FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' SELECTION

of

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Factors Influencing Students Selection of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Peter Songan
Gabriel Tonga
Mustapha Abdul Rahman
Hong Kian Sam
Lily Law

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak,
Kota Samarahan, Sarawak.
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Foreword

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) was established as the eighth public universities in Malaysia on 24 December 1992. It began offering its academic program in 1993 to students registered under its two pioneering faculties, namely, the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Resource Science and Technology. That has now expanded to eight (8) faculties offering 34 undergraduate programs.

As the first full-fledged public university in Sarawak, UNIMAS aims to generate, disseminate and apply knowledge strategically and innovatively in its effort to enhance the quality of the nation's culture and prosperity of its people. Its vision is clear; to become an exemplary university of internationally acknowledged stature and a scholarly institution of choice, for both students and academics through the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and scholarship.

Strategically located in the state of Sarawak, UNIMAS is in an ideal position to offer its students an enriching experience that is unrepeatable elsewhere. Here at UNIMAS, students will be able to not only benefit from a state-of-the-art research and academic facilities, but celebrate the explosion of natural and cultural diversity of the state. The environment and the diverse mix of students provide an environment conducive for interpersonal growth. The learning experience is further enhanced by an integrated learning system to provide for a well-rounded education. In addition, programs and curriculum at UNIMAS are constantly reviewed to ensure not only relevancy, but most important, to impart knowledge needed by its graduates in a real life experience.

UNIMAS will continue to explore to the fullest the potential present in this region and harness the economic, social, cultural, and environmental resources of this state for sustainable development and socioeconomic change that would benefit not only Sarawak but the nation as a whole. And in our endeavour, we will continue to place at the forefront our students' development and the economic and social development of the state and the nation. We only hope that we would be able to gather a quality pool of students to realise our aspirations and inspirations.

It is, therefore, important for UNIMAS to understand the information sources that students used to obtain information about the university and also to investigate the factors that influenced students to select UNIMAS as the place to pursue their higher education. Information obtained from these efforts will enable UNIMAS to come up with more effective ways to create awareness and interest among potential students, and to attract them to choose and study at UNIMAS.

Prof Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid
Vice Chancellor,
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

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Summary

When UNIMAS first began its operation, there were only eight (8) public institutions of higher learning (PIHL) in Malaysia, in which UNIMAS is included. That has now risen to 20 public universities in a period of less than 20 years. These gave the current students more choices on PIHL in Malaysia in which to further their studies. Therefore, competition among PIHL to attract students to come and study with them is becoming tougher.

UNIMAS has a clear vision to become an exemplary university of internationally acknowledged stature and a scholarly institution of choice, for both students and academics through the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and scholarship. But to achieve its vision, UNIMAS among others, has to be able to attract quality students to enroll in its programs. However, as the number of public universities has increased dramatically in the recent years, the competition for students has increased as students have more choices to select a public university in which to study.

As tertiary education becomes more competitive, extra efforts must be made by the PIHL to attract students to study in their campuses. Two major questions that are related to students' choice of a university are: (1) how do they come to know about the university and its academic programs; and (2) what are the factors that influence their decision to select a university to further their studies?

This study was, therefore, conducted with the major aim of identifying the information sources that are available to the students to get to know UNIMAS and its academic programs, and to determine the factors that influence the students to select UNIMAS to further their studies. This study employed a cross-sectional survey as a methodology to obtain data from the respondents.

The sample of this study was obtained from a population of all first year students who were enrolled in the academic programs offered by all the eight faculties in UNIMAS for the 2007/2008 academic session. Descriptive statistics, such as percentages, means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data on selected demographic characteristics of the respondents, the information sources, and on the choice of UNIMAS as a university to further their studies. Inferential statistics, such as independent samples t-tests, One-Way ANOVAs and regression analysis were used to determine which among the information source(s) was/were more influential, and whether the factors that influenced students' preference differed among certain group of students.

This study found that the two major sources of information for students to know UNIMAS and its academic programs are "by word of mouth from friends and relatives," and "UNIMAS website." These significant sources are followed by "Unit Pusat Universiti Guides," "school teacher career talks," and "UNIMAS published materials." The two major factors that have a major influence on the students' decision to select UNIMAS are academic program choice, and the quality of teaching and academics at UNIMAS.

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that the management of UNIMAS put more emphasis on improving the quality of the information and the attractive design of the UNIMAS website so that it is able to attract more people to access it. Also, the

management of UNIMAS should focus on creating a better and conducive learning environment for the students to study and socialize, so that they can tell their friends and relatives who are potential students that UNIMAS is a wonderful place to be.

Building up strong alumni program is also useful, so that the alumnus of UNIMAS can spread the good words about UNIMAS to their friends and relatives. It is also recommended that UNIMAS maintains and enhances the current academic programs that are being offered by the faculties, because students are attracted by these contemporary and forward looking academic programs.

The management of the university should continue to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning methodologies and approaches used in UNIMAS, and also to continuously upgrade the competence of the academics through various professional development programs to enhance their profession as quality educators.

1.0   Introduction

Tertiary education in public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia has become more competitive in recent years due to the relatively sudden increase in the number of public universities in the country. When Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) first started its academic programs in 1993, there were only eight public universities in Malaysia compared to twenty-one at present (Ministry of Higher Education, n.d.). Therefore, the current pool of students is presented with more choices of public university to further their study.

As of late, UNIMAS has been faced with problem of getting enough number of students to fill up the enrollment quota for the academic programs offered by its various faculties. The worst hit faculty, which is the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology for example, was unable to get enough students to fill the quota allocated for its six academic programs. On average, the faculty was only able to attain 23.9 percent of the quota in all of its six academic programs for the 2007/08 academic session (Undergraduate Studies Division, 2008).

Concerned by this problem, UNIMAS over the years has used various means and sources to publicise itself and its academic programs to the public and to the students, in particular. Those efforts were intended to create awareness and interest among potential students and to attract them to choose and study at UNIMAS.

2.0   Review of Related Literature

As tertiary education becomes more competitive, extra effort by the university to attract students to come and study in its campus becomes more significant. One of the important information that would assist a university in laying the strategies to attract more students to walk through its gate and study is the factor that determines students' selection of a university or their preference toward a university.

Many studies have been done in other countries to investigate students' choice of educational institutions. Some of the studies that are relevant to this research is reviewed and discussed. Krampf and Heinlein (1981) conducted one of the earliest studies into the marketing of universities by interviewing prospective students for a large mid-western university in the United States of America. Through factor analysis, they found that prospective students who had positive impression of a particular university rated campus attractiveness, informative campus visits, family recommendation, major's with good programs, informative university catalogue, closeness to home and friendly campus atmosphere, highly suggesting that these factors might influence preferences.

A similar study by Hooley and Lynch (1981) analysed the choice processes of prospective students of United Kingdom universities. They identified six attributes used by the students in their decision process. The attributes were course suitability, university location, academic reputation, distance from home, type of university (modern/old), and advice from parents and teachers.

While the above studies look at local students', Mazzarol, Soutar and Tien (1996) studied the factors that influenced international students' choice of study destination, using the students in Australia as their samples. Students were asked to rate, in term of importance, 17 factors that influenced their decision to study at a particular institution. They found that the most important factor was the recognition of their qualifications by prospective employers. This was followed by the institution's reputation in terms of quality, its willingness to recognise students' previous qualifications, and the academic staff's reputation in term of quality and expertise.

In a separate Australian study, Soutar and Turner (2002) investigated the importance of a number of attributes used by school leavers in Australia to determine their preference for a particular university. The results indicated that the four most important determinants were course suitability, academic reputation, job prospects and teaching quality.

Lin (1977), who investigated the reasons for students' selection of a particular educational institution in the Netherlands, found that the most significant reasons for students' selection were the quality of education offered, career opportunities, the school's reputation, traineeship opportunities, faculty qualifications, academic standards, availability of modern facilities, curriculum emphasis, student life, and the availability of an international student body.

In addition to the studies conducted by Mazzarol et al. (1996) and Lin (1997), the study by Turner (1998) on the reasons a group of business undergraduates decided to enroll at a particular university, found that students rated future job prospects, qualification that is valued by employers, opportunity to use modern facilities, standard of teaching, and international recognition of the university's programs as the most important factors.

While there has been no published study done on students' choice of university in Malaysia, the studies that have been conducted in other countries provided a useful list of potential factors such as course suitability, university location, academic reputation, distance from home, type of university, family opinion, job prospects, quality of teaching and campus atmosphere. Therefore, these factors were considered as the list of possible factors for investigation in this study.

3.0   Problem Statement

Students may come to know a university through various sources, and some of these sources may be more influential than others in shaping the students' preference of a university. Also, the students may consider many factors before selecting a university in which to further their studies. But, whatever factors that they may have considered in their selection of a particular university, some factors will be more important than others. To select a university, the students will consider the factors important to them and, consciously or unconsciously, trade-off between these factors. It is the nature of this trade-off process that this study seeks to investigate and understand. Knowledge of this trade-off process and the relative importance attached to the various factors should provide a good foundation for the university to formulate strategies which would attract students to come and study in its campus.

This study, therefore, attempted to provide answers to the following questions:

1.   What were the information sources available to students that enable them to discover UNIMAS and its acadeic programs, and which among these source(s) was/were the most influential?

2.   What were the factors that influenced students to select a university (UNIMAS) to further their studies, and which among these factors was/were the most important?

3.   Were there certain groups of students for whom different factors were more important?

4.0   Research Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey to collect data from the respondents. The population of this study was the 2040 first year students enrolled in all the academic programs offered by all the eight faculties in UNIMAS for the 2007/08 academic session. The respondents were obtained through a stratified random sampling method and were stratified by faculty and academic programs. The sample size for this study was 1396 students which represent approximately 68.0 percent of the first year student population for the 2007/08 academic session.

4.1   Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study was modified from instruments that have been used by other researchers (Hooley & Lynch, 1981; Lin, 1997; Turner, 1998; Soutar & Turner, 2002). The research instrument consisted of three sections.

Section A contained questions to gather information on selected demographic characteristics of the students.

Section B included 12 closed-ended items to obtain data on the students' sources of information regarding the university and the extent of each of these sources in influencing their choice. There was an additional open-ended item to elicit additional information on students' sources of information regarding the university which were not listed among the 12 items.

Section C consisted of 41 closed-ended items related to factors that influenced students' preference of a university. There were six sub-sections: University Choice (12 items), Institutional Reputation (7 items), Personal Fit (11 items), Academic Program Choice (6 items), Employment Prospect (5 items) and Quality of Teaching and Learning (5 items). There was an additional open-ended item to elicit additional information not listed in the close-ended items.

The close-ended items in Section B and Section C had six response selections, ranging from "Very little influence", "Little influence," "No influence," "Strong influence," "Very strong influence," to "Not applicable."

A pilot test was conducted prior to the actual study to ensure the reliability of the research instrument, especially for Section B and Section C. The research instrument is attached in Appendix 1.

4.2   Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted in February 2008 during the second semester of the 2007/08 academic session. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected sample of students through their respective faculties.

4.3   Data Analyses

Descriptive statistics such as percentages (%), means, and standard deviations were used to analyze data on the students' selected demographic characteristics, their information sources and the choice of UNIMAS as a university to further their studies. Independent t-tests, One-Way ANOVAs, and regression analysis were used to determine which of the information source(s) was/were more influential, and whether the factors that influenced students' preference differed among certain groups of students.

5.0   Findings and Discussions

5.1 Reliabilities of the Questionnaire

The reliability of Section B and Section C of the questionnaire was found to be at an acceptable level during a pilot study conducted on 72 third year Education students from the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FCSHD), UNIMAS; the students were not involved in the actual study. The Cronbach Alpha (a) values for Section B and the six sub-sections in Section C were more than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). Likewise, subsequent reliability analyses on the actual research sample showed that Section B and Section C of the questionnaire showed acceptable reliability levels (refer to Table 1).

Table 1
Reliabilities of the questionnaire based on pilot and actual studies

Questionnaire	Pilot Study (N=71)	Actual Study (N=1396)
Section B: Source of information on UNIMAS (12 items)	0.914	0.879
Section C: University choice (7 items)	0.753	0.735
Institutional reputation (7 items)	0.883	0.913
Personal fit (11 items)	0.860	0.850
Academic program choice (6 items)	0.787	0.847
Employment prospect (5 items)	0.770	0.894
Quality of teaching and learning (5 items)	0.896	0.910

5.2 Demographics of Survey Respondents

A total of 1396 respondents consisting of first year undergraduates of the 2007/2008 academic session from all the eight faculties in UNIMAS were involved in this study.

5.2.1 Faculty

Table 2 shows the breakdown of the respondents by faculty: 10.1% from the Faculty of Engineering (FE), 7.2% from the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences (FMHS), 21.2% from the Faculty of Resource Science and Technology (FRST), 2.0% from the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology (FCSIT), 17.0% from the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB), 17.3% from the

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts (FACA), 10.7% from the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FCSHD), and 14.5% from the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS).

Table 2
Distribution of respondents by faculties

Faculty	Frequency	Percent
Faculty of Engineering	141	10.1
Civil Engineering	*13*	
Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering	*30*	
Electronics & Computer Engineering	*19*	
Mechanical Engineering & Manufacturing Systems	*77*	
Omitted	*2*	
Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences	100	7.2
Medicine	*65*	
Nursing	*29*	
Omitted	*6*	
Faculty of Resource Science and Technology	296	21.2
Aquatic Resource Science & Management	*45*	
Animal Resource Science & Management	*24*	
Plant Resource Science & Management	*43*	
Resource Chemistry	*47*	
Resource Biotechnology	*127*	
Omitted	*10*	
Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology	28	2.0
Software Engineering	*6*	
Network Computing	*6*	
Information System	*4*	
Computational Science	*8*	
Multimedia Computing	*3*	
Omitted	*1*	
Faculty of Economics and Business	237	17.0
International Economics & Business	*34*	
Industrial Economics & Organization	*32*	

Tourism & Hospitality Management	1	
Marketing	161	
Omitted	9	
Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts	242	17.3
Fine Arts	22	
Design Technology	93	
Arts Management	50	
Music	12	
Drama & Theatre	-	
Cinematography	28	
Omitted	37	
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development	150	10.7
Cognitive Science	41	
Human Resource Development	105	
Omitted	4	
Faculty of Social Sciences	202	14.5
International Studies	22	
Industrial Relations & Labor Studies	37	
Communication Studies	33	
Social Works Studies	29	
Development Planning & Management	34	
Politics & Government Studies	30	
Omitted	17	
Total	1396	100.0

5.2.2 Gender

As revealed in Table 3, a majority of the respondents (68.7%) were female. Only 30.9% of the respondents were male. This finding shows that the ratio of female to male students in UNIMAS is approximately 2:1.

5.2.3 Ethnicity

The ethnicity of the respondents reflects the composition of the major races found in Malaysia. As shown in Table 3, the Malays who made up 44.5% of the

respondents is the major race followed by Chinese (28.6%), Sarawak *Bumiputera* - such as, Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu (26.0%), Sabah *Bumiputera* - such as, Kadazan, Dusun, Bajau and Murut (4.4%), and Indian (4.4%).

5.2.4 Residence

The respondents of the study were categorized into urban and rural students. Table 3 reveals that 62.3% of the respondents came from urban areas and 30.5% of them from rural areas.

Table 3
Distribution of respondents by gender, ethnicity and residence

Selected Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	431	30.9
Female	959	68.7
Omitted	6	0.4
Ethnicity		
Malay	623	44.6
Chinese	399	28.6
Indian	61	4.4
Sarawak Bumiputera	223	16.0
Sabah Bumiputera	61	4.4
Other Bumiputera	13	0.9
Others	8	0.6
Omitted	8	0.6
Residence		
Urban	876	62.8
Rural	426	30.5
Omitted	94	6.7
Total	1396	100.0

5.3   Selection of UNIMAS

When applying for a place to pursue their studies in public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia, applicants are given the opportunity to indicate their pref-

erence for universities by ranking them from 'first choice' to 'eigth choice' in the application form. As indicated in Table 4, slightly more than one quarter of the respondents (27.2%) put UNIMAS as their first choice for a university to pursue their studies. But there were also respondents (18.0%) who did not put UNIMAS in their list of preference for universities but were offered a place in UNIMAS and chose to pursue their studies at the university.

Table 4
Distribution of respondents by their choice of UNIMAS (n=1361)

	N	%
First choice	370	27.2
Second choice	140	10.3
Third choice	111	8.2
Fourth choice	98	7.2
Fifth choice	75	5.5
Sixth choice	73	5.4
Seventh choice	92	6.8
Eighth choice	155	11.4
I didn't select UNIMAS	247	18.0
Total	1361	100.0

From the gender aspects, approximately 31.6% of male respondents selected UNI-MAS as their first choice for a university compared to 25.2% of female respondents. However, females (20.8%) outnumbered males (11.7%) in term of those students who did not put UNIMAS as one of their preferred university, but were offered a place to study in the university and chose to pursue their studies in the university.

Table 5
Distribution of respondents by gender on their preference for UNIMAS

	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
First choice	130	31.6	236	25.2
Second choice	40	9.7	100	10.6
Third choice	46	11.2	65	6.9

Fourth choice	29	7.1	69	7.3
Fifth choice	28	6.8	46	4.9
Sixth choice	24	5.8	49	5.2
Seventh choice	27	6.6	65	6.9
Eighth choice	39	9.5	115	12.2
I didn't select UNIMAS	48	11.7	196	20.8
Total	411	100.0	941	100.0

So, does student residence background influence their decision in deciding to put UNIMAS as their first choice for a university? The data shown in Table 6 indicates that whether they're from the rural or urban background, the percentage of students who decided to put UNIMAS as their first choice university is almost similar between the two residence background, i.e. 28.0% for the urban areas and 27.8% for the rural areas. Little difference were also seen between the two residential background in terms of those who did not indicate UNIMAS as their first choice for a university but were offered a place and chose to pursue their studies at UNIMAS; 18.2% and 17.7% for urban and rural residential background, respectively.

Table 6
Distribution of respondents by residence background on their preference for UNIMAS

	Residence			
	Urban		Rural	
	N	%	N	%
First choice	240	28.0	115	27.8
Second choice	87	10.2	42	10.2
Third choice	67	7.8	34	8.2
Fourth choice	65	7.6	23	5.6
Fifth choice	48	5.6	24	5.8
Sixth choice	50	5.8	20	4.8
Seventh choice	56	6.5	30	7.3
Eighth choice	87	10.2	52	12.6
I didn't select UNIMAS	156	18.2	73	17.7
Total	856	100.0	413	100.0

5.4   Sources of Information

The study looked at the various sources of information that may have reached the students and investigated the extent to which respondents used those various sources and how far each of those sources actually influenced the students' decision. Twelve sources of information were identified and investigated (Table 7).

The findings indicate that the most used and influential source of information for the respondents was "by word of mouth from friends and relatives," with more than half of the students (55.6% with a mean of 2.47) suggesting this source of information as having a strong influence.

The next important source of information on UNIMAS was its "website" with a mean of 2.46. However, although 54.2% of the respondents felt that the website was an influential source of information, 29.2% perceived it to be of "little influence" and "very little influence" and 11.9% reported it as of "no influence".

The next cluster of information source was the *Unit Pusat Universiti* Guides" (UPU Guides), "school teacher career talks" and "UNIMAS published materials" with means of 2.08, 2.06 and 2.01 respectively, which indicated that these sources were of little influence. Slightly more than one third of the 1396 respondents (36.4%) felt that the UPU Guides were of "little" or "very little influence" and 16.4% viewed that the guides as of "no influence". Likewise, 31.5% of the respondents perceived that their "school teacher career talks" had little or very little influence on their decision making, and approximately 19.0% of the respondents felt that the career talks did not influence their choice of UNIMAS for furthering their studies.

Printed material and electronic media exposure, it seems, has little or no influence at all on students' decision to enroll in UNIMAS. "UNIMAS published materials" was not considered to be an important information source as 34.4% of the respondents indicated that it was of little influence and 18.6% stated that it had no influence at all. In addition, "Newspaper articles", "UNIMAS roadshow", "school visit to UNIMAS", "newspaper advertisement", "UNIMAS open day", "UNIMAS telephone hotline" and "documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio" ranked lowly as influential sources of information on the 1346 respondents' decisions to choose UNIMAS.

Table 7

Respondents' sources of information and the extent of their influence.

Sources of Information about UNIMAS and its Academic Programs		No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable	Omitted	Mean	Std Dev
12	Friends and relative	171 (12.2%)	85 (6.1%)	285 (20.4%)	500 (35.8%)	276 (19.8%)	60 (4.3%)	19 (1.4%)	2.47	1.256
2	UNIMAS website	166 (11.9%)	64 (4.6%)	344 (24.6%)	505 (36.2%)	251 (18.0%)	54 (3.9%)	12 (0.9%)	2.46	1.213
1	*Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU) Guides*	229 (16.4%)	158 (11.3%)	351 (25.1%)	351 (25.1%)	182 (13.0%)	93 (6.7%)	32 (2.3%)	2.08	1.300
7	School teacher career talk	265 (19.0%)	92 (6.6%)	348 (24.9%)	411 (29.4%)	141 (10.1%)	124 (8.9%)	15 (1.1%)	2.06	1.300
4	UNIMAS published materials (UNIMAS brochure, Faculty pamphlets, etc)	260 (18.6%)	99 (7.1%)	381 (27.3%)	405 (29.0%)	115 (8.2%)	112 (8.0%)	24 (1.7%)	2.01	1.262
9	Newspaper articles and supplements	254 (18.2%)	118 (8.5%)	386 (27.7%)	378 (27.1%)	118 (8.5%)	117 (8.4%)	25 (1.8%)	1.99	1.258
5	UNIMAS roadshow event and career fair	288 (20.6%)	96 (6.9%)	381 (27.3%)	353 (25.3%)	122 (8.7%)	135 (9.7%)	21 (1.5%)	1.94	1.297

8	School visit to UNIMAS	328	97	298	235	121	215	12	1.84	1.369
		(23.5%)	(6.9%)	(21.3%)	(23.3%)	(8.7%)	(15.4%)	(0.9%)		
10	Newspaper advertisements by UNIMAS	316	119	379	347	94	130	11	1.83	1.284
		(22.6%)	(8.5%)	(27.1%)	(24.9%)	(6.7%)	(9.3%)	(0.8%)		
3	UNIMAS open day	317	101	352	323	101	145	57	1.82	1.314
		(22.7%)	(7.2%)	(25.2%)	(23.1%)	(7.2%)	(10.4%)	(4.1%)		
6	UNIMAS telephone hotline	359	136	347	300	107	233	14	1.73	1.330
		(25.7%)	(9.7%)	(24.9%)	(21.5%)	(7.7%)	(9.5%)	(1.0%)		
11	Documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio	366	140	331	283	100	161	15	1.68	1.332
		(26.2%)	(10.0%)	(23.7%)	(20.3%)	(7.2%)	(11.5%)	(1.1%)		

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

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5.4.1   Differences in Influence of Information Sources based on Selected Demographics.

Gender and Residence

Looking at gender, the degree to which the various information sources influence the decision of either group differs only for five sources of information (Table 8). The scores obtained from female respondents were generally higher compared to males for each of the five sources of information: "UPU Guides", "UNIMAS published materials", "UNIMAS telephone hotline", "School visit to UNIMAS" and "Newspaper articles and supplements". The two strong influential sources of information i.e. "Friends and relatives" and "UNIMAS website" were similar in their degree of influence for both gender groups.

Similarly, when residential factors are taken into account, there were no differences in the degree of influence of the two strong influential sources of information between the urban and rural group (Table 8). Differences in the degree of influence were detected in seven sources of information: "UPU Guides", "UNIMAS published materials", "UNIMAS telephone hotline", "School teacher career talk", "School visit to UNIMAS", "Newspaper advertisements by UNIMAS", and "Documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio". The scores obtained from rural respondents were generally higher compared to urban respondents for these sources of information. Thus, efforts should be made to ensure that these sources of information reach potential students living in the rural areas.

Table 8
The various sources of information and the extent of their influence based on gender and residence.

Sources of Information on UNIMAS and its Academic Programs		Gender					Residence				
		Male	Fe-male	t	df	p-value	Ur-ban	Ru-ral	t	df	p-value
No.											
1	Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU) Guides	1.94	2.14	-2.483*	1263	0.013	1.99	2.21	-2.757**	1184	0.006
2	UNIMAS website	2.41	2.48	-0.942	1323	0.346	2.45	2.47	-0.295	1238	0.768
3	UNIMAS open day	1.73	1.86	-1.590	1187	0.112	1.80	1.86	-0.804	1116	0.422
4	UNIMAS published materials (UNIMAS brochure, Faculty pamphlets, etc)	1.89	2.07	-2.226*	1253	0.026	1.94	2.14	-2.557*	1169	0.011
5	UNIMAS roadshow event and careers fair	1.89	1.96	-0.935	1233	0.350	1.94	1.97	-0.433	1155	0.665
6	UNIMAS telephone hotline	1.56	1.80	-2.893**	1242	0.004	1.64	1.89	-3.028**	1163	0.003
7	School teacher career talk	1.99	2.09	-1.255	1250	0.210	1.97	2.19	-2.737**	1170	0.006
8	School visit to UNIMAS	1.72	1.89	-2.013*	1164	0.044	1.73	2.02	-2.013***	1088	0.001

9	Newspaper articles and supplements	1.83	2.09	-3.088**	1247	0.002	1.95	2.02	-0.889	1171	0.374
10	Newspaper advertisements by UNIMAS	1.72	1.87	-1.943	1247	0.052	1.75	1.97	-2.713**	1163	0.007
11	Documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio	1.70	1.67	0.351	1212	0.726	1.61	1.83	-2.668**	1137	0.008
12	Friends and relatives	2.51	2.46	0.716	1310	0.474	2.48	2.45	0.447	1228	0.655

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

Ethnicity

Where ethnicity is concerned, differences in the degree of influence of each of the information sources are seen in 10 of the 12 sources of information, including the two strong influential sources i.e. "Friends and relatives" and "UNIMAS website" (Table 9). Differences were detected between Chinese and Malays and Sarawak *Bumiputera*. In general, the Chinese respondents gave lower importance to the 10 sources of information than their Malay and Sarawak *Bumiputera* counterparts. Thus, it appears that Chinese potential students require other sources of information that were not identified in this study.

Table 9

The various sources of information and the extent of their influence based on ethnicity.

Sources of Information about UNIMAS and its Academic Programs		Malay	Chinese	Indian	Sara-wak Bu-miputra	Sabah Bumipu-tra	Other Bumipu-tra	Others	F	df	p-value
No.											
1	Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU) Guides	2.25	1.57	2.17	2.20	2.47	2.92	2.88	13.286***	6/1256	<0.0005
2	UNIMAS website	2.47	2.25	2.58	2.67	2.62	3.00	3.00	3.861***	6/1316	0.001
3	UNIMAS open day	1.87	1.68	1.80	1.93	1.81	1.91	2.14	1.034	6/1180	0.401
4	UNIMAS published materials (UNIMAS brochure, Faculty pamphlets, etc)	2.09	1.76	2.09	2.15	2.17	2.25	2.00	3.353**	6/1246	0.003
5	UNIMAS roadshow event and careers fair	2.01	1.71	1.91	2.18	1.79	2.00	1.43	3.610***	6/1226	0.001
6	UNIMAS telephone hotline	1.86	1.46	1.74	1.73	1.89	1.27	2.14	3.738***	6/1234	0.001

7	School teacher career talk	2..07	2.03	1.85	2.10	2.05	2.17	2.29	0.337	6/1243	0.918
8	School visit to UNIMAS	1.86	1.66	1.77	2.15	1.59	1.82	2.00	2.934**	6/1156	0.008
9	Newspaper articles and supplements	2.04	1.76	2.22	2.10	2.13	2.33	2.38	3.139**	6/1241	0.005
10	Newspaper advertisements by UNIMAS	1.87	1.56	1.88	2.03	2.00	2.18	2.25	3.974***	6/1241	0.001
11	Documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio	1.69	1.48	1.71	1.91	1.81	1.92	1.38	2.486*	6/1206	0.021
12	Friends and relatives	2.42	2.37	2.21	2.88	2.38	2.72	2.13	5.064***	6/1303	<0.0005

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

Faculties

In order to determine the differences in respondents' sources of information and the extent of the differences based on faculties, responses to the indicators were organized according to the eight faculties of UNIMAS. The differences between faculties in the respondents' perceptions appeared to be between FMHS, FE, FRST and FCSIT, and FACA, FSS, FEB and FCSHD, and were identified for 11 of the 12 sources of information' the exception being "Friends and relatives" (refer to Table 10).

Respondents from FMHS generally gave lower rating for each of the information sources compared to other faculties in UNIMAS. Respondents from FMHS gave a significantly lower importance (mean=1.91) to "UNIMAS Website" compared to those given by respondents from FRST, FSS, FE, FCSHD, FACA, and FEB (means between 2.38 and 2.68) with $F(7,1322)=5.417$, $p<0.0005$. Respondents from FMHS also gave a significantly lower importance (mean=1.15) to "UNIMAS open day" compared to respondents from FE, FRST, FCSHD, FSS, FCSIT and FEB (means between 1.52 and 2.05). Respondents from FACA, on the other hand, gave significantly higher importance (mean=2.25) to "UNIMAS open day" compared to those from FMHS, FE, FRST and FCSIT (means between 1.15 and 2.00).

Respondents from FACA, FEB and FCSHD indicated "Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU)" as a significantly more influential (means between 2.19 and 2.39) source of information regarding UNIMAS and its academic programs compared to respondents from FRST, FE and FMHS (means between 1.62 and 1.90) with $F(7,1263) = 6.960$, $p<0.0005$. Again, respondents from FMHS viewed "UNIMAS published materials" as relatively unimportant compared to those from FRST, FEB, FCSHD, FSS and FACA (means between 1.89 and 2.32). In contrast, respondents from FACA (mean = 2.32) gave higher importance on "UNIMAS published materials" compared to those from FMHS, FCSIT, FE, and FRST (means between 1.37 and 1.89).

The trend of response continues with regards to FMHS compared to other faculties in UNIMAS. "UNIMAS Roadshow event and career fairs" were also given less importance in term of influence (mean = 1.39) by respondents from FMHS compared to respondents from FSS, FEB, and FACA (means between 2.01 and 2.19). Both respondents from FMHS and FRST also placed significantly less importance (mean = 1.36 and 1.50) on "UNIMAS telephone hotline" then FSS, FEB and FACA (means between 1.90 and 1.97).

Similarly, "School teacher career talk" was rated less influential by respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.68) and FE (mean = 1.71) compared to respondents from FSS, FEB and FACA (means between 2.17 and 2.34). While "School visit to UNIMAS" was an influential source of information for respondents from FACA (mean = 2.20), respondents from FMHS, FE, FRST and FSS (means between 1.32 and 1.72) viewed this source of information as not important.

"Newspaper articles and supplements" was rated as a relatively inconsequential source of information by respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.44) compared to respondents from FEB, FSS, FCSHD and FACA (means between 2.03 and 2.22). Respondents from FSS, FCSHD, FACA, and FEB (means between 1.88 and 2.03) placed more importance on "Newspaper advertisements by UNIMAS" as source of information compared to respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.24). "Documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio" was of low importance and was significantly less influential for respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.23) and FRST (mean = 1.55) than those from FEB (mean = 1.80) and FACA (mean = 1.93).

Thus, the findings above indicated that the various sources of information influence the respondents from the various faculties differently. This is especially true for respondents from FMHS, where except for "Friends and Relatives", they rated all the other sources of information as having little influence on their selection of UNIMAS. This is followed by respondents from FE, FRST and FCSIT who, with the exception for "UNIMAS website" and "Friends and relatives", appeared to place relatively little importance to the other sources of information. Thus, for these faculties, a strong alumnus is importance. Also, the university website must be attractive and well-informed to attract potential students.

At the other end of the continuum, respondents from FACA appeared to perceive strong influence from "UNIMAS website", "Friends and relatives", *Unit Pusat Universiti* Guides", School teacher career talk", "UNIMAS published materials" and "UNIMAS open day" (means between 2.66 and 2.25). FEB, FSS and FCSHD formed another group which appeared to place more importance on the following sources of information, "UNIMAS website", "Friends and relatives", *Unit Pusat Universiti* Guides", "School teacher career talk", "UNIMAS published materials", "UNIMAS roadshow and career fair" and "Newspapers articles and supplements" (means ranked between 2.66 and 2.03). For potential students to these faculties, efforts must be made to further improve the stated sources of information, in addition to "Friends and relatives" and "UNIMAS website", to enable UNIMAS to reach and influence a greater number of potential students.

Table 10
The various sources of information and the extent of their influence based on faculties.

Sources of Information about UNIMAS and its Academic Programs		FE	FMHS	FRST	FCSIT	FEB	FACA	FSS	FCSHD	F	df	p-value
No.												
1	Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU) Guides	1.70	1.62	1.90	1.91	2.30	2.39	2.09	2.19	6.960***	7/1263	<0.0005
2	UNIMAS website	2.41	1.91	2.38	2.13	2.68	2.66	2.40	2.52	5.417***	7/1322	<0.0005
3	UNIMAS open day	1.52	1.15	1.56	2.00	2.05	2.25	1.92	1.71	10.205***	7/1186	<0.0005
4	UNIMAS published materials (UNIMAS brochure, Faculty pamphlets, etc)	1.74	1.37	1.89	1.50	2.11	2.32	2.15	2.13	7.696***	7/1252	<0.0005
5	UNIMAS roadshow event and careers fair	1.85	1.39	1.80	1.48	2.08	2.19	2.01	1.91	4.724***	7/1232	<0.0005
6	UNIMAS telephone hotline	1.57	1.36	1.50	1.14	1.97	1.97	1.90	1.56	5.937***	7/1241	<0.0005
7	School teacher career talk	1.71	1.68	1.88	1.83	2.23	2.34	2.17	2.07	5.669***	7/1249	<0.0005
8	School visit to UNIMAS	1.61	1.32	1.72	1.77	1.98	2.20	1.72	1.77	4.934***	7/1161	<0.0005
9	Newspaper articles and supplements	1.87	1.44	1.85	1.55	2.03	2.22	2.13	2.14	5.028***	7/1246	<0.0005
10	Newspaper advertisements by UNIMAS	1.73	1.24	1.70	1.43	2.03	2.01	1.82	1.93	4.904***	7/1247	<0.0005

11	Documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio	1.62	1.23	1.55	1.71	1.80	1.93	1.64	1.69	3.145**	7/1212	0.003
12	Friends and rela-tives	2.62	2.63	2.48	1.85	2.50	2.49	2.29	2.53	2.030	7/1309	0.05

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

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5.5 Factors Influencing Students' Decision to Select UNIMAS

In this study, six factors (university choice, institutional reputation, personal fit, academic program choice, employment prospect and quality of teaching and academics) were investigated to determine their influence on students' decision to select UNIMAS. The overall mean scores, standard deviations and rankings for the six factors are shown in Table 11.

Table 11
Rankings of the six factors influencing students' decision to select UNIMAS.

Factors	Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
University Choice	2.16	1.432	4
Institutional Reputation	2.01	1.362	5
Personal Fit	2.01	1.350	5
Academic Program Choice	2.36	1.341	1
Employment Prospect	2.32	1.304	3
Quality of Teaching and Academics	2.33	1.291	2

The detail findings on how these factors influenced students' decision to select UNIMAS are discussed in the following sections.

5.5.1 University Choice

The factor "university choice" is ranked 4th out of the six factors investigated in this study. It has an overall mean of 2.16 out of a score of 4.0. As shown in Table 12, the four statements listed under "University Choice' which have a mean higher than the overall mean of 2.16 are "UNIMAS offers a program of my interest/choice" (mean = 2.53), "UNIMAS is readily accessible from my home state using modern transport" (mean = 2.35), "UNIMAS is a modern/new university" (mean = 2.26), and "UNIMAS has colleges or hall of residence" (mean = 2.16). Apparently, students' decision to select UNIMAS is very much influenced by the academic programs that the university offers. "Academic program choice" is one of the major statements which strongly influence students' decision to select UNIMAS. This is followed by the university's accessibility from their homes, its modern outlook, and the offer of better facilities, such as residential colleges.

5.5.2 Institutional Reputation

The factor "institutional reputation" is ranked low (no. 5 out of 6 factors) in its influence on students' decision to select UNIMAS. It has an overall mean of 2.01

Table 12
Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: University Choice

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable	Omitted	Mean	Std Dev
University Choice									
1 UNIMAS offers a program of my interest/ choice	179 (12.8%)	68 (4.9%)	275 (19.7%)	451 (32.3%)	330 (23.6%)	83 (5.9%)	10 (0.7%)	2.53	1.298
2 UNIMAS is near to my home state	351 (25.1%)	121 (8.7%)	99 (7.1%)	217 (15.5%)	339 (24.3%)	257 (18.4%)	12 (0.9%)	2.06	1.657
3 UNIMAS is readily accessible from my home state using modern transport (air/ land)	271 (19.4%)	78 (5.6%)	186 (13.3%)	389 (27.9%)	336 (24.1%)	124 (8.9%)	12 (0.9%)	2.35	1.475
4 UNIMAS is a modern/ new university	272 (19.5%)	85 (6.1%)	259 (18.6%)	454 (32.5%)	257 (18.4%)	56 (4.0%)	13 (0.9%)	2.26	1.392
5 UNIMAS is a technological university	320 (22.9%)	91 (6.5%)	296 (21.2%)	417 (29.9%)	191 (13.7%)	68 (4.9%)	13 (0.9%)	2.05	1.393
6 UNIMAS has colleges or hall of residence	275 (19.7%)	74 (5.3%)	245 (17.6%)	483 (34.6%)	244 (17.5%)	60 (4.3%)	15 (1.1%)	2.26	1.388
7 My school teachers' recommendation	403 (28.9%)	133 (9.5%)	246 (17.6%)	259 (18.6%)	127 (9.1%)	212 (15.2%)	16 (1.1%)	1.64	1.421

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

out of a score of 4.0. As shown in Table 13, more than 50% of the students mentioned that the six statements here have little or no influence on their decision to select UNIMAS as a place to study. UNIMAS is a young institution of higher learning in Malaysia. As such, UNIMAS is still in the process of building up its institutional reputation, and therefore, it has yet to have a reputation that would have influence the students' decision. Meanwhile, older universities in Malaysia, such as University of Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), have a certain degree of institutional reputations built up over the years; and therefore, for these universities, institutional reputation may be an important factor that influenced students' decision to select them. Thus, institutional reputation is not considered an important factor in influencing students' decision to select UNIMAS.

Table 13
Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Institutional Reputation

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS		No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable	Omitted	Mean	Std Dev
Institutional Reputation										
8	The "prestige" of studying at UNIMAS	337 (24.1%)	82 (5.9%)	331 (23.7%)	422 (30.2%)	149 (10.7%)	55 (3.9%)	20 (1.4%)	1.97	1.362
9	The "image" of UNIMAS	250 (17.9%)	81 (5.8%)	329 (23.6%)	476 (34.1%)	180 (12.9%)	50 (3.6%)	30 (2.1%)	2.19	1.302
10	The "international character" of UNIMAS	317 (22.7%)	94 (6.7%)	331 (23.7%)	406 (29.1%)	174 (12.5%)	58 (4.2%)	16 (1.1%)	2.02	1.363
11	UNIMAS' research reputation	320 (22.9%)	90 (6.4%)	347 (24.9%)	410 (29.4%)	152 (10.9%)	55 (3.9%)	22 (1.6%)	1.99	1.346
12	UNIMAS' academic reputation	281 (20.1%)	72 (5.2%)	341 (24.4%)	436 (31.2%)	181 (13.0%)	54 (3.9%)	31 (2.2%)	2.13	1.335
13	The employment rates of UNIMAS' graduates	345 (24.7%)	89 (6.4%)	313 (22.4%)	370 (26.5%)	183 (13.1%)	80 (5.7%)	16 (1.1%)	1.97	1.406
14	The starting salaries of UNIMAS' graduates	389 (27.9%)	81 (5.8%)	316 (22.6%)	327 (23.4%)	160 (11.5%)	101 (7.2%)	22 (1.6%)	1.83	1.421

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

5.5.3 Personal Fit

The factor "personal fit" has very little influence on students' decision to select UNIMAS, and is ranked the lowest (5th), with an overall mean of 2.01 out of a score of 4.0; similar to the overall mean for the factor "Institutional reputation". As revealed in Table 14, the five statements under this factor that have a score above an overall mean of 2.01 are "I belief that I would fit in well in UNIMAS" (mean 2.49), "I belief I can fit into the social and cultural life in UNIMAS" (mean 2.42), "I am comfortable with the size of UNIMAS' campus (mean 2.21), "I find UNIMAS' campus surrounding exciting (mean 2.15), and "I like UNIMAS' campus atmosphere" (mean 2.14). Based on the nature of these statements, the students felt that they could adapt well, both socially and culturally, in the campus environment. They are comfortable with the campus and its up-to-date teaching facilities, residential colleges and beautiful surrounding.

Table 14
Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Personal Fit

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Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable	Omitted	Mean	Std Dev
Personal Fit									
15 I belief that "I would fit well in UNIMAS"	195 (14.0%)	67 (4.8%)	251 (18.0%)	564 (40.4%)	267 (19.1%)	26 (2.6%)	16 (1.1%)	2.49	1.272
16 I find UNIMAS' campus surrounding exciting	268 (19.2%)	93 (6.7%)	314 (22.5%)	466 (33.4%)	182 (13.0%)	55 (3.9%)	18 (1.3%)	2.15	1.327
17 I like UNIMAS' campus atmosphere	270 (19.3%)	98 (7.0%)	302 (21.6%)	477 (34.2%)	173 (12.4%)	55 (3.9%)	. 21 (1.5%)	2.14	1.327
18 I am comfortable with the size of UNIMAS' campus	244 (17.5%)	93 (6.7%)	335 (24.0%)	458 (32.8%)	199 (14.3%)	55 (3.9%)	12 (0.9%)	2.21	1.306
19 I belief I can fit into the social and cultural life in UNIMAS	200 (14.3%)	70 (5.0%)	268 (19.2%)	594 (42.6%)	220 (15.8%)	34 (2.4%)	10 (0.7%)	2.42	1.249
20 I am satisfied with the sporting and recreational facilities	317 (22.7%)	143 (10.2%)	335 (24.0%)	389 (27.9%)	130 (9.3%)	70 (5.0%)	12 (0.9%)	1.90	1.326

21	The clubs and so-ciety at UNIMAS are appropriate for me	354 (25.4%)	136 (9.7%)	369 (26.4%)	367 (26.3%)	103 (7.4%)	56 (4.0%)	11 (0.8%)	1.80	1.309
22	I am at ease with the types of students who go to UNIMAS	338 (24.2%)	97 (6.9%)	331 (23.7%)	435 (31.2%)	124 (8.9%)	52 (3.7%)	19 (1.4%)	1.93	1.339
23	My parents' view of the best uni-versity for myself	421 (30.2%)	115 (8.2%)	241 (17.3%)	303 (21.7%)	163 (11.7%)	136 (9.7%)	17 (1.2%)	1.74	1.466
24	My friends are studying at UNI-MAS	399 (28.6%)	118 (8.5%)	227 (16.3%)	318 (22.8%)	147 (10.5%)	156 (11.2%)	31 (2.2%)	1.75	1.451
25	I have friends who planned to study at UNIMAS	440 (31.5%)	134 (9.6%)	181 (13.0%)	294 (21.1%)	144 (10.3%)	188 (13.5%)	15 (1.1%)	1.64	1.479

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

5.5.4   Academic Program Choice

One of the major factors that seems to have strongly influence the students' decision to select UNIMAS as a place to further their studies is the "academic program choice". This factor was ranked first among the six factors investigated in this study, with an overall mean of 2.36 out of a score of 4.0. The students felt that the academic programs offered at UNIMAS suit their interests and needs, and that the programs are contemporary and have better prospect to meet future demands and challenges. As revealed in Table 15, approximately 63% of the students were strongly influenced by the fact that the academic programs offered at UNIMAS have the potential to grow, or they foresee that these programs will have a better prospect in the future. Another aspect of the academic programs offered at UNIMAS that strongly influenced 60.5 % of the students to select UNIMAS is that they have the confidence in their ability to adapt to the demands exerted by these programs. Slightly more than one half of the students (54.0%) were influenced by the fact that the academic programs offered at UNIMAS have a good reputation among employers. They observed that graduates from these programs were able to gain employment as soon as they graduated.

Table 15
Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Academic Program Choice

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable	Omitted	Mean	Std Dev
Academic Program Choice									
26 This is the academic program of my choice	204 (14.6%)	92 (6.6%)	181 (13.0%)	408 (29.2%)	371 (26.6%)	127 (9.1%)	13 (0.9%)	2.52	1.401
27 I have confidence in my ability to meet the demands of the academic program	169 (12.1%)	70 (5.0%)	250 (17.9%)	562 (40.3%)	282 (20.2%)	49 (3.5%)	14 (1.0%)	2.54	1.240
28 The academic program has good reputation with employers	244 (17.5%)	74 (5.3%)	257 (18.4%)	498 (35.7%)	256 (18.3%)	54 (3.9%)	13 (0.9%)	2.34	1.350
29 Past graduates are satisfied with the academic program	317 (22.7%)	85 (6.1%)	245 (17.6%)	441 (31.6%)	183 (13.1%)	108 (7.7%)	17 (1.2%)	2.07	1.409
30 The employment rates of past graduates from the academic program	303 (21.7%)	78 (5.6%)	288 (20.6%)	430 (30.8%)	182 (13.0%)	97 (6.9%)	18 (1.3%)	2.09	1.380
31 The academic program has the potential to grow/ better prospect in the future	167 (12.0%)	69 (4.9%)	218 (15.6%)	545 (39.0%)	336 (24.1%)	46 (3.3%)	15 (1.1%)	2.61	1.264

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

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5.5.5 Employment Prospect

"Employment prospect" was ranked third, with an overall mean of 2.32 out of a score of 4.0, among the six factors investigated in this study. As shown in Table 16, approximately 59% of the students were strongly influenced to choose UNIMAS as a place to study because it offers academic programs that they believe will give them an opportunity for an interesting and rewarding career in the future. The "image" and the "prestige" of the field of study offered at UNIMAS also had a strong influence on their decision to select the university to further their studies (as indicated by 55.4% and 53.7% of the students, respectively). Approximately 51% of the students were also strongly influenced to come and study at UNIMAS because they had seen a high employment rate for graduates in the chosen field of their study. The students perceived that the academic programs offered at UNIMAS are contemporary and are in line with the needs of industry and the nation.

Table 16
Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Employment Prospect

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS		No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable	Omitted	Mean	Std Dev
Employment prospect										
32	The "prestige" of the field of study	235 (16.8%)	85 (6.1%)	271 (19.4%)	545 (39.0%)	205 (14.7%)	39 (2.8%)	16 (1.1%)	2.30	1.302
33	The "image" of the field of study	222 (15.9%)	67 (4.8%)	278 (19.9%)	554 (39.7%)	219 (15.7%)	39 (2.8%)	17 (1.2%)	2.36	1.285
34	The opportunities for interesting and rewarding careers	191 (13.7%)	68 (4.9%)	257 (18.4%)	558 (40.0%)	265 (19.0%)	39 (2.8%)	18 (1.3%)	2.48	1.266
35	The employment rates for graduates in the field of study	204 (14.6%)	58 (4.2%)	260 (18.6%)	499 (35.7%)	208 (14.9%)	47 (3.4%)	120 (8.6%)	2.37	1.289
36	The starting salary of graduates in the field of study	304 (21.8%)	78 (5.6%)	283 (20.3%)	454 (32.5%)	185 (13.3%)	69 (4.9%)	23 (1.6%)	2.11	1.378

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

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5.5.6 Quality of Teaching and Academics

Another factor that strongly influenced the students' decision to select UNIMAS is the quality of its teaching and academics. This factor is ranked second out of the six factors investigated in this study, with an overall mean of 2.33 out of a score of 4.0. As shown in Table 17, the students were strongly influenced to select UNIMAS because the "university has quality teaching" (55.8%), "provides good academic services such as learning skill support" (55.7%), "engages a variety of teaching approaches" (55.8%), and "uses technology on a wide scale in teaching" (53.1%). The students were influenced to select UNIMAS because they were impressed by the quality of its teaching and academics, which they must have heard from their friends and relatives who have studied at UNIMAS.

Table 17
Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Quality of Teaching and Academics

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS		No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable	Omitted	Mean	Std Dev
Quality of teaching and academics										
37	The quality of teaching at UNIMAS	232 (16.6%)	75 (5.4%)	261 (18.7%)	573 (41.0%)	206 (14.8%)	31 (2.2%)	18 (1.3%)	2.33	1.294
38	The variety of teaching approaches used at UNIMAS	252 (18.1%)	71 (5.1%)	271 (19.4%)	552 (39.5%)	196 (14.0%)	30 (2.1%)	24 (1.7%)	2.27	1.313
39	The use of information technologies in teaching at UNIMAS	224 (16.0%)	86 (6.2%)	287 (20.6%)	533 (38.2%)	208 (14.9%)	38 (2.7%)	20 (1.4%)	2.31	1.288
40	The quality of UNIMAS' academics	215 (15.4%)	68 (4.9%)	271 (19.4%)	562 (40.3%)	220 (15.8%)	33 (2.4%)	27 (1.9%)	2.38	1.278
41	UNIMAS' academic services, such as learning skills' support	217 (15.5%)	80 (5.7%)	266 (19.1%)	562 (40.3%)	215 (15.4%)	36 (2.6%)	20 (1.4%)	2.36	1.282

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

5.6 Differences in Influence on Students' Decision to Select UNIMAS based on Selected Demographics.

5.6.1 Differences based on Gender

Independent t-test analyses were used to determine gender differences in students' decision to select UNIMAS as a place to study. The results of the independent t-tests analyses are shown in Table 18. For the factor "university choice", only one statement showed differences in the responses between male and female respondents. Male respondents (mean = 2.67) were more influenced by UNIMAS offers of program of their interest/choice than female respondents (mean = 2.46).

In "institutional reputation", all seven statements showed differences in response patterns between male and female respondents (Table 18). Overall, female respondents were more influenced by all the seven statements compared to male respondents. The seven statements are: "the "prestige" of studying at UNIMAS", "the "image" of UNIMAS", "international character", "research reputation", "academic reputation", "employment rate" and "starting salaries".

Only one of the 11 statements in the "personal fit" factor registered a difference in responses between male and female respondents. Female respondents (mean = 1.84) were more influenced by their parents' view of UNIMAS as the best university for them than male respondents (mean = 1.49).

For the factor "academic program choice", only one of the six statements had significant differences between male and female respondents; male respondents (mean = 2.65) were more influenced in their decision to choose UNIMAS because they have confidence in their ability to meet the demands of the academic programs at UNIMAS than female respondents (mean = 2.49).

Gender differences were also seen in two of the five statements in the "employment prospect" factor. Female respondents (mean = 2.43) were more influenced by the "prestige" of the field of study at UNIMAS than male respondents (mean = 2.19). In addition, female respondents (mean = 2.16) were more influenced by the starting salary of graduates in the field of study offered in UNIMAS than male respondents (mean = 1.98).

All five statements for the factor "quality of teaching and academics" showed differences in response patterns between male and female respondents. Female respondents (mean = 2.39) were more influenced by the quality of teaching at UNIMAS than male respondents (mean = 2.21). Likewise, female respondents (mean = 2.34) were more influenced by the variety of teaching approaches used at UNIMAS than male respondents (mean = 2.13). In addition, female respondents (mean = 2.39) were more influenced by the use of information tech-

nologies in teaching, quality of UNIMAS academics, and UNIMAS academic services such as learning skills support than male respondents (refer to Table 18 for the respective mean scores for male and female respondents).

5.6.2 Differences based on Residence

Independent t-test analyses were used to determine the differences between urban and rural respondents in terms of in their decision to select UNIMAS as a place to study. The results of the independent t-tests analyses are shown in Table 18.

No significant differences were found for all the statements in the "university choice" factor. However, five of the seven statements in the "institutional reputation" factor seem to have more influence on the rural respondents' decision to choose UNIMAS than the urban respondents. The five statements are the "prestige" of studying at UNIMAS, UNIMAS research reputation, UNIMAS academic reputation, employment rates of UNIMAS graduates and starting salaries of UNIMAS graduates (refer to Table 18 for the respective mean scores for rural and urban respondents).

For the "personal fit" factor, only one statement showed differences in responses based on respondents' residence background where rural respondents (mean = 1.92) were more influenced by the clubs and societies at UNIMAS that suited their needs than urban respondents (mean = 1.75).

Similarly, for the factor "academic program choice", only one statement showed differences in response; rural respondents (mean = 2.19) were more influenced by the employment rates of past graduates from the academic programs offered at UNIMAS than urban respondents (mean = 2.01).

With regards to "employment prospect" factor, rural respondents (mean = 2.33) were more influenced by the starting salary of graduates in the field of study from UNIMAS than urban respondents (mean = 2.03). The other four statements in this factor did not show any differences based on the respondents' residence background.

Under the "quality of teaching and academics" factor, four of the five statements showed differences in their influences on rural and urban respondents. Rural respondents (mean = 2.46) were more influenced by the quality of teaching at UNIMAS than urban respondents (mean = 2.26). The rural respondents (mean = 2.43) were also more influenced by the use of information technologies in teaching at UNIMAS than urban respondents (mean = 2.24). Furthermore, rural respondents were more influenced by the quality of UNIMAS academics and UNIMAS academic services, such as learning skills support than urban respondents (refer to Table 18 for the respective mean scores for rural and urban respondents).

Table 18
Differences in influences on decision to select UNIMAS based on gender and residence

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Gender					Residence				
University choice	Male	Female	t	df	p-value	Urban	Rural	t	df	p-value
1 UNIMAS offers a program of my interest/ choice	2.67	2.46	2.739**	1295	0.006	2.55	2.48	0.870	1212	0.385
2 UNIMAS is near to my home state	2.51	2.46	0.716	1310	0.474	2.48	2.45	0.447	1228	0.655
3 UNIMAS is readily accessible from my home state using modern transport (air/ land)	2.14	2.03	1.039	1120	0.299	2.12	2.05	0.710	1049	0.478
4 UNIMAS is a modern/ new university	2.34	2.36	-0.184	1252	0.854	2.36	2.37	-0.114	1175	0.909
5 UNIMAS is a technological university	2.16	2.29	-1.558	1319	0.120	2.21	2.35	-1.740	1232	0.082
6 UNIMAS has colleges or hall of residence	1.95	2.09	-1.565	1307	0.118	2.02	2.06	-0.477	1221	0.633
7 My school teachers' recommendation	2.16	2.30	-1.659	1313	0.097	2.20	2.36	-1.867	1230	0.662

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Gender					Location				
Institutional reputation	Male	Female	t	df	p-value	Urban	Rural	t	df	p-value
8 The "prestige" of studying at UNIMAS	1.84	2.03	-2.307*	1314	0.021	1.90	2.07	-2.038*	1232	0.042

40

		Male	Female	t	df	p-value	Urban	Rural	t	df	p-value
9	The "image" of UNIMAS	2.06	2.25	-2.531*	1309	0.011	2.14	2.26	-1.543	1227	0.123
10	The "international char-acter" of UNIMAS	1.79	2.12	-4.030***	1314	<0.0005	1.93	2.15	-2.694	1230	0.007
11	UNIMAS' research repu-tation	1.81	2.06	-3.080**	1313	0.002	1.91	2.10	-2.394*	1229	0.017
12	UNIMAS' academic reputation	1.97	2.19	-2.773**	1304	0.006	2.03	2.26	-2.907**	1219	0.004
13	The employment rates of UNIMAS' graduates	1.84	2.02	-2.202*	1292	0.028	1.87	2.07	-2.317*	1209	0.021
14	The starting salaries of UNIMAS' graduates	1.58	1.95	-4.245***	1266	<0.0005	1.74	1.97	-2.580*	1185	0.010

Factors influencing your de-cision to select UNIMAS		Gender					Location				
Personal fit		Male	Female	t	df	p-value	Urban	Rural	t	df	p-value
15	I belief that "I would fit well in UNIMAS"	2.49	2.47	0.259	1336	0.796	2.46	2.57	-1.459	1251	0.145
16	I find UNIMAS' campus surrounding exciting	2.09	2.18	-1.130	1316	0.259	2.11	2.25	-1.665	1229	0.096
17	I like UNIMAS' campus atmosphere	2.11	2.15	-0.442	1312	0.659	2.15	2.15	0.088	1226	0.930
18	I am comfortable with the size of UNIMAS' campus	2.21	2.20	0.082	1322	0.935	2.23	2.23	0.018	1236	0.986
19	I belief I can fit into the social and cultural life in UNIMAS	2.39	2.43	-0.557	1345	0.577	2.39	2.50	-1.475	1258	0.140

20	I am satisfied with the sporting and recreational facilities	1.86	1.92	-0.862	1306	0.389	1.89	1.93	-0.487	1222	0.626
21	The clubs and society at UNIMAS are appropriate for me	1.71	1.83	-1.597	1321	0.110	1.75	1.92	-2.228*	1236	0.026
22	I am at ease with the types of students who go to UNIMAS	1.90	1.94	-0.489	1317	0.625	1.92	1.97	-0.518	1235	0.605
23	My parents' view of the best university for myself	1.49	1.84	-3.760***	1236	<0.0005	1.79	1.63	1.741	1159	0.082
24	My friends are studying at UNIMAS	1.83	1.71	1.259	1202	0.208	1.73	1.79	-0.663	1125	0.507
25	I have friends who planned to study at UNIMAS	1.54	1.69	-1.618	1187	0.106	1.61	1.71	-1.084	1108	0.279

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Gender					Location				
Academic program choice	Male	Female	t	df	p-value	Urban	Rural	t	df	p-value
26	This is the academic program of my choice	2.63	2.47	1.848	1249	0.065	2.57	2.48	1.004	1167	0.316
27	I have confidence in my ability to meet the demands of the academic program	2.65	2.49	2.291*	1325	0.022	2.60	2.47	1.700	1242	0.089
28	The academic program has good reputation with employers	2.31	2.35	-0.466	1321	0.641	2.31	2.36	-0.520	1237	0.603

#		Male	Female	t	df	p-value	Urban	Rural	t	df	p-value
29	Past graduates are satisfied with the academic program	2.00	2.10	-1.133	1263	0.257	2.01	2.13	-1.454	1182	0.146
30	The employment rates of past graduates from the academic program	2.03	2.11	-0.907	1273	0.364	2.01	2.19	-2.232*	1188	0.026
31	The academic program has the potential to grow/ better prospect in the future	2.52	2.65	-1.645	1327	0.100	2.58	2.68	-1.244	1243	0.214

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS		Gender					Location				
Employment prospect		Male	Female	t	df	p-value	Urban	Rural	t	df	p-value
32	The "prestige" of the field of study	2.20	2.34	-1.852	1333	0.064	2.26	2.40	-1.698	1248	0.090
33	The "image" of the field of study	2.19	2.43	-3.197***	1332	0.001	2.32	2.44	-1.545	1245	0.123
34	The opportunities for interesting and rewarding careers	2.42	2.50	-1.096	1331	0.273	2.43	2.55	-1.578	1246	0.115
35	The employment rates for graduates in the field of study	2.35	2.37	-0.192	1221	0.848	2.33	2.43	-1.227	1146	0.220

36	The starting salary of graduates in the field of study	1.98	2.16	-2.215*	1296	0.027	2.03	2.23	-2.379*	1213	0.018

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS		Gender					Location				
Quality of teaching and academics		Male	Female	t	df	p-value	Urban	Rural	t	df	p-value
37	The quality of teaching at UNIMAS	2.21	2.39	-2.309*	1339	0.021	2.26	2.46	-2.633**	1253	0.009
38	The variety of teaching approaches used at UNIMAS	2.13	2.34	-2.606**	1335	0.009	2.16	2.45	-3.700	1251	<0.0005
39	The use of Information Technologies in teaching at UNIMAS	2.12	2.39	-3.578***	1330	<0.0005	2.24	2.43	-2.485*	1248	0.013
40	The quality of UNIMAS' academics	2.24	2.43	-2.581*	1328	0.010	2.31	2.48	-2.274*	1246	0.023
41	UNIMAS' academic services, such as learning skills' support	2.15	2.44	-3.776***	1332	<0.0005	2.27	2.52	-3.290***	1250	0.001

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

5.6.3 Differences based on Ethnicity

Differences in students' decision to select UNIMAS, based on ethnicity are shown in Table 19. The results are described below.

Ethnicity differences seemed to matter in six of the seven statements under the factor "university choice". For example, Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.82) are more influenced by "UNIMAS offers a program of their interest/ choice" compared to Malay respondents (mean = 2.43). The distance between UNIMAS and their home appeared to be a significantly influential factor on Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 3.06) decision to select UNIMAS. Likewise, Chinese respondents (mean = 2.32) also perceived UNIMAS proximity to their home as an influential factor for selecting UNIMAS. However, this did not seemed to be important in the Indian, Malay and Sabah *Bumiputera* respondents decision to select UNIMAS (means between 0.82 and 1.65). The fact that UNIMAS is readily accessible using modern transport (air/land) also influenced Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.98) decision in selecting UNIMAS compared to the Malay (mean = 2.17) and Chinese (mean = 2.32) respondents. Furthermore, Sarawak *Bumiputera* respondents (mean = 2.63) were more significantly influenced than Sabah Bumiputera, Chinese and Malay respondents (means between 1.88 and 2.28) by the notion that UNIMAS is a modern new university. The Sarawak *Bumiputera* respondents (mean = 2.35) also believed that the fact UNIMAS is a technological university significantly influenced their choice to select UNIMAS, compared to Chinese (mean = 1.85) and Sabah *Bumiputera* (mean = 1.57) respondents. Sarawak *Bumiputera* respondents (mean = 2.64) were influenced in choosing UNIMAS as their university of choice as UNIMAS has colleges or hall of residence, while this factor was not an important factor for Chinese (mean = 2.06) and Malay (mean = 2.26) respondents.

Ethnicity differences are also seen in six of the seven statements in the "institutional reputation" factor. Chinese respondents (mean = 1.63) placed less emphasis on the prestige of studying at UNIMAS when choosing UNIMAS as their place of study compared to Malay (mean = 2.05) and Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.36) respondents. Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.13) respondents were significantly influenced by the image of UNIMAS, compared to Malay (mean = 2.23), Chinese (mean = 1.96) and Indian (mean = 1.93) respondents when choosing UNIMAS as their place of study. Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.33) respondents also thought that the international character of UNIMAS significantly influenced their selection of university compared to Malay (mean = 2.07) and Chinese (mean = 1.76) respondents. In addition, Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.37) respondents believed that UNIMAS research reputation influenced their selection of UNIMAS, compared to Malay (mean = 2.04) respondents and Chinese (mean = 1.66) respondents. Indian (mean = 2.45) and Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.37) respondents placed high importance on UNIMAS academic reputation in selecting the university compared to Chinese (mean = 1.89) respondents. The "employment rates of UNIMAS graduates" was also rated significantly higher by

Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.28) respondents compared to Chinese (mean = 1.80) respondents in selecting UNIMAS as their choice of university.

The "personal fit" factor also has ten of its 11 statements registering differences in response patterns for the various ethnic groups. Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.85) respondents were highly influenced by their belief that they would fit in UNIMAS compared with Malay (mean = 2.48) respondents and Chinese (mean = 2.24) respondents. The three ethnic groups that differed significantly in their responses toward the views that UNIMAS' campus surrounding is exciting were the Sarawak *Bumiputera*, Malay and Chinese respondents. The Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.56) were the highest influenced by this factor, followed by the Malay (mean = 2.24 and Chinese (mean = 1.80). Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.57) and Indian (mean = 2.34) respondents were more influenced by "I like UNIMAS' campus atmosphere" in choosing UNIMAS than Chinese (mean = 1.96) respondents. Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.43) and Malay (mean = 2.28) respondents also placed significantly higher importance on being comfortable with the size of UNIMAS campus in choosing to study at UNIMAS compared to the Chinese respondents (mean = 1.98).

The ability to fit into the social and cultural life in UNIMAS was a more influential reason in choosing UNIMAS for Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.80) and Sabah *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.62) respondents compared to the Malay (mean = 2.47) and Chinese (mean = 2.10) respondents. Satisfaction with sporting and recreational facilities was significantly more influential for the Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.17) than for the Chinese (mean = 1.64) respondents. On the other hand, Sabah *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.03) and Malay (mean = 1.95) respondents placed significantly more importance on the appropriateness of clubs and society at UNIMAS than the Chinese (mean = 1.45) respondents. Chinese (mean = 1.67) respondents placed significantly less importance on being at ease with the types of students who go to UNIMAS than Malay, Sarawak *Bumiputera* and Indian respondents (means between 2.01 and 2.25). There was a significant difference on the importance placed on "parents' view of the best university for myself" between Chinese and Sarawak *Bumiputera* respondents. *Sarawak Bumiputera* (mean = 1.99) respondents placed more importance on this reason than Chinese (mean = 1.58) respondents. Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.02) respondents also considered that having friends planning to study at UNIMAS had more influence on their choice of UNIMAS compared to Malay (mean = 1.64) and Chinese (mean = 1.48) respondents.

For the "academic program choice" factor, five of the six statements in this factor registered differences among the ethnic groups. Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.76) respondents, compared to the Malay (mean = 2.37) respondents, were significantly more influenced by "the academic program being one of my choice" in selecting UNIMAS. In addition, "having confidence in my ability to meet the demands of the academic program" was a significant influence on Indian (mean = 3.07) respondents' reason for choosing UNIMAS compared to

Malay (mean = 2.52) and Chinese (mean = 2.36) students. Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.59) and Malay (mean = 2.40) respondents, compared with Chinese (mean = 2.02) respondents, placed "the good reputation of the academic program with employers" as a significant reason for choosing UNIMAS. Chinese (mean = 1.77) respondents also indicated that past graduates satisfaction with the academic program was not an important reason for choosing UNIMAS in comparison to Sarawak *Bumiputera*, Malay and Indian respondents (means between 2.19 and 2.35). The Indian, Malay and Sarawak *Bumiputera* respondents (means between 2.15 and 2.48) also rated the employment rates of past graduates from academic program as an important factor in choosing UNIMAS; which was rated as unimportant by Chinese (mean = 1.77) respondents.

Significant different in response patterns among the various ethnic groups were seen in four of the five statements under the "employment prospect" factor. Indian, Sarawak *Bumiputera* and Malay respondents (means between 2.36 and 2.72) placed higher value on the prestige of the field of study when choosing UNIMAS as the place to study than Chinese (mean = 1.99) respondents. Chinese (mean = 2.10) respondents were also less influenced by the image of the field of study than Malay (mean = 2.40) and Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.60) respondents. Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.72) and Malay (mean = 2.50) respondents put significantly more importance on the "opportunities for interesting and rewarding careers" in selecting UNIMAS compared to Chinese (mean = 2.24) respondents. Also, the employment rates for graduates in the field of the study had a greater impact on Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.50) and Malay (mean = 2.42) respondents than Chinese (mean = 2.16) respondents.

Differences in responses among the various ethnicity is seen in all the statements under the "quality of teaching and academics" factor. For the Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.43) and Malay (mean = 2.42) respondents, the "quality of teaching at UNIMAS" was an important factor but not for the Chinese (mean = 2.08) respondents. In addition, the Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.48) and Malay (mean = 2.35) respondents, compared to the Chinese (mean = 2.01) respondents, felt that the "variety of teaching approaches used at UNIMAS" influenced their selection of UNIMAS. The "use of information technologies in teaching at UNIMAS" was considered less influential by Chinese (mean = 2.10) respondents in their decision to choose UNIMAS compared to Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.53) and Malay (mean = 2.36) respondents. The "quality of UNIMAS academics" had a higher impact on Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean 2.60) and Malay (mean = 2.40) respondents' decision to select UNIMAS compared to Chinese (mean = 2.14) respondents. Sarawak *Bumiputera* (mean = 2.64) respondents considered that UNIMAS academic services, such as learning skills support had strong influence on their selection of UNIMAS compared to Chinese (mean = 2.11) respondents, who felt that it only had little influence in their decision making.

Table 19
Differences in influences on decision to select UNIMAS based on ethnicity

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Sarawak Bumiput-era	Sabah Bumiput-era	Other Bumiput-era	Others	F	df	p-value
University Choice										
1 UNIMAS offers a program of my interest/ choice	2.43	2.54	2.51	2.82	2.47	2.15	2.50	2.600*	6,1288	0.016
2 UNIMAS is near to my home state	1.65	2.32	0.82	3.06	1.06	1.91	2.00	30.087***	6,1113	<0.0005
3 UNIMAS is readily accessible from my home state using modern transport (air/ land)	2.17	2.32	2.41	2.98	1.92	2.25	1.57	9.340***	6,1245	<0.0005
4 UNIMAS is a mod-ern/ new univer-sity	2.28	2.04	2.29	2.63	1.88	2.46	2.50	4.971***	6,1312	<0.0005
5 UNIMAS is a tech-nological univer-sity	2.09	1.85	2.02	2.35	1.57	2.54	2.88	4.998***	6,1300	<0.0005
6 UNIMAS has col-leges or hall of residence	2.26	2.06	2.15	2.64	2.09	2.77	2.50	4.627***	6,1306	<0.0005
7 My school teach-ers' recommen-dation	1.66	1.62	1.69	1.67	1.22	1.67	2.00	0.824	6,1155	0.551

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Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Sarawak Bumiputera	Sabah Bumiputera	Other Bumiputera	Others	F	df	p-value
Institutional Reputation										
8 The "prestige" of studying at UNIMAS	2.05	1.63	1.97	2.36	1.73	2.38	2.50	8.024***	6,1307	<0.0005
9 The "image" of UNIMAS	2.23	1.96	1.93	2.13	2.07	2.31	2.75	6.081***	6,1303	<0.0005
10 The "international character" of UNIMAS	2.07	1.76	1.97	2.33	1.86	2.31	2.38	4.636***	6,1308	<0.0005
11 UNIMAS' research reputation	2.04	1.66	2.02	2.37	1.98	2.15	2.25	6.804***	6,1305	<0.0005
12 UNIMAS' academic reputation	2.14	1.89	2.45	2.37	2.08	2.23	2.50	3.793**	6,1297	0.001
13 The employment rates of UNIMAS' graduates	1.95	1.80	2.00	2.28	1.91	1.92	2.25	2.638*	6,1285	0.015
14 The starting salaries of UNIMAS' graduates	1.84	1.68	1.91	2.04	1.81	1.73	2.38	1.678	6,1259	0.123

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Sarawak Bumiputera	Sabah Bumiputera	Other Bumiputera	Others	F	df	p-value
Personal Fit										
15	I belief that "I would fit well in UNIMAS"	2.48	2.24	2.68	2.85	2.50	1.85	2.50	6.266***	6,1330	<0.0005
16	I find UNIMAS' campus surrounding exciting	2.24	1.80	2.25	2.56	1.90	2.00	2.88	9.426***	6,1309	<0.0005
17	I like UNIMAS' campus atmosphere	2.20	1.96	2.34	2.57	1.80	1.38	2.00	4.501***	6,1305	<0.0005
18	I am comfortable with the size of UNIMAS' campus	2.28	1.98	2.43	2.43	2.02	1.64	2.50	4.303***	6,1315	<0.0005
19	I belief I can fit into the social and cultural life in UNIMAS	2.47	2.10	2.56	2.80	2.62	2.08	2.13	8.687***	6,1338	<0.0005
20	I am satisfied with the sporting and recreational facilities	1.99	1.64	1.98	2.17	1.66	2.00	2.00	4.742***	6,1299	<0.0005
21	The clubs and society at UNIMAS are appropriate for me	1.95	1.45	1.90	1.86	2.03	1.69	2.63	6.837***	6,1314	<0.0005

22	I am at ease with the types of students who go to UNIMAS	2.01	1.67	2.25	2.11	1.91	1.54	1.50	4.295***	6,1310	<0.0005
23	My parents' view of the best university for myself	1.74	1.58	1.94	1.99	1.37	2.33	1.75	2.731*	6,1228	0.012
24	My friends are studying at UNIMAS	1.72	1.74	1.58	1.96	1.37	1.75	2.29	1.614	6,1196	0.140
25	I have friends who planned to study at UNIMAS	1.64	1.48	1.63	2.02	1.17	1.50	1.43	3.858**	6,1179	0.001

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Sarawak Bumiputera	Sabah Bumiputera	Other Bumiputera	Others	F	df	p-value
Academic Program Choice										
26 This is the academic program of my choice	2.37	2.62	2.76	2.76	2.33	1.92	2.13	3.272**	6,1243	0.003
27 I have confidence in my ability to meet the demands of the academic program	2.52	2.36	3.07	2.80	2.44	2.23	2.50	4.967***	6,1318	<0.0005
28 The academic program has good reputation with employers	2.40	2.02	2.50	2.59	2.42	2.38	3.00	5.415***	6,1314	<0.0005

29	Past graduates are satisfied with the academic program	2.23	1.71	2.35	2.19	2.02	2.08	2.38	5.919***	6,1256	<0.0005
30	The employment rates of past graduates from the academic program	2.19	1.77	2.48	2.15	2.04	2.38	2.50	4.776***	6,1266	<0.0005
31	The academic program has the potential to grow/ better prospect in the future	2.62	2.47	2.59	2.83	2.54	2.69	2.75	2.026	6,1320	0.059

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Sarawak Bumiputera	Sabah Bumiputera	Other Bumiputera	Others	F	df	p-value
Employment prospect										
32	The "prestige" of the field of study	2.36	1.99	2.72	2.58	2.16	2.08	2.75	6.855***	6,1326	<0.0005
33	The "image" of the field of study	2.40	2.10	2.59	2.60	2.38	2.54	3.25	5.101***	6,1325	<0.0005
34	The opportunities for interesting and rewarding careers	2.50	2.24	2.59	2.72	2.52	2.62	3.13	4.050***	6,1324	<0.0005
35	The employment rates for graduates in the field of study	2.42	2.16	2.56	2.50	2.38	2.08	3.00	2.733*	6,1216	0.012

| 36 | The starting salary of graduates in the field of study | 2.13 | 1.97 | 2.10 | 2.18 | 2.04 | 2.08 | 3.00 | 1.822 | 6,1289 | 0.091 |

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Sarawak Bumiputera	Sabah Bumiputera	Others Bumiputera	Others	F	df	p-value
Quality of teaching and Academics										
37 The quality of teaching at UNIMAS	2.42	2.08	2.30	2.43	2.57	2.62	2.75	3.788**	6,1332	0.001
38 The variety of teaching approaches used at UNIMAS	2.35	2.01	2.14	2.48	2.54	2.23	2.75	4.483***	6,1328	<0.0005
39 The use of Information Technologies in teaching at UNIMAS	2.36	2.10	2.19	2.53	2.38	2.62	2.88	3.419**	6,1323	0.002
40 The quality of UNIMAS' academics	2.40	2.14	2.42	2.60	2.49	2.92	2.88	4.073***	6,1321	<0.0005
41 UNIMAS' academic services, such as learning skills' support	2.35	2.11	2.52	2.64	2.56	2.92	3.00	5.503***	6,1325	<0.0005

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence **5.6.4**

5.6.4. Differences based on Faculties

The differences in students' decision to select UNIMAS based on faculties are shown in Table 20. Except for one statement, all the other statements under the six factors investigated showed differences in students' decision to select UNIMAS based on faculties.

For the factor "university choice", respondents from FSS (mean = 1.91) indicated that "UNIMAS offers a program of my interest/ choice" as a significantly less influential reason for choosing UNIMAS compared to the rest of the respondents. Respondents from FMHS (mean = 3.03) and FE (mean = 2.91) considered this very influential. "UNIMAS is near to my home state" was rated as an influential reason by respondents from FE (mean = 2.65) and this was significantly higher than those rated by respondents from FACA, FSS, FMHS, FCSIT and FEB (means between 1.68 and 2.01). Respondents from FE (mean = 2.88) also put greater emphasis on UNIMAS being readily accessible from their home states using modern transport (air/ land) compared to respondents from FMHS, FACA, FCSHD and FSS (means between 2.12 and 2.23). On the other hand, respondents from FACA (mean = 2.70) rated "UNIMAS being a modern/ new university" as significantly more influential compared to those from FMHS, FRST, FSS, FEB, and FE (means between 1.73 and 2.23). Respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.73) gave the lowest rating to this reason. Additionally, respondents from FACA (mean = 2.60) viewed that UNIMAS as a technological university significantly influenced them compared to those respondents from FMHS, FRST, FSS, FCSHD, FEB and FE (means between 1.40 and 2.07). Respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.40) again gave the lowest rating for this reason. FMHS respondents (mean = 1.53) also believed that UNIMAS having colleges or hall of residence has less influence in their decision to select UNIMAS compared with the respondents from the other six faculties (means between 2.15 and 2,77). In general, school teachers' recommendations had low influence on respondents' selection of UNIMAS; respondents from FACA (mean = 2.15) rated it as having little influence while respondents from other faculties rated it as having very little influence (means between 1.27 and 1.84).

For the "institutional reputation" factor, the prestige of studying at UNIMAS has very little influence on FMHS respondents (mean = 1.44) decision to select UNIMAS compared to respondents from FSS, FCSIT, FEB and FACA (means between 2.02 and 2.43). Respondents from FACA (mean = 2.43), on the other hand, felt that this reason was more influential than respondents from FMHS, FRST, FE and FCSHD (means between 1.44 and 2.00). Likewise, respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.60) when compared to respondents from the other faculties (means between 2.03 and 2.49), felt that the image of UNIMAS was of little influence. Respondents from FACA (mean = 2.39) and FEB (mean = 2.24) believed that the international character of UNIMAS strongly influenced their selection of UNIMAS while respondents from FMHS, FRST, and FCSIT (means between 1.36 and

1.78) rated this as having little influence. UNIMAS' research reputation elicited three categories of responses: respondents from FCSIT (mean = 1.26) and FMHS (mean = 1.50) rated this factor as having very little influence on their decision to select UNIMAS; respondents from FE, FSS, FRST and FCSHD (means between 1.86 and 1.99) rated it as of little influence, while those from FEB (mean = 2.17) and FACA (mean = 2.28) gave it a slightly higher rating. UNIMAS' academic reputation was generally perceived as having "some influence" on respondents from FACA, FCSHD and FEB (means between 2.56 and 2.32) compared to respondents from FMHS, FRST and FE (means between 1.48 and 1.92) who rated it as having "little influence". Respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.25) perceived the employment rates of UNIMAS' graduates as of very little influence while those from FACA (mean = 2.34) felt that it was of some influence in deciding to study at UNIMAS. Respondents from FRST, FSS, FCSIT, FCSHD, FE and FEB (means between 1.68 and 2.20) rated the factor as of "little influence". Respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.17) felt that the starting salaries of UNIMAS' graduates had very little influence in their selection of UNIMAS. On the other hand, respondents from FACA (mean = 2.38) felt that it had "some influence" while respondents from the other five faculties perceived that it had "little influence" (means between 1.52 and 2.10).

In the "personal fit" factor, respondents from FE (mean = 2.70) felt that believing they would fit well in UNIMAS strongly influenced their decision to select UNIMAS and this significantly differed from the responses from FMHS respondents (mean = 2.07). In general, respondents from FMHS gave lower rating to most of the statement under this factor compared to the rest of the faculties. FMHS respondents (mean = 1.49) viewed "UNIMAS' campus surrounding exciting" as of less influence compared to respondents from the other seven faculties (means between 2.04 and 2.42). They also gave a significantly lower rating (mean = 1.44) to UNIMAS' campus atmosphere compared to the respondents from the rest of the faculties (means between 2.11 and 2.58). In addition, respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.44) also rated "feeling comfortable with the size of UNIMAS' campus" as of very little influence in deciding to study at UNIMAS compared to respondents from the other seven faculties (means between 2.08 and 2.74). They also gave a significantly lower (mean = 1.92) importance to believing they could fit into the social and cultural life in UNIMAS compared to the respondents from rest of the faculties (means between 2.37 and 2.68). Similar response by FMHS respondents (mean = 1.05) were also given to the sporting and recreational facilities compared to the respondents from the other seven faculties (means between 1.71 and 2.25). Respondents from FMHS indicated that this factor had "very little influence" on their selection of UNIMAS. Likewise, they (mean = 1.06) also viewed appropriateness of the clubs and society at UNIMAS for students as having lesser influence when compared with respondents (means between 1.58 and 2.10) from other faculties. The respondents from FMHS indicated that this factor had "very little influence" on their selection of UNIMAS. The feeling

of "at ease with the types of students who go to UNIMAS" was also of very little influence on FMHS respondents" (mean = 1.38) decision to study at UNIMAS compared to respondents from FE, FACA and FEB (means between 1.99 and 2.17). In general, respondents from FCSIT (mean = 0.68) and FMHS (mean = 1.35) viewed having friends studying at UNIMAS is of very little influence compared to respondents from FEB, FE and FACA (means from 1.85 and 2.10). Having friends who planned to study at UNIMAS was of little influence to all the respondents (means between 1.28 and 1.89) and even less for respondents from FCSIT (mean = 0.50) who perceived it as it of very little influence.

In the "academic program choice" factor, responses to "the academic program of my choice" varies into three different types. Respondents from FMHS (mean = 3.18) and FE (mean = 3.07) believed that this reason strongly influenced their selection of UNIMAS; while respondents from FSS (mean = 1.93) felt that it was of little influence. The rest of the respondents (means between 2.37 and 2.62) responses vary between these two. Again, respondents from FE (mean = 2.93) and FMHS (mean = 2.76) indicated a strong influence of their abilities to "meet the demands of the academic program" in their decision to select UNIMAS, compared to respondents from FCSIT (mean = 2.19) and FSS (mean = 2.23). Respondents from FE (mean = 2.65) also viewed that the academic program having good reputation with employers as having some influence on their selection of UNIMAS. In contrast, respondents from FCSIT (mean = 2.04) and FMHS (mean = 2.04) viewed it as of lesser influence. Past graduates' satisfaction with the academic program had less influence on FMHS (mean = 1.75) and FSS (mean = 1.82) respondents decision to choose UNIMAS compared to respondents from FE (mean = 2.29) and FACA (mean = 2.36). The employment rates of past graduates from the academic program also had less influence on the decision to select UNIMAS among respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.80) and FRST (mean = 1.85) compared to respondents from FEB, FACA and FE (means between 2.30 and 2.33). Respondents from FSS (mean = 2.34) rated "the academic program has the potential to grow/ better prospect in the future" as having little influence on their selection of UNIMAS, compared to respondents from FRST (mean = 2.82).

"Employment prospect" factor showed that respondents from FE (mean = 2.58) placed more importance on the prestige of the field of study compared to respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.95) and FSS (mean = 2.04) in deciding on UNIMAS as a place to further their study. Respondents from FE (mean = 2.57) also placed more importance on the image of the field of study compared to respondents from FMHS (mean = 2.11) and FSS (mean = 2.11). Furthermore, respondents from FE (mean = 2.70) placed more importance on the opportunities for interesting and rewarding careers compared to respondents from FSS (mean = 2.24) and FMHS (mean = 2.25) when considering to study in UNIMAS. Respondents from FE (mean = 2.70) also perceived that the employment rates

for graduates in the field of study was an important consideration in their decision to study at UNIMAS compared to respondents from FSS (mean = 2.15). In term of the starting salary of graduates in the field of study, respondents from FACA (mean = 2.34) felt that it had higher influence in their decision to select UNIMAS compared to respondents from FMHS, FRST and FCSIT (means between 1.76 and 1.91).

On the "quality of teaching and academics" factor, respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.83) viewed the quality of teaching at UNIMAS as having less influence on their choice of UNIMAS compared to respondents from FEB, FACA, and FCSIT (means between 2.54 and 2.76). The variety of teaching approaches used at UNIMAS was of less importance to the respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.81) compared to respondents from FCSHD, FCSIT and FACA (means of between 2.40 and 2.62). Likewise, "the use of Information Technologies in teaching at UNIMAS" did not have a strong influence on the respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.84) compared to respondents from FEB, FCSHD, FACA and FCSIT (means between 2.37 and 2.80). Respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.73) also rated the quality of UNIMAS' academics to be of less importance in influencing their decision to choose UNIMAS compared to respondents from other faculties (means between 2.18 and 2.88). Similarly, UNIMAS' academic services, such as learning skills support was rated to be of less influential to the respondents from FMHS (mean = 1.83) compared to respondents from other faculties (means between 2.19 and 2.55).

Table 20

Differences in influences on decision to select UNIMAS based on faculties

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	FE	FMHS	FRST	FCSIT	FEB	FACA	FSS	FCSHD	F	df	p-value
University Choice											
1 UNIMAS offers a program of my interest/ choice	2.91	3.03	2.70	2.30	2.55	2.43	1.91	2.38	11.487***	7,1295	<0.0005
2 UNIMAS is near to my home state	2.65	1.84	2.28	1.87	2.01	1.68	1.83	2.20	5.338***	7,1119	<0.0005
3 UNIMAS is readily accessible from my home state using modern transport (air/ land)	2.88	2.12	2.44	2.39	2.40	2.16	2.23	2.21	3.806***	7,1252	<0.0005
4 UNIMAS is a modern/ new university	2.23	1.73	2.05	2.63	2.19	2.70	2.16	2.44	7.347***	7,1319	<0.0005
5 UNIMAS is a technological university	2.07	1.40	1.79	2.56	2.05	2.60	1.98	2.04	10.425***	7,1307	<0.0005
6 UNIMAS has colleges or hall of residence	2.38	1.53	2.16	2.77	2.41	2.47	2.15	2.29	5.749***	7,1313	<0.0005
7 My school teachers' recommendation	1.34	1.59	1.27	1.48	1.84	2.15	1.53	1.60	8.182***	7,1160	<0.0005

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	FE	FMHS	FRST	FCSIT	FEB	FACA	FSS	FCSHD	F	df	p-value
Institutional Reputation											
8 The "prestige" of studying at UNIMAS	1.79	1.44	1.63	2.15	2.16	2.43	2.02	2.00	9.621***	7,1313	<0.0005
9 The "image" of UNIMAS	2.21	1.60	2.03	2.22	2.28	2.49	2.17	2.31	5.403***	7,1308	<0.0005
10 The "international character" of UNIMAS	1.95	1.36	1.68	1.78	2.24	2.39	2.10	2.11	9.449***	7,1314	<0.0005
11 UNIMAS' research reputation	1.86	1.50	1.94	1.26	2.17	2.28	1.92	1.99	5.316***	7,1311	<0.0005
12 UNIMAS' academic reputation	1.92	1.48	1.85	2.19	2.32	2.56	2.06	2.33	10.220***	7,1303	<0.0005
13 The employment rates of UNIMAS' graduates	2.16	1.25	1.69	1.92	2.20	2.34	1.81	1.99	9.071***	7,1292	<0.0005
14 The starting salaries of UNIMAS' graduates	1.67	1.17	1.52	1.85	2.10	2.38	1.70	1.88	11.712***	7,1265	<0.0005

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	FE	FMHS	FRST	FCSIT	FEB	FACA	FSS	FCSHD	F	df	p-value
Personal Fit											
15 I belief that "I would fit well in UNIMAS"	2.70	2.07	2.51	2.52	2.45	2.57	2.42	2.43	2.300*	7,1336	0.025

16	I find UNIMAS' campus surrounding exciting	2.04	1.49	2.08	2.29	2.23	2.42	2.11	2.30	5.312***	7,1315	<0.0005
17	I like UNIMAS' campus atmosphere	2.15	1.44	2.12	2.58	2.25	2.33	2.11	2.12	5.299***	7,1312	<0.0005
18	I am comfortable with the size of UNIMAS' campus	2.30	1.44	2.09	2.74	2.26	2.45	2.08	2.44	8.034***	7,1321	<0.0005
19	I belief I can fit into the social and cultural life in UNIMAS	2.50	1.92	2.37	2.68	2.52	2.44	2.43	2.51	2.872**	7,1344	0.006
20	I am satisfied with the sporting and recreational facilities	2.02	1.05	1.71	1.96	1.99	2.25	1.93	1.96	9.159***	7,1306	<0.0005
21	The clubs and society at UNIMAS are appropriate for me	1.79	1.06	1.61	1.58	1.93	2.10	1.83	1.92	7.593***	7,1321	<0.0005
22	I am at ease with the types of students who go to UNIMAS	1.99	1.38	1.89	1.83	2.17	2.14	1.81	1.78	4.786***	7,1317	<0.0005
23	My parents' view of the best university for myself	1.86	1.45	1.60	1.48	1.81	1.95	1.61	1.80	2.036	7,1235	0.060
24	My friends are studying at UNIMAS	1.94	1.35	1.68	0.68	1.85	2.10	1.57	1.64	5.240***	7,1201	<0.0005
25	I have friends who planned to study at UNIMAS	1.74	1.28	1.62	0.50	1.80	1.89	1.52	1.50	4.093***	7,1185	<0.0005

Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	FE	FMHS	FRST	FCSIT	FEB	FACA	FSS	FCSHD	F	df	p-value
Academic Program Choice											
26 This is the academic program of my choice	3.07	3.18	2.44	2.37	2.62	2.38	1.93	2.43	11.582***	7,1248	<0.0005
27 I have confidence in my ability to meet the demands of the academic program	2.93	2.76	2.53	2.19	2.53	2.50	2.23	2.57	4.400***	7,1325	<0.0005
28 The academic program has good reputation with employers	2.65	2.04	2.24	2.04	2.44	2.45	2.13	2.41	3.157**	7,1321	0.003
29 Past graduates are satisfied with the academic program	2.29	1.75	1.87	2.12	2.27	2.36	1.82	1.97	4.830***	7,1263	<0.0005
30 The employment rates of past graduates from the academic program	2.33	1.80	1.85	2.17	2.30	2.31	1.90	2.03	4.447***	7,1273	<0.0005
31 The academic program has the potential to grow/ better prospect in the future	2.71	2.52	2.82	2.77	2.62	2.59	2.34	2.51	2.874**	7,1327	0.006

Factors influencing your decision to select UNI-MAS	FE	FMHS	FRST	FCSIT	FEB	FACA	FSS	FCSHD	F	df	p-value
Employment prospect											
32	The "prestige" of the field of study	2.58	1.95	2.45	2.08	2.31	2.36	2.04	2.24	3.788***	7,1333	<0.0005
33	The "image" of the field of study	2.57	2.11	2.51	2.20	2.36	2.36	2.11	2.40	2.779**	7,1332	0.007
34	The opportunities for interesting and rewarding careers	2.70	2.25	2.56	2.42	2.50	2.52	2.24	2.68	2.413*	7,1331	0.019
35	The employment rates for graduates in the field of study	2.70	2.26	2.40	2.38	2.38	2.40	2.15	2.26	2.264*	7,1221	0.027
36	The starting salary of graduates in the field of study	2.31	1.76	1.90	1.91	2.26	2.34	2.02	2.04	3.773***	7,1296	<0.0005

Factors influencing your decision to select UNI-MAS	FE	FMHS	FRST	FCSIT	FEB	FACA	FSS	FCSHD	F	df	p-value
Quality of teaching and Academics											
37	The quality of teaching at UNIMAS	2.32	1.83	2.10	2.76	2.54	2.57	2.27	2.43	5.938***	7,1339	<0.0005
38	The variety of teaching approaches used at UNIMAS	2.20	1.81	2.09	2.52	2.32	2.62	2.25	2.40	5.328***	7,1334	<0.0005

39	The use of Information Technologies in teaching at UNIMAS	2.32	1.84	2.18	2.80	2.37	2.61	2.19	2.38	5.051***	7,1330	<0.0005
40	The quality of UNIMAS' academics	2.49	1.73	2.18	2.88	2.52	2.62	2.27	2.52	7.338***	7,1328	<0.0005
41	UNIMAS' academic services, such as learning skills' support	2.46	1.83	2.19	2.28	2.50	2.53	2.29	2.55	4.744***	7,1332	<0.0005

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

5.7 Most Influential Factors in Selecting UNIMAS

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the most in-fluential factor(s) that influence students' decision to select UNIMAS as a place to study. The result of the analysis showed that all the four factors (academic program choice, quality of teaching and academics, employment opportuni-ties, and university choice) contributed 12.9% of the variance in the students' choice of UNIMAS. The most influential factor was academic program choice, followed by quality of teaching and academics, employment prospect, and university choice. The results of the regression analysis (refer Table 21) further strengthened the findings of the descriptive statistics using means in determin-ing the factors that influenced the decision of the students to select UNIMAS that showed similar findings.

Table 21
Regression analyses results to determine the influential factors on students' decision to select UNIMAS

	SS	df	MS	F	R-Square	p-value
Regression	747.5504	18	6.888	23.308	0.129	<0.0005
Residual	5035.303	628	8.018			
Total	5782.853	632				

Independent variables entered: the six factors
Dependent variable: 1st - 8th choice, and didn't choose UNIMAS
Excluded variables: Institutional Reputation and Personal Fit
Most influential predictors:
Academic Program - beta 0.644
Quality of Teaching and Academics - beta 0.446
Employment Prospect - beta 0.351
University Choice - beta 0.118
Multiple linear regression equation:
Preference for UNIMAS = 0.644 x Academic program choice + 0.446 x Quality of teaching and academics + 0.351 x Employment prospect + 0.118 x University choice + 6.355

5.8   Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that the two major sources of information for students' discovery of UNIMAS and its academic programs are "by word of mouth from friends and relatives," and "UNIMAS website." These two important sources are followed by "*Unit Pusat Universiti* Guides," "school teacher career talks," and "UNIMAS published materials." However, the two factors that have a major influence on the students' decision to select UNIMAS are "choice of academic programs", and the "quality of teaching and academics at UNIMAS".

No significant gender and rural-urban differences were apparent for the two major sources of information. In terms of ethnicity, the sources of information appeared to be less effective for Chinese respondents than Sarawak *Bumiputera* and Malay respondents. Furthermore, respondents from the various faculties appeared to view these information sources differently. Respondents from FMHS appeared to only take "friends and relatives" as an important source of information; while FE, FCSIT and FRST placed importance on "friends and relatives" and "university website". Respondents from the other faculties appeared to look for information from more available sources.

In term of the differences in the students' perceptions of the factors' influencing in their decision to select UNIMAS, female respondents, in general, perceive the factors to be more influential than male respondents. In addition, rural respondents seemed more inclined to view the factors as having more influence in making them chose UNIMAS as the university in which to further their study than the urban respondents. Sarawak *Bumiputera* and Malay respondents seemed more likely to feel that the factors did influenced them in selecting UNIMAS than their Chinese counterparts.

In contrast to the other faculties, respondents from FMHS and FE tended to view the factors as having little influence on their decision to further their study in UNIMAS except for the following factors: "university of choice", "academic program choice" and "employment prospect".

Therefore, based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the management of UNIMAS put more emphasis on improving the quality of UNIMAS website design and the information within it so that it is able to attract more people to browse it. Also, the management of UNIMAS should focus on creating a better and conducive learning environment for the students to study and socialize, so that they are able to impart a positive view of the university to their friends and relatives who are potential students to UNIMAS. Building up strong alumni program is helpful, as the alumnus can help promote UNIMAS to their friends and relatives.

It is also recommended that UNIMAS maintains and enhances the current academic programs that are being offered by the faculties because students are attracted by these contemporary and forward looking academic programs. The management of the university should continue to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning methodologies and approaches in UNIMAS; and to continuously upgrade its academics competency through various professional development programs to enhance their quality as educators. The management should also look into the possibility of taking different approaches in targeting their prospective students by considering the differences in the students' perceptions of the factors' influence in their decision to select UNIMAS which suggest difference perceptions in term of gender, rural-urban, ethnicity and faculty.

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Centre for Applied Learning and Multimedia
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

> **Title of Study:**
>
> Factors Influencing Students' Selection of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) as their Preferred University

This study is conducted by the Management of the UNIMAS and is supported by UNIMAS Research Grant: 03(522)/670/2008(01)

We are conducting a study on "*Factors Influencing Students' Selection of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak as Their Preferred University.*" The main purpose of the study is to determine the factors that influence students to select Universiti Malaysia Sarawak as a preferred institution of higher learning for furthering their studies. Knowledge of these factors and the relative importance students attached to these factors will provide a good foundation for the university in formulating strategies to attract more students to come and study in its campus. In addition, the findings from the study can be used to further improve existing facilities and quality of teaching to benefits present and future students.

Your cooperation in responding to the questions/items in this questionnaire is highly appreciated.

Please be assured that any information that you provide in this questionnaire will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of achieving the objectives of this study.

Project Leader: Professor Dr. Peter Songan (Dean, Centre for Applied Learning and Multimedia)

Project Members: Associate Professor Dr. Gabriel Tonga (Deputy Dean, Centre for Applied Learning and Multimedia)

Associate Professor Dr. Mustafa Abdul Rahman (Deputy Dean, Faculty of Resource Science and Technology)

Associate Professor Dr. Hong Kian Sam (Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development)

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A. Background Questions

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a blue/ black pen or 2B pencil

- Please **TICK LIKE THIS (√)** for the appropriate choice or **WRITE YOUR RE-SPONSE** in the appropriate space provided

Example:

Gender   [√] Male   [   ] Female

Academic Program | **Human Resource Development** |

Faculty

- [ ] Fakulti Kejuruteraan
- [ ] Fakulti Perubatan dan Sains Kesihatan
- [ ] Fakulti Sains dan Teknologi Sumber
- [ ] Fakulti Sains Komputer dan Teknologi Maklumat
- [ ] Fakulti Ekonomi dan Perniagaan
- [ ] Fakulti Sains Gunaan dan Kreatif
- [ ] Fakulti Sains Kognitif dan Pembangunan Manusia
- [ ] Fakulti Sains Sosial

Academic program   [   ]

Gender   [   ] Male   [   ] Female

Race

- [ ] Malay
- [ ] Chinese
- [ ] Indian
- [ ] Other Sarawak Bumiputera (Iban, Kayan etc)
- [ ] Other Sabah Bumiputera (Kadazan, Murut etc)
- [ ] Other Bumiputera
- [ ] Others

- Please specify   [   ]

Home state

- [ ] Perlis
- [ ] Kedah

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	Pulau Pinang
☐	Pulau Pinang
☐	Perak
☐	Selangor
☐	Melaka
☐	Negeri Sembilan
☐	Johor
☐	Pahang
☐	Terengganu
☐	Kelantan
☐	Sabah
☐	Sarawak
☐	Wilayah Persekutuan – Kuala Lumpur
☐	Wilayah Persekutuan – Putrajaya
☐	Wilayah Persekutuan - Labuan

Location of residence in home state   ☐ Urban   ☐ Rural

(Note: 30 kilometers from a city is considered as rural)

Parents educational level

Father ☐ No schooling   Mother ☐ No schooling
☐ Primary   ☐ Primary
☐ Secondary   ☐ Secondary
☐ First degree   ☐ First degree
☐ Post graduate   ☐ Postgraduate

Parents income level (RM per month)

Father ☐ < 1000   Mother ☐ < 1000
☐ 1000-1999   ☐ 1000-1999
☐ 2000-2999   ☐ 2000-2999
☐ 3000-3999   ☐ 3000-3999
☐ ≥ 4000   ☐ ≥ 4000

Access to media and technology [For this item, you may tick more than oneresponse as appropriate]

☐ Internet
☐ Television
☐ Radio
☐ Newspaper
☐ Magazines

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a b

- Please
represe
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decisio

Example:

Sources of Inf
about UNIMA
Academic Pro

1	Unit Pusa Universit Guides
2	UNIMAS
3	UNIMAS

Note: Not App
such as not ho
applicable sou

Sources of Info
mation about
UNIMAS and it
Academic Pro
grams

1	Unit Pusat versiti (UP Guides
2	UNIMAS w site
3	UNIMAS a day

SECTION B. Sources of Information and the Extent of their Influence

	Sources of Information about UNIMAS and its Academic Programs	No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable
1	Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU) Guides						
2	UNIMAS website						
3	UNIMAS open day						

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4	UNIMAS published materials (UNIMAS brochure, Faculty pamphlets, etc)						
5	UNIMAS roadshow event and careers fair						
6	UNIMAS telephone hotline						
7	School teacher career talk						
8	School visit to UNIMAS						
9	Newspaper articles and supplements						
10	Newspaper advertisements by UNIMAS						
11	Documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio						
12	Friends and relative						

If you have any additional sources of information about UNIMAS that influenced your decision to select UNIMAS, please list them below and tick the appropriate space to indicate the level of influence.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a bl

- Please **T**
  your resp
  your dec

Example:

Factors inf
your decisi
select UNI

University Choi		
1	UNIMAS program of interest/ ch	
6	UNIMAS colleges or residence	
7	My school recommen	

Note: *Not Appli*
For example, if y
to you while you

- Use a blue/ black pen or 2B pencil

- Please **TICK LIKE THIS (√)** for the most appropriate choice that clearly represents your response regarding the following statements related to factors that influence your decision to select UNIMAS

Example:

	Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	No Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable
University Choice							
1	UNIMAS offers a program of my interest/ choice					√	
6	UNIMAS has colleges or hall of residence					√	
7	My school teachers' recommendation						√

Note: *Not Applicable* refers to a factor listed in the statement not of relevance to you. For example, if your school teacher has never recommended any university to you while you were at school, than tick Not Applicable for Item 7.

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Factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS	No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable
University Choice						
1 UNIMAS offers a program of my interest/choice						
2 UNIMAS is near to my home state						
3 UNIMAS is readily accessible from my home state using modern transport (air/land)						
4 UNIMAS is a modern/new university						
5 UNIMAS is a technological university						
6 UNIMAS has colleges or hall of residence						
7 My school teachers' recommendation						
Institutional Reputation						
8 The "prestige" of studying at UNIMAS						
9 The "image" of UNIMAS						
10 The "international character" of UNIMAS						
11 UNIMAS' research reputation						
12 UNIMAS' academic reputation						
13 The employment rates of UNIMAS' graduates						

14	The start UNIMAS'
Personal Fit	
15	I belief t well in UI
16	I find UNI surround
17	I like UNI atmosph
18	I am cor the size campus
19	I belief I the socia life in UN
20	I am satis sporting ational f
21	The club at UNIMA priate fo
22	I am at e types of go to UN
23	My paren the best myself
24	My frienc studying
25	I have frie planned UNIMAS
Academic Pr Choice	
26	This is the program

14	The starting salaries of UNIMAS' graduates						
Personal Fit							
15	I belief that "I would fit well in UNIMAS"						
16	I find UNIMAS' campus surrounding exciting						
17	I like UNIMAS' campus atmosphere						
18	I am comfortable with the size of UNIMAS' campus						
19	I belief I can fit into the social and cultural life in UNIMAS						
20	I am satisfied with the sporting and recre-ational facilities						
21	The clubs and society at UNIMAS are appro-priate for me						
22	I am at ease with the types of students who go to UNIMAS						
23	My parents' view of the best university for myself						
24	My friends are studying at UNIMAS						
25	I have friends who planned to study at UNIMAS						
Academic Program Choice							
26	This is the academic program of my choice						

27	I have confidence in my ability to meet the demands of the academic program						
28	The academic program has good reputation with employers						
29	Past graduates are satisfied with the academic program						
30	The employment rates of past graduates from the academic program						
31	The academic program has the potential to grow/ better prospect in the future						
Employment Prospect							
32	The "prestige" of the field of study						
33	The "image" of the field of study						
34	The opportunities for interesting and re-warding careers						
35	The employment rates for graduates in the field of study						
36	The starting salary of graduates in the field of study						

Quality of Te... Academics

37	The quali... teaching
38	The varie... teaching... used at U...
39	The use ... Informati... Technolo... teaching
40	The quali... academ...
41	UNIMAS' ... services, ... learning

If you have a... list them belo...

	Quality of Teaching and Academics						
37	The quality of teaching at UNIMAS						
38	The variety of teaching approaches used at UNIMAS						
39	The use of Information Technologies in teaching at UNIMAS						
40	The quality of UNIMAS' academics						
41	UNIMAS' academic services, such as learning skills' support						

If you have any additional factors influencing your decision to select UNIMAS, please list them below and tick the appropriate space to indicate the level of influence.

In your application for your undergraduate study, was UNIMAS your preferred university? Please tick ONE appropriate space below.

[ ] First Choice   [ ] Sixth Choice

[ ] Second Choice   [ ] Seventh Choice

[ ] Third Choice   [ ] Eighth Choice

[ ] Fourth Choice

[ ] Fifth Choice   [ ] I did not select UNIMAS

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) was established in 1992. As a relatively young university competing with the earlier established university, and later, the many established local universities in Malaysia, it knows that its approach needs to be innovative and is not confined to the usual practice of the day in order to attract quality students to fill its courses. So, what is the factor that attracts students to a particular university? Specifically, as revealed in this booklet, what is the factor that takes the students through UNIMAS gate? Such investigations are not new abroad, especially in the market driven western university, but it is the first in Malaysia.

This monograph is a result of a concerted effort of a group of researchers at UNIMAS who felt that there is a need for UNIMAS to take a proactive approach to investigate the many factors that could have influence students decision to enter its courses. Even though the focus here is only on UNIMAS, the approach/method could serve useful for researchers of other universities who would want to identify their attractiveness among potential students.

A RESEARCH MONOGRAPH•A RESEARCH MONOGRAPH•A RESEARCH MONOGRAPH