

# **TRANSFORMING TO RESEARCH & INNOVATION CAMPUS: STRATEGIES OF UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA (UiTM) MELAKA BRANCH, MALAYSIA**

**Shafinar Ismail, Universiti Teknologi MARA  
Abdul Rahim Ridzuan, Universiti Teknologi MARA**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Universities worldwide are striving to excel in the management of academic achievements, student activities and research and industrial linkages and they need to scrutinise their Critical Success Factor (CSF). In this case, UiTM Melaka branch is not an exception. To achieve excellence, one of the key determinants is proper planning and initiatives in strategizing and systemising the processes involved. The objectives of this paper are to discuss the practices and achievements of UiTM Melaka branch, particularly in research and innovation. The good practices are seen in the top-down commitment by the management, the bottom-up involvement of staff from every level, the culture that encourages cultivating and sharing in every program, continuous improvement in carrying out tasks and responsibilities, reward and recognition for outstanding staff and setting a long-term goal in connecting the industry and community with academia. These good practices have showed various promising results. For instance, UiTM Melaka branch has developed a proper procedure in enhancing the number of index publications as well as securing the highest number of grants for social science among branch campuses. These achievements were obtained through CSFs of UiTM Melaka branch. The CSF identified is (i) publications strategies and research grant administration. CSF has truly encouraged its staff and students to build the university together. As such, adapting CSF has aided the management to excel in achieving its goals.*

**Keywords:** Achievement, Critical Success Factors, Management, Practices, University.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of Critical Success Factor (CSF) has brought forward the best practice for university excellence. It is a management term for an element necessary for an organisation to achieve its mission. It is the critical factor or activity required for ensuring the success of a university in academia. Underpinning this concept has been the on-going commitment of the UiTM Melaka branch management, staff and students in order to meet the university's vision to establish UiTM as a premier university of outstanding scholarship and academic excellence, capable of providing leadership to Bumiputeras's dynamic involvement in all professional fields of world-class standards. This is aimed at producing globally competitive graduates of sound ethical standing.

Therefore, through CSFs, selected indicators are identified and planned by the university management before it is executed by the students, staff and community. These indicators are considered critical in strategic planning. Through this stage, an alignment has been made to make sure the approaches taken to achieve these goals can be performed by all parties. The management provides guidance to ensure the parties can perform and achieve the outcomes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Critical Success Factors

The concept of '*Critical Success Factors*' is well established in many fields of activity and this term is used frequently to refer to the elements selected by an organisation in order to excel in their arena. It is also applied for higher education institutions such as universities, colleges and polytechnics with different contexts of excellence. Excellence may be equated with the reputation and standing of universities and it is highly depended on the performances and the varying missions of institutions. The concept of CSFs was developed in the early 1960s. It was proposed by Ronald Daniel (1961) and it achieved its popularity in 1979 through the efforts of John Rockart. According to Rockart (1979), Ronald Daniel first discussed the idea of CSFs in the management literature, stating that information analysis must focus on "*success factors*" as the new approach to help achieve organisational goals. He further added that Critical Success Factors (CSF) has a limited number of areas which, if satisfactory, will ensure competitive performance in organisations. However, in the context of the present study, CSFs are the actionable solutions executed by the management of the institutions to address the challenges in providing quality education.

Rockart (1979) developed the idea of identifying the CSFs from the viewpoint of chief executives, pointing out that the process of identifying CSFs help to ensure that these factors will receive the necessary attention and are carefully managed by the organisation. Bullen & Rockart (1981) affirmed that:

*"CSFs are the few key areas where 'things must go right' for the business to flourish and for the manager's goals to be attained"*.

Otherwise, Pinto & Slevin (1987) described CSFs as:

*"Factors which, if addressed, will significantly improve project implementation chances"*.

There are numerous views that will suit different purposes and different areas of quality assurance and stakeholders' involvement when identifying key success factors. This concept is adequately vague to offer plentiful grounds for both theoretical and practical research. In the view of university, it is important to consider key success factors as a social phenomenon based on theoretical and cultural considerations. There is a need to identify key success factors through the lens of different key stakeholders, including academic staff and students, society and management. In this context, it is possible to define standards of performance which permit the recognition of excellence. This will elucidate the level of the quality of service provided and achievement attained by university.

### Achievements in Publishing Index Publication for UiTM Melaka Branch

UiTM Melaka branch consists of three (3) campuses, 35 programmes, 7 faculties, more than 1000 staff and nearly 13,000 students. It has many divisions such academic, students' affairs and many more, including division of research and industrial linkages. This division is responsible for research, innovation and publications. One of key performance index of lecturers is to publish articles in the index journal.

UiTM Melaka branch has put-forth various efforts to encourage its staff to conduct research and produce high-quality research works. For this purpose, the Division of Research and Industrial Linkages of UiTM Melaka branch is putting various strategies to achieve these objectives. In order to achieve number of index publications, one of the strategies is to increase number of grants secured. By practicing frequent reminder, (sending email to all lecturers) this will trigger most lecturers to keep up and to stay alert on the submission deadline. Successful grant holder from the previous cycle shared useful tips to ensure submitted proposals have high chance to secure the grants. Those initiatives have encouraged lecturers to apply grants. As a result, number of successful applicants from UiTM Melaka branch increased and was recognised as the campus that secured the highest number of grants.

## METHODOLOGY

### Publications in Index and Referred Journal

The data used in this paper was basically extracted from the university journal database known as PRISMA system. There are two types of data being used which are index journals (ERA, Scopus and WOS) and refereed journal (any other index journals). All the data from the three branches of UiTM Melaka were transformed into histogram beginning from 2015 until 2018.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Trend of Index Journal and Referred Journal

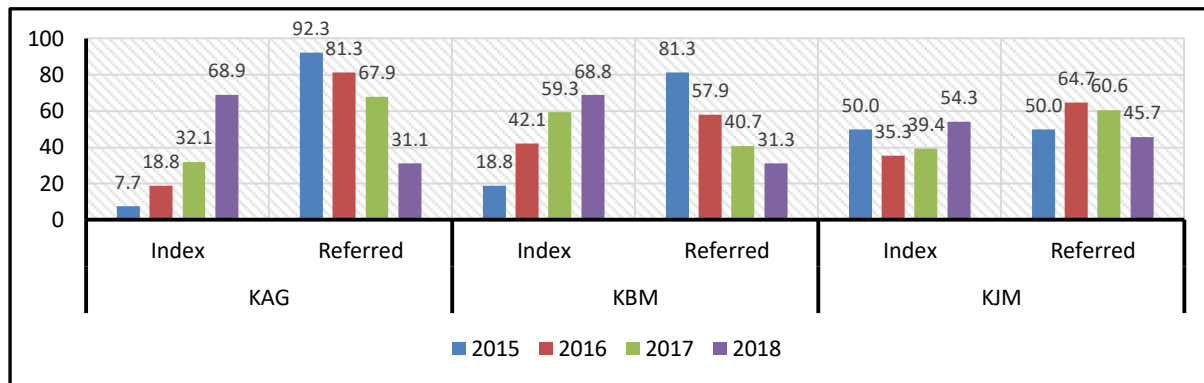
Index publication implemented peer review system to enhance the quality of the journal. Besides, the reliability of peer review improves journal legitimacy when authors often see their manuscripts evolving and refining after rounds of reviews (Casnici et al., 2017; Rigby et al., 2018). Publication in recognized index journal is important for the academia especially for career advancement and this term has been widely recognized and accepted in all universities including UiTM. The trend for index and referred journal are observed in Figure 1. Among the 8 categories of publication, journal is considered as the most active platform for the lecturers to be engaged in academic writing and to enhance their writing skills and portfolio. In the diagram, the trends are classified according to the performance of each UiTM branches (KAG: Alor Gajah campus; KBM: Melaka City campus; KJM: Jasin campus). Based on KAG campus, we found an upward trending for the number of journals published in indexes journal (ERA, Scopus, or WOS) begin from only 7.7% in 2015, followed by 18.8% in 2016, 32.1% in 2017 and twice the amount in 2017, which is 68.9% in 2018. The rapid increase of index journal over the years has reflected the downward trend for publication of referred journal, starting from 92.3% in 2015 and decreases to only 31.1% in 2018. This has indicated that UiTM Melaka lecturers have put higher priority to ensure their journal articles are submitted to index journal as it translates to greater weight for career advancement. Similar trend is also observed for UiTM Melaka City campus, (KBM) but with lower number of published journal (both index and referred). Meanwhile, the trend of index journal published by lecturer in UiTM Jasin campus (KJM) campus is slightly different. Equal amount of journal is published in both index and referred for 2015. However, the following years have showed that, the majority of the journal between the four years of observation, publication in in referred journal is 64.7% and index journal is recorded at 35.3%

for 2016. Better track of publication in index journal is detected in the following year from 2016 and 2017.

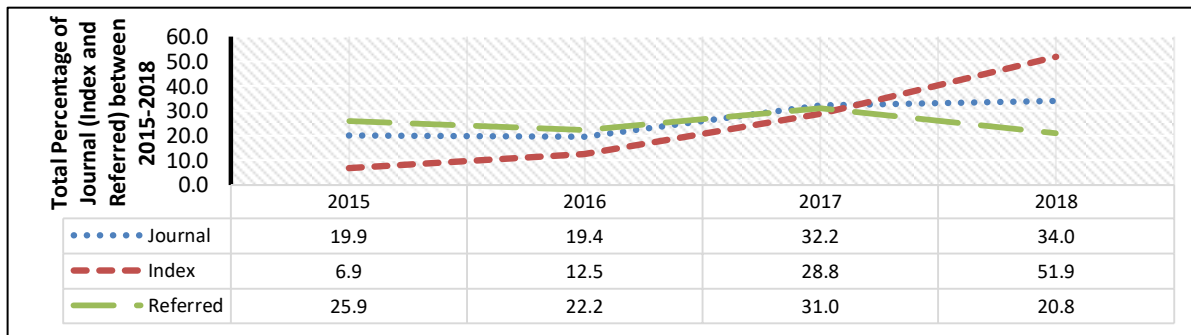
**Trend of Journal (%) for UiTM Melaka from 2015-2018**

Figure 2 shows the overall achievement of UiTM Melaka in index and referred journal publication from 2015 until 2018. First, the amount of publication for journal category has increased from 19.9% in 2015 from all publication categories to 34.0% in 2018. There is a steep upward trend of publication in index journal which represents by red dotted line between 2016 to 2018. The amount of index journal is only 11 journals in 2015 and it has increased to 83 journals in 2018. As more lecturers choose to publish their article in index journal, we can see the decreased trend of referred journal from 2015 to 2016 and 2017 to 2018.

There are many factors contributed to the achievement of more index journal being published in UiTM Melaka. To name a few, the role of PJI has been more intense in promoting research culture to the lecturer through organising many series of workshop, enhancing collaboration with UiTM main campus (UiTM Puncak Alam), supports received from top management in providing internal fund, higher number of government grant receivers and others. Furthermore, the huge increased of published index journal from 46 journals in 2017 to 83 journals in 2018 in this campus is believed from the new performance indicator set by UiTM highest authority that clearly outlined the amount of journals that need to be published by each UiTM lecturer, based on their grade. Besides, the recognition of ERA indexed journal helped to boost this trend as most lecturer have realised that it is easier to publish their paper in ERA as compared to Scopus and WOS/ISI.



**FIGURE 1**  
**TREND OF INDEX JOURNAL AND REFERRED JOURNAL (% OF TOTAL JOURNAL PUBLISHED EACH YEAR) FOR UiTM MELAKA BRANCHES FROM 2015-2018**



**FIGURE 2**  
**TREND OF JOURNAL (%) FOR UiTM MELAKA FROM 2015-2018**

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this article is to identify the performance of UiTM Melaka in term of publications. Overall, there is an upsurge trend of index publication for all three UiTM Melaka branches and this indicates that the university managed to penetrate the research cultures and environment among the stakeholders of the university.

As UiTM Melaka is focusing on index journal publication, a tremendous increase was seen in index proceedings. This happens due to the establishing of key performance index that targeted index journal. Index journal can contribute to University Ranking as International University rankings will evaluate the amount and impact of research that is conducted at institutions of higher education, the quality of teaching, the reputation of the institutions in question among researchers and employers, as well as the extent of their international outlook.

Publications can contribute to the academic visibility of lecturers worldwide. Traditionally, “visibility” functioned in the form of printed outputs like books, book chapters, and peer-reviewed journal articles primarily available in academic libraries. This is rapidly changing with the exponential increase in electronic, online indexing of these materials. Scholarly recognition and reputation will increase as the visibility is increasing from works that are being frequently referred to as authoritative. For lecturers, the promotion and tenure process will be taken into account of their achievements and reputation of their scholarly activities. Having a national (and international) reputation means that their academic publishing has been disseminated widely and is frequently cited by other scholars. Therefore, UiTM Melaka is on the right track of preparing their lecturers to become reputable scholars in a reputable institution.

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