, beliefs and thinking, and it is also socially constructed through individuals' experience of the world they live in. This means reality might be diversely understood by different individuals or different groups of people as experiences are often dissimilar.

Epistemology, on the other hand, considers the nature and form of knowledge and how it can be acquired. Scholars define epistemology as an "acceptable knowledge in a discipline" (Walliman, 2006, p.20) and about how knowledge is learned or acquired (Guba, 1990). Bryman (2012) describes two extreme epistemological positions; positivism and interpretivism. Positivists claim that knowledge is something out there which requires to be tested or proven by the researcher through scientific testing relates to a single reality based on facts and numbers while interpretive researchers advocate the idea of exploring and understanding the social world through the participants' perspectives and their own interpretations (Bryman, 2012). Unlike positivism, interpretivism emphasises that individuals' understandings, feelings and ideas form their perceptions of reality and that there is no one, universal reality. Hence, in conducting research, interpretivists tend to adopt a subjective perspective in which knowledge is

generated by individuals, who form their own experiences based on their views, emotions and interpretation and not through gathering experimental data that yield figure and numbers as results (Krauss, 2005). Embracing interpretivism directs a researcher to explore the complexity and variation of participants' perspectives because the aim of research is "to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell 2003, p.8).

For the purpose of this study, I opted for a qualitative research approach with an interpretivist stance because it fits logically with the main aim of the study. With a parallel intention of understanding "the world of human experience" (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.36), I focused on understanding how the academics as individuals make sense of the world and their experience with it (Robson, 2011b). In addition, the nature of area understudy, which is internationalisation, being multifaceted and meaning different things to different people (Knight, 2003; Stier, 2004) as discussed in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), made a strong justification for the adoption of the interpretivist approach that subscribes to the belief that the social world is "produced through meaningful interpretations" (Pascale, 2011, p.22).

In addition, as this study was interested solely on the "participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p.8), by adopting interpretivism I hoped to be immersed into "a deeper understanding of a phenomenon by uncovering aspects that have been hidden" (Crotty, 1998), as cited in Jones et al. (2014, p.17). Exploring internationalisation with this paradigm, I anticipated that academics as individuals might not share the same sense of reality (Denicolo et al., 2016) about their engagement in internationalisation.

Interpretivism endorses researchers to interpret and make sense of the participants accounts and the data. The study participants might have their own intentions of what they were sharing with me, and these may not match my interpretations. Therefore, adopting a position that appreciates subjectivity in meaning making of the reality allows for a deeper and more critical exploration of the academics' worldview on internationalisation of higher education.

The Research Approach

The study utilised the qualitative approach in order to delve into individual academics' internationalisation engagement as perceived and experienced by them. Perhaps it is also important to reiterate that the aim of the study was neither to investigate internationalisation policies, activities or the nature and features of Malaysian higher education in isolation, nor to evaluate the nature of academics' engagement against a set of internationalisation indicators.

At the heart of this research was how the academics' individual accounts of their engagement in the internationalisation of higher education could be appropriately elicited, constructed and analysed to illustrate their international engagement in their respective contexts. It was also my intention to utilise qualitative methods appropriately and ethically to uncover academics' individual interpretation of internationalisation, their take on their experience, how they navigated these experiences and how this phenomenon has changed their professional domain.

Being aware of the accountability of the analyses resulted from the research, I would like to highlight that the present study focused on the analyses at micro level viz the individual experience of internationalisation as opposed to the meso (institutional) and macro (national) levels of experience with internationalisation policy as explained in the introductory chapter. That said, although the focus is on the micro level perspective, in reality the distinction between micro, meso and macro of whole internationalisation of higher education phenomenon is not always distinctive. Therefore, to shed lights into these complexities, I focused on experience. Only by focusing on the lived professional experience of academics in internationalisation higher education, the impact of internationalisation on individual academic (at micro level) and how that interact with the institutionalised profession (the meso) could be explored as affective, practices and perspectives could be highlighted through their accounts of their international engagement.

Positionality

Researchers' background, beliefs and values are some of the elements of positionality which can affect the choices they make in conducting research (Sikes, 2004). It is,

therefore, important to be self-critical and examine the bias I may hold in conducting this research (Wellington, 2015). Reflecting on the whole research journey, I identify a few aspects of my personal and professional experience, which might have influenced how I view internationalisation and academics' engagement as well as how I have structured and executed the research project.

Being an international student in two British universities at different times throughout my formal education period has shaped my personal internationalisation understanding. As an international student doing an undergraduate degree in southern England in the 90s, I felt that over the years, I grew more 'inter-culturally' tolerant as the result of the relationships with my lecturers, course mates and host family. More importantly, the teaching-learning process, co-curricular activities organised by my former university and care given by the international office have also made an impact on how I view internationalisation. At that time, I was not aware of the policies the university had in place in relation to internationalisation, but those experiences somehow helped me to value internationalisation.

Having gone through such positive internationalisation experience, I made a career out of promoting British education when I worked as an education counsellor at the British Council, Malaysia. Promoting British universities was exciting for me as Malaysians generally have positive outlook about them. Thus, based on these positive experiences and deciding to explore internationalisation for this study, I believe that internationalisation to be axiomatic (Harris, 2009) to good quality higher education.

However, I also view internationalisation as potentially problematic based on my experience when I worked as a teacher in a university in Malaysia as I face challenges in my attempt to internationalise teaching and learning. Teaching in a university where students come from almost homogenous ethnic and religious backgrounds, I felt the need to 'internationalise' my students through my teaching. It was not easy, and there was resistance, but I believe it is important and worth the effort. There were also dilemmas about whether to prioritise the disciplinary content over intercultural elements in teaching and whether intercultural diversities should be highlighted or downplayed. I remember struggling with the tensions arising between intercultural understanding, national and

religious identities. These dilemmas have left me feeling intrigued by internationalisation of higher education.

In addition, teaching international students also presents a different set of challenges and learning experience for me as a teacher. I sometimes found myself struggling to manage both home and international students' expectations and at the same time enjoying working with the multicultural and multinational groups. Later, during my attachment at the international office in the university, I continued to reflect on how I engaged in internationalisation and my reasons for doing the things I did in the process while serving as an academic and administration staff. I always feel that while governmental and institutional policies emphasise on internationalisation, in reality, there is much more to be explored in terms of implementation and support for the key actors of internationalisation in universities. These are largely my internationalisation experiences that explain decision to research academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education. More importantly, among the many perspectives I could have chosen from, academics became the lens through which I have decided to explore internationalisation in this research journey.

In researching internationalisation of higher education, I also needed to reflect whether I am being a reductionist or a neoliberalist. Often, while progressing in the research, I also needed to question myself in terms of epistemological and ontological positionality, for example in analysing data and selecting what to include or not in the literature review. Am I thinking as a British higher education graduate and doctoral student or as a (former) internationalisation enthusiast? Based on my previous professional experience, and as proud British education qualified graduate, was I being romantic and naïve about internationalisation as advocated in internationalisation policies in both Malaysian and British contexts? Can I distant myself from my existing passion and positive belief about internationalisation and be more critical and analytical in exploring, analysing and interpreting data in the present research?

The Research Design

As the result of adopting interpretivist paradigm, qualitative methods of data collection and analysis formed the basis of the research design. Kincheloe (2008) asserts that

qualitative researchers are committed to analysing social events from various angles and perspectives. This study attempted to gather the data on the academics' understanding, meanings, motivations and struggle, which is not amenable to quantifying and measuring as "knowledge of human beings involves the understanding of qualities which cannot be described through the exclusive use of numbers" (Kincheloe, 2008, p.188). To achieve this aim, I chose a few qualitative data collection methods, a semi-structured interview and a focus group which will be described following the sections on the research sites and the participants.

The Research Sites and the Participants

For ethical reasons, the names and the locations of the universities where participants were recruited are not disclosed in this thesis because there are only twenty public universities in Malaysia, and they are easily identifiable by the mere mention of the category and the location of a particular university. For example, there is only one research university at the southern part of the country. Therefore, if the present study were to mention that it involved participants of a research university in this area, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, which is the only research university in Johor will be easily identifiable. This is against the agreed ethical measures between the researcher and the participants on having anonymity on their personal and institutional identities.

The universities where the participants were recruited consists of all three types of universities in the Malaysian public higher education system as described in Chapter Three (The Research Context). They are Research Universities (henceforth RU), Comprehensive Universities (henceforth CU) and Focused Universities (henceforth FU). This was intentional because I believe by involving academics from all three types of universities, the data generated from the study could capture the diverse backgrounds of Malaysia higher education institutions. The rationale for having participants selected from all three categories of public university was to establish a more comprehensive picture of the nature of the academic profession and their internationalisation involvement. Different types of universities could provide different structures and contexts, which may have an influence on the internationalisation engagement of the academics.

From the twenty public universities in Malaysia, the academics who were participated in the study were employed at one of six universities involved at the time of the research participation. The study involved seventeen (17) academics from the three types of Malaysian public universities (Research, Comprehensive and Focused universities) as described in the contextual chapter. The participants consist of academics holding the positions of senior lecturer, associate professor and professor according to Malaysian Public Universities classification of academic designation. I believe the engagement in internationalisation by academic practitioners in different stages of their career could differ distinctively depending on the amount of experience as academics (Childress, 2009).

It is assumed that senior academics, compared to early career academics, may have had enough exposure to typical academic responsibilities of an academic staff in a public university including teaching, research, community outreach and research supervision at various levels. They were not chosen on the basis of their international engagement because the study was not targeting at the 'enthusiast' in internationalisation group.

Seventeen academics voluntarily participated in the study and Table 1 outlines the key demographic and academic disciplinary information of the seventeen participants of the study:

Information category	Sub-category	Number of participants
Category of public university	Comprehensive (CU)	4
	Research (RU)	6
	Focused (FU)	7
Academic Position	Associate Professor	6
	Senior Lecturer	8
	Professor	3
Academic discipline	Social Science	9

	Science	8
Gender	Female	8
	Male	9

Table 1: Participants' demographic, disciplinary and academic position information

The following table (Table 2) lists each participant's demographic information.

Pseudonym	Gender	Position	Academic discipline	University
Khan	Male	Associate Professor	Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	Focused (FU1)
Safa	Female	Senior Lecturer	Engineering Education	Focused (FU1)
Alan	Male	Senior Lecturer	TVET	Focused (FU1)
Barry	Male	Associate Professor	Language Education	Focused (FU1)
Laila	Female	Senior Lecturer	Computer Science	Focused (FU2)
Husin	Male	Senior Lecturer	Law	Focused (FU2)
Jamil	Male	Professor	Biotechnology	Focused (FU2)
Lin	Female	Senior Lecturer	Linguistics	Comprehensive (CU1)
Rose	Female	Senior Lecturer	Linguistics	Comprehensive (CU1)
Yahya	Male	Senior Lecturer	Linguistics	Comprehensive (CU1)

Rita	Female	Senior Lecturer	Communications	Comprehensive (CU2)
Fahad	Female	Associate Professor	Engineering	Research (RU1)
Suri	Female	Professor	Engineering	Research (RU1)
Zain	Male	Associate Professor	Engineering	Research (RU1)
Lisa	Female	Associate Professor	Engineering	Research (RU1)
Zaza	Female	Associate Professor	Engineering	Research (RU1)
Ahmad	Male	Professor	Computer Science	Research (RU2)

Table 2: Participants of the study

Sampling Strategy and Participant Recruitment Procedures

For sampling strategy, I adopted Bryman's (2008) purposive sampling strategy in which I selected and invited participants who fit three main criteria. The first one is, participants must have been tenured for more than 5 years in academic positions at Malaysian public universities. The second criterion is that all the participants must not hold any departmental or university-level leadership or managerial post related directly to internationalisation such as the International Office during the recruitment and data collection period. Finally, only participants who are Malaysian citizens and were in-service during the study period can be recruited for the study. Those who were on study or sabbatical leave, for example were not included as participants.

At the initial stage of the recruitment process, I made the selection from a pool of curriculum vitae (CV) of Malaysian academics, which were readily available online. If any of the invited participants withdrew their participation, the plan was to recruit a replacement from the same type of university in order to maintain a total five participants from each category, Through the screening of academics' CVs, I looked for academics with a record of internationalisation activities with the anticipation that they would be

able to talk about their diverse internationalisation experience. For example, academic staff with various involvement in international research collaboration, international exchange programme and international community project were identified as potential participants and later invited to participate in the study.

Unfortunately, during the participant recruitment process, I found that the purposive sampling strategy was not very successful in achieving the intended number of participants. Although twelve out of thirty academics selected from the pool of CVs initially agreed to participate when they were invited via email prior to the data collection stage, five had to cancel due to change of work plans and schedules. Two more who had consented to participate later withdrew their decisions due to sabbatical leave and move to a private institution. When I arrived in Malaysian in February 2017, I only managed to arrange for confirmed individual interviews with five consenting participants from three public universities (an CU and two FUs). Alternatively, to recruit more academics as participants of the research, I also resorted to asking for recommendation from the academics who were contacted from the CV screening strategy. Some suggested those who were within the same institution and known to have vast experience in internationalisation activities. However, this was not very successful either because when contacted they either did not respond to my email or declined the invitation to participate.

Finally, I approached academics among my personal contacts who were attached to a few public universities and asked for their recommendations for academics working at the same institutions as they were. In doing so, I also explained the criteria for potential participants and that I could only invite those who fulfilled the criteria. Through this strategy, I was introduced to eleven participants who were later successfully recruited for the study.

Criteria for Participant Selection

As mentioned above, for recruitment purposes, the participants were invited to participate only if they had served for more than five years as academics, possessed Malaysian nationality and were not holding any internationalisation-related managerial or leadership positions at the time of the data collection period. Upon identifying potential participants,

I also based the final selection of the participants on the number of years of experience as academics, the roles they hold as academics and their areas of expertise.

Regarding their roles in their respective university, typically, academics working within a Malaysian public university hold a range of roles. In addition to teaching and research, leadership and management roles are other possible dimensions to an academic position. It is quite common for university lecturers and professors to be appointed in administrative, managerial and top management positions. Positions such as Course Coordinator, Dean, Head of School and Director of Research Centre are normally held by academics. In relation to internationalisation of higher education, academics in these roles could also have significant impact on the delivery of service, teaching, learning and research of higher education by way of management.

Another criterion for participation in the study was subject disciplines. This was determined by the courses they teach, research expertise and discipline-specific professional affiliations. Previous research has indicated that some disciplines such as political science, economics and geography lend themselves well to internationalisation agenda while some, for example, chemistry, religious studies and mathematics may not (Childress, 1999). With the intention to ensure trustworthiness in terms of the sampling in this study, I chose participants who belong to various disciplinary backgrounds because this reflects the real world of the academia. The rationale for having respondents from various academic disciplines is to be open to the possibilities of discipline as driver or hurdle in internationalisation of higher education as experienced and perceived by the academics. Area of expertise encompasses the main bulk of an academic's job description. Designing and improving curriculum, managing teaching and learning activities, developing and conducting assessment as well as conducting research are all very much related to one's area of expertise.

Data Collection Methods

The study, as mentioned earlier, adopted a qualitative research design and for data collection methods, individual, semi-structured interviews, and Internet-based focus group were utilised. These methods were carried out in the two phases of the study which will be later described in this chapter.

Considering the aim and objectives of the study, I believe interviews would be useful in obtaining the interpretations and details of the reality as perceived by the respondents in relation to the phenomenon that is being explored (Kvale, 1996). I did consider other methods of getting the data from academics, such as questionnaire, however in order for the study to be explorative and open to any realities and perception of the academics, the use of questionnaire may be limited to a set of opinions listed in the tool itself. In other words, descriptions or options that are valuable in answering the research questions may not be included and thus not recorded. Besides, I would lose the opportunity to ask for further clarification, to confirm and to check their input if a questionnaire was utilised. In contrast, a semi-structured interview, when conducted well, can generate rich data like personal experiences and opinions that may not be accessed with the use of other methods, such as a structured questionnaire (Wellington, 2015).

Together with the individual interview, a supporting tool, the life-grid, was also employed to complement the interview, which is useful for collecting retrospective data (Parry et al., 1999; Nico, 2016). The qualitative life-grid was utilised to guide the interview when the participants talk about significant incidents in relation to their internationalisation engagement in in the past. Life grid has been proven in in the previous research to be useful to encourage respondents to focus on the conversation and to recall chronological data event to explore the complexities and richness of past events (Abbas et. al., 2013; Parry et. al., 1999). Perception and practice academics form about internationalisation could developed overtime and are influenced by the long-term experience in internationalisation. Personal experiences construct the reality as perceived by individuals and over a period of time, become the underlying construct of human perception, attitude, and understanding of a phenomenon or behaviour (Denicolo et al, 2016). For some of my participants, internationalisation has perhaps been part of their life course as academics. Therefore, to understand and explore the significant events that have happened in the academic participants' lives, the life grid was anticipated to be effective. With the use of life grid, I hoped to be able to encourage the participants share the challenges, success or any critical incidents in their past that have formed their perception of internationalisation, that could explain their rationale for their engagement or disengagement in internationalisation and have impacted their professional lives. Besides, using life grid could be a great tool to ease both the researcher and participants off the awkwardness of being in an interview.

Utilising this tool, I was aware that it is impossible to get into the participants' mind to explore their reality, but I was hoping that it would help them to recall accounts of critical incidents that could provide insights into their sense of internationalisation as perceived, practiced and experienced by them. Further critics on this method is that data in the form of retrospective accounts from research participants can be inaccurate as memory fades overtime (Nico, 2016). While bearing that in mind, I was hoping to benefit from this method by focusing on the recall of significant events about the success and obstacles in career as memories such as education and occupation tend not to be significantly affected by the passage of time (Field, 1981).

In addition, the rationale for using the life grid method as part of the interview was to encourage the participants to remember their success or/and challenges at different stages of their professional lives in order for them to reflect on how they have dealt with these challenges, what the achievements meant for them, and how these experiences have affected their professional identity. In other words, accuracy of data is not the main emphasis of the usage of the life grid in the research, but the meanings and effects of these life events are.

Nevertheless, while the use of life-grid has helped the pilot study respondents to recall the past and reflect on their own engagement in internationalisation and keep the conversation on track, I also experienced some difficulties in using the life grid during the semi-structured interview during the actual data collection period. Most respondents, while giving consent to the use of the life-grid before the interview, did not manage to chart their internationalisation incidents on the life grid because they appeared more comfortable to just speak without referring to the life grid. Sometimes, the respondents were not able to share many critical instances in relation to international engagement in the past because they have rather limited experience with internationalisation as they have only served the public universities for just a bit more than five years, or they could not recall the exact point of time when they experienced the challenges or triumphs of their internationalisation engagement. Time limitation was also a factor in the failure to optimally utilised the life grid as part of the data collection method. Within an hour, I later discovered that there was a lot of information and stories that the participants wanted to share, and the use of the life-grid was found to be a distraction rather than a stimulus.

During that data analysis stage, I noticed that very few life-grid that were brought into the interview hardly had notes or marks made on them due to the reasons discussed above. Therefore, I made the decision to exclude the data recorded in the life-grid as they appear to be negligible. Furthermore, the interview data as recorded and analysed have captured the few information mentioned by the participants when they actually referred to the life-grid.

Throughout the design process, I constantly questioned myself on the possible features of academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education. What is it that I wanted to understand and explore within the focus of the study. Persistently checking the literature on previous studies in the area helped to shape the research questions and later the design of the interview questions. I also designed questions for the interviews based on the typical job scope of an academic. To make sure that the methods and interview questions suited well with the aims and objectives, I conducted a pilot study with three Malaysian academics who were on study leave while pursuing their doctoral study in the University of Sheffield prior to the main fieldwork. Based on the findings of the pilot study, I then improved the questions and the execution of the interviews accordingly to gain effective information for this study.

The Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with the purpose to familiarise with the three data collection methods that are proposed for the research: interview, life grid and online focus group interview. Pilot studies are important to see if there are potential problems with the methods proposed (Wilson and Sapsford, 2006) or to exclude poorly constructed questions, ensure comprehensibility of questions and improve the quality of data (Wellington, 2015).

Three Malaysian public university academic staff, named *England*, *Zulu* and *Japan* (pseudonyms) agreed to participate in the pilot study. *England* and *Japan* are currently attached to a focused university while *Zulu* works for a comprehensive university in Malaysia. They have had around three years of experience working as academic staff in the universities they are employed at. They had only left work in Malaysia for less than a year, which means they were still able to remember their practice and experience in relation to internationalisation during the years they have served. Based on these criteria,

I felt that they were near fit to my potential participants' profile, hence, they could share their interpretations, perceptions and experiences in their past international engagement based on their tenure at a Malaysian public university.

One-hour pilot interviews were conducted with each one of the participants individually and a life grid was also used to aid the semi-structured interview. The Facebook focus group ran for a week after that with all three participants taking part in this phase of the pilot study. From the feedback given by the pilot study participants and the reflection that I made throughout the pilot study process, the were a few valuable lessons learned and amendments that I decided to make to the research methodology.

Firstly, during the interview and the Facebook-based focus group, I noticed that the associations each participant made with the word internationalisation in two different languages, English and Bahasa Malaysia, differed quite significantly. I found that they gave more information on their practice and perception on what internationalisation means to them when "*pengantarabangsaan*", the Bahasa Malaysia version was used. This could be because when working in Malaysian public universities, they were more exposed to the term "*pengantarabangsaan*" which is widely used in institutional policy documents. Although they were familiar with the term internationalisation but reflecting on the pilot study, they seemed to associate better with the Bahasa Malaysia version of it.

Based on this experience of the pilot study, both version Bahasa Malaysia and English were used during the communication with potential participants in the research when interviewing participants so that they were able to associate better and reflect deeper on their internationalisation engagement during data generation process. In addition, the interview questions and prompts, stimuli for the Facebook-based focus group were also translated into Bahasa Malaysia, back translated and expert-reviewed before the data collection work commences. I was also more flexible in using and switching between both languages in my interactions with them during the interview depending on what the participants were comfortable with.

Secondly, all three of the pilot study respondents gave permission for the interviews to be audio-recorded. However, I noticed that as soon as the audio-recorder was switched off in two of the interviews, the participants started to relax and shared more accounts on the subject of the interview, which sounded to me as very honest reflection of their

international engagement. Anticipating this could probably happen during data collection of the main study, I planned to subtly and casually ask for the participant's permission to restart the audio recorder to allow for further recording. Alternatively, I also spent an hour after each interview to write my field notes and reflection of the interview immediately after the session ended.

In terms of the interview questions for both the individual interview and the focus group, I learned from the participants that a few of the interview questions forwarded were a bit too broad and general to be answered in a single response. While I am aware that some of the questions were open ended with the intention to elicit deeper and richer responses from the participants, I should have prepared to be more specific in wording the interview questions.

While the use of the life-grid had helped the pilot study respondents to recall past experiences, reflect on their own engagement in internationalisation and keep the conversation on track, I also experienced some difficulties in using the life grid during the semi-structured interview. There were a few times where the respondents were not able to share any critical instances in relation to international engagement in the past because they have rather limited experience with internationalisation as they had only served the public universities not more than 4 years. My immediate reaction after the pilot interviews was to revise the years of experience of participant criteria and exclude early career academics. However, reflecting on a discussion that I had with my supervisor on the pilot study, I was also aware that academics' perceptions and experiences of internationalisation as well as the impact it has on their professional life could vary depending on the duration of tenure in academic position. This imply for differentiation in support for internationalisation based on whether they are early career, mid-career or senior staff. Including participants at various stages of their academic career in the study would provide a more nuanced understanding of the diversity in academic experiences and academic professions in higher education environment.

Finally, through the pilot study, I also learned a valuable lesson on research participation and commitment. Through the pilot focus group interview that I conducted via Facebook secret group, I noticed that *England* stopped responding after four days due to personal commitments, thus decided he had no time to respond to the posts in the Facebook secret group. From this, I learned timing and priority are important consideration for

participants. Was it practical then to choose a data collection method that allows a lot of freedom in terms of the timing and the form of response that is far from the researcher's control? Nevertheless, I proceeded with the plan to use the online focus group for data collection method because the benefits such as richness of data with prolong and casual interaction with participants outweighs this limitation. To prepare for this setback, I sent friendly reminders via personal messaging or email when the actual participants became less active. I was also prepared to offer to moderate the discussion through email to maintain the interaction with the participants on their current engagement accounts over the period of one semester if any of them decided to drop out of the Facebook focus group.

Phase One: The Interview

Phase One was the first stage of data collection where the first group of participants were selected, invited and recruited for the purpose of data collection through the interview together with the use of a qualitative life grid and documentary evidence to be collected in this phase. Upon receiving the ethical approval (Appendix 1) to conduct the study, I returned to Malaysian in March 2017 to proceed with the fieldwork.

In the first phase, to generate data on engagement in the form of opinion, interpretation, attitude, experience, reasoning, practice, motivation and challenge, a semi-structured interview was employed as the main tool for data collection in this research. As the face-to-face interview was semi-structured, there were a combination of open-ended and closed questions that I asked throughout the interview. In addition, further questions or prompts were also asked depending on the responses given by each participant during the interview. A participant consent form (Appendix II), information sheet (Appendix III), potential interview questions (Appendix IV) were emailed to participants upon the confirmation of the interview appointments. The interviews were all conducted in the academics' individual workspace where the environment was quiet and allowed the interview to take place without many interruptions.

Phase Two: The Online Focus Group

For the second phase of the data collection stage, I conducted online focus group in order to explore the academics' opinions, perceptions and experiences in the

internationalisation of higher education. According to Snelson (2016), academic research employing social media platforms such as Facebook has "entered the mainstream of academic literature" and that "social media research is emerging as a field of study in its own right" (p. 11).

This method is an adaptation of the face-to-face World Café method (Estacio and Karic, 2015), which was suited to a private online environment of exchange and interaction. The participants who agreed to participate via virtual focus group were invited to join via their personal Facebook account. They were then invited to join a secret group on Facebook called "The Internationalisation Café", where their participation remained anonymous to the public users of Facebook. I, as the host, used my personal Facebook account where the secret group meant for the focus group discussion was created. The data collection period for this phase was fourteen weeks whereby almost every fortnightly I posted, either a stimulus or a set of questions which the participants could respond to. This was also aimed at encouraging on-going discussions based on the questions or stimuli (Refer to Appendix VI for Facebook-based focus group questions and stimuli).

On this platform, I functioned as the researcher and the administrator of the chat room and managed any forms of prompt such as questions, statements or status updates initiated by any of the participants. Figure 5 shows a snapshot of the interaction that happened during the online focus group.

Figure 5: A Snapshot of the Facebook-based Focus Group

Source: Author

I, represented by Eily Jalil, which is my Facebook profile name, is seen in Figure 5 posting a follow up question about international journal publication which was identified by almost all interview participants as a challenge in their engagement with internationalisation. The participants (anonymised) responded at the reply section and the thread went on with a few more participants giving their responses. This is an illustration on how the online focus group was conducted in the effort to gain insights into the participants'' experience and opinion concerning their engagement in the internationalisation of higher education. For more samples of the Facebook-based data, please refer to Appendix VII.

The rationale for the secret Facebook-based focus group was to make the group interactions possible for the participants (Liamputtong, 2011) as they were located in

different parts of Malaysia. Logistically, this method worked effectively in creating a convenient safe, and flexible space for the focus group (Brüggen & Willems, 2009), whose members were busy academics too. It would be almost impossible to get all seventeen of them to gather at one place to join the focus group. Furthermore, as the discussion run asynchronously, it allowed the participants and the researcher who was in the United Kingdom to engage at any time and pace that were suitable for each participant.

In fact, the most important rationale of the choice to make the group a secret and private from the public was an ethical one. Involving research participants from a small population of academics who are attached to 20 Malaysian public universities could cause too much exposure and discomfort if the participants were seen online to share their personal views and experiences about the world of work with colleagues. They were only known to each other, who were also members of the Internationalisation Café. More importantly, the lack of anonymity might also create a sense of collegiality for participants to share their personal experience and opinions openly and critically on their engagement. From my observations over the years of serving in a public university, academics in Malaysian universities tend to be very conscious and mindful in voicing critical opinions and sharing personal accounts due to cultural norms. Therefore, by keeping the identities of the participants known only to the members and confidential to the public, I aimed for more insightful and honest discussion within the secret Facebook focus group.

Reflecting on the decisions I made regarding the data collection methods, I am mindful about Silverman's (2013) warning on interview participants' tendency to adapt their accounts to the audience. I addressed this issue of trustworthiness in data generated through interviews by including both individual also focus group interviews with the same group of participants. I also employed the focus group method with the intention to explore internationalisation engagement in the light of the research questions for over a period of time (14 weeks) as opposed to the one-off interview in Phase One.

The combination of the individual interview and focus group interactions over a sustained period of time would increase the research method credibility. Employing these methods was also part of my effort to provide dual platforms for my participants to articulate their

accounts and perceptions. This triangulation of data generation methods has allowed for deeper insights on how they make sense of internationalisation when they were sharing with me during the individual interview and later when they were constructing the data with other participants in the Facebook focus group. Orth et al., (2020) highlight the value of utilising social media like Facebook in research as they argue,

> "…using social media in qualitative research allows researchers the opportunity to triangulate data using multiple methods of online data collection, thereby strengthening the credibility of the research findings." (Orth et al., 2020, p.12).

Responding to the above statement, it was evident that there was consistency in the accounts that the participants shared during the individual interview and the online focus group. Some opinions were reiterated in the focus group while there were instances where clarification of their views shared during the interview was provided later in the data generated from the online method. These were made possible because the questions asked were related to the questions during the individual interview. Therefore, the online focus group had given the participants the opportunity to further illustrate their accounts thus increasing the credibility of the data produced through the combination of the selected methods.

Data Analysis Methods

This study generated qualitative data through interviews and the online focus group. While there is no one-size-fit-all method for analysing qualitative data (Creswell, 2012), a systematic way, which is suitable for analysing a set of qualitative data need to be employed in order to make sense out of the complex and rich data generated from the research. For that purpose, I found thematic analysis to be most suitable of analysis method for the study for a few reasons. According to (Braun & Clarke, 2006),

> Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. (p.79).

Schwandt, 2007 proposes that in conducting thematic analyses, data is coded according to their patterns, allowing for categorisation of data into related themes. Dealing with seventeen interview transcripts and a set of data from the focus group and seeking for patterns or themes to answer the four research questions, thematic analysis, in my view

was suitable because it is "a robust and highly sensitive tool for the systematization and presentation of qualitative analyses" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.385).

I was also trying to make sense of the data with the guide of a theoretical framework which is loosely based on a few internationalisation theories including (Stier, 2004) ideologies underpinning internationalisation rationales. (Braun & Clarke, 2006) argue that thematic analysis is a method that is "independent of theory and epistemology and can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches" (p.78). This flexibility, therefore, makes data analysis process more transparent, systematic and convenient.

Upon completing the interviews in Malaysia over a period of three weeks, I transcribed each recorded interview and followed the analysis process as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) as shown in Table 3,

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 3: Phases of thematic analysis
Source: Braun & Clarke (2006, p.87)

The transcription process was indeed effective in helping to familiarise with the data. Although I was the interviewer who carried out all the interviews, after seventeen data-packed and insightful interviews, I felt overwhelmed by colourful accounts that the participants had shared with me. Phase 1 was instrumental in getting close to the data as the process aided me to 're-live' the interviews by listening to the voices of the participants from the recordings.

Upon familiarising myself with the data through the transcribing process, I imported them to NVivo, a computer software for analysing qualitative data so that I could manage the massive amount of data more systematically and efficiently. , Basit (2003) suggest that the use of software such as NVivo depends on expertise of the researcher, the size, available time duration of the research project as well as funding. For the purpose of doing the analysis, I took up a few sessions on NVivo for beginners and later found the software while an excellent tool for data storage, organisation, recall and analysis, was not rigorous enough in analysing the data that I have obtained from the study. Due to the nature of my data which was transcribed in two languages, I found the process of analysing using NVivo too complicated and superficial. Many expressions and accounts from the interviews that might not appear in the same patter but carried similar meaning, was left out by the machine. Consequently, I decided to also examine the transcript and code on NVivo which I utilised mainly for organising and recalling data. When coding, I tried to look for data that corresponds to the research questions. The keywords of each research question such as definition, rationale, challenges and impact, became the main categories or parent code while the recurrent themes from the data were coded and collated as the sub-themes.

Following Phase 4, I then reviewed and refined the themes in order to generate the thematic map of the analysis as shown in Appendix VIII. Part of the mapping of codes and themes is shown in Table 4, as follows.

Research question	Main category/aspect	Parent and child codes

RQ1: In what ways do academics engage in internationalisation?	Conceptualisation	1) International partnership
		    a) HE institution
		    b) Industry
		    c) Other kinds of organisation
		2) International presence/visibility
		    a) University ranking
		    b) Academic's reputation
		3) Foreign elements
		    a) Curriculum content
		    b) Students
		    c) Staff
		    d) Academic programme
		    e) Medium of instruction
		4) International guidelines

		a) Disciplinary-related professional guidelines b) International recognition/qualification 5) Intercultural understanding/Universal 6) Trading/sharing of academic products/services 7) International networking

	Forms of engagement	1) Academic exchange
		2) Academic programmes
		3) Curriculum
		4) Student mobility programmes
		5) Research
		   a. Conference organising
		   b. Collaboration
		6) Teaching & Learning
		7) Leadership roles
		   a. Mentoring
		   b. Managerial roles
		8) Training
		9) Networking
		10) Professional bodies

RQ2: What are their rationales in internationalisation?	Rationales for engagement in internationalisation	1) Career development 2) Disciplinarity 3) For the community/humanity 4) Funding 5) Interculturalism 6) International student recruitment 7) Knowledge development 8) Personal traits 9) For improving quality 10) For quality assurance measures 11) Ranking 12) Students' interest

Table 4: Mapping of research questions, main categories (aspects) and codes for RQ1 and RQ2

Ethical Considerations

To ensure that the research is ethical and that I have secured the interest of the participants, there were steps that I have planned throughout the research process. One of the most important aspects was participants' consent. Starting from inviting potential participants and through the recruitment stage till the data collection and analysis phases, I tried to ensure that they will be thoroughly briefed and have understood what the research was about and how they were going to be involved and about the risk of participating. This was done via the invitation emails and via the information sheet that was sent to them. Only when they had given their consent in written form, I proceeded with the data collection process. The same went with the consent for voice-recording the interviews, only when the participants agreed, I placed the recorder near us and switched it on. Interview transcripts were returned to the participants for their confirmation.

Measures in ensuring ethical researching were also taken in collating, storing, analysing and reporting the data. Confidentiality is paramount when storing the data, personal identity of the participants and institutions. I made sure that all the physical and digital forms of the data are safely kept and protected from other parties. The data of the study was collected, stored, used and later, will be destroyed in compliance to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Common Law duty of confidence.

In terms of cultural sensitivity, I felt that belonging to almost similar cultural groups as the participants (Malaysian, academic staff working in a Malaysian public university), it might help in being aware and more reflexive on what is culturally, socially and politically accepted in communicating with the participants. Therefore, whenever I was interviewing a male participant, I made sure that the door to his office was not totally shut and left slightly ajar. I did this based on the understanding that in Malaysia it is frown upon for two unmarried people to be in close proximity in a closed room. I felt that it was important to show respect and ensure that both the participants and I were comfortable.

Finally, although the application for ethics review of the study has been approved by the University of Sheffield, and besides the measures discussed above, I did my best to constantly reflect on my research conduct at all times throughout the research journey by

keeping a fieldwork journal. This journal was used to note down any ethical issues or challenges I faced during data collection stage.

Reflection on Data Collection and Analysis process

One of the issues I faced during both stages was related to confidentiality, anonymity and trust. I observed that despite the declaration to keep the identities of the participants and their institutions confidential, there was a sense of fear of surveillance among the participants in speaking out. I did not realise it was a genuine concern on some of the participants' side. During the focus group interview or group discussion on the Facebook secret group "The Internationalisation Café", when asked about the challenges they faced, one of the participants texted me privately and confessed that she did not feel comfortable sharing her experience or view on the particular topic because she feared that there might be those in the group who knew her superiors such as her dean or from the university management team, who might share the information that she shared in the focus group. I responded by giving her assurance that each one of them has agreed to keep the discussion and identity of the group member confidential. However, she seemed not convinced and did not respond extensively on the topic.

Is this incident an example of the fear of surveillance among academics in Malaysian public universities or does this fear rooted from the feeling of institutional loyalty, hence the fear of being accused of not being loyal. There is a law in Malaysia deterring government servants (including academics who are employed in public universities) from disclosing any negative information about the government, the leaders, and the institutions. Sometimes being critical and constructive could be misinterpreted as being disloyal as well. This could be the reason why some of the participants who were also government servants felt uncomfortable to openly comment negatively about their workplace, leadership, or the system as they fear that they will be regarded as breaking the law and that it could affect their promotional opportunities and appraisals.

Learning from this experience, while recognising that privacy and confidentiality are some of the advantages of using secret online focus group, it may not guarantee that any individual who participated in the virtual focus group would not feel insecure in any ways. Literature suggests that online methods can provide a 'safe space' (Orth et al., 2020; Franz

et al., 2019) if researchers are able to take measures to ensure confidentiality. On the other hand, it is also recognised that accidental disclosure by researchers or participants could happen (Wiles et al., 2008), which explains the concern expressed by the two participants who felt uncomfortable in sharing their views in the online focus group. Perhaps, due to this reason, they did not experience it as a safe space.

In addition, secrecy does not necessarily guarantee that participants would instantly and always feel comfortable to share their opinions. For example, to ensure that Internationalisation Café was a safe place for sharing their views, the participants were informed about the procedures and 'house rules' of the online focus group and the confidentiality measures taken by making the group anonymous to the public. However, there were moments when they felt insecure, such as when sharing negative comments about their institutions even though it may be true. From this, I learned that online method researchers may not have control over how safe participants might feel about the method used for various reasons. In this case, it seemed that power dynamic may have influence, and this was felt by a few participants, if not all.

The other issue that was unsettling for me was unanswered questions in the focus group. There were a few questions that did not receive any response. It could be because they refrained from responding to it due to the fear of surveillance or perhaps unintentionally overlooked by my participants during the interview. I noticed, when asked for further details on their accounts of IoC, or about the support and challenges in internationalisation during the online focus group, some of them were silent. What were the reasons for this silence?

Finally, during the data collection period, I learned through the hard way that getting permission from the institutions of research sites does not guarantee meaningful access to research participants as argued by Hammersly and Atkinson,

> The process of gaining access is not *merely* a practical matter. Not only this its achievement depends upon theoretical understanding, often disguised as "native wit," but the discovery of obstacles to access, and perhaps of effective means of overcoming them, themselves provide insights into the social organisation of the setting. (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1983, p.54)

Having obtained the permission from the universities where the research participants were employed at, I sent out thirty invitations to participate via email before arriving in Malaysia for the fieldwork. However, more than half of the academics who were actually involved in the interview were not in the initial recruitment list even when some of them replied and agreed to be interviewed. To deal with this sudden loss of access when a few cancelled their participation or became unavailable due to work demands, I had to resort to alternatives ways of recruiting participants. The most successful way for me was through a few gatekeepers in these universities. I happened to know a few academics who I have worked with or met at conferences and stayed in touch after the events. For example, in RU1, a research university, the gatekeeper is one of the senior staff who has very good rapport with his colleagues in the department. It was with his informal "introduction and the tour' of his department to meet his colleagues, I managed to approach them and secure the interview with four of the research participants. Recruitment through socially influential individual in the institution in the end became the main method of participant recruitment for this study. Nevertheless, prior to the interview, I made sure that their background and profile matched the criteria of participant selection as mentioned earlier.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the philosophical and methodological choices I made for the study including the research paradigm, the research design and data collection and analysis methods. The justifications underpinning the research design and discussion on the ethical considerations were also presented. I also shared the reflections on the methodological aspects that affected my journey in conducting the research.

Due to these limitations, although the findings of this small-scale qualitative research may illuminate the discourse on academics' engagement in the internationalisation, it would not be highly generalisable to other contexts. Nevertheless, the value of qualitative data and approaches are not for generalisability. I believe through the care and rigour I have put in conducting the study, guided by the theories and scholarly works, the research has managed to delve deep into the participants' world of engagement with internationalisation of higher education and make sense of their world view on this matter.

Chapter Five: Conceptualisation, Rationale and Forms

Introduction

Following the discussion on the methodology of the study, Chapter Five and Chapter Six present the findings resulting from the analysis of the data generated through individual interviews and the online focus group interviews which were conducted via a Facebook platform called "The Internationalisation Café". This chapter presents the data analysed that answers the following research questions:

1. In what ways do academics engage in the internationalisation of higher education?" (RQ1), and

2. What are their rationales for engaging in the internationalisation of higher education? (RQ2)

This chapter is divided into three main sections, presenting three of the six main categories of the overall findings. The three categories of the findings, which attempt to answer the first and second research questions as stated above, are i) conceptualisations of internationalisation, and ii) rationales for engaging in internationalisation, and iii) the strategies or forms of academics' international engagements.

Conceptualisation of internationalisation

In exploring how academics in Malaysian public universities engage in the internationalisation of higher education, it is also essential to be aware of how they understand internationalisation. One of the first questions posed to participants during the individual interviews and in the online focus group was what internationalisation meant to them.

In general, all of the academic participants were familiar with the term "internationalisation", because internationalisation is present in and a part of the organisational structure, universities' mission, vision and strategic planning, academics' core responsibilities, and the MoHE's main policies for public universities as explained in the contextual chapter (Chapter Three).

However, perhaps because internationalisation is such a widespread term in higher educational discourse, what it means has to some extent been taken for granted and is

being assumed to mean the same, well-understood concept by all actors in higher education, including academics. Therefore, to explore how academics engage in internationalisation, as intended in RQ1, it is vital to investigate how academics understand and conceptualise internationalisation as a dimension of the academic profession.

Despite the familiarity with the language and activities that are deemed part of internationalisation, the interview data shows that the academics involved in the present study held diverse meanings of the internationalisation of higher education. The following section presents four groups of interpretations found in the definitions of internationalisation that were shared by the participants: i) integration of international community and elements, ii) international partnership and networking, iii) intercultural understanding, and iv) visibility and recognition.

Integration of international community and elements

One of the more recurrent themes based on the interpretations given by the participants links internationalisation to the integration of international content into university curricula and the integration of nationalities within the university community of staff and students. A few participants defined internationalisation as the incorporation of international and foreign dimensions into the higher education system, while others emphasised the presence of foreign students and staff on the university campus.

Firstly, Laila, a Senior Lecturer in Computer Science from FU2, viewed internationalisation as a process of integration of local staff and students with the international community among them. While mentioning that one sign of an internationalised university was the use of English as a medium of instruction, she also explained her understanding of internationalisation by expanding the value of having English as the medium of communication as a tool of integration in the following example:

> Our local students, who are the majority, when they are internationalised, they blend in well with the international students. Not just in class but also with those who are in different cohorts, programmes, and levels, like the PhD students. And the communication should be everywhere, in class, in sports, at the hostel…this way, it develops them, internationalise themselves. We don't have to wait to have

international students in the class to be internationalised. It's this kind of communication that shapes the internationalisation of the students. (Translation) (Laila, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2)

Referring to the undergraduate students in FU2, from Laila's explanation of her understanding of the internationalisation of higher education, it can be implied that it is the multiway, natural, formal, and informal communication among the university's local and international community members that defines internationalisation.

The idea that international students' presence in universities means internationalisation is at work is also echoed in the definition given by Jamil, a Biotechnology professor from the same university. He interpreted internationalisation in this way and illustrated his definition by linking it to the recruitment of students and staff from foreign countries:

> You can look at different angles. For example, […] students come from various countries. I interpret this as part of internationalisation. Secondly, you can look at lecturers, academicians. So, if there are certain quotas to be set or a number of foreigners who are not citizens of Malaysia, to serve in […] Malaysian universities, then we can also consider this a part of the internationalisation of academicians. (Jamil, Professor, Biotechnology, FU2)

Jamil also referred to the incorporation of the knowledge of field of studies that are internationally originated in conceptualising the internationalisation of higher education. He further reiterated the centrality of international elements in defining internationalisation by giving more examples, including the following which refers to academic areas of discipline:

> My subject is also an international subject. The person who made it famous was in Austria, for example, Mandle, one of the famous names in genetics. Of course, now the field has been modernised with new technology, with biotechnology and so on. So, uh… that's one way you can interpret it. (Jamil, Professor, Biotechnology, FU2)

From the assertions provided by both Laila and Jamil from FU2 about internationalisation, the inclusion of members of the international community, such as students or staff, and knowledge that of foreign origins into the service and delivery of education at the university level formed their interpretation of the internationalisation of higher education.

A different way of looking at the presence of the international community on campus for the purpose of benchmarking as part of internationalisation was also offered by Laila, who interpreted internationalisation, among other things, as a mechanism of benchmarking local and international students who are studying at the same university. This understanding was implied when Laila expressed her relief about the home students at her university appearing to be on par with the international students:

> […] internationalisation means students mix […] because our medium of instruction is English, […] from this we can see that the local and international students are just as competitive, which means our local students are not too far behind the international ones, so far. So, that's good. (Laila, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2)

In relation to benchmarking, some of the academics also perceived internationalisation to be the integration of international elements, such as standards or guidelines, into university programmes. They spoke about international guidelines in various disciplines that are incorporated into the curriculum as forms of international standardisations for universities to benchmark against each other to ensure best practices. For instance, Suri interpreted internationalisation as "a set of guidelines" which is agreed collectively, internationally, and "a platform where everyone can share and benefit from" (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1). She illustrated this definition with references to some international guidelines which are accepted and used globally by scholars, researchers, and industries in her area of specialisation.

To summarise, these responses from Laila (Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2), Suri (Professor, Engineering, RU1) and Zaza (Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1) demonstrate that the academics viewed internationalisation as the integration of international elements (i.e. guidelines) and that the local-international comparison serve as benchmarking mechanisms to gauge the quality of academic work, study programmes, academics, students and graduates.

International partnership and networking

Responding to the interview question on what they understood by internationalisation, another common definition mentioned was related to international partners. The notion of national boundary was used quite frequently by the academics interviewed to

distinguish what they included and excluded in defining internationalisation. This kind of definition often refers to relationships that are formed between two or more entities that belong to different countries for the purposes of higher education. For example, when asked about what internationalisation meant to him, Alan (Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1) instantly mentioned 'international partners' who he distinguished as those who were from abroad:

> … our international partner is academic-based. As long as it's international, from other countries, then I would say it's part of internationalisation. (Alan, Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1)

Alan further elaborated on his definition by saying that "an international partner" could be an individual, an academic, or non-academic institution and exemplified that "academic-based" activities that he considered part of internationalisation include "joint degrees", "international conferences", "lecturer exchange programmes", and "student exchange programmes". Even "public-private partnership" was identified as a possible form of international partnership as long as it involves transnational entities.

This element of geographical distinction between the national and the international is also echoed in Ahmad's definition, as he stated:

> Internationalisation, basically, outside Malaysia. It's what you do with people who are not from Malaysia, that is internationalisation. Whether you want to sell your academic products to outsiders, or you want to bring them to Malaysia, join your programmes. That is part of collaboration, it can be academic programmes, it can be research programmes, it can be culture programmes, it can be anything, including bringing funds from external parts. To me, these are the forms of internationalisation. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

Based on Ahmad's view, similar forms of academic activities to those stated by Alan are also regarded as internationalisation activities with further expansion to non-academic programmes such as cultural programmes and external funding.

Yahya, on the other hand, while supporting the opinion that internationalisation means partnerships with international counterparts, emphasised the international collaboration which involved the transfer of knowledge and expertise for the benefit and development of one or both partners. To illustrate his understanding of internationalisation, which was based on study programmes at CU1, Yahya stated:

Internationalisation, in my opinion, is, making our programmes known at the international level. We can either be the one that receives or the one that offers […] Also, when we collaborate in conducting research with foreign partners. Or, perhaps, we also receive international students through student exchange programmes. (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

He further defined what he meant by receiving and offering:

The one that receives means we welcome expertise from overseas as a smart partnership, in the aspects of expertise or technology […] Offering means, we share our expertise with foreign partners. For example, in the contexts of our partnership with Thailand, we offer expertise in the Malay Language. Our academics were sent there to teach and develop the programme for two years. (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

In short, internationalisation of higher education, based on the views of Alan (FU1), Ahmad (RU2), and Yahya (CU1), can be understood as collaborative partnership for an exchange of higher education products, expertise, and services established between two higher education entities that transcends their national borders. It is also important to note that their views of the international partnership are based on mutual recognition and the mutual benefit of the partners. However, from Yahya's explanation above, it can also be inferred that those who offer are also seen as the party that have recognised expertise in a specific field of knowledge. This could mean he linked internationalisation in the context of partnership as knowledge and expertise transfer as possibly being more beneficial for one side than the other.

In relation to partnership, international networking for the purposes of building individual academic and institutional reputations also features in the definition of internationalisation of higher education given by the academics. Some of the academics viewed initiating, nurturing, and maintaining professional relationships with fellow academics, students, and significant others from industry, professional bodies, and international agencies from abroad who are central to higher education. This understanding emerged when they talked about international visits that they either participated in or when they received international visitors at their universities as part of their role as academics in Malaysian public universities, including meeting international students and international staff at their workplace and via conference participation. The academics shared that they were often reminded that they were 'ambassadors' of their

universities, the MoHE, the Malaysian government, and the nation. An internationalised university representative, in their opinion, should be actively initiating or participating in academic networks that benefit their academic profession, their students and their institutions. Laila shared her understanding of internationalisation in relation to networking:

> Internationalisation means networking [...] no need to go abroad as long as you can communicate, reach, and disseminate knowledge to international counterparts locally or internationally. (Laila, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2)

It is interesting to note that Laila's idea of international networking does not necessitate staff or students to travel internationally. This could be linked to the fact that the international community has a strong presence within Malaysian public and private universities. Alternatively, it could also imply that communication technology facilities are readily available and easily accessible to the extent that networking or having a collaborative relationship as part of internationalisation initiatives are no longer limited to the minority of mobile students and staff.

Safa, by contrast, during the online focus group discussion via the International Café, Facebook-based secret group, included networking with international students:

> Network [...] not just to colleagues from international partners but also with international students [...] and the relationship lasts 😍😍😍 (Safa, Senior Lecturer, Engineering Education, FU1)

From the instances above, internationalisation emerges as forming relationships with foreign academics, students, and institutions either in Malaysia or when travelling abroad to introduce and promote one's academic work and universities.

Intercultural understanding

While a few academics defined internationalisation by referring to international elements, communities and partners, Rita, a Senior Lecturer in Communications, and Barry, an Associate Professor in Language Education, offered interpretations of internationalisation that are more cultural-themed and placed less focus on the notion of national boundaries. The cultural attributes included in their responses were ethnicity, religion, language and nationalities. For instance, Rita said:

> Internationalisation is […] getting into a community, with different backgrounds, with different cultures, so there is a need to somehow understand how they go about their social daily lives, and in terms of interacting. (Rita, Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2)

In a similar vein, giving his definition of internationalisation from the perspective of a Muslim, Barry (Associate Professor, Language Education, FU1) interpreted internationalisation as being something universal, and he illustrated this concept by comparing Islamic values with other cultures that mutually emphasise cleanliness and punctuality as shared universal values. Interestingly, both definitions as presented above seem to be geographically decontextualised and are not specifically connected to the higher education system and university.

Both Rita and Barry further explained their definitions in length by giving various, detailed examples of what they viewed as internationalisation or what it is not. For instance, to them, in the context of education, internationalisation is about accepting, respecting and learning from others of all cultural backgrounds. They gave examples in teaching and learning that illustrated their interpretation of internationalisation as being about avoiding prejudice, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, and fanaticism in one's attitude, behaviour, and activities in class as well as local-international student relationships.

Visibility and recognition

Another central idea that emerges based on the definitions of internationalisation generated from the interviews emphasises international visibility. For higher education, this refers to the awareness of others about a university, its academic programmes, scholars, niche areas, reputation, and graduates both locally and internationally. According to the academics, a university with strong international visibility tends to be recognised as prestigious in terms of the quality of knowledge and the graduates it produces. They seemed to believe this kind of university tend to be among the top universities in international university rankings and league tables. In addition to institutional international prominence, the participants also included individual academics' international visibility and standing as a scholar as part of internationalisation.

Zaza and Suri, respectively an Associate Professor and a Professor in Engineering at RU1, for example, extended their interpretations by including academics instead of just universities. In their view, part of internationalisation is being internationally renowned, distinguished, visible, recognised, and perhaps influential in the area of one's expertise. For Suri, internationalisation is about making an academic's scholarly work and professional reputation known to the community at the international level. She suggested this could be achieved through research publications in international journals and commercialisation as well as publicising through online professional social media networks such as ResearchGate, LinkedIn, and Academia.

The idea of internationalising via international networking for the purposes of being visible, recognised, and also for benchmarking was reflected in Zaza's illustrations that by "going international", as an academic, "you can benchmark your own research work" (Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1). She later reiterated this idea during the Facebook focus group discussion:

> Internationalisation means you go international; networking with people of the same field and to be known among those in the field. Exist within the large research community. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

Zain also perceived internationalisation in a similar way but emphasised that academics have to internationalise their work and expanded on gaining recognition by others, as he said:

> To me, it's how you portray yourself in your field. Are you being referred? Referred in many ways, as a specialist, in terms of your publications and recognised in your field. By recognised, I mean, for example, you are being appointed as an editorial board member of an international journal. You are sought after for your knowledge and expertise. […] Being invited by others, that's a form of recognition. (Zain, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

According to Zain, internationalisation is when an academic proactively makes themselves visible internationally and is recognised for their scholarly work and research contributions to a particular area of knowledge. Recognition by the international community outside Malaysia appears to be vital to his definition. Similarly, Ahmad, a professor of Computer Science, also highlighted the visibility of Malaysian universities or academics in the eyes of the international community:

> […] now we have ranking, part of this is you need to make sure yourself or your institution excel or be well known...means, seen by other outsiders. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

Note also how Ahmad equated quality, which he termed 'excel', to international reputation, or in his words, 'well known'. Here, he could be implying that the more well-recognised and highly ranked a university, the better the quality of education.

Similarly, Yahya suggested that internationalisation is also about making oneself visible as a scholar in an area and about making one's affiliation visible internationally. He exemplified this by claiming that by publishing in international journals, academics are "actually internationalising" themselves and their universities (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1).

From the views of the participants, it can be inferred that internationalisation relates to global recognition and awareness of the existence, reputation, and quality of a university and its academic and graduates.

Rationales for engaging in the internationalisation of higher education

The study's second research question was aimed at exploring the academics' rationales for engaging in the internationalisation of higher education. The intention of the question was to probe why academics decided to engage with internationalisation activities. In the interview and focus group, questions related to rationales were constructed using terms such as *why*, *reasons*, *drivers*, *purposes* or *what they wanted to achieve by doing what they did*.

The study revealed that there were various rationales for engaging in the internationalisation of higher education. In fact, an academic might have different reasons for their engagement in internationalisation, their rationales might also be underpinned by different ideologies for the different forms of international engagement. Drawing from the Stier's work (2004) on the ideologies underlying internationalisation, the findings generated from the interview and online focus group data were analysed and grouped using his classifications of idealism, educationalism, and instrumentalism, which were discussed in the literature review section.

Idealism

When asked about why they engaged in internationalisation the way they did, I found that some of the reasons they gave were centred around being for the greater good of the world and humankind (Stier, 2004). The following are some specific illustrations of idealistic rationales that the academics provided.

a. *For the local and global community*

One of Suri's rationales for engaging in internationalisation around research, which to her has no clear local-international boundaries, was to improve local and global community problems. Linking this to research and development (R&D), Suri shared her intention in her international R&D engagement:

> The final output [...] is how we can do R&D. Simple, simple ones which could solve the daily problem of a community. We have to think of that. Sometimes you wanna do rocket science but there's no takers. (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1)

Suri's rationale, as mentioned above, may not be to solve the world's problems, but her work in research was driven by the intention to help provide solutions to specific problems in specific contexts for the benefit of those within the locality and across national borders. This rationale echoes the vision of creating a better world (Stier, 2004).

b. *Nationalism*

On the other hand, some of the academics place the interests of the nation at the heart of their internationalisation efforts. Being Malaysians, though the majority of these academics were educated abroad at some point in their tertiary education, many claimed to engage in internationalisation because of their love for their country and that they wished to improve Malaysia and its people.

This strong nationalistic feeling blossomed when they received their PhD training or travelled for academic activities abroad. One of the participants who confessed that nationalism was the primary driver for his international engagement was Husin, a Senior Lecturer in Law from FU2:

> I think I am a very patriotic person, maybe. I just want to show to the world what Malays, Malaysians, are made of. I love history and it was the reason I specialise in this area. It involves a lot of history. If you read about the history of Malay communities, we have quite a sad history. We were being colonised… there are

good parts but more often than not, people like Frank Swettenham said, the Malays are incompetent, not able to do this, to do that, the Malays are second class human beings, […] even in Dr. Mahathir's book, Doctor in the House, we even lost to Siamese. So, it's things like these that motivated me. […] I sent all these to the media just for internationalisation. So that people know our strengths. If we don't change people's perception of us, who would? (Husin, Senior Lecturer, Law, FU2)

In explaining the motivation for promoting his academic work internationally so that Malaysian's capabilities were recognised as part of his international engagement, Husin also recalled an account of a negative experience which sparked his nationalistic feelings. It was about a few foreigners he met abroad who assumed that Malaysia and its people were inferior in many ways. For instance, he was asked by a Canadian colleague if there were roads in Malaysia like the ones in Australia when they were both pursuing their doctorates there in 2009. Ignorance about the existence and negative perception about Malaysia, as narrated by Husin, was one of the main reasons why he felt that it was vital for him to internationalise himself as academic, the university, and Malaysian higher education with the hope of promoting a better international understanding about Malaysia and its people.

c. *Interculturalism*

Interculturalism emerged as one of the rationales for engaging in internationalisation through research, community activities, or teaching. The academics shared various cultural anecdotes which implied that they tried to be strong advocates of deep intercultural understanding and tolerance. Rita, whose area of expertise and research interest was intercultural communications, reiterated her belief in interculturalism and internationalisation as a means of achieving intercultural understanding and tolerance. She claimed it was her motivation for internationalising research, curricula, and teaching as she felt that even in a university with a very international environment such as CU2, promoting intercultural understanding efforts still needed to be systematically planned and organised as she emphasised:

> […] after being around for more than 25 years, […] to a certain extent, somehow, they're already very much comfortable with how things already are. And to impose something like this is gonna be a bit of a struggle. But it needs to be done, you know? Because, so that our teachers will not be running to the office and going like (raises her voice and imitating another female whining voice) "You know these students they are always complaining!" But the fact is for them it's

not much of complaining, this is them expressing their opinions, you know? (Rita, Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2)

This shows that there was still a lack of understanding, respect, and acceptance of other cultures as observed by Rita. She admitted that it could be impossible to learn specifically about every culture in the world, but the spirit of wanting to learn about, appreciating, and accepting others' culture was missing. Therefore, this had been a great concern to her, which motivated her to engage in internationalisation in various ways in her capacity as an academic.

Educationalism

According to Stier (2004), educationalists' internationalisation rationales relate to the value of education and learning itself. Engaging in internationalisation activities or viewing it as a way of enriching one's academic experience and promoting personal growth and self-actualisation is part of the educationalist ideology of internationalisation of higher education.

a. *Knowledge development*

When asked about their motivation for internationalising higher education, passion for knowledge and learning were cited as the main drivers in their international professional initiatives. Laila, for example, stated that internationalisation itself was never the goal of her academic activities, but she realised that she found herself internationalising in teaching, research, and services because she felt that it was part of what she needed to do as an academic, but she did it for the sake of education and knowledge development, as she recalled:

> To me, internationalisation, what we do is part of our duty. It means we do our thing, but at the same time, it helps leading us to internationalisation. Truthfully, we don't focus too much on internationalisation. But we truly focus on is spreading and expanding our knowledge. I believe that whether it's internationalisation or not, what I intend to do is to develop knowledge, to give exposure as much as necessary to my students. What is important to me is that the knowledge is disseminated either through publications, conference or teaching or by sending students to present. (Laila, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2).

It seems that according to Laila, and indeed many others who gave similar reasons, internationalisation is an element that is embedded in the academic profession. It also

implies that internationalisation, as seen by Laila, is more of a means in knowledge development and dissemination rather than a goal in itself.

Another educationalistic rationale given by Laila was making knowledge accessible to others. In explaining her main reason for incorporating the task involving students writing for a real audience in her Masters' programme course, she stated:

> My intention is for them to see that knowledge is meant for sharing and for the benefit of others too. (Laila, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2).

Sharing a quite similar reason, which is to contribute to the body of knowledge, when asked about his rationale for internationalising higher education, Yahya responded:

> It is my passion! And satisfaction. In academic aspect, social science especially, each context is unique […]. Our background and education are different, […] so even if I replicate, the result may be different. So, that the contribution to the body of knowledge […] So, it is my passion to contribute to the body of knowledge. (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1).

Suri also confessed that she was driven by the passion for learning and discovery in research. Her love for research, which fuelled her effort to internationalise through research, demonstrated the ideology embedded in her rationales for internationalisation, as she said:

> For me, research is a passion. […] a discovery in research is like a million dollars falling from the sky! (*laugh*) (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1).

From these four excerpts, it can be concluded that educationalistic internationalisation rationales drives academics to internationalise their teaching, research, and other duties that they perform because they are passionate about knowledge and education and, for them, it is inevitable to function and thrive as academics in higher education.

b. *Students' learning experience*

At the heart of the educationalist view underpinning internationalisation rationales is to enhance the individual's learning process (Stier, 2004). The findings from the interviews with the academics showed that this reason appeared many times during the discussion around the academics' motivation for engaging in the internationalisation of higher education. Educationalism could be implied in Yahya's explanation for continuously

reviewing the curriculum and teaching materials for his courses, the main reason for which was to enrich their students' learning experience, as he said:

> In my opinion, knowledge must always be improved, updated. […] I need to prepare them to learn well, so that they are ready for university life, so they enjoy learning and hopefully the outcome will be better, right? (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

In the same vein, Zaza shared her joy as the result of internationalisation that later became her motivation to continue engaging in it:

> Another thing that is worth sharing, […] which I really like to see is, when alumni are communicating with each other and they are doing, like internationalisation. […] Some have gone back to Myanmar, some to Indonesia, our Malaysian student, TWK, he is now in Japan. But they are communicating with each other and doing research together. […] It's like a seed that you planted, and you are seeing it growing. Sometimes it does involve you but sometimes they do it without you pushing for it. And those who are active in publications, you can see that they are really moving forward with that. It's really nice to see your students doing very well after all this experience. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1).

As illustrated above in the reasons that they gave for why they internationalised, these academics attributed this rationale to students' learning and development.

c. *Self-actualisation*

Passion and interest, together with personal strength, combined to making the next rationale, which was mentioned numerous times by some of the academics. Most of them saw themselves as passionate about either science, travelling, or meeting and working with international colleagues. Not only that, whilst they had a great interest in these aspects, they also found themselves to be good at them, so much so that they were encouraged to actualise these traits in their professional domains. Zaza declared her passion for science and through her success in the internationalisation of research at RU1, it became her reason to internationalise further:

> I like what I do. When you do science, you do it because you like it. […] When you work in a university that really look at science as you know, it's like your life, your bread and butter. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1).

Similarly, Husin, driven by his love for travelling and history, later found that he was quite savvy at international networking. He attributed his rationale for international engagement as an academic to these passions:

As I said, I like to travel, and I'd like to live overseas. At that time, I thought the easiest way to do it is by becoming an academic and scholarships opportunities were abundant at that time. […] So, that was my driving force and it's quite fun because I can mix my hobby, and my desire and also my strength together. To be honest, I didn't realise that I was actually internationalising. (Husin, Senior Lecturer, Law, FU2)

On the other hand, a few academics confessed that their religious values could be considered as one of the rationales for their engagement in internationalisation. For example, Barry, who stated that he was against ethnocentrism, linked his internationalisation motives to his religious values. He believed in intercultural tolerance and internationalisation in teaching by bringing content from other cultures around the world into his classes because his religion advocates peace and respect among all regardless of nationality, skin colour, belief, and culture. Passionately sharing his reasons for internationalisation, Barry said:

> With regard to my thinking about internationalisation, in Islam, that's why God created humans with different creeds and backgrounds so that they get to know each other (*quoting the Quran*). I mean, God could have created the world that all are Muslims, all are non-Muslims, all are Malays, all are Westerners, couldn't He? […] from internationalisation, you can generate a lot of knowledge. I think God is most kind, you know, God does not only give knowledge to the Muslims, but God also gives knowledge to the non-Muslims, so people go to Japan, people go to Israel, […] they learn from these people. (Barry, Associate Professor, Language Education, FU1)

From Barry's justification, it appears that because his religious values promoted self-awareness about one's connection to others in this world and also emphasised interculturalism, it became his rationale for internationalising higher education. Thus, perhaps due to wanting to actualise what he believed in, he internationalised through cultivating interculturalism in his teaching.

Instrumentalism

Instrumentalism concerns the economic justifications that underpin internationalisation initiatives, aims, and understanding. It was found that this ideology was the most prominent philosophy embedded in the rationales for the various international activities that the academics engaged with.

a. *Graduate employability*

Since students' interests tend to be at the heart of the teaching and learning effort of the academics, some of them consciously included international and intercultural materials in their modules or related world issues to the content of the curriculum, for instance. The main reason for the internationalisation of the curriculum, many of them claimed, was to enhance students' employability skills and prepare them for the international workplace. When asked why they internationalised, all the following participants provided justifications centred around the economic benefits for the students, similar to the following:

> Not just about producing, teaching materials engineering, materials science. It's more like actually preparing them for the global market. There's no more local boundary anymore. […] After working for seven years, I started to realise that the engineers that we produced, the two previous batches, they are not only for us. I have to say, the Chinese graduates, for example, they go to Singapore to work. They are not bound in this country only. In that sense, they are for Southeast Asia as well. Once I realised that they are actually very precious not only in Malaysia, […] if these students are going international, they need to know where they could possibly be parked at and what sort of skills they should have. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1),

> We train our students not to cater only for the local market. We train them for the worldwide market…for our students, the international element is extremely important. (Alan, Senior Lecture, TVET, FU1),

> Working overseas is one aspect, but the other aspect is that they are going to work locally, but then Malaysia is part of the process of globalisation, we trade, for example, we export our products overseas and at the same time we have to communicate with the world. (Jamil, Professor, Biotechnology, FU2),

> For example, the issue of air filtration, that the air quality is important, so what are the consultation area where they can solve the problem and create money. Being a consultant, you earn between RM60,000 to RM100,000 for one building. So, it's like the matter of triggering the importance, of showing, hey guys, you'll get very good incentives in your life when you embark into it. That's very important. They'll want to know, because they know it benefits them at the end of the day. (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1).

A closer look at the extracts above revealed that each academic viewed internationalisation to be necessary, especially in teaching, by way of aim, content, and

outcome of the curriculum as well as pedagogy. The rationales they tied to this were that students in universities were to be well equipped with the desired language and professional skills upon graduation for the working world and were to be trained to earn well when they work, not just locally but also abroad. All these justifications are clearly based on students' subsequent economic gains.

b. *Building institutional and academic reputations*

One of the most common rationales for internationalisation given by the academics for internationalising research through publishing in journals, particularly those categorised as top-tiered or high impact periodicals, was the necessity to be recognised as a reputable scholar in their fields of expertise. Universities and academics alike mutually accept that this can only be achieved through a high citations index. In Malaysia, and perhaps around the world, it is becoming more prevalent for scholarly recognition of an academic or a group of academics to be based on an author-level citation index, with *h*-index as one of the most commonly used both in Malaysia and internationally.

Therefore, it was almost expected that academics in Malaysian public universities were also driven by high impact journal publications as means to build their academic reputations, as Yahya acknowledged:

> When I was doing my PhD, there was one article that targeted to the highest. If it was rejected, I would send it to a slightly lower one. So, in 2011, my article was published in a Q1, Educational Studies. So, after that, there were requests for me to review articles. […] when we publish, our name and our affiliation must be clear, so people know where we are. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

The tips learned by Yahya, as in the quote, which was to make sure that his personal and professional details were visible, implied that one of his intentions in publishing in a high impact journal was to increase his presence and visibility internationally. In his opinion, it is imperative for academics to internationalise their academic work to build academic reputation and to become referred scholars in their fields. In Yahya's case, this was cultivated as early as the doctoral training he underwent during the early stage of his academic career.

Engaging in the internationalisation of higher education through making scholars and their work visible via tools that measure the productivity and citation impact of their publications, such as *h*-index, can be seen as an instrumentalist rationale as the end

goal is to use the impact factor score to compete in university rankings and attract international fee-paying students (Stier, 2004).

Building institutional and academics' reputations was a strong and recurrent rationale for internationalisation of research, as mentioned by most of the academics. As Yahya stated:

> […] I would like to increase the number of postgraduate students so that lecturers with PhDs could have the opportunity to supervise research students properly and publish more. In addition, this will later help them to build their academic reputations, internationally. There are so many academics around, so we have to market ourselves. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1).

Note the word 'market', which echoes the ideology of instrumentalism embedded in his rationale for the effort of making the university and academics visible internationally. The justifications for internationalisation, due to universities' need to recruit more international postgraduate students to boost publications and that academics must be able to 'market' themselves are, in my opinion, clearly economic-oriented.

c. *Assessment of research performance as a driver for internationalisation*

Another strong and recurrent rationale identified by the respondents as a reason why they engage in international activities at work was that internationalisation was part of the job description and there were annual targets or the Key Performance Index (KPI) that they must achieve as academics in Malaysian public universities. Not only was each academic accountable for his or her personal research KPI, but their achievement also counted towards the departmental score and institutional score that finally contributed to the national research assessment, called the Malaysian Research Assessment (MyRA), and, of course, world university rankings for some universities. These performance indicator instruments, which spelt out the targets and scores they have to achieve, have become one of the strongest drivers for academics to engage in international publication, as they stated:

> For my career, as an academician, research and publications are my KPIs. So, we must target, every year must have a target. My target is that I must have at least one grant. And, of course, we target international grants if we can […] In terms of publications, we target, at least, a year, to produce two papers to publish. […] if it's worth something, we would send to the ISI. (Laila, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2),

> … to get marks for our departmental evaluation, academics need to have both international and national collaborations. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1),

> ... we need to achieve our KPIs and MyRa score. It's very important for us to really make sure that we achieve our targets, for the faculty and the University. (Translation) (Rose, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1).

In the same vein, Yahya, also raised the issue of KPIs as a push factor towards internationalisation, in this case by recruiting more international students. As an academic with a managerial position, who had just been appointed the lead CU1's graduate school a few weeks before the interview, he envisioned increasing local and international doctoral student intakes, as he stated:

> When we have many and enough postgraduate students, we could hit the target, especially PhD and Masters. Secondly, research activity will increase. Third, we could apply for more research grants. So, academics could supervise the projects as guides. And, of course, fourth, our publication target – ISI. Finally, conference. […] Academics do not have enough time to do everything. To teach, oh, the workload. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1).

Viewing KPI as an important rationale for their engagement in the internationalisation of higher education, note the emphasis academics placed on meeting "the targets" and achieving "the scores", not just for themselves but also for their departments and universities. Because all public universities in Malaysia are subjected to national rating instruments such as MyRA, and some to international ranking tables, such as THE and QS, it is not surprising that the academics had such an instrumentalist view of internationalisation. As aptly expressed by Alan when I asked about his rationales for engaging in international activities:

> We are moving toward internationalisation because of university ranking. [long pause] Everybody is focusing on ranking now. When we are looking for ranking, there are several aspects that we need to focus on. One of them is international students. Then, international lecturer/staff. Your publication, local journal or international journal? These are required for evaluation by the ranking agency. Those things count. (Alan, Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1).

d. *Funding*

Because research funding is scarce these days, a few of the senior academics revealed that one of the drivers for their engagement in internationalisation was access to funding,

both locally and from abroad. Jamil, for instance, received numerous international research grants and local funding at the university and national levels in addition to two American fellowships throughout his career as an academic. He claimed that these funding opportunities had motivated him to internationalise the knowledge as well as his academic self:

> During the early part of my career, I received research funding from [an international agency], and also I obtained research funding from international foundations […] for science, besides a research grant from the University or from the Malaysian Government. So, from there […] I internationalised myself and also the knowledge and also through publication, I internationalised myself. […] I also… managed to obtain or secure two international fellowships. (Jamil, Professor, Biotechnology, FU2)

For Zaza, on the other hand, her desire and effort to internationalise was fuelled by the grants she received for international collaboration programmes. For example, there was funding from a regional education network in collaboration with a Japanese university. Through the network, she supervised students from ASEAN countries who were sponsored for doctoral studentships at RU1. Motivated by the funding received through the network, along with the grants brought in by the students, she organised a research student mobility programme to Japan as part of the collaboration project activities, as she narrated:

> […] when the money came, there were PhD students who joined in, already with research grants. They also shared their funding for this collaboration. Another student mobility project that I want to share with you […] we had exchange students supported by JPA (The Department of Public Service). So, JPA also funded their attachment for three months. [...] one doctoral student […] they accepted him to come and work in their lab for free. No fees paid at all! […] they even sent our students, M and A, for a conference with their budget. It was a very good conference and they funded everything for both students. One hundred per cent fully funded by the Japanese. So, to me this is exciting. It makes me happy. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

It was clear from the account shared by Zaza that access to funding, either through a research project, or sponsored doctoral students, could be a strong driver of academics' engagement in internationalisation, especially in international research collaboration.

Strategies and forms of academics' internationalisation engagements

In the attempt to seek insights into Malaysian academics' engagement with internationalisation, as guided by RQ1, this section presents the findings on the activities that the academics perceived to be international elements of their profession. These include the activities that are labelled by the MoHE and public universities as internationalisation strategies, as well as any international activities or initiatives in which they invested their time and effort as part of their typical academic roles and responsibilities.

In general, the study found that the forms of engagement of the academics in the internationalisation of higher education were strongly influenced by the imperatives that the MoHE advocated through the governance of academic professionals in Malaysian public universities and their policies. This is predictable because, for an academic position, the job specifications and work plan are quite clearly itemised by hiring universities based on the MoHE's, as well as Malaysia Public Service Department's specifications. In other words, there is a list of duties to be performed within a period of a year when a university staff member accepts an academic tenure that makes them part of the civil workforce. These typical areas of responsibility of an academic in a Malaysian public university are research, publication, teaching, consultation, and community service.

The interviews and online focus group discussion revealed three main areas of international engagement, categorised as research, teaching, and service. There are also some internationalisation activities that are grouped as other forms of international engagement.

Research

Based on the interview and focus group data, it was revealed that the most extensive form of international engagement performed by the participants centred around research. Viewing many academic disciplines as inherently international, many participants felt that most of the research that they conducted was itself inevitably international as well. Besides conducting research on international contexts and topics, and by involving international participants, the academic staff identified various kinds of research and

research-related activities that they viewed as having international dimensions, namely research publication, research collaboration, research commercialisation, and academic conferences.

a. *Research publication*

The study noted a widespread engagement in international research publication among the participants and many of their responses were centred around international journal article publication. Other forms of academic publication such as books, conference proceedings, and technical reports were the genres that they had published internationally but far more was being shared about journal publications. For example, Yahya from CU1 offered a glimpse off his internationalisation engagements through research publication:

> As an academic, one of my responsibilities is to conduct research and publish articles in my area of expertise. […] I have written some articles and got cited by articles from abroad. Secondly, I have also been asked to review articles […] from ISI and Q1 journals. So, that means my personal involvement as an academic are as a reviewer and an author of journal articles. (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

For a scholar whose academic discipline is Arabic, who writes in Arabic, and publishes in Arabic-medium journals, Yahya explained that it has been quite a struggle for him and colleagues in the Arabic Department to publish in top-tier English-medium, peer-reviewed journals on databases, especially ISI[1] and Scopus[2] as advocated by the MoHE. However, most high impact journals are in English as it is the lingua franca of scientific communications. At the time of the interview, and indeed presently, only a few Malay-medium and even lesser Arabic-medium journals are recognised by the MoHE for the purposes of academics' annual appraisals. This, according to the participants, is important for the MoHE, and Malaysian public universities and academics because publication in high impact periodicals contributes to a higher impact factor for an academic and thus boosts the ranking of the university they are affiliated with. Therefore, for these reasons, academics felt compelled to carefully strategise their international research publication efforts. Yahya reminisced about his struggle and success in international publication in top-tier journals as part of his internationalisation engagement:

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[1] ISI stands for Institute for Scientific Information, also known as "ISI Web of Knowledge", is a bibliographic database operated by Clarivate Analytics.
[2] Scopus is a bibliographic database operated by Elsevier.

When I was doing my PhD, there was an article that I wanted to publish, so I targeted to submit it to the top tier journals in my area. I was thinking, if I got rejected, I would try to improve based on the reviewers' comments and try submitting to another journal that is slightly lower in rank. That happened a few times and, finally, in 2011, my article was accepted in a Q1 journal, *Educational Studies.* Not long after that, I received invitations for me to review articles. I also learned it is very important that our name, the university that we are affiliated with, to be accurately mentioned so that it would be easy for the readers or publishers to identify and contact me. (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

He also shared advice that further disclosed how he internationalised or enhanced his academic visibility internationally through publishing in international, high impact journals, co-authoring with renowned scholars or a 'big name in the field of studies' (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, CU1), to gain international recognition in his area of expertise.

From these two excerpts, it can be established that Yahya's engagement in the internationalisation of research did not only involve researching, theorising, writing research reports, and producing further academic writings based on the research. It seems that, in addition to committing to research activities, he also needed to strategise to be recognised as a reputable expert in his particular area of knowledge. According to Yahya, internationalisation of research or strategic engagement in international dimension of research (Antelo, 2012) was part of the means to achieving the 'status' of a reputable scholar. It was also about knowing the politics to gain presence and visibility within his community of practice through international academic publication, for instance, who to co-author with. His assertion also reveals that it was vital to know where to publish for his academic work to count towards the development of his reputation as an academic in an international sense.

This practice of manoeuvring research publications following the tricks-of-the-trade was similarly echoed in Suri's recollection of her engagement with international research publication, in which she also emphasised the desirable result of such engagement, namely, to achieve a "better image for your publications." (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1).

Yahya's and Suri's accounts of internationalisation of research highlight the importance that academics understand how to make themselves 'visible' by means of publication by co-researching and co-authoring with respected international scholars in the field.

As mentioned earlier, all the academics noted that publishing internationally was their main engagement in internationalisation because it was one of the mandated parts of academics' duties at Malaysian public universities. Zaza (Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1), for example, shared eleven reports compiled as part of the documentation of an international academic collaboration she led between RU1 and a Japanese university. The main content of these reports were the articles that were published because of the research collaboration which she and her colleagues, as well as the Japanese academics involved, had produced.

Besides research publication, another kind of research publication-related activity that some of the academics engaged in was journal editorial work. Jamil (Professor, Biotechnology, FU2) classified his commitment as a member of various international journal editorial boards as his way of internationalising research and mentioned his affiliation with an international peer-reviewed research journal in his area of expertise as an example.

b. *Research collaboration*

Secondly, research collaboration with international counterparts was also mentioned as one of the most dominant forms of internationalisation engagement that the academics have pursued. Research collaboration refers to any types of cooperation with an international entity that the academics were involved in for research purposes. The entity can be a co-researcher or a group of co-researchers, funding bodies, departments of a university, or an organisation of non-Malaysian origin. Research collaboration can occur in many ways and may include the use of facilities, researchers working together on a joint research project, exchange of research students, research funding assistance, and co-authoring a research-based publication.

According to some of the academics, especially those from research universities, these kinds for international research cooperation activities were their main form of international research engagement. Zaza, for instance, initiated a research collaboration

project with a Japanese university. After ten years, the partnership was recognised by both institutions and a formal agreement to consolidate the relationship was signed between both universities just a year before the interview (in 2017). She also led a part of the collaboration and what was initially thought to be a 'simple project' had transformed into a considerably larger collaboration involving more departments and research groups within both universities, as she recalled:

> So, we thought of a very simple project and at the end we have this heavy metal project ... to check heavy metals in the environment. So, we invited them but not only they are involved, MMM Lab but along with other labs from other departments. So, for my departments, I led this programme. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

It is worth observing that in Zaza's case, she actively played several roles as part of her engagement in the internationalisation of research. Not only did she collaborate with the researchers from the partnering university in conducting the initial research project, she also coordinated the communication between RU1 and the partnering institution. In addition, she also managed the whole collaboration between the other departments of both universities. As she was explaining the nature of this internationalisation engagement in detail to me, she showed me the evidence of the international research collaboration with the Japanese university:

> This is how we collaborate (*flipping through the pages*). They compile these articles that have been published out of this (*showing me nine thick reports on the collaboration activities with the Japanese universities for the past eleven years. Each report contains articles published out of their projects, reports on student exchange activities and related events*). (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

It is interesting to note the multiple roles and responsibilities Zaza performed for research collaborations with international counterparts in these two accounts of her engagement. It can be concluded that from Zaza's experience, performing in international research collaboration means wearing many hats at the same time. In this case, she was an academic, a project manager, a researcher, a student advisor, an event manager, and a representative of RU1 for any communications with the Japanese university. The array of responsibilities demanded of an academic in their engagement in international research collaboration can be enormous. According to her, more research collaborations with institutions from other countries had taken place since then:

> And also, it's not just Japan. There are the UK and the European people that I already work with. Last year, I started to work with people from the Middle Eastern countries. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

Zaza was not the only one shared evidence and accounts of the engagement in the internationalisation of research in the academic profession. Many of the academics related various stories of their international engagement in research collaboration. For instance, Alan engaged in "quite a number of international projects" (Alan, Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1) with collaborators from Germany and Indonesia. Suri was also involved in a research collaboration with a British university where she did her twinning doctoral programme and claimed that she was a 'product' of an international research collaboration between RU1 and the British university, as she recalled:

> I especially wanted to do my PhD under Professor TW […] So I did a lot of impedance work with him. So that's how a collaboration starts. (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1)

c. *Research commercialisation*

Research commercialisation was mentioned as a form of internationalisation engagement by only one participant from a research-intensive university. Suri attributed her success in achieving a professorship position within a quite short period of time at RU1 to international research commercialisation. Although the forms of internationalisation in research were not prescribed in detail in either of the MoHE's policy documents (MEBHE 2015-2025 and HEMIP 2011), academics in public universities are expected to perform in research commercialisation, which is regarded as a way to internationalise academia. Researching and developing a product, process, or system for an international group of end-users, for instance, can be considered part of the internationalisation of research initiatives.

Seeing commercialisation as an opportunity, which was less taken up by many academics in Malaysian public universities, Suri, an Engineering Professor at RU1, paved her research career in this way. At various times during the interview, she shared her experiences participating in international research invention exhibitions and competitions to illustrate how commercialisation had driven her internationalisation engagement, as she reiterated when I asked:

I: So, am I right to understand that this is the way you internationalise with research and development?

Suri: Yeah... I'd say that. […] I met a lot of people doing R&D (research and development), but the question is how we can do R&D, simple, simple ones which could solve the daily problems of the community. We have to think of that. Sometimes you wanna do rocket science but there's no takers […] What I noticed was...I saw loopholes, […] not fulfilled by most of academics, commercialisation! So, I said, fine, I need to commercialise. So, whatever I do in R&D, it should [have the] goal [of] serving the community. That was my aim. (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1)

From Suri's account of a form of international academic engagement in internationalisation, commercialisation of research at the international level is part of the internationalisation strategy pursued in Malaysian public universities. It may not be compulsory for every academic who works at Malaysian universities, but it is one of the desired forms of academic engagement.

d. *Conference participation and organisation*

Another common research-related activity that academics engaged in as part as their research responsibilities was participating in research conferences for the purpose of sharing their research. Participating in scientific meetings can have different roles; presenter, invited keynote speaker, or participant. Speaking about conference participation as an act of internationalising research, Yahya (Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1) mentioned his engagement as a presenter in international conferences abroad. Suri also shared that she had been to "all the main international exhibitions" (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1) in her field.

Closely related to conference participation is conference organisation, which was another frequently mentioned research-related internationalisation activity that the academics gave their commitment to. Alan (Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1) played various roles in the organising committee for several international conferences, from being the vice president and a secretary, to chairing sessions in such events. This is another typical form of research-based service in which academics in Malaysian public universities are involved. Ahmad (Professor, Computer Science, RU2) and Yahya (Senior Lecturer,

Linguistics, CU1) also mentioned similar roles that they played in international conferences organised by the public universities they work at.

From the examples given by Alan (Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1), Ahmad (Professor, Computer Science, RU2), and Yahya (Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1), it is evident that academics were also heavily involved in research event management, which demands a lot of time and effort, as part of their international engagement at public universities in Malaysia.

Teaching

In relation to internationalisation, the study revealed that academic staff give an enormous amount of time, effort, and attention to internationalising their teaching. Predictably, with globalisation, recruitment of international students, and advancements in online teaching and learning, internationalisation has become embedded in teaching and learning in Malaysian public universities.

The categories of international-oriented teaching activities the academics claimed they engaged in were internationalisation of the curriculum, student inbound/outbound mobility, teaching, and supervising international students and transnational education, which will be presented in detail in the following section.

a. *Internationalisation of curriculum (IoC)*

Generally, the data from both the individual interview and the Facebook-based focus group revealed a range of teaching and learning practices that the academics perceived to be part of international engagement. The online focus group gave an opportunity to further explore how they engaged in the internationalisation of the curriculum or pedagogically.

Incorporating international content and resources into teaching was mentioned as part of their internationalisation engagement. For example, Jamil (Professor, Biotechnology, FU2) utilised materials from Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) provided by universities abroad to improve his teaching. He explained that the sharing, adapting, and adopting of teaching materials such as lecture notes, task sheets, and written quizzes

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obtained through open sources were some of the ways how these academics in Malaysian public universities engaged in the internationalisation of teaching.

Many of the academics interviewed also reported that they committed to internationalisation by incorporating international and intercultural elements into the curricula of the courses that they developed, improved, or implemented. Their act of internationalising through the curriculum was manifested through the inclusion of content that is of intercultural and international in nature. For example, Rita (CU2), who viewed intercultural elements as part of internationalisation included disablism as one of the topics in her course on intercultural communications.

Inspired by what she saw in the United Kingdom where she pursued her doctoral studies, Rita (Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2) intentionally chose to include a topic on disablism because she felt that it has been side-lined and that those who belong to this community are often marginalised in the course curriculum. In addition, she also felt that the use of teaching materials and aides that are of foreign origin was part of her effort to familiarise her students with some international and intercultural perspectives on disablism.

This way of incorporating international and intercultural elements into the curriculum and delivery was also reported by Yahya (Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1). He explained how he normally included topics and teaching materials on Arab culture in his Arabic course. In his lessons, he also conducted various language awareness activities to expose his students to the varieties of Arabic language from around the world.

Another method of internationalising curriculum and pedagogical practices that surfaced from the data was to draw connections between the core content of a course to problems the world is facing. World issues such as climate change, food and water shortage, cybercrime, unemployment, inequality, and destruction of the environment were often found to be brought into discussions as a part of internationalisation of teaching by the participants. Through the delivery of academic courses, regardless of the discipline, this was planned and executed by the academics with the intention to raise their students' awareness of what is happening around the world, to show the relevance and value of the

knowledge they are learning in solving real-world problems and to motivate purposeful learning for the benefit of all.

Suri (Professor, Engineering, RU1), for example, spoke about how she incorporated the specific problems of the world that could be solved with invention or technology that could stem out of research or development in materials engineering:

> So, they will learn, what is the problem, the current situation, what is the impact to the economics, quality of life […] what are possible solutions for the problems and in order to come out with the solution of the problem, what can engineers do? With the global problems as the platform, how can you make business out of it? (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1)

In the same vein, Laila (Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2) also shared her accounts of how she incorporated real-life tasks into her teaching, as she recalled:

> I will normally look for authentic materials, for example, standards. Like DOD standards and ISO standards. I bring in these materials to expose them to real-life experience. In my class, for example, there is one project on software development that I included in the course content. For the assignment, the students are required to follow exactly, strictly, the development process. That means the students have to follow the same ethics and procedures as if they were working in real life as software developers. It's the same ethics that every software developer has to follow. In other words, if the first phase is planning, they will be required to produce the plan documents, how to work, how to communicate, and if it includes interviewing people, they will have to go out and interview people. So, they have to follow the same, real process. (Laila, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2)

Although Laila's and Suri's methods of incorporating international issues and guidelines seem similar at first glance, the reasons for doing what they did are different. Suri, in doing this, highlighted the monetary gains out of solving the world problems to motivate her students in their studies. Laila, on the other hand, incorporated international materials into her curriculum content, for example, international ethics in software development, because she did not want to just educate students to be engineers, but also to be more humane, as she reiterated:

> Why do we need international ethics? […] It is to guide us to become professional. Be it a teacher, a software developer, or a software engineer. Ethics in software engineering is similar to the ethics of being a human. (Laila, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2)

From the insights shared by both academics, Suri (Professor, Engineering, RU1) and Laila (Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2), the inclusion of both content, materials, and teaching-learning activities that are international-oriented were ways of internationalising the curriculum as practised by them. More interestingly, although the acts of internationalising of the curriculum appear similar, the rationales underlying these practices may well differ.

As mentioned earlier, many of the academics, who perceived their areas of academic discipline to be inherently international, provided slightly different accounts of how they engaged in internationalisation through the curriculum and pedagogy. They argued that when a discipline covers topics that concern the world, earth, human beings, living and non-living things regardless of geographical and national boundaries, then it is naturally international and universal. Zaza (Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1) made this point when asked how she dealt with the international elements in teaching and supporting learning:

> Teaching and learning? With engineering, you just cannot, not go international. Invention and engineering activities are global. However, lecturers need to be sensitive, aware, and alert to what's going on; read more, network more, find out more. Information is abundant and easily accessible, but it is hard to synthesise. So, need a lot of time to click, click and read the websites of international companies to see what's new that they do. Daunting and tiring but worth the effort. What's new will then be shown to the students so they know. This will be done by constant revision of lecture materials to make sure technology taught would not be 100 years old but rather new. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

As Zaza emphasised above, to her, engineering is inherently international and that invention activities are universal. Due to the universality and dynamics of engineering as a field, she sourced international information from her networking, reading, and the Internet to inform her teaching and keep her curriculum up-to-date and relevant to her students' needs.

In addition, those from the engineering departments from RU1 and FU1 noted that they were guided by the Washington Accord, an international accreditation agreement for professional engineering academic degrees between the bodies responsible for accreditation in its signatory countries (REF) in planning their curricula and teaching.

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During the Facebook-based focus group discussion, Zaza (RU1) described how she and her colleagues in the engineering department engaged with international guidelines as part of their teaching domain:

> […] we have ALL OUR FILINGS and teaching style done accordingly – there are guides and rules. But I must say, through these guide and rules, teaching activity becomes more structured…more organised teaching style – all the same across lecturer, so it's easy to perform appraisal assessment, right? (*Translation*). (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

From this, it can be implied that Zaza (Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1) regarded internationalisation engagement in teaching to include adhering to an international standard in the teaching of an academic programme that has been subjected to the international recognition. This involves having the curriculum documentation and lesson planning to be performed in the manner prescribed by these international guidelines. In Zaza's case, she seemed to appreciate this exercise, which she claimed resulted in uniform and standardised teaching practices.

The next trend in engaging with the internationalisation of curriculum that emerged from the data was the teaching of courses in the universities that they deemed international-oriented. Many of these courses were core university or compulsory courses for all undergraduate students in each public university in Malaysia. For example, CU2 offered a few compulsory courses which Rita (Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2) regarded as a good attempt at the internationalisation of the curriculum. Commenting in the Facebook secret group, she supported CU2's action in offering courses such as Intercultural Communication and International Relations because they "would be useful for the students to understand other cultures because the target market for employment are the international companies. Plus, most of our students would go off for mobility projects, internship, and exchange programmes abroad" (Rita, Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2).

A slightly different way of engaging with curriculum internationalisation, on the other hand, was established from a few other academics' responses. It is not so much the delivery of the curriculum but more of the planning and evaluation of the curriculum, where the difference was that it involved foreign, external collaborators. Reflecting on

his involvement as a curriculum planner, reviewer, and consultant in curriculum internationalisation activities, Ahmad narrated:

> This particular project is part of European foreign policy programme. So, the funding came from EU, basically involving students and academics transfer to Malaysia. They also asked us to develop... another research grant basically. The research collaboration was in a form of a summer school on Islamic Engineering. They also asked us to develop a curriculum for their students or engineers to these parts of the world on what they need to know about Islam. If they want to design innovative products, what would be the features for Muslims? (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

In some projects, according to Ahmad, the evaluation process was reciprocal. Besides Ahmad's experience as stated above, it was also mentioned that at postgraduate level, many of the academics, especially those in professor positions, have been invited to act as external examiners in neighbouring countries such as Indonesia. This kind of engagement in internationalising the curriculum can be perceived as having dual purposes as stated above, for the integration of intercultural and international elements into the curriculum and benchmarking.

b. *Transnational Education (TNE)*

Three of the academics who were interviewed spoke about their involvement in transnational education activities as part of their responsibilities at the universities they are attached to. Ahmad (Professor, Computer Science, RU2) had experience in teaching and managing a double degree programme in Germany, whereas Safa (Senior Lecturer, Engineering Education, FU1) and Alan (Senior Lecturer, Engineering Education, FU1) mentioned their involvement in an international franchise programme where FU1 authorised a foreign partner to deliver its degree programmes.

Service

a. *Student support (academic)*

In addition to the active engagement in internationalisation in teaching and research by the interviewees, the study also identified another tendency in international engagement among the academics, which is in student support. There were various and very diverse roles that academics played in supporting students in their academic internationalisation activities. In fact, they frequently found themselves wearing different hats at different

stages of a programme because the roles demanded them to act as teachers, trainers, facilitators, invited speakers, and at the same time advisors, coordinators, judges, and chaperones for these programmes. These activities were mainly institutionally initiated or administered as internationalisation activities for students, which were organised by either academic departments or student services. Responding to the discussion regarding the international elements of teaching and learning in their universities, during the Facebook-based Internationalisation Café, the members of the group listed a number of examples of international inbound or outbound mobility programmes for students that involved the respective academics. From the information given by the academics about the internationalisation activities related to students, it is obvious that cross-national border student mobility activities were very common commitments that the academics had to perform as part of university internationalisation.

b. *Student support (non-academic)*

From the interviews, the academics were also found to be quite highly involved in supporting students in non-academic forms of internationalisation activities. For instance, Yahya (Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1) was involved in supporting students who participated in debate and public speaking competitions representing CU1:

> We sent English degree students to Indonesia and that shows our visibility. Those from the Arabic programme also joined the Arabic debate competing against participants from Singapore, Brunei, and Malaysia. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

He also spoke about an Arabic debate and undergraduate internship programmes in countries like the United Arab Emirates and Egypt. From his detailed narration about the students' experiences and the feedback of others, such as the host and fellow Malaysians in those countries that the students met, it seems that he was very involved in supporting students in their internationalisation activities.

In terms of the support that academics provided for students on non-academic matters, the interviews revealed that some academics went the extra mile to support students. Ahmad (Professor, Computer Science, RU2) for instance, felt that it was necessary for him to support the graduate international students working under his supervision for their PhDs in these ways:

> So, for me, I have fund, I will provide partition and buy a PC before my students come. When the new students come, the place is ready. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

For other students, both local and international, he sometimes helped financially:

> Sometimes students tell me they don't have money to present in a conference, the fee. Well, ok, from my pocket, "Take this and go to the conference". I am not too bothered by this. And students appreciate these gestures. It's difficult because the University has very limited funding. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

From the academics, I also learned that their engagement in preparing, training, and advising students as well as raising funds for student internationalisation activities often went unrecorded, unrecognised, let alone awarded. However, as presented above in this section, the data revealed that academics have been contributing in various and significant ways in supporting students' internationalisation activities.

Other forms of engagement in the internationalisation of higher education

a. *Training*

During the interviews, many participants spoke about their doctoral training and deemed it to be their first professional experience and engagement in the internationalisation of higher education as academics. This was rather unexpected as having trained at the doctoral level abroad was not part of the participant selection criteria.

The following are some accounts of Ahmad on the range of academic training at different levels as part of academics' internationalisation engagement, the first being their doctoral training programme:

> I did my first degree in a UK university in Scotland, then I joined RU2 as a tutor. My Master's was at another UK university in Manchester, and I later completed my PhD in West Yorkshire. I was also involved in an attachment-to-industry programme in the UK at a university in the South of England. If you look into my internationalisation experience, the SLAB scheme was part of it for two weeks. University sends staff to do PhDs overseas as part as their training. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

Then a more specific, disciplinary-based training stints:

> There was also this body that gives training on specialised technology for example, I once spent two weeks in Korea for training in fibre optics which was

something new at that time. We had training and lab visits and so on. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

Also, there were a few training opportunities that were offered to him on academic exchange programmes:

At the same time, there's also this international scholar-exchange programme in my area of expertise. So, I was involved in two of those to UK. One on 1996 at a university in the South of England and the other in another British university for two weeks. There was also a training programme, more for exposure. There used to be a lot of these kinds of programme for third world countries...back then including Malaysia. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

Besides being trainees or those being trained, academics also revealed that they engaged in internationalisation as trainers. For instance, Rita (Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2) spoke about her experience conducting training in CU2:

Coordinate programmes in university, different subjects and courses, so I have like a… international staff, you know, teachers, academic staff working under me, and then, um… Whether to say that I've done a proper training on all this cultural awareness thingy, it's not really… Wouldn't label as one, though, but coordinating with international staff, you need to somehow gauge towards getting them to understand the culture of our work and our working system. I mean, the organisation itself. So, there is a need to somehow like, spell out how things are done, what is expected of them, you know... with regard to our students. (Rita, Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2)

b. *Leadership roles*

The findings revealed that even without official leadership responsibilities in internationalisation, the participants demonstrated significant commitment in various forms of leadership roles. Alan (Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1), Zaza (Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1), Ahmad (Professor, Computer Science, RU2), Yahya (Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1) and Jamil (Professor, Biotechnology, FU2) spoke about how they planned, coordinated, managed, and led programmes and projects which either involved international students, staff or collaborators at the universities they were attached to. Alan (Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1), for instance, coordinated the communication between FU1 and a German university for an academic collaboration programme for five years, whereas Ahmad, although he was not the deputy dean of academic and internationalisation of his faculty, engaged in multiple leadership and managerial tasks over the years of his service at RU2, as he reflected:

The biggest part of my internationalisation experience for me, is managing a double degree programme with a German university. […] I was in the programme development team. […] I was the coordinator of the programme. […] My role was in the academic aspect, curriculum but now I have passed it down to my colleagues, young lecturers. Basically, I just take office only. If they need facilities or anything, I help them to source them. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

On the other hand, he also played another form of a leadership role which was something similar to that of a mentor. Observing that some early career academics faced difficulties in either getting international graduate students to supervise or in managing supervision with them, Ahmad sometimes took the lead:

So, what I normally do, is I take students and invite a junior lecturer for co-supervision. That's what I do, to help the young lecturers to experience the system, but not everybody does that. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

These accounts demonstrate that besides teaching, research, and other services, the academics found themselves engaging in internationalisation through leading and mentoring to move internationalisation activities.

c. *Consultancy*

Another form of international activities that some of the academics engaged in as part of their professional domain was consultancy involving international entities. This kind of engagement in internationalisation was not part of the main responsibility of an academic in Malaysian public universities such as teaching, research, and services. Nevertheless, this kind of engagement could significantly contribute to or be the result of an academic's international reputation.

Jamil spoke about his involvement with the consultation work he was entrusted with, mainly due to his academic expertise in the specific area of agriculture:

I also do consultancies in eleven countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Senegal, Ghana. Mexico, Ecuador and Vietnam. […] Currently people talk about green technology and sustainability. One of the issues that has been raised is […] industry is sustainable or not. I am involved as peer reviewer of [a specific roundtable member in the area]. This is an international group, but I am also part of the national body, […]. These two bodies are interlinked, to ensure that […] industry is sustainable. (Jamil, Professor, Biotechnology, FU2)

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Linked to consultancy as a way of internationalising higher education was the academics' involvement with professional bodies. While most of the academics interviewed were members of the professional bodies of their academic disciplines, Ahmad (Professor, Computer Science, RU2) and Jamil (Professor, Biotechnology, FU2) also held leadership positions in the professional bodies they were attached to. Jamil had been elected as the president of several professional bodies at the Asian and Oceania levels at different times during his professional membership, and Ahmad had chaired one of Malaysia's largest Engineering professional bodies for a term.

The study found that having a consultancy role at the international level was quite common among the academics, especially among professors who specialised in applied science and technology. They were also amongst the academics who had served for many years and had strong relationships with either professional bodies or industry.

Summary

The data analysis as presented in this chapter offers an overall view of how academics understand and engage with internationalisation at Malaysian public universities. In terms of their understanding of internationalisation of higher education, the meanings of internationalisation generated by the participants in the interview were associated with partners that involved cross-national border higher education academic-based activities, having international community and elements integrated into higher education and about being globally visible or recognised. An alternative interpretation focusing on intercultural integration was also found from the interviews.

The findings also revealed that academics were not passive recipients of internationalisation measures, but rather the interviews and online focus group demonstrated proactive engagement in internationalisation as initiated by the academics themselves. They might have been guided by internationalisation policies, job descriptions, performance measures, and research imperatives at the beginning. However, it was shown that they developed self-motivation and were driven to engage in internationalisation due to the perceived benefits to their academic selves, students, and institutions that they experienced as they engaged more in internationalisation. This is evident in the kinds of international engagement that the academics committed

themselves to, which encompassed the various roles and responsibilities of a typical academic serving in a Malaysian public university.

This said, the data also might have hinted at a case of a lack of evidence in their engagement in internationalisation at home and internationalisation of the curriculum, which should be at the core of academic professionals' internationalisation. However, these forms of engagement seem to be less spoken about by the participants. What does this suggest? Is it because all academic programmes are inherently international as mentioned by few? Or is it because they have not had the pedagogical means to discuss this? Or could it also be attributed to the fact that their engagement in internationalising the curriculum was rather incidental, ad-hoc, and that they have been doing it without realising it or strategically engaging with this form of internationalisation?

The following section of the thesis presents the findings for the two remaining the research questions (RQ3 and RQ4) that the study aimed to explore, which cover the support the academics require in their internationalisation engagement and the impact of this effort has on them.

Chapter Six: Support, Challenges and Impact

The preceding chapter presented the findings relating to the academics' understanding of internationalisation, their rationales for their engagement in the process, as well as described the various forms of their international engagement which they deemed to be part of academics' internationalisation initiatives at Malaysian public universities. This chapter focuses on the findings that reveal insights into the kinds of support the participants sought in facing the challenges of internationalising the academia. The final section discusses the impact of internationalisation engagement on the academics and therefore addresses RQ4.

1. What support do academics want in their engagement with the internationalisation of higher education? (RQ3)
2. How does their engagement in internationalisation impact on the academics? (RQ4)

Support in the internationalisation of higher education

The study's third research question probes the support that the academics have received and wished for internationalising teaching and research. During the interviews, when speaking about support, most of the academics also revealed the challenges they faced in internationalisation. Therefore, it is useful to explore the challenges that academics face in the process of internationalisation to understand the forms of support that academics need in their international engagement. This section presents the findings that have been analysed, coded and categorised with regard to the support the academics have received and suggested. The following section which is also dedicated to discussing the findings for RQ4, describes the challenges to their engagement with the internationalisation of higher education.

Collegial and leadership support

The academics concurred that support from colleagues and leaders in universities, especially those who were more senior and have had more experience with internationalisation, was crucial to promoting academics' engagement with

internationalisation. Some spoke about mentoring, which they defined as senior professors, formally or informally, leading and collaborating with the early career academics in developing professionally.

Alan, for instance, attributed his keen engagement in internationalisation to the informal mentoring he received from a colleague:

> I had [considerable] support from my mentor. We have a professor who is very good in networking abroad. We had a few international projects channel in through him. (Alan, Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1)

A similar view on the importance of such collegial support in internationalising was also expressed by Suri, as she reiterated:

> I would say, in RU1, we have a couple of academic leaders who are really good, like [naming a few professors], all of them are like icons of RU1, you know. So, I would say, we have many seniors as good role models for us. They really carved the path [for us]. (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1)

Yahya equally emphasised the importance of mentoring and benefiting from collegial support, particularly in international research activities. In sharing his tips on how he had been successful to publish in high impact journals such as those in ISI and Q1 categories, Yahya used an Arabic term, "*kafilah*", to refer to his research team. "*Kafilah*" is an Arabic word that means a group of people travelling together to a destination with a common purpose and strong sense of belonging to the group. Historically, they travel as a group on camels, carrying goods for trade. Yahya, viewing his research team as his *kafilah*, acknowledged the value of the support he received and the sense of collegiality he experienced while working with his co-authors both at CU1, and RU2 where he completed his doctorate. Advocating internationalisation through co-authoring for international publication, Yahya shared his experiences:

> Publishing internationally is actually a way of internationalising ourselves and [the] institution where we work. However, when we are studying, we also co-author with our supervisor and normally have my name as the first author and the correspondence author. Therefore, that is how you collaborate with your *kafilah*. (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

From one who had the experience of mentoring others in international research collaboration, Ahmad provided the 'mentor' view of such support for internationalisation:

They need guidance from the seniors. That's the most important thing. If they are just starting and doing research alone, they'll go nowhere. It's either, they need to approach the senior ones, to learn, seek guidance, or the seniors automatically help or [it's] the department itself that organises or creates the platform. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

Having held various leadership positions at RU2, a professional body, and internationally, Ahmad also emphasised the role of leadership support in the internationalisation of higher education. Implying leadership and collegial support are of similar value, he recalled his experience of doing what he felt he had to do in his leadership positions to support academics:

I was once the Head of Department, you need to plan all these for your department. For example, allocation of staff for each area of studies or specialisation. As a manager you need to oversee all this, if you fail, you'll see imbalance. So, it's the role of managers, deans, heads of departments to oversee the manpower distribution. At the same time, you need to put up, for example, team teaching, research teams. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

Reflecting on the positive experience of being mentored or mentoring, the academics viewed collegial support as an important form of support in their engagement in the internationalisation of higher education.

Funding support

The majority of the participants indicated that funding support was crucial to internationalising higher education. When I initiated an online discussion on the support they valued the most, many of those who were actively contributing to the online focus group called on funding almost instantly during the Internationalisation Café discussion on 4 December 2017, as recorded:

Zaza (Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1): Funding.

Rita (Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2): Funding would help loads!! Most definitely 😍😍😍

Lin (Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1) […] and funding

Lisa (Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1): Funding, so much can be done when there's funding; research-student-output, etc.

Laila (Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2): […] and funding

From the feedback given regarding financial assistance as a rationale for internationalisation, as discussed in the previous section, and here as noted by the members of Internationalisation Café, funding has been a strong enabler of internationalisation for the academics. They mentioned that for academics to develop international collaborative research, funding was vital. In addition, financial assistance in all types of internationalisation activities was welcomed by the academics. These responses were entirely expected because during the individual interviews a few months prior to the online focus group, some of the academics, including those who opted not to join the online focus group, had indicated that financial issues could hamper efforts to internationalise. Detailed examples from the findings on this will be presented in the section discussing financial constraints.

Challenges to internationalising higher education

The challenges academics face in their engagement with internationalisation included circumstances that demanded a lot of physical effort, time, financial resources, and emotional labour from academics. The study identified eight categories of such challenges. These are lack of support for internationalisation, leadership and academic governance issues, planning and implementation issues, financial constraints, international research and publication challenges, student-related issues, and change.

Lack of support for internationalisation

In discussing support for academics in internationalising higher education, some of the respondents indicated that little support was evident at this stage. Instead, they often found that they had to support each other when learning and navigating around how to internationalise academia. When asked about the kinds of support he had received, Ahmad stated:

> Not really. I have to work on my own, learn from experience, find your strength, and build from there. I see less support from the University. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

In the same vein, Rita observed that support for academics in the form of training for internationalisation was scarce at CU2. She shared her concerns about the lack of genuine intercultural understanding and integration on campus that she had observed and

attributed in on the lack of systemic effort in advocating intercultural integration among the university community by the university:

> Not by design, not so much by the input, or via training, nothing as proper, as formal as that, but we have that programme, we go away for one week, we sit together, we talk about our roles as academics, […] that's basically it. (Rita, Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2)

Another form of support that Yahya felt that was also lacking, but important to internationalising academia, was information technology (IT) facilities, and he touched on IT support in promoting academics and their work internationally as he stated:

> So, we want to market…there are many good ones, but we need to improve our technical support. The problem is, sometimes it's not updated. Here in CU1 we have a system to capture information such as publications but sometimes it's not updated. […] So, we need to. So, when Googled, we will come at the top, so we will be visible. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

While some support for academics, such as access to some funding and encouragement from the academic community and university leaders were mentioned, much more support needs to be made available for internationalisation to flourish.

Leadership shortcomings

Many of the academics, regardless of the university they were attached to, voiced their concern about the lack of sense of direction and structure in the implementation of internationalisation at the university and departmental levels. All the participants were aware of the existence of internationalisation policies as introduced by the MoHE in 2011, and later as further refined in MEBHE. Most of them were also aware of the internationalisation policies at the university level, as revealed during the Internationalisation Café discussion. However, despite the documented policies and strategic plans produced by each university, somehow, they felt there was still a lot of ambiguity in the implementation of these policies and strategies for academics. For instance, Ahmad (Professor, Computer Science, RU2) felt that "there should be a direction on where to go" and Yahya (Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1) echoed a similar sentiment by questioning, "where are we going, what's the vision?"

Despite having the organisational structure for internationalisation in Malaysian public universities, many of the participants felt that there was a gap in the support given to academics, which resulted in academics feeling they were left alone to figure out how they should materialise internationalisation policies and plans. Ahmad shared his observation on the lack of genuine, effective, and substantial support and structure for academics in internationalisation, as he stated:

> So far, I can't really see in the university... Basically what we can see is the international office is there, the faculty has a deputy dean overseeing academic and internationalisation matters, but, at the bottom, nothing. For example, who monitors internationalisation? Is it just the deputy dean or head of departments as well? […] there should be a committee for internationalisation within the faculty. It doesn't matter, represented by whoever […] there is a gap. You hold the post, but nothing is being done at the bottom. So, that's what I saw. At the top, it's a different story. All the time, […] it's like, "Do we have the report? What's the figure?" That's the problem I can see. It should be more structured, I think. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2).

Note the strong assertions of the missing link between the rhetoric expressed by the institutional leadership and how academics are being supported – or indeed not supported – in the process. From Ahmad's observation, apparently, the university leadership cared about the superficial outcome viz-a-viz documentation and statistics of internationalisation, more than about academics' struggles to internationalise. Likewise, a few other academics expressed feelings of being left confused and unclear as to what was expected of them in the internationalisation of academia.

Other participants also made further observations that evidenced the lack of follow-through by the leadership in internationalisation. For instance, Zaza (Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1) felt that planning for internationalisation engagement for academics was also quite problematic. While networking was going well, according to her, sustaining the interest and materialising the initial relationship into a mutually beneficial relationship for potentially collaborating universities could have been better. Zaza warned about the risk of poor planning in implementing internationalisation strategies, as she said in the online focus group discussion platform, The Internationalisation Café:

> One can sign hundreds of MOAs, but if nothing done, no proper planning, whether there is funding or not, nothing will happen. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

Based on Zaza's statement, solid actions that should have followed international networking activities were often left unmonitored, which had resulted in the networking efforts being rather wasted. Should there be a closer monitoring and proper procedures in this regard, academics could have been better guided and supported in their roles in internationalising universities.

Planning and implementation problems

Further in the interviews, more academics shared their accounts of how a few aspects of the planning had been poor. One was on distribution of opportunities and tasks related to international networking and collaboration. The other was the international student recruitment target and planning of facilities for them.

Regarding top-down international networking and collaboration, a few of the academics interviewed observed that those who were being appointed or given the opportunity to engage in international collaboration activities were sometimes chosen by accident. One example of this was presented earlier in the forms of engagement section. Alan (Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1) was assigned to coordinate and lead several collaborations with German universities primarily because he had undertaken his doctoral education there. Hypothetically, there were other academics who might be interested in getting involved, but because of the criteria of selection of the coordinator was as such, they might have been denied the opportunity to engage in internationalisation. Ahmad also spoke of these typical occurrences in RU2 that signals poor planning and management of academics' expertise, experience, effort, and time in internationalisation, as he recalled:

> When there's collaboration, faculty will just appoint some people... "You, take care of this because..." Maybe before, you've studied in Germany. "So, you manage the discussion", for example, "with Japan." Just because you've studied in Japan, you will be assigned with potential collaboration with Japanese visitors. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2).

The academics believed that when internationalisation strategies were carried out in such a superficial manner as illustrated previously, it was challenging for them to plan their time and responsibilities to maximise their internationalisation initiatives in all regards, including teaching and research, which also require a tremendous amount of planning and effort. Ahmad, having had the wealth of experience of working with RU2 for more than

30 years, justified why he thought a strong structure and clear leadership directions for academic in internationalisation was important:

> Because when you do international collaboration, it's not because of you. Some people collaborate with an international organisation through a programme. But it cannot bring the whole university. Others can't get involved. [...] You need to identify, the direction of each department because you know the strength of each research areas and so on. That has not happened, I think. What happens is visitors come and ask to collaborate with us...for example, Korea came and asked because they have funds. Then [laugh], you look for people in the faculty to do it! […] Very [emphasise] ad hoc! To me, we cannot work like that. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

From Ahmad's observation, it seems that in RU2, the approach to internationalisation was operationalised by depending on and responding to what external parties bring to the networking platforms rather than proactively planning and strategising for more efficient and effective engagement from academics.

Another issue related to poor planning and execution of internationalisation strategies relates to postgraduate student recruitment. Despite the target for each public university to increase international postgraduate student enrolment for research programmes as aspired to by the MoHE, according to Ahmad proper planning for facilities to cater for both international and local research students have been problematic, as he recalled:

> If there're a thousand students but there are only 200 tables, how? That is bad. You want more students, but you don't provide the facilities. That is one of the problems that I see. […] Those people should know, when they recruit students, let's say, this year, this semester, they get 30 students, they should plan where will these 30 students be placed. All these should be automatic, shouldn't bother the academics with things like this. I always have to fight for this. "You give me 40 students, where are their working spaces?" At least provide a common room. So, this is contradictory. If we want to excel in internationalisation, when people come […] when they look at our place, they're shocked. They have high expectations about physical facilities, this you need to provide. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

In this case, the failure to plan and cater for the needs of postgraduate students, including international students, posed a significant challenge to the academics. This is because they tend to be the first point of contact and the supervisors for graduate students. International students who came with the expectation that access to the basic facilities for conducting doctoral research were already in place in Malaysian universities might be

disappointed. It was the academic supervisors or research student coordinators who had to deal with students' frustration once they have registered for their programmes. Such administration issues had become a source of frustration among the academics in their efforts to internationalise universities.

Governance of academic employment and careers

The governance of academics in relation to internationalisation matters was raised by a few of the respondents and is worthy of further examination. This includes matters concerning the expectations made of academics, workloads, recognition, and career promotion.

As presented previously in the rationale section, KPIs for internationalisation for academics to fulfil were numerous and often also burdened some academics financially. Linked to KPIs are promotional criteria, and this has been a source of dissatisfaction for them. A few academics complained about unrealistic expectations and lack of transparency in the promotion system in relation to internationalisation of higher education, as Alan shared:

> There are a lot of unwritten rules when it comes to promotion. For example, publication, there's no written document saying that you need to have a certain *h*-index, Scopus. No! (*emphasised*). But when you submit your application for promotion, they will request your list of contributions. "Where is your *h*-index? Where are your publications? Scopus, ISI?" (*imitating another voice*). They are a lot (*enunciated*) of unwritten rules. (Alan, Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1).

Similarly, Ahmad also observed the gaps in the kinds of internationalisation initiatives that were part of their KPIs and the parts that were being included in their annual appraisals:

> It's just in Malaysian public universities, the number of students is not counted as part of your achievement in terms of grants to you. What counts is still the number of research grants only […] If I have 30 PhD students, it's nothing. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

Such discrepancies in how academics were being appraised in relation to internationalisation, as illustrated by Ahmad and Alan, have led to frustration among academics and thus hampered their internationalisation engagement.

Besides, a few academics also found the management of academic employment and careers in Malaysian public universities quite stifling and signalled a lack of understanding of the nature of academic work on the part of university management. For example, academics working hours and scope of duties were managed without clear consideration and understanding of how academics work. Academics in some Malaysian public universities were expected to clock in and out the office and were subjected to investigations and disciplinary actions should they fail to comply. This style of governance was felt by some academics, including Ahmad, to be quite problematic, as he said:

> I've never counted my working hours (*laugh*)...Yes, I know there are prescribed working hours for most public universities in Malaysia. Like you have to clock in at 8.30 am and clock out at any time as long as you fulfil 40 hours for the week. I just feel that universities are too strict on that, then, it's a problem. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2).

Workloads that academics were assigned that could also hamper their engagement in internationalisation, especially in research and publication. Yahya expressed his concern regarding this matter:

> At CU1 our average teaching load is quite high, around 18 hours per week. That's high, so some academics perceive it as a barrier to conducting research. But if there is no research, then there's no publication too, right? (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

The concern over the workload and fulfilling the performance target (KPIs) has put tremendous pressure on academics and this has affected how they prioritise their internationalisation activities. Priorities tend to be given to initiatives that are more tangible and can be quantified. For example, Yahya implied that presenting in conferences may be of low priority since presentations did not contribute directly to his impact factor as a scholar. Conference proceedings are normally not indexed, unlike the articles that they publish in top-tier journals, hence "since it's not indexed, it would just vanish" (Translation). (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

Having served academia for more than 30 years and nearing his retirement age, Ahmad sketched the complexities of fulfilling the responsibilities of being an academic, the excessive workload, and the labour of dealing with other pressures surrounding it as he lamented:

If you have so many students, how can you publish? Some publications need money, so, where to get the funding? Academics have to do everything! Look for grants, pay for publications, what do universities do then? They used to give [...] per PhD student, you get RM3000 [of research fund]. Once only. Now, stop. Now, it's even worse. We've got no money. […] Yes, if all these burdens can be taken away from lecturers, they can focus more on their job, academic stuff. You know, things like working space, it shouldn't be on academics. […] Academics' initiative! [to find space for newly registered doctoral students] […] Everything has to be done by the lecturers. That's why sometimes young lecturers find it difficult to survive. They need to find, apply for grants, they need to do everything on their own, they need to teach, research [...] Everything! Everything from A to Z, lecturers, researchers have to do themselves. Some would give up, they couldn't be bothered, too clerical. So, I mean, basically, to become academics [...] professors, you have to be a superman. (Ahmad, Professor, Computer Science, RU2)

International research and publication: hierarchies and divides

Getting published in top international journals was a concern to a number of academics, who felt that it was quite challenging due to epistemological background, language, and cost.

Yahya expressed the discomfort he felt about having to be part of the 'mainstream' in order to achieve the KPIs for international publications, in particular. Mainstream, in this context, refers to positioning one's research work in the research community and discourse within the Euro-Western epistemologies.

The first challenge […] is that we must be in the mainstream. That means, when we research, we need to position our studies in the mainstream body of knowledge. This is not easy. If our research doesn't relate to any western theories, we will not be able to publish, we will not be able to market ourselves. […] So, it's important that we strategize to place ourselves as experts in our field […] we need to have a base. If not, not matter how hard we work and how good our research is, it will not take us far. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

He also spoke about his insecurity with regard to writing and submitting his work in English:

The second thing is the about the language. Yes, I do feel insecure sometimes, but I wouldn't know until I try. One of the Q1 articles that I sent, I did the proofreading myself and with some help of a colleague who had a quick look. Well, we are aware, we are Asian, most of the time, the style is off, different than the American

style of writing. Even British and American are different. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1).

This implies that some of the academics felt that they had to plan their research and research trajectory based on what is valued in the Western world. Besides, they also did not have much choice but to publish in English because the internationalisation approach, as adopted by the Malaysian higher education system, subjects academics to impact factors and university rankings. Because the academic world is dominated by Western epistemologies, and English is the lingua franca of science, some Malaysian academics felt that they had to supress their preferred epistemologies and academic language options, which may not belong to the 'mainstream' in their international engagement.

Rita expressed her concerns over academics facing financial pressure and jeopardising the quality of academic work due to the lack of financial assistance to cover the cost of pricy international journal publications publication fees. During the online focus group discussion, when I asked about the challenges they have experienced in relation to international publication, she lamented:

> Issues aplenty! To be honest it's no longer about sharing knowledge, more like whoever has the money can go for all these impact factor hullabaloos! Quality is not the in thing anymore, unfortunately 😌😌😌 . (Rita, Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2)

While academics are being judged as prolific or expert by the academic community according to the matrices of their publications, there are those who are not particularly privileged in terms of financial resources, as shared by Rita. Therefore, most of the time, in order to fulfil their KPIs and academic responsibilities, these academics often had to make certain sacrifices, as Yahya revealed during the interview:

> Yahya: These are part of the main responsibilities and job scope. Even to participate in conferences, we have to pay on our own too, sometimes. Even if it's local, we will need around five to six hundred Malaysian Ringgit. (Translation) Yahya (Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1):

> Researcher: So, do you make personal investments in these kinds of things?

> Yahya: Yes, for conferences, because presenting is part of our KPI. Though, I spend more on journals, personally because the impact is better. Conferences...urm...I limit to those that allow me to publish. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

Financial constraints

Lack of financial resources was identified as one of the major impediments to internationalisation by the academics. When I posed questions related to challenges they faced with regard to internationalisation, for example, Alan (Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1), Yahya (CU1), and Ahmad (Professor, Computer Science, RU2) admitted that insufficient funding was a hurdle in internationalisation. Funding was an enabler for internationalisation, according to the academics, thus a lack of such could hamper internationalisation initiatives greatly. Yahya illustrated how financial issues have become a challenge for academics in their engagement with internationalising research:

> To me, funding is a significant challenge. If we want to publish in ISI and all those international journals, we need money. Some reach RM2000. So, without funding, it's difficult. Not many are willing and able to pay for it out of their own pockets. (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

Rita echoed the same resentment, pointing to funding issues which hampered her international publication engagement, which was part of academics' responsibilities, as she stated during the focus group discussion on Facebook:

> Basically, if we have our own grants, it wouldn't be so bad. Unfortunately, we don't have a lot. We are asked to publish a few and sometimes at our own expense. (Rita, Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2)

The insights into budget constraints academics faced in internationalisation provided by Yahya and Rita reveal that while academics in Malaysian public universities were responsible for achieving the performance target for international publication, participating in conferences, and engaging in international research collaboration, they often found themselves 'forced' to self-fund the costs incurred from these international engagements. It also implies that those who were less privileged financially were at risk of not being recognised as reputable, international, and referred scholars due to their inability to fund their research projects and publications, regardless of the quality of their research or their contributions to knowledge.

Student-related issues

Yahya elucidated an issue that hampered academics' international engagement in some Malaysian public universities, namely the recruitment of research students.

> Supervision, for example, there are 50 students. That number is very small compared to the number of lecturers who are PhD holders, which is around 100 of them. So, there is a bit of a competition to get research students here because once we got a PhD, it is part of the job satisfaction to supervise students for higher learning. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

This issue could be quite unique to Comprehensive and Focused public universities (please see Chapter Three: The Research Context about the structure of the higher education system) because research universities tend to attract more Masters and doctoral research students, both local and international. Besides, Comprehensive and Focused universities have been established for the purpose of widening participation in higher education, especially for Malaysians. Therefore, their local and international undergraduate student recruitment allocation, which is dictated by the Ministry of Higher Education, is greater.

This has led to low recruitment of research students, which in turn could affect the research productivity of Comprehensive and Focused universities. Academics, performance-wise, are also affected as the criteria for promotion to associate professorship and full professorship, in particular, include the number of research students supervised and who have graduated.

Change as a form of challenge

Change needs time and effort to react and adapt to. In their internationalisation engagement, these academics, who mostly have served at Malaysian public universities for at least ten years, had gone through the rapid development of the Malaysian higher education system. As discussed in Chapter Three, with regard to the internationalisation of Malaysian higher education, the system has been through a dynamic development process. More than twenty years ago, the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 was passed that marked an open-door policy to foreign tertiary education providers to operate in Malaysia. This has resulted in an increase in the number of private colleges and universities, as well as international branch campuses. In addition, two

internationalisation policies have been introduced and operationalised since 2011 which resulted in the setting of matrix-based, quantitative targets on academic performance indicators. Hence, for the past twenty years, these academics have experienced tremendous change in their professional lives that impact on how they understand internationalisation and engage with it.

During the individual interviews, many of the participants spoke of their struggle and triumph in dealing with these changes to the system. Yahya highlighted that change, as the result of higher education internationalisation, is a form of challenge in itself. When I asked about the support that he has been getting in his international engagement, Yahya, while admitting having received some forms of support from management, as well as expertise and technical support, diplomatically hinted the emotional burden he and many academics felt in dealing with the changes concerning internationalisation, as he said:

> Yes, there is a lot to do, and many are working towards it, but we can't push for it too hard. We need time, ok… Change is challenging sometimes. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

From his statement above, I could sense that the changes resulted in the labour of internationalising universities has had tremendous emotional effect on him. This is quite expected as many academics spoke about how different academia was and how many changes have taken place in higher education teaching and research. The ever-increasing expectations on academics to be able to be continuously productive in dynamically changing higher education, locally and globally, also made change even more difficult to cope with.

Even when Suri was able to look back and reflect on her success in achieving her career goals, she also implied that there were considerable difficulties coping with the changes that came with the engagement with internationalisation in her professional life. While sharing her survival and triumph in attaining her professorship in a competitively short time, she acknowledged that to deal with the change itself was difficult, as she said:

> […] it's a little bit of a hard work. Following guidelines is very important. You can reach the bar. In ten years, I got my professorship. So, it's not impossible, of course, sometimes you need to work around the clock and all, but if you want to be fast, that's the way to go about it. So, nothing is impossible. It's just that you need to set your aim and work towards it. (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1)

From her statement, it can be deduced that even though the hardship of internationalising academia ultimately favoured her career progression, nevertheless the process itself demanded a lot from her. "Working around the clock", as Suri said it, and earlier, a similar challenge was indicated by Ahmad (Professor, Computer Science, RU2) when he said, "[…] to become academics [...] professors, you have to be a superman", implies the overwhelming emotional labour in dealing with all the forms of challenging change that academics were subjected to in their profession. Internationalisation of higher education, as the participants have shared, has been one of the most significant sources of these changes.

Impact of internationalisation engagement on academics

The engagement of academics in the internationalisation of higher education throughout their academic careers has had various impacts on the academics' roles and identities. The final research question was to explore how their roles and identities as academics have changed as the result of their engagement with the internationalisation process professionally. This section presents the impact of internationalisation on aspects of the academics' roles and identities that were established from the analysis of the data as guided by the research question, "how does their engagement in internationalisation impact on their professional role and identity?"

Impact on academics' role

The academics in Malaysian public universities play various roles in internationalisation, as based on the various forms of internationalisation-oriented commitment presented in the earlier part of this chapter. This includes their roles as researchers, teachers, consultants, student advisors, curriculum developers, leaders, managers, coordinators, scholars, and university representatives.

a. *Research and publication*

One of the most frequently mentioned impacts of internationalisation as shared by the academics was in their research domain. Their involvement in internationalisation over

the years of service through their research activities has influenced their research trajectories, practices, and purposes.

Rita (Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2), who was initially trained in English language teaching, developed a deep research interest in interculturalism as the result of her experience with the internationalisation process at CU2. Observing the lack of intercultural integration despite working in a highly multinational campus, Rita's interest in researching interculturalism grew and later became her doctoral project topic, which subsequently shaped her post-PhD research path.

Similarly, Lin attributed a few important decisions about her role as a researcher to her internationalisation experience. From her doctoral training experience in the United Kingdom, Lin decided to pursue an under-researched area within her disciplinary, which would contribute to a Malaysian dimension to the body of knowledge. This, to her, was a significant change in her role as a scholar because the area is "quite rare" and that there were "not many experts here in Malaysia" (Lin, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1).

On the other hand, Suri shared how her engagement in international research publication, specifically, has influenced how she planned her future research directions and activities:

> When you do international publication, what happens is, there'll be a set of reviewers. […] they are from different countries, it could be Japan, it could be [the] US, it can be [the] UK. And even Asians. So, you tend to have people's opinions on your work, at early stage itself. So, you align your work to go in a certain direction. (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1)

From Suri's, Rita's, and Lin's accounts above, it can be seen how the academics' internationalisation engagement, since the early stages of their academic careers, has affected their research trajectories in their academic life.

International publication has also had an impact on how Yahya performed as a reviewer for journal articles. Learning about the expected standards of scholarly articles and quality review, Yahya commented on how he developed academically from the experience of his engagement in international publication as a reviewer:

> Writing, on daily basis, presents its own set of challenges. For instance, to review an article, we need to understand what the expectations are. It is not easy to give

feedback. Especially for Q1 journals. It has to be very detailed. (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

This interesting observation made by Yahya implies that there are different academic conventions and practices, both locally and internationally. Being involved and having experience in playing similar roles at both levels made academics, as illustrated by Yahya, aware of these distinctive standards and expectations.

b. *Research support for students*

Strongly impacted by her positive experience of international research collaboration that she gained during her doctoral training in a British university, Zaza was driven to promote research student mobility for her students and also continue to engage in internationalisation in this way, as she narrated:

> I wanted to cultivate the same culture, like students looking for their own collaborators. […] Through [a research collaboration partnership] I had a collaborator from a Japanese university, which I later sent three students […] for a year. These are local students, and they came back to us for research […]. For example, one of them continued with his PhD in Japan and is now working with a university and is now the anchor person between RU1, my group, and the Japanese university. So, there're always, always, always programmes that we do together. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

In this case, Zaza transformed her role as a research supervisor to that of research collaboration coordinator by extending her research supervision support to international research mobility support for her students, based on her previous internationalisation engagement. This effort required a tremendous change of perspective on supervising role, international outlook, and learner autonomy on her part as a research supervisor. It also demanded additional workload in coordinating the research attachment programme, but according to her, it was all worth it, and she planned to play this extended role for as long as she could in the future. This is, in my opinion, an example of a significant impact of internationalisation, on both academics and students.

c. *Teaching*

Some academics spoke about how their engagement with internationalisation, in general, has affected their teaching. Yahya, for instance, planned his teaching-learning activities and resources differently as the result of his international experience as an academic. This

is what he said as he was explaining about how internationalisation has impacted him as a teacher:

> I feel that it's so significant because in the past when I taught, I just went in and taught, mere servicing. So, I repeated the same thing. […] Now, it's different. I would challenge students by getting them to research the cultural aspects […] if I hadn't been through this process, I would not have got the idea to do that (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

Alan also felt a similar impact of his engagement with internationalisation on teaching as he shared the following account of him with his students:

> They are more interested in listening to your experiences overseas (*laugh*). For example, about informal learning, I shared my experience when I studied in Germany, of how I had to learn from YouTube how to handle an infant after my wife delivered my second child and was in confinement. That was informal learning through technology. I'd apply that situation in my classroom on how informal learning was embedded with technology. My experience really inspired my students to get involved in informal learning technology after that. (Alan, Senior Lecturer, TVET, FU1)

From the two accounts on how academics' engagement has impacted their teaching, it can be inferred that, regardless of the form of international engagement, internationalisation could have a remarkable impact on how academics further internationalise the curriculum and pedagogy in their teaching-learning support roles.

Impact on identity/academic self

Exploring how their engagement in internationalisation has affected their identity as guided by RQ4, the set of data coded as the impact on identity included that on how the academics felt they changed as a result of internationalisation. Findings that depict the changes in the ways they think about themselves as academics, the ways they are viewed by the world, and the characteristics that define them as academics are considered part of the impact.

a. *Academic reputation and confidence*

Some of the academics related their engagement in the internationalisation of higher education to building an academic reputation and confidence. Through years of their engagement in various international activities within the professional domain, the respondents felt that recognition by international communities and their community of

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practice helped to enhance their academic reputations and confidence. Recognition, such as the award of research grants, acceptance of their articles in peer-reviewed journals, invitations to deliver keynotes or training, appointments for consultancy services, and by professional bodies, endorsed their academic credibility as scholars in their own disciplines. Zaza took the view that academic confidence was one of the impacts of internationalisation engagement on academics, as she stated:

> Internationalisation means you go international; networking with people in the same field and to be known among those in [your] field. […] Needless to say, you then become more confident with your research. And you can benchmark your own research work. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

Yahya (Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1) also spoke about how his engagement in internationalisation through research publication has helped him to build his academic reputation in his area of expertise. He felt that having published in top-tier journals led him to gain an international presence as a scholar in his area of expertise and got him invited as a reviewer for a few other highly ranked journals.

In addition to building academic confidence and global reputation, the impact of being involved in research collaborations in particular and travelling abroad changed the way Suri viewed differences too, as she reflected:

> I feel I develop my academic identity through internationalisation. My confidence, openness. I now appreciate diversity, variation better. I start to think variation, variety as something healthy. There is more than one way of doing things. I start to accept that our way is not the only or best way. (Suri, Professor, Engineering, RU1)

b. *Increased intercultural tolerance and openness*

Zaza spoke extensively about the numerous cultural lessons she learned as the result of her engagement with internationalisation over the years, which she termed "a really eye-opening cultural experience". She gave a few examples of what she had learned about Japanese academic working culture, which places great importance on building trust and being explicit about mutual benefit, but "never talk about money in the meetings" (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1). She also learned about the great importance of time and punctuality as well as attention to detail when collaborating with Japanese academics, as she recalled:

For them, time is very important, especially if it involves your work, lab space, time, equipment, then you can't fool around. You say you want to send students, you must have a clear plan, guideline, and purpose. If you want to accept their students, you need to tell what is it that you can offer. Even me, why am I important for their time. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

She also claimed that internationalisation, especially through mobility activities, challenged her ignorance about other cultures and unveiled some cultural stereotypes about the Saudis, as she confessed:

I started to realise they are not being oppressed. They are free to do whatever they like within their own space. So, they wear really fashionably but when they go out, they will wear their black attire. That was really interesting. […] But things that people said that women are prohibited to go out of the house alone, that's not true. They still can go out on their own. And the part that women must cover the whole body, everything up, that's not true either. (Zaza, Associate Professor, Engineering, RU1)

The value of enhanced intercultural understanding and tolerance was also raised by Rita and Yahya as an effect of engaging in internationalisation, when they responded to the interview question, "Are there any other ways that internationalisation has had an impact on you, on your academic life?"

Definitely! (*enunciated*) Especially on my career. I mean, my academic life, because meeting with all these international people. […] you have to be international. […] having this cultural intelligence, if you have that, you'd be able to slot in yourself in any situations, in any culture, you, will not be seen as, offensive. […] has shaped me as an academic, and as a person as well, I am able to relate more to people from a different culture and background […] You minimise the filter in a sense that you don't get agitated, you don't get annoyed, because you understand that they're different. (Rita, Senior Lecturer, Communications, CU2)

Personally, I now view people, society differently. I mean, we became more open, we learn much more about different views on an issue. We learn to be more professional, we don't simply judge. (Translation) (Yahya, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

Laila's accounts of her experience of a research attachment at a renowned space technology institution in the United States showed how they had had an impact on her views on professionalism. She felt she has developed greater maturity, openness, and

understanding about others' cultures, as well as about differences in views and opinions, as she shared:

> I see myself as being more open. I'd say that I've become more mature. Maybe because, through internationalisation, I've been exposed to how others, foreigners, work and when I returned to FU2, we've been trying to do what we think is best practice. […] I noticed, although it appeared they were afraid of me, they never disrespected me, in the sense that I was not treated rudely, not insulted, they were very professional. They were just curious. So even when the body checks were done every day, once I requested that I was checked by female staff, they obliged. When I was there, it was also during fasting month. So, they avoided eating in front of me and gave me space to perform prayers. Although we have differences, they accepted my views. So, I learned that, about openness, respect for others. The experience at that time was eye-opening for me. To me, openness involves our ego, so if we think we are always right, we will not be open. For academics, openness is very important. As academics, sometimes we think that we really know our stuff, so sometimes we have difficulty accepting others' views. Some academics are sometimes reluctant to even hear others out because they think they know their area of expertise very well. (Laila, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, FU2)

These accounts of how internationalisation has cultivated better intercultural understanding, acceptance, and respect amongst the academics and how they see themselves in relation to others are amongst the profound impacts of internationalisation on the academics' selves and identities.

c. *Enhanced nationalism*

Committing themselves to the internationalisation process at Malaysian public universities has made some of the research participants reflect more on their own roots. When travelling for academic work internationally as a part of academic exchange and mobility programmes, Lin, being a Malay, for instance, saw how others genuinely valued their cultural heritage and started reflecting on how Malay heritage was being appreciated by the Malays:

> It is my hope to see a cafe serving Malay delicacies and food products and the language being spoken in a cafe anywhere abroad. […] Look at Ikea with its Swedish meatballs and English cafe with scones. See how these have become export commodities. We, too, are rich with our specialities. [...] I learned many things. The Thais, everything about their culture can be commercialised. Their food is beautiful, their art of weaving, everything in their culture, in their environment, they can make it pretty and commercialised. They have this concerted initiative to have one village, one product. […] And I also observe, if

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they have guests, they will always serve Thai food. They won't try to serve cupcakes […] But we, we don't do as much. (Lin, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

Being more internationalised has also led Lin to reflect on the stigma surrounding Malays, an ethnic group she belongs to:

I think I am now able to see the bigger picture, […] because when I am out there, I reflect on my people, my language. […] there are these negative perceptions about Malays that they are not punctual, Malays are lazy, but when I travel I notice, these traits are universal. There are lazy people, hardworking people everywhere in the world. So, I learn not to overgeneralise things. Then, through meeting others in this field, […] I met many kinds of Malay. One who married a German, then another one, Swedish. How they preserve their Malay-ness. Some are very good at preserving their Malay identity and culture. (Lin, Senior Lecturer, Linguistics, CU1)

These revelations, as the result of the academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education, may imply that being an internationalised academic does not make one less nationalistic or lead to losing one's national identity. Lin's reflection shows that this could, in fact, be the opposite. She became more aware of her Malay-ness and valued her roots more when she saw how others valued theirs.

d. *Enhanced social skills*

The final impact of internationalisation on the academics' identity, as articulated by some of the academics, is one of enhanced social skills. Their professional commitment to international activities and their understanding of the internationalisation of higher education has affected the social skills that are crucial to academics in general.

Husin reminisced on how much he has changed to being sociable and wanting to connect to others, both around him and internationally, as an effect of being educated in an international university in Malaysia and later engaging in internationalisation as an academic:

To be frank with you, when I was growing up, I was a timid child, I didn't have many friends. […] I didn't get the chance to study overseas, I had the opportunity to go abroad when I joined FU2. So, I think, […] how internationalisation actually influenced me was, the desire to have a lot of contacts. (Husin, Senior Lecturer, Law, FU2)

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In the same vein, Jamil also recalled a lesson learned from his internationalisation engagement experience which transformed his professional social behaviour:

> Behaviour. The importance of having internationalisation, international students, we learn to be diplomatic. When I was young, I was quite vocal and straightforward. I remember this one occasion, we had a meeting and the committee consisted of all foreign lecturers except me and I questioned that, then a few days later I was called to meet the Vice Chancellor. […] we had a chat about a complaint about me being too outspoken in meetings. So, I was advised by the Vice Chancellor (*imitated the VC's voice*), "Jamil, I know you work hard and you talk, but when you talk, please put a lot of grease, unless the situation calls for it, just sprinkle a little bit of fine sand. Just a little bit, most of the time, only use grease." So, I was a really changed person after that incident. I try to think more carefully about the implications of my words. So, internationalisation changed my behaviour and attitude as an academic. I'm a different person now. I am still vocal, but I've toned down a lot and I'll always remember his advice (*imitated the VC's voice*), "Jamil, it's not what you say but how you say it."

These transformational experiences, as the result of their engagement in the internationalisation of higher education and as narrated by these two academics, illustrate the effects internationalisation could have on academics' professional and personal identities.

In a nutshell, all of the accounts presented above in this section, some being positive and some quite unpleasant, have nevertheless had positive impacts on the academics, which could have helped them develop, through more nationalistic but also intercultural understanding, into more open and tolerant academics.

Summary

To conclude, the data analysed with regard to the two research questions (RQ3, and RQ4) form three main elements; support for and challenges of internationalising higher education, and, finally, the impact of their engagement in internationalisation on their academic selves.

Regarding the support and challenges related to the internationalisation of higher education, in their endeavour to internalise academia, the academic staff faced many challenges which stemmed from lack of leadership support, financial constraints, and discrepancies between policy imperatives and implementation. Unclear directions and

issues related to academic freedom were also found to pose threats that could be immobilising and demotivating for the academics. On the other hand, the appreciation of the forms of support that they have been given in internationalisation, such as collegial support, funding, recognition, and opportunities for their students, were also shared by the participants.

The overly demanding expectations placed on academics to perform professionally to compete in the global arena in the midst of all these challenges had various effects on them. While some positively shaped their career trajectories and aspirations, others could have had detrimental effects if left unattended.

Discussions of what the findings presented mean and how this research speaks to the wider discourse of academics' engagement in the internationalisation of higher education will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven: Discussion of Findings

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research findings were presented. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the following themes emerged from the study in the light of the literature. I would like to present a few reiterative themes that relate to the six main categories of the findings. They are i) agency of academics in internationalisation engagement, ii) research-oriented internationalisation, iii) the institutional-individual misalignment in the engagement of the internationalisation of higher education, and iv) internalisation of neoliberalism in academics' internationalisation engagement.

Individual agency of academics

Academics' individual agency as actors in the internationalisation of higher education as revealed in the findings as evident in their internationalisation strategies and rationales is shaping higher education through their internationalisation practice. The findings reveal that some of the participants admitted feeling that they are 'forced' into engaging in internationalisation activities for career development and quality assurance evaluations for ranking purposes. While these are being highlighted more as rationales for internationalising their professional self, some of them also spoke about their passion for genuinely engaging in internationalisation for the benefit of students. The research can be considered a small but significant part of the bigger discourse of what is the role of a university and the role of higher education. By examining internationalisation engagement, the study offered insights on how academics contribute to those roles.

Research-oriented internationalisation

From the findings, can we conclude that in the engagement of the academics in the internationalisation of higher education, the internationalisation of research is more emphasised or 'privileged' over teaching (Clark, 1987). From the academics' perspectives based on the findings of the research, it is debatable to say that there was a synergy between teaching and research in the internationalisation of higher (Clark, 1987). Although the participants spoke of their engagement in internationalising the curriculum, for example, by incorporating international ethics (Laila, FU2), promoting intercultural tolerance (Rita, CU2) and following international standards for professional accreditation

(Zaza, RU1), research-informed teaching and curriculum was not vastly evident. Research and teaching were rather implied as two separate, unrelated entities of their international engagement as academics. The intensity and the breadth in research when providing their accounts of international engagement much more in research than in teaching. From job specification to performance indicator to reward and recognition in terms of internationalisation, most are research related. Nevertheless, their rationales, were quite balanced between idealism, educationalism and instrumentalism (Stier, 2004),

Misalignment between institutional and individual engagement

From the findings on the forms of engagement especially in the area of international publication, it is notable that while internationalisation as experienced by the participants happened in planned and strategized ways especially in international publication, other aspects such as IoC, intercultural competence development among staff and IaH were rather incidental and by chance.

From findings on the challenges, specifically in international research collaboration and publications, it can be concluded that the trajectory of academic staff internationalisation at Malaysian public universities is very much dictated by top-down imperatives as the public universities and the Ministry of Higher Education impose upon academic staff the annual target for international publication and emphasize on achievement of research enterprise that is recognised at international university ranking leagues. While this may be seen as the effort to place Malaysian public universities in the world limelight as top universities, it strays from the national philosophy of education and MoHE's Education Blueprint 2015-2025 which emphasis is on realising the full potentials of graduates or students. The link between how soaring at world university league tables impact on this vision an interesting phenomenon would be to be explored.

There were also conflicting ideologies underpinning the national's rationales for internationalisation and the rationales as stated by some of the academics. For example, some of the rationales for internationalising higher education for students' development and because they felt their engagement is a form of vocation. However, from the policy documents, MoHE emphasise on competitiveness and economic gain. In other words, while more than half of the academics were motivated by educationalist rationales,

MoHe's rationales as stated in the MEBHE are clearly rather instrumentalist. This observation is reflected on the criticism by a few prominent higher education scholar, as they argued,

> However, the strong economic focus on education and human capital development in 11MP, as well as in the MEB and MEBHE, may be at odds with the NPE in producing an *insan seimbang* (translated as 'the balanced person'). As articulated in the NPE, the aim of education is about developing a holistic person intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically. (Da Wan, Sirat, & Razak, 2018).

Various and diverse definitions and rationales of internationalisation of higher education were given by the participants which some of them are different from the definitions found in the two policy documents and also different from the definitions found in the literature by scholars in the area. Most importantly, as we have seen in the findings, their definitions and rationales sometimes are not consistent to how they engage in internationalisation. In discussing this theme, I prefer Stier's (2004) use of the term 'ideologies' in examining internationalisation rationales and he defines an ideology referring to,

> "[…] a set of principles, underpinnings, desired goals and strategies that structure actions and beliefs of international educators[...]groups, organizations or societies. Ideologies may be, partly or completely, conscious or make up a set of taken-for granted assumptions about internationalization, manifested as an unconscious frame of reference for the individual" (p.85).

The findings reveal that instrumentalism is a dominant ideology underlying most of the conceptualisations from in the data from all three resources. Some academics feel that internationalisation could enhance local students' employability opportunities and valuable for nation building. This became one of the main reasons for engaging in various internationalisation activities either involving students or themselves. However, educationalism is also another strong ideology underpinning the academics' rationales for engaging in internationalisation. Connected to this, their internationalisation engagement appears to evoke the sense of belonging to the country and it has become one of the rationales for internationalisation.

Participants spoke about the importance of having a clear direction in the implementation of the internationalisation policy. This suggests that there has been contradicting messages sent through policy or rhetoric and how the policy has been translated in the form of academic staff promotion for instance. The contradicting ideologies can be seen in the findings on the rationale.

From the findings there were also gaps between the rhetoric and support for academics' engagement in internationalisation. There seem to have lack of training and support and were left on their own to develop the skills and their involvement in academic mobility for teaching abroad, these are rather sporadic and 'ad hoc' as Alan (FU1) and Ahmad (RU2) described it. These situations which made internationalisation engagement challenging for academics contradict the proposed 5 Is of Faculty Engagement in IoHE (Childress, 2018) and also highlight one of the findings of Proctor's work (2016) that reveals a disconnect between what institutions say is important and what academics do.

Internalisation of neoliberalism

The participants expressed their discomfort and dissatisfaction of being appraised using performance indicators that are not regulated by the employing institutions but international standards which are targeted at benchmarking universities worldwide using a set of rigid characteristics such as publication impact factor, number of international grants or funding acquired, and number of patents achieved. Some of them also questioned Malaysian's higher education internationalisation policy that favours the use of university ranking such as QS Ranking and Universitas 21 as benchmarks for quality in higher education institutions. In their responses, some of the academics especially the senior lecturers as opposed to senior professors, were very guarded when talking about the challenges they face in internationalisation. This could signal a covert resistance to internationalisation.

Again, this is consistent with the views of Da Wan et al. (2018) on commenting on neoliberalism in Malaysian higher education,

> Moreover, the 11MP further affirmed and strengthened the ethos of neo-liberalism and new public management (NPM) in the education sector, especially in higher education. As Wan, Morshidi and Dzulkifli (in press) argue, the philosophical

underpinnings of the MEBHE has been the principles of neo-liberalism and NPM, and these principles have shaped the landscape of higher education into focusing on concepts such as efficiency and cost effectiveness (see also Morshidi 2010; Morshidi and Abdul Razak 2008). In the process of doing so, universities became much more like business entities than educational institutions. (Da Wan, Sirat, & Razak, 2018).

However, ironically, there were also a sense of pride and content expressed when an academic has successfully fulfilled this persona of an ideal academic. Not only one talked about how others should follow suit to be internationalised in the neoliberalist term, but a few academics also emphasised on the importance that it is achievable not matter how hard it may be and that all one needs to do is just continue to work harder which means to intensify their effort.

Another evidence that supports this supra theme is the pride that one of the participants show with the implementation of English as the medium of instruction which she believes is a great advantage:

> Zaza: One thing, you also need to realise that we have the advantage as Malaysians because we speak English. You really need to make it a point. If the country starts to make people less aware that English is important, then we will have lesser collaboration. Whatever it is, that's the language that helps you to understand others' cultures better.

This, in my opinion, is a form of self-inflicted, internalised neoliberalism as a result of internationalisation.

Comparing the findings on the challenges of internationalisation that are faced by the academic participants and on the expectations the state place on academics in driving internationalisation through Thrust 2 and 8 of the MEB, one of the emerging themes is intensified workloads as the result of hyper-performativity expectations on academics. The findings reveal hyper performativity expectations on academics through the intensification and extensification of academic workload as well as deterritorialisation of academic workspace.

Ahmad (RU2), who has been an academic staff at RU2 for more than 30 years reiterated throughout the interview in many ways that academics in general have been long

subjected to unreasonably heavy workload. This workload often encompasses from those of academic, managerial, administrative and clerical aspects. For example, for teaching and learning responsibilities, the sheer number of doctoral students to supervise, on top of taught courses hours that are allocated under his belt shows as if academics are expected to have more than 365 days a year and 24 hours a day. According to Ahmad (RU2) there seems to be no systematic way of determining teaching and supervision workload among other responsibilities of a professor like him as he stated,

> "If I have 30 PhD students, it's nothing. It's just my workload, on my time. I think in my faculty, I have the most number of students."

Attached to a research-intensive university like RU2 also means academics have enormous research obligations. As presented in the previous chapter, the study reveals that the form of international engagement by the academics in Malaysian public universities are very much research oriented. This is reflected by ways of the job description of an academic be it at junior to senior lecturers and more so for those who are in full professorship positions which allocated the main responsibilities are research related such as international publications, conference activities and research collaboration project.

Academics not given due recognition for the sweat and tears they put in internationalisation (and beyond) engagement. Very often the job that they did will just be recorded quantitatively. Meaning, at the end of the year, during the annual appraisal, their involvement, for instance, in the organisation of an international research conference, advisory and support services they provided for student international mobility projects or the coaching of students' participation in an international invention competition, these kinds of commitment that they laboured in were recorded as a list of activities which has very little weightage in their application for promotion to a higher academic position or an award for their contribution to the universities they were attached to. Just because these do not count towards their academic impact factor and the universities score for the ranking exercise. However, the academics obliged because they see the value of such internationalisation activities for the students and for knowledge development.

Neoliberalism is also evident with regards to leadership and governance of academics. From the findings, there are concerns over the control imposed on academics in internationalisation. The data shows rigid and stifling demands imposed on academics in the name of quality assurance. For example, super-obedience to quality governing authorities which use unreasonable, inhumane, inefficient, time-consuming mechanisms as discussed in the findings This is found to adversely affect academics' internationalisation engagement.

There has been resentment with how some disciplines are considered 'mainstream' which tend to fit the Western epistemologies. Some participants spoke of the challenges of publishing in high impact journal for various reasons: i) They are not competent in the preferred language of publication, ii) They belong to aboriginal/indigenous knowledge or an area of studies that are not of western origin iii) If research is not conducted or reported in the 'mainstream' (Western) ways or using Western theories. I consider this a form of epistemological inequalities as an impact of IoHE felt by the academics. Perhaps because this is due to the significance of knowledge in defining the academic profession (Arimoto, 2010), epistemological inequality and epistemicide are possible because the power relies on the hands that hold the knowledge.

Is it justified and just for universities to pressure academics to solely publish only in high impact journals? Kwiek (2020) proved that low probability for non-Anglo-Saxon academics' work to be publish in top tier American journal:

> Should academics from non-Anglo-Saxon countries be submitting manuscripts to elite American journals, which published merely 1.6–2.0% (or even 9.3% in the case of ResHE) of papers with such affiliations in 1996–2018? From the point of view of resource allocation theory (according to which major academic resources are time and energy), these investments may be ill-directed. At the same time, a lack of knowledge about journal standing has clear implications for faculty, as publications "influence promotion and tenure decisions, faculty status, and salary increases" (Kwiek, 2021)

Ranking in relation to KPI monitoring as part of governmentality in HE on academics seems to be rather restricting and not liberating. This is contradictory to the academia having academic freedom in their scholarship and professional domain. There is a sense of a lack of academic freedom to research on areas preferred by the academics but not considered the mainstream or popular fields by funders, publishers, policy makers.

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The academics also do not feel free to be critical and analytical about many of the ongoing trends and developments in terms of how internationalisation is conceptualised, operationalised, and celebrated by the university leadership and management.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The research while aimed at exploring internationalisation of higher education as experienced by the Malaysian academics working in the public universities has also unveiled/offered insights into the features of some aspects of academic profession in this context. More often than not, these features have been accepted as 'normal' to Malaysian universities internationalisation and the academia by the academics. However, more and more into the research, I felt there are more serious issues here which have surfaced from the discussion of the findings such as the unintended internalisation of neoliberalism within Malaysian higher education system and its actors and isomorphism of the Malaysian higher education through internationalisation strategies and initiatives. These, in my opinion, signal two grave concerns.

Firstly, there is the risk of the infiltration of systemic neoliberalism through education on Malaysians and international students who pursued their education at the public universities. Another possible threat of such impact internationalisation could incur if (uncontrolled) isomorphism   is allowed, is denationalisation of Malaysia, which is against the Malaysian National Education Philosophy.

Secondly, the theme also highlights some issue with the governance of academic profession in Malaysian public universities. In the aim of achieving for excellence and quality higher education with internationalisation as the means, the main actor of internationalisation, there seems to be systemic inequality on the members of the academia as the result of the issue with the governance of academics. Malcolm Tight aptly illustrate/this notion through his analysis of research in international higher education with a focus on globalisation and internationalisation as frameworks for research in this field of studies, when he concludes:

> There is often a sense, however, that, when globalization and internationalization (or, more generally, neoliberalism) are foregrounded in the debate, we are really talking about something else. Thus, the focus of policy and/or research is on the nature or quality of some aspect of provision or practice, while it is merely the context that is international or global. If provision or practice is found to be wanting in some way, it is not, then, globalization itself that is at fault, but the actions (or lack of action) of institutions and their employees. (Tight, 2019)

I felt that Tight's observation above resonates with some themes generated from the analysis of the findings. In sharing their accounts of their engagement in international activities as part of their academic domain, some realities of how academics have been governed, managed, supported and engaged are illustrated. Some indicated detailed, quantified and objective aims and targets to be materialised in the internationalisation process by academics, others implied blurry vision and direction, disjointed effort as well as lack of support for academics to function effectively. For such circumstances/revelations, the research could be used as evidence in reflecting on how academics are treated and supported at public universities. With the roles and responsibilities, they are entrusted with, related to internationalisation or not, academics deserve to be better supported and their perspectives should be central in the internationalisation of higher education together with students' interests.

The study is far from being comprehensive, hence the conclusions and implications drawn from the findings are not meant to be prescriptive or proscriptive. Nevertheless, it is a nuanced accounts of the academics' perspectives and practices in their engagement of internationalisation within the public sector of Malaysian higher education system.

Limitation of the Study

Singular perspective

One of the limitations of the research was the singularity of the perspective. With the aim to centre the academics' voice which is observed to be lacking in internationalisation research, only academics were recruited as participants of the study, thus such tight viewpoint is unavoidable.

Having said that, I also needed to consider the main aim of this research which was to deeply explore internationalisation as experienced by academics. Therefore, instead of including the accounts from other sources, I managed the shortcomings of a singular point of view by including two more data generation methods to gain more nuanced insights into how academics understand, practice and deal with internationalisation. One of the methods was the focus group discussion. With the intention to explore their collective accounts on their own and each other's' engagement in internationalisation, the Facebook-based secret group was created as a safe and confidential platform to discuss

the matter. From the findings derived from this method have been useful in confirming some of the views generated through the individual interview and offering more detailed accounts that have not been mentioned before in any of the individual interviews.

Generalisability

Though aimed at exploring academics' experience in the internationalisation in a specific Malaysian sectoral context (of 20 public universities), this means the findings only illustrated the accounts of a fraction (17 participants) of the whole populations which was 31,877 academics in 2015, a year before the study was conducted. The individual experience and views of the seventeen academics vary. Although there were common themes emerging from the data, it can only be loosely generalizable.

Implications

Internationalisation of the Curriculum at Home by Design

From the data and discussion on the internationalisation of the academia, there is a dire need for higher education institutions to instigate reflection and discussion around the internationalisation of teaching (Sanderson, 2011). Through meaningfully structured and executed training programmes as well as continuous reflection on their academic practice and conduct, academics can be encouraged to have deeper engagement into how to incorporate international and intercultural perspectives into teaching. This commitment to be an internationalised academic needs to be made throughout one's career in the academia and as Sanderson (2011) states, "are likely to be realised by undertaking a 'life journey' rather than being a place where beginning teachers start."

For academics' professional development, early-career and other teachers should be supported to engage and develop the ideals of an internationalised academic as advocated by Sanderson (2008, & 2011) through the Academic Self. Meaningful, practical and reflective training programmes that develop academics' pedagogical skills and competence in teaching international students (Burke et al., 2020) and in promoting interactions between local or home and international students (Leask, 2009).

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Appendix I: Ethical Approval Letter

Suhaili A Jalil
Registration number: 150107897
School of Education
Programme: Education (PhD/Education FT) - EDUR31

Dear Suhaili

PROJECT TITLE: The Engagement of Academics in the Internationalisation of Higher Education at Malaysian Public Universities
APPLICATION: Reference Number 011346

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 03/10/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 011346 (dated 11/09/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1023238 version 3 (11/09/2016).
- Participant consent form 1023239 version 2 (11/09/2016).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

Final check to ensure the absolute anonymity of those referenced in the additional documentary evidence and also privacy of the Facebook site

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Appendix II: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: The Engagement of Academics in the Internationalisation of Higher Education at Malaysian Public Universities

Name of Researcher: Suhaili A. Jalil

Participant identification for this project:

Please initial appropriate boxes on the right:

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reasons and without any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to address any particular questions or requests from the researcher, I am free to decline. ☐

3. I agree to take part in the above research project. ☐

4. I agree for my interview to be recorded and transcribed by the researcher. ☐

5. I agree to allow the researcher to keep a copy of the documents that I have given her for the purpose of the research. ☐

6. I agree to take part in the online, closed/private Facebook group called "International Virtual World Café". ☐

7. I understand that my responses through the interview and the online group will be kept strictly confidential. ☐

8. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis and my institution, and I will not be identified in the thesis and subsequent publications. ☐

....

Name of participant   Date   Signature

Appendix III: Information Sheet

Information sheet

Research Project Title: The Engagement of Academics in the Internationalisation of Higher Education at Malaysian Public Universities

Researcher: Suhaili A. Jalil, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, the University of Sheffield, UK.

Invitation:

You are invited to participate in the above research project. Before you decide to participate or not, it is important that you are aware of what the study is about, why it is being conducted and what it involves. The following contains the information about the research project that you may need to know in order to make your decision. Please take your time to carefully read the information and feel free to ask me if you have any questions about it or if you would like further information. Thank you for your time and consideration to participate.

About the research project:

The research aims to explore academics' involvement in the internationalisation of higher education in Malaysian Public Universities. Internationalisation refers to the integration of global, international and intercultural elements in the purpose and delivery of tertiary education (Knight, 2004). Through this study, I am really interested to discover how academics think about, experience and practise the internationalisation of higher education within their professional domains. The research also aims to explore how internationalisation has affected academics' professional life over years of service.

Why have you been invited?

You have been invited because as an academic staff currently employed at a Malaysian Public University, you will have valuable knowledge, experience and views on international aspects relating to your professional life, and to the public university sector more broadly.

What does participation in this research involve?

If you choose to take part in this research project, it will involve consenting to:

i. A one-to-one interview

An interview will be conducted during which you can discuss your experience and thoughts on the internationalisation of Malaysian public universities, from your perspectives. It will be conducted on the date and time as well as at a place that are convenient for you. During the interview, I will ask for your permission to use a note-taking tool called a life-grid and also an audio recording device. You are not obliged to give consent to these, even if you have agreed to be interviewed. After the interview, if it is audio-recorded, I will show you the transcription of our interview to make sure that I have recorded it correctly.

ii. Document sharing

I would appreciate any complementary document that you may be able to supply and share with me. These documents would illustrate your internationalisation involvement that we would talk about during the interview. I will ask for your consent before taking a copy of the documents for the research use.

iii. A secret Facebook focus group (The Internationalisation Café)

This secret Facebook group called "The Internationalisation Café" is created for the participants (you and colleagues from the same or other public universities) and the researcher (myself), who is also the administrator of the group, to have casual conversations about your experiences and perception of the

internationalisation of higher education at Malaysian public universities over a period of roughly three months (September - November 2017). Participation at all times throughout this period is on a voluntary basis. This means you are free to read, write, post links or images, make announcements, update your status, ask questions, give feedback, and respond in the chat group at any time. Interactions can be initiated and based on newsfeeds and posts that are posted by the administrator or other members of the group. You will be invited to join "The Internationalisation Café" group once you have given your consent to participate in this phase of the study. You are also free to leave or re-join this group at any time. The interactions within this group, alongside the interviews, life grids and documents will be analysed to form the findings of the research.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits to taking part in the study, your participation will be valuable in constructing a better understanding of internationalisation in Malaysian public universities from the lens of academics. Internationalisation policies and strategies at the universities or ministry-level may have affected many academic professionals in various ways. It is hoped that this study will be able to contribute to the improvement of current frameworks of internationalising universities.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

While there is no anticipated physical harm, participating in this research could cause minimal distress if any sensitive issues you might face in your professional life were to be raised. You could possibly feel some discomfort within the secret Facebook group too if we get into a heated discussion. However, if at any time you feel distressed or uncomfortable, please inform me and we can discuss adjustments or further arrangements. You can also withdraw from any part of the study without having to state your reasons.

How will the information that you have provided be used and reported?

The data that is gathered and generated from our interactions through the interview and chat group as well as from the documents that you shared, will only be used for the purpose of producing the doctoral thesis and presentations or publications that stem from the thesis. No one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings and any documents with your personal data on them. Any of your personal data will be removed and kept confidential with access only for me while analysing the data and writing the thesis. Your personal and your institution's identities will be kept confidential and only pseudonyms will be used in the thesis, presentation conference and any publications related to this research. The audio recordings, any documents with your personal data and the documents you provided will be destroyed once the thesis is completed and the degree is awarded.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to make a complaint about your experiences associated with participating in this research, either with regard to the treatment by the researcher or if something serious occurs during or following your participation in the project (e.g. a reportable serious adverse event), you should inform the researcher as soon as possible. In the first instance, you should inform me (Suhaili A. Jalil), alternatively, you can contact the Supervisor directly (Dr Vassiliki Papatsiba). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction (e.g. by the Researcher or Supervisor) you can contact the Head of Department (Professor Elizabeth Wood), who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. All contact details are given at the end of this information sheet.

Ethics review

This project has been ethically approved by the School of Education, the University of Sheffield and the University of Sheffield's Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

Contacts for further information:

If you have further questions and if you are interested in taking part, please contact me via email to arrange for a short meeting to discuss and sign a consent form which you will retain a copy of. The interview can then be arranged at a time which is most convenient for you. My contact details are: Suhaili A. Jalil, email: sajalil1@sheffield.ac.uk and telephone: +44 (0) 7543210368

For further information about the research project or if there is a need to contact the Supervisor of the research project or the Head of School, their contact details are:

1) Supervisor: Dr Vassiliki Papatsiba, email: v.papatsiba@sheffield.ac.uk and telephone: +44 (0) 114 222 8152

2) Head, School of Education: Professor Elizabeth Wood, email: e.a.wood@sheffield.ac.uk and telephone: +44 (0) 114 222 8172

Thank you very much for your time and support.

Appendix IV: Interview Questions

Research: The Engagement of Academics in the Internationalisation of Higher Education at Malaysian Public Universities

Potential interview questions

Academics' personal conceptualisation of internationalisation:

1. How do you define internationalisation of higher education?
2. When you think about internationalisation, what comes to mind?
3. What does internationalisation of a university mean to you?

Academics' internationalisation roles and activities:

1. What are your roles in this university that you consider being part internationalisation process?
2. How do you relate to internationalisation (or the international elements) in your professional life?
3. What are the forms of your international activities?

Academics' rationale for internationalisation:

1. What are your reasons for being involved in the internationalisation activities?
2. What would you like to achieve through your practice in internationalisation as academics?
3. How important is internationalisation engagement for you as an academic?

Challenges, motivations, and support for internationalisation:

1. Could you share a few memorable instances of internationalisation activities that you have experienced?
2. How have your skills in internationalising HE developed over the period of your tenure as an academic?
3. Do you think you are getting the support that you need?
4. How do you think you can be best supported?

The impact of internationalisation on your professional life:

1. How has internationalisation impacted you as an academic?
2. Could you share any specific instances on how internationalisation affects your professional life?

Appendix V: Sample of Interview Transcript

Participant 13: RU2 Ahmad

Date: 06/09/2017, 1.30 pm, 57:03 minutes
Venue: In a work room at Diamond Building

AHMAD: (Handing me a list of his internationalisation activities)
So, these are some aspects of my inbound and outbound internationalisation activities. I've worked at RU2 since 1985 as a tutor. I did my first degree in a UK university in Scotland, then I joined RU2 as a tutor. My Master was at another UK university in Manchester and later completed my PhD in West Yorkshire. I was also involved in an attachment-to-industry programme in the UK at the University of Surrey. If you look into my internationalisation experience, the SLAB scheme is part of it... university sends staff to do PhD to overseas as part as their training.

I: Ok, yes.

AHMAD: At the same time there's also this international scholar-exchange programme in my area of expertise. So, I was involved in two of those to UK. One on 1996 at University of Surrey and the other one is in Southampton for two weeks. There was also a training programme, more for exposure... There used to be a lot of these kinds of programme for third world countries...back then including Malaysia.

I: Hmmm...

AHMAD: Other...Some like...(*pause*), I forgot what it's called. There was also this body that gives training on specialised technology for example, I once spent two weeks in Korea for training in fibre optics which was something new at that time. We had training and lab visits and so on.

I: Was this an invitation by the external body?

AHMAD: You had to apply.

I: Ok...

AHMAD: You had to apply for the attachment... (*long pause*) But...the biggest part of my internationalisation experience for me is managing a double degree programme with a German university. I was in the programme development team. I was part on the programme internationalisation of UKM. You can look at the list of my role there. So, basically there are three party between RU2, a public Indonesian university and the German university. It was in between 2002 to 2003 when we started the programme which...at that time we haven't had an international office or dean of internationalisation. Nothing.

I: It sounds like it was rather ad-hoc, one off.

AHMAD: Urm...yeah. so, experience wise, I went all the way back before...when we started to develop joint-study programme for undergraduates. Basically, the problem with Malaysian-German joint programme is that we are two very different systems. So, the first challenge is how to match these two programmes. so, we have the European transfer credit guideline. So, we have to start from there. So, to do that you have to match all the subjects. The problem is,

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German has its own diplome programme. Diplome is like M.Engg in comparison to Malaysian Engineering qualification. So, first we need to match, to what extent is the undergraduate component and to what extent is the master's elements.

I: Then, is it a diploma, a masters or a bachelor's degree?

AHMAD: So now we match our undergraduate programme, after that only Germany offers their programme to international students. So they split their Diplome programme into two parts, one they call it MSc., and the other one is Bachelor's degree.

I: Oh, I see.

AHMAD: But the Diplome programme is still there. But they have academic programmes targeted for international students. For us, undergraduate programme, we can match but for Engineering, in Germany it's a three-year programme only but Malaysian's is a four-year programme, so sometimes, there're some issues to synchronise these programmes.

I: What kind of issues?

AHMAD: For Board of Engineers Malaysia.

I: I see...BEM only recognises four-year Engineering programmes, right?

AHMAD: Yeah...used to be four-year then, three-year and now four-year again. It's just that...because now we have gone through the curriculum development phase, we can now match all the subjects. So, basically, when the students went there, it's only for one year, supposed around 15 to 18 months, they have to stay in Germany.

I: Right....so you are immersed in all this process.

AHMAD: Yes, I did all these, developed the curriculum, there was one time I became a guest professor and taught there. It's just that the movement between Indonesia and Malaysia didn't really happen. So, most of the time student mobility is from Malaysia to Germany.

I: Oh, I see, despite it being a tripartite programme?

AHMAD: Yes, now we also have German students coming to Malaysia bit not from and to Indonesia.

I: Does this involve DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)?

AHMAD: Yes, this is under DAAD? I was the coordinator of the programme.

I: Right... Just now you mentioned that you had to apply to be part of some internationalisation programme. I am also very interested to know what your motivation is?

AHMAD: Yes, we need to explore available opportunities for academics for training and so on. So, my motivation is...I need to learn new technologies and also to get exposure from other countries.

I: Hmm..do you think what you've gained from your doctoral training is insufficient for you to learn about your area?

AHMAD: My PhD is in a different area. These are highly specialised areas. I am in telecommunications area. It's very wide and I am specialising only on wireless communication. The trainings were on fibre optics and others.

I: Right...

AHMAD: And of course you meet people from other countries, this one from Asia Pacific and that's to me in very important.

I: Why do you think it's important?

AHMAD: And of course you meet people from other countries, this one from Asia Pacific and that's to me in very important.

I: Why do you think it's important?

AHMAD: It's an academic importance for you to get exposed to all sorts of technologies that you can. It can be a new knowledge or a future direction for your research. PhD is only one part. When you go back to Malaysia, you might not do the same thing especially for those who use many equipment. That's the most difficult part. People come here (referring to UK/abroad) and learn to work with a lot of machines and when they go back to Malaysia, it's different... they cannot do anything. They'll have to get fund, grant and buy everything before they could start research. I'm lucky because I use computers only because my research is mainly on simulations.

I: Oh, so you don't need labs and those kinds of equipment.

AHMAD: Well, I just need computers and soft wares...licences, to do my research. For those in chemical and civil engineering for example, they can be very instrument, lab...facility-dependant. So, that's the challenge... where to get the grant. Not many countries are willing to fund or sponsor you. This particular project is part of European foreign policy programme. So, the funding came from EU, basically involving students and academics transfer to Malaysia. They also asked us to develop... another research grant basically. The research collaboration in a form of summer school on Islamic Engineering. They also asked us to develop curriculum for their students or engineers to these parts of the world on what they need to know about Islam. If they want to design innovative products, what would the features for Muslims. So we develop the programme.

I: These students, are they RU2 students?

AHMAD: No, their students and they want to run this programme as a short course for industrial people to join. So, it's about the aspects to consider when designing for Muslims.

I: Right...about understanding the end-user of the of products they can create.

AHMAD: They want to know about ethics in Islam and so on because there are German companies doing business in Malaysia, so, they need to know the culture. So, it's basically, not just internationalisation of curriculum but also about learning Malaysian culture. Some students just take a few subjects and travel around Malaysia to experience the culture, meet people...RU2 also organise cultural programmes and visits like to Orang Asli villages as part of the cultural exposure.

I: What role do you play in this programme?

AHMAD: My role was in the academic aspect, curriculum but now I have passed it down to my colleagues, young lecturers. Basically I just take office only. If they need facilities or anything, I help them to source.

I: Where does the funding come from?

AHMAD: The University...urm... now there are also students who receive MARA scholarship for the undergraduate and these students join this programme right from their first year. But there's an issue. MARA only allows those who achieved CGPA 3.5 for students to be sent abroad. So sometimes, there are students who don't get to go to Germany because of this requirement while our counterparts in Germany only require 3.0.

I: Oh...German universities on require 3.0 but the sponsor requires 3.5?

AHMAD: Yes, so some students didn't get to go. I don't know why but this need to be looked into.

I: Is there a possibility that is because there are too many students...
AHMAD: According to them, it's not that important. As long as they follow the curriculum, the do the subjects and so on, they fulfil the academic requirements there. We also do interviews...(pause) (Pointing to the list) Others are research collaboration such as NICT Japan. These are projects with research grants from international bodies. This one is also with MIMOS (Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems - a Malaysian GLC for research and development in Information and Communications Technology under the Ministry of Finance). NGOs in Japan like NICT focus more on development of products. They normally support n a form of technology and they install it.

I: Right...

AHMAD: So, for this programme, the location is our research centre at LC (name of a place), and the support are in the forms of a device, installation and so on which is for the community. We want to see how the product sell on the community. This is what they do in this field and this project is still in progress.

I: What is your interpretation of internationalisation of higher education?

AHMAD: Internationalisation, basically, outside Malaysia. It's what you do with people who are not from Malaysia, that is internationalisation. Whether you want to sell your academic products to outsiders or you want to bring them to Malaysia join your programmes. That is part of collaboration, it can be academic programmes, it can be research programme, it can be culture programme, it can be anything you including bring funds from external parts, to me these are the forms of internationalisation. So, basically, activities. So, that's the meaning. At the same time, now we having ranking, part of this is you need to make sure yourself or your institution excel or be well known...means, seen by other outsiders...(long pause). Now, from my observation, the issue for Malaysian public universities is publication, citation index, impact factor, H-index and so on. Academics are measured using that. That is currently the main weakness of Malaysian public universities - publication!

I: When you said public universities' publications, does it mean the private universities publish more?

Ahmad: No...no...no... they're less, I think. The public universities now have problems achieving KPIs to maintain their rank.
The weakest aspects are international collaboration and international publication.

I: Why do you think so?

Ahmad: Personally, I don't have any problem with that. The university sets a target of three publications per year but not everybody is able to publish...achieve the target. So, I am not sure why some are not able to fulfil that or even publish. Some academics may prefer teaching but academics should be all-rounder, so you have to do both, research and teaching. I don't really have that problem because I am an all-rounder too, because I am involved in community activities, professional bodies. So, I don't really have the problem.

I: All these aspects of teaching, learning, research, publication, community service has always been part of your professional engagement?

Ahmad: Yes, it's just that lately I feel a bit lazy in applying for grant because I am retiring soon. So, I prefer to train the younger lecturers, more of contributing ideas and being part of a project team.

I: Based on your observation of early career or young academics,
what kinds of problems are they facing now when it comes to internationalisation?

Ahmad: They need guidance from the seniors. That's the most important thing. If they are just starting and doing research alone...they'll go nowhere. It's either, they need to approach the senior ones, to learn...seek for guidance, or the seniors automatically help...or the department itself that organises or creates the platform.

I: Which one will be more organic, more effective, you think?

Ahmad: I think mutual working relationship...I would prefer senior lecturers to support the junior or younger ones because ... I was one the Head of Department, you need to plan all these for your department. For example, allocation of staff for each area of studies or specialisation. As a manager you need to oversee all this, if you fail, you'll see imbalance. So, it's the role of managers, deans, heads of departments to oversee the manpower distribution. At the same time, you need to put up, for example team teaching, research teams... Now, for us in EU2, we have started attaching lecturers to research centres. Not to department anymore. Department only runs the academic programmes. So, they are attached to the centres, for example, Centre of Telecommunications. So your KPI is publication and so on.

I: Then what happened to teaching?
Ahmad: Teaching is under programme but lecturers still teach.

I: So, by having such structure, does it make it easier for the academics to move research and publication? Would it be at the expense of...
Ahmad: I think focus should be more on research and innovation because that is the weakness point. Teaching is already well established, unless you want start a new programme.
I: If academics are separated and located at research centres, how would research impact teaching and learning?
Ahmad: Research should impact teaching. It's just that in a more established university like RU2, we have enough staff and we can afford to structure our academic staff that way. They problem with some areas, they are overload because they run not only undergrads but also postgrad

taught programmes. Like my area, we our department run a coursework mode master's programme but only a handful of the teaching staff are involved. The others, not really. I have tried pushing for another new course but there's no takers. I really think teaching should be enhanced by research especially for postgraduate courses.

I: So what you're saying is, it shouldn't be at the expense of the other?

Ahmad: Yes. You know, teaching nowadays is very different from long time ago...before, 20 years back. Now, in teaching there are my things that you have to do. You need to assess, evaluate the performance of the students. PBL (Problem-based learning) and so on. So, it's no longer just giving lectures. No! For seniors like us, we have issues with PBL but we are helped by the juniors for file keeping and so on while we do the analysis but in terms of subject matter, sometimes the seniors are better at delivering the subject matter. That's why it's good to ask professors to teach first year students. You want the students to see the overview in their first year. You want to avoid spoon feeding...juniors tend to...Well, that's what I can see. What they have learnt in the first year somehow is not transferred into the fourth year.
I: And about international students? Do you teach international students?
Ahmad: I taught international students in Germany in 2003. But there are differences. In Germany, for master's programme, students attending lectures is not compulsory. They just register for exam only.

I: So who do you actually teach then?
Ahmad: (laugh) You don't really know, in the lecture hall maybe 10 people, by exam time, there're hundreds.
I: Do you find that very different?
Ahmad: It's normal, when you're understand their system but the course content mainly... Our problem is... in terms of internationalisation for master's programme ... in Germany, there's no one-year master's programme. The stick to two years.
I: Ok, but is Malaysia's one year?
Ahmad: Malaysia follows British system. Some not but mostly follow British. Like our master's programme, you can finish in... the minimum is 40 ...42 credit hours, So, you can finish in one year. That means, in a full year there're two semesters. That can be done. (pause). The difference in Germany is that, they teach many subjects, just like the master's by coursework here. Many subjects but you only sit for four papers.

I: I see...(pause) Ok, now I'd like to know if there's
any challenges in relation to internationalisation in your professional life?
Now that you're in your 32nd year of service and that you're looking at the end of your career as an academic, how has...

Ahmad: So far, I can't really see in the university...Basically what we can see if the international office is there, the faculty has a deputy dean overseeing academic and internationalisation matters, but, go to bottom...nothing. For example, who monitors internationalisation? Is it just the deputy dean or head of departments as well? Who? I cannot see that? I already, for a long time, there should be a committee for internationalisation within (emphasise) the faculty. It doesn't matter, represented by whoever, but there should be a direction on where to go.

I: Sounds like as if there's a gap?

Ahmad: Yes, there is (emphasise) gap. You hold the post but nothing is being done at the bottom. So, that' what I saw. At the top, it's a different story. All the time, what do you need... it's like,

"do we have the report? what's the figure?". That's the problem I can see. It should be more structured, I think.

I: Why do you think it should be more structured?

Ahmad: Because when you do international collaboration, it's not because of you. Some people have collaboration with an international organisation through a programme. But it cannot bring the whole university. Others can't get involved. So, you need to identify...in a faculty there are people from different areas. You need to identify, the direction of each department because you know the strength of each research areas and so on. That has not happened, I think. What happens is visitors coming and asking to collaborate with us...for example, Korea came and asked because they have funds. Then (laugh), you look for people in the faculty to do it!

I: Ad hoc?

Ahmad: Very (emphasise) ad hoc! To me, we cannot work like that. It's the same case for Germany, maybe because of the dean's initiatives to bring Germany counterparts and our people to meet together...

I: So, it sounds like that particular dean who pushed for it, right?

Ahmad: Yes...

I: What about the managerial role?

Ahmad: Managerial role? Hmmm nope. What I see is, if there's visits from foreign universities, they'll invite some academics and ask if there's an interest to collaborate. Very ad hoc manner. So, we don't know the plan and so on...it's difficult.

I: Despite all these challenges, in terms of internationalisation, you still have a lot going on over the years of your service. Is this typical of a research university academic, in RU2, for example?

Ahmad: Hmmm...no...(laughs)...no...(smiles)

I: Most academics would have been more engaged or less?

Ahmad: Maybe less. Not all are involved in internationalisation, that's I can see.

I: Is it a matter of choice then?

Ahmad: It's not the matter of choice, it's the matter...(pause) When there's collaboration, faculty will just appoint some people..."You, take care because..." Maybe before, you've studied in Germany. "So, you manage the discussion", for example. Of with Japan. Just because you've studies in Japan, you will be assigned with potential collaboration with Japanese visitors.

I: Ok, I see but can you say no?

Ahmad: (laugh) Up to the person.

I: Ah...so there's an element of personal choice whether to take it up or not.

Ahmad: But, normally people would take because nowadays for promotion, you have to have post. Young lecturers who have not held any post, will not be considered for promotion. That's part of the requirement. So, at departmental level, the management plans accordingly.

I: So, internationalisation comes with posts?

Ahmad: No. What I mean, at faculty level, what they have, "You're the coordinator for this project between RU2 and this Japanese university", for example. So, the coordinator ship.

I: Right! So, that is the post you were talking about.

Ahmad: Yes, that's a post. And some have got some money, some don't, so, it depends. That means, coordinators of such internationalisation programme, is not really an exclusive programme, basically. It's more of coordinating the activity. Some costs are borne by the partnering institution which sometimes cover travelling expenses. The activities...urm , sometimes summer school. So coordinators plan and organise the programme. Near the time of the event, it will be announced at the department and those who are interested can join in. It's just like that. It means, not everybody is involved.

I: Right...mainly by choice.

Ahmad: Yes.

I: Has there been instances of those who were interested didn't get to join?

Ahmad: Academics have to create the opportunity. If you have link with other universities...it should be via the management or if you know an expert ...or a professor, you should bring back and link to the department. For example, with Turkey, bring the faculty and the link together for a discussion, with the committee of internationalisation and so on...but not person-to-person.

I: Yes...ok, I see.

Ahmad: But now, what I see is there are a lot of person-to-person kind of contact. It can start with that but...for example, the VC (vice chancellor) maybe had a visit to somewhere and came back with a list of potential collaboration…

I: Is there any project that you're involved in that started with a personal contact or with somebody that you meet casually at a conference, for instance?

Ahmad: I tend to make contact with my ex-students mainly postgrads. There's one project an Indonesian university started from a contact who's our alumni, my former student. So, I was invited to help develop their curriculum, to teach and so on. So, it becomes academic relation. Alumni is important. One area in internationalisation that you should develop is alumni relations. When they go back to their home country, some of them are in higher education. For example, one of my ex-student from Iraq, he received grants from RU2 and now he's planning to do his post-doc but self-funded.

I: Instead of getting funding from RU2?

Ahmad: Yes...We have good relationship that ... he's now like a friend. He has many times invited me to go to Iraq (smiles). Then, there's also student mobility, and when people start to know

you from your international alumni, sometimes you get invited to be external examiners for PhD students.

I: So, if you're invited to a foreign country for that purpose, you'll go?

Ahmad: Yes, if it's near. I've been to Indonesia for that purpose. Sometime we also invite counterparts from overseas to review our curriculum, or benchmark which is part of international collaboration.
I: It's interesting that the way your experience in internationalisation form what you feel about internationalisation...

Ahmad: But my engagement in internationalisation is mainly...more through professional bodies, more than academic activities... through professional bodies, like IEEE.
Do you know about IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)?

I: Oh...yes, I do.

Ahmad: I was once the Chair of IEEE, Malaysia. So, basically, I met a lot of people through IEEE in conferences, activities and so on. That's something that can be established through internationalisation as well.

I: Has there been any challenges in internationalisation?

Ahmad: (Referring to the list) There's conference organisation, sometimes this activity is parked at departmental level.

I: Where's Abdussalam, Prof.?

Ahmad: Italy. They gave us some grant. It's just in Malaysian public universities, the number of students is not counted as part of your achievement in terms of grant to you. What counts are still the amount of research grants only.

I: Even though the students are funded, with scholarship from external sponsors?

Ahmad: Yes. If I have 30 PhD students, it's nothing. It's just my workload, on my time. I think in my faculty, I have the most number of students. (laugh)

I: Does that affect lecturers' decisions in internationalisation engagement?
For example, would they supervise more international students or go for international research grants?

Ahmad: It depends. But you have to start somewhere. I can't see if Malaysian public universities can be very successful at international collaboration with foreign business companies. It's very difficult. That means, if you expect, let's say Motorola to fund your research project. Hmm...almost impossible. It has not been very motivating with even local industries. So, international industries, hmmm...very challenging. Not like here (in UK), You have the European grant, the industry is there, university is there and so on.

I: Do you think how academics working hours and scope of duties are managed has any relation to this?

Ahmad: I've never counted my working hours (laugh)...Yes, I know there are prescribed working hours for most public universities in Malaysia. Like you have to clock in at 8.30 am and clock out at any time as long as you fulfil 40 hours for the week. I just feel if universities are too strict on that, then, it's a problem.

I: The reason I asked is just now you mentioned that the 30 students that you supervise are not counted towards your contribution to international grant.

Ahmad: If you have so many students, how can you publish? Some publications need money, so, where do get the fund? Academics have to do everything! (emphasis). Look for grants, pay for publications, what do universities do then? They used to give per PhD student, you get RM3000. Once only. Now stop. Now, it's even worse. We've got no money.

I: Does it make lecturers more selective and calculative in taking doctoral students?

Ahmad: I don't really mind. I like to do research and supervising PhDs is part of it. But there are those who prefer not to take international students. There are some female lecturers who refuse to supervise male students from Arab countries.

I: Why, Prof?

Ahmad: Bad experience (laugh). Cultural differences. getting into argument...
I've had a few of them who were problematic and transferred to me. I'm ok but they (the female lecturers) cannot handle them (the male students).

I: Does it mean that there's less problem with local students?

Ahmad: Malaysian students have a different set of problem. They can't focus on their study especially those academic staff from other universities coming to do their PhD and after three years they have to go back to work. Then, lost everything, not focused basically.

I: So different kind of problem with international students?

Ahmad: That will require a long day to talk about that. I have worked with 69 PhD students.
I: What about the impact of internationalisation to your academic career?

Ahmad: To me I learned a lot. For example, the culture of the students. Some Arabs and Iranian students, initially some would give you the impression that they are disrespectful and don't think highly of Malaysian academics. But you have to be strict. To me, it's fine that you're rich but when you're my student, you're working under me. At the end if you want to get your PhD, so you must follow the rules. You need to be firm. To socialise, I have no problem with that. You can come talk to me, see me anytime and so on. Relationship wise, I don't really put much barrier. But when it comes to academic matters, you have to follow, you have to obey, you have to be serious. "Are you here to study or work, make money?" I always say to my students, "If you want to work, then work, don't study because you won't be able to finish your study." The thing is we don't really have a strict deadline for PhDs. Like here, it's four years, right? In Malaysia, it can take as long as 18 semesters. So, the solution is to have strict regulations on this.
I: What about the support that you have received in internationalisation as an academic?

Ahmad: Not really. I have to work on my own, learn from experience, find your strength and build from there. I see less support from the University. To have better internationalisation,

alumni is the best strategy. That means, when international student come, first thing is the facilities and infrastructure. We can't compare to UK. In Malaysia, it depends on the supervisor, if there's no grant, you can't even get a workstation (laugh). That's bad. You need to be able to provide the basics to attract students to come. When you advertise, show them, this is the room, facilities that you have for the next three years. Something like that.

I: Oh...(surprise). If a new student comes, if they don't have labs, they have nowhere to work?

Ahmad: If the supervisor is a new lecturer, no lab, no grants. So the department has to take charge since they are the one who recruit students. They need to provide. If there're a thousand students but there are only 200 tables, how? That is bad. You want more students but you don't provide the facilities. That is one of the problems that I see. So, for me, I have fund, I will provide partition and buy PC before my students come. When the new students come, the place is ready.

I: Oh, really? To that extent? And that's academics' initiative? I thought it should be the department's?

Ahmad: Academics' initiative! (emphasises) It's not like over here. New students who just registered, there are space for PhD students. No...not in Malaysia. Everything has to be done by the lecturers. That's why sometime young lecturers find it difficult to survive. They need to find, apply for grants, they need to do everything on their own, they need to teach, research...everything.

I: So this is the missing support that you mentioned just now. It's not directly for internationalisation, more for the core responsibilities of academics.

Ahmad: Yes, it all these burden can be taken away from lecturers, they can focus more on their job, academic stuff. You know, things like working space, it shouldn't be on academics. Those people should know, when they recruit students...let's say, this year, this semester, they get 30 students, they should plan where will these 30 students be placed? All these should be automatic, shouldn't bother the academics with things like this. I always have to fight for this, "You give me 40 students, where are their working space?". At lease provide a common room. So...this contradicts...if we want to excel in internationalisation, when people come...especially the Arabs, when they look at out place, they're shocked. They have high expectations about physical facilities, this you need to provide. High class. Sometimes international students because they want to get the expertise. That also we need to develop. So, to create expertise in certain areas, academics perhaps needs exposure, training support too. It's not easy for lecturers who just got their PhD...just started their academic career in 2 to 3 years to get students. So, what I normally do, is I take students and invite a junior lecturer for co-supervision. That's what I do, to help the young lecturers to experience the system but not everybody does that.

I: So, this goes back to what you said just now about the senior academics supporting the juniors?

Ahmad: Yes, I think it needs to be done as they are going to take over from me. So, I need to train them...But, well, not every junior ones like this. Some are not interested. Some are willing to learn from us. And there are also professors who don't do it this way, they said "You need to do it yourself, during my time, I had to figure it out myself." (laugh) So, it depends on the individuals.

I: Why do you this, Prof.?

Ahmad: My motivation is that, if you can help people, disseminate all your knowledge to other people, then I am happy! (laugh). That's my job satisfaction. I try to help as much as possible, but you have to do your work... And there's also things that you just have to...such as work extra hours, forego you claims, fork out from your own pocket for students to buy toner...no problem with me. Sometimes students tell me they don't have money to present in conference, the fee. Well, ok, from your pocket, "Take this and go conference". I am not too bothered by these. And students appreciate these gestures. It's difficult because the University has very limited fund.

I: Do you think funding is the key factor?

Ahmad: I heard it's different here (UK). It's easier for students here to go to conferences. In Malaysia, it's hard because PhD students are required to present and publish. Now it's two journal articles. It used to be two conference presentations and two journal publications. This require supervisors to help students to get funding. There is no pool of money for students to use for these purposes. They demand Q1, the fees is Euro1000! Where do we get money from? So, this is a challenge.

I: Is there anymore challenge that you observe in internationalisation?

Ahmad: Another challenge in internationalisation is bridging the administrators and the academics. I don't see it happening. We have admin post that should support academics, researchers but I still couldn't see their contribution in assisting us with these technical things. They should, not us! By right, compilation for research grant submission and so on, they should do it but everything from A to Z, lecturers, researchers have to do themselves. Some would give up, they couldn't be bothered, too clerical. So, I mean, basically, to become academics...professors, you have to be a superman. (laugh).

I: (laugh) Ok, Prof. It's almost an hour already, as promised. Thanks so much for your time and for the interview.

Appendix VI: Facebook-based Focus Group Questions/Prompts/Posts

1. In what ways do academics engage in IoHE?
2. What are their rationales for engaging in internationalisation of higher education?
3. How should academics be supported in the internationalisation of higher education from their own perspective?
4. How does their engagement in IoHE impact on the academics?

Activity:	Theme:	Questions/Prompts & RQ it addresses
A1	Introduction (9 - 20 Oct)	About the group, reminder on confidentiality and house rules. Welcome messages as each member joined.
A2	Challenges in internationalisation of research (15 Oct)	Video on impact factor and nobel prize winners' opinion + During the interviews, journal publication was mentioned quite a lot when talking about academics' engagement in internationalisation. I wonder what your thoughts on this video by Nobel Prize are. **(RQ1/2/3/4)**
A3	Policy in practice (23 Oct)	Translation: May I know if there is an institutional policy document on internationalisation? May I know how you use the document, in what situation and for what purpose? **(RQ1)** + What do you think about the policy documents at your universities? How does it affect your work? **(RQ4)**
A4	Internationalisation policy impact on academic (30 Oct)	Based on the interviews, many said that some subjects naturally have international elements. Is this the case with your subject/discipline? **(RQ1/2)**
A5	IoHE of teaching and learning (14 & 25 Nov)	What are the international elements of the teaching and learning at your university? What about in terms of curriculum and pedagogy? **(RQ1)**
		What are the rationales of having an intercultural course a core subject and international elements part of the curriculum content? **(RQ2)**
A6	Follow up questions	
A7	Support for IoHE (4 Dec)	What would be the most valuable support that you have received so far for your international engagement in your professional life, and why do you think it is important? **(RQ3)**
		Translation: It seems that funding is the much needed support for academics and everybody seemd to agree that funding is an important driver of internationalisation. What about other forms of support? **(RQ3)**

A8	Impact of internationalisation on academics' professional domain (19 Dec)	I'm interested to know more about the impact that these international activities and commitments have on your professional lives. Feel free to share how internationalisation has affected or changed you as an academic over the years of your service at the public universities. **(RQ4)**
A9	Wrapping up/Debriefing (30 Dec)	I would really appreciate if you could be kind enough to share your views on my previous posts or respond to comments made by others for the past twelve weeks. It is a discussion after all, so, it will be interesting to see if there are any consensus or disagreement on how academics in Malaysian public universities experience internationalisation. The group will remain open to all of us until 7th January 2018.

Appendix VII: Facebook-based Focus Group Data

Samples of Print Screens of the Facebook-Based Focus Group Interactions

19 September 2016: Creation of the secret group for piloting purpose

11 October 2017 updating of the group photo

11 October 2017: Post A1 - Inviting group members and giving introduction about the focus group

The Internationalisation Café

The Internationalisation Café

🔒 Secret group

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👥 Halatuju TVET Malay... 8

👥 Masak Apa Hari Ni.... 20+

🏠 Malaysian Student... 20+

🖼 USIM sell and buy 20+

Eily Jalil
11 October 2017

Assalamualaikum. Welcome to The Internationalisation Café. 😃

Thanks so much for your support for my research project. This FB group is all about your thoughts and experience on the internationalisation of higher education in relation to academic profession. English is mainly used for admin purposes but feel free to post or comment in either English or Bahasa Melayu as all members are comfortable in both languages.

As members of the group, each one of us can post, comment on posts, respond in other ways such as using emoticons, stickers and GIF. All members and posts will be treated with mutual respect. While it is fine to disagree and have diverse opinions, ideas and experience, please avoid using offensive language or cursing. Posting graphic or disturbing photos, videos and other media in this group should also be avoided. If you are not sure about the content that you want to post, feel free to privately send a message to me through FB Messenger or my email (sajalil1@sheffield.ac.uk)

The group will run for 12 weeks and throughout this period, I will be posting questions or materials. I would really appreciate if you could contribute to our discussions. You are most welcomed to start your own posts around internationalisation too. This space is aimed at providing a relaxing platform for us to discuss anything related to internationalisation and your life as academics.

This group is set as secret which means only the members will be able to see the name of the group, the members and all the posts as well as responses. Please keep it this way by not tagging non-members to the posts in this group or by sharing any information about the group and our discussion with non-members. I hope to keep it confidential as I have promised in the consent form and I will need your support to do it. Thanks so much for this.

English is mainly used for admin purposes but feel free to post or comment in either English or Bahasa Melayu as all members are comfortable with both languages.

Thanks again for your support and may Allah bless you. I look forward to chatting with all of you. 😊

👍 Like   💬 Comment

❤

👤 **Eily Jalil** Saya dah mulakan post berkenaan penulisan jurnal antarabangsa, mohon maklumbalas semua. Terima kasih banyak...

Like · Reply · 33w

15 October 2017: Post A2 - on international engagement in research (publication in international journals)

313,718 Views

Nobel Prize
21 July 2017

"The research counts, not the journal!" Nobel Laureates speak out against impact factors

👍 Like   💬 Comment

Eily Jalil Do you face any issues in choosing which journal to publish in? How does impact factor affect your research and publication activity?

Like · Reply · 36w

15 October 2017: Responses to Post A2 - on international engagement in research (publication in international journals)

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🌐 SMSA (Sheffield Malay...

Eily Jalil Do you face any issues in choosing which journal to publish in? How does impact factor affect your research and publication activity?

Like · Reply · 36w

...ar Issues aplenty! To be honest it's no longer about sharing knowledge more like whoever has the money can go for all these impact factor hullabaloo! Quality is not the in thing anymore unfortunately 🙄🙄🙄

Like · Reply · 36w

Eily Jalil Do you mean, in ▮▮▮ academics have to get the funding to publish out of their research grants or their own pocket? Universiti Awam (UA) yang lain pun sama ya?

Like · Reply · 36w · Edited

Eily Jalil Di UA, bagaimana ahli akademik dinilai berkenaan penerbitan antarabangsa? Ada ke yang macam di dalam video ni, dikira kuantitinya?

Like · Reply · 36w

...ar Basically if we have our own grants it wouldn't be so bad. Unfortunately we don't have a lot. We are asked to publish a few and sometimes at our own costs.

Like · Reply · 36w

Eily Jalil 🔘 N▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ That's tough, isn't it? So, if funding is an issue, how do you make decisions about where to publish?

Like · Reply · 36w

...▮ Well at the moment my publication is non existent 😄😄😄

Like · Reply · 36w

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10 November 2017: Reminding group members to respond to Post A3

Eily Jalil Thanks so much, everybody. Amazing to see these are happening in a big way at your universities. Nampaknya dalam P&P, pengantarabangsaan berlaku secara dua hala, ada pelajar UA yang keluar dan pelajar antarabangsa yang masuk. Ada jugak aktiviti untuk ahli universiti yang bukan warganegara.

Like · Reply · 32w · Edited

Eily Jalil What about in terms of curriculum and pedagogy? Based on the interviews, many said that some subjects naturally have international elements. Is this the case with your subject/discipline? Thanks again for your feedback. 🙂

Like · Reply · 32w

boleh saya tahu kalau ada unsur-unsur antarabangsa yang Dr masukkan dalam kurikulum kursus-kursus yang diajar oleh Dr? Apakah rasionalnya jika ada atau tiada? Terima kasih 😊

Like · Reply · 27w

Eily Jalil as said below; ada. But moreover Engineering students are accrditated (betui ka spelling ni) by Washington Accord (boleh google ni) through an Outcome Based Education.

- The Washington Accord is an international accreditation agreement for professional engineering academic degrees, between the bodies responsible for accreditation in its signatory countries.

So we have ALL OUR FILINGS and teaching style done accordingly - ada guide and rules. But must say; through these guide & rules teaching activity becomes more structured. There are also system developed which must say create more organized teaching style - semua serupa across lecturer (mudah juga nk wat assessment aprisal kan).

Note that most engineering teachers never been to teaching school. But through the paksaan by the WA, most will learn how to be proper teacher- bloom taxanomy, exams questions, course outcome, programme outcome, psychology budak2, leadership skills, psychomoto skills bagai. All in all not bad.

Like · Reply · 26w · Edited

Eily Jalil Thanks, Dr ! This is amazing info! Will definitely look up WA.

Like · Reply · 26w

Write a reply...

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Continuation of responses to Post A4 – Internationalisation in teaching and learning

Ours we have Intercultural communication as a core subject and International relation & international business communication

Like · Reply · 32w 👍 1

Eily Jalil █████ why is this course made a core subject and what are the rationales for including these two others as part of the university curriculum? Thanks 😊

Like · Reply · 27w · Edited

████████████ To be honest darling. I was on study leave when this was decided. I think they thoufht it would be useful for d students to understand other cultures because the target market for employment are the international companies.

Like · Reply · 27w · Edited 👍 1

Eily Jalil Thanks, █████ I think in most cases, that is the reason why intercultural and international-oriented courses are introduced.

Like · Reply · 26w ❤ 1

████████████ Plus, most of our stds would go off for mobility projects, internship n exchange programs abroad. That's why they need these kind of courses to help them adapt

Like · Reply · 26w

Eily Jalil Yes, it is a very practical way of supporting students in terms of internationalisation.

Like · Reply · 26w

Write a reply...

Continuation of responses to Post A4 – Internationalisation in teaching and learning

Eily Jalil Yes, it is a very practical way of supporting students in terms of internationalisation.

Like · Reply · 26w

Write a reply...

P&P? With engineering you just cannot not go international. Invention & engineering activities are global. However, the lecturers need to be sensitive/peka/rela on whats going on; read more, network more, find out more. Information mudah sekarang but it is hard to synthesise. So banyak masa click2 baca website of international companies to see what new they do. Daunting & penat but worth the effort.

What new will then be shown to the students so they know. This will be done by constant revision on lecture materials to make sure technology thought would not be 100 years old but rather new.

Like · Reply · 26w

Eily Jalil Thanks, D█████████n. It is very interesting to know that even in engineering, as you said is naturally global, internationalisation through P&P still needs proper planning, thoughts and implementation by lecturers. Great insights, thanks!

Like · Reply · 26w

Write a comment...

19 December 2018: Post A6 – Impact of their engagement of internationalisation on their professional lives

Eily Jalil
19 December 2017

I'm interested to know more about the impact that these international activities and commitments have on your professional lives? Feel free to share how internationalisation has affected or changed you as an academic over the years of your service at the public universities. Thanks so much for your feedback. 😊

👍 Like   💬 Comment

❤️ Nor Zainiyah Mokhtar

⊘ N▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ r Working in [▓▓] i have always been in an international environment. Intercultural competence is an imperative skill to mingle and get to know my international counterparts.

Like · Reply · 27w   👍 1

Eily Jalil Thanks, Nor. Interesting! How does developing intercultural comepetence affect your work, then? When does it come in handy, for research, T&L or anything more specific? What about others? Do you feel the same way?

Like · Reply · 27w

▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ At the moment there aren't that many in our faculty. But b4 this when i was in celpad it helped a lot. Especially in teaching. in research i'm still working on it. There's still a lot to learn 🤣🤣🤣

Like · Reply · 27w   👍 1

Eily Jalil Of course, and it's humbling to know that even a very experienced academic like you feels that interculturality seems to be a life-long learning point.

Like · Reply · 26w

Write a reply...   😊 📷 GIF 😀

▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ n Internationalization means you go international; networking with people of the same field and to be known among those in the field. Exist within the large research community. Tak jadi katak bawah tempurung only rasa hebat di kampung.

Once you are recognized then you may be able to harvest the advantages: 1. Some become collobrators - international/national grants applied - sharing facilities become possible, 2. Some can help you ease in the difficulties of getting ur work published -

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Continuation of responses to Post A6 – Impact of their engagement of internationalisation on their professional lives

Internationalisation Café

seems to be a life-long learning point.

Like · Reply · 26w

Write a reply...

Internationalization means you go international; networking with people of the same field and to be known among those in the field. Exist within the large research community. Tak jadi katak bawah tempurung only rasa hebat di kampung.

Once you are recognized then you may be able to harvest the advantages: 1. Some become collobrators - international/national grants applied - sharing facilities become possible, 2. Some can help you ease in the difficulties of getting ur work published - become reviewers/they are the editors/co publish/share data etc, 3. Some introduce you to more people of the same interest - u then expand & learn from each other.

Needless to say, you then become more confident with your research. And you can benchmark your own research work. As said; tak lah rasa jaguh sendiri2.

Like · Reply · 26w

Eily Jalil Thanks, Dr████████████It seems to me that the KPIs for academics in terms of research productivity set by universities and MoHE could be achieved through internationalisation activities in research.

Like · Reply · 26w

Internationalization means networking...no need to go abroad as long as you can communicate reach and disseminate knowledge to international counterpart locally or internationally

Like · Reply · 25w

Eily Jalil Thanks, Dr████████████ It seems that from your and Dr ████████████'s responses about internationalisation, geographical border and physical mobility may not be the only way to make internationalisation happens. As long as there are working, academic and knowledge-based collaborations and communication among scholars from different parts of the world, that is already a form of internationalisation. A feasible and sustainable one, I'd think. Thanks so much 😊

Like · Reply · 25w

Network.....not just to colleagues from international partners but also with international students....and the ukhuwwah lasts 😍😍

Like · Reply · 24w

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8 January 2018: Announcing the closing of the focus group, thanking them for their support throughout the whole research, the process of uninviting the members and Facebook friend status

Appendix VIII: Mapping of research questions, categories and codes

The Engagement of Academics in the Internationalisation of Higher Education at

Malaysian Public Universities

Mapping of research questions, main categories (aspects) and NVivo codes

Research question	Main category/aspect	Parent and child codes

RQ1: In what ways do academics engage in internationalisation?	Conceptualisation	8) International partnership
		   a) HE institution
		   b) Industry
		   c) Other kinds of organisation
		9) International presence/visibility
		   a) University ranking
		   b) Academic's reputation
		10) Foreign elements
		   a) Curriculum content
		   b) Students
		   c) Staff
		   d) Academic programme
		   e) Medium of instruction
		11) International guidelines
		   a) Disciplinary-related professional guidelines
		   b) International recognition/qualification
		12) Intercultural understanding/Universal
		13) Trading/sharing of academic products/services
		14) International networking

	Forms of engagement	11) Academic exchange
		12) Academic programmes
		13) Curriculum
		14) Student mobility programmes
		15) Research
		   a. Conference organising
		   b. Collaboration
		16) Teaching & Learning
		17) Leadership roles
		   a. Mentoring
		   b. Managerial roles
		18) Training
		19) Networking
		20) Professional bodies

RQ2: What are their rationales in internationalisation?	Rationales for engagement in internationalisation	13) Career development 14) Disciplinarity 15) For the community/humanity 16) Funding 17) Interculturalism 18) International student recruitment 19) Knowledge development

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		20) Personal traits 21) For improving quality 22) For quality assurance measures 23) Ranking 24) Students' interest

RQ3: What support do academics want in their engagement with the internationalisation of higher education?	Forms of support received/required by academics	1) Expertise
		  a) discipline-specific
		2) Funding
		  a) Research grants
		  b) Institutional budget
		3) Facilities/infrastructure
		  a) Equipment
		  b) Space
		  c) technology
		4) Information
		  a) on opportunities for internationalisation
		5) Intercultural competencies training
		6) Teaching-learning training
		  a) Curriculum
		  b) International student
		7) Networking
		8) Leadership
		  a) Mentoring
		  b) academic freedom/autonomy
		  c) academic governance

	Drivers	1) Funding 2) Intercultural competence 3) International mind set 4) Performance indicator 5) Leadership 6) Passion 7) Student marketability
	Challenges	1) Leadership/governance/management issues 2) Poor planning 3) Research and innovation challenges 4) Resistance to the West 5) Lack of funding and facilities 6) Cultural differences 7) International publication challenges 8) Lack of response 9) Personal commitment 10) Overemphasis on ranking 11) Administrative red tape 12) Difference in HE systems 13) Student issues 14) Excessive workload
RQ4: How does internationalisation	Impact	1) Personal gains a) Academic confidence

engagement impact on academics?		b) International outlook
		2) KPI
		3) Professional development
		4) Roles & responsibility
		5) Practice
		   a) Pedagogy
		   b) Curriculum
		6) Confidence
		7) Professional reputation
		8) Career trajectory
		   a) Research
		   b) Engagement with industry

Appendix IX: Samples of Facebook-based Focus Group Data Coding

Focus group data (FB secret group "Internationalisation Café")

Category: Meaning (How academics understand internationalisation)

Networking/International reputation/bench mark

> **Zaza (RU1)** Internationalization means you go international; networking with people of the same field and to be known among those in the field. Exist within the large research community. Not just being the champion locally. (the academia persona)

> Laila (FU2) Internationalization means networking...no need to go abroad as long as you can communicate, reach and disseminate knowledge to international counterpart locally or internationally (physical and virtual?)

> Safa (FU1) Network...not just to colleagues from international partners but also with international students...and the relationship lasts 😍😍(inclusive of students)

> Ref: 19 December 2017: Responses to the Post A6 – Impact of internationalisation

Category: Forms of engagement

Internationalisation of teaching and learning
Inbound/outbound mobility programme as part of students' academic activities:
The accounts stated here by the participants were mainly institutionally administered internationalisation activities for students, which are organised by either academic departments or student services. Academics are normally given various roles in activities like these, such as coordinators, advisors and invited speakers.

(Translation)

> **Safa (FU1)** Academic Mobility - Exchange student programs, summer school (inbound and outbound). An off-shore campus in a South Asian country. (inbound and outbound mobility)

Yahya (CU1) summer school... Students from Japan , Indonesia and Korea came for a study programme in CU1 (inbound mobility)

Laila (FU2) An international outreach program by students and academic visits in universities in this region (South East Asia) and Australia too. (outbound mobility)

Yahya (CU1) CU1 also sends Malaysian students to complete/have their internship in Indonesia and Egypt. (outbound mobility)

Transnational Education (TNE)

> <u>Safa (FU1)</u> … There is a faculty in the university that is in charge of a franchise programme in Maldives.

Internationalisation of curriculum (IoC)

> <u>Zaza</u> (RU1) referring to the Washington Accord (translation): …we have ALL OUR FILINGS and teaching style done accordingly –there are guide and rules. But must say; through these guide and rules teaching activity becomes more structured…more organized teaching style – all the same across lecturer (s) (so it's easy to perform appraisal assessment, right (?)".

> *Rita (CU2)* Ours we have Intercultural communication as a core subject and International relation & international business communication… I think they thought it would be useful for the students to understand other cultures because the target market for employment are the international companies. Plus, most of our students would go off for mobility projects, internship n exchange programs abroad. That's why they need these kind of courses to help them adapt.

> *Zaza (RU1)* Teaching and learning? With engineering you just cannot not go international. Invention & engineering activities are global. However, the lecturers need to be sensitive, aware and alert on what's going on; read more, network more, find out more. Information is abundant and easily accessible but it is hard to synthesise. So, need a lot of time to click, click and read website of international companies to see what new they do. Daunting & tiring but worth the effort. What new will then be shown to the students so they know. This will be done by constant revision on lecture materials to make sure technology taught would not be 100 years old but rather new.

> <u>Lin (CU1)</u> We have 1. cross cultural pragmatic in a bachelor degree programme, 2. Contrastive Studies of Malay and English....

Ref: 14 November 2017: Responses to the Post A4 – Internationalisation in teaching and learning

Poor/Lack/Non-engagement in internationalisation

International academic publication – shortage of funding posed a challenge for academics to internationalise their research through publication in international journal.

> <u>**Eily Jalil**</u>: <u>Rita,</u> That's tough, isn't it? So, if funding is an issue, how do you make decisions about where to publish?

> Rita: Well at the moment, my publication is non-existent 😅😅😅.

Ref: 15 October 2017: Responses to the post "Don't waste time with high-impact journals" by Nobel Prize (21 July 2017)