



# Attracting International Students' Interest in Mobility and Advanced Study Programs in Indonesia: Case Study of Malaysian Vocational Education Students

Dedi Rohendi<sup>1</sup>, Iwa Kuntadi<sup>2</sup>, Dedy Suryadi<sup>3</sup>, Ana<sup>4</sup>, Muktiarni<sup>5</sup>, Zaliza Bint Hanapi<sup>6</sup>, Muhammad Oka Ramadhan<sup>7\*</sup>, Naufal Nadhif Rabbani Iskandar<sup>8</sup> 

<sup>1,2,3,4,5,8</sup> Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Education, Indonesian Education University, Indonesia

<sup>6</sup> Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

<sup>7</sup> Technical and Vocational Education, School of Postgraduate Studies, Indonesian Education University, Indonesia

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received September 06, 2024

Accepted November 10, 2024

Available online November 25, 2024

### Kata Kunci :

Indonesia, Mahasiswa Internasional, Minat, Mobility Program, Studi Lanjut

### Keywords:

Further Study, Mobility Program, Indonesia, International Student, Interest



This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.

Copyright ©2024 by Author. Published by Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha

## ABSTRAK

*Dalam konteks ekonomi global, pentingnya eksposur internasional bagi mahasiswa vokasi tidak dapat diabaikan. Indonesia, dengan sumber daya pendidikan yang melimpah dan kekayaan budaya, belum memanfaatkan potensinya sebagai tujuan utama bagi mahasiswa internasional. Penelitian ini mengkaji pengembangan dan dampak program sosialisasi yang bertujuan meningkatkan minat mahasiswa vokasi Malaysia terhadap program mobilitas dan studi lanjutan di Indonesia. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui survei online menggunakan instrumen kuesioner pretest dan posttest. Data dianalisis menggunakan uji Wilcoxon untuk menguji hipotesis bahwa terdapat perubahan positif yang signifikan dalam minat mahasiswa, serta nilai N-Gain untuk menentukan besarnya peningkatan minat tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan minat yang moderat, menegaskan peran penting pengetahuan awal dan citra institusi dalam proses pengambilan keputusan. Temuan ini menyarankan bahwa perguruan tinggi di Indonesia perlu meningkatkan visibilitas global melalui pemasaran strategis dan kolaborasi internasional. Implikasi dari penelitian ini memberikan wawasan penting bagi pemangku kebijakan, institusi pendidikan tinggi, dan pihak terkait lainnya dalam meningkatkan daya tarik Indonesia sebagai destinasi pendidikan bagi mahasiswa internasional, khususnya dari Malaysia.*

## ABSTRACT

In the context of the global economy, the importance of international exposure for vocational students cannot be overstated. Indonesia, with its abundant educational resources and cultural richness, has yet to tap its potential as a leading destination for international students. This study examines the development and impact of a socialization program to increase Malaysian vocational students' interest in mobility programs and further study in Indonesia. The participants in this study were university students. Data collection was conducted through an online survey using a pretest and posttest questionnaire instrument. Data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon test to test the hypothesis that there is a significant positive change in student interest and the N-Gain value to determine the magnitude of the increase in interest. The results showed a moderate increase in interest, confirming the important role of prior knowledge and institutional image in the decision-making process. These findings suggest that Indonesian universities need to increase their global visibility through strategic marketing and international collaboration. The implications of this study provide important insights for policymakers, higher education institutions, and other stakeholders in increasing Indonesia's attractiveness as an educational destination for international students, especially from Malaysia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected global landscape, international education has become a critical component for developing cross-cultural competencies, facilitating academic exchange, and fostering professional development. Mobility programs and opportunities for further study abroad are no longer just academic goals but are important experiences that shape students into global citizens (Tran et al., 2023; Weller & Reis, 2022) These programs allow students to immerse themselves in diverse cultures, interact

\*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [ramadhanoka@upi.edu](mailto:ramadhanoka@upi.edu) (Muhammad Oka Ramadhan)

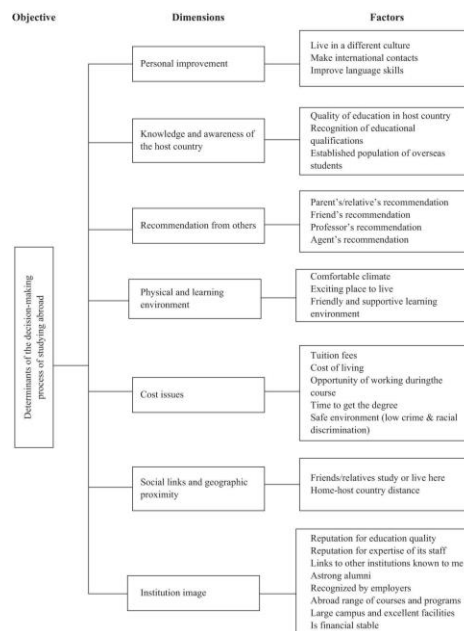
with peers from different backgrounds, and engage in learning that transcends geographic boundaries. Such exposure not only broadens their intellectual horizons but also equips them with the skills necessary to thrive in a multicultural and competitive global workforce.

Vocational education plays an important role in preparing students to enter the world of work by equipping them with practical skills and knowledge that can be directly applied in various industries. ((Hollis, 2022; Williams & Soriero, 2022)). In contrast to traditional academic pathways, vocational education focuses on hands-on training and industry-relevant competencies, so that graduates can work in their chosen field. In today's global economy, the importance of international exposure for vocational students cannot be overstated. Exposure to different cultures, practices and technologies increases their adaptability and competitiveness in the global job market. This allows vocational students to gain a broader perspective, improve their technical and soft skills, and ultimately increase their employability on an international scale (Horz & Schnotz, 2021; Jomir, 2023).

Despite the increasing importance of international education, Indonesia has not seen a significant influx of foreign students, especially when compared to its ASEAN neighbors. For example, countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand are attracting more international students, making them popular study destinations in Southeast Asia (Billet, 2020; Umboh, 2021). International student enrollment statistics for Malaysian higher education in 2019-2023, Malaysia accommodates around 130,000 international students. The Office of the Permanent Secretary of Thailand's Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation reports that by 2023, more than 30,000 international students will be attending higher education in Thailand (Services, 2022; Singapore, 2020). Stated that there would be around 65,400 international students by the end of April 2023. In contrast, Indonesia, with its abundant educational resources and cultural riches, has not exploited its potential as the destination country of choice for international students. Stated that currently only around 6,000 international students are registered at universities in Indonesia, this underlines the need for a more strategic approach to increase Indonesia's attractiveness as a study destination (Directorate of Higher Education at the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, 2020; Hanaysha et al., 2019).

Choosing a study abroad destination is a complex decision-making process influenced by a variety of push and pull factors. Push-pull model, originally used in migration theory, has been adapted to understand international student flows (McMahon, 1992), their motivation to study abroad, and choice of study abroad destination (Education Singapore, 2019; Kusumawati et al., 2020; Yang, 2020). Push factors relate to the country of origin, which motivate students to move, such as limited educational opportunities or challenges of admission to local institutions, while pull factors are the attractiveness of the host country, including educational quality, cost, and potential migration opportunities. Have shown that these factors influence students' decisions in three stages: deciding to study internationally, choosing a country, and choosing an institution. Have highlighted that push factors dominate the initial decision to study abroad, whereas pull factors guide the choice of country and institution. Despite this understanding, further research is needed to understand how these factors operate in various contexts, particularly in Southeast Asia, where international student mobility is increasing but its distribution is uneven. This significant gap shows that there is a gap between the expectations of Indonesia as a desired study destination and the current reality (Falk & Graf, 2020; Loveder, 2020). The lack of utilization of Indonesia's potential as a primary destination for international education underscores the importance of strategic initiatives to increase Indonesia's attractiveness and competitiveness in the global education market.

It is clear that previous investigations of international educational travel encompass two different methodological frameworks. One framework is to examine the macro-environmental determinants that impact student emigration from their home country to the host country. An alternative framework attempts to look at the factors that influence the choice of study abroad destination at the individual level by analyzing the perceptions expressed by the students themselves. Previous research has demonstrated a variety of push and pull factors that significantly influence international students' decision-making processes regarding their study abroad experiences. Building on the synthesis model, these factors can be roughly divided into seven categories: personal improvement potential; knowledge and awareness of the host country (J. et al., 2023; Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2019). Recommendations from other parties; physical and learning environment; cost issues; social relations and geographic proximity; Institutional image Determinants of the decision-making process to study abroad are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Determinants of the Decision-making Process to Study Abroad**

Educational partnerships between ASEAN countries, although beneficial in many ways, have not significantly made Indonesia a destination of choice for foreign students. Although ASEAN cooperation in education has increased academic exchange and collaboration, Indonesia still lags behind in attracting foreign students to its institutions. To address this, there is an urgent need to implement targeted efforts to increase the visibility and attractiveness of Indonesia as a study destination. Strengthening these efforts includes not only improving the quality of Indonesian education but also actively addressing the factors that currently prevent international students from choosing Indonesia for further study. Although some universities have initiated outreach programs to attract foreign students, their effectiveness has not been thoroughly assessed.

This research introduces a new approach by focusing on the specific demographics of Malaysian vocational students and assessing the impact of a specific outreach program developed by the Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (FEIE UPI). Previous research aimed to measure changes in student interest before and after the program, providing clear indicators of its effectiveness (Kendall et al., 2022; Suryawati & Lizhen, 2020). In addition, this study uses a comprehensive analysis of the push and pull factors that influence international students' decisions, using the Wilcoxon test and N-Gain to evaluate the significance and magnitude of changes in interest. By addressing gaps in existing research—particularly the limited understanding of international student mobility in Southeast Asia—this research offers valuable insights and practical recommendations for Indonesian universities to increase their global visibility and appeal. This research contributes to the broader discourse on international education by proposing targeted promotional strategies to better position Indonesia as a competitive destination for international students.

## 2. METHOD

This community-based service initiative aims to arouse international students' interest in Captivating Mobility activities and further study opportunities in Indonesia. The aim of this program is to provide comprehensive teaching and understanding of the school system in Indonesia, as well as to determine individual interests before and after the implementation of the outreach program. This research methodology is a community-based service initiative with a service learning method (Khalid et al., 2020; Shim, 2022). The research followed a structured procedure consisting of preparation, planning, action and reflection stages. First, Preparation Process: This involves discussions between professors from FEIE UPI and FTV UPSI to map curriculum issues and determine important information students need to know about further study opportunities in Indonesia. Second, Planning Process: This includes developing the structure of outreach program content, such as materials, media, and demonstration tools that will be used during the sessions. Third, Action Process: Includes actual implementation of the outreach program, which includes an introduction, a presentation about the Indonesian education system, and a special presentation

about the learning system at FEIE UPI. Fourth, Reflection Process: This includes assessing changes in students' interest in continuing their studies in Indonesia before and after participating in the outreach program.

The implementation of this program is carried out by a team consisting of FEIE UPI lecturers, lecturers and students. Participants in this activity consisted of third year students from the Engineering and Vocational Faculty of Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia (FTV UPSI). UPSI is a university that specializes in scientific disciplines. The selection of 3rd year students is determined by considering the most appropriate opportunities and moments for them to take part in the international mobility program. Additionally, third year students usually have a more comprehensive understanding of their studies compared to students in lower years. The participants were selected using a quota sampling technique, specifically targeting a group of 29 third year students of study. This quota calculation depends on room capacity. Socialization was carried out using lecture techniques, including introductions, presentation of themes related to the education system in Indonesia, and more specifically exposure to the learning system at FEIE UPI. Before and during the completion of the program, an assessment is carried out to determine individual interests and perceptions regarding the factors that influence their interest in participating in a mobility program or continuing their studies in Indonesia. The entire series of programs is presented in Figure 2.

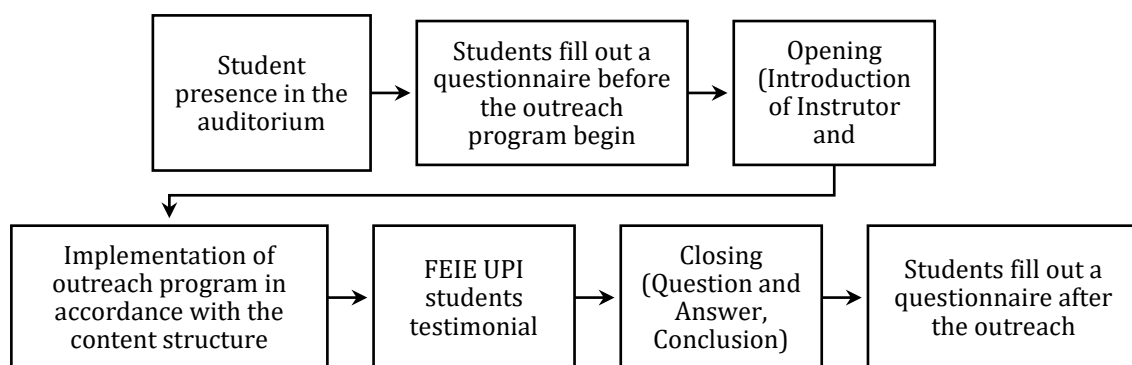


Figure 2. Program Sequence

To increase student interest, this activity carries out a socialization program by instilling a structure for delivering general material that students need to know. The program structure that has been prepared by the team contains the content presented at the time Table 1. and can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/handoutcaptvatinginternationalstudent>.

Table 1. Structure Accounts

No.	Aspect	Sub-Poin
1	Faculty Profile at a Glance	Historical background, faculty management profile, vision and mission, goals and aspirations, core values, organizational and management structure, quality assurance system, accreditation, study programs offered, student profiles, lecturer profiles, scientific publication publishers, conferences and agendas annual international events, cooperation and partnerships, strategic policies, strategic programs, and faculty development road maps
2	Academic System & Curriculum	The education system in Indonesia, the Indonesian education economy, the need for TVET & TVET teachers, study periods, practice & internships, general faculty curriculum, learning management platforms, teaching and learning methods, and international student application systems
3	Educational Facilities and Fees	Learning facilities (classrooms, libraries, laboratories, microteaching rooms), student accommodation, basic facilities (sports, worship, health, banking, canteen, co-working space, meeting hall, student

No.	Aspect	Sub-Poin
4	Student Activities	help center), average tuition fees for students international, contact and information platform Student achievements, international student mobility programs (summer courses, student symposia, international conferences, cultural exchanges), general terms and conditions for inbound programs, scholarship coverage, international student community, and international student testimonials

To measure changes in foreign students' interests and perceptions of the push and pull factors that influence them, a survey was conducted using pretest and posttest questionnaire instruments. Changes in interest are measured by looking at the percentage change in interest before and after participating in the socialization program, while the determinant factors use modified push and pull factors developed by (Lee, 2014). Determining factors of interest are seen on a 5-point Likert scale in terms of urgency. Prerequisite tests use the Wilcoxon test and hypothesis testing. The hypothesis in this research is that there is a positive change in students' interest in participating in the mobility program and continuing their studies in Indonesia or UPI. If the sign. value < 0.05 the hypothesis is accepted, if sig. value > 0.05 then the hypothesis is rejected (Meltzer, 2002).

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

This service activity is carried out in the form of training and counseling, which aims to achieve several main outcomes. First, participants gain a clear understanding of faculty policies regarding student exchange programs, both in specific study programs and in the broader university context. (Gambar 3a). Second, the counseling material provided is designed to familiarize participants, especially FTV UPSI students, with the academic programs offered by FEIE UPI, thereby ensuring they are well informed about the opportunities available to them. (Gambar 3b). Apart from that, participants were introduced to various supporting facilities at FEIE UPI which are very important for the success of student exchange activities (Figure 3c). The training also covers the academic programs that participants will participate in as part of their exchange experience, emphasizing the rigor and academic expectations associated with these programs. Finally, participants were provided with information about summer course programs as an alternative form of student exchange, which provided them with a broader perspective on the various pathways available for international academic engagement.



**Figure 3.** Implementation of Brochures and Implementation of Initial Surveys, and Delivery of Content Structure and Student Testimonial Sessions at FEIE UPI

The outreach program is carried out using a lecture-based approach, starting with an introduction and moving on to a detailed presentation on the Indonesian education system, with a special focus on the learning environment at the Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Education, Indonesian Education University (FEIE UPI). This 120-minute event encourages active participation from participants. Main topics include an overview of the faculty, academic system and curriculum, available facilities, tuition fees, and student activities. These aspects are very important in attracting international students, especially vocational education students from Malaysia, towards mobility programs and the possibility of continuing their studies in Indonesia.

Apart from informative presentations, participants were also given brochures and FEIE UPI branded merchandise for further exploration. To assess the impact of the program, evaluations were carried out before and during program implementation to measure participants' interests and perceptions, especially regarding the factors that influenced their decision to take part in a mobility program or continue higher education in Indonesia. Demographic data of participants involved in this survey are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Demographic Information**

Demographic Information	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Man	3	10.34%
Woman	26	89.66%
<b>Age</b>		
20-21 Years Old	6	20.69%
22-23 Years Old	11	37.93%
24-25 Years Old	12	41.38%
<b>Study Program</b>		
Vocational Teacher Education	22	75.86%
Pure Engineering & Vocational	7	24.14%

Table 2 displays the demographic characteristics of the participants, the majority of whom consist of female students, and the majority of whom are participating in vocational teacher education programs. The vocational teacher education program at TVE UPSI includes many academic programs such as home economics education, agricultural science education, and design. Pure technical and vocational education includes agricultural science and vocational technology. Before engaging in an outreach program, an assessment is conducted to determine the participant's previous involvement in a mobility program or similar effort. Their previous experiences are presented Table 3.

**Table 3. Previous Experience**

Previous Experience	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Have lived or Visited Indonesia</b>		
Never	26	89.66%
< a week	2	6.90%
a week or two	1	3.45%
two weeks to a month	0	0%
more than a month	0	0%
<b>Experience Visiting other Countries</b>		
Of	2	0.90%
No	27	93.10%
<b>Experience in Mobility Programs</b>		
Never	29	100%

Based on the findings in Table 3, the majority of students have never visited Indonesia or traveled abroad. Only a small percentage have experience traveling abroad. However, it should be noted that none of the participants had ever participated in a student mobility or exchange program. The assessment then continues with evaluating their perceptions and initial knowledge about study opportunities at UPI and Indonesia, as presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Prior Knowledge**

Previous Experience	Knowledge Level					DEVI CE ST	Mea n Scor e	Categor y
	Very Bad	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good			
How much do you know about further study	1 (3.45%)	8 (27.59%)	13 (44.83%)	4 (13.79%)	3 (10.34%)	1	3	Fair

Previous Experience	Knowledge Level					DEVI CE ST	Mea n Scor e	Categor y
	Very Bad	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good			
opportunities in Indonesia? Have you ever heard about Indonesian Education University (UPI)?	6 (20.69%)	5 (17.24%)	8 (27.59%)	8 (27.59%)	2 (6.90%)	1.26	2.83	Poor
Have you heard about the Faculty of Technology and Vocational Education at UPI?	7 (24.14%)	9 (31.03%)	9 (31.03%)	2 (6.90%)	2 (6.90%)	1.15	2.41	Poor

These findings indicate that, for Malaysian vocational students, Indonesia is not the right choice for mobility program purposes or continuing their education. However, most of them stated that they had a moderate level of knowledge. The next assessment focuses on determining whether they are aware of the scholarship programs available to study in Indonesia presented in Figure 4, as well as the platforms they use to obtain information regarding study opportunities in Indonesia presented in Figure 5.

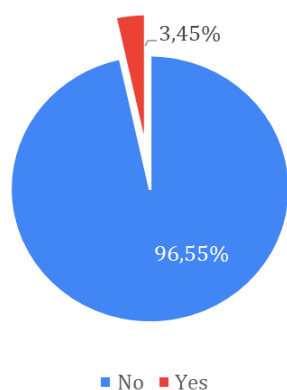


Figure 4. Awareness of the Availability of Indonesian Scholarships

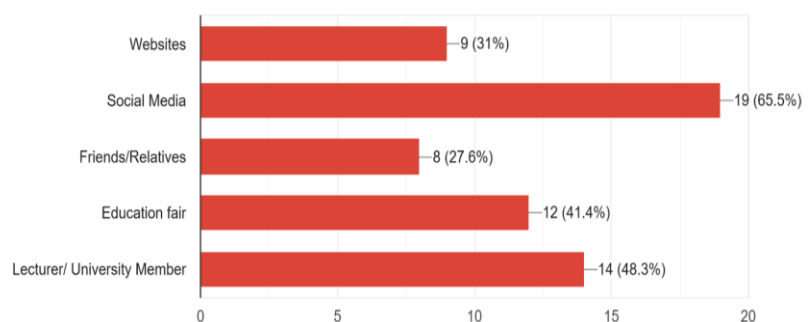


Figure 5. Information Sources or Platforms used to Search for or obtain Information about Studying in Indonesia

The next assessment is to compare students interest in participating in a mobility program or pursuing further studies in Indonesia before and after the outreach session. The level of student interest before and after participating in the socialization is then called "initial interest" and "final interest". This measurement aims to test the effectiveness of outreach programs designed to attract international students to choose Indonesia as a study destination. Level of interest was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with ordinal data collected before and after the session. After that, a normality test was carried out as a prerequisite for assessing significance and each increase in interest scores was presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Normality Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>A</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistics	df	Sig.	Statistics	df	Sig.
<b>Initial Interest</b>	0.207	29	0.003	0.810	29	0.000
<b>Final Interest</b>	0.423	29	0.000	0.632	29	0.000

Hypothesis testing was carried out using the nonparametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test method presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Nonparametric Test (Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test)**

		<b>N</b>	<b>Rankings Mean</b>	<b>Total Rank</b>
Final Interest – Initial Interest	Negative Rating	2 <sup>A</sup>	11.25	22.50
	Positive Rank	17 <sup>B</sup>	9.85	167,50
	Tie	10 <sup>C</sup>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>		

The majority of respondents reported an increase in interest, while 10 respondents reported no change in interest, and only a small portion, namely 2 respondents, reported a decrease in interest. To validate the hypothesis, it is necessary to test the Wilcoxon significance value presented in [Table 7](#).

**Table 7. Wilcoxon Test Statistics**

	<b>Late_Flower - Initial_Flower</b>
WITH	-3.024 <sup>B</sup>
Asymp. Signature. (2-tail)	0.002

The significance value is 0.002, less than 0.05. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis. This shows that the outreach program, which incorporates our subject structure, increases students' enthusiasm to engage in mobility programs or pursue further education in Indonesia. An N-Gain value of 0.67 indicates moderate gain. These results are important because they confirm that the subject structure of the outreach program has effectively increased Malaysian vocational students' interest in participating in the mobility program and pursuing further education in Indonesia. The next assessment is to identify the factors that influence their interest in participating in a mobility program or continuing their studies in Indonesia. The analysis results show a value of 4.5, indicating that it is very important. Participants considered the image of the institution as the most crucial determining factor. Other factors, namely costs, physical and learning environment, knowledge and awareness of the host country, recommendations from other parties, as well as social relations and geographical proximity, are also considered important.

## Discussion

This study shows that the level of experience and understanding among Malaysian vocational education students regarding involvement in mobility programs and seeking further education in Indonesia is very minimal. When individuals are equipped with a basic understanding or spark of motivation, it becomes the foundation for deeper exploration and engagement in their endeavors. This foundational knowledge not only fosters a sense of aspiration but also empowers individuals to face challenges and expand their capabilities, ultimately producing more meaningful and impactful results in their chosen fields. Previous research findings revealed regarding the selection process of international students highlight that lack of information or misunderstanding about the destination country plays an important role in preventing students from pursuing studies abroad. This corroborates our findings regarding the success of outreach programs in Malaysia and suggests that overcoming information barriers is key to increasing inbound mobility. This is in line with broader observations that a lack of information about study opportunities in Indonesia on a global scale may be a contributing factor to the relatively low number of students entering the country ([Amani & Kim, 2021](#); [Sudirman, 2020](#)).

To overcome this gap, there is an urgent need for proactive and global efforts to disseminate information on a massive scale, thereby increasing international awareness of Indonesia as a study destination. To significantly increase global awareness of Indonesian institutions, several strategic recommendations can be implemented. First, it is important to take advantage of programs and initiatives that have demonstrated success. This can be achieved by harnessing the power of digital marketing campaigns, which can effectively reach a wide audience through targeted messages, engaging content and social media platforms. By crafting a compelling narrative that highlights the uniqueness of Indonesian educational institutions, this campaign can attract international students and stakeholders. In addition, active participation in international education exhibitions provides a valuable opportunity to showcase the strength and diversity of Indonesian education. These events not only facilitate direct engagement with prospective students but also enable the creation of networks with education professionals from around the world, fostering partnerships and collaboration that can further raise the profile of Indonesian education. Additionally, collaborating with established educational institutions and organizations can strengthen these efforts. By forming strategic alliances, Indonesian institutions can leverage existing networks and resources, thereby increasing their visibility and credibility on the global stage. This



collaboration may involve joint marketing initiatives, exchange programs, and research partnerships, all of which aim to promote the richness of Indonesia's educational landscape.

Empirically, there is a significant correlation between participants' limited knowledge and their initial interest in participating in a mobility program or further study in Indonesia. This limitation is largely due to the lack of exposure and information regarding opportunities and experiences related to studying in Indonesia to participants. Many individuals may not have access to comprehensive resources or first-hand information that highlights the academic landscape, rich culture, and unique benefits of studying in Indonesia. The theoretical concept that supports the finding that limited understanding impacts enthusiasm and willingness to engage is Cognitive Load Theory. This theory argues that students have limited capacity in processing information. When cognitive load is high—due to complexity, unfamiliarity, or a large amount of information—students may have difficulty understanding the material (Bridgstock et al., 2023; T. & N, 2021). This can lead to decreased motivation and engagement, as they may feel overwhelmed or frustrated. Therefore, if individuals do not fully understand the program content, then their enthusiasm and willingness to participate may be significantly reduced. This underscores the need to increase the reach of information and educational resources to bridge this knowledge gap and foster greater interest among prospective international students. However, our outreach program, with a content structure carefully developed by the research team, demonstrated a moderate increase in participant interest levels. As students gain more information, their interest tends to increase, and they become less concerned about potential challenges or concerns that might prevent them from studying abroad (E, 2023; F. & S, 2021). This shows that the more students know, the less fear and uncertainty they have. Therefore, a similar program is highly recommended for Indonesian universities to increase international exposure and position Indonesia as an attractive study destination.

Participants involved in this outreach program acknowledged that the image of the institution, particularly the host campus, played an important role in shaping their decision-making process. The image of an institution includes various elements such as reputation for quality of education, faculty excellence, links with other recognized institutions, strong alumni network, employer recognition, variety of courses and programs, large and well-equipped campus, financial stability of the university. institutions, English language proficiency among local residents, university rankings, and presence in media advertisements, websites, and social media. These factors are very important and should be the main focus for institutions in Indonesia, because they play an important role in the decision-making process of prospective international students (Chen, 2021; Meltzer, 2020). Participants understood that campus image and reputation have a significant impact on their perceptions and choices, highlighting the importance of how an institution presents itself to prospective students and stakeholders. This realization underscores the need for effective communications and branding strategies that align with participants' values and aspirations, ultimately guiding their decisions regarding their educational and professional futures. Additionally, it is important to thoroughly evaluate additional highlighted factors, including financial implications, quality of the learning environment, and the importance of social relationships. Each of these elements plays an important role in shaping the overall educational experience. Cost considerations not only include tuition costs, but also include potential hidden costs such as textbooks, technology, and living arrangements. The learning environment itself—characterized by resources, teaching methodology, and institutional culture—can greatly influence student engagement and academic success. Finally, the importance of social relationships cannot be underestimated, as they foster opportunities for collaboration, support, and networking that are essential for personal and professional growth (Caillouet & Wood, 2019; Lee, 2020; S, 2023). Taking a holistic approach to these factors will ensure a comprehensive decision-making process.

The findings of this research present benefits and implications for understanding the role of prior experience and information dissemination in shaping Malaysian vocational students' interest in mobility programs and further studies in Indonesia. Its main advantage is that it highlights the importance of foundational knowledge and motivational outreach, indicating that even moderate exposure can significantly influence students' attitudes toward international education. Additionally, this study underscores the important role of institutional image, financial considerations, and the quality of the learning environment in shaping the decision-making process. These findings provide valuable insights for Indonesian educational institutions aiming to increase their global appeal and attract more international students. However, this research also has limitations, mainly due to its narrow focus on a specific group of vocational students from one institution, thereby limiting the generalizability of the results of this research. Additionally, although outreach programs are quite successful, this research lacks analysis of which specific aspects of the programs are most effective. This gap suggests a need for future research to use a more robust evaluative framework, such as the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), to prioritize key factors influencing student decision making.

Future research should also expand the participant base to include students from a variety of educational backgrounds and institutions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of student interest in mobility programs. Expanding the scope of this study will allow for more meaningful comparisons and help identify tailored strategies to improve Indonesia's position as a study destination. Additionally, greater emphasis should be placed on exploring the role of digital marketing campaigns, partnerships with international institutions, and the development of strategic alliances as tools to increase international exposure and address the knowledge gaps identified in this research. By adopting these recommendations, future research can further contribute to ongoing efforts to position Indonesia as a competitive and attractive destination for international students. The limitation of this research lies in its scope which only focuses on Malaysian vocational education students, so the results may not be generalizable to international students from other countries or different fields of study. In addition, this research uses a case study approach, so the findings obtained are more contextual in nature and cannot fully represent student experiences at large. In this case, data limitations, such as a small sample size or bias in the interviews, may also affect the validity of the results. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the geographic coverage and sample population, including students from various countries and study programs. In-depth research using mixed methods, such as a combination of quantitative and qualitative, can also provide a more comprehensive picture. In addition, this study recommends that educational institutions in Indonesia continue to evaluate the needs and preferences of international students, as well as increase promotions that highlight Indonesia's competitive advantages as a global education destination.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the low level of experience and knowledge among Malaysian vocational education students regarding participation in mobility programs and further studies in Indonesia. The outreach program implemented in this research succeeded in increasing student interest in these opportunities, with a moderate level of increase. The significant impact of prior knowledge and institutional image on students' decision-making processes suggests that a lack of awareness and understanding about studying in Indonesia can deter prospective students. These results underscore the critical need for higher education institutions in Indonesia to increase their global visibility and appeal, particularly in the context of attracting international students. To address this, a multi-faceted approach is needed, involving strategic marketing, participation in international education exhibitions, and collaboration with educational institutions to bridge knowledge gaps and foster greater interest. The implications of this research indicate that by improving institutional branding, improving the quality of educational offerings, and expanding outreach efforts, Indonesian universities can position themselves more competitively on the global stage, and ultimately increase the number of students entering. Future research should broaden the scope of participants and use more detailed analysis to further refine strategies for attracting international students to Indonesia.

#### 5. ACKNOWLEDGE

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Education, Indonesian Education University for the financial support provided under agreement number B-4852/UN40.A5/PM.01.01/2024. The successful conclusion of this investigation was greatly influenced by this funding. We also sincerely thank the Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia, for the opportunities and resources they have provided, which have substantially enhanced the quality and depth of this work.

#### 6. REFERENCES

- Amani, M., & Kim, M. M. (2021). Study Abroad Participation At Community Colleges: Students' Decision And Influential Factors. *Community College Journal Of Research And Practice*, 42(10), 678–692. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2017.1352544>.
- Billet, S. (2020). *Vocational Education*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia Of Education. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1739>.
- Bridgstock, R., Jackson, D., Lloyd, K., & Tofa, M. (2023). Social Connectedness And Graduate Employability: Exploring The Professional Networks Of Graduates From Business And Creative Industries. In *Higher Education And The Future Of Graduate Employability* (Pp. 70–89). Edward Elgar Publishing.

- <https://Doi.Org/10.4337/9781788972611.00012>.
- Caillouet, O. C., & Wood, L. S. (2019). Students' Perceived Barriers, Benefits & International Programmatic Preferences. *Journal Of International Agricultural And Extension Education*, 26(3), 134–146. <https://Doi.Org/10.5191/Jiaee.2019.26309>.
- Chen, L. H. (2021). East-Asian Students' Choice Of Canadian Graduate Schools. *International Journal Of Educational Advancement*, 7(4), 271–306. <https://Doi.Org/10.1057/Palgrave.Ijea.2150071>.
- Directorate Of Higher Education At The Ministry Of Education And Culture Of Indonesia (P. 39). (2020). <https://Pddikti.Kemdikbud.Go.Id>.
- E, M. M. (2023). Higher Education In A World Market. *Higher Education*, 24(4), 465–482. <https://Doi.Org/10.1007/Bf00137243>.
- Education Singapore, T. M. (2019). *Education Statistics Digest (Esd* (P. 37). <https://Www.Moe.Gov.Sg/About-Us/Publications/Education-Statistics-Digest>.
- F., M., & S, C. (2021). International Students' Motivation For Studying In Uk He: Insights Into The Choice And Decision Making Of African Students. *International Journal Of Educational Management*, 21(6), 459–475. <https://Doi.Org/10.1108/09513540710780000>.
- Falk, M. L., & Graf, A. (2020). Student Mobility Within Southeast Asia. *Trans: Trans-Regional And-National Studies Of Southeast Asia*, 4(1), 1–4. <https://Doi.Org/10.1017/Trn.2015.17>.
- Hanaysha, J. R., Shriedeh, F. B., & In'airat, M. (2019). Impact Of Classroom Environment, Teacher Competency, Information And Communication Technology Resources, And University Facilities On Student Engagement And Academic Performance. *International Journal Of Information Management Data Insights*, 3(2), 100188. <https://Doi.Org/10.1016/J.Jjime.2023.100188>.
- Hollis, S. A. (2022). Capturing The Experience: Transforming Community Service Into Service Learning. *Teaching Sociology*, 48(4), 200–213. <https://Doi.Org/10.2307/3211383>.
- Horz, H., & Schnotz, W. (2021). Cognitive Load In Learning With Multiple Representations. *Cognitive Load Theory*, 37(3), 229–252. <https://Doi.Org/10.1017/Cbo9780511844744.013>.
- J., E., W., S. W., & E, P. R. (2023). Exploring Factors Influencing Student Study Abroad Decision Choice. *Journal Of Teaching In Travel And Tourism*, 10(3), 232–250. <https://Doi.Org/10.1080/15313220.2010.503534>.
- Jomir, E. (2023). The Role Of University Image And Its Impact To Competitive Advantage. In *Development Through Research And Innovation* (Pp. 77–84). <https://Doi.Org/10.53486/Dri2022.07>.
- Kendall, N., Goerisch, D., Kim, E. C., Vernon, F., Wolfgram, M., Kendall, N., & Wolfgram, M. (2022). *The True Costs Of Student Fees*. The True Costs Of College. [https://Doi.Org/10.1007/978-3-030-53861-3\\_5](https://Doi.Org/10.1007/978-3-030-53861-3_5).
- Khalid, J., Ali, A. J., Nordin, N. M., & Shah, S. F. H. (2020). Regional Cooperation In Higher Education: Can It Lead Asean Toward Harmonization? *Southeast Asian Studies*, 8(1), 81–98. [https://Doi.Org/10.20495/Seas.8.1\\_81](https://Doi.Org/10.20495/Seas.8.1_81).
- Kusumawati, N. S., Dwi, I., Nurhaeni, A., & Nugroho, R. A. (2020). Internationalization Of Indonesia Higher Education: Does Government Support. *International Journal Of Education And Social Science Research*, 3(1), 173–180. <https://Doi.Org/10.37500/Ijessr.2020.3015>.
- Lee, C. F. (2020). An Investigation Of Factors Determining The Study Abroad Destination Choice: A Case Study Of Taiwan. *Journal Of Studies In International Education*, 18(4), 362–381. <https://Doi.Org/10.1177/1028315313497061>.
- Loveder, P. (2020). *Globalization And Vocational Education And Training* (P. 74). <https://Doi.Org/10.1016/B978-0-08-044894-7.00795-8>.
- Meltzer, D. E. (2020). The Relationship Between Mathematics Preparation And Conceptual Learning Gains In Physics: A Possible "Hidden Variable" In Diagnostic Pretest Scores. *American Journal Of Physics*, 70(12), 1259–1268. <https://Doi.Org/10.1119/1.1514215>.
- S, L. E. (2023). A Theory Of Migration. *Demography*, 3(3), 47–57. <https://Doi.Org/10.2307/2060063>.
- Services, E. M. G. (2022). *Statistics On International Student Applications For Malaysia's Tertiary Education 2019-2023* (P. 38). <https://Educationmalaysia.Gov.My/Student-Data>.
- Shim, S. S. (2022). A Fundamental Quest In Educational Psychology: How To Explain Learning And Engagement? *Educational Psychology*, 39(2), 151–152. <https://Doi.Org/10.1080/01443410.2019.1574425>.
- Singapore, T. I. C. A. (2020). *Ica Annual Statistics 2023 – Singapore* (P. 38). [https://Www.Ica.Gov.Sg/Docs/Default-Source/Ica/Stats/Annual-Stats-Report/Ica-Annual-Statistics-2023.Pdf?Sfvrnsn=4a6d74aa\\_6](https://Www.Ica.Gov.Sg/Docs/Default-Source/Ica/Stats/Annual-Stats-Report/Ica-Annual-Statistics-2023.Pdf?Sfvrnsn=4a6d74aa_6).
- Sudirman, S. (2020). The Role Of Vocational Education In Science And Technology Development In The Era Of Globalisation. *Journal Of Physics: Conference Series*, 970(1), 0–4. <https://Doi.Org/10.1088/1742-6596/970/1/012003>.
- Sukmayadi, V., & Yahya, A. (2019). Indonesian Education Landscape And The 21st Century Challenges.

- Journal Of Social Studies Education Research*, 11(4), 219–234.  
<https://www.Learntechlib.Org/P/218538>.
- Suryawati, S., & Lizhen, C. (2020). International Competitiveness Of Indonesia's Higher Education Services Trade. *International Journal Of Economics, Business And Accounting Research (Ijebאר)*, 3(04), 38.  
<https://Doi.Org/10.29040/Ijebאר.V3i04.758>.
- T., M., & N, S. G. (2021). Push-Pull” Factors Influencing International Student Destination Choice. *International Journal Of Educational Management*, 16(2), 82–90.  
<https://Doi.Org/10.1108/09513540210418403>.
- Tran, M. T., Jung, J., Unangst, L., & Marshall, S. (2023). New Developments In Internationalisation Of Higher Education. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 42(5), 1033–1041.  
<https://Doi.Org/10.1080/07294360.2023.2216062>.
- Umboh, P. (2021). Education For The Asean Community - The Case Of Indonesia. *Journal Of Asean Studies*, 1(1), 45. <https://Doi.Org/10.21512/Jas.V1i1.62>.
- Weller, W., & Reis, J. G. (2022). Student Mobility Of College Students From Former Public High Schools: Experiences Within The Science Without Borders Program. *Pro-Posições*, 33(4), 20210062.  
<https://Doi.Org/10.1590/1980-6248-2021-0062en>.
- Williams, T., & Soriero, M. A. (2022). Creating Global Citizens Through Multicultural Education. In *Evolving Multicultural Education For Global Classrooms* (Pp. 177–194). Igi Global.  
<https://Doi.Org/10.4018/978-1-7998-7649-6.Ch009>.
- Yang, M. (2020). What Attracts Mainland Chinese Students To Australian Higher Education. *Studies In Learning. Evaluation Innovation, And Development*, 4(2), 1–12.  
<https://Hdl.Handle.Net/10018/5964>.