

**Education Mobility as a Driving Force for the Coexistence, Development and  
Sustainability of Islamic Higher Education Institutions:  
The International Islamic University Malaysia's Perspective**

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**Abstract**

Global Prominence (eighth shift), comprising internationalization and education mobility, is considered as one of the supreme key result areas (KRAs) in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 goals. This paper focuses on and discusses Education Mobility as one of the KRAs that will generate a driving force for the coexistence, development and sustainability for higher education institutions in 2020s from an academic perspective. The discussion starts with the introduction of several education management related theories such as educational strategic management theories, education internationalization theories, education mobility theories, education development theories and higher education institutions sustainability theories. Next, the paper introduces and discusses the application of those theories in International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) long term strategic planning. The paper ends with suggestions and recommendations for improvement of IIUM's strategic planning effective implementation.

**Keywords:** Global Prominence, Internationalization, Education Mobility, Strategic Management & International Islamic University Malaysia.

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# Education Mobility as a Driving Force for the Coexistence, Development and Sustainability of Islamic Higher Education Institutions: The International Islamic University Malaysia's Perspective

## Introduction

The Coexistence, Development and Sustainability of Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (SMHEI) is believed to be partly contributed by quality management initiatives such as quality assurance system, long term strategic planning and balanced scorecard are implemented among public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This is due to the government initiative to ensure the quality delivery of every public Malaysian HEIs (Asim, 2001). These initiatives actually contributed to the growing number of local and foreign students as witnessed today in Malaysian HEIs. The former Minister of Malaysian Higher Education, YB. Mohamed Khaled Nordin (2010) asserts that "Malaysia is making efforts towards becoming an educational hub of Asia" (p.5). Therefore, that is why, sustainability needs to be achieved; strategies need to be effectively executed by initiating quality management as policy among higher educational community, so that this initiative can successfully help the HEIs facing future challenges in fulfilling highly quality demand on global education and keeping the promise of the Malaysian education policy of securing 100,000 foreign students by the year 2020s. Hence, this the reason why Malaysian HEIs' academic programmes need to be improved to entice more international and local students for them to benefits from Malaysian higher education system. Moreover, the coexistence and sustainability of higher

education institution perhaps needs more attention to ensure the university communities achieve a well-deserved future.

Literature has revealed that coexistence, development and sustainability is a challenge to HEIs administrators as it requires collaborative effort in retaining the institution's pride, staff effectiveness and efficiency in maintaining global standards (Wright, 2010). Sustainability enhances in the provision of good quality and standard educational services that meet customers' expectation and societal needs. Nevertheless, the sustainability of HEIs dominate in the literature with common findings that indicate organizational quality management leaders lack giving support towards the coexistence, development and sustainability achievement in HEIs. On the other hand, sustainability is required in HEIs to ensure its relevance and be a continuous process in HEIs. Sustainability is a general concept that sets the goal for university management and academicians in the educational industry to be the best providers of sustainable future for customers (students) and stakeholders of HEIs. Definitely sustainability is closely related to quality management due to it quality imperatives in the organizational climate of HEIs. Coexistence and sustainability is a global phenomenon that enhances quality achievement and retains the organization climate feature of HEIs.

Sustainability is described as living

and working in ways that do not jeopardize the future of social, economic and natural resources of the society (Sadler, 2003). In this regard, educational institutions are tested on what a “sustainable” university might look like by gaining awareness about sustainability and integration into HEIs (Moore, 2005). Undoubtedly, sustainability has become a prime concept required in the organizational climate of any university. This is because the management of HEIs are expected to assure quality in services and plan for quality performance (Nur Anisah, 2012). They can retain the present and future quality of HEIs. Organizational climate research has found that educational leaders are committed enormously in managing institution communities. With that fact, administrators are vastly successful in managing individual resistance towards the achievement of quality in services for customer satisfaction (Erwin & Garman, 2010). Studies have also identified significant long term strategic planning commonly used by HEI administrators for improvement rather than short term planning for the survival of HEIs (Abd Rahman Ahmad et. al., 2012; Nur Anisah, 2012; Zainal Abidin et. al., 2010).

In regards to this, it could be claimed that sustainability which lead to coexistence is one of the concepts available especially in the premises of higher citadel of learning

where standard and quality are required. However, the majority of HEI leaders are now engaging in SHEIs through the notion of quality management initiative which seems is adopted from the business sector for the achievement of sustainable future in HEIs (Rumane, 2011). It is believed that SHEIs could be achieved through quality management initiatives and quality effectiveness in organizational climate for SMHEIs.

#### **Comprehending Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025**

Malaysian education journey started well before this young nation gained her independence from the British in 1957. Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (MEB 2015-2025) for higher education is in fact a continuity of Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 for lower or school education. The main goals are to successfully achieve Stakeholder Outcomes (consists of students' aspiration) and Enablers to improve outcomes (System Aspirations). To achieve these systems and student aspirations, the MEB 2015-2025 outlines 10 Shifts that are expected to stimulate prolonged excellence in the higher education system. All 10 Shifts address the key performance issues in the system, particularly with regard to quality and efficiency, as well as global trends that are disrupting the higher education landscape.



Source: Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025.

Figure 1: Ten Shifts as Strategies in Achieving Students' and System Aspirations.

As exhibited in Figure 1, the first four shifts focus solely on outcomes for key stakeholders in the higher education system, including students in academic and TVET pathways, the academic community, as well as all Malaysians participating in lifelong learning. The other six shifts focus on enablers for the higher education ecosystem, covering critical components such as funding, governance, innovation, internationalisation, online learning, and delivery. Therefore it is the aim of this paper to discuss the education mobility (as comprised in Shift 8: Global Prominence) as the grand strategy for HEIs coexistence and sustainability in 2020s particularly from academic perspective.

### Revisiting the Educational Management and Leadership Theories related to HEIs.

#### *General Concepts of Educational Leadership.*

Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard first introduced '**situational leadership**' sometime in 1967. This leadership style is characterized by the ability of the leaders to adjust effective leadership style with the maturity level of his subordinates and the ability to address both hierarchical and collegial relationships (Hoy & Miskel, 1991). Situational leadership does not deal with the personality, but rather with the behaviour of the individuals or the groups whom are serving in HEIs.

Besides that, James McGregor Burns had proposed **transformational leadership** in 1978. Ten years later, Hackman and Johnson (1991) identified five personal qualities that transformational leaders should possess such as creativity, interactive, vision, empowerment, and passion. According to Blanchard and Peale (1988), one significant personality trait omitted by Hackman and Johnson (1991) is that of a high ethical standard. They go on to say that ethics must be present in the decision-making process. A transformational leader is committed to responding ethically to various situations. Thus, transformational leadership model emphasizes participative decision-making. This type of leader is people-oriented rather than task- and performance-oriented, provides the opportunity for empowerment, and emphasizes on collegiality which is pertinent in larger educational institutions such as HEIs.

Based on Greenleaf's vision, **servant leadership** theory states that a person can be both a leader and a servant. This model of leadership emphasizes that leadership can be understood in terms of the development of consciousness and value and that leadership styles cannot be separated from followership styles. Hall and Thompson (1980) had describe seven levels of leadership-followership style such as Level 1: The alienated person, Level 2: The preservative person, Level 3: The organization person, Level 4: The Communal

Person, Level 5: The Independent Person, Level 6: The Creator Person, and Level 7: The Person as Prophet. The higher the level, the more effective the leader becomes. The HEIs particularly in Malaysia are also operated based on the above management and leadership aspects in their journey for future sustainability (Abass, 2016 & Inas, 2016) and coexistence.

#### *Educational Strategic Leadership in Higher Education Revisited.*

Research in the field of strategic leadership naturally progresses towards tabulating strategic leader competencies. Cheng (2000) defines "strategic leadership as determining where an organization was heading and how to get there". The process includes strategic and 'long-range' planning. Boal and Hooijberg (2000) list three factors of a strategic leader in their view relating to the essence of strategic leadership. Bolt (1996) focuses more on the leader and less on the environment. According to him, there are three dimensions of a leader: business, leadership, and personal effectiveness. The business aspect focuses on executive development including creating new forms of organizations, leading change and directing the organization.

Covey (1996) states that strategic leaders have three primary functions: path finding, aligning and empowering. Path finding compromises the process of aligning the organization's value with the company's

vision and mission. Aligning involves the process of ensuring the organizational structure, systems and operational procedures in-line with the organization's mission and vision. Quong and Walker (2010) emphasize seven principles a strategic leader should have Future-oriented and have future strategy (Davies & Ellison, 2003), Evidence-based and research (Groundwater-Smith, 2000), Get things done (Robinson, 2007; Elmore, 2002), (4) Open new horizons (5) Fit to lead (Elmore, 2002) (6) Make good partners (Robinson, 2007) and (7) Do the 'next' right thing (Ramsey, 2003). Furthermore, Davies and Davies (2003, 2004) highlight nine characteristics of a strategic leader such as Restlessness, Absorptive, Adaptive, Wisdom, Strategic orientation, Strategic translation, Strategic alignment, Strategic intervention, and Strategic competence.

Higher education institutions certainly require leaders who can facilitate a complex transformation process, not just the core activity of higher education such as teaching and learning, research and publication, but also how internalize the values and culture of interest for their future sustainability. As every HEI is focusing on its future coexistence and sustainability, we believe that these strategic leadership characteristics are pertinent for the leaders in gearing up their organization towards their future success.

*Hindrances to education mobility in higher education institutions*

Education mobility, immobility and inbreeding are considered the main issues discussed in all higher education institutions all over the world (Altbach, Yudkevich & Rumbley, 2015). As education mobility is regarded as the most preferable but, immobility and inbreeding are found to be a problematic. Whatever strategies implemented and applied, it will somehow limits the scope of hiring the best possible candidates for academic appointments– both from within the country and internationally. Immobility and inbreeding tends to entrench the existing academic culture in the institution and make change and reform even more difficult than would normally be the case.

In the 21st century, where knowledge is rapidly changing and increasingly globalized, inbreeding engenders traditionalism, which limits excellence and innovation. Inbred faculty tend to be more “local” in their orientation and they exhibit more loyalty and commitment to their university rather than reflecting a “cosmopolitan” orientation, which is typified by a greater focus on their discipline and a broader identification with the academic profession at large (Gouldner, 1957). From various studies, generally, faculty with a local orientation are less focused on research and less involved with the wider academic community. They invest more in the types of activities that are visible and rewarded within the individual university – that is, teaching and administrative duties, which

are less appreciated by the academic market. Indeed, while publications in peer-reviewed journals or a record of obtaining grants can easily be recognized on a CV and increase a professor's "value" on the academic market, teaching efforts and administrative duties are quite often "sunk costs" for those seeking to move from one institution to another ((Altbach, Yudkevich & Rumbley, 2015)

There are cases where surprising number of institutions and countries have a long tradition of academic inbreeding. Many countries lack a labor market for academic jobs, and there is no tradition of mobility. In extreme cases, those academics who seek jobs at other universities could even be considered potentially problematic individuals, that is, those who have been pushed out by their home institutions. There are also when graduate schools, as a central place for the training of future academics, play a critical role in reproducing inbreeding practices. In those systems where PhD candidates are also employed as teaching assistants in their respective departments, inbreeding is often inevitable. Up until the moment of their doctoral defense, these individuals are deeply integrated into the department in terms of sharing values and informal ties with their colleagues. In this way, they naturally gain obvious preference over external candidates seeking employment in the department.

Historical and cultural tradition is

perhaps the greatest reason for academic inbreeding – universities often feel that since their own graduates are well trained and since they understand the culture and traditions of the institution, they will therefore "fit in" to the existing academic community. By taking in their own graduates, universities minimize efforts exerted in search and recruitment processes and also minimize the risks of poor hiring decisions. They are able to select the most loyal candidates who share the basic values of the organization and research community and will work toward further preservation of these values.

Continuity and respect for the institution's "academic heritage" is considered an important virtue in these contexts. In turn, the ability of a department to keep its best faculty for years is considered a sign of academic quality. In most countries where academic inbreeding exists, it is generally not considered a problem. The practice is so commonplace and longstanding in many systems that it is frequently not "considered" at all! The inbreeding arrangement is widely accepted, and universities are perceived to work well and produce appropriate quality in teaching and research. Indeed, research in a number of countries shows that inbred faculty are not notably less productive in terms of research output than professors who are not inbred.

There are also other problems with inbreeding agenda in HEIs. As existing



knowledge shows, countries with a higher level of inbreeding produce a smaller share of the world's research output (Soler, 2001). Despite established traditions of inbreeding in a number of countries, there is a general perception in the academic community globally, when this topic is considered at all, that inbreeding is generally a negative characteristic and that world-class universities should not be inbred. Some leading universities even have put "anti-inbreeding" policies into place so that mobility could be a possibility. For example, many of the top universities in China, including Peking University, no longer hire their own graduates for academic jobs – indeed, many Chinese universities favor hiring Chinese graduates of the best Western universities. Some institutions are increasingly hiring from an international talent pool. Other countries allow universities to hire their own graduates but only after they gain some considerable international academic experience.

Policy-makers in these countries are well aware of potential negative consequences of inbreeding and believe that they are often correlated with little academic mobility. So, by assuring such an academic mobility, they try to cope with potential negative impact of limited outside experience and absence of external connections. However, the studies convinced that the best universities of the 21st century will be outward looking, internationally minded, and open to the best

academic minds from their countries and the world. However, there some exceptions as the data shows that inbreeding is more common among high-quality, elite institutions than in the system on average. They belief that their graduates are the most well prepared and find it difficult to recruit outsiders with comparable skills and potential. The faculty in top universities actively cooperate with international colleagues and are well integrated into the international academic community. In contrast, low-quality institutions in many countries demonstrate lower levels of inbreeding than average because such institutions do not often have their own PhD programs, which are usually the main source of young faculty when hired from within.

IIUM as an international university is aware about the consequences due to inbreeding practice. This university was established shortly after the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad visited United Arab Emirates in January 1982. On 23rd May, 1983, IIUM was officially established. The international academic staff population was quite a big group in the beginning. However, due to world economic turmoil and hence affecting Malaysia, the number of internationals have been slowly reduced and hence inbreeding is taking place over the education mobility. Now they realize that they have to come back with education mobility of staff for the future coexistence and sustainability of IIUM.



## Educational Management and Leadership Theories in Action: Case of IIUM.

### *Vision and Mission*

As an international university in nature, IIUM needs to perform effectively and efficiently on three different highly competitive education sectors, particularly among the home competitors, international and Muslim world competitors. All educational management and leadership theories have been taken into account in preparation of long term strategic planning. Therefore certainly there is no way for IIUM to stay on the sideline but to compete all the way as the competition now is for future coexistence and sustainability.

As far as strategic management and

leadership are concerned, the vision of IIUM is, *"IIUM aims at becoming a leading international center of educational excellence which seeks to restore the dynamic and progressive role of the Muslim ummah in all branches of knowledge and intellectual discourse"*. Pursuant to this, the mission statement is "to achieve IIICE or Triple I'CE, i.e. Integration, Islamisation, Internationalization, and Comprehensive excellence. Both statements are considered the strategic intent which will guide everybody in every level of management in IIUM towards their identical goal. In the process of realizing the goal, IIUM had identified its Key Result Areas (KRA) as exhibited by Figure 2 below.

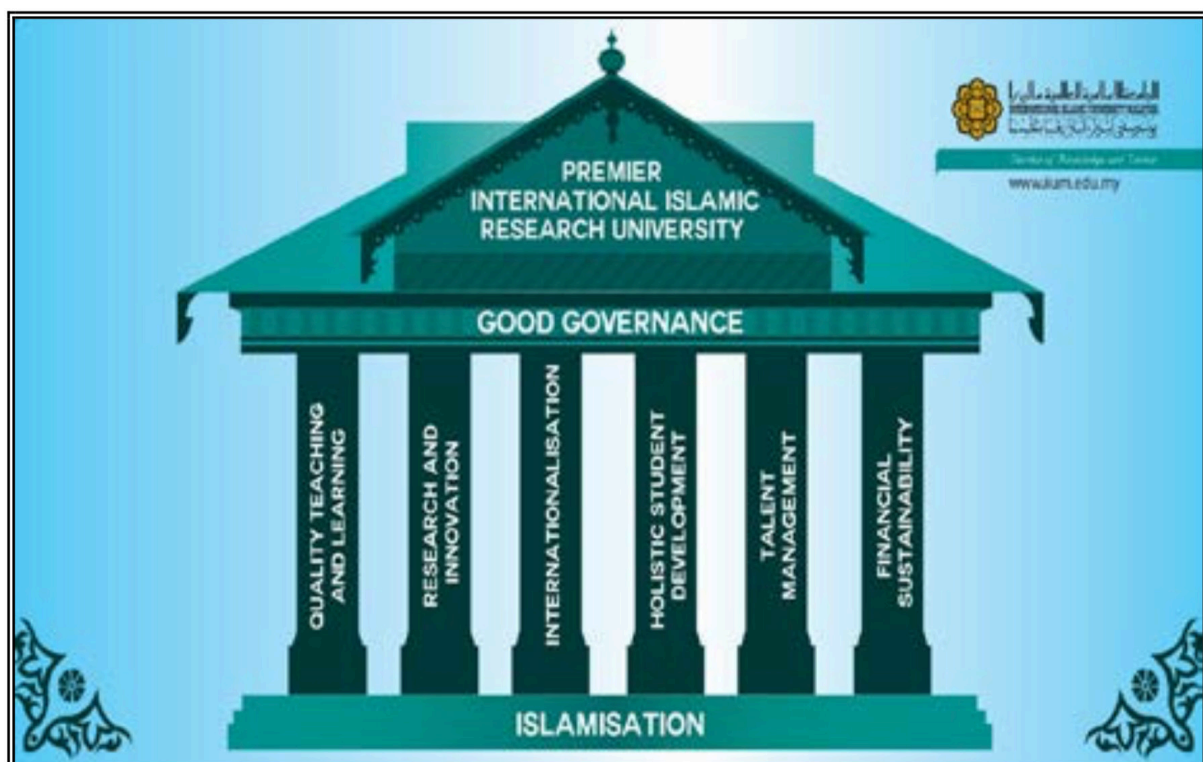


Figure 2: Model of IIUM Strategic Planning (2015-2025)

As exhibited, there are eight KRAs that need to be accomplished at, starting with **Islamization** as the foundation of all. To ensure that the buildup is rock-solid, the IIUM needs to accomplish and fulfill all other six KRAs particularly **financial sustainability, talent management, holistic student development, internationalization** (it incorporates education mobility, immobility and inbreed), **research and innovation, and quality teaching and learning**. In addition, **good governance** is expected to play its role as monitoring and controlling agent in the process of long term journey for future coexistence and sustainability. Convincingly, we could conclude that education mobility (as incorporated in internationalization pillar and Shift 8, Global Prominence) is considered as one of the grand strategies for IIUM in

its journey for coexistence and sustainability at least until year 2025

*How IIUM KRAs are incorporated in MEB 2015-2025 Ten (10) Shifts.*

As exhibited in Figure 3 below, the global prominence (shift 8) that incorporates internationalization and hence education mobility is blended with IIUM KRA internationalization which is also emphasizes on education and academic mobility. By implementing the programs such as **Borderless KOED** and **Inter-varsity postgraduate colloquium**, IIUM is expected to gain at least 50 international students for all programs and five PhD and five Master students' mobility in the year 2017 alone. This statistic is expected to increase once the first programme is successful.

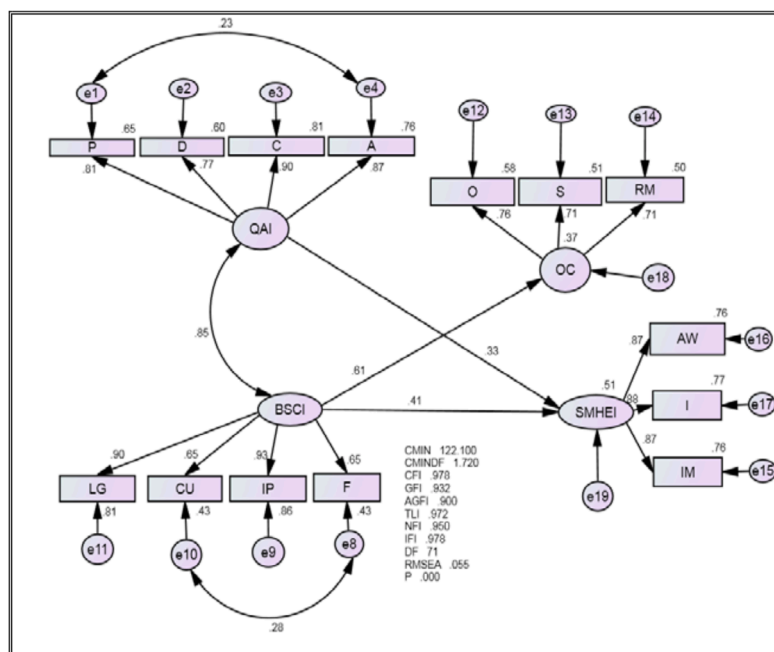
TEMPLATE		
MALAYSIA EDUCATION BLUEPRINT SHIFT NO. 8		IIUM KRA: • Internationalisation
i. Objective	To develop Malaysia into an international education hub with a difference, which is valued by students for its competitive advantage in providing value-for-money higher education, which balances quality, affordability, and liveability in Malaysia, with the added value of rich cultural experiences.	
ii. Proposed Project / Initiative to be Implemented in 2017 (Maximum 2 critical projects)	Target Deliverable (Output of the projects)	
1. Borderless KOED	50 international students for all programmes	
2. Inter-varsity postgraduate colloquium	Five (5) Ph.D and M.Ed. Students	
iii. Outcome Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of international students enrollment</li> <li>• No. of postgraduate international students enrollment</li> <li>• No. of students taking part in the colloquium.</li> </ul>	
iv. Resource Utilised	Manpower / Money / Machine / Method / Material	

Figure 3: Shift 8 (Global Prominence) and IIUM KRA: Internationalization

## IIUM the Way Forward.

Unfortunately, there are no indications of studies being carried out on education mobility and immobility (including the inbreeding) among the academic staff in IIUM in particular. The studies on the sustainability of HEIs is either scarce or none in regard to IIUM. However, I am fortunate enough as there is a study conducted by Abass (2016) about the Malaysian HEIs sustainability. Based on the Figure 4 below, all three sustainability components (sustainability awareness, sustainability integration and sustainability improvement) are highly loaded and correlated as proved by the significant indices or threshold values. Further, the independent variables comprised of Balanced Scorecard (BSCI) and Quality Assurance (QS) implementation

have direct and significant influence on the sustainability of the HEIs. The implication is that, as long as all ten shifts have successfully undergo through Quality assurance and Balanced Scorecard processes, this lead to strong influence on the future coexistence and sustainability of Malaysian HEIs. Thus, we could convincingly conclude that the coexistence and sustainability of HEIs in 2020s is somewhat certain if all ten shifts or KRA (particularly internationalization-education mobility) are successfully fulfilled particularly Shift 8 (Global Prominence) that is associated with internationalization and education mobility. Consequently, we believe that this is also a model of IIUM's future coexistence and sustainability in the globalized world.



Source: Abass (2016)

Figure 4: Sustainability Model of Malaysian HEIs.

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