

# HIGHER EDUCATION OF UK PROGRAMMES IN ASIAN MARKET—STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract**— Asia being the largest continent with diversified people and rich culture has always been the “apple of eye “for waving the war and setting up colonies by the western countries. Though, the system of colonies has been shifted completely by 21<sup>st</sup> century, Asian market is a favourite flavour for Liberalisation, Globalisation and Privatisation for many western countries.

With a distinct likeness towards the western culture, system, ideologies etc., Education has not been an exemption. Although, Asians are known for their unique education system in the world with the worlds first university in Asia (Nalanda University, India), they still have an ardent love and desire for the Higher Education system of the West. With the liberalised economy of the world, there is a wide corridor for the market of Western Education system in Asia. The past two decades have seen the emergence of International Market for Higher Education with a huge development. The players of the market are increasing as ever before.

This paper also highlights on the students perspective in choosing the UK education system in Asian Market. This study will enhance the international strategy of marketing higher education in Asia. The paper will try to answer the choice and preferences of the UK education in Asia rather than in the UK. A set of variables will be identified based on different constructs and these constructs will be analysed to find out the reason behind the preference of students in pursuing UK programmes in Asian market.

**Index Terms**—Asia, UK programmes, International Market, Higher Education.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The world has witnessed many revolutions in the past century. With the introduction of Industrial, Green and White revolution, there has been a silent revolution, which has been emerging gradually with the advent of LPG and borderless concept. The silent revolution is nonetheless but Education. The revolutionary change is fast gripping like the changes of wind in the Asian market. Asia is the largest continent holding 60% of population in the world. The Continent also comprises the strongest economies of the world like Japan, India, China, Singapore etc., and the Top ranking Educational Institutes are also located in Japan ,South Korea, Singapore etc., Higher education is an important ingredient in the economic –socio development of any country. The enrollment ratio in the Asian region has comparatively increased during the past two decades but it still pose a great challenge with the shortage of qualified staff, quality education, financial constraints etc., These challenges paved way for the International programmes in Asian market.

Students are the primary asset of any organisation and they play different roles in different situations: they are considered as product in a process, internal customer in utilising campus facilities, they are the labourers in the process of learning and the internal customer of the delivery of the course material. [1] customer orientation is generally accepted principle according to the survey conducted and examined.[2] Asian Market and

students had always been the hub of choice among the overseas education community. The transnational borderless education allow students to take advantage of international degree programs while remaining in their home countries.

## II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The UK is a popular destination for Higher Education compared to the other European countries. The UK overtook Australia in 2009 to become the second most important destination for International Students. They are regarded as having high standards and quality of education with International recognition. The sudden unpopularity of choosing UK as their destination is that the country places exorbitant financial demands on students with tightening visa regulations. On account of this many students prefer to study UK programmes and other International programmes in Asia rather than in Europe

The other reasons for the students to choose the UK programmes apart from the UK is to avoid military service and to escape from civil unrest and persecution [3] especially in countries like Middle East, Africa etc., International students choose the programmes based on the reputation and content of the module[4][5]. The students also choose the UK programmes in their home country due to lack of adjustment to a new cultural climate which can be described as culture shock [6]. The students faced difficulties of food, accomodation, racial problems, failures and disgrace, adpation to the environment etc., [7]

## III. RISE OF ASIA

Asia being the largest continent and diversified people and rich culture has always been the “apple of eye “for waving the war and setting up colonies by the western countries. Though, the European colonies has been shifted completely by 21<sup>st</sup> century, Asian market still remains a favourite flavour for Liberalisation, Globalisation, Privatisation, Internationalisation, diversification, decentralisation and increased competition in higher education for many western countries. These concepts are also the challenges faced by most of the countries in Asia [8].

With a distinct likeness towards the western culture, system, ideologies etc., Education has not been an exemption. Although, Asians are known for their unique education system in the world with the worlds first university in Asia (Nalanda University, India), they still have an ardent love and desire for the Higher Education system of the West. With the liberalised economy of the world, there is a wide corridor for the Western Education system to commence and flourish its markets in Asia. The past two decades have seen the emergence of International Market for Higher Education with a huge development. Since, Higher Education has shifted itself from Service Industry to Business sector [9][10].

The players of the market are increasing as ever before. Marketing theories and concepts are applied in many universities in the present scenario [11].with the purpose to gain competitive advantage.

Asian countries import colleges ,foreign programmes or universities from countries with well respected education systems or the foreign institutions in order survive the economic competitiveness as well as to increase international reputation. Indians and Chinese dominated the list of students pursuing their higher education abroad.

Asian countries target on these international programmes which has respectful quality education as well as allow the countries to construct their system of education rapidly than investing in their own institutions and local programmes. Due to the liberal policies and framework, Asia has been the recent hub of choice to pursue their higher education with the similar UK and US programmes. Africans also chose Asia as their destination for the higher education, since similar UK and US programmes are offered in Asian market itself and at a low cost as compared to UK programmes in UK.

#### IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

##### A. Objective

The objective of this study is to identify the indicators as well as to develop and validate the new instrument pertaining to the students perspective on Higher Education of UK programmes in Asian Market. The study also attempts to assess the perceptions of the students towards UK programmes in Asia

##### B. Development of Research Instrument

The Instrument was basically categoristed into two sections. Part a deals with the personal profile of the students, Part B deals with the factors that induces students to choose the UK programmes in Asia rather than in the UK and Part C includes an open ended question on suggestions relaing to the UK programmes offered by the Asian Universities. These factors are catagorised into 5 constructs and further they are classified into 26 variables based on the services offered by the University. The items were measured on a 5 point likert scale that varied from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree;

##### C. Limitations

The Data collection is limited to the UK programmes offered in a Malaysian University college. The sample size is restricted to the population of this University.

##### D. Data Collecton

Data was collected from students of Level 2 and Level 3 in a Malaysian University college which offers the UK programmes during August 2014. The area of the study has been taken as Malaysia, since it is considered as Asias’s leading education hub. The Ministry of education encourages the establishment of the renowned instiutions abroad and intends to make the education sector as an economic endeavour by attracting more foreign students.The sample size was determined by using [12] sampling techniques. A total of 408 questionnaires were returned and found to be useful which represents 81.6% of response rate.

##### E. Analysis

200 samples were collected for the purpose of pilot study in order to ensure the relibility and validity of the Instrument. To ensure the effectiveness of factor analysis, cronbach’s alpha

coefficient and critical analysis of correlation of the data matrix are required [13]. The alpha co-efficient of all the items were above 0.90 and inter item toal correlations of these variables were more than 0.30 except for one which has been deleted for the purpose of the study [14]. The Overall alpha variation showed as 0.898. The study also attempted to proceed with the other statistical bases for factor analysis which is Bartet test of spherity, which provides the statistical probability, that there is significant correlation among the other variables [15]. The KMO measures of sample adequacy indicated a clear variation of index as 0.901 with  $\chi^2 = 3566.485$  ( $p=0.000$ ) for the sutiability of factor analysis.

The study adopted Principal component analysis by using varimax rotation with 25 items from Section B of the Questionnaire. All the 25 items were remained for further analysis since the loadings showed  $\pm 0.40$  [16]. Therefore, factor loadings are considered significant for the study.A total of 5 factors has been exracted for the study which has been grouped based on these analysis. These variables has been catageorised into 25 under this 5 constructs. All the 5 constructs with an alpha variations of 0.670 to 0.901 indicates that the varibles were internally consistent.

TABLE 1: CFA

<b>AFM</b>	
Value of the $\chi^2$ ( $p=0.000$ )	600.02
Normed $\chi^2$	1.950
GFI	0.852
RMSEA	0.
<b>Incremental Fit Indices</b>	
NFI	0.800
TLI	0.902
CFI	0.911
RFI	0.822
<b>Parsimony Fit Indices</b>	
AGFI	0.850
PNFI	0.753

TABLE II : Construct Reliability of Latent Dimensions

	TC	AS	AF	CI	SS
Construct Reliability	0.829	0.833	0.844	0.801	0.750

The study conducted convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity in order to ensure the validity of the questionnairre. The standard loadings indicated the evidence of convergent validity which ranges between 0.50 and 0.80. Therefore the evidence proved to be an asepect of convergent validity which also showed an indication of construct reliability. The instrument validity is proved with the extracted variance estimates which are greater than the squared inter construct correlations which proves that each construct/factors are different or unique. The significant correlation between the factors are positive and this indicates the nomological validity.

#### V. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

408 samples were used for the purpose of analysis of the study based on the relibility results of the pilot study. The Five constructs were classified and grouped as Cost, Module content, Teaching and Learning, Institution and Infrastructure and Traning process. The final results based on the students perception revealed as follows,

The study reveals that 62.5% of the students are male and 37.5% of them are female. Majority (92%) of the students are pursuing their Bachelors degree under the UK programmes. Majority of the students pursue Accounting and Engineering courses followed by the Management Courses. Majority (54.4%) of the respondents are undergoing their final year courses of UK programmes. Majority of the students are Africans(47.5%) followed by Chinese (30.4%) who pursue the UK programmes in Malaysia. This shows a clear indication that African and Chinese students prefer UK programmes in Asia rather than in UK.

#### *Multiple Comparisons and Tukey test*

The Findings of the study reveal that there is a significant difference on students perception about the UK programmes offered in Asia. Based on the Tukey test of Multiple comparisons it is revealed that African students have a higher score on the perception factors Followed by Chinese, Malay and other races.

Based on the ANOVA F test and the homogeneity test there is a significant difference between the mean scores based on the preference factors and the courses taken by the students.

Using the Tukey test it can be revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean score of preference factors and the level of study.

t test

Based on the t-test it has been revealed that there is no difference between the preference factors and the gender of the students.

#### *Cost Factor*

Majority of the students believe that it because of the low cost and high standards of education, they pursue the UK programmes in Asia. Majority of the students believe that there should an improvement in the flexibility of the immigration process at a reasonable cost. African students feel that there is stringent procedures in the immigration and visa process of International students especially Africans. The students who pursue higher education under the UK programmes feel that the travelling cost is quite expensive and there should be relaxation in the travelling costs.

#### *Module Content*

The manifestation also reveals that students prefer the UK programmes especially for its professional recognition and International standard in case of courses like Accountancy. They also support on the views of exemption of papers in case of professional accounting streams like ACCA which is recognised globally. The responses are quite satisfactory in case of practical oriented courses offered by the UK programmes. The respondents also revealed that there is short term certificate courses during their period of study offered by the local programmes which supports them with the graduate courses.

#### *Teaching and Learning*

Manifestations also revealed that there is high professionalism in teaching learning process in Asian market. The Findings also revealed that the teachers are more approachable and the mentoring system is highly effective in Asia. The respondents are not satisfied with the students staff ratio, which is quite inappropriate.

#### *Institution and Infrastructure*

Students responses manifests that the infrastructure need to be improved and its not adequate in relation to the fees that has been charged. Adequate books and journals are available in the

library. Respondents have a neutral option over the preference of Asian author or western authors for the reference purposes of their text books.

#### *Training*

The study also indicates that the students have ample opportunities in case of part time jobs which will necessitate by meeting their ends. The respondents opine that adequate placement and training opportunities are not provided by the Institution. The Institution fails to motivate students to participate in extra curricular activities. The respondents are of the opinion that there is adequate training for the IELTS, TOFEL programmes.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The UK programmes are well positioned among the International Students in Asian Market, with various factors attracting the students to join the programmes. The high quality of UK education programmes are a major factor in attracting the students with its international recognition and professional accreditation. Besides, Malaysia is also seen as a potential country that welcomes International students compared to its competitors in asian continent. Despite major attractions there are some obstacles as per the perceptions of the students. The difficulty in obtaining visa as well as renewal of the visa and immigration process are stringent. More focus is required on the placement and training process which may help the students to stabilise themselves in future. The student staff ratio programmes need to be more appropriate in order to ensure a comfortable learning process among the students who are pursuing the UK programmes. The programmes should be widely available and marketed to other countries apart from China and Africa. Much of the previous studies has focussed on the effectiveness of teaching learning process in transnational higher education[17]. But failed to focus on the perspective factors and the satisfaction of the students who pursue International programmes.

The main purpose of this study is to shed its light on the students perception towards the UK programmes in Asian market as well as to discover the extent to which students are satisfied with their learning process of these programmes in their Institution. This study thus provides a birds eye view on the perception of students pursuing international programmes especially the UK programmes which might be useful for the policy makers and decision makers in Higher Education Institutions as well as the UK universities offering the UK programmes.

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