



EMPLOYABILITY AMONG THE B40 GROUP GRADUATES FROM MALAYSIAN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to establish the fundamentals of the novel employability among the B40 group Graduates from Malaysian HLIs. The aim is in line with the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Malaysia Plans to nurture quality human capital with good values focusing on B40 group, relevant skills and knowledge to meet industry demand and spur economic growth through greater industry-academia collaboration. The project objectives are to elucidate the ways industry and HLIs collaborate to meet industry demand and spur economic growth, to determine the factors that help to improve the education quality for better students' outcomes and institutional excellence, to determine the factors that causes issues among B40 graduates, to assess the B40 students' performance in HLIs and finally to assess the employment demand among the B40 graduates in the job market.

Keywords: *B40, Employability, Higher Learning Institutions, Industry, Unemployment*

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

This study discusses the detailed knowledge and understanding of the interactions between industry and HLIs to meet industry demand. The issues in the quality of Malaysian graduates will also be justified. Specifically, it focuses on how the B40 graduates are performing in HLIs and in the job market. Significantly, focusing on B40 group, the outcomes will contribute towards nurture quality human capital with good values and economic growth. The society and country at large benefits to meet industry demand and spur economic growth.

Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to elucidate the ways industry and HLIs collaborate to meet industry demand and spur economic growth. It also determine the factors that help to improve the education quality for better students' outcomes and institutional excellence. The study also determine the factors that causes issues among the B40 graduates while in HLIs and assesses the B40 students' performance in HLIs. The study assess the employment demand among the B40 graduates in the job market. Finally, the study describe the detailed understanding the ways industry and HLIs collaborate to meet industry demand and spur economic growth. There will be a detailed knowledge and understanding on the factors that help to improve the education quality for better students' outcomes and institutional excellence. Specifically, the proposed research work will show the performance of B40 group graduates in Malaysia. This research will also will clarify those aims under the 12th Malaysia Plan (2021-2025), that has demonstrated its intention to nurture quality human capital with good values, relevant skills and knowledge to meet industry demand and spur economic growth through greater industry-academia collaboration. This will directly benefit the subsequent pilot-scale or field scale production studies.

Methodology

Firstly, the study went through a concrete review of the literature. The study methodically searched the following focused database sources from Web of Science. In addition to that, Google Scholar was used to find more information on the discussed topic. The literature reviews were also extracted from the academic databases. Some of the search words and phrases are Employability, Group B40 graduates, Factors affecting group B40 in Higher Learning Institution, and B40 performance in education. The study focused on papers published since year 2010 until 2020. The Exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling method was used to accumulate the knowledge on the topic. The research findings systematically establish the tactical importance of Group B40 in HLIs. This paper summarizes the scholarly writings as well as reviews the findings of empirical investigations. Some limitations are discussed, and future areas of research are proposed.

Results

Malaysian government is strongly committed to Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) development, and the annual total expenditure on HLIs is equivalent to 7.7% of annual Government expenditure. Education is equally important for the poor group (B40) in Malaysia to improve their living standard. Poole, Alvarez, Penagos, and Vazquez (2013) stressed out that education is very important for poor people especially among young people in improving their standard of living. Ministry aims to ensure that all Malaysians have the opportunity to fulfil their potential regardless of background. However, education quality issues are reflected by its poor showing in international benchmark tests like the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the modest rankings of its universities. To deal with unemployment problems in line with Malaysia's Vision 2020 to create a high-income economy, the government allocated RM200 million to the Graduate Employability Taskforce which in 2012 produced The National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012–2017. The government has designed and introduced the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education) as part of the country's strategic plan towards becoming a developed nation. It also align with Tenth Malaysia Plan (10th MP) and Eleven Malaysia Plan (11th MP) where the government focuses on increasing the living standard of bottom 40% household (B40) by providing more access to education opportunities to people in this group to boost their education and skill attainment. The B40 group of people have fewer choices socially and economically. They are facing many hitches such as unemployment, low income and low quality of social services such as education and healthcare. According to the Economic Planning Unit (2015), all the B40 households irrespective of their ethnicity will be given greater focus. Accessibility to higher education and skills training among students from B40 households will be enhanced through special programmes. More B40 households will have family members with HLIs' education, from 9% in 2014 to 20% in 2020. The income share of the B40 to national household income will also increase from 16.5% in 2014 to 20% in 2020. So, it is important to provide emphasize on this B40 group graduated

student to see a positive impact on the B40 group from the allocation provided by the government to the B40 graduates.

Findings

Under the 12th Malaysia Plan (2021-2025), Malaysia has demonstrated its intention to nurture quality human capital with good values, relevant skills and knowledge to meet industry demand and spur economic growth through greater industry-academia collaboration. Malaysians are categorised into three different income groups: Top 20% (T20), Middle 40% (M40), and Bottom 40% (B40). In year 2016, Prime Minister's Department's Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU) approach is to elevate the B40 households to middle class society through their level of income and the creation of wealth. They wanted to them to move from low-value traditional industry economic activities to those that are high productivity, innovative and creative in a bid to build capacity. In the 10th Malaysia Plan (2011-2015), there were a shift from poverty to B40. In year 2015, the B40 consists of 2.7 million households. The Government took intensive efforts to bridge the education and skill attainment gap and increase productivity. A greater proportion of the B40's income was from self-employment and transfers. So, it is important for us to identify the reason for students from B40 to self-employed. The B40's heads of households typically held lower educational qualifications and were employed in lower-skilled jobs in 2014. The 9th Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) highlighted that there was deterioration of the B40's income shares from 14% (1990) to 13.5% (2004). From 2009 to 2014, there are about 2.7 million B40 households with an average monthly income of RM2,537. Number of unemployed graduates in 2018 was 162.0 thousand, increased 4.6 per cent from 2017 (154.9 thousand). The significant reason for graduates outside labour force was housework/ family responsibilities, 34.5 per cent (280.1 thousand) in 2018. Although Malaysia is suffering a labour shortage in certain areas, graduate unemployment is an ongoing problem. In Malaysia, graduate's employability and skills has been continually debated (Abdul Karim et al., 2012) to determine whether they possess high disposition and knowledge. As showned in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025, the following study explores the performance of graduates from B40 and how well these graduates are employed in the job market.

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Author's Biography



Dr. Kalaimagal Ramakrishnan is currently working at University of Nottingham Malaysia, as Deputy Associate Dean (Accreditation and Industry Liaison). She has more than 20 years experience. She teaches Computing modules. Her research interest includes Management Information System, Knowledge Management, Big Data and Education discipline area. In year 2013, she obtained her Doctorate Degree in Computer Science, majoring in Knowledge Management System from University of Malaya, Malaysia. She obtained her first degree

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