The Effect of Country Image and University Reputation: Where to Study?

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Abstract

The study focuses to know either country image or university reputation is more dominant in attracting students who have planned to further study. The samples have been taken from all over Malaysia. The analysis part use SEM and Multiple Regression to show the results. The findings show that both country image and university reputation are important. They must come together.

Introduction

It is particularly interesting to know which one is more dominant either country image or reputation of the university to attract students. Studies has been done to determine how the country image and university reputation towards perceived quality. It is because without the existence of perceived quality, country image and reputation is less significant for the university to attract students. Country's image is a proxy which provides the connotation of quality to attract students. Similarly, the good reputation of the university provides a good overview to anyone to further their education. Here arise the question that the perceived quality will be a partial mediator or mediators fully. It will be answered through an empirical comparison using the program SEM (Structural Equation Model).

It is the focus of this study to see which countries of choice for students to continue their studies and which university they want to go. These papers have been prepared in accordance with the following steps: rough description of the higher education sector and the destination which

attracts students from Malaysia. Then, research methodology and findings will be presented. This paper concludes with key findings, limitations and future research will be addressed.

It is clear, a university student in Malaysia, 20-30% after the bachelor's degree will going to further. While after the Diploma, 75-85% of students will further their studies at degree level. After a master's degree, around 20% of them will continue pursuing a PhD. 90-95% of students from certificate level to further their education. So researchers want to know which country is an option for students to continue their studies if all requirements are provided. This means that we assume that if a student does not have financial problems and the place is provided, which country and which university of their choice. This is the purpose of this study. In addition, which one is a strong appeal, whether the country's image or reputation of the university.

Literature Review

Review of the literature on country image has lot, but it is only about the product. There are not many articles discussed about the applicable service. And review of services related to the higher education sector as universities are also very limited. In-depth empirical study of this issue is also lacking, especially when researchers use quantitative methods and qualitative methods in one study, is unavailable. Therefore, researchers feel compelled to make this kind of research.

Higher education sector is very important to every country because the sector is contributing to the supply of skilled workers who will make a country's economic progress. The education sector in Malaysia has undergone rapid development, starting with one university in 1962, but now in 2011 have 20 public universities and 18 private universities. This is not included several university colleges will be upgraded to universities and foreign universities to establish branches, such as Monash University, University of Nottingham and University Curtin. With four universities have world-class research university and two more at any time be converted to

research university, Malaysia has been determined to be the hub of educational excellence in the region could become a reality.

Malaysia is also taking a fairly aggressive initiative to attract foreign students to local universities. Currently there are 86923 foreign students studying in Malaysia, where the students of Iran are the highest, followed by students from Indonesia and China and other countries (MOHE, 2011). Malaysia is a new player in the movement of international students (International Student Mobility) **(1)**. He added the main reasons international students choose a country such as the perceived quality of education and the educational reputation of a country.

Policies of liberalization and democratization of education through the higher education act by the government of Malaysia has resulted in a sharp increase the number of foreign students in centers of higher education both public and private sectors throughout the country. Number of international students in Malaysia has increased from only 32 people in 1970 had increased to 126.005 in 1999 in all universities and colleges, whether public or private **(2).** In 2004 alone, there are 39.763 students entering private universities **(3)**.

US and UK attracting nearly 80 percent of international students **(4)**. To date the U.S. is the market leader in the higher education sector, followed by UK and Australia **(5)**. In the US, the education sector is the second largest export market after the agriculture sector and the local education sector is the second largest industry after health care industry **(6)**. This show how big and important to the education sector, U.S. economy In terms of total investment, countries such as Australia, Canada, U.S. and Korea each provides 1.1, 1.5, 2.5 and 2.7 percent of their GDP to the higher education sector **(7)**. This figure is still much to be achieved by Malaysia.

It is important that a university has a good reputation. Now, identity, image and reputation of a university has attracted much attention due to globalization and internationalization **(8)**. **(8)**

stressed that for a university to attract students from all over the world, it is important to manage its reputation internationally. Of course, this reputation shows how the perception of others towards us **(9)**. University ranking systems are also growing in popularity and emerge as an important resource for students and the public to know the strength of a university **(10)**. Ranking system like the U.S. News & World Reports "America's Best Colleges", Times Higher Education and Tsinghua Report were among them. **(11)** reported identifies the need to create a federation of international universities to ensure they can compete successfully in the global environment. According to **(12)** all departments, faculties and universities also require a scorecard or the like to provide feedback on any factor contingency that may arise.

There are few studies conducted on university reputation, but they are done in developed countries. There was a study on student decisions to choose a university based on certain criteria which they have preferred a bit more quantity, but it is also done in the UK and Australia. Very limited research linking the country actually image and reputation as well as the presence of university quality perceived conducted in developing countries such as Malaysia. This kind of research that combines qualitative and quantitative methods to the issue of country image and reputation of the university is too limited. Most of those studies focused on aspects of selection criteria to the university is an educational and non-country specific. Only the study by **(2)** that affected the characteristics of the country. Furthermore, very limited research that has the respondent of local students and foreign students. Only the study **(2)** and **(5)** using international students. The study was made with a mix of local students and international students, although the percentage of international students is only 6.2 percent, or 114. It is very important to know what causes students to pursue studies in specific countries and in particular university. To find and uncover the secrets of this study is very relevant and timely. In addition, research on country

image and reputation of the University of Malaysia and international respondents is very small in number.

Methodology and Research Design

Sample Size

The study population includes all students at universities in Malaysia are either public or private university. Institutions of higher learning such as university colleges, colleges, polytechnics, college institutes are not included. However, the populations are all university students at certificate, diploma, undergraduate, master's degree until PhD. This study used simple random sampling, in which each member of the population are known and have an equal chance to be selected **(13)**. A total of 1852 respondents were successfully collected from all over Malaysia like in Table 1.

Table 1

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Country Image	.952	46
University Reputation	.968	29
Perceived Quality	.977	35
Intention to Study	.973	20

Validity

Factor analysis reduced the 46 items in the 35-country image. 29 items remained in the university reputation. Similarly, the 35 items maintained in the perceived quality and the 20 items in the intention to study. CFA was conducted on four variables after factor analysis. Once again, the number of items in the country image variables was further reduced by 20, live just 15 items. Items in the university reputation have been reduced by 17 again to live only 12. While the perceived quality items have been reduced by 22 to 13 live alone. The last item on the

intention to study has been reduced by 11 and lived only 9 items. Two things were looked at: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI). Since values of RMSEA for all variables were below 0.08 and values of GFI for all variables were above 9.50, the model were said to be reasonably fit. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Variables	**RMSEA**	**GFI**
Country Image	.050	.973
University Reputation	.041	.985
Perceived Quality	.050	.973
Intention to Study	.064	.976

Hypothesis 1

Country Image will have a significant and positive effect on Intention to Study

Hypothesis 2

University Reputation will have a significant and positive effect on Intention to Study

The result of inter-correlation analysis above shows a fairly strong correlation between the Country Image and University Reputation (r =. 644), while the correlation between the intention to Country Image Study was moderately strong (.518) and the correlation between the intention to University Reputation Study was moderately strong (.667). Both these correlations are positive and all the correlation is significant at $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 3

Perceived Quality will mediate the relationship between Country Image and Intention to Study

Hypothesis 4

Perceived Quality will mediate the relationship between University Reputation and Intention to Study

Multiple Regression

Model Summary[d]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.692[a]	.479	.478	12.78273
2	.729[b]	.532	.531	12.12107
3	.730[c]	.533	.532	12.10517

a. Predictors: (Constant), TotPQ

b. Predictors: (Constant), TotPQ, TotUR

c. Predictors: (Constant), TotPQ, TotUR, TotCI

d. Dependent Variable: TotITS

The three predictor variables entered into the regression model at $p < .05$. This means that the three predictor variables was a factor in the desire to further their education. The correlation between the variable and variable-criterion predictor variable is shown. Note that the correlation of these three predictors of overall criterion variable is .53 (Model 3). R^2 value of .479 (Model 1) shows that a total of 47.9 percent (R = 692) a change in the variable criterion (The desire to further their education) is caused by a change in the predictor variable, the perceived quality. This means that the perceived quality is a key factor to the desire to further their education. R2 value of .532 (r =. 73) for Model 2 shows that a total of 53.2 percent in kriterion variables (desire for further studies) is due to changes in the combination of the two variables predictors of total perceived quality and total university reputation. Note that the combination of the three predictor

variables accounted for 73 percent (r =. 53) changes in the variance of the variables kriterion desire to further their education.

ANOVA[d]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	277609.170	1	277609.170	1698.974	.000[a]
	Residual	302286.538	1850	163.398		
	Total	579895.708	1851			
2	Regression	308240.103	2	154120.051	1049.005	.000[b]
	Residual	271655.605	1849	146.920		
	Total	579895.708	1851			
3	Regression	309098.627	3	103032.876	703.127	.000[c]
	Residual	270797.081	1848	146.535		
	Total	579895.708	1851			

a. Predictors: (Constant), TotPQ

b. Predictors: (Constant), TotPQ, TotUR

c. Predictors: (Constant), TotPQ, TotUR, TotCI

d. Dependent Variable: TotITS

Results of data analysis using SPSS program showed that significant predictors of the three, the country's image, reputation of the university and the quality of responses, such as perception of quality (B = .41, p <.05), reputation of the university (B =. 33, p <.05) and the image of the country (B =. 05, p <.05) are significant indicates that these variables are factors to the desire to further their education. Researchers reject the null hypothesis and reported that overall, the three predictor variables that accounted for 73.0 percent (r =. 73) changes in the variance in the desire to further their education [F (3, 1848) = 703.13, p <.05].

The results show that significant, perceived quality (B = .69, p <.05) alone accounted for 47.9 percent (r =. 69) changes in the variance in the desire to continue education [F (1, 1850) = 1698.974, p <. 05]. The combination of the two variables of perceived quality (B =. 43, p <.05],

and university reputation (B =. 35, p <.05) accounted for 53.2 percent (=. 73) changes in the variance in the desire for further studies [F (2, 1849) = 1049.005, p <.05]. In addition, when the country image predictor variables (B = .05, p <.05) taken together, the three predictor variables that accounted for 53.3 percent (r = .73) changes in the variance in the desire to further their education [F (3 , 1848) = 703,127, p <.05].

Based on the results of regression analysis on a range, researchers reported that the perceived quality, university reputation and country image is a factor to the desire to continue learning.

Note that the ANOVA results in regression 3 shows that a significant, all three predictor variables are factors to the desire to further their education [F (3, 1848) = 703,127, P <.05]. Results-ANOVA testing showed that all three regression models are formed by various kriterion variables and predictor variables were significant. / for example, models 1 and 2 are represented by the decision below.

Model 1: F (1, 1850) = 1698.974, p <.05

Model 2: F (2, 1849) = 1049.005, p <.05

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	33.764	1.910		17.673	.000
	TotPQ	.420	.010	.692	41.219	.000
2	(Constant)	18.147	2.110		8.601	.000
	TotPQ	.260	.015	.428	17.633	.000
	TotUR	.279	.019	.350	14.439	.000
3	(Constant)	16.308	2.240		7.281	.000
	TotPQ	.248	.016	.408	15.935	.000
	TotUR	.262	.020	.330	12.853	.000
	TotCI	.037	.015	.054	2.421	.016

a. Dependent Variable: TotITS

Results showed that significant of the three different regression models are formed kriterion variables and predictor variables can be generalized to the population. For example, model 3 is represented by the following equation: Model 3: The desire to further their education = 16,308 + .248 (TotPQ) + .262 (TotUR) + .037 (TotCI). The three predictor variables of the standard regression coefficients, the total perceived quality (B =. 408, p <.05), total university reputation (B =. 330, p <.05) and total country image (B =. 054, p <.05) are significant indicates that these variables are factors to the desire to further their education.

Excluded Variables[c]

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance
1	TotCI	.148[a]	6.756	.000	.155	.570
	TotUR	.350[a]	14.439	.000	.318	.431
2	TotCI	.054[b]	2.421	.016	.056	.508

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), TotPQ

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), TotPQ, TotUR

c. Dependent Variable: TotITS

This table shows the predictor variables are not included in each model. For example, for model 1, although the two predictor variables in the table above are significant at p <0.5, the variables in the beta value (estimated value of the beta when it was included in the model range) is too small, so variable -predictor variables are removed from the model by stepwise procedure. The value of partial correlation showed a correlation between each predictor variable with variable kriterion. Note that the correlation is weak (<.70). Collinearity Tolerance values of> .10 indicates that the study data did not have the problem of multicollinearity.

Residuals Statistics[a]

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	42.9618	139.0784	111.5535	12.92246	1852
Residual	-61.45264	50.85759	.00000	12.09536	1852
Std. Predicted Value	-5.308	2.130	.000	1.000	1852
Std. Residual	-5.077	4.201	.000	.999	1852

a. Dependent Variable: TotITS

Rasidual value standard is a little outside the environment + 3.3 indicates that the study data did not have the problem of extreme values (outliers). He qualified for the extreme value regression testing range.

Conclusion

The study found that university reputation attracts more students to come to a particular university rather than the country image. However the country image is the second important. The study concluded that both are important and should come together.

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