Strategic Planning of Centre for Educational Extension (PKP) for Key Performance Index Enhancement of National University of Malaysia (UKM) As a Research University

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to discuss the strategic planning of Centre for Educational Extension (Pusat Kembangan Pendidikan) for key performance index enhancement of National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) as a research university. There are five strategic action plans have been identified and will be systematically implemented in stages by Centre for Educational Extension to ensure that the said plans will have an impact and positive effect on the growth of research in UKM. The five said strategic action plans are: i) Increasing the total number of graduate students, ii) Expansion of several graduate programs by the faculty to be managed by Centre for Educational Extension, iii) Intensification of writing and publishing by graduate students managed by Centre for Educational Extension, iv) Improving teaching and learning aspects, and v) Intensification of internationalisation program.

Key words: Strategic planning, Centre for Educational Extension (PKP), key performance index, National University of Malaysia (UKM), research university.

Introduction

Pusat Kembangan Pendidikan (PKP) or known in English language as Centre for Educational Extension is the entity responsible for marketing and management of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia’s academic executive programs. Since its formation as a separate entity in 1966, PKP has increased its capability to manage from four executive programs to more than 58 programs in various study modes currently in several specific lecture centres. PKP is now multiplying efforts to boost itself as the best Malaysian centre to offer academic programs for the professional class in all fields and occupations. Since its formation, the centre has cooperated with UKM to fulfil the objectives of offering further or extension studies (Perdana Annual Report, 2004).

Among the main objectives for the formation of PKP is to give the opportunity of ‘life-long learning’ to those who are interested and qualified. This is due to PKP’s realisation that not all people have the opportunity to pursue studies at a higher level at one time due to being tied down by various commitments. With this caring attitude, PKP has offered various quality programs at undergraduate and graduate level at competitive rates. With these two main elements, that is, ‘life-long learning’ and ‘community service’, PKP has, since 1996, successfully produced 2880 first degree holders and 2303 postgraduates. Indirectly, PKP has contributed to increasing the total number of UKM students, which is very important indeed for consideration in university ranking of Times Higher Education (THE). More significantly, by these two elements of ‘life-long learning’ and ‘community service’, PKP actually supports Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) policy and the core
fields of university. In connection with the recognition of UKM as one of the research universities, PKP feels a calling to put forward several strategic plans to assist UKM in enhancing its performance by not putting the said responsibility squarely on other faculties and institutes.

Method:

The methodology used in this research is qualitative study. This study is more in the form of a library study, that is, historical method and content analysis method by examining several primary and secondary sources such as reports, extracts of minutes of meetings, workshop working papers, annual reports and monographs. In addition, study of non-structured interviews is also done to obtain data.

Results:

Over the timeframe of the next 5 years (2010-2015), PKP has arranged and identified strategic plans to be implemented so as to ensure an increasing graduate student admission simultaneously increasing the capability and status of UKM as a premier research university in Malaysia and South-east Asia (Nordin, 2000). Five strategic action plans have been identified and will be systematically implemented in stages by PKP to ensure that the said plans will have an impact and positive effect on the growth of research in UKM. The five said strategic action plans are:

1. Increasing the total number of graduate students.
2. Expansion of several graduate programs by the faculty to be managed by PKP.
3. Intensification of writing and publishing by graduate students managed by PKP.
4. Improving teaching and learning aspects.
5. Intensification of internationalisation program.

These five strategic plans will be implemented to ensure PKP successfully achieves a target of producing postgraduates by as much as 50% of the total number of students managed by PKP annually.

In order to succeed in the first strategic action plan, that is, increasing the number of graduate students, PKP has taken measures for the purpose of increasing the number of PKP-managed graduate student research. Among the said measures are, using effective and strategic marketing, increasing cooperative and joint-venture programs between private institutions of higher learning (IPTS) and foreign universities, as well as promotion of graduate programs through educational exhibitions inside and outside the country (Johar et al., 2000; Amir et al., 2000).

As for the second strategic action plan, that is, expansion of several graduate student programs by the faculty, PKP has cooperated with the faculty to identify several existing and new graduate programs which can be introduced. In efforts to expand several existing graduate programs and create new ones, several other strategic measures may be implemented, that is, increasing number of lecture centres, increasing the involvement of organisations related to program offers, and increasing the frequency of student intakes at competitive rates. This also includes intensifying discussions and holding on-going roadshows with the faculty (Abu Bakar, 2000; Md. Yunus and Ali, 2000).

With regard to the third strategic action plan, that is, intensification of writing and publishing for graduate students, PKP has prepared several measures to achieve the said plans. Among these measures which will be implemented are the organising of graduate colloquium, and giving guidance and assistance to PKP-managed postgraduates to write books and publish dissertation extracts. PKP will cooperate with the Graduate Management Centre (PPS) and the faculty to ensure the success of this strategic action plan.

PKP also has devised measures for the fourth strategic action plan, that is, enhancement of teaching and learning aspects. Among the measures for realising this action plan are: to identify several aspects of teaching and learning which require improvement, utilising e-learning system and producing the best module for teaching and learning (Mansor, 2000; Salleh, 2000; Embi, n.d.; Abd. Razak, n.d.; Syed Abdullah, 2000; Hussin, n.d.). Among the approaches applied by PKP in the teaching and learning process are an adult learning approach, collaborative and cooperative learning, self-learning, problem-based learning and project-based learning (Anon., 2008). In addition, PKP also stresses on two-way communication aspect of teaching and learning, so that discussion and brainstorming of ideas can be optimally utilised to produce good and high impact research findings. The latest method of study at graduate level introduced is ‘blended learning’ which is expected to enhance the quality level of masters’ and doctor of philosophy students. Improvement of the teaching and learning aspects also focuses on the suggestions and proposals put forward by students in the PKP questionnaire forms (Yaacob et al., 2000; Mohamad, n.d.; Azman, n.d.; Mohd Yassin, n.d.; Rahman, n.d.)

The fifth PKP strategic action plan is the intensification of internationalisation program. Among the measures taken for the plan to succeed is to initiate a short-term program such as edu-tourism with the purpose of not only introducing UKM, but also Malaysia as an educational and tourism hub. In this regard, PKP may cooperate with PPS in sharing staff and cost aspect to explore new opportunities in high potential countries.
Some examples of internationalisation programs which have been implemented by PKP are the Doctor of Philosophy program with University of Riau (UNRI), BBA (Bachelor of Accounting) student program sponsored by Renong in Tashkent, Bachelor of Medicine program in cooperation with University of Padpajaran (UNPAD), Geo-science UKM-ITB program, and Edu-tourism program with Sunmoun University, Korea and Takushoku University, Japan. In addition, PKP can forge cooperation with the International Relations Office (PHA), specifically in student mobility programs. Such cooperation will facilitate forming a network by students themselves and simultaneously upgrade such a network pioneered by students to intervarsity level relations. The student mobility program can be utilised by PKP students who need to conduct field studies, specifically in studies overseas.

**Conclusion:**

PKP has played a major role in ensuring that the purpose of ‘life-long learning’ may be properly offered and managed. The current status of UKM as a research university has given PKP the opportunity to take steps to ensure its role in improving the Key Performance Index (KPI) at a level that UKM can take great pride of as a research university, by focusing on graduate studies in its strategic action planning for the next 5 years. Hence, PKP should utilise all space and opportunity to ensure its position as the best continuing educational centre in Malaysia, simultaneously enhancing the image of UKM as a research university.

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**References**


