Study Abroad and Cultural Adaptation among International Students in Malaysia

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Abstract
Despite the significant presence of international students in Malaysia, their cultural adaptation in Malaysia remains low. This study investigates the factors contributing to entry of international students in Malaysia. It also explores the challenges of cultural adaptation among international students while adapting to Malaysian culture. Through a qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews of 20 participants, this research identifies primary barriers to cultural adaptability. The study also revealed the actions could to be highlight by the management's university to facilitate international students adapting with Malaysian culture. The findings of this study suggest that university management should provide an opportunities or activities related to student engagement with the local community such as cultural exploration, pre-arrival training, cultural understanding and social interactions, tour to heritage places. These activities might provide better understanding and exposure of Malaysian cultural towards international students.
Keywords: International Students, Study Abroad, Cultural Adaptation, Malaysian Culture

Introduction
Education has a great role in the development of a country. The progress of a country is also symbolized by the progress of education. Higher education in Malaysia is undergoing radical changes to meet the aspirations and demands of national development. The country's higher education system is now more open and aims to become a regional higher education hub (Wan and Abdullah, 2021; Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). In line with the development of the global world, Malaysia emerged as the third group of important destinations in the world of higher education (Rock, Danaee and Coluzzi, 2021). Generally, students choose to

study abroad because they want to gain experience, a new learning system and culture (Wong and Liu, 2024). In addition, students think that the chosen country can provide quality and better education than their home country (Alshammari, Othman, Mydin, and Mohammed, 2023). International students also want to learn something new, for example in terms of language (National Higher Education Research Institute/IPPTN, 2009) and build new relationships (IPPTN, 2009).

In the Malaysian context, Higher education in Malaysia has grown rapidly and has now become one of America's competitors as a leading destination for international students (Choudaha & Chang, 2012). Higher education institutions in Malaysia, Singapore and China have successfully improved their reputation in the regional and international markets (Malay, Otten and Coelen, 2023). This is due to many things foreign universities set up campuses outside their country in Malaysia (Wenyan, Radzi and Omar, 2023). In 2010, the Malaysian government targeted at least 100,000 international students to further their studies in Malaysia. According to statistics from the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (KPT), until 2007, there were 47,928 international students studying in all higher education institutions in Malaysia. Of these, almost 30% of international students study at Public Higher Education Institutions (IPTA) while about 70% are studying at Private Higher Education Institutions (IPTS) (Chew et al., 2010). The national higher education strategic plan 2007-2020 targets 200,000 percent of international students with a ratio of 50:50 graduate and post-graduate, especially in research universities (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2007).

Based on Higher Education Statistics shows the number of international students entering Malaysia in 2022 is the highest at 104,448 compared to previous years of 97,236 (2021), 95,955 (2020), 93,570 (2019), 103,245 people (2018), and 133,860 people (2017) (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2022). The statistics also report the 10 countries of origin that recorded the highest number of international students, including China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Yemen, Pakistan, Nigeria, India, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Iraq and other countries. The entry of international students from regions with significant cultural differences can trigger cultural conflicts if not given due attention by certain parties (Demchuk, Mišić, Obydenkova, & Tosun, 2024). Cultural conflict can cause culture shock, misunderstanding, cultural ambiguity and cultural uncertainty (Sheng, Dai and Lei, 2022). This will indirectly have a bad effect on the mental health and performance of a student in a higher education institution. Hence, this study was conducted with the aim of identifying factors that encourage the entry of international students to continue their studies in Malaysia. At the same time, this study also wants to explore on the cultural adaptation challenges faced by international students in Malaysia. This study proposes the recommendation that find out through data collection from international's student management in the university

Research Objectives
1. To determine the factors that encourage the entry of international students to further studies in Malaysia
2. To explore the challenges of cultural adaptation faced by international students in Malaysia
3. To find out the recommendation for international's student management in the university

Literature Review

Cultural Adaptation among International Students

The migration of international students to Malaysia is seen as exposing themselves to the cultural differences and subsequently can cause problems and challenges for them to adapt to the multicultural culture of the host country (Berry, 2006). Previous researchers explained that individuals who migrate will go through psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation (Sheng, Dai and Lei, 2022; Gulraihan Su et al., 2019). From the perspective of international students, they are normally exposed to academic adaptation through self-adjustment to the educational environment including interpersonal relationships in education, norms and educational activities (Zhao et al., 2023; Zhang & Goodson, 2011; Brisset et al., 2010). This indirectly exposes themselves to the surroundings and society that practices cultural differences.

Previous studies revealed that international students face various challenges when they are abroad. Previous researchers mentioned that the challenges that international students go through in new countries are classified into physical, psychological and sociocultural contexts (Wilczewski and Alon, 2023; Alasmari, 2023). In the physical context, international students are exposed to challenges such as adapting to the weather, food, lifestyle, transportation facilities and health found in a new country. Meanwhile, the challenges in the psychological context are that international students who have just arrived in the host country need to understand different cultures, especially language, physical activity, norms, clothing and nutrition. In fact, they also need to learn each cultural difference so that they can adapt to the local community more easily. In addition, from the point of sociological context, new students need to learn the medium of instruction used by local residents so that they can easily socialize with local people (Säljö, 2020; Yang, He and Xia, 2023).

Previous study found that some of the international students difficult to understand the local language and they also resist to adapt with the new culture (Ofem, 2023). From that situation, its may cause culture shock which can effect on the academic performance of international students in the host country Therefore, in dealing with the issues of cultural adaptation challenges in international students, parties interested in managing international students need to guide and help international students by providing exposure, cultural training, seminars and tours from the aspects of history, leadership, norms, language, food, political system, economic status and safety can be understood and practiced as best as possible. Sato, Miller, Rakwal, Tomura and Fukasawa (2024), stated that exposure to local culture through cultural activities can increase adaptation in terms of physical, psychological and sociocultural.

Based on the previous literature, the studies conducted among international students by relating the elements of cultural adaptation have received less attention from researchers recently (Zhao and Schartner, 2024; Adhikari, 2023). This is where researchers are seen to focus a lot on studies involving expatriates, migrants and foreign workers compared to international students. Therefore, a study needs to be conducted among international students by relating to the elements related to cultural adaptation so that they can do cultural adaptation well and can concentrate on education and subsequently obtain good academic performance. This is because the effect of the lack of empirical studies makes it difficult for international students to handle various challenges and has an impact on the process of self-

adaptation to the new cultural environment in the host country. This is seen as one of the reasons why international students are sent home as a result of not being able to finish their studies and not being able to adapt to the cultural environment in the new country. Meanwhile, international students who are found to be successful abroad are those who can overcome and handle difficult situations and challenges in the best possible way through the desire to learn new things, improve communication skills and try to get along with the local community. Thus, the increase in the number of international students entering Malaysia is seen to be increasing.

Methodology
In line with the objective of the study, which are to explore on barriers to cultural adaptation among international students in Malaysia, the qualitative method could lead to a more accurate and enriching data collection. Data were obtained through in-depth interview among twenty participants and reach the saturation point. The face-to-face interview was carried out using semi-structured and open-ended questions that allowed participants to share their though and experiences. The interview started with the following questions: "Why do you want to study in Malaysia?". Follow up questions were asked about what is the difference between education in your country and education in Malaysia? and were you familiar with multicultural ethnic before this?". Based on the interview, other follow-up questions were used to obtain clarification if necessary, such as "Do you socialize with locals?", What is one part of Malaysian culture that you are excited to experience?, What is one part of your culture that you would like to share with Malaysians?, What's a challenge you have faced in the past?, Do you face any problems in Malaysia?, Have you ever experienced racism, discrimination or bias from locals?, How would you encounter that problem?, and What are the first actions you take while faced with an uncomfortable situation?". Interviews session lasted approximately 30 until 45 minutes per participants.

The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed with permission of the participants. Data collection of this study took a period of three months and was implemented in a natural setting at the participants' place of learning. The credibility of the data was also established through a peer review of qualitative research experts. In order to improve the dependability of the study, the researchers used an audit trail where all the findings obtained and the activities performed well as well as clearly documented. Thematic analysis in this study was used to extract prominent themes from participants' understanding and experiences (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In the context of transferability, the researchers asked participants to review the interview transcript and validate on the accuracy of the themes. This process was continually conducted throughout the study until last participant. The confirmability is established when credibility, transferability and dependability are attained (Lincoln et al., 1985).

Demographic of Respondents
The selection of respondents in this study was done through purposive sampling. The respondents involved in the interview session were a total of 20 international students. In order to obtain clear, rich and in-depth research data, the respondents involved in the interview session are the respondents who have answered the questionnaire of this study. The researcher kept the real name of each respondent confidential during data analysis. Nicknames such as R1, R2 until R20 are used to represent the respondents and MO1, MO2,

MO3 were mentioned in this article to refer management officers that involved in the interview data collection session for this study. According to Silverman (2013), giving the nickname when data analysis is done is intended to maintain the confidentiality of the respondents involved in the study. Interviews were conducted face-to-face among respondents from Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. Overall, the respondents involved in this study are female and male international students who are citizens of Indonesia, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Oman, Libya, Kuwait, Yemen and Pakistan. The results of the analysis also found that the respondents involved in the interview session were from private and public higher education institutions. Table 1 shows the demographics of respondents for this study.

Table 1
Demographics of Respondents

Nickname	Gender	Nationality	Type of University	State
Respondent 1	Female	Indonesia	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 2	Female	China	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 3	Female	China	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 4	Female	Indonesia	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 5	Male	Pakistan	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 6	Male	China	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 7	Female	China	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 8	Male	Bangladesh	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 9	Male	Bangladesh	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 10	Male	Bangladesh	Public Universi ty	Selangor
Respondent 11	Male	Bangladesh	Public University	Selangor
Respondent 12	Female	China	Public University	Kuala Lumpur
Respondent 13	Female	China	Public University	Kuala Lumpur
Respondent 14	Male	Libya	Public University	Kuala Lumpur
Respondent 15	Female	Oman	Private University	Selangor
Respondent 16	Male	Indonesia	Private University	Selangor
Respondent 17	Female	Kuwait	Private University	Selangor

Respondent 18	Male	Yemen	Private University	Selangor
Respondent 19	Female	Pakistan	Private University	Selangor
Respondent 20	Female	China	Public University	Selangor
Management Officer 1	Female	Malaysian	Private University	Selangor
Management Officer 2	Male	Bangladesh	Private University	Selangor
Management Officer 3	Male	Malaysian	Public University	Kuala Lumpur

Research Findings and Discussion

Factors that encourage the entry of international students to continue their studies in Malaysia

Figure 1 shows the theme and subtheme for Research Objective 1 which is to determine the factors that encourage the entry of international students to further studies in Malaysia.
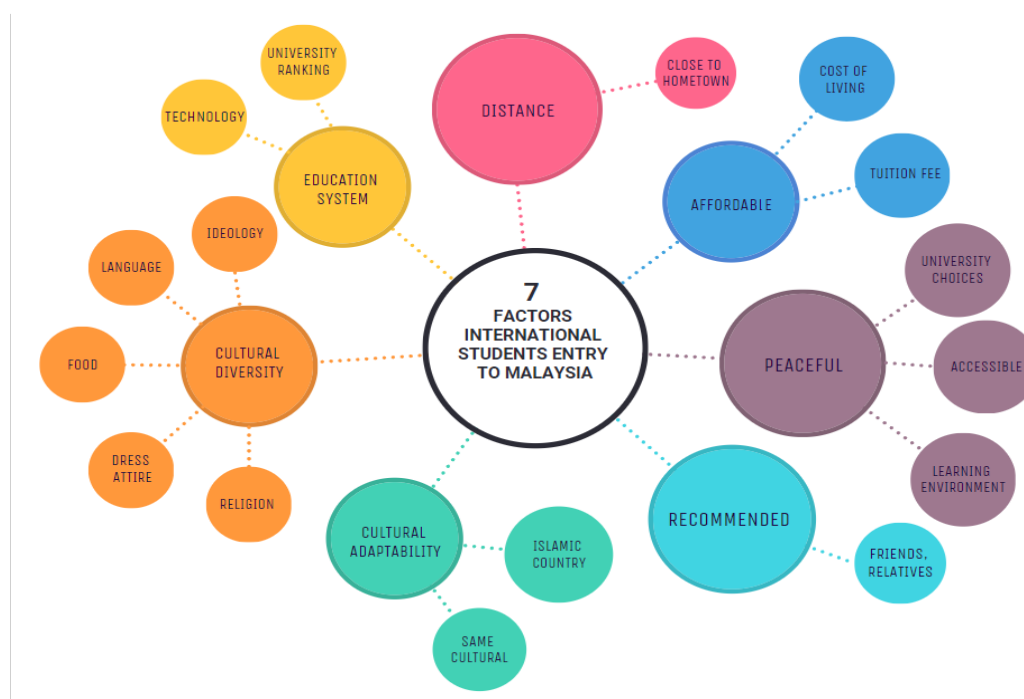

Figure 1: Factors international students' entry to Malaysia

Short Distance from Hometown

According to the respondents, one of the factors that encourage her to further study in Malaysia is the short distance from hometown. Respondent 1 and Respondent 4 stated,

"Malaysia is close to Medan, Indonesia. Easy for me to go back to my hometown if an emergency happens."

Respondent 1, Female, Indonesia

"Malaysia is close to my hometown, plus we have almost the same culture."

Respondent 4, Female, Indonesia

Affordable Tuition Fees
Second factor that respondents wanted to further their education in Malaysia was because of affordable tuition fees. Respondent 2, Respondent 6 and Respondent 7 mentioned,

"Malaysia university fee is affordable and many of my friends continue their study here."

Respondent 2, Female, China

"Cheaper fee compared to other countries and easy to enrolled."

Respondent 6, Male, China

"Cheaper, easy to enrolled and was recommended by my friend."

Respondent 7, Female, China

Peaceful environment
Third factor that encouraged international students to come to Malaysia was regarding the environment, it's related to the peaceful environment. Respondent 15 and respondent 17 mentioned that high quality education, cultural diversity and a safe country are the factors that Malaysia has chosen as a destination for further studies.

"I want to study in Malaysia because it offers a unique blend of high-quality education and rich cultural diversity. The country is known for its excellent universities, affordable tuition fees, and vibrant student life."

Respondent 15, Female, Oman

"I want to study in Malaysia because of its high-quality education system in the course that I want to study which is cyber security and the cultural environment. Additionally, Malaysia is a safe country."

Respondent 17, Female, Kuwait

Recommendation from friends and relatives
Other than that, findings from the interview found that recommendations by friends and relatives be one of the factors in the selection of Malaysia as an institution to continue their studies.

"I have a lot of friends here. They recommend that I come to study here (Malaysia)."

Respondent 3, Female, China

"I do have some friends, relatives who recommend me to study here because this is Islamic country and there will be no problem for us to pray and to eat."

Respondent 5, Male, Pakistan

"My friends recommended it (*Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*) here (in Malaysia)."

Respondent 8, Male, Bangladesh

"Because some of my friends recommend studying in Malaysia because education in Malaysia is good, especially in software engineering and it's quite cheap."

<div align="right">Respondent 18, Male, Yemen</div>

Cultural Adaptability

Cultural adaptability is an individual's ability to fit in and adjust in the communication and management context depending on the surroundings and environment in which they are operating. Cultural adaptability can promote better communication, participation and engagement with others in the community.

"Malaysia is close to my hometown, plus we have almost the same culture, in terms of religion, norms, language, attire, food…means, easier for me to fit in adjusting my life in Malaysia."

<div align="right">Respondent 4, Female, Indonesia</div>

"I do have some friends who recommend me to study here because this is Islamic country and there will be no problem for us to pray and to eat."

<div align="right">Respondent 5, Male, Pakistan</div>

"I prefer to study in Malaysia because the education is in English and Malaysian universities have high quality of education. It also has many choices of universities. Moreover, Malaysia is a Muslim country."

<div align="right">Respondent 14, Male, Libya</div>

Cultural Diversity

In general, cultural diversity is when people from different ethnic backgrounds coexist and live together in harmony with other communities, respect and appreciate each other.

"Because Malaysian education is under the system of English, and the culture is not that difficult for us due to Malaysians having diverse ethnicities including the Chinese also found in Malaysia."

<div align="right">Respondent 12, Female, China</div>

"Because of its diverse and multicultural environment, and high-quality education system, which can provide me with a better and easier learning environment both academically and personally."

<div align="right">Respondent 20, Female, China</div>

Educational System

Educational system refers to the structure of all institutions and the opportunities for obtaining education within a country that are organized according to the relevant laws of a country itself.

"Slightly different in the education system and environment. The grade used in Indonesia is not the same as in Malaysia."

<div align="right">Respondent 1, Female, Indonesia</div>

"Very different. We need to sit for a comprehensive exam every time we want to enrol for our next education. If we failed, we can't continue our study…"

Respondent 2, Female, China

"Education in Malaysia has a good quality of learning. They also focus on how to build researchers by emphasizing the student for publication."

Respondent 14, Male, Libya

"Education in Malaysia is distinguished by its strong emphasis on practical learning and industry collaboration. Malaysian institutions often incorporate internships and real-world projects into their curricula, providing students with hands-on experience that is sometimes lacking in my home country."

Respondent 15, Female, Oman

"One major difference is the emphasis on practical skills and multicultural perspectives in Malaysian education. In my country, the focus is more on theoretical knowledge, whereas in Malaysia, there's a blend of theory and practical application, which I find very beneficial."

Respondent 17, Female, Kuwait

"My own country Yemen is not good in software engineering, in my country it's still new and less experts in that field."

Respondent 18, Male, Yemen

The Challenges of Cultural Adaptation Faced by International Students in Malaysia
Figure 2 presents the theme and subtheme related to Research Objective 2: To explore the challenges of cultural adaptation faced by international students in Malaysia. From the analysis, there are five themes which are lifestyle, cultural differences, communication, accommodation and discrimination.
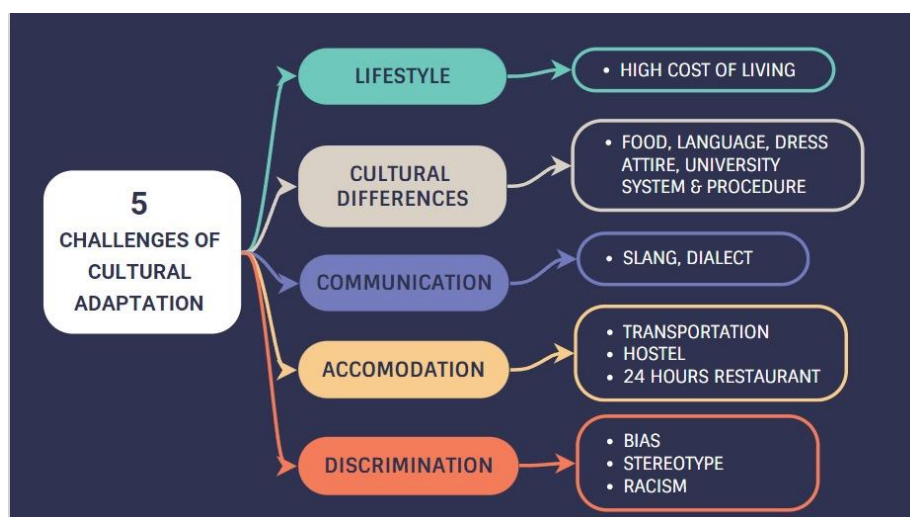

Figure 2: The Challenges of Cultural Adaptation

Lifestyle

Lifestyle can refer to a way of life, and a set of attitudes, habits and possessions that are typical of a particular group or individual. However, for the respondents who were interviewed, to do daily activities such as leisure activities especially in Kuala Lumpur were involved high costs. This statement has been agreed by Respondent 1 and Respondent 18, as per below.

"Accommodation inside campus for international students is expensive and limited."

Respondent 1, Female, Indonesia

"I found food in Malaysia is quite expensive, for example Hotel Food that meets my taste. Only food at Mamak is acceptable and I love nasi goreng ayam at mamak restaurant."

Respondent 18, Male, Yemen

Cultural Differences

Cultural differences are differences in terms of language, dress attire, beliefs, norms, landscapes, leadership and religion (Yassin, Abdul Razak, Qasem and Saeed Mohammed, 2020). Cultural differences arise constantly and diffuse throughout the physical world as people move or through the Internet. As mentioned by Yang et al., (2023), having problems related to cultural differences might cause low interaction between international students and the local community. This statement was agreed by Respondent 6, Respondent 7, Respondent 10, Respondent 14, Respondent 16, Respondent 19 and Respondent 20, as per below.

"I faced on language and food problem. My English not so good plus not many Malaysia food suit with my taste"

Respondent 6, Male China

"First is food. I can't eat Malaysian food that doesn't taste the same. Second, the weather. It's hot here in my place, not hot as here and language. I'm more into Cantonese, not really in mandarin. So, when local Chinese want to communicate with me, I don't understand"

Respondent 7, Female, China

"Food. So different from Bangladesh."

Respondent 10, Male, Bangladesh

"It's difficult to make friends. Not many local friends."

Respondent 14, Male, Libya

"One big challenge was getting used to the different academic style here when I first arrived. It was a bit tough at first, but with help from my friends and professors, I managed to get through it."

Respondent 16, Male, Indonesia

"Currently I feel like I don't want to stay in Malaysia because now in Durian season, I don't like the durian smell."

Respondent 19, Female, Pakistan

"I faced adapting into a new academic environment when I first moved to a different city for university. I need to develop new study habits. If not, I will be left behind because sometimes, I still have some communication barriers as well."

Respondent 20, Female, China

Language Barriers

Language barriers usually occur when two people who speak different languages cannot understand one another, and there is a breakdown in communication with others (Lashari, Awang-Hashim, Lashari and Kaur, 2023; Zhai and Razali, 2022; Kee, Yyadav, Ngu and Sasitheran, 2022). The findings of this study were found to be in line with the findings of previous studies, which are that language barriers are the most important challenges that respondents face when they are in Malaysia (Xiao, 2024; Ovchinnikova, Mol and Jones, 2023; Bond, 2022). This is proved by the statement of Respondent 2, Respondent 6, Respondent 7 and Respondent 13.

"The language and signboard instruction. My Chinese language is more Cantonese but in Malaysia it is mandarin. "

Respondent 2, Female, China

"Hard to understand the signboard instructions and at first, I can accept Malaysian food. Spicy. For me, I'm having language and food problems. My English not so good plus not many Malaysia food suit with my taste".

Respondent 6, Male China

"First is food. I can't eat Malaysian food that doesn't taste the same. Second, the weather. It's hot here in my place, not as hot as here and the language. I'm more into Cantonese, not really in mandarin. So, when local Chinese want to communicate with me, I don't understand"

Respondent 7, Female, China

"The biggest challenge comes from the language, and many Malaysians don't speak English."

Respondent 13, Female, China

Accommodation

Respondents have difficulties on accommodation while adapting with Malaysian cultures. Respondent 1, Respondent 4 and Respondent 5 mentioned,

"Accommodation inside campus for international students is expensive and limited."

Respondent 1, Female, Indonesia

"Accommodation on campus is limited."

Respondent 4, Female, Indonesia

"Accommodation and transportation to come to campus."

Respondent 5, Male, Pakistan

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age or sexual orientation. Based on the findings,

Respondent 4, Respondent 8, Respondent 10, Respondent 18, Respondent 19 and Respondent 20 revealed that they feel sad because of discrimination by other people in Malaysia.

"Yes sometimes. Some local people judge me as a *bibik* since I dress up like *bibik* a bit (laugh) but when I explain I'm a UKM student then they treat me well."

Respondent 4, Female, Indonesia

"Yes. When local people know I'm from Bangladesh, they treat me badly as if I'm a *buruh* but when I explain I'm a student, they are okay with me."

Respondent 8, Male, Bangladesh

"For me I have extra discrimination. I wasn't treated well due to my skin color. I'm dark so they think I'm a bad person. Don't know why."

Respondent 10, Male, Bangladesh

"Feel it a little bit when I'm here, when I want to rent a house, most of the landlords do not prefer to rent their unit/apartment to foreigners, only for locals. It's really hard for me to find a place to stay during that time."

Respondent 18, Male, Yemen

"Sometimes when locals only communicate in their own language, I feel like they are talking about me. But it happens sometimes because most of my local's friend are very good and they always translate for me. But now that we have googled it, it is easy for me."

Respondent 19, Female, Pakistan

"Yes, but I am just trying to address them calmly and seek support from my local friends."

Respondent 20, Female, China

Recommendations for International Student Management in the University
Figure 3 presents the theme and subtheme related to Research Objective 3: To find out the recommendation for international's student management in the university.

Figure 3: Recommendations for management in the university

From the research findings through the interview session, we found that five recommendations need to be taken into consideration which are issues, action, activities, strategies and contributions. Basically, the management of international students has several issues with international students in Malaysia like language barriers, cultural differences, academic adjustments, homesickness, financial difficulties, visa issues and mental health concerns.

"...international students often face challenges such as language barriers, cultural differences, academic adjustments, homesickness, financial difficulties, visa issues, and mental health concerns. Addressing these issues requires effective support systems as well as cultural sensitivity".

<div align="right">Management Officer 1, Female, Private University</div>

However, the common action that has been taken by management officers are to do the pre-arrival assistance, engaging orientation programmed, specialized academic, welfare services, fostering cultural understanding, provide language assistance and provide opportunities for student's engagement.

"UNISEL can efficiently manage international students by offering extensive pre-arrival assistance, engaging orientation programmes, and specialized academic and welfare services."

<div align="right">Management Officer 2, Male, Private University</div>

"...fostering cultural understanding, providing language assistance, and establishing opportunities for student engagement are critical. The institution should prioritize data-driven decision-making in order to constantly improve its assistance for international students".

<div align="right">Management Officer 3, Male, Public University</div>

In order to increase student's understanding related to the national culture in Malaysia, the management of international students can do a programmed related to the cultural exploration and social interactions, encourage students to attend classes and clubs, involve in cultural activities like festival programmed and do a tour Malaysia to ensure a well-rounded university experience such as tour a histories place, like Malacca, Pulau Pinang, Langkawi, Sabah and Sarawak.

"...international students at UTM participate in a wide range of activities, including academics, cultural exploration, and social interactions. They also attend classes, clubs, cultural activities, and tour Malaysia to ensure a well-rounded university experience."

<div align="right">Management Officer 3, Male, Public University</div>

From the findings, this research found that several strategies need to be implemented in order to increase participation and attraction from international students for universities in Malaysia. By doing effective research marketing strategies, competitive scholarships, maintaining high quality education, creating a harmonious campus life, worldwide alliance, active alumni engagement and an easy application process.

"Universities can increase international student enrolment by using effective marketing, competitive scholarships, high-quality education, a friendly campus, worldwide alliances, alumni engagement, and an easy application process."

<div align="right">Management Officer 1, Female, Private University</div>

However, this research found the positive impact of entering international students further their study in Malaysia, like increasing economic status, promoting cultural diversity, research cooperation and partnership, and enhancing Malaysian global reputation as an education hub.

"International students make major contributions to the Malaysian economy by paying tuition and living expenses. They promote cultural diversity in universities, which enriches the learning environment. Furthermore, they may encourage research cooperation and partnerships with overseas institutions. On a larger scale, they enhance Malaysia's global reputation as an education hub, potentially drawing more international students and investments in the future."

<div align="right">Management Officer 3, Male, Public University</div>

Conclusion

This study concludes that the factors that encourage the entry of international students to pursuing their study in Malaysia are the environment of Malaysia was peaceful, recommended by their friends, cultural adaptability, cultural diversity, education systems and a close-distance between their home country and Malaysia. This study also revealed that the most challenges their faced in Malaysia are lifestyles changes, cultural differences, communication barrier, accommodation and discrimination. By knowing the factors encourage the international student's entry in Malaysia and challenges that their faced, the management in university should identify the issues, plan strategies, do take the action and plan some attractive activities related to the cultural adaptation among international students in their university. By addressing the challenges or issues such as communication barriers due to lack of language proficiency, there is potential to increase communication skills among international students in Malaysia by learning the local language. However, this study focused generally on international students in Malaysia. Future research could explore on comparative perspectives across different nationalities of international students in Malaysia.

Implication of Study

This study has several important implications. Firstly, we have highlighted the critical importance of the factors that encourage the entry of international students to further studies in Malaysia, as this could help improve the university's ranking. Secondly, the exploration of the challenges of cultural adaptation faced by international students in Malaysia. Thirdly, some of the recommendation for international's student management in the university is needed to increase awareness and education while adapting with Malaysian culture. This requires a collaborative effort from key stakeholders such as international students' university management, international students itself, family members, colleagues and relevant agencies. Fourth, university policy has implications for international students has highest entry in university. Policy changes and cultural shifts within universities may overcome the fear, burnout and anxiety among international students. Lastly, this study

provides an indication that the entry of international students in Malaysia give the positive impact on university's ranking in Malaysia.

Acknowledgement

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