



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

PARTICIPATION OF FOREIGN GRADUATE STUDENTS IN CAMPUS- BASED NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

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**PARTICIPATION OF FOREIGN GRADUATE STUDENTS IN CAMPUS-
BASED NON- FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN UNIVERSITI
PUTRA MALAYSIA**

By

HELENA NAITSUWE AMADHILA

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

September 2008



DEDICATION

This endeavour is dedicated to my beloved parents- Father, Titus Amadhila and late mother Teopolina Adam Shikongo, my beloved grandmother Sofia Fillemon and uncle Tomas Ulofu Shikongo who laid my academic career foundation. It is also dedicated to all family members for constant moral, support, wisdom and inspiration they provided to me throughout the study period.



**Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science**

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Chairman: Ezhar Tamam, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

This study examined participation in campus based non-formal education programmes among foreign graduate students in Universiti Putra Malaysia and its correlates. Specifically, the study (1) determined the level of participation of UPM foreign graduate students in campus based non-formal education programmes, (2) ascertained whether there is differences in the level of participation of foreign graduate students in campus based non-formal education programmes across gender, programme of study and field of study (3) determined the relationships of the level of participation of foreign graduate students in campus based non-formal education programmes with general health, time engagement, knowledge about campus based non-formal education programmes, attitude toward participating in campus based non-formal education programmes, self-esteem and behavioural intention to participate (4) and determined the contribution of selected independent variables on level of participation in campus based non-formal education programmes.

The data were collected through survey using self-administered questionnaire. A total of 178 UPM foreign graduate students participated in the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The survey showed that the level of participation of UPM foreign graduate students in campus based non-formal education programmes was relatively quite low. However, some campus based non-formal education programmes, particularly academic related such as thesis writing, were preferred more than other campus based non-formal education programmes.

Level of participation in campus based non-formal education program is significantly and positively correlated with general health, knowledge about campus based non-formal education programmes, attitudes toward participating in campus based non-formal education programmes, self-esteem, behavioural intention to participate, and programme of study. These variables explained about 13.3% of the variance in the level of participation of UPM foreign graduate students in campus based non-formal education programmes. Thus, campus based non-formal education programmes should be regarded as an important networking support system for UPM foreign graduate students to successfully adjust to the university environment and culture. The study provides understanding of tentative model of participation for further testing.

Abstrak tesis dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi sebahagian keperluan untuk Ijazah Master sains

PENYERTAAN PELAJAR SISWAZAH ANTARABANGSA DALAM PROGRAM PENDIDIKAN TIDAK FORMAL DI KAMPUS UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA.

Oleh

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Kajian ini meneliti penyertaan pelajar siswazah antarabangsa Universiti Putra Malaysia dalam program pendidikan tidak formal di kampus dan faktor-faktor yang berkaitan dengan penyertaan. Secara spesifik, kajian ini bertujuan 1) menentukan tahap penyertaan pelajar siswazah antarabangsa Universiti Putra Malaysia dalam program pendidikan tidak formal di kampus, (2) menentukan sama ada terdapat perbezaan di dalam tahap penyertaan pelajar siswazah antarabangsa dalam program pendidikan tidak formal mengikut gender, program pengajian dan bidang pengajian (3) menentukan hubungan antara tahap penyertaan pelajar siswazah antarabangsa dalam program pendidikan tidak formal dengan kesihatan umum, penglibatan masa, pengetahuan mengenai program pendidikan tidak formal, sikap terhadap penyertaan pelajar antarabangsa program pendidikan tidak formal, estem diri dan motif penyertaan, dan (4) menentukan sumbangan pemboleh ubah terpilih terhadap penyertaan pelajar siswazah antarabangsa dalam program pendidikan tidak formal di kampus.

Data di kumpul menerusi kaedah survei dengan menggunakan teknik soal selidik yang ditadbir sendiri. Sebanyak 178 pelajar siswazah antarabangsa terlibat di dalam kajian ini. Statistik deskriptif dan inferensi digunakan dalam analisis data. Hasil kajian ini mendapati bahawa tahap penyertaan pelajar siswazah antarabangsa dalam program pendidikan tidak formal di kampus secara relatif adalah rendah. Walaubagaimanapun, sebilangan program pendidikan tidak formal, khususnya yang berkait dengan akademik misalnya, penulisan tesis, lebih popular berbanding dengan kampus lain.

Tahap penyertaan program pendidikan tidak formal mempunyai hubungan signifikan dan perkaitan positif dengan kesihatan umum, pengetahuan mengenai program pendidikan tidak formal, estem diri, niat penyertaan dan program pengajian. Pembolehubah ini menjelaskan 13.3 peratus varians dalam tahap penyertaan pelajar siswazah antarabangsa Universiti Putra Malaysia dalam program pendidikan tidak formal. Oleh itu, program pendidikan tidak formal di kampus adalah penting dan berfungsi sebagai sistem jaringan sokongan bagi pelajar siswazah antarabangsa Universiti Putra Malaysia bagi penyesuaian yang berjaya kepada persekitaran dan budaya universiti. Kajian ini juga mengemukakan model tentatif penyertaan dalam program pendidikan tidak formal di kampus untuk diuji pada masa akan datang.

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I certify that the examination committee met on 22 September 2008 to conduct the final examination of Helena Naituwe Amadhila on her Master thesis entitled “Participation of Foreign Graduate Students in Campus-Based Non- Formal Education Programmes in Universiti Putra Malaysia” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulation 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the degree of Master of Science.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institution.

Helena Naituwe Amadhila

Date: 22 September 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ABSTRAK	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
APPROVAL	ix
DECLARATION	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvi

CHAPTER

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background of the research problem	1
	Campus -based non-formal education programmes in UPM	9
	Statement of the research problem	12
	Objectives of the study	16
	Significance of the study	17
	Limitations of the study	18
	Definitions of terms	19
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	21
	Introduction	21
	The concept of participation	21
	Continuum of participation	23
	Non-formal education (NFE)	24
	Conceptualising NFE	26
	Participation theories	29
	Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)	29
	Expectancy theory	34
	Review of previous research	38
	Factors affecting people's participation	38
	Situational factors	41
	Institutional factors	42
	Informational factors	42
	Dispositional factors	43
	Characteristics of adults who choose to participate	44
	Research hypothesis	44
	Summary of the state of the art	46



3	METHODOLOGY	48
	Research design	48
	Research framework	49
	Instrumentation	50
	Measurement	52
	Pre-testing of instrument	61
	Population of study	64
	Sample size and sampling procedures	64
	Data collection	65
	Data analysis	67
	Test of normality assumption	70
4	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	73
	Respondent's demographic profile	74
	Psychosocial profile of the respondents	80
	Level of foreign graduate students' participation in campus based non-formal education programmes	87
	Tests of differences in the level of participation	90
	The relationship test between independent variables and level of participation	95
	The contribution of independent variables towards level of participation	106
5	SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	111
	Summary	111
	Conclusion	115
	Implications for theory and practice	118
	Recommendations	120
	REFERENCES	127
	APPENDICES	136
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	172



LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Continuum of participation	23
2	Levels of participation	24
3	Reliability of instruments	63
4	Levene's test for equality of variance	69
5	Test of homogeneity of variance	69
6	Skewness values for all independent variables	72
7	Profile of respondents	75
8	Distribution of respondents by gender and programme of study	78
9	Distribution of respondents by independent variables	82
10	Distribution of respondents behavioural intention by campus based non-formal education programmes	86
11	Distribution of respondents by levels of participation in campus based non-formal education programmes	89
12	Independent Samples t-test of differences in levels of participation by gender and programme of study	93
13	ANOVA test of differences in levels of participation by field of study	95
14	Correlation analysis: relationship between independent variables and participation	99
15	Multiple regression analysis	107

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
A	Theory of Reasoned Action	32
B	Research framework	50
C	The normal P-P plot of the regression standardized residual	109
D	The Scatterplot of Studentized Deleted Residuals vs Standardized Predicted	110
E	Core relationship of variables	115

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AERA	American Educational Research Association
CPE	Continuing Professional Education
CLDC	Community Learning and Development Centre
FOS	Field of study
IO	International Office
IPI	Institute for the Studies in Islamic Sciences
ISEP	International Students Enrichment Programme
ISFSP	International Students Friendship and Social Programme
ISRHP	International Students Returning Home Programme
ISSAP	International Students' Spouse Adjustment Programme
MTCP	Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme
NFE	Non formal Education
NISWP	New International Student's Welcome Programme
NISAP	New International Students Adjustment programme
POS	Programme of study
SMS	Short Messaging System
SGS	School of Graduate Studies
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
UPMISA	Universiti Putra Malaysia International Student Association

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to present the background of the research problem, statement of the research problem, general and specific objectives of the study, significance of the study, as well as limitations of the study. Finally, it presents definitions of the core terms used in the study.

Background of the Research Problem

Participation is increasingly becoming a contributing factor to the success of any development or educational programmes. Aside from formal educational programmes, non-formal education programmes are aimed at improving the learning environment and helping students to fully adjust and integrate themselves in the learning world. Participation in both formal and non-formal university educational programmes is increasingly given a high priority in developed and developing countries, and Malaysia is no exception. This priority is based on the notion that the participation will contribute to success and continuous impact of the educational programmes. Furthermore, the participation in non-formal educational programmes is a critical factor in providing meaningful learning experiences, which in turn will contribute towards academic success and social well-being of the participants.

The participation of foreign graduate students in non-formal education programmes is essentially a form of socialisation. For university students to effectively adapt and function in the university environment, they need to be socialised into the culture system of the university. In the context of higher learning environment, socialisation refers to the processes through which individuals gain knowledge, skills and values necessary for successful entry into a particular environment or culture. Socialisation process provides the opportunities for interaction, integration and learning, which can lead to a better knowledge acquisition and meaningful involvement in the culture of the academic programmes. Therefore, socialisation is an essential aspect of participation in non-formal education programmes.

The presence of foreign graduate students in institutions of higher learning brings a whole new set of responsibilities to the university, mainly in term of providing a range of services for international students (Ping, 1999). Foreign graduate students have to deal with a number of challenging issues such as homesickness, different education system, language barriers, cultural differences, economic problems and social responsibilities. In order to overcome these demanding challenges, there is a need for social support through which foreign graduate students get in their network by participating in non-formal education programmes. In this context, the introduction of non-formal education programmes is important in making university life less cumbersome for foreign graduate students.

Universities have embarked on a variety of new approaches which combine the elements of formal and non-formal education. These approaches are designed in many activities to provide not only the usual academic requirements, but also other types of locally useful knowledge which are not covered by the academic curriculum. Bridging the gap between the formal and non-formal educational programmes can help to improve students' academic performance and their psychological well-being.

The participation of foreign graduate students in campus-based non-formal education programmes will provide them opportunities to make new friends, interact with different people, get to know the university officials more, show their talents and learn new things which are pertinent in their university life. However, institutions of high learning strive to provide campus-based non-formal education to their foreign graduate students in order to further enhance their knowledge and experience. The programmes are geared towards helping foreign graduate students to become well qualified professionals who are advanced in knowledge, skills and values.

Many educators believe that non-formal education could play important roles in achieving significant reforms in the way education is provided (Prather, 1993; Ahmed, 1997; Wilson, 1997; Farrell, 1998; Muskin, 1999 & Nath, Sylvia & Grimes, 1999).

In addition, non-formal education scholars assert that non-formal education promotes adaptation of educational programmes to the needs and circumstances of learners, a learner-centred pedagogy, creative ways of mobilising and using educational resources, participants' participation in the planning and management of

programmes, as well as learning content and methods related to the life and environment of learners (UNICEF, 1993). In general, participation has been defined as the active process by which participants influence the direction and execution of the development and implementation of the educational programmes. In the past years, there has been a gradual shifting on the studies conducted on the students' participation in adult education programmes in many developing countries. The shifting has been on the trends of reflecting societal changes from socio-demographic surveys which place participation in the broader perspective of community involvement and tend to link participation to social class, towards emphasis on understanding individual motivation for participation (Courtney, 1984).

As a result of such trends, research has moved from education as a social concern to focus on the psychological underpinnings of individuals' decisions to participate. Participation has been studied primarily from the perspective of the service providers, gathering data on the participants themselves or on the programmes dropouts (Wikelund, Reder & Hart-Landsberg, 1992). This is not surprising considering that the success of the programmes has been measured in the numbers of participants attracted and retained, and the funding for continued service has been determined by those numbers.

On the intent of helping practitioners to serve a greater number of adults, researchers studied the adults who had taken part in this study, to find out what attracted them to the programmes and the type of personal motivations they had in deciding to improve their skills by participating in the programme.

In the 1970s, researchers began to broaden their view on the participation in education to the interest in participation in learning, including both organized and self-education (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). The fact that adult education cannot be equated, with a given set of institutions or a level of schooling, caused the researchers to come up with their own operational definitions of participation. Unfortunately, these have been usually and simply linked to institutional schooling. In this way, participation has been viewed in a restrictive, does he or doesn't he framework, rather than as an activity in which people engage with differing degrees of energy and focus, at different points in their lifetime (Wikelund et al., 1992). As for the benefits of participation, theoretical and empirical inquiries have identified benefits to the individuals who participate, to the recipients of the services they provide, to the institutions in which participation takes place, and to the larger community (Clary & Snyder, 2002).

Just as it is possible to catalogue the benefits of participation according to whether these benefits accrue to those who participate, to the recipients of their services, and to the institutions and the larger community in which such participation occurs, the costs of participation can also be considered, with reference to who incurs these potential costs.

For those who participate, there is a definite possibility that they are being encouraged to participate. This does not matter whether in a service-learning programme that is a part of the curriculum of an educational institution or as a part of expected community service, at the same time as it may increase the rate of

participation, and also chip away at their intrinsic motivation to participate (Stukas, Snyder & Clary, 1999).

In various research studies on the issue of participation among adults, non-formal and continuous education has been viewed from various perspectives. Programme planners, adult educators, adult education researchers and policy makers have sought answers to the following questions: (1) who participated in adult learning activities and who did not (Yang, Blunt & Blunt, 1994; Becker & Gibson, 1998, Livneh & Livneh, 1999); (2) the reasons given by adults who did or did not participate (Abruzzese, 1990; Beder & Valentine, 1990; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990; Norland, 1992; Childers, 1997; Balachandran & Branch, 1997); (3) how adults participated in learning experiences (Zeph, 1991; Cheetham & Chiveras, 2001); (4) improving access to and participation in adult learning (Pont, 2004); (5) expanding theories of adult literacy participation, (Wikelund, et al., 1992); and (6) what were the factors which influenced participation (Houtkoop & Van Der Kamp, 1992; McGivney, 1996; Stowe, 1998). In Malaysia, participation has been studied primarily from the perspective of community development, which covers a wide range of developmental programmes in the country (Bahaman, 1992; Asnarulkhadi, 1996; Munirah, 1997). In addition, studies on participation were done mostly on in-service training programmes (Arshad, 1993) and Continuing Professional Education (CPE) among various employees in the country (Masiah, 2006).

On the theoretical approaches, several researchers in adult education, non-formal education and continuing education have proposed theoretical models to describe and explain adults' participation behaviours (Henry & Basile, 1994; Yang; Blunt & Blunt, 1994).

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is one of the psychosocial theories which has been widely used to examine the factors related to various human behaviours (Bobbit & Dabholkar, 2001; Savage & Clarke, 2001; Rhodes & Courneya, 2003; Bobek & Hatfield, 2003; Evans & Norman, 2003; King & Dennis, 2003), including the participation in adult and continuing education, attending training and lectures (Fishbein & Stasson, 1990; Pryor, 1990; Yang et al., 1994; Becker & Gibson, 1998).

Generally, the focus of studies on participation is placed on the factors which act as barriers or facilitators (in adult education to participation), and these have been grouped in four main categories, namely situational, institutional, informational and dispositional factors. In addition, socio-demographic factor has also been added to the list of factors. Most research work found time and cost as the universal barriers to participation (Henry & Basile, 1994; Langsner, 1994; Kersaitis, 1997; Davis, 2002).

Previous studies showed that most of the researches on participation were restricted to the participation of formal, sponsored continuing programmes and formal learning activities (Thompson, 1992; Arshad, 1993; Henry & Basile, 1994; Mohd Halimi, 1996; Becker & Gibson, 1998; Masiah, 2006).

Based on these findings, it is crucial to note that research on participation have largely overlooked the informal adult learning experiences and the non-formal education programmes as modes of learning which serves as important roles in adult continuous development.

As mentioned in the earlier section, foreign graduate students have to deal with various challenging issues such as homesickness, different education system, language barriers, cultural differences, economic problems and social responsibilities. To overcome these challenges, there is a need for social support through which foreign graduate students can build network while participating in the non-formal education programmes. The role of the International Office (IO) of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) is to offer campus-based non-formal education programmes to foreign graduate students throughout their tenure of academic studies, from the day they register until their final day at the university.

The International Office, Universiti Putra Malaysia International Student Association (UPMISA) and the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) have been collaborating to provide campus-based non-formal education programmes to UPM graduate foreign students. The establishment of a university is more than a pursuit for scholastic degree, as it offers good times, opportunities for getting to know others, personal development, and meaningful contributions to others.

It is always believed that academic success is best achieved in an environment where there are positive interactions and diverse networking amongst students (International Office, 2007).