

# The Roles of Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEI) in Promoting Formal Lifelong Education in Malaysia

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One manifestation of globalisation is that countries are more integrated socially, politically, economically and technologically. The pressures of new knowledge and skills are challenging traditional higher education system. Higher education sector in Malaysia is compelled to cater for another important target community, the non-school leavers or working adults. Complex business nature requires competent workers. Formal higher education is a precursor to the creation of knowledge workers. Malaysian higher education landscape has undergone radical transformations since the government undertook higher education liberalisation in the late 1996. The main aim of this paper is to explore and understand lifelong learning notion, particularly the formal lifelong learning concept and the underlying reasons why working adults are pursuing formal higher education in private higher education institutions (PHEI). The first part of this paper discusses factors that give rise to the growing importance of PHEI in the provision of quality higher educational programmes. The second part of this paper discusses the scope of lifelong learning. Thirty PHEI were sampled for this study. This paper concludes by arguing that PHEI have been a major driving force in the promotion and provision of formal lifelong learning among working adults, which in turn contributes to human capital capacity building in Malaysia.

Keywords: Lifelong Education, Lifelong Learning, Private Higher Education, Formal Lifelong Education.

(\* Note: Only qualitative findings pertaining to the title are presented. This article is based on a bigger study undertaken by the researchers)