

***Bumiputera* University Publisher in Malaysia: Achievements in Academic Publishing**

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Abstract. The field of mass communication academic studies in Malaysia began rapidly with Malaysia's independence in the year 1957, with the founding of public higher learning institutions such as University of Malaya (1905/1962), Science University of Malaysia (1969), National University of Malaysia (1970), Agricultural University of Malaysia (1971) and also of Universiti Teknologi MARA(UiTM) in 1956, the only local institution of higher learning with a proud foundation history that went hand in hand with the birth of the country's nationalism movement. UiTM is unique in the sense that it is the largest higher learning institution in Asia and also the oldest in Malaysia. Its status and position as a university that caters solely to the *Bumiputras* is covered by Amendment 153 of the Malaysian Constitution and the Malaysian law (Act A1073). Therefore, UiTM is by rights removed from the reaches of Act 30 of the 1971 University and University-College Act (AUKU). In the year 2007, UiTM was able to increase its academic publication to up to 120 books and was listed as the university with the biggest number of published academic books, despite there being approximately 20 local public universities.

Keywords: University Press, Scholarly Publishing, Indigenous.

1. Introduction

The growth of the education field, regardless of level, has always molded and changed to reflect the evolution undergone by the society and the society's thinking trend. This era of change is observed to have begun with the era of colonialism (1800-1945), the nationalism movement (1945-1970), the era of national integration (1970-1990) and currently (1990-2000) the era of globalisation. The establishment of universities in Malaysia (formerly Malaya) started with the founding of the University of Malaya in Singapore in the year 1949, by the merger of King Edward VII Medical College (1905) with Raffles Institution (1929) with the endorsement of a Chinese millionaire and the report published by the Mclean Commission (1939) which was then renewed by the Carr-Saunders Report (1948), with the initial aim of training English-medium school leavers into officers serving under the colonial government (Sufean Hussin, 2004).

Each of the eras listed above represent the thinking of the society at that moment in history, the opinion that the *Bumiputras* (indigenous) should not be mentally colonised. This desire to liberate the people's thinking especially that of the Malays; and Sabah and Sarawak *Bumiputras* is what drove the increase of the number of public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. At the onset, the establishment of the earliest universities was done to strengthen the government's vision and plans such as the promotion of Malay language use among all Malaysians with the founding of UKM in 1970, the development of science and technology with the founding of USM in 1969 and many others. Currently, there are around 20 public universities in Malaysia, which was established either by upgrading the status of university-colleges to universities or by the founding of state universities. Eleven of the universities have relatively deeper establishment histories which definitely warrant studies, whereas the remaining nine universities were mostly established at the turn of the century. Historical sentiments aside, the government of Malaysia has been pushing for the establishment of one apex university, a university which adheres to more stringent criteria such as world-class researches and publications.

2. Background of UiTM Press

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Universiti Teknologi MARA Press (UiTM Press) was founded on 10 January 1981 as an outcome of a meeting session of the ITM Council (currently the UiTM Board of Directors). It was initially christened as the Text Preparation Bureau (BIROTEKS) before being rebranded as the Academic Publication Unit (UPENA) from 15 July 2001 as a move under UiTM's Consolidation Strategy of 2001. However, on 29 November 2001 in the UiTM Chancellery Main Meeting Hall (BMU), the Vice-Chancellor announced the bureau's new status and name; UiTM University Publication Centre (UPENA). During its infancy stage, UiTM Press was considered one of government's efforts to promote the use of Malay language not only as a national language, but also as the lingua franca of undergraduates of institutions of higher learning in Malaysia; especially those of UiTM.

In its official capacity, UiTM Press is under the Chancellery office's jurisdiction. Therefore, UiTM Press is responsible for all publishing and publication activities such as writing, translation works and also courses that promote the writing of original books and the translation of published books for the use of undergraduates and the general public alike by the academic and non-academic staff. UiTM Press's initial objectives were aimed at the spreading and disseminating of certain important and copyrighted knowledge in an effective manner.

2.1. UiTM Press Activities Since 1980's

UiTM Press is responsible for all the activities that are related to publication such as organising writing and translation workshops. This is to ensure that UiTM lecturers have the proper assistance when publishing in Malay language, therefore ensuring that UiTM and other institutions will obtain quality reading material.

The unit published only six books within the period of its inception from 1981 to 1985. However from 1986 to 1988, UiTM Press was successful in increasing that number to 74 including monographs. This increase is attributed to the new approach to assessing UiTM (then ITM) lecturers' promotion which takes into account their publication portfolio.

2.2. Source of Income

In general, UiTM Press currently receives its funding from two different sources; its Trust Account and the funding it receives from the Chancellery Office. The status quo is now deemed sufficient for administrative and office needs and for staff training purposes which in turn is supported by the Trust Account which is reserved for publication purposes.

However, despite receiving financial support from UiTM General Trust Account amounting to RM36,000.00 in 1986 for the purpose of expanding its scope of publication, this was still deemed insufficient. Therefore, with the recommendation of the UiTM Treasury and its Trust Account Committee, UiTM Press had applied for additional funding from the Finance and Development Committee of UiTM. This application was subsequently approved in the 62nd meeting in early 1991 with the contribution of a grant amounting to RM281,425.18 to UiTM Press, which is allocated for all its publication works. In 2005, UPENA received a lucrative funding intended for administrative purposes amounting to over RM480,000.00, which currently had been increased to millions of Ringgit to further its publication capacity. Apart from this, UiTM Press also collected RM100,854.30 through the sale of its publications since 1983. By the year 2007, the profit has been increase more than RM 1.1 million (UiTM Annual Report, 2007).

2.3. Publishing Practices

In general, UiTM Press's publications are split into two categories; original publications and translated publications. The translation of foreign works into Bahasa Melayu is deemed the easiest and fastest method in solving the shortage of academic books in Bahasa Melayu. UiTM Press will also inform other university-

publishers and the DBP of any new translation-work on its part to avoid similar titles from being translated by different publishers.

2.4. Original Works

A submitted manuscript must be in its written form and an original work by a UiTM lecturer or instructor. It has to be suitable for undergraduates' use as reference and the submitted manuscript must be thoroughly finalised before submission for an external review. Only with the external reviewer's approval will UiTM Press's Trust Account Committee, as chaired by the Academic Vice-Chancellor, decide on publishing any particular manuscript. The amount of royalty awarded to the writer is usually around 10 to 12 percent of the book's sale.

2.5. Translated Works

UiTM lecturers are always encouraged to publish translation works for the use of undergraduates' reference. Therefore, the Translation Unit was founded specifically for this purpose. The payment for translation works is set around two and four cents per word, the exact amount of which is fixed by the Director of UiTM Press.

3. Publishing Achievements

UiTM Press has successfully led the race of being the premier university publishers for three straight years, also cementing its position as the country's top publisher of academic publications, combined with the fact that its financial stability and increase of manpower is going to strength the centre's future endeavors. However, it must be stated that it is acknowledged that university publishers are very rarely financially on par with their commercial counterparts both locally and globally, since the purposes of both sectors are fundamentally different, with university publishers usually striving for the less materialistic aim of disseminating academic knowledge to the public.

UiTM Press's publishing achievements is more easily seen from the statistical comparison for the 12 years from 1998 to 2009. This comparison was made between the *Bumiputra* - university publisher (UiTM) and four other Malaysian universities that were designated the research university status (UM, USM, UKM and UPM):

Table 1: Number of Academic Publications in Malaysia by University for the Year 1998 – 2009

PRESS/YEAR	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL
UM Press	4	6	10	8	12	26	22	35	84	28	16	21	272
USM Press	26	20	10	15	26	31	46	27	37	21	36	31	326
UKM Press	22	19	43	24	26	25	33	35	52	31	38	34	382
UPM Press	15	11	13	18	24	19	20	25	18	20	37	21	241
UTM Press	23	24	26	27	30	25	23	29	19	32	27	12	297
UIAM Press	-	1	1	10	16	21	14	25	43	3	59	7	200
UUM Press	-	1	4	13	9	22	10	25	17	21	21	16	159
UNIMAS Press	3	-	3	4	7	4	4	4	7	2	1	1	40
UMS Press	3	19	22	15	12	7	23	13	11	31	20	13	189
UPSI Press	-	-	-	-	11	11	19	16	21	20	13	11	122
UiTM Press	3	10	15	5	4	20	21	54	118	90	92	80	512
TOTAL	99	111	147	139	177	211	235	288	427	299	360	247	2740

Table 2: Field Title Book Published by University for the Year 1998 – 2009

PRESS/CODE	000	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	TOTAL
UM Press	12	4	47	92	32	20	40	7	7	11	272
USM Press	34	0	12	69	20	76	70	17	24	4	326
UKM Press	56	6	24	125	39	50	39	16	9	18	382
UPM Press	6	2	5	119	39	35	28	4	3	0	241
UTM Press	32	9	37	67	2	74	57	14	1	4	297
UIAM Press	11	2	102	50	11	7	10	4	0	3	200
UUM Press	6	3	12	126	3	5	2	2	0	0	159
UNIMAS Press	8	0	0	16	0	6	7	0	0	0	37
UMS Press	2	12	7	97	6	32	14	8	5	6	189
UPSI Press	16	3	2	42	11	9	8	6	20	5	122
UiTM Press	31	2	60	219	39	72	39	27	21	5	515
TOTAL	214	43	308	1022	202	386	314	105	90	56	2740

000 : COMPUTER SCIENCE, INFORMATION & GENERAL

100 : PHILOSOPHY & PYSCHOLOGY

200 : RELIGION

300 : SOCIAL SCIENCE

400 : LANGUAGE

500 : SCIENCE

600 : TECHNOLOGY

700 : ART & RECREATION

800 : LITERATURE

900 : HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

It is apparent by the table above that UiTM Press is the university publisher with the most number of publications, exceeding those of other Malaysian research-universities’.

4. Publication Challenges

As a matter of fact, the field of academic publication is complexly challenging in nature due to the needs that must be fulfilled before publishing can take place (Zulkipli & Zulkifli, 2007) and also its nature that is not business-oriented. In fact it is aimed towards the dissemination of knowledge and information towards graduates and academicians. This is because every writer and publisher, especially those involved with university-publishers are required to adhere to the rules, regulations and guidelines that have been and will be drawn up for each publication. Listed below are the challenges that may stump any university publisher’s efforts to increase the number of its academic publications and to meet the needs and demands of National Book Policy:

- Administrators without publishing background – the top brass in any university publisher’s administration is usually comprised of those with expertise in marketing or business and not publishing.
- Financial constraints – More often than not, the funding received by the university from the government is allocated more for infrastructures geared towards the staff and students’ needs instead of the university academic publication needs.
- High cost and the photocopying culture – typically, around 500 to 1,000 copies of any particular book are printed for marketing. The basic theory of business has it that when more of any single product is produced for marketing, the lower its production cost becomes. In UiTM Press’s case, ‘more’ means over 10,000 copies, a number of supply which greatly exceeds the demand. The low number of copies produced forces the overpricing of the books, which in turn forces undergraduates and academicians to resort to photocopying to acquire required books at a lower price.
- Promotion and marketing – the market for academic publications is limited and confined to undergraduates and university academicians. This is further compounded with the fact that each public university possesses their own publication wing which publishes highly-specific books that are catered only to the academic needs and requirements of the institution’s students. All this contributes to making the promotional and marketing aspects of university publishing even more challenging,

even though there are existing surface-level agreements between universities to cooperate in the promotion and marketing of books.

- Government's Language Policy – the 1996 Private Higher Learning Institutions Act formally marked the end of the effort to promote Malay language through the national education system (Shahrir Mohamad Zain, 2002). Currently, sciences and mathematics subjects are taught in English in the primary and secondary levels. Although this move is not terrible in itself, its implementation is far from perfect and could also result in learning difficulties among students from the rural areas who are not fluent in and well-exposed to English.
- Attitude of Faculties – It is not unusual for the faculties in a university to be unsupportive of the university's effort to promote academic publication and they are somewhat reluctant to include the publication of academic works as a part of their yearly activities. Without the university administration's pressure, this lackadaisical attitude will become worse although publication of written works has already been made an important criterion to obtain a promotion by the administration. Another recurring issue is the attitude of some Professors and Associate Professors who are too contented with their attained ranks to embark on new writing projects.

These are just a small sample among the challenges faced by academic publishers and writers. Even though academic publishers and writers rarely have financial objectives that have to be met with their publications, they are often split in two; between having to ensure the publishing entities' survival and maintaining the writers' career as academicians.

5. Summary

The support of UiTM administration especially that of the Vice-Chancellor's in the promotion of academic publication needs to utilize. UiTM Press's improvement is apparent in its logistics, number of staff members and establishment of new departments, giving weight to a publishing scholar's remark that if a university's Vice-Chancellor values its publication unit, the publisher will in turn contribute to the effort of gaining international recognition for the university. The privileges granted by the government to UiTM as a *Bumiputra* university is also indirectly enjoyed by UiTM Press, therefore the efforts produced must always match the level of assistance it receives. All the obstacles faced must be cleared out of the path, not just overcome. UiTM Press must identify its weaknesses and turn them to its advantage in facing future challenges. Only then will it be possible to be on par with international publishers as nothing is impossible in this industry.

6. References

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