

# Current Outlook on the Development of Malaysian Chinese Private Higher Education in Design

Tien-Li CHEN and Hwee Ling SIEK



**Tien-Li CHEN, National Taipei University of Technology, Taiwan**

Tien-Li Chen is a full-time professor and the director of wood cultivation and design research center at National Taipei University of Technology, Taiwan. He received his PhD in Design from the National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Taiwan. Dr. Chen's research interests focus on furniture and interior design, cultural product design, image analysis, and design aesthetics. He has served as a National Judge for the Painting & Decorating category of the WorldSkills International competition. Contact: chentl@mail.ntut.edu.tw



**Hwee Ling SIEK, National Taipei University of Technology, Taiwan**

Siek Hwee Ling is a PhD candidate in National Taipei University of Technology College of Design, Taiwan. Her research interests include cultural design and design education. She earned her MA in Design from the University of New South Wales, Australia. She has 25 years of experience as a design lecturer and course facilitator in Singapore and Malaysia. Presently she is a lecturer in the School of Arts at Sunway University, Malaysia. Contact: perlinesiek@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

This paper describes the impact of national, economic, and educational policies on the development design education in Malaysia's private educational institutions. Through historical and content analysis and interviews with experts, this article offers a complete timeline of the development of Malaysia's Education in Design among private educational institutions founded by Malaysian Chinese, the history of Malaysia's private education in design and the evolution of Malaysia's national educational policies. We divide this history into the four periods of Chaotic (before 1965), Seeding (1966-1995), Germination (1996-2005), and Standardization (2006 onward). Our historical review concludes that education providers focus largely on providing basic training for students with the sole purpose of securing a job immediately after their graduation.

**Keywords:** Private higher education in design, Design programme, Design history, Malaysia

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Chinese emphasis on education, long regarded as a crucial step in social mobility and assimilated culturally as a core value, was described by the Song Dynasty (960-1272) poet Wang Zhu in his Prodigal poem, "Everything is but inferior, with the exception of studies". Malaysian Chinese have retained their cultural customs and roots, and education is also a key focus in the Malaysian Chinese community. However, this emphasis does not include the study of art, mirroring how art education is normally neglected in formal education systems (Ewing, 2010; Saharabudhe, 2005; Sharif, 2010). In Malaysia, a moderate Islamic country of 31 million people, the largest ethnic group is the Malays with 50.4% of the population, followed by the Malaysian Chinese (22.6%) and the Malaysian Indians (6.7%) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). In Malaysia, all public higher educational institutions operate on a system of racial quotas, and are largely reserved for the indigenous group. In the period before and up till the early 80s, non-indigenous races such as the Malaysian Chinese and Malaysian Indians generally sent their children overseas for higher education (Geok, 2010). After the global economic recession of the mid 1980s, when these parents could no longer afford to continue to send their children overseas, with the rising demand of the labor market, the government began to permit private educational institutions.

Since Malaysia's independence in 1957, the annual reports of the Ministry of Education (MOE) have continued to group all art programs under Arts and Humanities, and information is disseminated without distinguishing specific areas of art programs such as fine arts, design, music, and social science. There is a lack of information, official or otherwise, on exactly how many tertiary institutions provide education in art and design, how many students are currently pursuing their studies in these, and how many have graduated or are

graduating, based solely on the report from the Ministry of Education. In such an environment, it is worth exploring and organizing information on those educators in art and design.

There is little official data and documents on private educational institutions in Malaysia, especially for programs such as art and design, and especially for institutions founded by Malaysian Chinese. Thus, the objective of this research is to collate and document information on private educational institutions founded by Malaysian Chinese artists and designers, to generate a historical record of the field. This research also contributes by furnishing a summary of the progress of courses in art and design provided by these institutions over the past 50 years, as well as by describing these institutions and explaining their historical and cultural contexts.

## 2. MALAYSIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION

### 2.1 The Malaysian Educational System and National Education Policies

During the British colonial period, the objective of Malaya's education policy was to produce white-collar workers to serve the British Empire. After independence in 1957, United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the largest political party, played a dominant role in Malaysian politics, including the development of education policies and systems.

In Malaysia, all education systems are governed by the 1961 Education Act, which emphasizes the use of Bahasa Malaysia as the teaching language and applied a unified curriculum to promote solidarity (Reports of the Education Committee, 1956). The Malaysian government provides free basic education for every citizen in the country. Education takes the form of six years of primary school, three years of lower secondary education, two years of higher secondary education, and two

years of post-secondary education. After pre-university courses, Malaysian students can proceed to tertiary education (Lee, 1999). In Malaysia, all public universities of higher learning have racial quotas that are largely reserved for students of ethnic Malay background (Singh & Mukherjee, 1993), with limited seats open to non-indigenous groups (such as the Chinese and Indian).

The average monthly gross income of the three ethnic groups (Chinese, Indians and Malays) in the national economy in 1957 was RM288 (US\$65), RM228 (US\$52), and RM134 (US\$31), respectively (Perumal, 1989). In 1971, the second Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Razak, attempted to increase the indigenous people's share of the economy by launching the New Economic Policy (NEP). This policy was maintained by the fourth prime minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad, who held office from 1981 to 2003. The NEP emphasized the development of agricultural industries such as oil palm and rubber plantations and the promotion of energy-intensive industries, such as manufacturing, automobile assembly, and liquefied natural gas. The policy included poverty eradication and economic restructuring by increasing Malay participation in the economy. It created job opportunities for Malays in many new technical and administrative areas in the country's national agencies. By 2012, the average gross income per household for Malaysian Chinese, Indians, and Malays rose to RM 6366

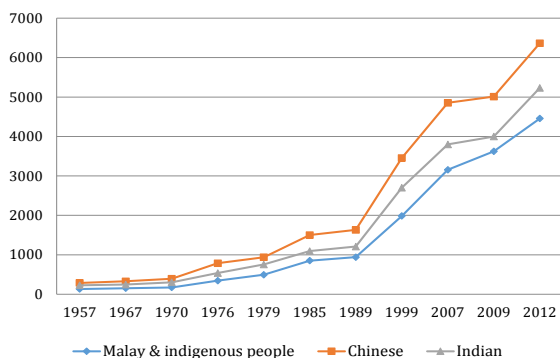


Figure 1. Average gross income per household  
Source: Malaysia Ministry of Information, Communications and Culture, 2010

(US\$1440), RM5233 (US\$1184), and RM4457 (US\$1008) (Figure 1). The current national plan calls for the nation to become a high-income economy by the year 2020, with the target of doubling the country's current upper-middle-income bracket to RM23,000 (USD\$5200) per person. However, the policy emphasizes industry and technology, and the design field is not addressed.

The first design program and institution established by the British colonial administration in 1951 was the Rural Industrial Development Authority (RIDA). After independence, RIDA was renamed Majlis Amanah Rakyat (People's Trust Council, MARA) in 1966. It was formed to help train and guide Malays and other indigenous people in the business and industry sectors. However, this institute was only opened to indigenous people. MARA offered graphic design and textile design programs at the diploma level in 1971 (Malaysian Counseling Magazine, 2012), and gradually developed into a channel for complete education while giving indigenous people assistance in business ventures. Since then, it has established four MARA Colleges (Kolej MARA), seven MARA professional colleges (Kolej Professional MARA), University Technology MARA (UITM), and University of Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) across the country. It has also established 181 MARA Vocational Training Centers (Pusat GIAT MARA), 24 MARA Higher Technical College (Kolej Kemahiran Tinggi MARA) and the German-Malaysian Institute (GMI) for the purpose of providing students from indigenous group with vocational training. The government established MARA Poly-technic College (KPTM) in 2003, a wholly owned subsidiary of MARA. These are spread across nine large cities throughout Malaysia, offering 2+2 Associate Degrees in American Undergraduate (AAD) programs which are accepted by 75 universities in the United States and New Zealand. The original purpose of MARA was to train and guide indigenous people in the commercial and industrial fields. However, most of the above-mentioned MARA institutions offer courses

such as fashion design, graphic design, multimedia design, and digital media creative production.

The second public university to set up a design department was the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) in East Malaysia. The government supported Malays by establishing a Malaysian Design Committee. The Chairman of the Malaysian Design Committee, Professor Datuk Ahmed Haji Zaedin (MRM, 1993), said that the establishment of the committee and various design facilities or centers would promote business, education, and design. This in turn would improve the competency levels and standards in the design industry. This Malaysian Committee was seen as a think tank and consultant that developed innovative designs and ensured compliance with international standards. In 2004, Prime Minister Badawi established the Malaysia Design Innovation Center (MDIC) to promote creativity and innovation for business (MDIC, 2005). In 2007, Prime Minister Badawi established the National Design Center, known as the Malaysia Design Development Center

(MDDC), a subsidiary of MARA. It was hosted by the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development to develop creative and innovative designs for the local and foreign communities. In 2014, Prime Minister Najib Razak's Ministry of Finance erected the Malaysian Global Innovation Center and Creativity Center (MaGIC) to promote innovation and creativity to build sustainable enterprise ecosystems (Asohan, 2014) (Figure 2).

Over five centuries of colonization, Malaysian culture has been influenced by the English, Portuguese, and the Dutch. In 1971, the government proposed a national culture heavily based on Malay Archipelago culture<sup>1</sup>. This cultural policy started at school level, schools offered clubs related to Malay art, self-defense martial arts, traditional dance, performing arts, games, music, and drama. The 1971 National Cultural Policy states that art related to Malay culture is divided into traditional handicrafts (knitwear, bamboo art, wood carving, embroidery, ceramics, shell craft, and sculpture), photography, painting, Malay traditional calligraphy, floral decoration to

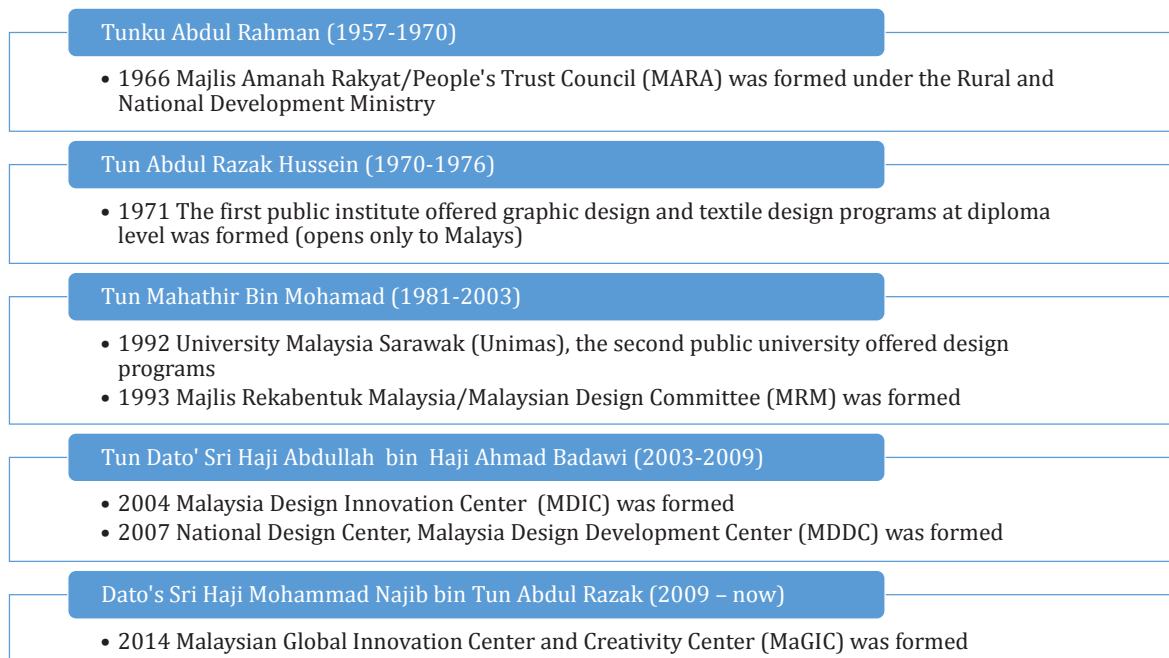


Figure 2. Malaysian prime ministers and their contributions to design education

<sup>1</sup> "Malay Archipelago culture" refers to the belief, customs, cultural practices and customary codes of conduct found among cultures native to the coastal areas of Malay Peninsula and Borneo. The Malacca Sultanate beginning in the 15th century set standards of Malay identity in literature, architecture, performing arts, martial arts, culinary traditions, and traditional dress.

promote Malay language, Malay cultural symbols, and Islamic religious values (Deraman, 1985).

Since policies in education, economy, and culture tend to support the Malays and indigenous people and neglect other ethnic groups, non-indigenous ethnic groups often had to solve issues pertaining to education, economy, and culture without government support. Hence, documenting the historical development of design education among the Malaysian Chinese is a first step in exploring and explaining it.

## 2.2 The Origin and Current Status of Malaysian Chinese Design Education

In 1968, Chinese private education was offered only from primary to high school. Malaysian Chinese sought to establish their own private university, Merdeka University (Tsao, 2007), to preserve Chinese language and culture, and to provide a higher education pathway for students who were educated in Chinese schools. Initially, this private university was supposed to have programs in agriculture, arts, social science, business, accounting, electronic and electrical engineering, and linguistics (Jiang, 2009). Art and design programs were not part of the proposal. However, the establishment of this private university was rejected by the government because the government forbids the usage of Mandarin Chinese as the language of instruction for non-language subjects in institutions of higher learning.

The government passed the Universities and University College Act (UUCA) on April 29, 1971. Under this act, no higher educational institution with the status of University or University College could be founded except with approval of the Sovereign<sup>2</sup> of Malaysia. The political, educational, economic, and cultural policies pursued by the Malay ruling party in the 1970s greatly affected the education and economic development of the Malaysian Chinese (Fan, 2001). The UUCA inhibited the development of Chinese society and

culture during tertiary education, thus arousing a sense of cultural crisis among Malaysian Chinese and encouraging them to preserve Chinese culture. Beginning in 1984, the Malaysian Chinese committee launched an annual nationwide Chinese cultural festival throughout the country, to carry forward the activities of Chinese culture, which include art-related ink painting calligraphy, sculpture, and print making, all of which have high visual aesthetic value.

Among these arts, painting was the most common in Malaysia. Through the early 80s, Malaysian Chinese and Indian parents had to send their children abroad to continue their education (Geok, 2010). The lack of financial and academic ability meant that artistically-inclined children were apprenticed under artists instead. Under these painters, children learned painting skills and undertook projects related to advertising and design. These apprentices were expected to become painters as well, earning a living through their art. In the early days, design was termed “commercial art”, “applied art” or “practical art”. Art that had practical applications and art that could be applied to functional objects for everyday use was considered practical art. These arts were career oriented (Salama, 2007).

In the mid-1980s during the global recession, parents could not afford to continue sending their children abroad because the United Kingdom and Australian governments required full payment from overseas students. Further, the government responded to domestic labor market demand (Geok, 2010; Harold, 1994) by liberalizing the private sector’s involvement in education.

As of 2014, 30 years later, there are 20 public universities, 61 private universities, 34 university colleges, 409 private higher educational institutions, and 9 foreign university branch campuses in Malaysia<sup>3</sup> (MOHE, 2014). In the beginning, only one out of nine foreign universities, Swinburne

<sup>2</sup> The Sovereign (Yang di-Pertuan Agong) is the monarch and head of state of Malaysia, formally elected to a five-year term by and from among the nine rulers of the Malay states.

<sup>3</sup> The university branch campuses include: 3 universities from Australia (Swinburne University of Technology, Monash University and Curtin University), 5 from the UK (Heriot-Watt University, Newcastle University Medicine, The University of Nottingham, University of Southampton, and the University of Reading), and 1 from China (University of Xiamen).

University of Technology from Australia, offered a program related to design. Established in 2000, Swinburne's main campus is in Sarawak, far from Kuala Lumpur. The cost of studying in the Malaysian campus of Swinburne is similar to that of studying overseas. Hence, it is not considered relevant to this topic.

Malaysian Chinese did not include art and design in the establishment of the private university's proposal to the government. Previously, students who did not perform well academically could enter art institutions based on their artistic talents. However, the MOE made it compulsory for prospective students to obtain credits for *Bahasa Melayu* (Malay language), history, and one additional subject, or obtain 3 credits plus at least a passing grade in Malay language and history in the Malaysian Certificate of Education (*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia*, SPM), to qualify for admission into tertiary education. This standard of admission excludes those who do not perform well in academia and prevents those who wish to make a living via art from honing their talents.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS AND SCOPE

Because the government does not make data on Malaysian Chinese institutions available to the public, there is no formal record of their educational institutions. This study thus collects and collates historical data about this field. First, experts were interviewed to understand the development of private design education among ethnic Chinese. Next, this study used historical analysis and content analysis to explore the relationship between research institutes, the Internet, government agencies, libraries, domestic and foreign scholars, and other information. This was supplemented by knowledge of the historical evolution of these relationships developed in the first step. This paper then summarizes the development profile of design education relations between Chinese and Malaysian private universities. It

then explores design education in Malaysia, to predict its future development.

### 3.1 Research Scope and Limitations

#### 3.1.1 Time

This study uses a timeline to explain the contemporary significance of history in context. Although there are few early documents, design education in Malaysia can be traced back to the establishment of the Society of Amateur Paintings in 1913. A more complete literature on higher education in Malaysia was created by the MOE in 2007 after the formalization of nationwide and international standards of education curricula (MQR, 2012). Therefore, the scope of the study ranges from 1913 to the present.

#### 3.1.2 Curriculum

To analyze the context of design education in private schools in Malaysia, it is vital to first identify the different courses offered by private colleges and universities in Malaysia. Private colleges may provide GCE A programs<sup>4</sup> or a one-year foundation prior to entering an undergraduate degree program, including home-grown programs such as full-time certificate courses (12 to 18 months) and Full-time Diploma programs (30-36 months). Private universities and university-colleges of the late 1990s are then able to offer undergraduate bachelor's degrees and above. This study does not include the stages of analyzing and exploring GCE A level courses, foundation courses, and certificate courses at private colleges because of their wide coverage. Moreover, A level courses and foundation courses primarily consist of subjects such as science and business. This research does not include the analysis of certificate programs that have durations of 12 to 18 months because the minimum job threshold for matriculation in Malaysia is a diploma. Therefore, this study is designed for professional diploma design courses, undergraduate degree design courses, or higher. Other factors consid-

<sup>4</sup> GCE A-level (A-level for short), or General Certificate of Education Advanced level, is a pre-university program offered in Malaysia that is based on the UK education system. A Level is recognized by many Malaysia universities as the standard for assessing the suitability of applicants.

ered herein include the year of establishment, the Chinese ownership of the design institutions, and design courses offered (Patton, 1990; Punch, 1998). Today, there are 504 local and private tertiary institutions (61 private universities, 34 private university colleges and 409 private colleges). There are 64 institutions with design schools and departments. Some government corporations, such as the Telecommunications of Malaysia, have set up a private multimedia university that is still considered as part of the government (Rahman, 2010) and so will not be considered in this study.

### 3.2 Expert Sample

Oral statements of experts are used to construct the history of design education. Purposive sampling methods were used to invite design education experts from different decades beginning with Singapore's secession from Malaysia. These experts are currently working and have many years of practical experience. The basic information from the five experts is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Informants of the study**

Era	Years of experience	Position	Experience
1960s	29	A / Head of department cum lecturer	Senior Lecturer
1980s	20	B/ CEO	Founder
1990s	23	C/ Principal	Founder
2000s	18	D/CEO	Founder
2010s	5	E/ CEO	Founder

All five experts work at different colleges. Four of them are the founders of their respective colleges. The remaining one was a senior lecturer who had worked in the college for 29 years and was chosen because the founder of the institute was no longer with the institute. Two of the founders have had more than 20 years of experience and another had more than 18 years of experience. The last, who founded their college in 2010, only had 5 years of experience.

### 3.3 Historical Analysis

Historical analysis is a research method use to analyze what happened in the past via data such as historical texts, newspaper reports, diaries, and maps (Marshall & Rossman, 1998). The literature and data sources used in this study can be roughly divided into three categories. The first category consists of official documents and documents of the Malaysian Chinese and the information materials published by the Malaysian Chinese News Agency, articles published by important policy makers in the Malaysian Chinese community, and literary criticism. The legislative documents referenced in this study are the five packages of legislation that initiated the reform of higher education: the 1960 Education Act and the Universities and University College Act of 1965, the Private Higher Education Institution Act of 1996, the 1996 National Accreditation Board Act, 1996 National Commission or Higher Education Act. Other policy documents are also referenced, including the Malaysian Five Year Plans and the Vision 2020 Plan (Mahathir, 1991). The second category consists of written materials and documents, including reports from the artist's exhibition catalogue, reports from Malaysian Chinese societies' educational committees, newspapers and periodicals or academic articles about private education in Malaysia. The third category consists of the oral histories of design education collected from the experts. Most interviewees are founders of the private design institutes established in the period 1980 to 2010. In addition, the researcher is also one of the founders of a private design institute established in the early 1990s, who continues to run the design institute. Therefore, the researcher has also been immersed in this historical process.

The 50-year study period is divided into four periods corresponding to the evolution of Malaysia's national educational policies. The first period refers to the period of chaos and disorder in design and education during which there were no set

guidelines. The second period refers to the period in which many institutes were built from scratch with the purpose of preserving heritage. The third period refers to the period in which seedlings were cultivated and design education grew. In the fourth period standards of education such as technical specifications, guidelines, methods, and processes were implemented across the nation.

#### 4. DEVELOPMENT PATH OF CHINESE PRIVATE DESIGN EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA

##### 4.1 Result

The history of the Chinese private design education in Malaysia stretches from 1913 to the present (2015) and begins with the earliest documented records of the Association of Fine Arts in 1913. The information collected from the limited literature and participants from this time was grouped into the first phase, which ended in 1965 when Singapore seceded from Malaysia. When Singapore seceded, it hosted the only art academy available for both countries. Malaysian Chinese could no longer predict the future of art and design. As a result, amateur art activities from 1913 that had since been upgraded to formal learning systems had to start again from scratch. The period between the first documented record of art education activities in Malaysia and the secession in 1965 is referred to as the chaotic period. The seeding period (1965-1995) refers to the period where artists started academies of art. The government's opening-up policy of the mid-1980s enabled the establishment of private education institutes, causing the number of privately-run art and design academies to double. The germination period (1996-2005) refers to the period of vigorous infrastructure development. Business conglomerates joined the establishment of design institutes and design courses. Newly established policies that affected private higher education laws led to the decay of the academies of fine arts which had upheld the struggle for art. The standardization period (2006 onward)

refers to the establishment of formalized education with technical specifications and standards. As a result of the newly established standard-based system, institutes of higher learning could now collaborate and offer programs in conjunction with foreign universities from the United Kingdom, France, and Australia. However, only in-demand courses were offered and new design institutes are largely concentrated in Kuala Lumpur or the areas surrounding highly populated areas of neighboring states.

##### 1. The Chaotic Period (before 1965)

In Malaysia, the beginning of Design education dates back to the establishment of the Singapore-based Amateur Drawing Association in 1913 (Weekly Sun, 1913) and the United Artists of Malaysia ('Nanyang shuhua she'<sup>5</sup>), an art society based in Kuala Lumpur, in 1929. The primary objective was to promote art and Chinese culture in general. Hence, there was no style or thematic restriction. Students were allowed to paint using Chinese inks or Western oils. To maintain the pace of learning, all members had to sit for a monthly test and a final examination at the end of each year. In 1938, Lim Hak Tai, the principal and a group of his students established the Nanyang Academy of Fine Art (NAFA) in Singapore and taught Chinese ink painting, oil painting, colored ink painting, and other patterns. NAFA was suspended for three years (1942-1945) during the Japanese occupation of Malaya and Singapore.

In 1946, after re-establishing NAFA, Principal Lin wrote in his school magazine, stating that the five major programs would integrate the culture and customs of all ethnic groups, communicate the art between East and West, exert the scientific spirit and social thoughts, establish a Singaporean tropical art style, and cultivate artistic talent (Tan, 1985). NAFA nurtured many graduates from the 1950s to the 1970s before the separation of Malaysia and Singapore in 1965, laying the foun-

<sup>5</sup> 南洋書畫社



dation for art education in these two countries. Prior to Singapore's secession, there were only two public higher educational institutions in the country: the University of Malaya, and Nanyang University in Singapore. These two universities did not offer art or design education since the art was regarded as the lowest in the hierarchy of the nation's economic needs at that time (Siew, 2011). Examples of Malaysian artists who graduated from NAFA include Chung Chen Sun, Cheah Thien Soong, Cheah Yew Saik, and Dato' Chuah Kooi Yong. In the same period, several watercolor/oil painters who were passionate about art went abroad for further study. These include Cheah Yew Saik, Jolly Koh, Chew Teng Beng, and Choong Kam Kon, all experts in their fields. As early as 1959-1965, these artists were featured in domestic and foreign exhibitions, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Art Fair in New Delhi (India), the 1<sup>st</sup> International Exhibition of Paintings in Saigon, and the National Gallery of Malaysia. These artists were instrumental in shaping Malaysian art and design education.

Two key issues emerged in this period. First, Malaysia gained independence in 1957, but art and design education was not prioritized by the nation nor considered the main driving force of the nation's economy. Second, before 1965, Singapore-based NAFA was the only institution offering formal arts and art courses. During that period, Malaysia did not have any art institutions or design education. The name 'Chaotic Period' reflects the chaos and lack of order in design education during this time. Art education, consisted solely of handful of Chinese artists who inherited the concepts of art and design.

## 2. Seeding Period (1966 to 1995)

After the separation of Malaysia and Singapore, NAFA belonged to Singapore. The Rural Industrial Development Authority (RIDA), established by the British colonial administration, was con-

verted to MARA and only admitted Malays and indigenous people. The National University of Malaya did not have a department of art and fine arts. The 1968 proposal for the establishment of Merdeka University<sup>6</sup> did not mention arts or the art department. During this period, the Chinese Calligrapher and Chinese ink painting artist Chung Chen Sun, a graduate of NAFA, mobilized the Chinese community to finance the establishment of an art academy dedicated to Chinese children who loved art and fine arts. A non-profit organization named the Malaysian Institute of Art (MIA) was established in 1967. It was the first private art institution in Malaysia that offered fine art program (FA). At about the same time, an artist of western arts who graduated from a UK school, Mr. Cheah Yew Saik, founded the Kuala Lumpur College of Art in 1968. Annie Wong, a Paris trained fashion designer, founded the first private school of design in Malaysia, the International Academy of Fashion and Design, in 1975.

In 1982, MIA launched its first design program. In the 10 years that followed an average of one new design institution was established every two years during the Seeding Period. Two of the founders graduated from Taiwan schools, five were graduates of MIA, two graduated from NAFA in Singapore, one was a French art and design graduate, one founder was engaged in the advertising and consultancy business, and the other three founders were businessmen who were already engaged in education. Driven by the global recession crisis in the mid-1980s, the government opened up policies to allow the establishment of private educational institutions in order to reduce the financial burden on parents who could not send their children abroad (Geok, 2010; Harold, 1994).

Eighteen private institutions were established during the Seeding period. Of these, 16 were located in urban areas. Two founders established institutes in their home towns (Perak, Sabah).

<sup>6</sup> In September 1967, Education Minister Zohan announced that from 1968 onwards, only students eligible for studies overseas were those who held Cambridge international examinations general certificate of education, or Malaysia's certificate of education. This meant that students who took the Malaysian Chinese's Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) were barred from studying overseas. To address this issue, the United Chinese School Committees Association proposed establishing a private university (Jiang, 2009).

Driven by market demand, 55% of them provided graphic design programs (GD), and 50% provided interior design programs (ID). KBU International College, founded in 1990, took the first step towards globalization in 1993 by inviting Nottingham Trent University from the UK to collaborate. Subsequently, KBU was the first Southeast Asian institute to arrange joint programs for undergraduate degree programs in graphic design and interior design. During this period, the Malaysian Ministry of Education had not yet formally regulated the curriculum or its development. The college offered independent enrollment, self-selection criteria for its students, voluntary self-referrals to secondary schools and parents, and demonstrated its own ability to stakeholders through awards and expertise. The founder of

The One Academy of Art promoted himself as an illustrator and offered an illustration design course (IL). In-House Multimedia College's founders are from Singapore's advertising industry. They set up a computer graphics design program (CG) at that time.

Private higher education institutions grew rapidly, to 156 by 1992 (Lee, 2004; MOHE, 2008). During that time, the 18 design institutes, comprising 11% of the total number of private tertiary institutions in the nation, included the only institution offering undergraduate design degrees (Table 2). In the early 1990s, fine arts (FA) was separated from applied art and formally named design. Hence, the tables regarding the ensuing periods exclude fine arts programs.

**Table 2. Higher education institutions in Design and design programs during the Seeding Period**

No.	Name/year of establishment	Launch of design program	Founder(s)	Diploma*						BA*	
				FA	GD	ID	CG	FD	IL	GD	ID
1	Malaysia institute of Art (1967)	1982	Chung Chen Sun Nanyang Academy of Art, Singapore Master's Degree in Public Administration, University of San Francisco, USA	FA	GD	-	-	FD	-	-	-
2	Kuala Lumpur Academy of Art (1968)	1983	Cheah Yew Saik Nanyang Academy of Art, Singapore Stroke on Kent College, UK	FA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	International Academy of Fashion & Design (1975)	1975	Annie Wong Paris Trained Fashion Designer	-	-	-	-	FD	-	-	-
4	West Malaysian Academy of Art (1978)	1978	Tang Tuck Kan St. Martin School of Arts, London, UK	FA	GD	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	PJ College of Art & Design (1985)	1985	Toh Chee Lip Malaysia Institute of Art	-	GD	ID	-	-	-	-	-
6	Perak Institute of Art (1986)	1986	Chew Kwong Wan Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan	FA	GD	ID	-	-	-	-	-
7	Central Academy of Art (1983)	1987	Cheng Haw Chien National Taiwan Cheng Chi University, Taiwan	FA	GD	ID	-	-	-	-	-
8	Equator Academy of Art & Design (1987)	1987	Dato' Chuah Kooi Yong Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts Hornsey College of Art & Design, UK	FA	GD	ID	-	FD	-	-	-
9	Saito College (1988)	1988	Tetsuo Saito Businessman	-	GD	ID	-	-	-	-	-

\* Diploma: FA= Fine Art, GD = Graphic Design, ID= Interior Design, CG= Computer Graphic, FD= Fashion Design, IL=Illustration Bachelor's degree (BA): GD = Graphic Design, ID= Interior Design

**Table 2. Higher education institutions in design and design programs during the Seeding Period (continued)**

No.	Name/year of establishment	Launch of design program	Founder(s)	Diploma*						BA*		
				FA	GD	ID	CG	FD	IL	GD	ID	
10	Impiana International College (1990)	1990	Timonhy Teh Hong Beng Malaysian Institute of Art	-	GD	ID	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	Sabah Institute of Art (1990)	1990	Prof. Dato' Dr. Wilson Yong Interior Design, Singapore Interior Consultant	-	-	ID	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	The One Academy of Art (1991)	1991	Tat Sun Hoi Malaysia Institute of Art Lee Loong Wun Malaysia Institute of Art Veronica Ho (LATE)	-	GD	-	-	-	IL	-	-	-
13	Carven Academy of Fashion (1991)	1991	Carven Ong Malaysia Institute of Art	-	-	-	-	FD	-	-	-	-
14	Lim kok Wing University of Creative Technology (1991)	1991	Tan Sri Dato' Lim Kok Wing Advertising / Businessman	-	GD	ID	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	In-House Multimedia College (1993)	1993	Siek Hwee Ling Master Degree in Design Management, University of NSW, Australia Nanyang Academy of Art, Singapore Yap Bu Kiang,NAFA, Singapore Chen Twu Bian Coleman College, Singapore Central Academy of Art, KL	-	-	-	CG	-	-	-	-	-
16	KBU International College (1990)	1993	Tan Sri Dr. Teo Soo Cheng** Businessman	-	-	-	-	-	-	GD	ID	-
17	LaSalle International Design / Raffles International Institute (1994)	1994	Malaysian partner: Chew Hua Seng National University of Singapore Business Administration	-	-	-	-	FD	-	-	-	-
18	Pratique Asia College (1994)	1994	Jeannie Choo Interior Designer	-	-	ID	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Total</i>				<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
				<i>(%)</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>5%</i>

\* Diploma: FA= Fine Art, GD = Graphic Design, ID= Interior Design, CG= Computer Graphic, FD= Fashion Design, IL=Illustration  
Bachelor's degree (BA): GD = Graphic Design, ID= Interior Design

\*\* Owner and developer of the 1000 acres fully integrated township/commercial district in Selangor, Malaysia

According to the official data generated every five years (1985, 1990, and 1995) published by the Malaysian Ministry of Education in 2007, the government was open to the establishment of private colleges and private universities beginning in the 1980s. The changing policies benefited the non-indigenous groups as they could further their studies in Malaysia, thus saving money. In 1985, private students accounted for 9% of the national students. This percentage grew to 15% in 1990

and 35% in 1995. During the same period of time, the number of students going abroad dropped from 40% in 1985 to 14% in 1995, whereas the number of students in public universities remained steady at 51% - 53% (Table 3).

There are three key features of the 1966 to 1995 period. First, before the mid-1980s, the government of Malaysia strictly controlled the establishment of private institutions. Six art colleges were

**Table 3. Percentage of students in various types of institutions (1985–1995)**

Institutions	1985	1990	1995
Public	86,330 (51%)	122,340 (53%)	189,020 (51%)
Private	15,000 (9%)	35,600 (15%)	127,594 (35%)
Overseas	68,000 (40%)	73,000 (32%)	50,600 (14%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>169,330</i> <i>(100%)</i>	<i>230,940</i> <i>(100%)</i>	<i>367,214</i> <i>(100%)</i>

Source: Authors' calculation based on the data from Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2007

set up, founded by Chinese artists who loved art and ran fine arts courses. Five out of these six institutions were in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. One was located in Perak, the founder's hometown. Second, colleges could be established as long as there were one or two courses. Since 82% of these colleges (14 out of 18) did so, they were successfully established. Third, once the government opened up the establishment of private institutions, a total of 156 private colleges were established in a span of 10 years. According to official data on student numbers, the number of students graduated from private colleges and universities rose sharply from 9% in 1985, to 35% of all students in 1995. The 18 art and design colleges accounted for 11% of the total institutions available during this period. This showed how the current system and external environment impacted the market demand and changed the scene. The art and design colleges that started from zero were symbolized by the seeds sprinkled on the surface of the field that would eventually grow. Thus, we call this period the 'Seeding Period'.

### 3. Germination Period (1996 to 2005)

In the early 1990s, Prime Minister Mahathir launched Vision 2020. This called for the nation to become a self-sufficient industrialized nation by the year 2020. As a part of this ambitious

project a number of plans have been launched. In Kuala Lumpur, the Petronas Twin Towers brought much international recognition to Malaysia. Renowned international architects were invited to design distinctive modern buildings for this area to promote the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) project. The land in the surrounding areas was used to develop office and high-rise buildings. The economy then took off in the early 1990s. During this period, Malaysia began to achieve industrialization (Rasiah, Crinis, & Lee, 2015).

From 1996 to 2005, a total of seven private design institutes were established: Dasein Academy of Art, Alif Creative Academy, Neo-Art Institute, MSC International College, Baruvi Academy of Communication Art, Tunku Abdul Rahman College (TARC), and New Era College. The founder of the first four was originally the faculty members of the design institutes during the Seeding Period. They spotted the opportunity to set up new design institutes with their own design and fine art expertise. The fifth establishment was the Baruvi Academy of Communication Art. Its founder was from the advertising industry in Taiwan. The founders of the 6th and 7th did not have a professional background in design and art. The TARC was established in 1969 during the Seeding Period. TARC was a non-profit organization founded by the Malaysia Chinese Association (MCA), a uni-racial political party. MCA is one of the three major parties in Malaysia's ruling coalition, and TARC receives a subsidy equal to 50 percent of its student tuition fees. TARC launched its art and design faculties in 1999. The 7th institution is the New Era College founded in 1997 by the United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia with donations from many Malaysian Chinese. New Era College started its design department five years after it was established (2002). All seven institutions offer diplomas in graphic design and visual communication. Their main workforces are artists and the foundation of its curriculum is applied art. Basic knowledge of art such as color, design concepts, and general drawing skill is

emphasized. New design courses such as Product Industrial Design (PD) and Interior Architecture Design (IA) were also introduced. At that time, design software became popular in Malaysia in the late 1990s and two other design colleges also offered software courses. All seven colleges established during this period offered graphic design course and 60% of them offered interior design (Table 4). Out of seven, six are concentrated in Kuala Lumpur or in the urban areas of neighboring states such as Klang Valley of Selangor.

The rapid expansion of private higher educational institutions led to the passing of the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act in 1996. A statutory body, the Quality Assurance Division (QAD), was also established to manage and coordinate quality assurance in public higher institutions. The National Accreditation Board Act of 1996 (Lembaga Akreditasi Negara, LAN) was given the authority to accredit certificate, diploma, and degree programs provided by all higher educational institutions. The Board defines two types of

semesters: a long semester made up of 16 weeks (14 weeks plus 2 weeks examination) and a short semester made up of 8 weeks (7 weeks plus 1 week examination). There are two long semesters and one short semester per academic year. The calculation of each credit hour is one hour of lecture hour for 14 weeks. For Diplomas, programs have to be conducted over a period of at least 28 months with at least 90 credit points or 3,600 students learning time (SLT). For bachelor degree programs, 120 credit points or 4,800 hours of student learning time were required (Table 5). During this transition period, institutions were required to submit brief descriptions on syllabus outlines for all single subject lesson plans, including such details as objectives, lecturer qualifications, reference books and textbooks. Those who had a bachelor's degree could teach diploma students, whereas those with a Masters could teach those enrolled in a bachelor's degree program.

The MOE set the basic academic qualifications for the admission threshold. Malaysia's design educa-

**Table 4. Higher education institutions in design and design programs during the Germination Period**

No.	Name/year of establishment	Launch of design program	Founder(s)	Diploma*								
				GD	CG	ID	PD	FD	AD	IL	IA	
1	Dasein Academy of Art (1996)	1996	A group of illustrators The One Academy of Arts	GD	-	-	-	-	-	AD	IL	-
2	Baruvi Academy of Communication Arts (1997)	1997	Yan Bo Qin Taiwan Advertising volume research Advertising consultant	GD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Alif Creative Academy (Alfa College) (1998)	1998	Henry MK Wong MBA, Photographer	GD	-	ID	-	-	-	-	-	IA
4	Tunku Abdul Rahman College (1969)	1999	Founded by the Malaysia Chinese Association (MCA)	GD	-	-	-	FD	-	-	-	-
5	Neo-Art Institute (2000)	2000	Tay Tian Pin (Late) Malaysia Teacher Training College	GD	CG	ID	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	New Era College (1997)	2002	Chinese School Committee and School Teachers Association	GD	-	ID	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	MSC International College (2001)	2004	The Design School of Segi University. Formerly known as MSC, established by Chung Chen Sun & a group of lecturers from MIA	GD	CG	ID	PD	-	AD	-	-	-
<i>Total</i>					7	2	4	1	1	2	1	1
<i>(%)</i>					100%	29%	60%	14%	14%	29%	14%	14%

\* Diploma: GD = Graphic Design, CG= Computer Graphic, ID= Interior Design, PD=product design, FD= Fashion Design, AD=Advertising Design, IA= Interior Architect

**Table 5. Diploma and Bachelor's degree program credit points, duration and total learning hours**

Program	Credit	Duration	Semester duration	Weeks	Learning hours
Diploma	90 pts/hour	2½ -3 years (min. 28 months)	Long semester x 5 Short semester x 2	16 weeks x 5 08 weeks x 2	3600
Bachelor's degree	120 pts/hour	3-4 years (min. 36 months)	Long semester x 6 Short semester x 3	16 weeks x 5 08 weeks x 2	4800

Source: Compiled by authors

tion and training were geared towards cultivating a workforce. Three years of professional training were the threshold for entry into the labor market. Additionally, design education and training focused on design work to prove student capability. The diploma certificates and transcripts were only useful if one chose to pursue further studies. The implementation of new educational regulations and quality assurance had an indirect impact on the private art colleges in the previous period. The West Malaysian Academy of Art, the Kuala Lumpur College of Art, and the Central Academy of Art closed in 1997, 2003, and 2005, respectively. Two fashion design institutes, the IFTC and the Carven Academy of Fashion chose not to register under the MOE. Students who enroll in institutes that are not registered under the MOE cannot apply for government education loans but are exempt from the admission standards set by the MOE. The PJ College of Art & Design (PJCAD) was acquired by INTI International Education Group<sup>7</sup> in 2005. MSC International College, established in 2001, joined the Systematics Education Group (SEG) which was listed on the second board of the KLSE in 1995. Then in 2004, the SEG International Berhad (SEGi) was transferred to the main board of KLSE.

Private higher institutions in Malaysia are not entitled to any allowance or monetary subsidy from the government. They also do not receive any allocation of students from the MOE. Institutions and colleges are expected to source and recruit their own students, do their own marketing and advertisements, and rent their own campus at commercial rates. If the colleges profit, they are expected to pay commercial tax. These regulations add administrative work and expenses. By the end of this period, there were 15 art institu-

tions left from the Seeding Period, plus the seven newly established colleges for a total of 22.

In sum, four phenomena characterize the period from 1996 to 2005. First, Malaysia's economy took off in the 1990s. Second, new design courses such as product industrial design, advertising design, and computer graphic design also entered the market during this period. Third, the Private Higher Education Act 1996 was enacted to regulate private education and provide quality assurance, which brought in businessmen who set up design departments and curricula. Fourth, the new MOE regulations indirectly affected six institutions founded in the previous period. Three closed, two chose not to register under the MOE, and one was incorporated into a business group. The main reasons for the closures were the lack of subsidies, non-allocation of students, recruitment and advertisement expenses, high rents, and insufficient student enrollment. During this period, institutes were like tiny seeds beginning to grow. Hence, this period is dubbed the 'Germination Period'.

#### 4. Standardization Period (2006 onward)

After 2006, private institutions established by Malaysian Chinese entrepreneurs two to three decades ago such as Taylor University College (39 years), Linton University and Help University College (26 years), UCSI University (24 years), KDU University College (23 years), and Sunway University College (20 years) also began expanding into design. These six private institutions were owned by major business groups. In the same period, Southern College in Johor was established in 1990 and Han Jiang College in Penang was founded in 1999. Both were non-profit institutions

<sup>7</sup> INTI has branch campuses in cities across Malaysia as well as Indonesia, Beijing, and Hong Kong

funded by Malaysian Chinese contributions that expanded their programs into design. Because of their long history, infrastructure, and scale, these eight institutions were of a certain standard. Moreover, during this time, they upgraded to university or university college status, and were able to offer their own home-grown bachelor's and master's degree programs. Colleges that have not been promoted to university college status or university are cooperating with foreign universities to offer joint programs or franchises which offer bachelor's and master's degree programs.

The Ministry of Education (Malaysia) took steps to formalize all education programs in the nation

by setting up the Malaysia Quality Agency (MQA) in 2007. This body governs all formal accreditation systems for courses of study from certificate to doctoral level. Its evaluation criteria follow international practices through the national framework of qualification standards known as the Malaysia Quality Framework. All public and private higher institutions of education have to follow the agency's regulations. The benchmarked standard of academic autonomy established by the MQA is similar to the four-step process of Tyler models (1949): defining the purposes or objectives of the curriculum; learning experiences; organizing the learning experiences for effective instruction; and evaluating the curriculum. The standard

**Table 6. Higher education institutions offering design programs during the Standardization Period**

No.	Name/year of establishment	Launch of design program	Founder(s)	Diploma*					BA*				
				GD	MD	ID	PD	JD	FD	AiD	GD	GI	FD
1	KDU College (1983)	2006	Dr. Teo Chiang Quan Middlesex University, UK.(Hons) Doctorate	-	MD	ID	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Southern College (1990)	2006	Funded by Chinese community mainly from Johor State	GD	-	-	PD	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Fashion Academy of Creative Technology (2006)	2006	Gillian Hung Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, USA	-	-	-	-	-	FD	-	-	-	-
4	Sunway University College (1987)	2007	Dato Dr Jeffery Cheah	GD	-	ID	-	-	-	-	GD	-	-
5	Han Chiang College (1999)	2007	Chen Geoh Pin Chinese community Association	-	MD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Taylor University College (1969)	2008	Tan Sri Loy Hean Heong (Late)	GD	MD	ID	-	-	-	-	GD	-	-
7	Oasis College (2007)	2008	Dato Ng Teck Fong** Businessman	GD	MD	-	-	JD	-	-	-	-	-
8	Mantissa College (1999)	2008	Dr Chua Chong Keow, William PhD (Mgmt) (Multimedia U), MBA (Mgmt/Fin) (Henley / Brunel U), BSc (Maths/Ed) (USM), MMIM, MIIKM, Honorary Fellow	GD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	UCSI University (1986)	2010	Dato Peter Ng Heriot-Watt University, Scotland MBA Lakehead University, Canada BA (Hons) Psychology BSc Computer Science	GD	-	-	-	-	FD	AiD	-	-	FD

\* Diploma: Diploma programs: G = Graphic Design, M= Multimedia Design, I= Interior Design, P=product design, J= Jewelry Design, F= Fashion Design, AiD =Animation Design

Bachelor Degree programs: G = Graphic Design, GI= Game & interactive Design, F=Fashion Design

\*\* A graduate in chemistry, emerged from the jewelry manufacturing industry with more than three decades of experience dealing with precious metals

applies Johnson's (Mauritz, 1967) theory, which calls for a structured approach to achieving desired learning outcomes. The MQA's standard was referred as the Product Model (O'Neill, 2010). The type of curriculum thinking it embraces has long been dominant, and it has also been termed the technical-scientific approach by Ornstein (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Under the MQA's guidelines, the student learning time (SLT), including lectures, tutorials (and report writing), library research, project, assignments, reading and self-study, are emphasized. In 2008 and 2012, Baruvi Academy of Communication (Baruvi) Art and Neo-Art Institute, which were founded during the Germination Period, were also closed due to

the lack of enrollment and implementation of the Ministry of Education's new regulations and quality assurance. Mantissa College, a college without any design background, took over Baruvi's design programs and teachers once they announced the closure. However, in 2011 the department was closed due to poor enrollment. Pratique Asia College also changed hands in 2011 and became Erican Education Group, an English Language school. During this period, of all the newcomers into the design field, only three institutions had design backgrounds: the Academy of Creative Technology (FACT) founded in 2006, Reng College founded in 2011, and Point College founded in 2013 (Table 6).

**Table 6. Higher education institutions offering design programs during the Standardization Period (continued)**

No.	Name/year of establishment	Launch of design program	Founder(s)	Diploma*						BA*			
				GD	MD	ID	PD	JD	FD	AiD	GD	GI	FD
10	Linton University (1985)	2011	Dato' Raymond Ooi Chong Seong Association of Business Executives ("ABE"), UK Advanced Diploma, Chartered Institute of Marketing ("CIM"), UK Diploma in Marketing	GD	-	-	PD	-	FD	-	GD	-	FD
11	Reng College (2011)	2011	Datuk Ar. Richard Eng Founder of RENG Group of Companies***	-	-	ID	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	Help University College (1986)	2012	Datuk Paul Chan Tuck Hoong University of Malaya, Bachelor of Arts, Master of Economics Mc Master University, Canada, Master of Arts (Economics) Australian National University (ANU) PhD	-	-	-	-	-	-	AiD	-	GI	-
13	Point College (2013)	2013	Yoki Chin Yoke Kee Deputy Chairman of CCIG (Creative Content Industry Guild). Deputy President of GAFIM (Federation of Screen Guilds of Malaysia) Honorary Secretary of CCAM (Creative Content Association Malaysia)	GD	MD	ID	-	-	-	AiD	-	-	-
14	Jesselton College (1988)	2015	Prof. Fred Chin Yuk Fong	GD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Total</i>				9	5	5	2	1	3	3	4	1	2
<i>(%)</i>				64%	36%	36%	14%	7%	21%	21%	28%	7%	14%

\* Diploma: Diploma programs: G = Graphic Design, M = Multimedia Design, I = Interior Design, P = product design, J = Jewelry Design, F = Fashion Design, AiD = Animation Design

Bachelor Degree programs: G = Graphic Design, GI = Game & interactive Design, F = Fashion Design

\*\*\* An architectural practice and Reklam Development Sdn Bhd, a property development company since 1994



The early colleges and institutions gradually coordinated with the new regulations of the MOE. Curricula were adjusted according to market demand. For example, graphic design courses included advertising design, and computer graphic design included multimedia design (MD). Many design institutes also added 1+2, 2+1, or 3+0 joint programs, and joint bachelor degree programs with overseas universities, or their own home-grown bachelor's degree programs. For example, from 2007 to 2010 Lim Kok Wing launched its own graphic design, new media design and technology, digital creative content, and master's degree program in international contemporary art and design. The One Academy of Art added graphic design, digital media design, and interior design of Hertfordshire University from UK; PJCAD from INTI International Education Group added the graphic design program of Sheffield Hallam University from UK in 2015. During this period, 14 new colleges and universities also added new design courses such as Jewelry Design (JD), and Game Animation Design (GA). Most of the institutions remained oriented on three-year diploma programs of graphic design, multimedia design, and interior design. With the implementation of the MQA regulations and the market becoming more competitive, there were 32 colleges offering design courses by the end of 2015.

Five trends characterize 2006 to 2015. First, colleges that had been promoted to university colleges or universities could now provide their own bachelor's and master degree programs. Second, the formalization of all programs in the nation helped to facilitate the establishment of design faculties in a number of private institutions. Third, private tertiary institutions were sensitive to the needs of the market and only supplied

demand-oriented courses. However, the 14 institutions that added design curriculums during this period continued to offer 3-year diploma design courses similar to those in existing design institutes. Fourth, with the exception of the two non-profit institutions located at the north (Penang) and south (Johor) ends of Peninsular Malaysia, design institutes were concentrated in Kuala Lumpur or the Klang Valley, thus illustrating the significance of the capital in the development of design programs. Fifth, universities from the UK, France, and Australia were now willing to run bachelor's or master's degree programs in tandem with private Malaysian institutions, demonstrating that the MQA standardization of all education programs was working. Therefore, this study named this period the Standardization Period.

#### 4.2 Discussion

The proportion of design institutes set up by the founders with art and design backgrounds fell in the later years of the study period from 80% to 20% (15 out of 18 of the Seeding Period had art or design backgrounds, 5 out of 7 of the Germination Period had art or design backgrounds, while only 3 of the 14 in the Standardization Period had art or design-related backgrounds) (Table 7).

Today, there are 504 private institutions in Malaysia (61 private universities, 34 private university colleges and 409 private colleges), but only 32 institutions offer design courses (Table 8). This number equals 6% of the total number of private education institutions in Malaysia. At present, these private colleges offering design courses are largely located in Kuala Lumpur. The design courses beginning from 1966 have a clear focus on diplomas in graphic design (29%), interior design (22%), multimedia design (9%), and fashion de-

**Table 7. The professions of founders of private higher education institution in design**

Founders' profession	Seeding Period	Germination Period	Standardization Period	Total
Art & design background	15 (80%)	5 (70%)	3 (20%)	23
Non-art design	3 (20%)	2 (30%)	11 (80%)	16
<i>Total</i>	<i>18 (100%)</i>	<i>7 (100%)</i>	<i>14 (100%)</i>	<i>39</i>

Source: Compiled by authors

sign (11%). Even though design courses officially entered the market 34 years ago in 1982, the development of the design curriculums of these four still lags at the diploma stage. Malaysian design schools focus on equipping students for the sole purpose of securing a job immediately after graduation (Table 9).

At present, there are 504 private colleges in Malaysia. Private institutes often target non-Malay students for enrollment. Only 32 (only 6%) of these private institutes with design faculty were run by Malaysian Chinese (Table 10). Design is

considered a commercial skill that remains in its embryonic stage. Even though 40 years have passed, 72% of institutions are still only offering the 3-year Diplomas in Graphic Design and Interior Design. Design education focuses on forms, functions, materials, aesthetics, and products only. By contrast, developed countries have integrated design education into everything that goes beyond craftsmanship. They have integrated science, art, commerce, applied science, social and behavioral science, and engineering knowledge to practice design through the understanding of human cognition.

**Table 8. The list of private institutions which closed**

No.	Year founded	Institution	Year/period closed
1	1978	West Malaysian Academy of Art	1997/ Germination period
2	1968	Kuala Lumpur College of Art	2003/ Germination period
3	1983	Central Academy of Art	2005/Germination period
4	1997	Baruvi Academy of Communication Arts	2008/ Standardization period
5	1994	Pratique Asia College	2011/ Standardization period
6	2000	Neo-Art Institute	2012/Standardization period
7	2006	Fashion Academy of Creative Technology	2012/Standardization period

Source: Compiled by authors

**Table 9. Main design programs offered in Malaysia from 1966 to 2015**

Design programs offered	Seeding Period (1966 to 1995)	Germination Period (1996 to 2005)	Standardization Period (2006 to 2015)	Total
<b>Diploma level</b>				
Graphics	9 (32%)	7 (35%)	9 (23%)	25 (29%)
Interior	8 (29%)	4 (20%)	6 (15%)	18 (22%)
Computer Graphic/Multimedia	1 (4%)	2 (10%)	5 (13%)	8 (9%)
Fashion	5 (18%)	1 (5%)	3 (8%)	9 (11%)
Advertising Design	-	2 (10%)	0	2 (2%)
Animation Design	-	-	3 (8%)	3 (3%)
Others	1 (4%)	4(20%)	3 (8%)	8 (9%)
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>				
Graphics	1 (4%)	0	6 (15%)	7 (8%)
Interior	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (1%)
Fashion	-	-	2 (5%)	2 (2%)
Others	2 (7%)	0	1 (3%)	3 (3%)
<b>Master's degree</b>				
Art & Design	-	-	1 (3%)	1 (1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>28(100%)</b>	<b>20<sup>*</sup> (100%)</b>	<b>39<sup>*</sup> (100%)</b>	<b>87<sup>*</sup> (100%)</b>

\* The 7 institutions which closed down offered diploma level only. The closure affected 2 graphic design and 1 interior design programs during the Germination Period and 2 graphic design, 1 computer graphic, 1 interior design and 1 fashion design in the Standardization Period.

**Table 10. Main design programs offered in Malaysia by Chinese private institutions**

No.	Year founded	Name of college	Seeding Period			Germination Period	Standardization Period
			1966-1975	1976-1985	1986-1995	1996-2005	2006-2015
1	1967	Malaysia Institute of Art	█	█			
2	1968	Kuala Lumpur Academy of Art		█			
3	1969	Tunku Abdul Rahman College				█	
4	1969	Taylor University College					█
5	1975	International Academy of Fashion & Design		█			
6	1978	West Malaysian Academy of Art			█		
7	1983	KDU College					█
8	1983	Central Academy of Art			█		
9	1985	PJ College of Art & Design, PJCAD/INTI			█		
10	1985	Linton University					█
11	1986	Perak Institute of Art			█		
12	1986	UCSI University					█
13	1986	Help University College					█
14	1987	Equator Academy of Art & Design			█		
15	1987	Sunway University College					█
16	1988	Saito College			█		
17	1988	Jesselton College					█
18	1990	Impiana International College			█		
19	1990	Sabah Institute of Art			█		
20	1990	KBU International College			█		
21	1990	Southern College					█
22	1991	The One Academy of Art			█		
23	1991	Carven Academy of Fashion			█		
24	1991	Lim Kok Wing University of Creative Technology			█		
25	1993	In-House Multimedia College					█
26	1994	LaSalle International Design (Raffles)			█		
27	1994	Pratique Asia College/Erican College					█
28	1996	Dasein Academy of Art				█	
29	1997	Baruvi Academy of Communication Arts					█
30	1997	New Era College					█
31	1998	Alif Creative Academy (Alfa College)					█
32	1999	Han Chiang College					█
33	1999	Mantissa College					█
34	2000	Neo-Art Institute				█	
35	2001	MSC International College					█
36	2006	Fashion Academy of Creative Technology					█
37	2007	Oasis College					█
38	2011	Reng College					█
39	2013	Point College					█

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study presents the development of Malaysia's private design education. It divides the history of Malaysian Chinese private design education into four periods: the Chaotic Period (before 1965), the Seeding Period (1966-1995), the Germination Period (1996-2005) and the Standardization Period (2006 onward).

The Chaotic Period (before 1965) refers to the years before Malaysia and Singapore separated in 1965. Folk amateur art activities and art development went separate ways and formal learning systems returned to square one.

The Seeding Period (1966-1995) begins when the first fine art course was offered in the early 1960s. There were no design courses yet, and most of

the masters who made commercial art were apprentices of artists. The Malaysian Chinese artists' enthusiasm for art brought about the establishment of private art schools. During the 30 years between the reestablishment of the art academy to the development of design education, the number of art schools doubled because the government relaxed its policy on establishing institutes. At the time, art and design institutes were hubs for expressing and exchanging artistic emotions.

The Germination Period (1996-2005) was the age of the vigorous infrastructure development when Malaysia entered the industrial age. Early design courses such as product industrial design, furniture design, advertising design, and computer graphic design hit the market during this period. The term 'design' emerged in Malaysia and became widely accepted by citizens, causing conglomerates to notice the future potential of the design field. These big firms then pursued the acquisition and establishment of design institutes and design courses. Unfortunately, new policies on private higher education laws threatened the academies of fine arts.

The Standardization Period (2006 onward) is marked by the establishment of new higher education constitution and the standardization of the quality of courses. Private colleges focused on the capital city where the economy, people, and culture converge, offering only popular design courses that translated to the workplace, or joint degree programs with foreign universities in response to the wishes of the parents who wanted a foreign education for their children.

The findings show that providers of Malaysian Chinese private education institutions in design should challenge policy-makers for the right to admit students who can sufficiently prove their creative, artistic, and graphic talents via portfolios. The national school education curriculum should be standardized. However, the design curricula of various institutions can be adjusted

independently so that design education can flourish. Design is a visual process, expressed through the observation of real life, experiences, analysis, and other creative means. Unlike data processing or accounting, it does not always follow strict rules or standardization. The benefits of individual styles and characteristic bears further investigation. More research can also be done on the seeding period, especially the early Nanyang style and the integration of different ethnic cultural customs into art and design. This way, future generations can learn about how the efforts of Malaysian Chinese artists and designers have developed modern design education in Malaysia.

## REFERENCES

- Asohan, A. (2014, September 12). CEO Cheryl Yeoh lays out MaGIC's ingredients. *The Malay Mail Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/tech-gadgets/article/ceo-cheryl-yeoh-lays-out-magics-ingredients>
- Chong, L. (2009). Can Asia become the new centre for graphic design? It's up to us. In *Asia Pacific Design No. 5* (pp. 11). Hong Kong: Sandu Publishing,
- Choong, K. K. (1991). The contributions of pioneer ink-and-brush painters in Singapore. In *The First Ink Exhibition* (pp. 15-16). Singapore: The Management Committee, Marine Parade Community Club.
- Choong, K. K. (1994). The development and evolution of Malaysian Art. *Compendium of Chinese artist in Malaysia since 1957* (p. 6). The KL & Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall
- Chung, Y. (2010, February). 鐘瑜. 馬來西亞華人美術史初探 [Malaysian Chinese art history exploratory], *美與時代期刊雜誌 [Iidea Journal]*, 382, 84-87.
- Chung, Y. (2012). 鐘瑜, 南洋美術之父—林學大在馬華美術史上的定位 [The Father of Nanyang's art --The position of Lim Hak Tai in Malaysian Chinese history of art]. *美術研究雜誌 [Art Research Journal]*, 2, 77-83.
- Deraman, A. A. (1985). *Socio-cultural development in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.
- Department of Statistics (2011, August 5). *Malaysia population distribution and basic demographic characteristic report, 2010*. Retrieved from <http://statistics.gov.my>
- Department of Statistics, Malaysia (2016, July 22). *Current population estimates, Malaysia*. The Office of

- Chief Statistician Malaysia. Retrieved from <http://statistics.gov.my>
- Eastern Art Research Centre, Malaysia Institute of Art (1999, August 27 to September 2). Malaysian contemporary art exhibition, China museum of art, Beijing, China (August 27, 1999 to September 2, 1999).
- Economic Planning Unit (EPU) (1971). Second Malaysia plan 1971-1975. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers.
- Ewing, R. (2010). The arts and Australian education: Re-actualizing potential. Australia Council for Educational Research, ACER
- Fan, L. Y. (2001). 范立言, 馬來西亞華人文化節資料集 [The data resources of Malaysian Chinese cultural festival]. 吉隆坡: 馬來西亞中華大會堂總會 [Kuala Lumpur: The Federation Of Chinese Associations Malaysia].
- Geok, H. K. (2010). The models and hard cores: Selective acculturation and racial stratification in Chinese students' school experience in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 11, 467-476
- Goh, A. A. (2010, October 29). 吳亞鴻 . 向謝有錫院長致敬 [A salute given to the principal, Mr Cheah Yew Saik]. Retrieved from <http://wuyahong.blogspot.my/2010/10/blog-post.html>
- Government of Malaysia (1976). Third Malaysia plan, 1976-1980. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer.
- Government of Malaysia (1991). Sixth Malaysia plan, 1991-1995. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer.
- Government of Malaysia (2006). Ninth Malaysia plan, 2006-2010. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer.
- Han, S. Y. (2014, August 28). 韩山元 - 從南洋風到新謠 [Nanyang's style to Singapore's Chinese folk song] .《聯合早報》副刊“四方八面” [Lianhe Zaobao-Singapore Chinese Newspaper] supplements section.
- Harold, B. (1994). Transformation with industrialization in peninsular Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Huang, T. Z. (2003). Further studies intelligence (19). Kuala Lumpur: FSI Center.
- Jiang, J. J. (2009, August 13). 江嘉嘉 - 獨立大學運動: 封殺升學管道 [Independent University Campaign: Banning further education]. 馬來西亞華校董事聯合總會, [United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia. (UCSAM)]
- Kanapathy, V. (2003, February 20-21). Services sector development in Malaysia: Education and health as 26 forum on public policy alternative sources of growth. AT120 Research Conference. Retrieved from [https://www.nomurafoundation.or.jp/en/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/20030220-21\\_Vijayakumar\\_Kanapathy.pdf](https://www.nomurafoundation.or.jp/en/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/20030220-21_Vijayakumar_Kanapathy.pdf)
- Kwok, K. C. (2000) United artists Malaysia. University scholars programme project. Retrieved from <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/singapore/arts/painters/channel/3.html>
- Lee, M.N.N. (1999). The politics of educational change in Malaysia: National context and global influences. In T. Townsend & Y. C. Cheng (Eds.), *Educational change and development in the Asia-Pacific region: Challenges for the future* (pp. 107-132). Lisse, the Netherlands: Sweet and Zeilinger Publishers.
- Lee, M.N.N. (2004). Private higher education in Malaysia: Expansion, diversification and consolidation. In Lee, M.N.N. (Ed.), *Restructuring higher education in Malaysia* (pp. 47-62). Penang: School of Educational Studies, University Science Malaysia.
- Lee, T. T. & Yeong, W. B. (2010). Curator's note, inception continuity and beyond. In *Inception continuity and beyond- an art exhibition of the oriental masters* (pp. 15-19). Kuala Lumpur: OACC
- Lee, Y. H. (2009). 李耀華·馬來西亞華文高等教育發展之路 [The development pathway of Malaysia Chinese higher education]. In 董總 50 年特刊 [Dong Zong 50 years special issue] Selangor (pp. 530-539). Selangor: United Chinese School Committees Associations of Malaysia.
- Liu, B. C. T. (1996). Education directory 1997/98, volume 1: Private education. Kuala Lumpur: Huazi Resource & Research Centre.
- Mohamad, M. (1991, February 28). The way forward: Vision 2020. Kuala Lumpur: Inaugural meeting of the Malaysia business council.
- Malaysian Counseling Magazine (2012, September). Further studies intelligence, 61. Kuala Lumpur, FSI Center.
- Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). (2007). Malaysia qualifications register. Retrieved from <http://www2.mqa.gov.my/mqr/>
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (1998). Designing qualitative research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mauritz, J. (1967). Definition and models in curriculum theory. *Educational Theory*, 17, 127-140.
- Majlis Rekabentuk Malaysia (MRM) [Malaysia design council] (n.d.). Innovative and creative products sell. Retrieved from [http://www.mrm.gov.my/dc\\_aboutus.asp](http://www.mrm.gov.my/dc_aboutus.asp)
- MDIC (2005). Catalyst for building competitiveness, M.B.a.P.D. Centre (ed.). Selangor: Malaysia Design Innovation Centre
- Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.mohe.gov.my>
- Morshidi, S. (2006). Transnational higher education in Malaysia: Balancing benefits and concerns through regulations. *R.I.H.E International Series*, 10 (03), 109-126.

- Neary, M. (2003). Curriculum concepts and research. In Curriculum studies in post-compulsory and adult education: A teacher's and student teacher's study guide (pp.33-56) Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes Ltd.
- Nikitina, L. & Furuoka, F. (2011). Revisiting metaphors for education: A student's perspective. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 12(2), 311-318.
- O'Neill, G. (2010). Initiating curriculum revision: Exploring the practices of educational developers. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 15(1), 61-71.
- Ong, Z. & Ng, F. W. (2012). Round table discussion: The state of design in Malaysia. *Rediscovery: ico-D design week 2012* (pp.1-47). Sarawak: Graphic Design Association of Malaysia (wREGA).
- Ornstein, A.C. & Hunkins, F. P. (2009). Curriculum development. In *Curriculum: foundations, principles and issues* (5th ed.) (pp. 194-231). Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, C.A: Sage.
- Perumal, M. (1989). Economic growth and income inequality in Malaysia, 1957-1984. *Singapore Economic Review*, 34(2), 33-46
- Punch, K. F. (1998). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London: Sage.
- Rahman, M. A. A. (2010, November 7). Malaysia: Model in private higher education. Retrieved from <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20101105220921112>
- Rasiah, R., Crinis, V. & Lee, H. A. (2015). Industrialization and labor in Malaysia. *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy*, 20(1), 77-99.
- Report of education committee of 1956 (1956). Federation of Malaysia. Government press.
- Saharabudhe, P. (2005). Design for learning through the arts: Mainstreaming art education in the school curriculum. In *Education for creativity: Bring the arts and culture into Asian education* (pp. 47-54). Bangkok: UNESCO
- Salama, A. M., & Wilkinson, N. (Eds.) (2007). *Design studio pedagogy: Horizons for the future*. U.K.: Urban International Press, Gateshead
- Shari, I. (2000). Economic growth and income inequality in Malaysia, 1971-95. *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy*, 5(1-2), 112-124.
- Sharif, A. (2010, February 4). Public school art programs neglected. *Yale Daily News*. Retrieved from <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2010/02/04/public-school-art-programs-neglected/>
- Shen, T. Q./Amended by Choong Hwa secondary school (2004). 沉天奇 / 華文中學改制。馬來西亞華文教育 185 年簡史 (1819 年至 2004 年) [Brief history of 185 years Malaysian Chinese education (1819-2004)], 董總 50 年特刊 [Dong Zong 50 years special issues]. 雪蘭莪: 董總 [Selangor: Dong Zong]
- Siew, S. (2011). *Liu Kang: Essays on art and culture* (1st ed.) (T. T. Teng, Trans.). Singapore: The National Art Gallery Singapore.
- Singh, J. S. & Mukerjee, H. (1993). Education and national integration in Malaysia: Stocktaking thirty years after independence. *International Journal of Education Development*, 13(2), 89-102.
- Snodgrass, D. R. (1980). *Inequality and economic development in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Standard information for private higher education institutions (2013). Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. Government Press.
- Standard information for private higher education institutions (2012). Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. Government Press.
- Tan, A.M. (2002). *Malaysian private higher education: Globalisation, privatisation, transformation and marketplaces*. London: ASEAN Academic Press
- Tan, M. H. (2003). *Training guide Malaysia* (6th ed.) (pp. 80-81). Selangor: Challenger Concept.
- Tan, T. C. (1985). The prospect of Nanyang style. Presented in Asian pacific conference on arts education (ASPACAE), Kuala Lumpur.
- The Star Online (2012, September 14). Terengganu to get varsity modeled after University of London. The Star Online. Retrieved from [www.thestars.com.my](http://www.thestars.com.my)
- The Weekly Sun (1913, September 6). The amateur drawing association (p. 8) microfilm reel NL 2940 [Singapore Lee Kong Chian Reference Library - On shelf]
- Tsao, S. Y. (2007). 曹淑瑤 - 馬來西亞「獨立大學」籌建之探討 [A study on the Merdeka university in Malaysia]. *興大歷史學報* [Chung-Hsing Journal of History], 19, 205-233.
- UNESCO (1973, January 21-29). International meeting of experts for launching of Malay culture project, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Xia, S. (2000). Nanyang spirit: Chinese migration and the development of southeast Asian art. In *Visions & enchantment: Southeast Asian paintings* (pp. 18-21). Singapore: Singapore Art Museum.
- Xie M. F. (2004). *Education directory 2005-2006*. In Huazi Resource & Research Centre (pp. 97-109). Selangor: Nanyang Newspaper Publishing