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UniKL Business School: Matters Beyond Ranking Towards Becoming A World Class University

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Abstract

Past researches revealed that, to be a world class institution, the institution itself need to make sure that everything inside are highly strong, excellent and then it can be ready to be claimed as a world class. In the other word, from A to Z of the university should and compulsorily achieved the world class standard before it can be claimed as the world class institution. This paper focuses on some issues need to be highlighted by Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School by its management in order to facilitate the university to climb the ladder to be the world class ranking higher institution among others in the region. The issues such as manpower quality, students' quality, graduate quality, teaching quality, learning quality, facilities quality and the overall operational quality are crucial issues need to be focused by the top management in realizing and achieving the dream of the institution to be the world class university. Careful analyses of eighteen articles with different themes on world class university and management of higher learning institution yields some insights on issues prevalent in the matter. Finally, this paper proposes an integrated model for world class university management which highlights the important management issues that need serious attention from the management. The model is constructed based on insights drawn from the analyses of the articles. The model may be used as a guide for UniKL Business School and may be useful tools for consultants to use in handling tasks relating to the developing world class university.

Keywords: manpower quality, students' quality, graduate quality, teaching quality, learning quality, facilities quality, world class university, UniKL Business School

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INTRODUCTION

It is a dream of every higher learning institution to achieve higher ranking among other competing institutions and becoming a world class university is always the major concerns simultaneously becoming the preferred institution in the world. However, many institutions in Malaysia seems forgotten to strengthening the bases of education as well as ignored the internal matters which is more crucial than a ranking. Many institutions in Malaysia made mistakes by focusing the dream to be the world ranking university but forgotten to look inside themselves and tend to ignore the important of being strong internally before they can roar the world. Harvard Business School, Oxford Business School, Cambridge Business School, University of Singapore Business School and many other top ranking Business School in the world are not only strong externally but deep inside they are extremely prepared and well organized. In the other word, they have strong base of internal aspects be in the human resource, the teaching and learning, the facilities, the curriculum, the operational aspects as well as the products they produce and producing. All these are important elements that will make any institution strong and can be called as World Class University.

The concept of world class university

According to Douglass (2014) in his research titled "Profiling the Flagship University Model: An Exploratory Proposal for Change the Paradigm from Ranking to Relevancy", the world class university can be defined as institutions which 'generate unachievable goals for the vast majority of aspiring universities'. In the other hand, Broecke (2015) defined the world class university as an ultimate higher learning institution that achieved among the highest quality in teaching, learning, graduates, facilities and products produced (students and graduates). Shattock (2010) added that, a world class means the best among the best together with other universities in the world. Interestingly, Marginson (2014) claimed that, to be the world class university, a university must be the best in the market, the best in the district, the best in the state, the best in the country, the best in the region and the best in the continent. Kauppi (2018) and Jacob & Hellström (2018) agreed the statement by Marginson (2014) and they found that, the world class universities should be world class in all aspects of its operation be in the internal or external aspects of the institution.

According to Stephen Toope (2008) in the Economic Times, there are four factors make a university world class. First, it must show a commitment to breadth and excellence in all fields of

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human inquiry, not simply in a particular niche. Uniform excellence across all fields is an ideal that no university achieves in practice, but it is a fine ambition. One senses that universal, high ambition in great universities, coupled with real excellence in most fields, most of the time. Second, world class universities engage in cutting-edge research whilst at the same time teaching the next generation, their students. Teaching and research are intrinsically bound together, with top researchers inspiring and mentoring their students. In turn, students themselves inspire and challenge their teachers. Much of the talk about world class universities centers around the production of exciting discoveries and universities' contribution to the economy and to human enrichment through the development of cultural knowledge. But every bit as important as these is the role of universities as educators. World class universities produce students who will go on to be leaders in all walks of life. Third, great universities must allow their researchers the freedom to experiment, succeed, and sometimes fail. They must be able to make grand mistakes as well as grand discoveries. It is often through making those mistakes that the grand discoveries are made. This implies a degree of inefficiency, but it is a necessary inefficiency and a corollary of greatness. Stephen Toope (2008) added, a university operating with a completely utilitarian mindset will forego the opportunities that a more open-ended system allows. Finally, world class universities have permeable boundaries. This means encouraging interdisciplinary research and teaching; it means working with the private sector, for example, fostering and encouraging partnerships with industry; and it means encouraging international collaboration. World class universities look outward, and think beyond conventional boundaries today, it educates students more and more of whom will go on to live and work in a range of cultures. The university must equip them for this life, partly by what the academic teach them, partly by what other experiences the university offer them, who they meet as students and the composition of the study body.

The Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School: An overview

Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School is one of the private higher learning institution in Malaysia. It is another pinnacle of success for Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) in its efforts to produce entrepreneurial graduates. The rebranding of this institution has significantly enhanced the image of UniKL which has already been known for being a leader in technical education and striving to become one of the higher academic institutions that offer programs in Management and Business for both the graduate and undergraduate levels. This institution was formerly

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known as the International School of Entrepreneurship or UniKL ISE. According to Prof. Dr. Sulaiman (2018), the first and current Dean of Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School, "Rebranding is another step towards realizing the organization vision which is to be a leading institution of higher learning that offers programs with the aim of producing entrepreneurs and professionals." Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School currently offers highly qualified programs of study at UniKL Satelite Campus, located in Bangunan Yayasan Selangor, Kampung Bharu, Kuala Lumpur. With its campus strategically located in the heart of the city of Kuala Lumpur, it is also well-equipped with modern teaching and learning facilities but still lacking in numbers. The school is continuously attracting many local and international students.

This institution introduced several new programs in 2012 namely, Marketing, Tourism Planning and Management, Economics, and International Business. In order to continue its objective in providing top quality education programs, UniKL Business School offered pre-university programs known as Foundation in Business and Management for the intake of May 2012. Pre-university programs were offered to students who excelled in their SPM to pursue undergraduate programs in Accounting, Management, Entrepreneurship and Finance. It has future plan to introduce and develop more unique and reputable programs for undergraduates. This institution also aiming to offer many more value-added programs such as Professional Accounting AACA, CIMA, CA (Aust.) for the graduates. UniKL Business School provides a conducive learning environment for students who prefer a unique learning environment with a difference. In UniKL Business School, the medium of instruction is English and this will encourage students to be exposed to the global environment in the presence of international students and 60 percent of lecturers with a Doctorate qualification. Concerted efforts are also taken to promote character building of students with the aim of producing future entrepreneurs and leaders. UniKL Business School also focuses on research and development. Under the Entrepreneurship Research Centre (CERES), particular attention is given to research activities related to entrepreneurship.

This institution has a vibrant population consisting of staff and students who come from a wide range of backgrounds and are always willing to share their knowledge and expertise. UniKL Business School, at present, has a total of 3,100 students, comprising both local and international student. Finally, it aims to be the world class university and roar among other higher institutions in Malaysia.

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Issues need to be focused beyond the ranking and the proposed strategies to overcome the issues (from entrepreneurial perspectives)

Behind the dream of UniKL Business School to be the premier entrepreneurial university and also one of the world class universities in Malaysia, it is actually far beyond the dream. The university is consider unhealthy internally due to some of the internal issues pertaining to the academic operation of the university. As mentioned by Mittelman (2017), internal strengths of any institutions of academic will be able to make those institutions to be strong and excel externally. This statement supported by many past researchers (Broecke, 2015; Shattock, 2010; Marginson, 2014; Kauppi, 2018; Jacob & Hellström, 2018).

The institution (UniKL Business School) found to have problem and struggling with the manpower issues, the students' quality, the quality of the product (graduate) it produced, the teaching and learning system, the issues of lack educational and campus facilities as well as the problem with its current academic and management procedures and operations. Shattock (2010) highlighted that, it is important to university's management to seriously look after the internal aspects of the institution before claiming that their university is a world class university. Birnbaum (2015) added that, if the world class university is strong and excel internally, there will be no world class university left behind. They will be standing at par with others and maintain in the ranking.

Marginson (2014) in his study entitled "university rankings and social science" found that, world class university is like a body. A healthy body and healthy skin is a result from healthy internal organs (parts) of the body. In the case of world class university like what the UniKL Business School dreams of, the university will only be able to be called as world class by not only looking on what it show or promote to the world but the hidden parts that is inside the university (the manpower issues, the students' quality, the quality of the product (graduate) it produced, the teaching and learning system, the issues of lack educational and campus facilities as well as the problem with its current academic and management procedures and operations) as suggested by Broecke (2015), Shattock (2010), Marginson (2014), Kauppi (2018) as well as Jacob & Hellström (2018). Thus, UniKL Business School should achieve the world class status internally and as a result, it will be world class as well externally Mittelman (2017).

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Manpower quality

Employees are valuable assets of an organization and the key to success. In today's competitive world, the key to success in any business relies on customer satisfaction and this is depending on the quality of employees' services provided to the customers. In marketing, high touch customers are totally rely on the employees and if the employees are happy and motivated towards their job, they will provide good quality of services to the customers (Alegre, Mas-Machuca & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2016).

Employers need to understand that a content and motivated employee has a higher probability of making significant contributions to the organization (Shah, Irani, & Sharif, 2017). In higher learning institutions, the employees or manpower are categorized into two categories. They are the academic employees and the operational employees (in UniKL Business School they are called as support staffs).

In order to be a world class university, the manpower (academician and support staffs) is deemed important to UniKL Business School. However, current status showed that, the university is struggling with the manpower issues such as the high number of turnover among academician which leads to high workloads and academic burden to those who stays. The financial crisis in the university made the top management freez the recruitment of new staffs or replacements. Thus, this affects the motivation of existing academician who stays in the institution and the workload which previously belong to those who left need to be shared by those who stays and their workload increased. A normal academician will have 18 hours mandatory teaching load and some of them exceeds the hours.

As for the support staffs, the numbers of support staffs to facilitate the academician is not sufficient. As example, in a big university like UniKL Business School which surely need to purchase equipment or anything related to buying and purchase purposes only relying on two support staffs under the Department of Procurement. In this case, those two employees surely having difficult time to handle all purchasing activities in such a big institution and this will affect the quality of work they produce and directly affects the quality of services provided to the academician and external customers. It is proven that this situation affects the quality of teaching and learning simultaneously affects the dream of the university to be the world class university.

Furthermore, another issue pertaining to manpower quality is the employees' qualification. Many of the academicians are master holder and quite numbers of the group hold doctoral degree. In order to be a world class university, one of the requirements is the numbers

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of doctorate degree holders among the academician Broecke (2015). In his study, Broecke highlighted that, doctorate degree holders in any higher learning institution in UK is a matter. It is important to show the world that all academicians have extensive research and operational knowledge which is crucial for a world class university. Mittelman (2017) supported that academicians with doctorate degree will bring along their qualification as well as research culture to the institution. Thus, UniKL Business School is far behind the mission to be the world class university if this element is taken into the consideration.

The issue of job burnout, high turnover and low motivation among UniKL employees also become the major problem of the institution. High teaching loads and other management responsibilities among academician made many of qualified and experienced academicians left this institution. The lack of manpower from the support staff division as highlighted above made many of academician have to perform the administrative works by themselves without the assistance of the support staffs. Bernburg, Vitzthum, Groneberg, and Mache (2016) highlighted in their research about the effect of workplace stress among employees. According to them, the more stressful the working environment, the higher the possibility of job burnout to be happened among employees.

Bernburg et. al (2016) also stressed out that, job burden with high responsibilities beyond the ability of employees will affect employees motivation and affect the quality of job they produced. This situation will not stop at the workplace but also will affect the total life of the employees. Thus, this situation is not a healthy situation to any organization including UniKL Business School. In order to be a world class university, UniKL Business School and other universities world class to be should have world class manpower as well (Sperling, 2017). Therefore, UniKL Business School is far behind the mission to be the world class university if this element is taken into the consideration.

However, the management should pay full attention to overcome this problem by taking immediate actions which could curb this issue to be major simultaneously hinder the university to become a world class institution. As suggested by past researchers, UniKL Business School could overcome this problem by creating a program which could improve the employees' academic qualification through study scheme and scholarship. Moreover, the management also should start thinking of employing more qualified and high skill staffs to be part of the team regardless the category whether support staffs or academic staffs. The bigger the number of highl;y qualified employees and manpower, the bigger the chance the university to be the world

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class institution (Sperling, 2017). Instead, in order to equip the academics with the latest development in the industry, it is highly recommended to the management to give chance to the academics team to have more industrial exposure and industrial Experience. This can be done through the industrial training, industrial attachment and sabbatical programs to the academician. It is believed that, the latest knowledge on the industry practices will make the teaching and learning more interesting simultaneously increase the quality of the graduate produced by the university.

Based on the above highlighted issues, it is becoming a major concern when talking about employees' morale and motivation. Thus, it is highly recommended to the management of UniKL Business School to give salary increment, rewards and more benefits to the employees to boost up their morale and motivation. The university also should have proper human resource planning in the future to avoid the problem of lacking in manpower number. Finally, it is also recommended to the management to divide the academic staffs into two different clusters which define their job scopes. Those propose clusters are cluster research and teaching. Research clusters academics could have less workload on teaching but higher number in doing research. This team is important to increase the number of research and publication in the university and vice versa.

Students quality

Students are also the asset of any higher learning institutions. It is the ultimate product of any universities in the world. The quality of any university mostly measured by looking to the graduates it produced. The higher the quality of the graduate, the higher will be the quality of any university. Thus, focusing on the process of developing higher quality graduates starts from the first day of the selection of those students to be enrolled into the university, the ongoing learning and development as well as towards the graduation day. Hazelkorn (2015) and Mittelman (2017) claimed that, the world will judge the quality of teaching and learning of any universities by just looking at the graduates they produced. The survival skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills, and research ability skills are mostly the skills that the employers will seeks on any graduates.

Surprisingly, some employers already have stereotyping perception towards any graduates by just looking at where they earn their degrees Hazelkorn (2015). Here we can see that, the graduates quality is important in determining the level of quality the university is.

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However, UniKL Business School nowadays is having problem by most of it graduates. The university received higher complaints from employers on the graduate on their bad attitude and inability to perform in real life working environment. The university's internship program seems failed to achieve it objectives to produce a well-rounded graduates. Thus, this situation is not a healthy situation to any organization including UniKL Business School. Therefore, UniKL Business School is far behind the mission to be the world class university if this element is taken into the consideration. Moreover, the university is also found to have poor quality policy on admission of new students. The qualification on admission is considered lower as compared to other higher learning institution. With low CGPA during Diploma (2.30/4.00), any applicant will be accepted to this university without any English language higher qualification is needed. Thus, the entry to this university is more easy as compared to others and poor quality candidates is easily accepted to this university and this affect the quality of teaching and learning where these students are poor on attitude, poor soft skills, poor entrepreneurial skills, poor survival skills, poor communication skills, attitude. Kauppi (2018) claimed that, university should be strict in selecting and recruiting its future graduates as the university is not an incinerator which will recycle rubbish into diamond. The same case happened to UniKL Business school where most graduate quality is low (poor soft skills, poor entrepreneurial skills, poor survival skills, poor communication skills and poor attitude). In order to be a world class university, UniKL Business School and other universities world class to be should have world class students and graduates as well (Mittelman, 2017). Therefore, UniKL Business School is far behind the mission to be the world class university if this element is taken into the consideration.

As suggested by Hazelkorn (2015), the problem of students' quality as well as the quality of the graduates could be solved through series of strategies. It is highly recommended to the management to do the following in improving the quality of students and graduates of the university. Those strategies are

a. Increase the eligibility for the Admission to filter the quality of the students of the university.
b. Students development and attitude (moral development) program could improve the moral and attitude of the students and graduates simultaneously made them a better person in life and being respected by anybody outside the university especially the industry.

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c. Skills development embedded with teaching and learning on soft skills development, entrepreneurial skills development, survival skills development, communication skills development will make students quality improved and valuable in the industry.

Teaching and learning quality

Birnbaum (2015), Hazelkorn (2015), Shattock (2010) and Broecke (2015) proposed that, a world class university to be should strengthen it teaching and learning aspects in order to be the real world class institution. Savery (2015) in his research titled "overview of problem-based learning" suggested that, modern world class universities should employed various techniques of teaching and learning to ensure higher quality of understanding among graduates. He proposed the concept of problem based learning which he believed as a powerful teaching and learning techniques that could make the process of learning more interesting and able to increase the understanding of graduates towards the subject matters.

In UniKL Business School, most of the teaching and learning are conducted using traditional ways. If it wants to be a world class university, it should starts to take serious actions towards this issues and start following other model of prominent world class universities around the world. Harvard Business School, Oxford Business School, Cambridge Business School, University of Singapore Business School and many other top ranking Business School in the world are not only strong externally but they have strong teaching and learning programs with various teaching and learning techniques implemented and embedded into the sessions. Thus, with this comparison, UniKL Business School is far behind the mission to be the world class university if this element is taken into the consideration and the management should take immediate actions to overcome this problem.

Shattock (2010) and Broecke (2015) outlined some strategies to be taken by the management of university (particularly on the teaching and learning aspects) in order to make the institutions as better institution in the world. Those strategies are as follows:

Cooperative learning especially among big numbers of courses while the numbers of lecturers or academics a not sufficient. By doing this, time and energy could be saved and standardization could be achieved in term of teaching and learning.

Certification of current program versus professional bodies or professional bodies' linkages locally and internationally will be able to increase the value of the program. Insights from

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international perspectives could make the curriculum at par with the international standards and meet the requirement and standards of professional bodies. The accreditation also could add up value to the graduates.

The embedded of technology in teaching and learning is also could increase the chance for the university to improve the quality of teaching and learning at par with the standards of a world class university. This is also to say that currently issues of 'design' are prevalent to a world class university and this goes the same to UniKL Business School with respect to the use of online technology in learning, and that research could be supported by a more direct 'design experiment' framework for vigorous discussions of the contexts and processes that ensure the attainment of the conditions of online learning. Blended learning is the best selection.

New modern methods of pedagogy should also being practiced to replace the traditional ways of teaching and learning. Discussion, two ways communication, three-ways communication with third parties using technologies such as Skype and video conferencing tools could enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning which simultaneously boost up the understanding of students towards the subject matters.

Industrial linkages and teaching factory implementation in teaching and learning could enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning which simultaneously boost up the understanding of students towards the subject matters and made academician knowledge up to the standard of the industries. This method is an important and integral component of the Teaching Factory Concept is the industry project work in which staff and students work closely as a team on real-life industry problems with cost, quality, reliability and deadline constraints, and often requiring multi-disciplinary capabilities residing in different schools

Facilities quality

In the research conducted by Huang (2015), he mentioned that in building the world-class research universities in China, the universities should pay high investment on research and education as well as in infrastructures and technologies. It is a must for a world class university to have excellent research and development, high quality of education, a world class infrastructures as well as world class technologies. By having all these, the promise and dream to be a world class university will comes true. Matzdorf and Greenwood (2015) found that, it is because the high quality facilities of a university that made students enrolled into that institution.

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Those facilities will facilitates their learning process and also improve the teaching quality delivered by the academician in that particular university.

Here, we can see that, having high quality facilities is crucial for any institution which wanted to be a world class university. This is not happen in UniKL Business School. The lack of facilities really affects the quality of teaching and learning. The university only has two computer lab, not enough classrooms to cater the high numbers of students, no sports facilities, only one small library with limited references and poor access to researches and journals. This is far beyond lower if compared not only to the other world class universities but also nearby competing institutions in Kuala Lumpur. In order to be a world class university, UniKL Business School and other universities world class to be should have world class facilities as well (Verbik, 2015). Therefore, UniKL Business School is far behind the mission to be the world class university if this element is taken into the consideration.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion world class universities or world class university to-be must never forget that they are very much embedded in their countries and their regions. The great universities become economic hotspots and play a huge role in their region. Same goes to UniKL Business School. As mentioned by Marginson (2014), to be the world class university, a university must be the best in the market, the best in the district, the best in the state, the best in the country, the best in the region and the best in the continent. The world class universities must have strong base of internal aspects be in the human resource, the teaching and learning, the facilities, the curriculum, the operational aspects as well as the products they produce and producing. All these are important elements that will make any institution strong and can be called as World Class University. In order to be a world class university, the manpower (academician and support staffs) is deemed important same goes to UniKL Business School. Students are also the asset of any higher learning institutions. It is the ultimate product of any universities in the world. The quality of any university mostly measured by looking to the graduates it produced. The higher the quality of the graduate, the higher will be the quality of any university. In order to be a world class university, UniKL Business School and other universities world class to be should have world class students and graduates as well (Mittelman, 2017). A world class university to be should strengthen it teaching and learning aspects in order to be the real world class institution. Many world class universities in the world not only strong externally but they have strong teaching and

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learning programs with various teaching and learning techniques implemented and embedded into the sessions. In order to be a world class university, UniKL Business School should pay high investment on research and education as well as in infrastructures and technologies. It is a must for a world class university to have excellent research and development, high quality of education, a world class infrastructures as well as world class technologies. Thus, with this analysis and suggestions, UniKL Business School should take immediate action to curb the problem and take all recommendation into the consideration and the management should take immediate actions to overcome this problem by applying all the outlined proposed strategies to be a world class university as it dreams.

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