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How Universities Communicate their Corporate Reputation to the World Using Students' Citizenship as Promotional Tool in the Context of Higher Education Information Literacy

Ahmed Lawal Gusau ^{a,*}, Khor Mi Nee ^b, Adamkolo Mohammed Ibrahim ^c

^a Abdu Gusau Polytechnic, Talata Mafara, Zamfara State, Nigeria

^b The Easyway Academy (Sendrian Berhad), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

^c University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

Abstract

The literature demonstrates that higher educational organisations perceived corporate reputation soars and gains global reputation with rising international recognition and patronage. Therefore, in an era when higher education is increasingly becoming globalised with the rising internationalisation of university education, a university's students' citizenship may be a tool to promote and enhance the standing of its corporate reputation both locally and internationally a process we refer to as 'globocation'. However, the dearth of literature in this area of research particularly in the context of Malaysian higher education industry prompted the present study to be conducted. A simple random sampling technique was used to recruit 331 international (foreign) students from the Malaysian Infrastructure University of Kuala Lumpur (IUKL) who completed a 21-item questionnaire with very high reliability of $\alpha = 0.92$. Only one correlation hypothesis was tested which was formulated on the citizenship dimension of the RepTrack™ model and it was accepted. Data were analysed using SPSS version 23 and moderate correlation (Person's $p = 0.00$, $r = 0.55$) was found between citizenship and reputation. In addition, reputation is expressed as high esteem, love, respect, and trust. The study concludes that international students will tend to recommend to others (their friends, peers, colleagues, etc.) educational institutions they found very reputable. Future research should explore comparative studies between international and local students on the reputation assessment of their institutions.

Keywords: citizenship, corporate communication, corporate reputation, higher educational institution, information literacy, IUKL, RepTrak model, university student.

1. Introduction

The World is witnessing a high increase in the population of international students moving from one country to another (Alam et al., 2020; Song, McCarthy, 2018; Tan, 2022; Tran, Marginson, 2018). According to the United Nations International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) report 2020 (IOM, 2020: 80), *The number of international students from Eastern Asia, particularly at the tertiary level, has increased rapidly in recent years, while the number of foreign students within the subregion also continues to grow.... However, Eastern Asia is not only a major origin of international students, [but] it is also gradually becoming an important destination for foreign students...*

In 2018, there were over 490,000 international students enrolled in Chinese higher educational institutions. In 2018, students from the Republic of Korea made up the largest

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: marubucialkalami@gmail.com (A.L. Gusau)

proportion of international students in China. Eastern Asia is becoming a popular destination for international students, particularly from the region (IOM, 2020). The IOM's 2022 World Migration Report also shows that China is the world's largest source of international students, with the majority residing in North America. Eastern Asia is becoming more popular as a study abroad destination for international students. The Republic of Korea and Japan both saw an increase in international student numbers before the COVID-19 pandemic (IOM, 2022). This may have suggested why many emerging economies such as Malaysia are trying to attract foreign students (Cerna, Czaika, 2021; Mok, 2012) with the aim of globacating their universities' corporate image and reputation. Globacation refers to "all the strategic tools deployed, and deliberate efforts embezzled by an organisation toward promoting and enhancing the standing of its corporate reputation both locally and internationally." In achieving this, reputation is very important because students tend to go to countries where they feel their demands and expectation can be adequately met (Khoi, 2021) in this regard,

Britain has recently announced that it is working to attract 600,000 international students by 2030 which shows a sharp rise from the about 460,000 currently enrolled (ICEF Monitor, 2019). The United Kingdom is the second most popular EU destination for students from Russia, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, after Germany. Former Soviet Union countries accounted for approximately 4 % of international students in the United Kingdom. While the number of degree-mobile students from former Soviet countries to the United Kingdom has nearly doubled in the last two decades, the number of students enrolling in UK higher educational institutions varies greatly by sending country. The top sending countries are currently Lithuania, Russia, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Estonia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan (Chankseliani, 2018: 54; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2020).

As Malaysia serves as a strategic contender for these recent developments, it is equally necessary for its institutions to demonstrate high commitment which should create a good mindset for the psyches of its foreign students. According to Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOE), their vision is "to make Malaysia a centre of higher educational excellence by the year 2020". These should align with the hope of many international students who come to Malaysia for the enrichment of their expertise. To come to term with this reality, it should be observed that the world high ranking institutions are such as Harvard, Cambridge, Oxford, etc. "have their rankings not by mere accidents but by the reputation they have built over time [through] research, innovation, quality teaching, commitment, and good services." Their identity matches with their brands and so the image and reputations. Therefore, reputation assessment uncovers whether organisations have maintained their covenanted promise or not (Knight, Morshidi, 2011; Shahjahan et al., 2022; Subbarayalu, 2022).

Over the last decade, Malaysia has witnessed a growing number of international students (Ahrani et al., 2019; Chin, 2019; Nadeem et al., 2020). "This increase was noted some years after the United States 9/11 attack, especially among Arab students" (Alzubaidi, Rechards, 2010; Sirat, 2008). However, Malaysia has also taken measures to handle the new challenges which could help to reposition the country's role in the world, and which will certainly enhance its economic prosperity. MoHE set up an international student's division to cope with the increasing number of foreign students pursuing higher education which is gradually turning the country into a centre of educational pursuit. The division has been operating since 2007 to facilitate and manage the entrance of foreign students which is appreciably increasing (Asari et al., 2017).

According to Chin (Chin, 2019) and ICEF Monitor (ICEF Monitor, 2016), Malaysia's recent recognition as one of the top ten destinations for post-secondary education by UNESCO bodes well for the Malaysian government's goal of increasing the number of international students to 250,000 by 2025. Malaysia has risen from 12th to 9th place in the latest international student mobility survey by UNESCO since 2014. At the end of 2014, about 135,500 international students were studying in public and private higher educational institutions and international high schools in Malaysia. This was a 16.5 % increase from 2013, with Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Yemen, Sri Lanka, and Libya being the top sending countries for Malaysian institutions.

As of 2014, Malaysia had sought to position itself as a regional education hub in Southeast Asia, with rising international enrolments and increased government investment in the sector. Regional hubs are beginning to attract greater numbers of internationally mobile students, according to UNESCO and others. Malaysia, along with China, Korea, and Singapore, is beginning to compete with destinations such as Australia and Japan for students from a variety of Asian

markets. Working with private partners, the Malaysian government has helped establish two higher education zones: EduCity Iskandar and Kuala Lumpur Education City. Investment in education infrastructure is also linked to the country's economic development strategies (Chin, 2019; ICEF Monitor, 2016).

Thanks to these zones, Malaysia has become a popular host country for international branch campuses. Foreign institutions such as Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia, University of Southampton Malaysia Campus, Netherlands Maritime Institute of Technology and the University of Reading Malaysia are currently based at EduCity Iskandar Campus. Organisations such as the British Council have recognised Malaysia as a world leader in transnational education because of its internationalisation efforts. The University of Nottingham celebrated its 15th anniversary in September 2015 as the first UK university to open a campus in Malaysia. "In the 1990s, the University of Nottingham made the internationalisation of higher education a priority... The Malaysian government liberalised its higher education sector by inviting foreign universities to set up campuses" (ICEF Monitor, 2016).

In the pursuit of these goals, Malaysian educational institutions need to consider how reputation is given attention to by research today (Fauzi et al., 2020; Hira et al., 2021). Against this background, the work is timely and necessary for the Malaysian universities such as Infrastructure University, Kuala Lumpur (IUKL), which is the focus of this study, to have an objective insight on how they are being perceived by the foreign students, which if carefully studied would among other measures help this institution in achieving its vision.

Research Gaps and Objectives: Furthermore, it can be noted that a growing body of research today examines reputation in the field of private manufacturing and service companies. The importance of this is only lately discovered by the public sectors and remains many under-used resources (Lee et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2020). What is more relevant is the observation by Aula et al. (Aula et al., 2011) that there is no adequate attention by researchers to measure the reputation of universities. Thus, this has created a gap that this researcher has found interesting to fill. The essence of conducting this research work is to determine the reputation of Malaysian Universities as perceived by their international students. It is to be measured by the level of trust, admiration, respect, and positive feelings of the respondent. Organisations with strong reputations have this emotional connection and they can increase support from their key stakeholders (Nielsen, 2012).

Therefore, this study aims to: (1) provide the descriptive data analysis of the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics and (2) determine the relationship between IUKL's student citizenship and its perceived reputation.

Conceptual Review of Extant Literature: A growing body of research has been using reputation indices to judge how good organisations are. Reputation has to do with the internal feelings of individuals about organisations. That organisation can be a profit or non-profit venture; a country or a state; a university or a company; a school or even an individual (Balmer, 2012; Dominic et al., 2021; Esa et al., 2022; Khoshtaria et al., 2020; Ponzi et al., 2011; Tay et al., 2020). Reputation is the overall evaluation often expressed as the admiration and esteem in which an organisation or company is held. It answers whether one is good or bad (Brenneke et al., 2020). It also determines the extent to which people trust an organisation (Adebesin, Mwalugha, 2020; Al Shobaki et al., 2020; Golata, Sojkin, 2020).

Reputation is described as the "collective representation of multiple constituencies, the image of a company [or organisation] built up over time and based on a company [or organisation's] identity programs, its performance and how constituencies have perceived its behaviour" (Argenti, Druchenmiller, 2004; Pires, Trez, 2018). Reputation is also described as intangible (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013; Rindova, Martins, 2012; Shah, Abdullah, 2016). "Thus, it is very difficult to measure" (Taamneh et al., 2022; Shah, Abdullah, 2016).

Still, scholars have tried in their ways to describe what reputation means and how best it can be measured. Past research has variously defined reputation one of which is "the emotional connection between people and companies. Reputation can be measured by the level of trust, admiration, respect, and good feelings" (Rashid, Mustafa, 2022). Companies or organisations with strong reputations have this emotional connection which they attract increased support from their key publics. According to Singh and Misra (Singh, Misra, 2021), corporate reputation is the overall (often expressed as admiration, respect, and esteem) in which a company is held. Thus, he posits that corporate reputation answers the question, are you good or bad. It determines if people trust the company. Therefore, discussing this in connection with universities would tell how some of

their attitudes and practices lead to criticisms and reputational injury. According to Abdullah and Abdul Aziz (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013), corporate reputation can also be defined in terms of several attributes that form a buyer's perception as "to whether a company is well known, good or bad, reliable, trustworthy, reputable, and believable." Corporate reputation is concerned with how people feel about an organisation based on whatever information (or misinformation) they have on the organisation's activities, workplace, past performance, and prospects (Singh, Misra, 2021). "A good reputation creates a favourable operating environment, but it demands continuous maintenance and demonstration through good practices." It delivers promise; this is how organisations will behave in the future (Pires, Trez, 2018; Ponzi et al., 2011; Rimkutė, 2018). Many tend to interchange the three concepts of reputation, image, and identity. Anything that has to do with the painting of the good values of an organisation is identified with one of the three concepts. But scholars have distinguished the three concepts though they are not without relationships, namely corporate image, corporate identity, and corporate reputation.

1. *Corporate image*: this is intangible; it is the belief and impressions held by stakeholders about an organisation (Singh, Misra, 2021). Stakeholders can be students, employees, community and so on. Gołata and Sojkin (Gołata, Sojkin, 2020) posit that "image is a reflection of an organisations reality." This means that the stakeholder examines what the organisation is all about, what the organisation is doing and the direction it is heading to (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013; Ponzi et al., 2011). Hence the corporate image answers the question of what people think about you (Singh, Misra, 2021).

2. *Corporate identity*: this has to do with attributes, symbols, nomenclature, and behaviours used by an organisation to express and identify itself (Singh, Misra, 2021). Managing identity is vital to portray a good image of the organisation (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013). Unlike the image, identity is tangible. It should be made unique, unambiguous, thrilled, and simple. In other words, the actual identity should match the covenanted identity which is the corporations promise to its stakeholders (Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2020). The role of corporate identity is to measure who you are (Boafo et al., 2020; Melewar et al., 2018; van der Rijt, 2021).

3. *Corporate reputation*: corporate reputation is the overall evaluation often expressed as admiration, respect, esteem, and good feeling (Adebesin, Mwalugha, 2020; Ajayi, Mmutle, 2021; Esa et al., 2022). Like the image, reputation is also intangible. It is the emotional connection between people and organisations. Therefore, corporate reputation answers the question, are you good or bad? It determines if people trust the organisation (Singh, Misra, 2021; van der Rijt, 2021).

However, it should be observed that three concepts are related. Some scholars have given further definitions which show how identity and image are attached to reputation. Adebesin and Mwalugha (Adebesin, Mwalugha, 2020), and Abdullah and Abdul Aziz (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013) have defined corporate reputation as "a collective term referring to all stakeholders' views of corporate reputation, including identity & image." Related to that definition is the one which sees reputation as "the collective representative of multiple constituencies, images, of a company built up over time based on a company's identity programs, its performance and how constituencies have perceived its behaviour" (Burke, 2016).

Furthermore, according to the 2018/2019 report of an online higher education statistics agency 'Study in UK', there are currently 485,645 international students pursuing degrees in the United Kingdom. The total number of people has risen from 458,520 in the previous year's statistics. In the fiscal year that ended in September 2019, the UK government announced that 276,889 students were granted a Sponsored Study (Tier 4) visa. This represents a 16 % increase over the previous year, and it is the highest level of Tier 4 visas granted since 2011 (Liu, 2021; Study in UK, 2021). Study in UK (Study in UK, 2021) further noted that as of 2018/2019, "there are 2,383,970 students enrolled in higher educational institutions, including international students as well as students from the United Kingdom." This represents a 2 % increase over 2017/2018. International students from China account for 32 % of first-year non-UK students, or 86,485. A total of 342,620 students from countries outside the European Union came to the UK to further their education. Other European Union countries, excluding the UK, account for 143,025 students enrolled in UK higher educational institutions (Liu, 2021).

Most international students coming from non-EU countries, according to Study in UK (Study in UK, 2022), "come from China, with a total of 120,385 students enrolled in higher educational institutions in the UK." This means, 35 % of all non-EU students are from China, as of 2018/2019 statistics. With a total of 26,685 students, India ranks second among the top countries of origin for

non-EU students in the UK. The United States is right behind, sending a total of 20,120 students to the United Kingdom to pursue a qualification. When it comes to international students' countries of origin, Hong Kong and Malaysia are fourth and fifth, respectively, with the former sending 16,135 students and the latter sending 13,835 students. Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Canada, and Thailand are the top five non-EU countries sending the most students to the UK (Liu, 2021; Study in UK, 2021).

Furthermore, Liu (Liu, 2021) and Study in UK (Study in UK, 2021) noted that the total number of international students from other EU countries, excluding the United Kingdom, is 143,025, with 13,965 of them hailing from Italy. The scholars further noted that after Italy, France is the EU country that sends the most students to the UK to study. According to statistics from 2018/2019, there are 13,675 students from France studying in the United Kingdom. According to them, with a total of 13,475 and 10,380 students respectively, Germany and Spain are among the EU countries with the highest population of students in the UK. They also pointed out that Greece, Romania, Ireland, Cyprus, Poland, and Bulgaria are among the other countries sending the most students to the United Kingdom.

Levatino et al. (Levatino et al., 2018: 3) noted that UK and France ranked second and fourth among the leading host countries to international students in 2014. Spain, however, has been the main destination for foreign students from Latin America. Further, statistics show that during the same year (2014), the UK hosted 428,724 international students, France hosted 235,123, and Spain hosted 56,361 international students (Levatino et al., 2018: 4). According to Lassegard (Lassegard, 2016: 47), Japan's government planned "to accept 300,000 international students by the year 2020 as part of its global strategy and international commitment to expand flows of human resources." According to Trilokekar and El Masri (Trilokekar, El Masri, 2019: 29), in OECD countries, "IS [international students] are the fastest-growing immigrant group among all groups of immigrants, including labour migrants, family migrants, and refugees." It was observed that as of 2015, "45 per cent of Canadian institutions of higher learning identified the recruitment of IS [international students] as among their highest priorities, and 70 per cent included IS recruitment among their top five goals" (Trilokekar, El Masri, 2019: 27).

According to Hirschmann (Hirschmann, 2020), about 13,450 students from China studied in Malaysia in 2019. However, most of the international students that study in Malaysia hail from Muslim countries, "with most of them enrolled in private higher educational institutions." Nearly 234,080 male students and 358,600 female students are expected to enrol in public higher educational institutions in 2020. Even though the number of male students enrolled has been steadily declining since 2016, female students still outnumber male students in 2019. This reflected a global trend in which women are more likely than men to pursue higher education (Hirschmann, 2022). According to the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE), as of the Second Quarter of 2018, however, there were 27,766 international students (representing 5.16 %) and local students 510,789 (representing 94.84 %) of the total enrolment of 538,555 students spread across various public higher educational institutions in Malaysia (Chin, 2019; MOE, 2018).

Empirical Review of Extant Literature: A study by Abdullah and Abdul Aziz (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013) found that "90 % of senior executives agreed that stakeholders especially customers [or students in our case] will consider corporate reputation as a strong determinant to purchase products or services." That study is corroborated by Aula and Mantere (Aula, Mantere, 2020). The abstract nature of the concept of reputation has made it very difficult to be measured in visible terms (Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, 2013; Ajayi, Mmutle, 2021; Kaur, Singh, 2018; Keller, Brexendorf, 2019; Singh, Misra, 2021; Tahir et al., 2021). Thus, recent studies have witnessed the development of different measurement scales which have made reputation management more visible. Some include Reputation Quotient by Fombrun et al. (Fombrun et al., 2000) such as Angliss (Angliss, 2021), and Jie et al. (Jie et al., 2019), while others include AC4ID test (Balmer, 2017), and more robust RepTrak model developed by Ponzi et al. (Ponzi et al., 2011), among many other emerging scales.

Most of the corporate measurement bodies such as fortune 500, Reputation Institute's RepTrak 100, Clarin Magazine's most 100 admired companies, and so on, focus largely on measuring companies' reputation (Kaur, Singh, 2018; Khan, Digout, 2018; Pires, Trez, 2018). However, nowadays we have witnessed how research is conducted to access the reputation of public sectors which is seen as a source of accessing performance and getting ways to improve it. For example, Kotková Strítěská and Sein (Kotková Strítěská, Sein, 2021) conducted a study to

define a set of key characteristics of organisational culture that contribute to reputation, effective performance measurement and management of public sector organisations. A study found that measuring the reputation of an educational institution helps to uplift the rankings of the institution, meet students' demands, boost the socio-economic nature of a state, and proactively manage risk and crisis before they occur (Dominic et al., 2021). A study conducted by Najimdeen et al. (Najimdeen et al., 2021: 89) which examined how students' satisfaction is impacted by service quality discovered that "moderate positive perceptions of overall university quality service and satisfaction with a low level of satisfaction for some dimensions of quality service such as empathy and assurance."

Another critical factor that prompted university reputational studies is its relevance in the attainment of a good ranking (Angliss, 2021; Gutiérrez-Villar et al., 2022). For example, the QS University ranking for Asia which is published annually since 2009 uses criteria like "academic reputation, employer reputation, and student/faculty ratio", among other things. Chais et al. (Chais et al., 2018: 20) and Mascarenhas et al. (Mascarenhas et al., 2018: 708) examined why corporate university relations are important. Outcomes of the study highlight the importance of understanding by universities and corporations that "working in collaborative technology research contributes to the transformation of applied research into technological innovations that can transform society." This further provides some hints about the growing relationship between universities and corporations.

Moreover, universities need support for programmes, research, and student development (Heller, 2022; Jacob et al., 2021). However, one fundamental question that should agitate our minds is, who would risk investing in an institution that has no good reputation? When an institution builds a good reputation, everyone would be flocking to its doors. Rebuilding a damaged reputation is more difficult than building a new one entirely. That is why proponents of corporate reputation always emphasise on companies to take control of their reputations (Burke, 2016).

Against this background, we can understand that studies on reputation are very necessary, not only to Malaysian universities management but also to the Malaysian Government as a whole. According to the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE), Malaysia anticipates raising the number of international students from 93,000 previously in 2012 to 150,000 in 2015, 200,000 in 2020, and 250,000 in 2025. In addition, Malaysia is among the top 10 destinations for international students (Chin, 2019; MOE, 2015). Ahmad and Buchanan (Ahmad, Buchanan, 2017) confirm that institutional reputation is one of the top two factors that contribute to students' enrolment. Hence, it could be important to globalise the reputation of Malaysian universities as well.

It can further be observed that focusing on institutional reputation studies also links to the economic wellbeing of a country. According to Chin (2019) and MOE, Malaysia's economy earns an average range of RM46,000 (£ 9,944) to RM88,000 (£ 19,000) per international student per annum. Generally, however, Malaysia earns about RM7.2 billion (£ 1.4 billion) per annum from international students. "Given the rising cost of education and other related costs at 10 % per annum," this higher education sector is expected to generate not less than RM15.6 billion (£ 3 billion) when it achieves its target of 200,000 international students by 2020. As of March 2019, the enrolment of international students in Malaysian universities is 127,582 with about 70 % of this population of international students enrolled in private higher institutions (Chin, 2019; Malay Mail, 2019).

Organisations perceived to be having "a weak reputation, risks losing its customers" according to research (e.g., Maor, Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2016; Rimkutè, 2018). Hence, the findings of the present study are expected to provide the Management of IUKL a view of how they are being perceived by their international students. This study examined international students because of their recent influx in Malaysia which boost its education enterprises and globalise their standing. International students have proven to be very important to any university across the globe. Only a university with a growing number of international students can be termed as an international university (Soliman et al., 2019).

Mbous et al. (Mbous et al., 2022) assert that international students are enormously beneficial to the United States and bring knowledge and skills to the classrooms, new experiences to the laboratories, provide campuses with a good level of diversity, and create and promote a long-term relationship between American educational institutes and abroad. To provide an understanding of the impact of mutual export of international students for higher education between Asian and OECD countries, Beghin and Park (Beghin, Park, 2021) employed "a gravity equation approach

using panel data from 1998 to 2016.” However, Mbou et al.’s (Mbou et al., 2022) study found no evidence that the reputation of a country’s universities explains student flows.

What probably leads to growing studies on corporate reputation in recent times is the fact that it has become an inter-disciplinary construct with conventional meaning. It thus attracts research in fields as diverse as economics, marketing, management, psychology communication (Eger et al., 2021), among others. In management alone, Christensen and Gornitzka (Christensen, Gornitzka, 2019) recognise the numerous theories that contribute to our understanding of this construct. Expectedly, corporate reputation definitions and operationalisation are muddled (Ponzi et al., 2011).

Ponzi et al. (Ponzi et al., 2011) revealed that corporate reputation continues to gain interest among scholars and practitioners. According to them, the average number of scholarly articles published between the years 2000 to 2003 was five times the average between 1990 and 2000. This indicates a tremendous increase of interest in corporate reputation among scholars and other commentators on social issues. Ponzi et al. (2011) further posit that all scholars agree that corporate reputation is a valuable, intangible asset because they influence consumers decisions about the companies whose products and services they will buy, creditors and investors about both the companies to which they will lend and job-seekers decision about the companies for which they are prepared to work (Ponzi et al., 2011). Various authors have also suggested that reputation is an economic asset because it influences the profitability of companies and is unique and inimitable (Esa et al., 2022; Ponzi et al., 2011; Singh, Misra, 2021; Subbarayalu, 2022).

It has been shown that CEOs perceive the importance of reputation management with utmost importance. A study found that 90 % of CEOs prove that stakeholders especially customers, will consider corporate reputations importance when they decide to purchase a product or service (Abdallah, Abdul Aziz, 2013; Taamneh et al., 2022). According to Global Corporate Reputation Index (GCRI, 2020: 2, 7), reputation has a different importance to organisations. Most world company executives that were surveyed by GCRI (GCRI, 2020) believe that the reputation of their companies is strong, with 45 % of them reporting ‘very strong.’ Only 3 % of them reported a ‘very weak’ company reputation. A similar opinion was reported by global businesses. Some company CEOs “attribute at least 76 % of their market value to company reputation.” GCRI (GCRI, 2020: 2, 7) also made a critical finding that reputation is regarded as ‘omnidriven”, meaning that “a company’s reputation is influenced by a variety of factors, with no one driver having a greater impact than all of the rest. This lack of distinction suggests that companies can no longer solely focus on and prioritize just a few key drivers of reputation but on many. From quality of employees to quality of products, to financial performance, to corporate culture, everything matters to managing corporate reputation today.”

Furthermore, GCRI indicates that reputation approximately accounted for about \$ 750 million for the organisations accruing large revenues in both developed and less developed of about “\$ 500 million” and “\$ 250 million” respectively. GCRI’s (GCRI, 2020: 11) findings also underscore that “Reputation is important to the governing board in all industries. More than nine in 10 executives in six industries say reputation is important to their board: consumer goods at 95 %, telecommunications, IT, technology (93 %), energy, natural resources (93 %) retail (93 %), and media and industrial, manufacturing both at 92 %.”

Nielsen (Nielsen, 2012) argues that an organisation is perceived as having a weak reputation when only 16 % of people say it would buy its product or services. Those with an average reputation might attract up to 41 % and those with an excellent reputation can be up to 64 %. However, it can be noted that much of the literature that is available today discusses reputation in the field of private manufacturing and service companies. The importance of this is only lately discovered by the public sectors and remained many underused resources (Kuoppakangas et al., 2019).

A study on the corporate reputation of public sector suggests that reputation does not feature directly in law, but the “stakeholders can freely voice their opinions on the competence and trustworthiness of public sector organisations” (Kuoppakangas et al., 2019). Kuoppakangas et al.’s (Kuoppakangas et al., 2019) study found five reputation factors which include authority, trust, service, esteem, and efficiency. They conclude that the reputation of public sector organisations among frequent stakeholders was quite neutral except for a rather high trust. Hence it can be argued that the reputation of the public sector can be assessed, and it is important for public organisations to take their reputation in high esteem.

In their study on the consumer perspective of the high education service sector in Malaysia, Ali et al. (Ali et al., 2016) suggest that “the reputation values of institutions are deeply established on the mind of the students.” In addition, stability of organisations, loyalty of employees and performance, easy recruitment, decreased cost of transaction, profit, and decreased transaction costs are found to be impacted by reputation (Beghin, Park, 2021; Pires, Trez, 2018) all of which are particularly attractive attributes to public sector organisations struggling with financial and political pressure. Reputation assessment uncovers whether organisations have maintained their covenanted promise or not (Knight, Morshidi, 2011; Shahjahan et al., 2022; Subbarayalu, 2022).

However, unlike Nuseir and El Refae (Nuseir, El Refae, 2021) who studied the factors that led to enrolment of students to UAE universities; Rashid and Mustafa (2022) who investigated the effect of corporate reputation antecedents and stakeholder loyalty on enrolment in Malawian universities, Adeyanju et al. (Adeyanju et al., 2020) who studied factors that influence students’ choice of public universities in Nigeria, Christensen and Gornitzka (Christensen, Gornitzka, 2019) who studied the reputations of public sectors, Cao et al. (2022) who investigated the correlation between developing countries’ population and their universities’ international reputation with a focus on Chinese universities, Sugiharto et al. (Sugiharto et al., 2022) who studied correlation between student loyalty reputation of higher educational institution focusing on a polytechnic in Bandung, Indonesia, Ajayi and Mmutle (Ajayi, Mmutle, 2021) who investigated how to create corporate reputation through strategic communication of corporate social responsibility in South African corporate organisations, Eger et al. (Eger et al., 2021) who examined how universities communicate with publics using social media platforms, Gruzina et al. (Gruzina et al., 2021) who examined the creation of effective cooperation between Russian youth and foreign higher institutions in research and development, Chernikova et al. (Chernikova et al., 2021), who investigated the adaptation of foreign students at South-Russian universities, Kozyrev et al. (Kozyrev et al., 2019) who empirically studied “special aspects of management of higher educational institutions through the use of correlation analysis, Mascarenhas et al. (Mascarenhas et al., 2018) who performed systematic literature review on cooperation in university-industry, Pestereva et al. (Pestereva et al., 2019) who studied internationalisation of education focusing on “Eurasian education and research ecosystem”, and similarly, Aula and Tienari (Aula, Tienari, 2011) whose study also focused on the formation of educational ecosystem by university conglomerates for the purpose of boosting their reputation, the present study investigates perception of university reputation by foreign students.

Theoretical Framework: The concept of reputation has received great attention from scholars of various fields. Literature on reputation is appreciably piling up (e.g., Aula, Tienari, 2011; Kaur, Singh, 2018; Khoi, 2021). In addition, scholars have developed different research models which help us to quantify the intangible nature of companies. To this end, it can be found suitable to use a new model designed by Reputation Institute called the RepTrak model (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016). “RepTrak is a tool developed from extensive international research which provides organisations with a standardised framework that can be used to quantify their reputation.” RepTrak has seven dimensions and 23 drivers. It also has a pulse that determines what reputation is. Based on the assessment of the seven dimensions, six of the dimensions are not applicable in the present study, only citizenship is. However, to provide comprehensive literature on the model, a review of the literature on the five of the most related dimensions is performed (Chan et al., 2018).

The dimensions of the RepTek model are as follows:

(1) *Leadership:* this is the act of a leading a group of people or organisation. It is part of the success of any organisation to establish a competent and focused leadership. Any organisation that has failed to establish good leadership, such has planned to fail from the beginning. Leadership is very important; it reflects the capacity to direct, support and strategic competence to create value for an organisation. In this model, leadership has three drivers, which include: the establishment of a strong and respected leader, a clear vision for the future and well-organised leadership.

First, it adds to the reputation of an organisation for its leader to be responsible. Reputable leaders must establish legitimacy, trust, credibility, and emotional connections with their constituents. The legitimacy of a leader is described by two factors which are authority and validity. Authority permits leaders to lead; leaders of the universities got authority from the senate or employers. Whereas validity has to do with what a leader is a period or which a leader is expected to stay in office. Credible leaders need to establish a vision, communicate effectively, build strong

teams, and empower employees. In addition, a leader will create trust with his stakeholders when he acts in honour best on morality and ethics. His management should transmit and create an ethical and conducive working environment as research has shown that “31 % of employees said that unethical culture in business will lead them to act unethically too” (Chan et al., 2018; Prado, Ballabriga, 2016).

Second, a leader should have a clear vision, in the discharge of his duties. Vision answers why University is established. It identifies what universities are set to achieve. Following the visions of the Malaysian Universities by their leadership would build more reputation to the institutions as their covenanted identity matched their actual and perceived identities. The third point under leadership is for the universities to be well organised. The seriousness of an organisation can be perceived in how well it is having organised itself. The qualities of being well organised are both internal and external. The internal has to do with how well their leadership is emotionally connected to the followership. Vision must be translated to the understanding of the employees, ensure good downward communication, allow for upward communication for feedback, as well as the adoption of a win-win situation between the leadership and employees (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016).

(2) *Products and services*: the nature of products and/or services also adds to the reputation of the employee. A client should be treated very well. An organisation should have good value for finance, high quality goods and services, satisfactory manner of handling complaints, best ways to meet the clients’ needs. In the case of this study, universities largely deal with services that are teaching the students and research. Malaysian universities have been a reservoir to students across the globe; these different students should be treated well so that they enjoy their stay in the universities and this by implication adds to the good reputation of the universities. This can be done through different gestures such as employing of qualified teachers, enough teaching aids, well-furnished classrooms, functional library, laboratories, research tools, hostel accommodations and residential colleges, social centres and cafeterias, sports facilities and transportation, market and above all good employer student relationship (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016).

(3) *Innovation*: the RepTrack’s model suggests that innovation can be used to examine organisational reputation. According to Prado and Ballabriga (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016), “Innovation is the process of translating an idea or invention into goods or service that creates or for which customers will pay. To be regarded as an innovation, an idea must be replicable at an economical cost and must satisfy a specific need. Innovation involves the deliberate application of information, imagination, and initiative in deriving greater or different values from resources and including all processes by which new ideas are generated and converted into useful products.” Freeman’s Innovation Theory describes “innovation as “the main growth factor for an organisation, producing competitiveness that would be achieved through investment in R&D [Research & Development] and other intangible efforts” (Lundval, 2016). Similarly, Vargo et al. (Vargo et al., 2020: 527) describe innovation as “the [work of] several managers that interact with each other and during the interaction process, they are designing, emerging, and exchanging knowledge with each other.” This dimension also has three drivers, which include: being first to market, adapting to changes and innovative company (Prado, Ballabriga, 2016). “It is part of an organisation’s reputation to be innovative” (Balina et al., 2020; Lundval, 2016).

(4) *Governance*: governance is about how transparent the management is, whether cooperation behaves ethically and fair in the way they do business. In other words, effective governance improves financial and operational transparency. This is because it decreases the information asymmetries between insiders and outside investors. By adopting governance provisions, it may improve financial transparency because it accentuates information disclosure (Hlel et al., 2020). Jang et al. (Jang et al., 2016) defined governance as a company’s policy in which the policy is presented in standard writing that accentuates the company’s code of ethics. In other words, it is to create a high-level normative principle and redefine how a business should be conducted in a moral context of business.

According to Ponzi et al. (Ponzi et al., 2011), governance has three dimensions. The first is transparency, which is defined as “a principle that allows those affected by administrative decisions, business transactions or charitable work to know not only the basic facts and figures but also the mechanisms and processes.” It is the duty of civil servants, managers, and trustees to act visibly, predictably, and understandably. In this sense, a university organisation needs to be more transparent as the contract between the university and students does not end with the students’

graduation. The second driver is ethical behaviour which “concerns acting in ways consistent with society and individual typically feels are good values. Ethical behaviour tends to be good for business and involves demonstrating respect for key moral principles that include fairness, honesty, equality, dignity, diversity, and individual rights” (Balina et al., 2020; Aryati et al., 2018; Pires, Trez, 2018). The third driver is fairness. Napoli (Napoli, 2021) defines fairness as “providing [people] with a balance of opposing viewpoint.” The notion of fairness rests on the assumption that each person matters in them and is more than a number – to put it formally, persons are separate bearers of dignity and rights. Thus, fairness adds to the university reputation.

(5) *Citizenship*: corporate citizenship is “the extent to which businesses are socially responsible for meeting legal, ethical, and economic responsibilities placed on them by shareholders. The aim is for businesses to create higher standards of living and quality of life in the communities in which they operate, while still preserving profitability for stakeholders” (Campopiano et al., 2019; Homer, 2021; Singh, Jamil, 2021). Corporate citizenship is a business leadership process that focuses on a company’s impact on society and its relationships with stakeholders (Waddock, 2017) as well as its “strategies on the operationalisation of its relationship that have an impact on stakeholders and the natural environments” (Homer, 2021). Lewis et al. (Lewis et al., 2019) while defining citizenship according to institution theory said it is a business that has a long-term existence in the industry; it has to do with the area of economic, legal, and ethical responsibility of industry. However, the RepTrak drivers of citizenship are not different from what the above scholars said. Citizenship has three drivers: supporting a good cause, contribution to society, and protection of the environment (Campopiano et al., 2019).

Conceptual Framework of the Study: This study focuses on the citizenship dimension of the RepTrak model. Therefore, the independent variable of the study is only one, which is, citizenship (excluding the remaining variables). The dependent variable, which is, reputation, was measured based on four sub-variables, namely esteem, feelings, admiration, and trust (e.g., Fombrun et al., 2000) (see Figure 1). Hence, only one hypothesis was tested, and it is formulated as below.

Hypothesis of the Study: Given the preceding literature review, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H1: There is significant relationship between IUKL citizenship and its reputation.

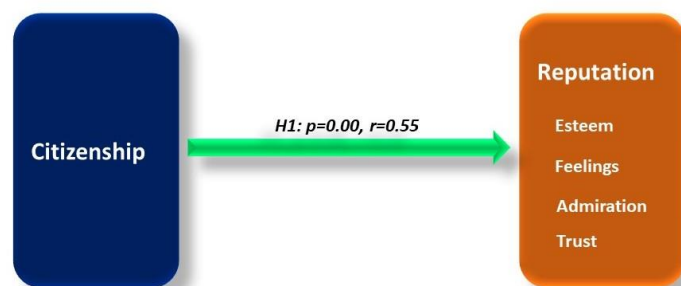


Fig. 1. The conceptual framework of the study

2. Materials and methods

Research Design and Population: Given the nature of this study, which focuses on providing an understanding of the influence/correlation of the population of foreign or international students on/with the reputation of the Infrastructure University, Kuala Lumpur (IUKL) reputation as a corporate academic organisation, survey research approach was deemed suitable especially given that a large sample of the international students was involved (e.g., Singh, 2022). The data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The population of this study was the international students at IUKL, Malaysia. A student was considered international once he/she is not an indigene of Malaysia and had registered at IUKL.

Sample and Sampling Technique: Surveying a whole population of foreign students at IUKL “may be practically impossible, hence the need for the selection of a representative sample from the sampling frame” (Singh, 2022). That permits the generalisation of data and “elements of the population have the probability of having equal chances of being selected in the sampling process” (Singh, 2022), a simple random sampling technique was employed to recruit the respondents of the study. Because the sample is chosen randomly, “the result is assumed to be the reflective view of all the respondents” (Wimmer, Dominick, 2013). The population of this study was 1,852.

However, using the Krejcie and Morgan's (Krejcie, Morgan, 1970) sampling calculator, 319 respondents are enough to represent the population.

Location of the Study: This study was conducted at IUKL. IUKL was established in 1998 and it was the centre of Kumpulan Ikram tertiary education activities. In 1999, Ikram College had its name changed to Ikram College of Technology (ICT). On 13th September 2003, ICT was upgraded by the Malaysian Ministry of High Education "to the status of a university college with a new name Kuala Lumpur Infrastructure University College (KLIUC)." In 2012, KLIUC has further upgraded to a full-pledged university with the name Infrastructure University, Kula Lumpur. IUKL's vision is to be a world-renowned infrastructure university, and its mission is to strive for excellence "in various fields of infrastructure by providing quality education, advanced knowledge, state-of-the-art technology, and excellent professional services." Consequently, many international students prefer to study there. International students constitute (1,850) more than 40 % of the student population (4,550) in the university. Thus, they are presumed to be important publics through whose opinion IUKL's reputation can be measured (IUKL Website, 2022).

IUKL was chosen because of the following reasons. First, unlike most public universities which provide admission to international students mainly at postgraduate levels only, IUKL is a private university that admits both undergraduate and postgraduate international students. Second, the population of International students at the university is very significant – it constitutes up to 40 % of the entire population of the students. Thus, because of cultural and social differences, it is important to assess their perception of the university's reputation. Third, IUKL witnesses an important landmark in its history. It used to be a college and now a full-pledged university. It is undergoing massive transformation including in the areas of the rebranding of its name, logo, corporate colour(s), identity, image, etc. Finally, physical infrastructures are rehabilitated, and new ultra-modern buildings are under constructed. Hence, this study deemed IUKL's reputation is worth assessing to determine whether these have any influence on the students (IUKL Website, 2022).

IUKL has been in the education industry for more than 20 years providing quality education and various professional services excellently well. It also has a global affiliation with top-ranking universities in the United Kingdom, Nepal, Indonesia, Australia, China, Pakistan, etc. It was rated 5-star in the teaching and facilities category in the 2020 QS rating (IUKL Website, 2022).

Research Instruments, Adaption, Pre-Testing, and Organisation: The research instrument used in this study was RepTrak, which measures seven dimensions: leadership, financial performance, workplace, innovation, governance, products and services, and citizenship. The model was adapted because measuring 'workplace' and 'financial performance' do not apply and are irrelevant to students. Financial performance is confidential and cannot be assessed by students while the workplace has to do with the feelings of the staff. To obtain a reliable result, only five dimensions were adopted. In addition, RepTrak pulse was also tested, which serves as the dependent variable, and it encompasses esteem, feelings, admiration, and trust.

Pilot study: a pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the RepTrak model. Twenty-one (10 %) questionnaires were administered to international students on campus – at the Café, the Postgraduate School and Bloc A. The result shows a reliability score of 0.92 Cronbach's Alpha as shown in Table 1.

Operationalisation of Variables: The adapted dimension of the RepTrak model in this study is citizenship. The dependent variable is reputation, which is based on the emotional appeal of the students' high esteem, admiration, respect, and trust as well as their good feelings toward IUKL. Thus, to determine IUKL's reputation, the citizenship dimension was tested.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument: The instrument employed a 7-point Likert scale. The respondents' choices were ranked in order from 1) strongly disagree, 2) partially disagree, 3) disagree, 4) not sure, 5) partially agree, 6) agree and 7) strongly agree. Likert scale was employed because it is very precise and presents no ambiguity, it can lend itself to various statistical manipulation and analysis and can be used in both natural and behavioural research. It has all the attributes of a good scale: definite order and standardised distance. Besides, interval ratios such as the Likert scale have high validity than ordinal or nominal scales. They can be measured in arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and variance (Ponzi et al., 2011).

The RepTrak model has strong scale reliability (Ponzi et al., 2011). This means that it has steady and stable measurements across time and the various items in the instrument. The model has convergent validity with the variance extracted from all the independent variables to the latent

variable as 0.92, which has exceeded the benchmark of 0.50 (e.g., [Ponzi et al, 2011](#)) as shown in [Table 1](#), above. “Convergence validity is assuring that the variables are valid to be measured and corresponding to the concept” ([Wimmer, Dominick, 2013](#)).

Table 1. Reliability of the Test of the RepTrak Model-Based Instrument

| Scale's Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha of RepTrak Model | Number of items |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 0.92 | 0.96 | 21 |

Data Analysis and Statistical Significance: The study measures the data from descriptive data such as the central tendency to inferential data. Frequency analysis was adopted to describe each of the datasets. Inferential data were also measured to identify the relationship between two variables. The interval scale is a continuous variable; hence the statistical tool that was used is Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis. The value for a Pearson's correlation can fall between 0.00 to 1.00. Pearson's correlation is best and largely used in linear relationships. It shows whether the relation is positive or negative. The relationship is said to be positive when both variables increase or decrease; whereas it is also said to be negative when one variable is decreases and the other increases. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 23.

3. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between IUKL's international students' citizenship and its corporate reputation. Only the citizenship dimension of the RepTrak model was examined, hypothesised, and tested in the study's conceptual framework. Malaysia has grown in popularity as a higher education destination, particularly among Asian, Middle Eastern, and African students, over the last decade. IUKL is a Malaysian private university located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital city, with approximately 40 % of its students coming from various countries around the world. As a result of Malaysia's advantageous position in the educational ecosystem, many research studies focusing on international students, including the current study, have been conducted.

The study used a survey method to recruit participants, who were chosen at random. As a result, the discovery can be generalised ([Singh, 2022](#)). Our lone hypothesis has confirmed that there is a positive correlation between citizenship and IUKL reputation. This also demonstrates that IUKL international students have a high regard for their institution of study, have a positive attitude toward it, and love and trust it. The RepTrak model used in this study was tested in various countries around the world and found to be suitable despite cultural differences. As a result of the pilot study, the instrument is found to be valid with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.92. to collect data for analysis, 350 international students at IUKL were chosen at random from a total of 1,582 to participate. In light of the two objectives of the study, the respondents' demographics are discussed first followed by the correlation dimension of the study.

Respondents' Sociodemographic Characteristics: This sub-section discusses the findings of the study on Objective 1, which seeks to provide descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents of this study.

Some of the most important sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents are gender and age. By gender, 293 (88.5 %) of the respondents are males, 38 (11.5 %) females. This is not surprising as most of the students are from Muslim dominated countries, and in Islam, women have some restrictions on travelling without Mahram (male companion) (e.g., [Nisha, Cheung, 2022](#)). However, this is contrary to Wan's ([Wan, 2018](#)) study which found that female students' enrollment in Malaysian higher educational institutions is higher than that of male students. Arguably, there could be no contradiction if his study were on local Malaysian students. While by age, most of the respondents (203, 66.9 %) are aged 21-25 years while the remaining 61 respondents are aged 26-30 years. While this indicates that most of the respondents are under the age of 30, all of them are youth (young people). On marital status, a vast majority of them (304, 91.8 %) are single, with only 24 of them married. Thus, the survey questionnaire was largely completed by single international students.

Moreover, of the 331 respondents, 158 have been studying at IUKL for one to two years while 98 of them have been studying there for three to four years. Hence, most, or virtually all the respondents have some experience with the university's modus operandi. While most of the respondents are from non-Arab countries, many of them are. Most of the respondents (85 %) are undergraduates. It has been observed that since the September 11 attacks in the United States international students, especially those of Arab origins enroll in Malaysian universities (Ahrani et al., 2019; Alzubaidi, Rechards, 2010; Chin, 2019; Nadeem et al., 2020; Sirat, 2008). Although the respondents are enrolled in various faculties of IUKL, most of them are enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering with a sizeable number of them enrolled in faculties of business and information technology. This suggests that courses related to engineering, business management and information and communication technology (ICT) are the most popular among international students at IUKL.

Correlation between Citizenship and Reputation: In this sub-section, findings of the study regarding Objective 2 are discussed, which seek to provide empirical evidence on the correlation between citizenship and reputation.

The citizen dimension of the RepTrak model:- corporate citizenship is a business leadership process that focuses on an organisation's impact on society, and its relationships with stakeholders (Waddock, 2017), as well as the strategies used in the operationalisation of its relationship with and impact on stakeholders and the natural environment (Lee et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2020).

This study focuses on an area that is not substantially researched, which is measuring the corporate reputation of a university considering the citizenship of its public (students). International students who are from diverse countries were recruited as respondents. The importance of having a well-defined reputation using the citizenship dimension of the RepTrak model was examined. International students will tend to globally recommend to others (their friends, peers, colleagues, etc.) educational institutions they found very reputable. Reputation is expressed as high esteem, love, respect, and trust. Building on these foundations would lead to the growth of not only universities but also other educational institutions and similar organisations.

Both international and local students tend to seek to gain admission in educational institutions they perceive as having quality teaching and a good reputation (Ahrari et al., 2019; Khoshtaria et al., 2020; Najimdeen et al., 2021). Moreover, according to the RepTrak model, we can understand that quality education is even part of reputation itself (e.g., Ponzi et al., 2011). Thus, when higher educational institutions have diversified citizenship, it is much likely that such institutions would be held with high esteem by their publics – they would be respected, loved, and trusted. Corporate reputation is supposed to be measured continuously to determine the strengths or weaknesses of an educational institution, and most importantly to ascertain which aspect of it needs changes. IUKL should invest more in its reputation through the creation and sustenance of academic programs and an environment capable of attracting more international students. With this, it can attain the highest level of corporate reputation in the higher education industry. As employees are changed, priorities and strategies are also changed. These changes can affect the reputation of an educational organisation at any time. Thus, reputation management should be relentlessly pursued.

According to the RepTrak model, the concept of citizenship has at least three drivers, and it is not a complete departure from what was amplified by precited scholars. The first is to determine the extent to which IUKL is committed to the environment. The second is to determine whether the institution supports a good cause, while the third driver focuses on the positive influence of the university in society. After all, the finding, which is consistent with the existing literature (e.g., Campopiano et al., 2019; Homer, 2021; Lee et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2020), shows a positive correlation between IUKL citizenship and its reputation at a very strong significant level. Hence, we can say that this finding suggests that IUKL is perceived by international students as an educational institution that contributes toward the development of society. Similarly, we can confidently argue that when IUKL prioritises the citizenship of its students, there is a tendency that its reputation would be elevated higher its fame globally – thus, it could attract more international students to enroll in its various academic programmes something that could enlarge its revenue drive. In other words, this study's hypothesis (H₁) is retained, that there is a positive relationship between IUKL citizenship and its reputation (refer to Fig. 1 in Section 1, under Sub-Section *Conceptual Framework of the Study*).

3. Results

Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Respondents: This sub-section answers Objective 1 of this study, which seeks to provide descriptive analysis of the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics.

As can be seen in Table 2, of the 331 respondents, 293 (88.5 %) are male international students with the remaining 38 (11.5 %) being female students. On the age of the respondents, Table 2 shows that 203 (61 %) of the respondents are aged from 21 to 25 years, 61 (18 %) are aged from 26 to 30 years while 56 (17 %) are aged from 16 to 20 years. Concisely, all the respondents are young people below the age of 30 years.

Table 2. Respondents' Demographic Data (n = 331)

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| <i>Gender</i> | | |
| Male | 293 | 88.5 |
| Female | 38 | 11.5 |
| Total | 331 | 100 |
| <i>Age</i> | | |
| 16-20 | 56 | 16.9 |
| 21-25 | 203 | 61.3 |
| 26-30 | 61 | 18.4 |
| 31-35 | 8 | 2.4 |
| 36 or older | 3 | 0.9 |
| Total | 331 | 100 |
| <i>Marital Status</i> | | |
| Single | 304 | 91.8 |
| Married | 24 | 7.3 |
| Divorced | 2 | 0.6 |
| Widow | 1 | 0.3 |
| Total | 331 | 100 |
| <i>Duration of Stay</i> | | |
| Less than 1 year | 48 | 14.5 |
| 1-2 | 153 | 46.2 |
| 3-4 | 98 | 29.6 |
| More than 4 years | 32 | 9.7 |
| Total | 331 | 100 |
| <i>Respondents According to their Nationalities</i> | | |
| Sudan | 86 | 26.0 |
| Nigeria | 55 | 16.6 |
| China | 35 | 10.6 |
| Yemen | 43 | 13.0 |
| Somalia | 10 | 3.0 |
| Libya | 32 | 9.7 |
| Mauritania | 1 | 0.3 |
| Bangladesh | 2 | 0.6 |
| Oman | 4 | 1.2 |
| Syria | 4 | 1.2 |
| India | 4 | 1.2 |
| Indonesia | 3 | 0.9 |
| Iraq | 9 | 2.7 |
| Iran | 3 | 0.9 |
| Pakistan | 5 | 1.5 |
| Maldives | 3 | .09 |
| Kenya | 2 | 0.6 |
| Jordan | 2 | 0.6 |
| Bhutan | 3 | 0.9 |
| Palestine | 2 | 0.6 |

| | | |
|---|-----|------|
| Chad | 4 | 1.2 |
| Djibouti | 2 | 0.6 |
| Egypt | 3 | 0.9 |
| Myanmar | 2 | 0.6 |
| America | 1 | 0.3 |
| Bahrain | 1 | 0.3 |
| Saudi Arabia | 3 | 0.9 |
| Sri Lanka | 1 | 0.3 |
| Belize | 1 | 0.3 |
| Kazakhstan | 1 | 0.3 |
| Tunisia | 1 | 0.3 |
| Ghana | 3 | 0.9 |
| Total | 331 | 100 |
| <i>Respondents based on their Levels of Study</i> | | |
| Undergraduate | 283 | 85.5 |
| Postgraduate | 48 | 14.5 |
| Total | 331 | 100 |
| <i>Respondents based on their Faculties</i> | | |
| Engineering & Technology | 142 | 42.9 |
| Architecture & Build Technology | 5 | 1.5 |
| Communication & Languages | 34 | 10.3 |
| Business Infrastructure | 78 | 23.6 |
| Information Technology | 70 | 21.1 |
| Applied Science & Foundational Studies | 2 | 0.6 |
| Total | 331 | 100 |

Regarding marital status, [Table 2](#) shows that 304 (91.8 %) of the respondents were single and that only 24 students (7.3 %) were married. Two students were divorced while only one was a widow. Regarding how long students stayed in the institution, [Table 2](#) (above) shows that 152 students (46.2 %) stayed for one to two years. Most (98, 29 %) of the students stayed for three to four years, 48 of them (14.5 %) stayed for less than a year, while 32 of them (9.7 %) stayed for more than four years. Regarding the respondents' countries of origin, [Table 2](#) (above) shows that of the 331 students, 86 (26 %) were from Sudan, 55 (16.6 %) from Nigeria, 43 (13 %) from Yemen, 35 (10.6 %) from China, 32 (9.7 %) from Libya, and 10 (3 %) from Somalia. The remaining 70 (21.1 %) hail from other 26 countries with less than 10 students each. These include nine Iraqis, five Pakistanis, and so on. Regarding the respondents' level of studies, [Table 2](#) shows that 283 (85.5 %) students participated in the study with 48 of them (14.5 %) postgraduate. Regarding the respondents' faculty of study, [Table 2](#) (above) shows that 142 (42 %) are from the Faculty of Engineering and Technology Infrastructure. The remaining high percentages include 70 (21.1 %) respondents from the Faculty of Information Technology Infrastructure and 35 (10.3 %) from the Faculty of Communication and Language Studies.

Measurement for the Correlation Variables: This sub-section answers Objective 2 of this study, which seeks to determine the correlation between the citizenship dimension of the RepTek model and reputation.

The RepTek model's dimension that was used to assess IUKL's reputation is citizenship. Respondents responded to the statement whether IUKL is responsive to the environment differently. Most of them (116, 35 %) agreed that the institution is responsive to the environment, 106 (32 %) of them partially agree while 52 (15.7 %) strongly agree. However, 30 disagree, 7 partially disagree and 52 of them agree. The mean score of the responses in this question is 5.38 as shown in [Table 3](#).

Regarding the statement whether IUKL supports a good cause, 129 (39 %) of the respondents agree that the institution supports a good cause, 100 (30.2 %) partially agree while 62 (18.7 %) strongly agree. However, 26 of them indicated they are not sure, 6 disagree, 6 partially disagree and 2 strongly disagree. The mean of the total responses is 5.57 as shown in [Table 3](#). Regarding the statement whether IUKL has a positive influence on society, 112 (33.8 %) of the respondents agree that the institution influences society, 103 (31.1 %) partially agree, 77 (23.3 %) strongly agree, 20 of them are not sure, 12 partially disagree, and only 3 of them strongly disagree as shown in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Perception of IUKL's Citizenship (n = 331)

| Statement | Strongly disagree | Partially disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Partially agree | Agree | Strongly agree | Mean score |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|-----------------|--------|----------------|------------|
| IUKL is responsible for the environment. | 0.6 % | 2.1 % | 5.4 % | 9.1 % | 32 % | 35 % | 15.7 % | 5.38 % |
| IUKL supports a good cause. | 0.6 % | 1.8 % | 1.8 % | 7.9 % | 30.2 % | 39 % | 18.7 % | 5.57 % |
| IUKL has a positive influence on society. | 0.9 % | 1.2 % | 3.6 % | 6 % | 31.1 % | 33.8 % | 23.3 % | 5.60 % |

Table 4 contains data that were generated from measuring the dependent variable, reputation. Regarding the statement whether the international students have high esteem toward IUKL, 109 (33.9 %) of the respondents agree that they have high esteem for the institution, 107 (32.3 %) of them partially agree, and 69 (20.8 %) strongly agree. However, only 28 of them indicated they are not sure, 13 disagree, 3 partially disagree and 2 strongly disagree. The mean score of all the responses is 5.53 as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Percentage Distribution of the Students' Perception of IUKL's Reputation (RepTrak pulse) (n = 331)

| Statement | Strongly disagree | Partially disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Partially agree | Agree | Strongly agree | Mean Score |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|-----------------|--------|----------------|------------|
| I have high esteem for IUKL. | 0.6 % | 0.9 % | 3.9 % | 8.5 % | 32.3 % | 33.9 % | 20.8 % | 5.53 % |
| I admire and respect IUKL. | 0.6 % | 0.9 % | 1.8 % | 4.8 % | 33.5 % | 36.9 % | 21.5 % | 5.66 % |
| I trust IUKL. | 0.6 % | 0.9 % | 1.8 % | 5.4 % | 43.4 % | 37.5 % | 19.3 % | 5.62 % |
| I have good feelings toward IUKL. | 0.6 % | 0.9 % | 1.5 % | 3.3 % | 32 % | 32 % | 29.6 % | 5.60 % |

Regarding the statement, whether the respondents admire and respect IUKL, 122 (33.9 %) agree that they admire and respect IUKL, 111 (32.3 %) partially agree, 71 (20.8 %) strongly agree, 16 are not sure, 6 disagree, 3 partially disagree, and 2 students strongly disagree. The mean of the total responses is 5.56 as shown in Table 4. Regarding the issue of trust, 124 (37.5 %) of the respondents agree that they trust IUKL, 114 (34.4 %) partially agree, 64 (19.3 %) strongly agree, 16 indicated not sure, 3 disagree, and 2 strongly disagree. The total mean of the responses is 5.62, which is quite high (see Table 4). The last statement was whether the respondents have good feelings about IUKL. Many of them (106, 32 %) agree that they have good feelings toward the university, 106 (32 %) partially agree, 98 (29.6 %) strongly agree, 11 of them are not sure, 5 disagree while 2 strongly disagree. The mean score of the responses is 5.80, which is the highest (refer to Table 4).

Determining the Correlation between Citizenship and Reputation: Table 5 shows that IUKL citizenship is moderately correlated with its reputation, where Person's $r = .55$ and the significance level is $p = .00$. Hence, we can say that H1 was accepted. This result is also reflected in Figure 1 (refer to Section 1, under Sub-Section *Conceptual Framework of the Study*).

Table 5. Relationship between IUKL Citizenship and its Reputation

| Variables | <i>P</i> | <i>r</i> |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| Citizenship → Reputation | 0.00 | 0.55** |

Note: **Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

5. Conclusion

The implications of the findings of this study highlight the importance of reputation in an organisation as inevitable. For instance, Ponzi et al. also reiterate that reputation “can be incorporated with other measures of interest; be standardized cross-culturally; gathered perceptual data from a large sample of diverse participants; and survey can be distributed by both traditional and modern way that distinguish corporate reputation construct and its drivers” (Ponzi et al., 2011).

IUKL’s reputation was rated very high by the respondents even though only moderate correlation was found between the variables. This suggests that when IUKL reaffirms its commitment to a diverse student citizenship, incorporating more international students, its reputation would be favourably globacated and tremendously soar among its peers, especially those educational institutions that admit only local students. Moreover, the research was conducted in IUKL, which is a new generation private university. Even though the reputation of one educational institution may not be overtaken by another, it manifests that “studying large public universities could yield better results in terms of research importance because of their popularity.”

Limitations and Recommendations: This study focuses on an international private university in Malaysia, IUKL and the sample is limited to the international students at the university. Although because of the research design that was used and sample size the findings of this study can be generalised, the findings should, however, be interpreted with caution. In addition, this study only examines one of the five dimensions of the RepTrak model, which is, citizenship and only correlation study were performed between the variables (citizenship and reputation), caution should be maintained considering the limitations mentioned above while interpreting the data.

Future research should focus on postgraduates rather than undergraduate students. This is because of their advanced knowledge and maturity. This is also in line with Dahari and Abduh that “more research has been focusing on undergraduates; hence future research must focus on postgraduate students” (Dahari, Abduh, 2011).

Finally, curious researchers should explore other angles in reputation research including comparative studies between international and local students on the reputation assessment of their institutions, measuring the reputation of two or more universities to compare the differences between students’ rating of different institutions, and conducting a qualitative or quantitative study focusing on lecturers, policymakers, and independent writers or researchers to measure the reputation of at least top Malaysian universities.

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