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**EXPLORING CONSTRAINTS ON AND SUPPORT FOR
QUALITY TEACHING AT A HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTION IN MALAYSIA**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Education

at Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research, except where due acknowledgement is made, and it contains as its main content, work that has not previously been submitted for a degree of any tertiary education institution.

Thaharah Hilaluddin

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploratory case study of one institution of higher learning in Malaysia. Teachers' active involvement in a wide variety of quality activities raised concerns about their teaching quality. The literature review suggested that there was no universally accepted definition of quality teaching. There was also lack of a definition in Malaysian research studies and government reports. The aim of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of quality teaching at the case institution in order to better support the institution's quality assurance efforts. The research questions investigated the teachers' perceptions of quality teaching, the kinds of existing support they found helpful or needed enhancement, and the kinds of existing constraints that needed rectifying.

A mixed methods approach was employed comprising teacher and manager interviews, document analysis and a teacher survey to elicit themes relevant to the research questions. The key findings were that many teachers held transmission-based teaching perceptions although some student-centred perceptions were also evident. A major constraint on quality teaching was quality assurance activities that were drawing teachers' focus away from teaching. Other impediments included class size, poor student quality and inadequate resources. A major support for quality teaching was teaching-related courses that needed to be made more relevant for teachers of various levels of experience and provided in a more structured manner. Other kinds of support that needed enhancement included mechanisms to evaluate teaching, outcomes based education (OBE) curriculum transformation and a quality assurance framework related to OBE.

Recommendations were made for institution managers and professional developers including developing and promoting a systems framework that promotes and values quality teaching as of equal importance to quality research, developing a clear articulation of the institution's teaching philosophy, improving material resources, aligning all systems to support the shift to OBE, and providing professional development support that could expand teachers' conceptions of teaching. Findings from the case study were discussed against the backdrop of Malaysia's efforts to cope with global trends in higher education. Critical adaptation of Western concepts and the need to develop the nation's own idea of quality teaching were also discussed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UGG	Universiti Gading Gemilang
DQA	Department of Quality Assurance
DPT	Department of Pedagogical Training
DHR	Department of Human Resource
DOP	Department of Organisational Planning
DVC	Department of Vice Chancellor
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MOE	Ministry of Education, Malaysia
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
MAGNETIC	The Malaysian Higher Education Teaching and Learning Council
AKEPT	<i>Akademi Kepimpinan Pengajian Tinggi</i> (Academy for Leadership in Higher Education)
OBE	Outcome-Based Education
NHESP	National Higher Education Strategic Plan
THES-QS	Times Higher Education Supplement-Quacquarelli Symonds
CUAP (NZ)	Committee on University Academic Programmes, New Zealand
AUQA (Australia)	Australian University Quality Agency
QAA (UK)	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

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