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Faculty Workload and Employment Benefits in Public Universities

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ABSTRACT

Malaysian Public Universities are undergoing the process of transformation which requires efforts from every components of the universities, especially the academic staffs, in order to achieve high rankings internationally and to fulfill their key performance indicator for the purpose of promotion and appraisal. These ambitions have increased the workload of academic staffs and extend their workloads from teaching to other myriad of responsibilities such as; research, consultation, administrative works and community services. In light of this, the benefits received by the academic staffs are disproportionate with their workloads. This research examines the relationship between transformation of higher education status, the workload of academic staff and the proportionality of benefit allocated to them. Data was collected through interview with the top level management from four different categories of universities such as Accelerated Program for Excellence, Research, Focused and Comprehensive University. Thematic content data analysis technique was employed in analyzing the data collected. The findings shows that the transformation of higher education status has intricate the workloads of academic staffs with less benefits. The workloads and job specifications of the academic staffs are different in accordance to the categories of the universities. Meanwhile, all public universities are bound to follow the standard scheme provided by the Public Service Department of Malaysia. This study suggests that the contract of service of academic staffs be revised to include clear terms on the improvement of scheme and benefits for academic staffs in public universities.

Keywords: Transformation of Higher Education Status, Workload of Academic Staffs, Employment Benefits
JEL Classifications: K1, K12, K120

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions exist to educate students as a constructive way of contributing to national developments. However, due to globalization, the establishment of university does not play a unitary role of producing human capital but also involve in training and focusing on infusing values that are beneficial industrially and to the society at large. This global trends have led to the changes of national educational policy and institutional development in Malaysia (Lee, 2004). New approaches and strategies are designed to reorientate and transform the way in which universities are managed as well as the delivery of educational services (Hee, 2007). This changes motivated the need to train human capitals that are knowledgeable, skillful and innovative to meet the future national challenges. In meeting these targets, the curriculum and pedagogical methodologies were improved periodically to provide versatile and marketable graduates (Harvey and Knight, 1996).

Consistent with the national objective to ensure Malaysian higher education stand in rank with the world universities, the transformation of higher education status was invented which brought about classifying Malaysian public universities into different categories namely; Accelerated Program for Excellence (APEX) University, Research University (RU), Comprehensive University, and Focus University. The universities under each categories set distinctive visions, missions, objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) in order to facilitate the attainment of the university's status. However, all public universities are bound to follow the dictated scheme provided by the Public Service

Department of Malaysia even though the work specifications are different compared to one another. These issues have caused discrepancies between the teaching workload of academic staffs and the remuneration they receive. Against these backdrops, this paper seeks to answer the following research questions;

1. Does the transformation of higher education status affects the workload of academic staff?
2. Is the workload of academic staff as prescribed by the university is proportionate to the benefit received?

2. TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN MALAYSIA

The Malaysian government have been interested in restructuring the higher education institutions in Malaysia, by revamping the relationship between the universities, state government, and the industries, increasing the institutional autonomy of higher institutions in Malaysia through transformation of the higher educational institutions status. In line with the educational and institutional transformation objectives, a significant pedagogical shift that allows learners to be independent, creative, innovative and critically reflective was introduced. Additionally, higher institutions were encouraged to be knowledge-based economy where knowledgeable, skillful and innovative human capital are produced to meet the future national challenges. In order to achieve these transformational targets, the learning curriculum was revised with the invention of a National Higher Education Strategic Plan which includes the improvement of quality teaching and learning approach. For that purpose, public universities were categorized into four different categories namely; APEX University, RU, Focused University, and Comprehensive University (Ministry of Higher Education) and were entrusted with different responsibilities. The responsibilities and the criteria for the said categories are explain in details below.

2.1. Universities Category

2.1.1. APEX University

APEX is an acronym that stands for Accelerated Program for Excellence. Universiti Sains Malaysia was selected to be recognized as APEX University with the aim of enabling the university to be highly ranked among international universities. National Higher Education Action Plan 2007 defines APEX University to be the centre for academic distinctions, led by visionary, motivated and committed leaders, encompassing of talented and renowned academic staffs, filled with local and international students who possess a high standard of academic excellence, and equipped with state-of-the-art facilities (Morni et al., 2009). APEX is known as a fast track program that guides the university towards excellence and better quality performance. In order to achieve this, commitment from every components of the university including management, academic staffs and students is absolutely necessary.

2.1.2. RU

RU is to enhance the development and commercialization of research activities in the academia. This is done by increasing the number of post-graduate and post-doctoral candidates in Malaysia public universities. RU are expected to be centres of excellence focused on improving university ranking in THE-QS (Razak, 2009). The aim of establishing RU was to actively engage in new explorations of ideas, proffer innovations, and take intellectual opportunities to further discover and expand the boundaries of knowledge. Certain criteria was established with a focus on the Development of Research, Development and Cluster. These criteria are presented in Table 1.

2.1.3. Comprehensive University and focused university

Comprehensive University is expected to offer courses in several fields of studies at all educational levels such as; pre-undergraduate, undergraduate, and post-graduate degrees. Four public universities are entrusted with these responsibilities namely; Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Universiti Malaysia Sabah and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Ministry of Higher Education). Meanwhile, Focused University is established to concentrate on specific fields of study such as technical, education, management and defence. 12 universities are listed under the Focused University category namely; Universiti Utara Malaysia focuses on management, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris focuses on education, Universiti Malaysia Pahang focuses on technology, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia focuses on engineering, science and technology, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka focuses on technical, Universiti Malaysia Perlis focuses on electronic engineering, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia focuses on Islamic studies, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu focuses on science marine, Universiti Sulatan Zainal Abidin focuses on technology management, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan focuses on entrepreneurship, and Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia focuses on defence. Both Comprehensive and Focused University have similar criteria in terms of student intakes. The student intakes are usually competitive as the public demand for tertiary education is increasing. Public university has competed for student enrollment since the student's selection for university depends on the academic program available, quality of education, faculty qualification and others (Sia, 2010).

2.2. Faculty Workload

According to Eubene, workloads of faculty members are different according to their disciplines and the university they work. Normally, workloads of academic staffs go beyond the time they spend in classrooms teaching or the time they spend on research activities. Tural mentions that the globalization process has affected the academia administratively and financially. According to the author, academic staffs are trusted with magnanimous

Table 1: Marking criteria for RU in Malaysia

Criteria	Weightage
Quantity and quality of researchers	25
Quantity and quality of research	30
Postgraduate quantity	10
Postgraduate quality	5
Innovation	10
Professional services and awards	7
Networks and links	8
Support facilities	5
Total	100%

Source: Ministry of Higher Education (2006). RU: Research University

responsibilities that rob them of their academic freedom, implicated with more challenges in teaching and writing and faced with accountability challenges. Since the inception of the transformation of educational status in Malaysia, the workloads of the academic staffs have increased exponentially while their participation in decision making processes is inversely reducing. Additionally, the requirements for their KPI appraisal have been challenging than ever before (Tural, 2007).

Peter in his study on academic staff workloads mentioned that teaching and research are the core academic responsibilities of academic staffs and any other tasks relating to course coordination or management and leadership activities are somewhat a distraction to academic staffs. However, academic staffs are commonly distracted with assignments outside academic core responsibilities. Recently, it has been a commonplace scenario in public universities for academic staffs to face excessive demands to do too many disconnected tasks outside the academic responsibilities that are primarily expected of them (Austin and Gamson, 1983). The Faculty Workload Report of the University of Nevada presents that academic staff workloads are dual-facated that is, the instructional workload (i.e. in-class workload) and out-of-classroom activities. This indicates that the role of academic staffs in higher education institutions extends beyond classroom. The degree of the increase in the faculty workload varies from one university to another as according to their institutional type of mission. In general, the basic workload of academic staffs entails research, supervision, teaching and myriad of other responsibilities outside the academic activities (University of Nevada, 2010).

2.3. Benefits Received

Faculty members are rewarded based on the nature of their work as the teachers and researchers and any other works related to colleagues and students. The reward usually will be in a form of salary and benefit and sometimes the most important thing is satisfaction on the promotion. The issue of salary has become a significant issue to the faculty members (Austin and Gamson, 1983).

Euben has suggested the concept of merit pay. It refers to the practice of allocating annual salary increases to individual faculty members based on the quality of their performance. The practice encourages faculty members to dedicate their efforts to some combination of research, teaching, and service activities, in accordance with the mission of the institution, thereby strengthening the institution and improving the benefits gained by students and society. A fundamental difficulty arises from the countless nature of the quality of teaching, research, and service (Euben, 2003).

Morris mentions that in an effort to inspire members of the civil service to be more efficient, productive and more initiative, the Malaysian Government need to introduce, a new salary planning schedule called the New Remuneration Scheme (NRS) (Morris et al., 2004). This was also intended to avoid brain drain among those in the civil service including education, and reward deserving cases. Academic Staffs in public universities are government employees under the NRS and are allocated to salary bands within it. Its promotion and pay are based on the assessment of the individual's job performance. It attempts to give incentives in order to improve individual and organizational performance. However, the survey conducted among UiTM academic staff revealed that a large component of employees are dissatisfied about pay and promotional policies, and have clear notions of withdrawal. This, in turn, will be reflected the increased staff turnover rates (Morris et al., 2004).

Thomas in his writing addressed on the benefit of non-pecuniary form. He states that, an important and generally quantifiable dimension of non-pecuniary income from employment consists of the collection of fringe benefits that can be characterized as equally costly to the employer as the provision of income in the form of direct wage payments. Fringe benefits are defined as goods, services, or deferred money income received by the employee, but paid for by the employer.' The list of such items includes pension plans, medical insurance, paid vacation and disability insurance, sick leave, profit sharing, free or subsidized meals, vehicle parking, stock options, and so on (Juster and Duncan, 1975). Clare in his writing mentions that, to attract and preserve an effective and committed workers and colleges, universities must offer competitive levels of compensation to their faculty, and they must recognize their successes. This commitment to the faculty enhances performance, which, in turn, is a key component to improving academic quality (Comm and Mathaisel, 2003).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a qualitative research method by conducting interviews with the top level management such as the registrars and deputy vice chancellors from four different categories of public universities namely; APEX University, RU, Focused and Comprehensive University. In analyzing the data, thematic data analysis was employed to deduce findings from the respondents' views. The thematic analysis sort out the rules and principles and law of the university's policy that govern academic staff in terms of their workload and the allocated benefit. While, an analytical analysis concept is adopted to evaluate the factual data in the study. The respondents are classified as R_1: APEX University, R_2: Focused University, R_3: Comprehensive University, and R_4: RU. Discussion on the analysis of the workload and the benefits received by the academic staffs are presented below.

4. ANALYSIS ON WORKLOAD OF ACADEMIC STAFF

Workload of academic staff is grouped as: TS - Teaching and supervision, RC - Research and consultation, AW - Administrative work, P - Publication and CS - Community service. Landmark represents: R - Respondent and W – Workload.

Table 2 explains the workload of academic staff in four different categories of public universities in Malaysia. The Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents agreed to the fact that academic staff in each university have the same workload which consists of TS, RC, AW, P and CS. However, R_3's response state that it is not

Table 2: Workload of academic staff

R/W	TS	RC	AW	P	CS
R_1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R_2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R_3	Yes	R - Not compulsory (Required to be principal investigator) C - No, it is encouraged	Yes	Yes	Yes
R_4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

TS: Teaching and supervision, RC: Research and consultation, AW: Administrative work, P: Publication, CS: Community service

compulsory for academic staff to participate in research activities. The only requirement for academic staff is to be Principal Investigator which is considered as part of their KPI. While, consultation is also not part the workload and KPI's assessment. It is just a means of encouragement.

4.1. TS

The triad core of the academic work which involved teaching, learning, and research has caused complexity as it demands a deeper understanding of the nature of student learning, pressures to the relocation of the teaching and learning environment around learning outcomes, and due to demand of certain course that require a professional approach in university teaching (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). For instance, it has been required by the public university to teach English language in order to expose students with the right use of legal language before fully embarking into real Law Programme (Mahmod and Kamal, 2005). Other challenges in today's life of teaching is the demand of the professional body which directly involved with the accreditation of certain courses such as law, medical, engineering, architecture and few other professions. For example, in producing a quality graduates in the professional field, the Qualifying Board of Certain Profession will monitor the conformity of university with the standard produced by the Board (Mahmod and Kamal, 2005). Among the professional bodies such as the Institute of Engineers, the Board of Architects, Malaysian Medical Association and Legal Qualifying Board in Malaysia has power in determining the quality of the university's graduates. Therefore, in ensuring compliance of the standards and to produce the eminence graduates, academician has to work hard to achieve such requirements.

All of the professional courses require extra effort of academician such as law course. Teaching law is not only limited to the theories of law, but the concentration needs to be put on few other courses namely the procedural courses and professional courses. The procedural courses consist of few subjects which include the Trial Advocacy, Criminal Procedure, Civil Procedure, Evidence, and Evidence and Procedure of the Shariah Court has been made compulsory for the law students to learn. These subjects aimed to equip the students with the procedural matters in court (Mahmod and Kamal, 2005). Another important course is Professional Practice that provides knowledge on the court's matter such as the professional ethics, alternative dispute resolution, solicitor's account and others. These two courses are important in ensuring that the school or university may produce the "ready-made" lawyer in the future (Mahmod and Kamal, 2005). Teaching professional subjects may require extra work as it normally involved few administrative tasks such as the reporting process to the member's committee of the Professional Programme. For instance, the progress of Law Programme need to be submitted to the member's committee of the meeting consists of the Bar Council, representatives from law schools, the Attorney-General's Office and the Qualifying Board. It is to ensure that the Code of Practice on Quality Assurance in Public Universities (Kod Amalan Jaminan Kualiti IPTA) will be observed by the law school and adhered to.

In some country like Singapore, they prefer the law lecturer to involve in locum solicitor, especially during long vacation for the purpose of getting the recent knowledge in certain practical matters and to get the first hand information through the practical experience (Cohen, 2004). Even though it seems beneficial to the lecturer himself and even the faculty may profit from his knowledge, but it became part of their workload as they have to commit with both works.

In another aspect, teaching load of academic staff in public university is increasing due to surplus number of undergraduate student enrolled in every semester. The average number of hours of an academic staff is measured and the data collected during the interview shows that even though they have other supplemented work, but the teaching load is still the same. Majority of the respondent agreed that teaching load of the academic staff will not exceed 18 h. It is based on the statement of R_1, R_2, and R_3 (TS) that "the maximum credit hour would be 18 credits equivalent to 2 or 3 subjects per semester." However, R_4 (TS) has extended the discussion by mentioning that "we had made the teaching work to be flexible as required by academic staff. Academician may request either to fully focus on the teaching or research."

The most crucial part is, part of their teaching KPIs will be evaluated by the student. It would reflect their credibility and competency in carrying out their task as it will show the qualities associated with the good teaching such as lecturers' knowledge, clarity, classroom management and course organization (Chuan and Heng, 2013). It is for the purpose of improving teaching ability of the lecturers (Comm and Mathaisel, 2003). The outcome of this evaluation is often used to formulate key performance index of lecturers in staff appraisal for both promotion and tenure decisions (Chuan and Heng, 2013).

Therefore, the academician would feel impossible to maintain the quality of teaching and learning if they have to face other works in one time. It is supported by the statement made by the R_3, who mentioned that "Why bother about research track, we've been teaching for 4 years, we will not produce papers because we are concentrating on producing high caliber graduate and talented students for the market, and teaching professional programs to produce high employability graduate such as architects, lawyers, accountant." We have introduced semi-professionals and professionals, but as we became the university, and they tried to implement research, entrepreneurship, we lost focus. Everyone started to aim to get the status of RU that require them to follow guideline provided by the Ministry of Higher Education. We have to produce papers, research, post-graduate, supervised PhD, but we

forgot about this group of people that have been working so hard to ensure 100% of the student will be employed after graduate."

Thus, it can be said, in the process of teaching itself, it needs a lot effort of academician to maintain the quality of knowledge disseminated to the student. It is no longer based on the textbook itself, but it goes beyond that in which students will be expecting the lecturers to equip them with practical knowledge. Hence, the lecturers have to ensure that they are well-versed on that particular subject.

4.2. RC and P

Research and scholarly publication are important for the purpose of disseminating knowledge, especially for the country's development. New findings, theories and solution to the issues are useful to the public. In academic side, research and publication are the medium for them to share their knowledge and it will be evaluated to determine their achievement for promotion and tenure (Ahmad, 2012). Scholarly publication is normally in a form of a written paper to be published in academic journal. It has to go through the process of peer review by one or more referees to ensure the quality of the paper (Dhillon et al., 2013).

It is also important as the excellent performance of university will be measured by the quantity and quality of research produced other than the quality teaching and learning. It does not only contribute to the university's performance, however, most importantly, it will be valued as the contribution to global economic development and to nation's gross domestic product (Ahmad, 2012). The research activity is normally measured periodically. The logic for this approach is that publication is usually an indicator of research (Townsend and Rosser, 2007). It has been acknowledged as the medium of developing the knowledge of economy and society. A quality research normally evaluated through research funding, post-graduate supervision, publications, citations and intellectual properties (IPs). In achieving the performance indicators, lecturers are encouraged to produce two to three academic article journals per year and publish in the high impact publications and citations such as the first quartile (Q_1), Scopus, ISI and others because it reflects the international recognition (Ahmad, 2012).

The requirement in consistency writing journal and produce research publication somehow contributes to the workload of academic staff, especially those universities which hold the status of APEX and RUs because the main criteria for an establishment of a RU are publications with impact factor journals followed by external research funding (Ahmad, 2012). On top of that, all the universities' research achievement will be evaluated every 5 years through the Malaysian Research Assessment tool. It requires all the criteria listed in evaluating the RUs' achievement which include the quality and quantity of researchers and research, quality and quantity of post-graduate, innovation, professional services, and networking and linkages to be fulfilled (Minitry of Higher Education). Research and publication is not new in the Asiatic region such as Singapore, Thailand, China, Japan, India and others. The growing trend in publication is also reflected in Malaysian universities such as UM, US, UPM, UKM, UTM, UiTM and IIUM. They evaluate the research achievement through quality and quantity of publication in Scopus, ISI Web of Knowledge, SCImago and others (Ahmad, 2012).

It does not only caused other universities to follow the same trend as they are competing each other for the national rankings, but also increases burden to the university itself. Research has been made compulsory to all universities regardless of the status either Comprehensive or Focused University as mentioned by the R_3 (RC) "we always aim for RU status, but without being RU, it's very important to have research activities because we need to have research profile." Therefore, it shows that all academicians cannot escape from conducting any research as the current situation demands more research papers to be produced, to gain more external money, to conform with criteria for performance appraisal, and also to supervise more graduate students (Mat et al., 2007). Thus, in addressing their effort, they should be rewarded with a publication incentive to increase their motivation and encouragement (Ahmad, 2012).

Method of evaluating research is through publication. The research or any scholarly product is normally measured by the number and type of publications because it is considered as indicator of research. Moreover, productivity now leads to reward and recognition (Townsend and Rosser, 2007) as the promotion and salary increases are depending on number of articles and books they publish. The stress is more heightened in RU University as they need to maintain the status and produce article journal publishable in high impact publication. Based on the interview, majority of respondent agreed that they are required to publish average one to three publications per year. R_4 (P) mentioned that, "to achieve their KPIs, they have to publish 1-3 publications."

Besides that, consultation is important in academic work as it helps the institution to generate money through service provided to the client. The new transformation of governing councils into corporate boards has directed the executive system to emerge to new corporate structures in areas such as international education, IP, relations with industry, and work based training (Marginson, 2000). Consultation at will be evaluated as appraisal and for the promotion is referring to the ability of academics in providing a consultancy service based on their field of expertise to resolve certain problems. The scoring system will be based on the project and candidate should be appointed as consultants. There are two types of consultations which may bring benefit in the form of reward and another type is just considered as free consultation. However, the academician is encouraged to involve in corporate consultation that may bring in financial reward (Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2013). The achievement of the consultation is depending on the capability and skill of the consultant in carrying out the process. They should ensure that they have full knowledge on that matter and able to create good relationship with the client (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia).

4.3. AWs

Recently, there is portion in the KPIs that evaluate the participation of academician in administrative post. Since it is part of their KPIs, it will link to their promotion and tenure (Makhbul and Khairuddin, 2014). Administrative post is considered periodically as the

appointment is rotary in nature (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). It is important to ensure the execution of faculty and management department will be in the right track such as the Academic Programme, human resource management, and management of academic process such as teaching, learning, examination and several others. Besides, it is the duty of administrator to lead the department or institution to achieve the vision, mission and objective of university by guiding the academician to understand the direction of the faculty and department.

Associate professor and professor that hold the administrative position will normally perform the function as the chairman for the meeting as they are not only restricted to producing paper and article journal. Method of assessing the AW is hard as it cannot be associated with other types of evaluation (Barrett and Barrett, 2009). However, it can be suggested that the achievement in carrying out administrative post should be assessed through recognition given to the university, department, faculty or institution either at the national or international level. While in term of hours, it can be assessed on the amount of hours spent in conducting the duty. AW is different in its nature as compared to academic work because it hold the public accountability as a key value. Thus, they have to be very selective in putting priority to direct the university to the peak of excellence. In administering an institution, the concept of accountability is very prominent as it may lead to the succeed or failure of the organization (McMaster, 2002).

To appreciate their hard work in ensuring the performance university, for major roles, such as Deputy Vice Chancellor, heads of school and deans, weightings are often set centrally with allowances depending on the size and complexity of the task.

Majority of respondents agreed that AW is part of their KPIs for the purpose of promotion to the next level. However, certain university reluctant to provide incentive to those administrator that hold the administrative post such as vice chancellor and deputy vice chancellor. R_1 mentioned that "vice chancellor will not be provided with any incentive as he holds the position of chairman in APEX University. But, the rest of the administrative holder may receive allowance according to the rate fixed by the university. For example dean may be given RM 800, deputy dean is RM 700, programme coordinator is RM 600."

4.4. CS

CS refers to the activities of academics involving participation in external committees or organizations outside the university. This activities include services extended to the government; professional associations, public and community organizations, other universities, and activities such as the external examination of theses, consultancy work and appearances as an invited expert in media event (Makhbul and Khairuddin, 2014).

Lecturers owed responsibilities to the society in the aspect of contribution of knowledge and social welfare. They are encouraged to exercise their duties and responsibilities as members of society by establishing connection and contacts with others, such as industry and professional bodies for the purpose of enhancing the quality of an institution's academic program. Lecturers have to contribute their knowledge and expertise to the society either locally or at the international level. They may contribute directly or indirectly to the society as both methods capable of establishing local and global community. Contribution to the society can be achieved in a way of delivering lectures and presenting their research findings (Zahiruddin).

CS is part of workload of academic staff that will be evaluated at the end of the year. By looking to the new lecturers' KPIs in public universities, it has been made compulsory for them to attend seminars and conferences for the development of the knowledge and getting new ideas on the current issues in the field. Sharing opinions and information may support the sustainability of education development. CS also may involve lecturer's participation in professional organizations which capable of giving clear direction on certain information in a particular field. Moreover, it may give an opportunity to the lecturer to create broad range of networking among groups in the same field that shares the common interest and knowledge. They may use this platform as a medium of discussion for certain issues. CS has been made compulsory among the public university in Malaysia. The statement has been supported by the respond of the respondent as they agreed that the CSs are normally involved not only at the national level but also international.

5. ANALYSIS ON BENEFITS RECEIVED BY ACADEMIC STAFF

Table 3 explains the benefits, allowances and schemes of service received by academic staff in four different categories of public universities. The Table 3 shows that all the respondents agreed their salary scheme is adopted from scheme provided by Public Service Department. Basically the scheme consists of monetary and non-monetary form such as public service incentive, housing incentive, cost of living allowance, critical allowance, annual leave, medical leave, maternity leave, sabbatical leave and others. Therefore, based on the interview conducted, all of the respondents satisfied with the basic salary provided by the scheme.

However, respondents are of the opinion that other allowances, benefits and scheme provided in the contract of service should be increased. For example, those academic staffs that hold the administrative post should be rewarded with extra allowances due to nature of work to cater both, the academic work as well as administrative matters. It is suggested by the R_3, "I think the basic base is okay, but they have cut some of allowance, for example,

Table 3: Benefits received by academic staff

Respondents	Salary Scheme provided by the Public Service Department	Allowances, benefits and scheme provided in contract of service
R_1	Yes	Yes
R_2	Yes	Yes
R_3	Yes	Yes
R_4	Yes	Yes

I was promoted from B to A but they reduce my allowance. Moreover, there is no allocation of allowance for those who hold the post of Deputy Vice Chancellor. In the end, I received the same salary with no difference at all. We also work as hard as we can and we should be given incentive on all such effort we have done."

R_1 and R_2 responded that, the universities have provided the academic staff with the group insurance scheme, scheme to attend seminar and conference, administrative allowance, medical benefits, staff welfare fund benefits as well as method of appraisal which has been updated to online system to make the process of promotion become easier. The same goes to R_4 university who implemented the online system for academic staffs to do self-assessment. Moreover, the promotion process will be conducted twice per year since the process will go to internal assessment. R_2 added that, the academic staff in the university is given with flexible working hours for them to commit with other responsibility related with academic work. R_3's university practice different method of promotion as they are not depending on the standard KPIs method of assessment but more on the track system which has different weightage according to their track. Besides that, R_4's university has implemented top-up scheme to those eligible to be promoted to the next level, but due to no vacancy, they may be given salary based on the new position they are holding. It is part of university's effort to appreciate their employee.

6. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION

Higher education institution in Malaysia is targeting on the achievement to be leveled in the world rank university. To reach the main goal, it needs a lot of effort, especially from the component of university itself, which includes management of university, academic staffs, and students. Even though some may question on the capability of Malaysian university to compete with other universities, especially from developed country, it will not downgrade the motivation of academic staffs who plays a big role in leading the university to the highest level of achievement. But, in a way it does not mean the government should neglect their role in providing good environment, equipment, incentive and other requirements to uplift the value of local universities. In fulfilling aspiration of the government and also the individual target on the KPIs of institution, academic staffs especially has to face with the burden of workload which is disproportionate with their effort spent and benefit received in achieving every components of the required achievement such as the number of research and publication, doing AW, teaching and learning, handling programme for students and several others. This kind of issues had lowered the motivation of academic staffs to struggle to steer the university to the next level of achievement.

To acknowledge that, government agreed to grant public university with the status of autonomy as they realize such status may allow the university to be more independent and have higher level of confidence in competing with other universities outside. Higher Education Institutions in heavily bureaucratic countries find it difficult to strive for better knowledge, academic excellence, and freedom or even to provide education in response to the needs of national social and economic development. As being granted with the autonomy status, there should not be any interference by the outsiders and the bureaucratic process should be lessened. However, by looking to the trend of university's management in Malaysia, it can be said there is still dictation by the government to control the management and running progress of university as the power in determining the position of Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Rector and several others are still on government. Supposedly, the government should allow the top management to lead the university according to the mission, vision and objective as planned without interference from outsiders. They should guarantee implementation of full autonomy in university and assure the academic freedom for academic staffs. The concept of educational autonomy is accepted universally because it ensures the success of certain institutions. The rationale of it, is each universities may work on the requirement as designed to achieve their own status.

Another issue that led to the higher burden workload of academic staff is the non-standardize system of public universities in Malaysia. We had acknowledged that public university in Malaysia has been categorized in different types of university, namely APEX University, RU, Focused and Comprehensive University. However, every university aims to get the status of RU which makes core duty of academic staffs on teaching and learning is no longer a priority, even though the student enrolled for diploma, undergraduate and post-graduate is large in number. Academic staffs in such university are burdened with number of credit hours, which sometimes become excessive. They even need to produce research products as part of their KPI and contribution to the university. Chapter 3 of this research has shown some analysis on a different category of university, but they shared almost the same workload which indicates that, whatever status they are holding now, they still need to fulfill requirements set by the ministry. Some may afford with the workload assigned to them, but as a reward they should be given some appreciation either in monetary or non-monetary form. Therefore, the following discussion will concern on few suggestions to be looked upon in order to improve academic staff's contract scheme, scheme of remuneration and appraisal to appreciate their effort.

There are few suggestions presented by the researcher in terms of amendment of the existence law to include or cancel certain provisions which prohibit the exercise of power of academic staffs, providing fund for the research project, and improvement on the salary scheme and system of work which may help academic staffs to focus on their real work.

6.1. Improvement on Remuneration and Appraisal

For the last few months in 2014, there was an issue reported that medical lecturers were leaving public universities in droves after complaining of years of being overworked and underpaid. It is because they are more attracted by the better salaries and less workload in private medical schools and hospitals. It is worse when Malaysian Medical Association president Datuk Dr N.K.S. Tharmaseelan claimed that some clinical lecturers were stuck for more than 20 years without a promotion despite being specialists and qualified surgeons with years of experience (Samy et al., 2015). From the report, it shows that remuneration is considered

important not only as a salary, but more on the motivation aspect to improve their performance as well as some sort of appreciation. It is even important to those expertise and outstanding lecturers to be paid with higher amount to appreciate their knowledge in certain fields. Even though the basic salary scheme of academic staff has been determined by the Public Service Department, as an appreciation, university may set an increment that reflects the market, job preparation and any achievement they acquired. Furthermore, the remuneration provided must be very competitive as what has been offered by private universities. Another strategy to attract and retain the academic staffs in public university, a competitive level of compensation must be offered, and they must recognize their achievements (Comm and Mathaisel, 2003) which can be acknowledged in terms of appraisal scheme (Smith, 1995). A systematic appraisal scheme is significant for individual staff development. It may result a greater accountability, motivational improvement through recognition of good performance and the identification of training needs (Haslam et al., 1993). The best way in implementing an appraisal scheme is by giving appropriate definition of workloads of university and its performance measurement as it may help the faculty staffs to perform their duties and work together with the mission of university. The establishment of these criteria is essential to ensure the successful of faculty performance assessment and it must be closely studied and evaluated (Comm and Mathaisel, 2003).

6.2. Providing Fund and Facilities

Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia are facing the decline of funding from Government and such reduction has caused public universities to work harder to generate their own income (Ahmad and Farley, 2014). Moving towards a greater future as a hub place for research and development, Higher Education Institution in Malaysia needs to integrate its RU with the global research community which requires the university to collaborate with foreign research institutions, universities and companies. It may cultivate the funding research culture and provide special incentives and research and development funding allocation to promote the development of centers of excellence by concentrating on top level researchers and financing in particular institutions specializing in certain fields (Vestergaard, 2007).

Even though the ministry stresses on the importance of research collaboration and encourage the university to be less dependent on government funding, but the universities, indeed still need such funding from government to work on the research facilities improvement. Thus, the government and university's management should continue their reward system to ensure the continuing process of future research project by allocating funds to public higher learning institution. Government must observe the needs of funding for higher education institution in Malaysia to ensure a better progress in the future. Fund allocated may be done through evaluating the performance of universities and its capability of upholding the name of Malaysia to the international level.

6.3. Professional Track

Career in academics nowadays focuses on a few main areas that requires achievement of faculty members in order to be promoted to the next level. It includes research, teaching and professional service. However, in reality, many academic staffs are still incapable of reaching these expectations as it needs 100% commitments for every category of work. Moreover, many of them are still not meeting the standard as a preparation for them to meet the challenges in academic life of today and tomorrow (Jusoff and Samah, 2009). Therefore, in preparing them for a better future to meet the achievement and excellence, a clear and high standard of academic strategic have to be planned by the top level management of university to ensure the objective of university as well as the academic staffs's aim is on the right track. It is suggested for local university to have a promotion tracks to fit the different career path because it allows them to focus on their specialization either teaching, research or professional service. Researcher acknowledges that some of the public universities in Malaysia have started with the implementation of professional track. However, researcher of the opinion that, it is better if all public universities would take into consideration to practice the same concept for the purpose of bringing up the value of public universities and to lead the university towards achievement. However, for the assessment matters, they are still being evaluated on the criteria provided by the university but according to different portions of weightage. This kind of track may serve as substance for greater steps in the development of the universities as it may lead the university to reach their target.

Every academic staff must prove their capability in handling the task what they should master in teaching, research or professional service. Only through standard measures of career path, they may chart their progress in disseminating knowledge and advancing their skills. For example, in teaching, the lecturer must have an outstanding personality to fit with the definition of academic excellence. They should be very creative in delivering information to students with the target to produce a First Class Honors Degree student that may contribute to the number of employability of human capital. Lecturers who involved in professional course require different stage of knowledge as they have to equip themselves with the current practical knowledge to be delivered to the students such as law course, engineering, architecture, medical studies, and others. Lecturers cannot only rely on textbook to obtain the information, however, some may need to attend professional courses to ensure they have advance and updated knowledge of certain fields. By categorizing them in their own track, they may focus and know their priorities without feeling crazy of doing everything.

While in research track, they may contribute fully to increase the number of research products and publication as the ranking of universities are also depending on number of publication and types of high impact journal. In doing research, they are encouraged to collaborate with the other universities, private institution, agencies and several others. As it demands a considerable amount of time and energy, those lecturers in this track may focus in producing a good quality of research which may help in generating funds for university.

Lastly, those involved in professional service track normally provide their service to the Faculty or University which

includes consultancies, leadership in CS activities, and the professional community (Jusoff and Samah, 2009). Among the types of participation of lecturers in professional organizations is International Union of Forestry Research Organization, Malaysian Remote Sensing Society, and Malaysian Institute of Foresters or non-academic bodies such as Parents-Teachers Association. Even though professional service may not be viewed as scholarly activity, but it has led to the creation of parallel tracks within research-dominated institutions. In Malaysia it has been acknowledged as part of contribution towards academic excellence (Jusoff and Samah, 2009).

7. CONCLUSION

Transformation of higher education in Malaysia directly leads to the increasing number of academic staff. However, issues arose due to dissatisfaction of academic staffs because all public universities are still bound to follow the dictated scheme provided by the Public Service Department of Malaysia and the benefits received lesser than they supposed to obtain despite the burden of workload of academic staff and job specifications are different compared to one another regardless of the status of universities either APEX, Research, Focused, or Comprehensive University. Therefore, researcher suggested for the revision of contract of service of academic staff to include clear terms in the contract for the purpose of better scheme and improvement of benefits to academic staffs.

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