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**An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian
higher education: Goals, achievements and challenges**

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore and construct an in-depth understanding of the work of community colleges as new higher education institutions in the Malaysian context. Attention has been focussed on their goals, achievements and challenges within higher education. Beginning in the new millennium, community colleges started to appear in most higher education systems in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, following a recommendation of UNESCO and the World Bank. These colleges were established worldwide, strongly in the USA, primarily as short-cycle and two-year institutions for certificate/diploma qualifications and/or as pathways to further education. Community colleges often have been described as the people's colleges, rural colleges, or an alternative institution, suggesting an educational service for non-regular groups of learners in higher education. Nevertheless, an embedded quality of community colleges is adherence to lifelong learning principles, especially in their new settings in Southeast Asia.

This qualitative inquiry used a multiple case study approach to examine four community colleges from four different locations in Malaysia. Empirical data were gathered from three levels of these institutions (directors, teachers, and students) via semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion and individually administered questionnaire at each site. Using thematic analysis of data, the researcher discussed the findings grouped under a lifelong learning framework to gain a multi-faceted understanding of community colleges' provision and functions in Malaysian higher education.

The conceptual framework that significantly shaped this constructive-interpretive study included discussion of global market developments (human capital, globalisation and neoliberalism, a knowledge economy, and lifelong learning), and of key lifelong learning domains (economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal fulfilment).

Findings from this study suggest that goals, achievements and challenges of the community colleges are best understood in terms of serving disadvantaged sub-populations in Malaysian society. Disadvantaged populations constitute "left-out" groups who have been affected adversely by rapid changes in Malaysia's adoption of global market principles. In turn, these global tendencies have impacted upon

policies and practices of Malaysian higher education. Within an uncertain knowledge economy, community colleges highlight a commitment to specific local (mainly rural) communities and especially deprived groups within those communities. Lifelong learning has been shaping the functions and practices of community colleges.

Findings identify that lifelong learning domains and vocational provision are the main components to frame goals, achievements and challenges of the community colleges. Formal credentialed education and non-formal non-credit education provide a wide range of courses to diverse groups of local communities. Curricula include entrepreneurial components to build key traits in students in terms of creativity and practical skills as a way forward to developing successful entrepreneurs for local communities. Community colleges work in both on-campus and off-campus contexts to enable the colleges to meet their goals as the Malaysian government envisaged. A feature of the achievements of community colleges through their flexibility is fostering of social inclusion and active citizenship for participants. In empowering disadvantaged adults with knowledge and skills, teachers are pressurised to diversify their expertise and to engage actively with local communities through service learning. Challenges faced by these community colleges include a gap between central administration's imperatives and diverse local learning needs, the stigmatisation as lower level institutions, constant recruitment expectations, and on-going requirements for teacher professional development.

The study led to the understandings that global principles have exerted their influence on local values, and introduced lifelong learning as an answer at least in part to help economically and socially deprived members of society to face work and life challenges. The community colleges appeared as a special set of higher education institutions to serve a distinctive student demographic who may not be a high priority for other higher education institutions. The community-orientated mission appropriately has been adopted in their programmes together with suitable pedagogy to foster inclusive education to respond to the needs of diversified learners from local communities. This study makes an original contribution to the knowledge of community colleges within Malaysian higher education in the context of lifelong learning.

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GLOSSARY

Agong	King – The head of parliament and the government of Malaysia
Bahasa Malaysia	The first language of Malaysia
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
CCCs	Community College Certificates
DCCE	Department of Community College Education
DOSM	Department of Statistics Malaysia
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
MCCs	Malaysian Community Colleges
MCE (SPM)	Malaysia Certificate of Education – High school examination of students in academic stream
MCEV (SPVM)	Malaysia Certificate of Vocational Education – High school examination of students in vocational stream
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture
MSCs	Malaysia Skill Certificates awarded by the Department of Skill Development
MQA	Malaysia Qualification Agency
NOSS	National Occupational Skill Standard that determines Malaysia Skill Certificates
NVTC	National Vocational Training Council – A coordinating body of skill training in Malaysia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development
PDT	District Office and Land of Temerloh, Pahang, Malaysia
PERHEBAT	The Corporation of Ex-Armed Forces Affairs – The members are the veteran students in community colleges
PHEIs	Private Higher Education Institutions
SPP	Education Service Commission of Malaysia
UNESCO	United National Economic Science Corporative Organisation
WBL	Work-based Learning

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study is about community colleges and their goals, achievements and challenges in the context of lifelong learning. My desire to learn more about community colleges emerged from my professional experience as a teacher in a rural part of Malaysia, when I had an opportunity to meet with students and parents often deprived of educational opportunities. Accordingly, in the first section of this chapter I explain how my personal interest shaped this entire endeavour. The second section covers the study's purpose, aim and the research questions. In the third section, I present an overview of the context of this study, Malaysia. The final section describes an outline of the chapters in this thesis.

1.2 Personal Interest and Rationale for this Study

“Community college! Is there such a college in Malaysia?” Many Malaysians respond with surprise when I mention the colleges. Community colleges are almost “invisible” institutions for many people. I approached this study from my own personal interest, with a naïve understanding about the colleges because they have a connection to lifelong learning. I always had an interest in lifelong learning as it has been shaping my educational journey for almost 30 years, from my starting as a certificate holder in teaching, then moving to a degree, then a Masters in Teaching and now as the researcher of this study. Along with my professional experience of teaching students and meeting people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, their promotion of lifelong learning was the reason that most inclined me to know more about these colleges.

Twenty years of teaching experience taught me about people from deprived backgrounds, especially in rural parts of Malaysia. My own very different upbringing encouraged me to embrace the new experience enthusiastically. I am from an Indian background and had the opportunity to meet and mingle with all sorts of people from different ethnicities as a “mature” person that is, after the initial phase of life, schooling and then immediately training to be a teacher.

Jerantut was my first posting after I completed my three years' teacher-training programme. The small town became more like my second hometown, and gave me an opportunity to learn the real part of life and shaped me into a more optimistic and independent person away from my parents' watchful eyes. Traditional villages and huge settlement areas cultivating oil palm and rubber tree plantations was defining Jerantut when I arrived there in 1988.

In that small town, I had an opportunity to teach in four primary and one secondary school. Teaching rural students fitted into their community's conservative lifestyles. Most of the time education would be their second choice of what to do, as they had to help with family chores and were often given responsibility as a "big" person at a very young tender age. We teachers had to be proactive in developing their minds and characters into those of more positive, holistic people in our effort to free them from their constrained traditional upbringing. Going to school was always a secondary task for these rural students and an opportunity to continue education was often limited.

Such engagement very close to my heart triggered me to ponder why community colleges have been located only in rural areas rather than in other higher education institutions, and what their function might be. I hold a belief that community colleges may have an opportunity for rural students who are often less fortunate to continue education after their secondary school. Mostly their job/career aspirations are constrained to becoming shop assistants, clerks, or waiters/waitresses for employers who prefer to recruit an educated group with minimal salary. Therefore, I decided to undertake an explorative study to investigate community colleges in depth, as they are only a decade old as an institution and had not been studied previously as higher education instruments of government.

The study is about community colleges and their emergence within higher education with a focus on their goals, achievements and challenges. As a matter of fact, the colleges were started with 12 in 2000 and they increased to 90 by 2014 (DCCE, 2012, 2014). They were established in selected rural parliamentary constituencies, yet gained little public attention (DCCE, 2012, 2013). This might be because little information has been given about the colleges to inform parents

and students that they were different and not simply another higher education institution among the quickly growing numbers. Nevertheless, several national policy documents did mention them as an addendum together with the rest of higher education institutions. For example, in the 8th Malaysia Plan, the colleges should allow “those who left the school system to join the labour market to further their education and training” (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a, p. 163). In the Blueprint of Lifelong Learning, the colleges were considered as hubs of lifelong learning for local communities and needed to help “the underprivileged; the disabled and senior citizens” with computer literacy and communication skills (MOHE, 2011a, p. 60). It is noteworthy that information about community colleges did not reach everyone, probably because their rural locations meant that most people were unaware of them. Thus, a detailed examination of the colleges may help to promulgate knowledge of their actual role(s) to parents and students at large.

Since community colleges are a relatively new entry into the Malaysian higher education system, apart from a few examinations of the effectiveness of their programmes, they have not been much studied. Esa, Abdul Razaaq, Masek, and Selamat (2009) set out to learn the views of high school students regarding the programmes offered at the colleges. Kamin, Cartledge, and Simkin (2010) investigated the effectiveness of work-based programmes through a collaborative effort between community colleges and an automotive industry. Ismail and Azman (2010) studied preferred learning styles of adult learners in the non-formal education environment of community colleges. Abd Rahman, Jamaludin, and Ismail (2015) observed students’ competency levels in the fourth module of a modular programme’s practical class. Ibrahim, Hamid, Chai, and Abdullah (2016) conducted a study of senior citizens and their participation in the U3A programmes. In addition, many quite comprehensive studies on higher education have barely mentioned community colleges but instead focussed on universities (Idris, 2011; Lee, 2004; Mohd Zain, Aspah, Mohmud, Abdullah, & Ebrahimi, 2017). Therefore, it was timely to investigate the role of community colleges as part of Malaysia’s higher education system and to understand their goals as Malaysian society continues to evolve.

1.3 Purpose of this Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore and build knowledge about the positioning of community colleges as a new phenomenon within Malaysian higher education through a qualitative inquiry conducted into their goals, achievements and challenges in the context of lifelong learning. The investigation adopted a multiple case study approach to answer the following research questions:

Central question:

- What are the goals, achievements and the challenges of community colleges within Malaysian higher education and how are they related to lifelong learning?

Subsidiary questions:

- What are the goals of community colleges within Malaysian higher education?
- What are the achievements of community colleges within Malaysian higher education?
- What are the challenges of community colleges within Malaysian higher education?

The exploration also looked at a broader context by understanding four global market principles influencing higher education development – human capital, globalisation and neoliberalism, a knowledge economy and lifelong learning – to identify an influence translated in the Malaysian Economic Plans as global practice to encourage the acceptance of community colleges in the 2000s. Of the four, lifelong learning showed a significant positive connection to community colleges and their development. In that respect, the examination of goals, achievements and challenges of community colleges were strongly connected to lifelong learning and its four aspects: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Findsen & Formosa, 2011). Lifelong learning and its four aspects have been mapped out with three other market principles influencing higher education developments as a conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) to address the main research question which is about the goals, achievements and challenges of Malaysian community colleges in

the context of lifelong learning. Of particular interest and relevance to this study was the beginning of formal higher education in Malaysia with the formation of the first university and the establishment of technical and trade schools.

1.4 Background of the Study Context

Malaysia, a country of diverse ethnicity, religion, culture and language attempts to provide a strong base for its people to live in relative harmony (Economic Planning Unit, 2016b; Embong, 2002). Malaysia's neighbouring countries are Thailand, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, and Indonesia, which together make up a group of Southeast Asian countries located in the continent of Asia, as shown in figure 1.1 (Embong, 2002). They are located in the zone of tropical climate with the oldest rainforest in the world. The area has very hot and humid weather, experiencing plenty of rain throughout the year.



Figure 1.1. Malaysia and its neighbours

Source: FreeWorldMaps.Net (2017)

Malaysia is a federation of 13 states encompassing 11 states in the West part and two states in the Eastern part, two individual geographical regions separated by the South China Sea (Embong, 2002). Malaysia gained its independence from Britain on August 31, 1957 and became a federation in 1963 after Singapore decided to become independent (Embong, 2002; Kamarulzaman, 2005; Lim,

1994). At present, it has a democratic political system under the rule of the Parliament with a constitutional monarchy system (Embong, 2002). The King (*Agong*), who is the head of the Parliament as well as the Government, is a representative among nine royal rulers (*Sultans*) selected every five years. The executive power of the nation is in the hands of the Prime Minister and his cabinet as a ruling government selected through an electoral system every four years (Embong, 2002). In 1973, *Bahasa Malaysia*, the indigenous language, officially became the first language, and English language is the second official language, used in schools and all business and private sectors (Economic Planning Unit, 1971). Two other important mother tongues, Mandarin of Chinese and Tamil of Indians, were given priority as a medium of instruction in two vernacular primary level schools respectively (Economic Planning Unit, 1971). Thus, *Bahasa Malaysia* is the medium of instruction at all levels of education and English language is used widely in private schools and private higher education institutions (Lee, 2004). Most Malaysians can converse in at least three languages; Bahasa Malaysia, English and own mother tongue, and write moderately well in the first and second language.

Malaysia has three main ethnic groups, Malays, Chinese, and Indian. In Malaysian history, immigration into the country began in the fourteenth century when people from China, Arab, Persia, and India came as traders through the Silk Route (an ancient network of maritime trades of silk and spices) (The Commonwealth, 2018). During that time, Malacca was a seaport and acted as a strategic location for the early traders to meet and trade their goods (Embong, 2002; The Commonwealth, 2018). Many traders married local people and settled in Malacca (Embong, 2002). In the early nineteenth century, the British rulers brought more people from Southern China and Southern India to work in their mining companies and rubber plantations, respectively. When Malaysia gained its independence from Britain, all became citizens of Malaysia (Embong, 2002).

In 2017, the population reached around 31.7 million and it is growing at a rate of 1.94 per cent annually (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). The ethnic composition of Malaysia is a combination of Malays (68.6 %), Chinese (23.4 %), Indians (7.0 %) and other ethnicities (1.0 %). These other ethnicities include certain indigenous groups from East Malaysia, Eurasians of Portuguese descent

and Sikhs. The working population aged 15 to 64 represents around 69.4 per cent of the total population and is growing at 0.2 per cent annually. In 2017, the older population aged 65 years and above was only around six per cent (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). Therefore, Malaysia has a very young population.

Malaysia aspires to be a high income country by 2020 (Economic Planning Unit, 2016b). It is hoped that its youthful human capital will bring an increase to the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of between USD 15,000 to USD 20,000 by 2020. The national per capita income has been growing at an increasing rate, “more than 25-fold from US\$ 402 (1970) to US\$ 10,796 (2014) and is well on track to surpass the US\$15,000 threshold of a high-income economy by 2020” (Economic Planning Unit, 2016b, p. 3). In addition, 1.3 million skilled jobs are being created in five economic zones in industries such as oil and gas extraction, financial services, tourism, and oil palm to provide more jobs for people at all levels through the “prioritising people’s economy” policy (Economic Planning Unit, 2016b, p. 6). Community colleges may have a role in driving this aspiration.

1.5 Chapters in this Thesis

This study is made up of nine chapters. **Chapter 1**, this chapter, presents my personal interest and rationale for undertaking this study. It also introduces the overall purpose and the overarching and subsidiary research questions for this study. It then provides background detail about Malaysia to locate the study in its historical and cultural context.

Chapter 2 presents the first phase of the literature review. This acts as a basis to understand the events that were potentially responsible for the emergence of Malaysia’s community colleges in the early 2000s.

An overview of the literature considering the development of higher education in Malaysia needs to be understood in the historical context of early medieval Europe. This coverage offers an understanding of the circumstances, which led to the formation of Europe’s ancient universities. This historical background relates to the formation of the first university in Malaysia, signifying the birth of formal education in the country. The prevailing colonial ethos meant that university was

intended for an elite group of students, and technical and trade schools were concurrently established to provide training to lower strata jobs.

Malaysia gained its independence in 1957; Chapter 2 next reviews the literature on the effects on post-Independence Malaysia's higher education systems from four global market's principles of human capital, globalisation and neoliberalism, a knowledge economy and lifelong learning. In the context of this study, these developments have particular relevance, as they equally pressurised changes in local policies and practices in tandem with the growth that in a gradual manner disadvantaged particular sectors of Malaysian society geographically, economically and socially. The literature considering the need for technical knowledge to keep up with growing industrial sectors is reviewed to appreciate the building of vocational training/education. In 2000, in the era of lifelong learning, a change in policy introduced community colleges as an educational hub for local communities. The review noted that lifelong learning might be best implemented in higher education via the community colleges development. **Chapter 3** presents the second phase of the literature review. It delves deeper into community colleges' development from an international perspective and makes connections through the literature to lifelong learning as a significant higher education phenomenon.

The review of broad international perspectives helps orientate Malaysian community colleges. This review conforms with an earlier assumption, in Chapter 2, that lifelong learning is particularly important to community colleges in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia. Taking this into account, the investigation continues under the four fundamental aspects of lifelong learning: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Finsden & Formosa, 2011). The literature was searched under each aspect in turn for work explaining the function of the concepts and relevant studies with empirical evidence to show a connection to contemporary community colleges. This investigation was important as a way of placing the goals and achievements of community colleges in a broader context. Finally, the literature was delved into the challenges faced by community colleges. The examined information in Chapters 2 and 3 was mapped out into a conceptual framework for the entire study.

Chapter 4 provides an account of the research design. This study took the form of a qualitative inquiry using a multiple case study approach. Decisions about constructivism and interpretivism as appropriate ontological and epistemological stances are discussed and justified. Five research methods (semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, individually administered questionnaires, participant observation, and document analysis) explain the data gathering techniques used to generate empirical evidence from four case study sites (community colleges). The process of selecting and meeting the three different sub-populations (directors, teachers, and students) at each of the case studies has been explained, including ethical considerations.

The use of thematic analysis as the analysing tool justified the use of an inductive data-driven approach and the selection of a latent thematic approach to interpret the acquired data using lifelong learning as the underpinning concept. An explanation of the method of tabulated data notes a systematic, organised and integrated approach to coding data into themes and then grouping them under latent themes, these being the four aspects of lifelong learning. Finally, a consistent procedure used for participants' selection and data analysis has been outlined to substantiate the trustworthiness and validity of this study.

Chapter 5 describes the context of the four case studies. An organisation chart and five main programmes provide relevant information about Malaysian Community Colleges. A brief profile of each case study site gives a history of its establishment, location, environment, staff, programmes and potential participants. Four tables present demographic characteristics of the three sets of participants (directors, teachers and students) in this study. Characteristics of directors, teachers and students from the four case studies have been presented in individual paragraphs.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 together present the findings and discussion as the core learning from this study. The three chapters look in turn at the findings on the goals, the achievements and the challenges of the colleges and answer the three subsidiary research questions consecutively. In each of these chapters, the findings have been organised following the four aspects of lifelong learning

mentioned above to support a broader discussion and understanding of the practices of community colleges.

In Chapter 6, findings and discussion on the goals of community colleges are presented. The goals demonstrated a similarity to the goals required by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Department of Community College Education (DCCE), the two higher governing bodies of the community colleges. In short, the goals may be listed as follows: community colleges as hubs of the geographically isolated local communities for lifelong learning providing two types of programmes in the forms of formal and non-formal education. These programmes have been designed to help economically and socially disadvantaged people in local communities to have a better quality of life and perhaps achieve personal fulfilment goals. In support of developing active citizenship, the Corporate Social Responsibility programmes are fulfilling teachers and students social responsibilities.

In Chapter 7, findings and discussion on the achievements of community colleges are presented. Some remarkable achievements include providing disadvantaged students with a “second chance” to continue education, helping single mothers to convert their everyday chores into income-generating skills, and enabling older adults to be assimilated into the new world of computer technology.

In Chapter 8, findings and discussion on the challenges of community colleges are presented. The general populace seems to regard the colleges as lower status institutions because their students come from lower socio-economic strata, and sadly, that perception affects both the teachers and the students.

Chapter 9 provides the final conclusion and implication of the study as well as addressing its contributions, significance and some recommendations for further research. A concise discussion drawing from all the findings and discussion in the three earlier findings chapters’, acts as a thread to connect them to pertinent literature to answer the overarching research question.

The conclusion justifies the position of community colleges in the Malaysian context related to lifelong learning and its four aspects. On reflection, the chapter highlights some significant points to ponder about the future of community

colleges. It also presents some recommendations for the Department of Community College Education (DCCE) as ways to enhance the Colleges' status, given the challenges to institutional reputation they currently confront. Next, the significance of community colleges in Malaysian higher education is discussed, limitations of this study are conveyed and further suggested research has been outlined based on this study. Finally, implications for policy and practice in connection with the future development of the Malaysian Community Colleges have been suggested for the Government.

The next chapter presents the first phase of literature review on higher development in a global context and the influence to the Malaysian higher education development.

CHAPTER 2

HIGHER EDUCATION IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and build knowledge about community colleges as a new phenomenon in Malaysian higher education in the context of lifelong learning. It focussed on investigating their goals, achievements and challenges to understand their role within the higher education and for Malaysian society.

Chapter 1 presented an introduction to this study. Chapters 2 and 3 together have examined the literature review for this study. This chapter has six sections to construct a broader literature on higher education development in a global context. The first section explores a historical development of universities in Europe and some circumstances that encouraged the universities to change. The following subsection discusses the influence in the formation of the first university and some contributions to the growth of technical and vocational form of formal education during colonial period in Malaysia. Sections two to five in turn look at higher education development globally under direct influence of the four global market's principles identified for this study: human capital, globalisation and neoliberalism, a knowledge economy, and lifelong learning. The four principles have been considered as four worldwide adoptions in higher education developments strongly reflected in the Malaysian Economic Plans and some important government documents from the 1960s to the 2000s. The documents enacted policies and practices for the development of Malaysian higher education for its economy and society. Thus, a subsection of each section also describes each of the principles in the context of Malaysian higher education. The final section provides a brief summary of this chapter.

2.2 Higher Education in a Historical Context

This section explores a historical beginning of universities and higher education provision in Europe and outlines events to bring polytechnics and community colleges among the elitist universities.

A historical beginning of universities in the 12th century in Europe has an influence to the formation of some early universities in Southeast Asia during the European colonial period in 1900s (Altbach, 1998; King, 2004). This influence is often commented as a considerable duplication of the derivative models has been brought across to Southeast Asia but they are “deeply embedded” in local culture (Altbach, 1998, p. 39; King, 2004). In Malaysia, the formation of the first university has its roots in the Britain universities as it happened during their colonial rule (Lim, 1994; Selvaratnam, 1986) and the following subsection discusses this. University may be the first form of formal higher education and with respect to that, a brief exploration on the early start and the influence of science and technology to the provision in Europe may shed some understanding about the development of community colleges in America in around 1900s. The colleges have inspired many countries in Southeast Asia including Malaysia to accept almost similar models into their higher education systems in around 2000s (Chen & Wang, 2009; Idris, 2011; Punthumasen & Maki, 2009; Raby, 2009; Wong, 2015).

In Europe, an early beginning of the university had a strong association to the study of theology as a continuation of cathedral missions and then the European Enlightenment, a period connected to the origin of modernity (Barnett, 1990; King, 2004). Modernity witnessed a major transition into a world of science and technology encouraging many of the ancient universities to consider science studies as new disciplines while still prioritising theology as a higher discipline for the elites (Newman, 2008). The same period experienced the Industrial Revolution that began in Britain introducing a new economic system, capitalism, necessitating more scientific discoveries for growing manufacturing industry (Habermas, 1971; Newman, 2008). Capitalism also encouraged feudal society to leave their peasant life and move to cities to work in plentiful manufacturing jobs and this change saw a prospering population demanding more goods for consumption (Gillard, 2011; Habermas, 1971). Manufacturing technology grew with more innovative machines to work alongside human labour to increase production immensely for the growing population. One of greater manufacturing technologies was the steam-powered machine that supported fast operation to boost production massively that it demanded for huge amount of labour force to

complete numerous cycles of operations continuously (Gillard, 2011; Habermas, 1971). The increasing cost of labour in turn required labour specialised capabilities to handle specific cycle of task more efficiently with a reduced labour force. This was the beginning of technical-orientated jobs where hidden talent in human labour was capitalised in machine operations to increase their production capacities (Habermas, 1971) that Smith (1910) argued as human capital in the next section. The working population which was considered as “ordinary people” as Habermas (1971) asserted in his rational society, began to receive education in technical knowledge at employers’ own initiation, to improve their efficiency at the workplace. This may signify the liberation of an older society through education; members of whom were heavily defined by a social class structure. In late 1800s, technical institutes emerged as formal education providers to train young people with technical knowledge and skills for growing manufacturing industries in Europe (King, 2004). This may also represent a shift in higher education provision to acknowledge other sectors of population for educational opportunities than the elites.

In the early 20th century, a new market model higher education institutions started to appear in America as an innovation of the European continental model (King, 2004). These two classic models successfully challenged many higher education globally in accordance with different societies’ preference and needs (King, 2004; Shin, 2015). As mentioned earlier, American community colleges are one of them. As a matter of fact, the key differing ideas between the models are: the British believed in producing scholars from liberal arts studies as the highest order of intellectual value while the Americans encouraged research into more scientific knowledge to cultivate talented individuals with economic characteristics (King, 2004). The “pluralistic society” or the “immigrant based society”, with many languages, cultures and different educational needs, contributed to the emergence of institutionally diverse higher education system in America (King, 2004, p. 10) that is increasingly becoming a focus of contemporary higher education system worldwide (World Bank, 2003). Despite the two opposing ideologies, in mid-1960s, a growing middle class population and advancement in technology following industrial needs also forced Britain to change (King, 2004). They

included 30 polytechnics as a new form of higher education institution into the system (Barnett, 1996; Teichler, 2008). As stated in the Robbins Report 1966:

[T]his sector of system of higher education was to be more “responsive” to the wider society in a number of senses: its courses were to be more oriented to industry and commerce; they were to be more open to a wider intake, more representatives of all social classes. (as cited in Barnett, 1996, p. 145)

Polytechnics started to acknowledge diversity in that technical and vocational education became useful for educating people at all levels (Altbach, 1998; Barnett, 1996; Teichler, 2008). This may also indicate a start to consider higher educational opportunities for people with differing abilities with new institutional characteristics.

In 1945, after World War II ended, an almost similar trend as in Britain began in Southeast Asia where a growing middle-class population demanded flexible access to higher education. They wanted to acquire a qualification that could authorise them to enter better employment and improve their social mobility (Altbach, 1998; Selvaratnam, 1986). Thus, polytechnics similar to the British model started to appear in Southeast Asian systems as the first group of second-level institutions to cushion the demanding students’ entry to universities (Osborne, 2005; Selvaratnam, 1986). Polytechnics were considered formal higher education institutions with recognised qualifications of technical types for young people with less favourable results for direct entry to university education (Osborne, 2005). In America, community colleges emerged in the system as an institution one level below the polytechnics mainly to help problematic high school students for university education (Bonham, 2005; Boone, 1997; Dougherty, 2002; Grubb, 2006; Myran, 1978; Osborne, 2005; Vaughan, 2000). Chapter 3 will review the contribution of these scholars.

This exploration has provided some key historical events relating to changing higher education provision. Science and technology has influenced higher education to consider educating people in growing industries for an increasingly prosperous society. As an impact of the consistent growth, higher education had to diversify into different types of institutions especially polytechnics and

community colleges in early 1900s. The next subsection presents a historical account of higher education development in Malaysia that has a resonance with the above exploration.

2.2.1 Malaysian Higher Education in a Historical Context

This subsection examines the formation of the first university to understand the beginning of formal higher education and other types of technical and vocational institutes during the colonial period in Malaysia.

Formal higher education in Malaysia began while it was still a colony of Britain and the beginning has a considerable influence in the formation of the first university (Lim, 1994; Selvaratnam, 1986). The beginning signalled a track record of around a century old, when local philanthropists in Singapore started a public medical school in 1905, the Straits and Federated Malay States Government Medical School (McLean Commission, 1939). It was later renamed by the colonial government, first as the King Edward VII Medical School, in 1912, and then as King Edward VII College of Medicine in 1921 (Selvaratnam, 1986). This institution together with the Raffles College that was started in 1928 became established as the University of Malaya in Singapore in 1949. Thus, it is not surprising that the history of higher education in Malaysia and Singapore tells a common story (Lim, 1994; Selvaratnam, 1986, p. 6).

In retrospect, the King Edward VII was a public institution and the Raffles was a semi-governmental institution controlled by an independent body with representatives from the colonial government, and they worked independently. They were not able to fulfil the entire higher education needs of the growing population and thus the local people started requesting, from 1935, for the inception of a university (Lim, 1994). As a result, in 1938 the colonial government was obliged to appoint the McLean Commission to investigate the readiness of Malaya for a university. After an investigation that took one year, the Commission reported as follows:

The position as we see it in Singapore is that there is a well-established College of high standing, concerned with subjects of Medicine and Dentistry; there is, in addition, a younger, less well established College,

the work of which embraces those of Arts and Science. We recommend, therefore, that there be a *University College* of Malaya.

(McLean Commission, 1939, p. 89 & 91)

The Commission further strengthened their decision by adding that neither of the Colleges had either a programme at a degree level or a level of research that could contribute to qualify for the status of university, as how it had been expected from the universities in Europe. Thus, the Commission recommended only a status lower than university and suggested that Malaya work with the University of London for a better preparation in the next evaluation (McLean Commission, 1939). However, this evaluation only infuriated the local people as what they really wanted was a fully-fledged university (Lim, 1994).

For almost five years, the whole idea was put aside, following World War II, Japanese occupation, and the British temporary return to homeland (Lim, 1994; Selvaratnam, 1986). In 1949 after the end of World War II and two more rounds of evaluations, Carr Saunders, the chairman of the third Commission, used his position and conferred the university status (Selvaratnam, 1986). From then onwards, the University of Malaya started to use its autonomous position to confer more degree programmes in arts, science, medicine, engineering, law and agriculture to produce more local intellectuals from the elites.

As the University was supplying professionals for various sectors, the colonial government started technical and trade schools across the colony to produce technical support teams for departments within the sectors and some artisans in traditional skilled jobs near villages (King, 2004; McLean Commission, 1939). This may also be the beginning of technical and vocational education in Malaysia. In 1904, a technical school was started to train apprentices for three different public service departments that eventually became three individual training schools for the departments in 1962 (McLean Commission, 1939). In 1931, an Agricultural College was started as a research centre of the rubber industry to increase the supply of the commodity that was heavily needed for the Industrial Revolution usage in Britain. The College also trained local technicians to help in the management (Selvaratnam, 1986). At those villages undertaking traditional economic activities such as *batik* printing, trade schools were created to help young people to learn the skills in formal education more appropriately and

increase the artistic productions; as noted in the McLean Commission (1939): “the schools should cater for the areas in which they [traditional activities] are situated” (p. 38). Trade schools may be the older sort of community colleges in Malaysia. The role of the government, here, may represent a historic example of a state’s responsibility to other sectors of population with less accessibility to university education, helping them with technical and vocational education to improve their financial status, to equally boost the economy.

In 1945, the end of World War II also marked the end of colonialism in many countries in Asia including Malaysia where the countries gained full independence and started to build nations whose respective policies intertwined with individual cultures and beliefs (Altbach, 1998). Malaysia achieved its independence in 1957 (Selvaratnam, 1986). An after-effect was social cohesion, especially in Malaysia, as the ancient British colonial strategy of “divide and rule” had separated the Malays and the immigrant Chinese and Indians in different areas according to specific jobs. There had been no opportunities for the three ethnic groups to meet or mingle: the Malays were in the villages engaged in farm work, the Chinese were in the quarries mining tin, and the Indians were in the estates cultivating the rubber trees (Embong, 2001, 2002). Thus, education especially facilitated a common culture and became an instrument to unite Malaysia’s segmented society (Kamarulzaman, 2005).

This overview has shown that formal education in Malaysia has been progressing from the colonial times to independence with the foundation of the first university in 1949 and a support of technical institutes and trade schools. In Malaysia, higher education may also have a function to unite the Malaysian people, who are exceptionally diversified in terms of origins, beliefs, and cultures.

In the next section, I briefly examine human capital as one of the oldest concepts relevant to higher education development. An understanding of human capital can provide some fundamental concepts to shed light on three successive influential market growths in global higher education development, identified for this study: globalisation and neoliberalism, a knowledge economy, and lifelong learning, that are subsequently discussed in the next three sections. The four global market

principles are also important because they underpin higher education development in Malaysia and construct the conceptual framework for this study.

2.3 Human Capital

This section examines a connection between human capital and education. The exploration begins from Adam Smith, the founder of the concept of human capital and relates to the benefit of investing in education to improve human capital.

A major argument in support of the concept of human capital is that people are born with natural abilities that can be enhanced through an investment in education (Becker, 1993; Schultz, 1981; Smith, 1910). The origin of the idea of human capital is also rooted in times of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, as mentioned earlier when machines became the main determiner of production capacity with assistance from workers (Habermas, 1971; Smith, 1910). During that time, factory workers who were largely without any qualifications used only their work experience to operate new machines at their workplaces (Gillard, 2011; Habermas, 1971). Thus, Smith (1910) considered work experience together with skills and talent inherent in workers as their “wealth” that they must use to gain an expert knowledge for greater efficiency in manufacturing production.

Adam Smith (1723 - 1790), the founder of modern economics in his book *The wealth of nations* (1776) described people as the “wealth” (human capital) a country loaded with talent and skills that can be enhanced for a better economic purpose (Smith, 1910). In the processes of a simple pin factory, Smith illustrated the division of labour that can help to acquire knowledge specialisation. After Adam Smith, two other influential economists were Theodore Schultz, and Gary S. Becker. They expanded on Smith’s thinking by suggesting that education could be used as a way to enhance an individual’s in-built experience, talents, and skills.

Theodore Schultz (1902 -1998) was interested in Bangladesh, a third world country, as he wanted to discover ways of improving the welfare of a disadvantaged people. He strongly believed that a significant improvement to overall population quality through “advances in knowledge” is the primary wealth of a country (Schultz, 1981, p. 140). Schultz’s *The economics of being poor* (1979) and *Investing in people* (1981) suggested ways to eradicate poverty in low-

income countries. He highlighted improving population quality by investing in educating mothers on healthcare of their children, adults in skill-learning centres and children in schools. He strongly believed that an improved infrastructure focussing to improve life style of the underprivileged could significantly benefit them. Thus, the investments towards the disadvantaged have been regarded as an “acquired population quality”, or in economic terms, an achievement of overall human capital quality.

Gary S. Becker (1930 - 2014), strongly advocated education as an important investment to enhance human capital especially after a person started to work (Becker, 1993). Becker (1993) closely related an extra education to a marginal increase in income. He believed that knowledge gained in formal education would not be sufficient to support changing work requirements at the workplace. On-the-job training was asserted to be an opportunity to improve work performance for workers. He further interpreted factors such as age, employment criticality, courses type, study aims, and individual attitudes may distract a worker’s decision to continue education, but an income incentive could alter their decision.

A number of scholars have commented on the concept of human capital. Marginson (1995) said that educational institutions are the “right” settings to invest in human capital because they are a formal institution with the facilities and materials appropriate for its development. He asserted that educational institutions such as schools, colleges, skill training centres, and universities are the best options to invest in human capital. Eade (1997) further noted that proper education policies and practices spell out at the national level for human capital development can help to improve the quality of life for the entire population. Fitzsimons (2017), in his more recent observations, saw three types of human capital enhancement that are: an acquired knowledge gained through social interaction and cultural experience; a learned knowledge acquired through formal education in the early part of life; and a self-enriched knowledge attained through continuing education for economic benefits. The observations of Fitzsimons (2017) may also resemble informal, formal, and non-formal domains of learning that are discussed in section 2.5 on lifelong learning.

In sum, human capital can be conceptualised as natural skills and talent and valuable knowledge inherent in every individual. This overview has explained two different perspectives on human capital investment. Some older versions emphasised improving human capital at formal educational institutions. However, a newer view states that it is also possible to acquire human capital through informal and non-formal learning environments. The next subsection examines the importance of human capital to Malaysian higher education

2.3.1 Human Capital and Malaysian Higher Education

This section outlines the development of higher education in Malaysia on a foundation of human capital. Human capital has been an important agenda in almost all Malaysia Economic Plans as it aligns with societal needs. Thus, this section and the following three subsections on Malaysian higher education are investigating Malaysia Economic Plans to gain an understanding of changes in local education policies and practices following the global trends. Vocational and technical education is also examined as relevant to this study. This section examines five Malaysia Plans in relation to human capital; Economic Planning Unit (1966, 1971, 1986, 1991, 2001a)

The time after independence as Altbach (1998, p. 8) asserted, saw the “single, most important trend” in most Asian countries including Malaysia, an expansion of higher education to deal with dual complexities, colonialism and war (Kamarulzaman, 2005). However, in Malaysia education restructuring was progressing in phases of human capital development from schools to higher education to “meet the rapidly developing independent nation” (Economic Planning Unit, 1966, p. 164; 1971). Since 1951, schools have been guided through succeeding educational reports to help the three different ethnic groups to find a commonality through shared curricula and the national language, *Bahasa Malaysia*, which became the medium of instruction in all national primary and secondary schools from 1973 (Economic Planning Unit, 1971). Nevertheless, two types of vernacular primary schools, Chinese and Tamil, continued using their mother tongue as a medium of instruction. The University of Malaya, after functioning for almost 20 years as a single institution, joined force with six new public universities, four polytechnics, one private college and several technical

institutes and vocational colleges for higher education provision at the end of 1980 (Economic Planning Unit, 1986; Selvaratnam, 1986). Around this period, the focus of universities were only to produce nobles and elites for professional positions, polytechnics together with technical institutes and vocational colleges for skilled semi-professional jobs and those with only high school education were comfortably finding a living as general workers in manufacturing and agricultural sectors (Economic Planning Unit, 1986, 1991).

By the 1990s, Malaysia had already passed three decades of independence and the education system was still successfully building human capital through an “expanded and improved education and training” (Economic Planning Unit, 1991, p. 155). By this time it was equipping individuals not only with knowledge and skills but also with the qualities of being a “responsible citizen with a strong moral and ethical value” (Economic Planning Unit, 1991, p. 157). Thus, Malaysia relied heavily on education and its restructuring plans to raise all its citizens to a better standard of living and education. In the same period, school enrolments at all levels showed a significant increase as a result of consistent improvement in educational policies. For example, in 1995, there were around 2.8 million primary students, 1.13 million lower secondary students and 589,580 upper secondary students (Economic Planning Unit, 1991, pp. 158-161). As shown in the statistics, some students were apparently lost in the transition: around 60 % from primary to secondary and 48 % from lower to upper secondary. Some of these students were transferred into vocational schools and some permanently left the formal education for employment (Patel, 2014) who might have later become students of community colleges.

Vocational schools have been teaching secondary students with less satisfactory results in lower secondary school examination in vocational subjects together with main academic subjects (*Bahasa Malaysia*, English, Mathematics and History) for the Malaysia Certificate of Vocational Education (MCEV) (Economic Planning Unit, 1991). Among these students, some who could not cope with the vocational curriculum are taught trade skills such as welding or motor mechanics for an evaluation of the National Vocational Training Council (NVTC). To enhance the students’ skills, these vocational schools also establish a connection with neighbouring industries and provide extra coaching for the students in real

environment that may have a similarity to community colleges education. The vocational schools were actually an early intervention of preparing young people to “meet the industrial needs of the nation” (Economic Planning Unit, 1991, p. 167). Upon completion of the vocational education, students with good results would usually continue their higher education in a polytechnic or public skill training institute (Economic Planning Unit, 1991) and those unsuccessful would find a job. From 2001, these “unlucky students” together with the dropouts of formal education mentioned earlier became the target groups of community colleges (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a).

In support, private skill training institutes helped to train low-achieving school leavers and low-skilled working adults. They worked along with public skill training institutes by using their facilities in exchange for their customised industrial training courses (Economic Planning Unit, 1991). Such collaboration helped 65 private institutes successfully to train around 8,300 low-achieving school leavers in mechanical, electrical and civil engineering, computer engineering and information technology and about 3,200 working adults in industrial skills in 1995 (Economic Planning Unit, 1996). In this way, public skill training institutes managed to build their students with relevance to industrial skills. This observation explains the different approaches used to prepare young people as human capital for the complex labour market.

Working people received an extended support in a different manner in the growing economy. The National Vocational Training Council (NVTC) reviewed trade skills standards by consulting private industrial sectors for ideas and advice (Economic Planning Unit, 1996). Using these suggestions, the NVTC established a new standard, the National Occupational Skill Standards (NOSS) replacing the old National Trade Skill Standard (NTSS). By the end of 1995, the NOSS developed 42 skill-standards for three levels (Levels 1- 3) and introduced an evaluation based on a competency certification, the Malaysian Skill Certificates (MSCs) (Economic Planning Unit, 1996). In 2005, the NOSS finalised its development with 467 skill-standards under four levels (Levels 1- 4) and another 138 skill-standards at Level Five (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a). This initiative was to help self-employed people with traditional skills to articulate them for legal trade certificates. The National Modular Certificate programmes of community

colleges follow the NOSS skill standards to prepare working people with long-term work experience (DCCE, 2012).

This overview shows that a consistent education planning started to produce human capital of diverse abilities by the end of the Eighth Plan. A very diverse number of schools and higher education institutions were available to cater for differing student abilities in schools as well as higher education. From 2005, the Plans focussed on strengthening the entire system with a delivery aligning to technological and industrial change globally in which community colleges partly contributed. Accordingly, the next section examines the impact of globalisation and neoliberalism on higher education development.

2.4 Globalisation and Neoliberalism

This section examines globalisation and neoliberalism as the second influence on higher education development. Careful adjustment to existing conservative approaches has helped Asian countries such as Malaysia to succeed in the face of globalisation (Gopinathana & Lee, 2011).

The World Bank (2003) ascribes the increasingly changing characteristics of higher education worldwide to globalisation. From one perspective, globalisation is a revolutionary interaction between two polarised worlds, the West and the East (Ferguson & Mansbach, 2012). From another viewpoint, globalisation can be seen as a “grand theory” describing social, economic, and political changes in every country and this may be a modern world hegemony after colonialism. The two views may have a common factor: globalisation is increasingly influencing local administration and businesses including education with international ideas (Ferguson & Mansbach, 2012).

With particular reference to education, globalisation has exerted pressure on higher education to diversify into many types of institutions so all sorts of people may be relevant in a competitive global change (World Bank, 2003). Accordingly, community colleges were recommended in the early 2000s in Southeast Asia to help a segment of population who had difficulty to access to higher education by the World Bank (2003). Southeast Asia may have responded to the impact of globalisation with a mix of local practices in higher education policies. A laudable

effect was the employment of “Asian social values”: a melting pot of cultures, people, and beliefs that higher education institutions acting as conduits to transmit to people (Ferguson & Mansbach, 2012; Gopinathana & Lee, 2011). This shows that a “right” amount of global engagement has placed Asian countries among the key beneficiaries of globalisation.

In the midst of this complexity, neoliberalism came about with a new way of organising higher education more with a mix of corporate culture and reduced government intervention. Governments started to have less control over higher education finance and their growth. Olssen and Peters (2005) argued that it is more a politically motivated global discourse imposing corporate practices into local higher education developments. In general, they identified four persuasive areas of “new” liberalism: “freedom of choice; more market-driven opportunities; acknowledgement of individual rights; and performance in an open market” (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 314). Actually, neoliberalism has advocated a self-regulating market to open an opportunity for corporate people to be involved in government organisations, especially in financing in order to enjoy privileges of tax reduction and amended laws in trade matters (Olssen & Peters, 2005). According to Lee (2004) neoliberalism has encouraged individuals and corporates to invest in higher education institutions overwhelmingly and made many to collaborate with other overseas institutions to make extra profit with new ideas in Southeast Asia.

Such a corporate approach has also become detrimental for certain disadvantaged groups of population, as argued by Davies and Bansel (2007). They believed that neoliberalism has encouraged new forms of administrative and management practices in many countries and such countries have unintentionally exploited their disadvantaged poor population. Additionally, increasing individual rights has helped more affluent and influential corporate individuals to venture into education as another form of business investment and such freedom is increasingly resulting in a hefty cost for many young people wanting to continue higher education. Therefore, Davies and Bansel (2007) suggested that the continuing retreat of governments from education welfare following neoliberal practices implies their “shrugging off of collective responsibility for the vulnerable and marginalised” (p. 252).

This examination has indicated neoliberalism with market-oriented practices have changed higher education characteristics. This new trend became detrimental to disadvantaged people to have educational opportunity for a better economic outcome. In this context, the following studies interpret an impact on working people that may well be correctable through education.

Brown (2001) has asserted that a direct consequence of globalisation is the increasing fragmentation of worker status into three different groups: “high skilled, middle-skilled, and low skilled” directly resulting from their “levels of education” (p.3). In this new situation, a high skilled worker may be a degree holder and a middle-skilled may have a high school certificate but low skilled workers are all those having a qualification lower than high school. According to Brown (2001), the fragmentation can actually increase production efficiency in a competitive economy but the decision to align salary/wage to the level of education tends to put low skilled workers in a difficult position. Additionally, Brown noted that an international market standard quantifying workers’ salary/wage is further degrading low skilled workers into a low-income group. Hence, the sole opportunity for low skilled workers is to continue learning new skills and earn a reasonable income in a competitive economy as Illeris (2006) asserted in his study.

Illeris (2006) provided a more detailed understanding of who could possibly be a low skilled workers in a fast-changing economy using computer knowledge. In pursuance, he grouped potentially low-skilled workers themselves into three different groups; “classic”, “educated”, and “young adults”. Accordingly, the “classic” were mature workers with only a high school certificate, the “educated” were those senior workers with a higher academic or vocational qualification plus long-term work experience, meanwhile the “young adults” were those modern youths who often change jobs. From the three groups he tried to identify the “vulnerable” and the “at risk” with an assumption that the group “at-risk” was most likely to be marginalised in the workplace (Illeris, 2006, p. 16). Thus, he identified the “classic” to be the “at risk” group and the “educated” and the young adults” as the “vulnerable” only. Illeris’s study showed that the “classic” was not able to learn continuously new skills and cope with new changes at the workplaces because of their inadequate education to support them. Whereas the “educated” learned easily the new skills using their higher educational knowledge

and the “young adults” utilised their numerous work experience to adapt to the new changes. Thus, Illeris (2006) concluded that the group “at risk” has the highest chances to be marginalised in new work environment and the “vulnerable” however, can be resilient to the changes. Therefore, Illeris (2006) noted that a higher education institution with flexible and diverse programmes can best help the “at risk” group from further marginalisation with newer type of opportunities.

This examination has showed that scholars have found a contemporary uncertainty in work conditions and a gradual disengagement of workers from work because of widespread use of technology in all types of work. This can be improved through an engagement with continuous learning but again working people with lower education may face complications. The next section illustrates the impact of globalisation and neoliberalism on Malaysian higher education.

2.4.1 Globalisation and Neoliberalism in Malaysian Higher Education

This section explores the most recent innovations in Malaysian higher education as an outcome of the global restructuring of higher education after 1990s. Malaysia has been gradually moving from an agriculture-based to a manufacturing-orientated economy with a need to build the domestic industrial workforce. Higher education institutions have been structured to strongly support this change. This section mainly examines four Malaysia Plans; Economic Planning Unit (1996, 2001a, 2011, 2016b).

By the end of 2005, the demand for higher education almost reached the point where the public higher education institutions could not absorb the upsurge of students; hence, some displaced academic students found a place in the expanding skill training institutions (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a). In the Eighth Plan, community colleges also emerged as a special programme provider that could enable “youths who are drop-outs to gain access into formal skills training institutes” (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a, p. 583).

Following neo-liberal practices, Malaysian higher education changed, reflecting what was happening in the global arena by adopting two significant terminologies: privatisation and corporatisation. The influence on public universities was minimal as finance was largely still under the Government’s supervision but such

opportunity encouraged hundreds of private higher education institutions to emerge with various packages and incentives that made education very competitive and confusing for many and much more to the disadvantaged (Lee, 2004).

At first, private higher education institutions (PHEI) under individual and trustee ownership emerged under a company act regulated by the PHEI Act 1996 and National Accreditation Board Act 1996 (Economic Planning Unit, 1996). In addition, public universities were corporatised, commencing with the University of Malaya and subsequently four others. These universities adopted a minimal corporate culture in terms of student recruitment and management, as the larger part of their finances were still under the Government's supervision (Lee, 2004). By the end of 2016, around 436 PHEIs, 32 public universities, 20 polytechnics and 90 community colleges that together could accommodate around one million students were helping Malaysia to build its human capital (Ministry of Education, 2016).

All these institutions are guided by a standard stipulated by the Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQF). The MQF was formed under the Malaysian Qualification Agency Act 2007 as a revised framework for all different forms of qualification and practices formerly established under the Act of 1996 (MQA, 2017). The MQF's goal was to reduce the divide between academic and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) qualifications and establish a strong connection between the two sectors and lifelong learning. The key role was to "set qualification standards for all qualifications in the higher education and training sectors" MQA (2017, p. 4). The standards were prepared according to the policy documents in the National Education Philosophy and the national education blueprints revised every five years. The MQA considers academic qualifications as the positive achievement of learning outcomes of programmes in eight levels [level 1 to 3 for certificates, levels 4 and 5 for diplomas and advanced diplomas respectively, levels 6 and 7 for all sorts of degrees and finally level 8 for both masters and doctorates]. Community colleges mostly offer levels 1 and 2 certificate programmes (DCCE, 2013). Meanwhile, for lifelong learning the established pathways include a credit transfer system, either vertical or horizontal

and between sectors, a stackable credit system with multi-entry and exit, and accreditation of prior experiential learning (MQA, 2017, p. 34).

From 2010, Malaysia has moved towards building human capital for an industrial world and is becoming a high-income nation in 2020 (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). After almost 30 years of careful educational restructuring and planning, Malaysia made a significant achievement by 2010: the rate of poverty reduced to 3.8 per cent from 49.3 per cent in 1970. With this achievement, Malaysia's next target groups were only the low-income group and the disadvantaged. In 2010, low-income Malaysians were those with income below the minimum standard wage, that was, "less than RM2, 300 [(NZD\$766)] per month", comprised a group of 2.4 million households categorised as "the bottom 40 per cent (B40)" (Economic Planning Unit, 2011, p. 149). The B40 was also identified to be single-income families with the family wage earner only having a high school certificate and working as a general worker or self-employed. The Tenth Plan had two specific plans for the B40 group: improving their quality of life through skill training programmes and specially tailored entrepreneur programmes having a relevance to local industry. On the other hand, the disadvantaged (for example, the disabled and older persons) would be trained with special programmes to build their self-esteem and confidence so that they could find a better position in society. Among the many skill training institutions for the B40 group and the disadvantaged was community colleges in 2010 (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). Thus, the tendency of globalisation to disadvantage some vulnerable groups started to gain attention in the Tenth Plan and the combative effort continued in the subsequent Plan as an important focus area. Malaysia indeed wants to "enrich their [the B40] lives, raise their dignity, and enable them [the B40] to partake in the country's economic prosperity" (Economic Planning Unit, 2016b, p. 18).

This overview has shown the progress of Malaysia towards becoming a high-income nation. Private and public higher education institutions play complementary roles in the provision of higher education to increasing numbers of students. In this effort, the vulnerable at-risk group is becoming a special consideration for skill training institutions, with community colleges having a function to transform members of this group into entrepreneurs. The next section

examines the importance of a knowledge economy and its influence on higher education as the third market development.

2.5 A Knowledge Economy

This section examines the significant effect of the developed world's increasing adoption of technological innovations, especially computer technology, in every aspect of management and production. This has led to the advent of *a knowledge economy* that prioritises intellectual capital, particularly in relation to computer use.

Peter F. Drucker (1909 -2005), a founder of modern management, is often credited with popularising the term “knowledge workers”. Drucker (1993) understood “knowledge” as the main connecting instrument in open market trade and predicted the rise of a post-capitalist society primarily using only knowledge relevant to society in a knowledge economy. Drucker further suggested that the new “wealth” of a knowledge economy is the amount of knowledge about information technology one is able to accumulate and then apply. Thus, Drucker (1993) believed that the challenge facing modern education is the need to produce the designers and administrators of new computer applications.

The OECD (1996) suggested that computer literacy is imperative in a knowledge economy. Familiarity with computer use would determine a better economic return; thus, the OECD has encouraged its member states to invest in computer training for their workers as an investment for long-term economic growth. According to the OECD (1996), the abundant information available in a computer system is a form of codified knowledge that can be accessed using a basic system search (know-what, know-why, know-how and know-who) which is also a standard procedure used in economic operations. Therefore, if an employee is able to operate a computer he/she can access the almost infinite information free and provide a better service in the workplace.

Peters and Besley (2006) asserted that the huge amount of information available in computers is steadily changing traditional learning approaches in a knowledge economy. Modern learning using computers is becoming more open and is not confined to specific locations, times or teachers. Thus, Peters and Besley (2006)

identified at least five functions of learning using computers in a knowledge economy: open education for all; learner-centred learning; more industry-oriented learning; creative and innovative learning; and self-learning using courseware. In this way, a learning environment comprising flexible, inclusive, and user-friendly aspects may be an attraction to more learners, which may also reflect the features of community colleges to attract more participation.

De Grip (2006) and Van Loo, De Grip, and De Steur (2001) suggested that skill obsolescence implies a depreciation in the value of human capital as a result of increasing use of computer knowledge in all aspects of work. They identified it as economic obsolescence and it happens when employees/workers fail to upgrade their knowledge as an outcome of changing new work requirements (Van Loo et al., 2001). Furthermore, the economic obsolescence has become more apparent in a knowledge economy as computer applications are playing a major role in all management structures and business operations (De Grip, 2006; Van Loo et al., 2001). In this new economy, those without computer skills/knowledge are generally considered a skill obsolete person which could be detrimental to employees' employment status (De Grip, 2006). In the Netherlands, Van Loo et al. (2001) identified three measures working adults can take to avoid economic obsolescence: "job-specific", "sector-specific" and "firm-specific". Accordingly, to have job-specific skills a worker has to know all new skills needed for his/her job through non-stop engagement in learning. To have sector-specific skills a worker has to bring new innovative ideas to his/her sector after learning new relevant changes in the sector continuously. Finally, to have firm-specific skills a worker has to adapt his/her own transferable skills to new firm's requirements by attending their formal training (Van Loo et al., 2001, pp. 8-13). Thus, this study shows that any worker potentially can be a victim of economic obsolescence if he/she does not practice an active learning style according to changing work requirements. Therefore, De Grip (2006) and Van Loo et al. (2001) believed that only continuous engagement in lifelong learning can deflect the potential risks of economic obsolescence for workers.

This review has found that a knowledge economy is contributing to a new form of society that was probably not imaginable for economists in the eighteenth century. The members of this new society may risk losing their knowledge and skill to

obsolescence if they lack computer knowledge. However, there is also a warning that only a continuous engagement in learning will make people adaptable to fast changing computer technology in all dimensions of modern life (De Grip, 2006; Drucker, 1993; Van Loo et al., 2001). In other words, a knowledge economy implies the importance of continuous learning about new skills as an important feature of lifelong learning. This also raises a question about how the disadvantaged people who largely with financial issues are going to have an access to learn computer knowledge. The next section examines the arrival of a knowledge economy in Malaysia and its influence to the higher education.

2.5.1 A Knowledge Economy and Malaysian Higher Education

This section expands on the function of higher education, developing a more competitive society to face modern challenges in the knowledge-based economy. I examine that in the following three Malaysia Plans; Economic Planning Unit (2001a, 2001b, 2006).

Several earlier consistent initiatives to meet globalisation and liberalisation became a cornerstone to facilitate a smooth transformation into a knowledge-based economy in Malaysia beginning from 1996 (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a). It became necessary to build “a resilient, competitive nation and an equitable society” also ensuring greater unity and “social stability” following a worldwide economic influence (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a, p. 4). A knowledge-based economy in the context of Malaysia has two distinctive characters: “knowledge about technology and knowledge about attributes” and the second stressed experiential knowledge for shaping a better citizen (Economic Planning Unit, 2001b, p. 121).

Malaysia tends to understand well that the rapid growth of technology would eventually replace the traditional factor of production, labour, with sophisticated inventions all using knowledge. Again, developing human capital became imperative but this time to face a knowledge-based economy with the abilities “to create, innovate, generate and exploit new ideas” (Economic Planning Unit, 2001b, p. 120). Thus, higher education may serve a purpose to encourage wider participation in its institutions that had already diversified into other forms and functions.

As a foundation for the new economy, Malaysia has started to build a cyber-infrastructure as a necessary key factor at national and community level under the supervision of the National Information Technology Agenda from 1996 (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a). In the same year, the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC)[high technology business district] was conceptualised to be a national mega ICT engine to host selected cities, local and foreign companies, smart schools, government agencies, and all other developments based on multimedia technology as a dynamic ICT environment for the economy (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a, 2001b). However, from the very beginning, the expanse of the development only concentrated in a few urban centres because of limited telephone connections in the rural areas. This also caused a digital gap between the urban and the rural areas. Therefore, at the initial stage the situation was handled by supplying certain rural public departments with the Internet access for the rural communities' usage and the schools were set up with computer laboratories (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a).

Despite this accessibility issue, Malaysia also realised that it was not developing sufficient higher qualified individuals especially in the science and technology field to take the roles of a knowledge worker. Therefore, schools have been streaming more students into science classes while higher education has enrolled more students for science courses (Economic Planning Unit, 2001b). However, this newer type of demand placed “Malaysians with no formal education, senior citizens, disability people and those aged 15-64 without any occupation [to be] at risk to be marginalised” (Economic Planning Unit, 2001b, p. 128). The language of computers that largely has been in English furthermore became a treat to some working people to learn the skills. Therefore, in the early beginnings, employers have been encouraged to maintain certain jobs in their original forms (without any technology inclusion) to accommodate some workers who might need more time to learn the new skill (Economic Planning Unit, 2006).

To build a knowledge worker, Malaysia gradually restructured the school education system in terms of curriculum and teaching methods with teachers taking in-service training in computer skills (Economic Planning Unit, 2001b, 2006). Vocational and technical education started to offer courses having more relevance to “changing requirement of the labour market” to reduce “skills

mismatch” with incorporation of industrial internship (Economic Planning Unit, 2006, p. 30). To provide a continuous learning opportunity especially for working people, community colleges became a lifelong learning enabler with flexibility in terms of courses, times, entry requirements and fees for a better access to many (Economic Planning Unit, 2001b). For women and vulnerable youths, community college training programmes helped with employability and many were encouraged to be entrepreneurs through Small Medium Enterprise (SME) loans from banks (Economic Planning Unit, 2006).

This overview has shown the continuous progress of Malaysia in adapting its knowledge based economy. By accepting the new economy increasingly all public and private sectors gradually changed into a new way of technology-oriented management. Community colleges emerged to help the marginalised. The next section examines the development of lifelong learning as another crucial and comprehensive development in education.

2.6 Lifelong Learning

A knowledge economy tends to prioritise computer knowledge for almost everyone in order to sustain the nation’s industries. Thus, the concept of lifelong learning has been used to encourage people to learn about innovative applications in the computer world. This section examines lifelong learning as a new education development.

Lifelong learning became a widely accepted learning concept by international organisations and the European Union only in the late 1990s (Wain, 2004). It was perceived to bring a solution to social and economic tension resulting from increasing student enrolment; however, it could be also a consequence of computer technology (Delors, 1996; Wain, 2004). Helping people with education through lifelong learning opportunities may do much to enable them to deal with uncertainty in the future (Wain, 2004). Lifelong learning became an international agenda through three main agencies: the European Union (EU), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Wain (2004), a recent writer on the philosophy of lifelong education, suggested that lifelong learning is a derivation from lifelong education or adult education that had different terminologies: “continuing education”, “recurrent education” and “education permanente”. In the 1960s, most American universities through a separate adult and continuing education department provided continuing education opportunity to adults onto a degree in liberal studies (Wain, 2004). In the 1970s, the OECD introduced recurrent education to its member countries that followed the guidelines of adult education in the USA and Sweden to build human capital (Field, 2001; Wain, 2004). The European Union used *education permanente* as a term to describe a systematic education after school in post-school or non-education system (Wain, 2004). Arguably, all three described a post-school system for adults.

Wain (2004) further derives an understanding of lifelong learning from lifelong education through R.H. Dave’s *Foundations of lifelong education*, published in 1976. He unpacks Dave’s arguments about lifelong education as “an all rounded approach that could help a person to achieve total development through education and gain a better position continuously in life” (p. 9). Lifelong education may be considered an all-inclusive learning accepting formal, non-formal, and informal engagement to create a self-directed learner demonstrating motivation and determination for continuing education (Wain, 2004).

Lifelong learning as a term became important in two UNESCO reports: the Faure Report and the Delors Report. In the reports the use of *a learning society* and *learning throughout life* contributed to the idea of lifelong learning initially (Boshier, 1998). The Faure Report (1972) identified *a learning society* as having three key tracks: vertical integration, horizontal integration, and democratisation (Boshier, 1998, 2006). Vertical integration refers to the traditional path of formal education beginning from school, higher education to job that can be interrupted with an early employment between school and higher education (Boshier, 2006). The second track, horizontal integration involves: “learning to live; learning to learn; learning to think; learning to love the world; and learning to develop” (the Faure Report cited in Wain, 2004, p. 11). Horizontal integration signals learning can occur in formal settings, non-formal settings and in informal ways (Boshier, 2006). Democratisation in learning happens under an initiation of governments to

build resilient citizens where individuals take ownership of learning continuously for changing economy (Wain, 2004).

The Delors Report (1996) with a new outlook *learning throughout life* highlighted four pillars of education: learning to know; learning to do; learning to live together; and learning to be (Delors, 1996, p. 37). The Report further suggested that *a learning society* could be nurtured through a belief that “every aspect of life offers opportunities for both learning and doing” for every individual and society through a comprehensive educational practice (Delors, 1996, p. 19). The term *lifelong learning* became official discourse in the educational policies and practices in Europe after 1996 became the European Year of Lifelong Learning (Field, 2001; Wain, 2004). In actual practice, the Delors Report was an exclusive preparation to improve the economy in Europe but in 1997 UNESCO promulgated the idea to developing countries.

According to Field (2001), the Delors Report was actually a consequence of growing scientific discoveries and technological inventions in the USA and Japan in the 90s that increasingly confronted the European countries on their readiness to a rapid change. The Report was an outcome of an accelerating tension between “the global and the local; the universal and the individual; tradition and modernity; equality and opportunity; extraordinary knowledge expansion and human capacity; and the spiritual and the material” (Delors, 1996, pp. 14-16). Thus, the Report had a significant direction to create a “tomorrow society” in Europe that Field (2001) simplified into four focus areas: “developing a single competitive European market; creating a society to use technology efficiently; building a sense of citizenship in society; and fostering social inclusion” (Field, 2001, p. 10). In the process of analysing the Delors Report, Findsen and Formosa (2011) further modify the four derivative directions as follows: “the economic imperative; personal fulfilment; active citizenship; and social inclusion” (Findsen & Formosa, 2011, p. 36).

Because lifelong learning has a strong influence in this study, I have used all four lifelong learning directions suggested by Findsen and Formosa (2011) as derivative of Delors’s “tomorrow society” and Field’s four areas of development. The four directions became four main aspects of lifelong learning to interpret and

understand the findings obtained from four community colleges in Malaysia. In Malaysia, lifelong learning and community colleges are very relevant to the UNESCO recommendation in early 2000 (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a). This is suggestive of a relationship emerging among community colleges, higher education and lifelong learning in Malaysia. Thus, this study endorses this relationship as it explores the significance of community colleges in Malaysia.

In what follows, I explore three dimensions of lifelong learning: formal, non-formal and informal where the settings of lifelong learning pertain. The four aspects of lifelong learning will be examined in the next chapter with the literature on community colleges where the settings of this study is.

Formal, non-formal and informal dimensions of learning

Formal, non-formal and informal learning provide “a more pluralistic and accessible array of opportunities throughout life cycle” (The Faure Report cited in Boshier, 2006, p. 29). All the three learning dimensions, according to Findsen (2005), however, have “boundaries” that “are permeable” with a relation to interaction and occurrence (p. 81). For example, *formal education* occurs in school, *non-formal education* may happen in a community setting while *informal learning* may take place in everyday life events such as in a family gathering. Therefore, lifelong learning is more concerned with “what is learned”, not “where it was learned” (Boshier, 2006, p. 28). Lifelong learning involves an “engagement in a multitude of individually or collectively initiated learning activities in different contexts and with distinct orientation” (Livingstone, 2002, p. 50).

Formal education is a structured and systematic process of knowledge gain organised in different types of legitimated educational institutions (Boshier, 2006; Formosa, 2016). They argued that formal educational institutions are usually endorsed with a mainstream curriculum, learning ethics and widely acceptable qualifications. Schools and universities are common formal education settings for the traditional path of learning in almost all countries. According to Livingstone (2002), these formal institutions would be meeting a crucial need in alignment with national requirements through a translated education policy.

Non-formal education is a variation of formal education, being a systematic, structured learning programme without the award of a standard qualification (Findsen & Formosa, 2011). It is mostly conducted by welfare associations or volunteer bodies, and occasionally offers programmes for a specific group. Non-formal education also happens in everyday settings with regular systematic procedures such as in the workplace, prisons or religious classes, as an extended service (Boshier, 2006). Therefore Formosa (2016, p. 264) suggests that non-formal programmes can range from “creative to educational to informational” according to particular needs.

Informal learning is largely an acquired knowledge representing a person’s “experience, skills or behaviour” through a regular or occasional social involvement (Findsen & Formosa, 2011, p. 23). Furthermore, Formosa (2016) describes informal learning as the natural gaining of knowledge triggered by “a question, a problem, a need to know, or a curiosity” (p. 266). For example, informal learning could constitute positive knowledge gained from any involvement, such as visiting a new place, watching a movie, meeting a friend, or listening to one’s grandmother’s advice.

This examination has suggested that lifelong learning can be a continuous engagement in learning in order to become more relevant to changing circumstances. All three dimensions of learning can open multiple opportunities to more people. The next subsection discusses lifelong learning as a contemporary education development in Malaysian higher education.

2.6.1 Lifelong Learning in Malaysian Higher Education

This subsection explores lifelong learning as a newer path with a diversified educational opportunity for the people of Malaysia. The Prime Minister perceived it as meaning to “seek knowledge from cradle to grave” on the inauguration of the Blueprint of Lifelong Learning in 2011 (MOHE, 2011a, p. v). The use of “lifelong learning” as a term to describe educational plans first appeared in the Eighth Malaysia Plan; however, the launch of the Blueprint in 2011 promulgated the idea to the people of Malaysia. This section explores key document of lifelong learning the Blueprint and two new Malaysia Plans, Economic Planning Unit (2011, 2016a).

In Malaysia, lifelong learning took a position in the mainstream education as the third way after school and higher education (MOHE, 2011a). It may give hope to many, especially mature adults who might not even consider further study after missing out once. For the nation, lifelong learning may well develop a new source of human capital comprising mostly entrepreneurs from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The 2011 Blueprint became a key document with its focus on lifelong learning as a route for Malaysians to acquire new knowledge and skill and strengthen already acquired skills. In the Blueprint's foreword, the Minister of Higher Education wrote:

In this Blueprint, it is recognised that lifelong learning is the third pillar of human capital development after the school and tertiary education system. Based on this, it seeks to provide lifelong learning stakeholders with a road-map to enculturate lifelong learning in Malaysia. (MOHE, 2011a, p. xv)

The Minister is informing the people that Malaysia's aspiration is to build a society which makes learning a continuous engagement and a way of life. In this sense, lifelong learning has at least four functions in the Malaysian context. They are to help individuals to acquire and update all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge, and qualifications from preschool years to post retirement and to develop knowledge and competencies to enable every citizen to adapt to the knowledge-based society. They are to provide value for all forms of learning, formal, non-formal and informal and to provide a "second chance" to update basic skills to an advanced level through a more open and flexible formal system" (MOHE, 2011a, p. 6).

In this alignment, people of the ages 15 to 64 years are considered an ideal group of lifelong learners (MOHE, 2011a) while those above 64 could be older people learning in later life for active ageing (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c). Lifelong learning may largely be used for economic purposes in Malaysia. It could be crucial as Malaysia needs to escape its middle-income trap where a large proportion of the workforce is still low skilled with low wages, and hindering the nation's progressive growth (Economic Planning Unit, 2011; MOHE, 2011a). It can provide a chance for low-income workers to achieve better economic status.

Lifelong learning is also enabling opportunities for high school leavers employed in the Small Medium Entrepreneurs (SMEs) businesses. The economy is receiving a good revenue from the SMEs and thus the employers have been encouraged to use the concept of lifelong learning as an opportunity to improve their employees' skills (MOHE, 2011a). This signals a role of community colleges "at the local level" with upskilling programmes as the expansion programmes of lifelong learning (Economic Planning Unit, 2011, p. 47).

In the most recent Plan (2016-2020), lifelong learning has been enforced as a skill enhancement method for those "Malaysians 15 years and above who have dropped out of formal education and those who are currently employed, unemployed, or retired" (Economic Planning Unit, 2016a, p. 23). This Plan also stated a commitment to "widen access to lifelong learning and raise the quality of existing programmes" through remodelling the skills related to a traditional industry, community education and entrepreneurial knowledge (Economic Planning Unit, 2016a, p. 23). Thus, lifelong learning can help the Government to educate its citizens to achieve a better quality of life especially for the marginalised.

This examination has provided an understanding of lifelong learning as an innovative approach within Malaysian education. Lifelong learning is promoting education through varied dimensions of learning and opening up opportunities for more people to be educated in their individual area of interest besides an academic path.

The next section provides a brief summary of this chapter and the conceptual framework.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the development of higher education in a historical context and then moved on to four global market principles (human capital, globalisation and neoliberalism, a knowledge economy, and lifelong learning) as four influential principles to understand higher education developments globally and locally. Therefore, each of the four developments was also examined in the context of Malaysian higher education with a reference to the Malaysia Economic Plans and some national official documents. All the four developments helped to deal with growing social and economic demands emerging from a changing society and a competitive economy worldwide. Embracing all these principles, Malaysia moved on a positive trajectory from 1960s to 2015.

In this investigation, lifelong learning has been understood to be the most recent development having relevance to the aim of this study. Lifelong learning has been found to be a comprehensive concept for community colleges with its flexibility in recognising all three dimensions of learning occurrences: formal, non-formal and informal (Boshier, 2006; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Wain, 2004). The significance of this insight relates to the study's core analysis of community colleges under four aspects of lifelong learning: economic imperatives, personal fulfilment, active citizenship and social inclusion (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Findsen & Formosa, 2011) in the next chapter. Chapter 3 investigates the various models of community colleges in different parts of the world to position Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs). It also examines the development of community colleges under the four aspects of lifelong learning for a broader understanding of community colleges' function.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and build knowledge about community colleges as new institutions in Malaysian higher education in the context of lifelong learning. It has focussed on examining their goals, achievements, and challenges.

Chapter 2 reviewed higher education development on a global context. This chapter will focus on community colleges developments in higher education. Seven sections shape this chapter. As outlined in Chapter 2, lifelong learning tends to have the closest connection with community colleges. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the development on literature of lifelong learning and its four aspects: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Findsen & Formosa, 2011).

The first section examines community colleges and the developments in an international arena to develop a global understanding, and then narrows to Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs), the core of this study. Sections two to five review the literature of community colleges as a higher education institution closely associated with lifelong learning. Reviews of each section have been connected to the four aspects of lifelong learning as a useful way to better understand the provision of community colleges via lifelong learning. The sixth section presents literature relevant to challenges for community colleges for their teachers and students. The final section provides a brief summary of this chapter and an overall conceptual framework for the study.

3.2 Community Colleges from an International Perspective

This section examines the development of community colleges from an international perspective to understand the emergence in the Malaysian context that became a reality after 2000.

The World Bank (2003) encouraged all countries in Southeast Asia to include community colleges into their higher education systems as “an institutional

differentiation to accommodate diverse and growing demand of tertiary enrolment” (p. 48) in order to achieve at least five goals:

- To enable every citizen to contribute to an increase in national productivity;
- To improve the living standard of citizens and increase their participation in a global activity;
- To create a way to use technology to reduce the incidence of poverty;
- To provide better educational opportunities for low-income groups and marginalised students;
- To teach and encourage citizens to learn new skills and knowledge through lifelong learning practices (World Bank, 2003, p. 6)

Even before this suggestion, many countries in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, had started to integrate community colleges into their system under a recommendation of UNESCO after the Asian financial crisis in 1997 (Idris, 2011; Raby, 2009). This World Bank suggestion may have further strengthened the position of community colleges in Southeast Asia. As outlined in Chapter 2, American community colleges have had an influence on the development of community colleges in Southeast Asia as new types of short-cycle /two-year college (Osborne, 2005) also asserted by Raby (2009).

Raby (2009) has conducted several studies of community colleges in Southeast Asia. She observed two characteristics of the community colleges from the perspective of the impact of globalisation: having similar mission and heavily connected to local communities. Raby understood the term “community” is to emphasise locally-based education with a connection to global economic standards such as “curriculum, occupational certifications and student-centred pedagogy” (p. 23) and described two principles closely associated with the community colleges: “economic principles of neoliberalism and humanitarian principles” (p.24). For *economic principles*, they are providing skill courses to develop human capital in lower-level skills that may not be offered in any other institutions. In this way, Raby argued that community colleges in Southeast Asian countries are meeting the needs of people with minimum qualifications and helping their higher education to serve equal opportunity purpose, especially for

those “denied access due to minority status or lowered income” (p. 25). As for *humanitarian principles*, the community colleges are preparing local disadvantaged populations with skills that are more relevant to new economic demands (Raby, 2009).

The above is a brief introduction of the community colleges in Southeast Asia. However, a closer examination of American community colleges may be useful to better understand Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs). At the same time, an investigation of Britain’s short-cycle colleges may also be helpful as Malaysian higher education is historically influenced by the British system and this may well be significant for MCCs.

The next two subsections investigate the development of colleges similar to MCCs in America and Britain.

3.2.1 American Community Colleges

American community colleges, better known as public colleges and two year institutions, often use such terminologies to set them apart from universities (Bonham, 2005). In 2001, the colleges celebrated their 100th year anniversary (of their beginning in 1901) as public junior colleges to prepare high school students for a university education. With regards Bonham (2005) confirmed that the colleges' central role has always been to help “problematic students to enter university” (p.179). However, in the 1960s, Boone (1997) asserted that the term *community* attached to the colleges has established a sense of a different way for people “to restore a sense of identity and belonging” to America (p. 1). *Community* as a concept is believed to empowering and providing new opportunities for the people and thus, the colleges became “people’s colleges to serve a broader role within a community” (Boone, 1997, p. 2). Accordingly, the colleges started to develop more comprehensive and community-oriented programmes carrying different missions to serve a broader community. Myran (1978) an early scholar noted that this new orientation is gradually changing the original mission of the colleges from an academic-based curricula into curricula reflecting behaviours and skills of people relating to “life on the street corner, in the shop or factory, and in the home” (p. 4). But for Boone (1997) the connection

with community has even greater mission within higher education where they have to “stay within a community and help the community grow” (p. 2).

Myran (1978) further argued that the new aim of the American community colleges is to be both education-based institutions and centres of community development. He clarified that the colleges work is to provide education to advance individuals as well as communities. Therefore, he suggested “community education and community service” as two general routes to educate communities (p.3). For Myran (1978), *community education* is the community colleges programmes to satisfy the varied educational demands emerging from local communities, whereas *community service* is the colleges’ involvement in local communities’ activity as a means of providing education and to improve their students’ social skills. According to Myran (1978), such community service is a deliberate educational opportunity for community members that could suit the “natural grain of their [communities’] lives”(p. 3) who otherwise may not even consider a college-level education. Wang (2013) a more recent scholar, presented that community education is a significant contribution of the colleges to their local communities. She found community education to be the friendliest aspect of the community colleges as it is for all regardless of age and position, but importantly, a person has to live in the service area of the colleges (Wang, 2013). Community education is to help local communities to improve their quality of life with courses related to their everyday tasks.

Vaughan (2000) argued that the American community colleges became *open access* institutions to extend an established mission of diversity and equality. *Open access* is noted to be the “philosophical base” (p.20) on which the community colleges function and intended to enable more high school students to receive a college level education. According to Vaughan (2000), *open access* and its new services for students include “offering a comprehensive programme; providing guidance and counselling services; helping with low fees; and locating colleges close to service areas” (p. 21). He further emphasised that the new services have encouraged more students to enrol, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those with poor academic qualifications.

Vaughan (1997) also argued that the American colleges are *community-based institutions* and the term *community* is a signal to indicate that they will serve community. He noted that the colleges are performing in two places: the *core* and the *edge* for serving community. The core activities happen on campus ranging from curriculum development, teaching and learning, to evaluation whereas the edge expands on the activities of the core in a community space, for example at industry sites, public and private agencies or local authorities (Vaughan, 1997). Through the off campus activities, the colleges are establishing an interaction with the outside world by which they are getting to know more about local needs and services that could meet their needs. In this way, Vaughan (1997) noted that the American community colleges are helping their students to improve their learning as well as achieve an important goal, social values.

Dougherty (2002) added that American community colleges are also *workforce development centres* using practical teaching for high school leavers. She called the service distinctive as it has made a difference in the life of those school-leavers disadvantaged by having socio-economic problems and poor high school results. In this framework, the colleges are providing skill training in demanding vocational courses so the students could move directly into employment after their pre-employment occupational training. She said that the courses usually would come with a combination of structured curricula and qualifications so students can go for a better paying job. According to Dougherty (2002), the community colleges are focussing on such demanding courses as students with a one-year certificate course of theirs are earning 10 per cent more than those students decided to work after school.

Leigh and Gill (2009) discussed the service of the American community colleges to working adults. The colleges are providing *occupational training* for working adults in local industries and public agencies. Leigh and Gill emphasised that the role is increasingly becoming important to the colleges to address the impact of the knowledge economy on working adults in all local sectors. In order to meet this demand, the training is arranged to fit into the busy schedules of workers mostly involving short-term courses at flexible times (Leigh & Gill, 2009). Accordingly, the colleges are becoming an alternative institution for working adults especially for those who intend to reskill at moderate cost.

Grubb (2006) argued that community colleges are becoming more vocationally orientated institutions for students with talents. He described the community colleges as “relatively ubiquitous, low-cost institutions, smaller institutions and less daunting” (p. 30) and catering for “school graduates and non-graduates mostly from lower socio-economic society to learn lower status occupational programmes” (p. 32). Hence, he identified three groups of students who generally enter community colleges in America:

- Students who choose community colleges because they are nearer to home and offer better opportunities and support than universities;
- Students who want to gain a valid credential through several entries in credit accumulation programmes while continuing to work;
- Students who are interested in transferring to a university after a strong foundation at friendly community colleges.(Grubb, 2006, pp. 32-37)

After exploring the American community colleges, the next subsection looks at short-cycle colleges in Britain that almost have similar functions as community colleges.

3.2.2 Colleges of Further Education in Britain

In 1970, the British higher education system introduced 200 colleges of further education as another component of its further education colleges. Parry (2005) asserted that these colleges are short-cycle colleges for two obvious reasons: “to meet direct market needs and to create a pathway to higher education for students” and described them to be “the most local, vocational and distributed parts” (p. 65) of higher education. He identified that the colleges’ role is to broaden educational opportunities for a poorly qualified population and offer further education opportunities to disadvantaged high school students or mature students. The students mostly take two-year full-time programmes in a vocational course and continue to a higher qualification at a polytechnic (Parry, 2005). The colleges are also meeting the local employment needs by working closely with local authorities and local industries.

This examination has showed that in their beginnings community colleges in America and further education colleges in Britain were very community-orientated in terms of services and programmes. They offered education to less

successful high school leavers. However, Grubb (2006) identified that American community colleges are experiencing changing patterns in students' enrolment as students with good results are also enrolling to build a strong foundation and to enjoy their friendly approach before going to universities.

I am interested to understand what is actually happening in the modern community colleges established around the early 2000s in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the following two subsections investigate the community colleges of two of Malaysia's neighbours, Taiwan and Thailand.

3.2.3 Taiwanese Community Colleges

Taiwanese community colleges focus on building a civil society (Chen & Wang, 2009). Taiwan wants to build a sustainable society of responsible citizens supporting the common interest through "a greater participation from its citizens in public affairs and decision-making" (Chen & Wang, 2009, p. 51). In Taiwan, the colleges are the leaders for developing grassroots communities with new educational goals. Taiwan has 100 colleges now, from a single college started in 1998 and they are the *community universities* inspired by the American community colleges.

At first, local authorities privately managed the colleges, as the Government could not cope with their speedy growth (Chen & Wang, 2009). In 2002, a nationwide implementation of lifelong learning forced all the colleges to work together towards their national goal, developing the grassroots community under the governance of each individual state. All the colleges became "independent" colleges within Taiwanese higher education with a "primary goal" to provide lifelong learning (Chen & Wang, 2009, p. 54).

According to Chen and Wang (2009), the colleges have three types of programmes: "academic, life-skills, and community involvement programmes" (p.55). *Academic* are regular education programmes, *life skills* are self-enrichment courses, and in particular community involvement courses are a combination of community education and service learning to establish a sense of active citizenship for young people by reaching into the grassroots community. In this service, the students (young people) meet the grassroots community as part of

their course fulfilment while the community utilises the meetings as an opportunity to communicate their immediate local issues and problems to the students with a hope to get a solution. According to Chen and Wang (2009), such a planned activity is becoming useful for young people to learn and appreciate the culture and customs of their grassroots community. Furthermore, the course contents that have been constructed out of the materials and stories collected from the elders of the grassroots community are helping the students to understand better the issues of the marginalised community and making their learning more meaningful.

In Taiwan, all programmes are awarded with a transcript to appreciate the time devoted to the programmes. Using lifelong learning, the community colleges are striving to create a community that can access other useful practices through learning more than the usual academic pursuits (Chen & Wang, 2009). Furthermore, the Taiwanese community colleges also focus on adult learners to build a robust society, in the belief that adults would be more committed to learning than the younger generation. For Taiwan, the concept of a civil society refers to forming “a collective community” in which “people respect each other to participate in social engagement and to show social responsibilities” (Chen & Wang, 2009, p. 56). The Taiwanese community colleges might be building a society focussed on the active citizenship aspect of lifelong learning.

The next subsection examines community colleges in Thailand, Malaysia’s closest neighbour.

3.2.4 Thailand’s Community Colleges

Thai community colleges aim to improve the quality of life of the rural communities through offering better opportunities for higher education (Punthumasen & Maki, 2009). *Withayalai Chumchon* is the local name of these colleges, and they have survived in different kinds of institutions with similar functions since 1986. In Phuket, the Prince of Songkhla University helped to resolve the shortage of professional courses for local needs. In the north, Community Learning Centres (CLCs) or Ma Fa Luang or Mae Jam, provided adult literacy classes for hill tribes. Punthumasen and Maki (2009) asserted that Thai community colleges were only instituted as such in 1999 through the

National Education Act mainly to promote “Lifelong Education for All”. In Thailand, every province only has one community college and altogether there are 18 colleges in 18 provinces, all completed by 2006.

Thai community colleges have two main programmes: “2-year associate degree programmes and intensive short training or short-term courses” (Punthumasen & Maki, 2009, p. 135). The colleges’ main task is to provide higher education opportunities for a growing student population in the rural areas as the universities are mostly concentrated in Bangkok and other urban areas (Punthumasen & Maki, 2009). In this sense, they said that Thai community colleges are the only higher education institutions of the rural students with pre-degree level education that is very flexible with varied types of programmes to bridge the higher education gap between rural and urban students. Thus, as Punthumasen and Maki (2009) explored, Thailand’s colleges might have been set out to address the economic imperative aspect of lifelong learning to foster positive instrumental educational values in the younger generation.

This discussion has described the arrival of community colleges in two countries neighbouring Malaysia. Lifelong learning appears to be a driving force behind the Taiwanese and Thailand community colleges, because they are established in the era of lifelong learning. These colleges also focus on helping an educationally disadvantaged sector of the population, like community colleges elsewhere. With this broader understanding, the next section examines the development of community colleges in Malaysia. Henceforth, Malaysian Community Colleges will be referred to interchangeably as MCCs or the Colleges.

3.2.5 Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs)

This section explores the development of Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs) from policy documents of the Department of Community Colleges Education (DCCE), the direct managing body. It also looks at some studies conducted based on the Colleges.

Pursuant to a parliamentary order in 2001, 12 colleges were established in 12 locations. In 2007 the number increased to 35 colleges and by 2014 there were around 90 altogether in which West Malaysia had 78 colleges and East Malaysia

had 12 colleges (DCCE, 2014). This rapid increase could indicate either that the people welcomed MCCs or that the Government initiated their growth; this is also part of this study's investigation. The Colleges are spread across 145 administrative districts, which are the geographical subdivisions of the 14 states in Malaysia (DCCE, 2013). Most of MCCs have shifted to their own permanent campus either an own campus or a row of shops converted into a campus. There were 20 in own campuses, 33 in a row of shops and 37 still in rented premises in 2014 (DCCE, 2013, 2014). Among the four community colleges that I examined for this study, three were in campus situations and one in shops.

The Department of Community College Education (DCCE) briefly explains the origin of the Colleges (DCCE, 2012). MCCs were originally placed with polytechnics under a common department, the Department of Technical Education. Later, the Department took a new name as the Department of Polytechnics and Community Colleges Education. Like the polytechnics, MCCs are public institutions so the Ministry of Higher Education is their caretaker. In 2007, a major breakthrough happened when the former Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi became very much interested in upgrading the Colleges after a meeting with UNESCO. The Prime Minister was greatly inspired and planned to expand MCCs' services to educate more people through lifelong learning. Thus, he inaugurated MCCs as a hub for lifelong learning and created more opportunities for access to education for more people, especially from the rural areas.

In 2009, MCCs received greater recognition for their work and the Ministry acknowledged this through a special department to govern and manage the community colleges alone: the Department of Community College Education. MCCs became more autonomous at the Ministry level but at the local level, the DCCE guided them. The DCCE used its eight divisions (policy and curriculum development; academic development; examination and assessment; industrial liaison, graduates tracking and alumni; student welfare; student admission; and management services) to help in administering the Colleges through an internal administrator at every college (see chapter 5 for the organisational chart). MCCs are public institutions fully-funded by the Government based on the number of students in enrolment every year (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a; MOHE,

2011b). Every fiscal year individual Colleges set the target number of students for two different courses (formal programmes and non-formal programmes), plan a budget, and submit for allocation to the Ministry of Higher Education. Formal programmes are for young people from high schools and non-formal programmes are mainly for working people and any members from local communities (DCCE, 2012).

Idris (2011), a former Director General of the DCCE, asserted that MCCs have been established from 2001 to accommodate around 40 per cent of high school students for “post-secondary learning and training opportunities” and to deliver “lifelong learning opportunities for communities at large” (p. 120). He also confirmed that MCCs are an inspiration of the community colleges in America and Canada. The actual plan is for the Colleges to be placed in every parliamentary constituency and they are being established in stages after due consideration had been given to every community demand and demographic (see subsection 6.3.1). Idris (2011) also noted that as elsewhere MCCs are providing a link to further education for high school students who have been hindered from continuing education as a result of overcrowded higher education institutions and rigid entry requirements.

Janang (2014), editor of a Malaysian social magazine, considered that MCCs are leaders to equip the younger generation with skills needed for the economy by becoming centres for “innovation and creativity and education intertwined with skills” (p. 7). One more function is to provide lifelong learning opportunities for all people through non-formal/non-credit education based on skills, which may improve their economic chances. She believed that MCCs are expanding lifelong learning opportunities as wide as possible to allow more people to be educated.

This exploration shows that MCCs are well linked to a community college at the international level. They provide an alternative pathway for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. They also provide lifelong learning opportunities for any learners emerging from local communities.

Upon examining three kinds of community colleges from three countries in Southeast Asia, namely Taiwan, Thailand and Malaysia, their common strong characteristic is lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is seemingly a reason for

these community colleges to expand their services to a broader segment of people with newer educational opportunities. This also sets apart community colleges in Southeast Asia from their antecedents in Britain and America. Thus, the following sections delve deeper into lifelong learning and its four fundamental aspects: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Fjendsen & Formosa, 2011). This is to provide a greater understanding of the position of community colleges within lifelong learning, particularly in Malaysia.

The next four sections examine lifelong learning and the four aspects beginning with economic imperatives.

3.3 Lifelong Learning and Economic Imperatives

This section explores literature that examines the connection between lifelong learning and the aspect of economic imperatives linked to higher education and community colleges.

A country offering a wide choice of creative skills and knowledge as human capital is testimony to its wealth and strength. Human capital necessitates an investment in education and training to increasingly integrate into economic imperatives. Globalisation and the rapid growth of computer knowledge in all types of productive activities, including marketization, are not helpful for a deprived population to continuously contribute to a fast changing economy. Lifelong learning has become an essential part of continuous learning to help many of the disadvantaged to have educational access through “welfare” institutions such as community colleges.

The following studies describe how lifelong learning may foster economic development.

Drucker (1993) predicted that the future workforce would be “less labour-intensive but more cognitive-resourceful” (p. 61). He envisaged that the technicians of the future might be high skilled workers with reasonable competency in computer knowledge and could be the strongest technical support team in various fields and industries. Technicians might be teams of technical specialists who want to learn more about fast changing technical expertise, rather

than assume a role as successors to blue-collar workers. Hence, the predictions of Drucker link to the reality of today's workers where they have to consistently upgrade knowledge to changing work requirements.

Henry, Hill, and Leitch (2005) noted that entrepreneurship education could be a help for students who face current challenges and future uncertainty. They believed that an education mixed with entrepreneurial skills might be a solution to growing anxieties in the workplace and an educational trend towards supporting marginalised people. Seth (2017) commented that an entrepreneur is a person who always uses an innovative business idea to “start and run a business with limited resources and planning,[by] taking account of all risks” (p. 1). He believed that entrepreneurial education can be a trigger to “start business with a revolutionary intention” (p. 2).

Jamieson (1984) suggested three frameworks of entrepreneurship education that could be useful in teaching. *Education about enterprise* is learning about entrepreneurship in a class; *education for enterprise* is applying the learning in a business setting in a college; and *education in enterprise* is working on real business sites to learn and eventually start an innovative business (the frameworks have a close connection to MCCs entrepreneurial programme and they have been explored in subsection 7.2.1. According to Jamieson (1984), entrepreneurship education must include active practical skills for significant experiential learning in the sense of decision-making, knowing about people, and understanding failure.

Handel (2007) identified measures necessary to transfer students from community colleges to higher degree programmes. These suggestions were taken from the California community colleges that are enabling poor and minority students to continue their education. Thus, he recommended five effective ways to help students to transfer:

- Compulsory academic preparation in English (Writing) and Mathematics (Algebra) across all curriculums;
- The provision of counselling services on the importance of having a higher degree;
- Professional development with university advisers for teachers from community colleges;

- Clear identification for students of the courses that could qualify them for a transfer;
- Development of a positive transfer culture in community colleges. (Handel, 2007, pp. 41-44)

Leary (2012) suggested that community colleges could choose to train a skilled workforce for “*unfilled jobs* [that] do not require a traditional college degree” (p. 28). Some of the identified sub-populations include technicians and electricians at engineering, construction or health sites, and service workers. Leary emphasised that after a cycle of successful training of such specific jobs, community colleges could acquire a certification for an industry standard to add value to the courses. Meanwhile, Russell (2011), in support of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE at present known as the Learning and Work Institute) concept of the Big Society in Britain, remarked that further education colleges with a mission to help communities have to focus on building skills “at the heart of each and every one of those communities” (p. 16). He further explained the importance of every individual to attain the “right” skills and confidence so he/she can decide on what to contribute to community that eventually would build a healthy community. To make this happen, Russell suggested that the power exercised should not always be from top down but also needs to be distributed at local community level to empower local people. Thus, Russell (2011) noted that further education colleges being based in communities are in a good position to raise the self-esteem of every individuals in a community.

Goho and Rew (2009) observed that school leavers who had to work after school could continue to study through the cooperative education programme, a partnership programme between Canadian community colleges and local industries. The programme works on an understanding between community colleges, employers, and mature students at work. Goho and Rew noticed in their study that working students were willing to return to college when they were selected for a course by their employers to learn in a community college. Given such opportunity, the students are coping well with work and their study in two ways; learning the practical part at the workplace and the theoretical part at the colleges. According to Goho and Rew (2009), the students who successfully

completed their course became permanent workers, usually with an increased salary. This cooperative education model helped poor students who decided to work immediately after school with the help of their own employers and community colleges.

Wong (2015) investigated Hong Kong community colleges to understand their intention and practices and their characteristics at the present stage. The colleges borrowed an idea from the American colleges but are functioning in a very different scenario altogether. According to Wong (2015), the role is only one, transferring high school students into a university programme after their associate degrees at the colleges. Hong Kong community colleges are private colleges supporting high school students following the “open access” policy of community colleges. This is making the colleges more accessible to richer students who are able to self-finance their study. Hence, Wong understood that the colleges are generally swaying away from the original mission of community colleges in America. The increasing number of graduates of the associate degrees started to compete for the limited space at the public universities. This, consequently, introduced a new set of students “hungry” for university education and encouraged a new sector of private universities to emerge which is more accommodating for the graduates to gain a university degree. Accordingly Wong (2015) asserted that the Hong Kong higher education sector has expanded and increased degree holders in Hong Kong employment market through the community college education without really disturbing their public universities’ policies and practices.

In the Malaysian context, the OECD (2013) asserted that Malaysia has to address its internal issues before proceeding to be an advanced economy by 2020. Three main challenges identified were: “skill shortages and mismatches and the deficiencies in the education system that underlie them; the low participation of women in the workforce; and the increasing gap between rural and urban small and medium enterprises (SMEs)” (OECD, 2013, p. 2). Thus, OECD suggested three policy amendments to intensify human capital development: “strengthen Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the education system to address skills shortages; address the weakness in labour market functioning; and enhance productivity of SMEs” (p. 3).

Mohd Zain et al. (2017) conducted a review of higher education and its impact on graduates since independence up to the present day in Malaysia. They reviewed many Government documents, which exposed a number of challenges for recent graduates. The challenges include that graduates can be employed only if their skill suits employers and they are willing to learn through an industrial internship before employment. According to Mohd Zain et al. (2017), the graduates have to listen to industry experts, who may become a major source for their knowledge bank and they have to adapt to a competitive global market by having good oral and written skills. They also must be able to make independent decisions in case of technical problems, make progress when given responsibilities and finally, they need to have the ability to improve their knowledge by continuously engaging in learning (pp. 85-86).

Esa et al. (2009) observed high school students' perceptions of courses offered at MCCs. They met the students at a national camp after their high school examination. They conducted a survey of 105 students. They found that all the students are aware of the courses as skill-based and could help them to find a future job or continue education. According Esa et al. (2009), the most preferred courses of the high school students are "hotel management, culinary skills, tourism, and information technology" (p.103). The students' sources of information are their school and friends about MCCs. A determining factor to choose a particular course is the chance of being employed after course completion. Some students also responded that they could avoid becoming a factory worker.

Kamin et al. (2010) investigated the effectiveness of a work based learning programme run by MCCs and a Malaysian automotive industry from the perspectives of students, lecturers, and employers. Work based learning (WBL) is a combination of 25 % lessons in colleges and 75 % on-job training at industrial sites and the aim is to allow students to be well prepared for a specific job (Kamin et al., 2010). In this study, Kamin et al. (2010) found that the students are happy to have a real work experience and prefer it over classroom learning and some students are also disappointed with their lecturers who are not able to guide them with automotive technicalities as the employers. On other hand, the lecturers believed that such exposure is good for their students as they can learn to handle

new equipment and to be familiar with the latest automotive technology. However, employers expressed that the curriculum offered at community colleges is often out-dated and may not be sufficient to teach students about new changes in the automotive industry. The employers also pointed out that the lecturers as course trainers should be aware of new changes in industry in order to deliver appropriate knowledge to their students.

Abd Rahman et al. (2015) conducted an observational study of students in a culinary arts course that is one of the modular programmes in MCCs. They decided to examine the programme as it has the potential to create entrepreneurs among local communities especially women. They observed students' competency level on the fourth module of the course, banqueting, that uses hands-on methods to enhance their practical, social, and entrepreneurial skills. The students were 11 high school graduates and four single mothers. They found that younger students who were following all the four modular sets in sequence had a higher competency level in practical skills than other students. However, single mothers who only enrolled in the fourth module, according to Abd Rahman et al. (2015) showed a high interest to start their own business and demonstrated a higher competency level in social skills than the younger students.

This examination has highlighted that a changing economy encourages the employers to be very demanding in terms of employees' useful skills and knowledge. Engagement in learning is perceived as an individual responsibility for job advancement. Industrial sites are turning into essential learning grounds for students in skill development programmes. A new opportunity for less academically-able students resides in the development of entrepreneurship skills to help meet unfilled job skills.

The next subsection investigates community colleges under the second aspect of lifelong learning, social inclusion.

3.4 Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion

This section explores literature that explains links between lifelong learning and the concept of social inclusion and how they influence higher education and community colleges.

Social inclusion may be defined as a process of integrating the most disadvantaged members of the community into mainstream society by offering better lifelong learning opportunities (Silver, 2015; World Bank, 2013). Such inclusion could establish a greater participation of the disadvantaged in social, economic and political activities (Silver, 2015). Thus, a society has to promote an “inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status” (Silver, 2015, p. 1). The World Bank (2013) asserted that stereotyping, stigma and superstition are often used to further exclude certain groups within the disadvantaged. Today, leaving the disadvantaged unattended can also be a costly affair as they may well cause social unrest or they may be recipients of costly welfare security (Silver, 2015).

The World Bank (2013) highlighted three interconnected domains: “markets, services and spaces” that can be “barriers and opportunities for inclusion”, especially for disadvantaged people (p. 8). *Markets* relate to land, houses, labour, and finance. Higher prices of land and housing in urban centres are influencing the prices in rural areas as well and making it difficult for rural communities to afford basic commodities. Wage differences between educated and non-educated exclude many lower-income earners from the labour market. Financial inclusion in the form of social assistance (credit) through sophisticated bank facilities potentially excludes the already less educated and disadvantaged (World Bank, 2013, pp. 8-10). Thus, *services* in the form of education, health, transport, and basic amenities are necessary to improve vulnerable people’s position. However, *spaces* formed out of certain characteristics such as political, social, geographical or cultural influences are further solidifying exclusion of members associated with those spaces. Therefore, the World Bank suggested that improving ability, opportunity, and dignity through suitable services could help those socially excluded to find partial solutions (World Bank, 2013, pp. 11-13). *Ability* should be built positively from childhood without any discriminatory comments so that

children from disadvantaged families would not set a “much lower bar for themselves” seeing the others similar to them “performing at a low level” (World Bank, 2013, p. 14). Educational *opportunity* for a disadvantaged child should be established from young and an expansion of opportunity at a later stage “can itself be exclusionary” (p. 14). *Dignity* is linked to “notions of respect and recognition” (p. 14). Less recognition of cultures and beliefs of minorities by the dominant group can gradually exclude minorities’ participation from the mainstream society’s activities.

As well as describing factors influencing exclusion, the World Bank (2013) suggested four newer inter-related contexts of social inclusion: “demographic, spatial, economic, and knowledge transition” (p. 18). Demographic transition involves issues relating to the impact of increasing number of older people, especially in developing countries. Older adults need new ways to include them in market and services domains. Spatial transition is about dealing with the mass movement of people during urbanisation that has resulted in a much less educated population living at the fringes. Disadvantaged people are yet to experience positive economic and knowledge transition in the era of technology revolution (World Bank, 2013, pp. 18-19). Incompetent governments may face issues of income inequality, youth unemployment, and families living at subsistence level. Educational opportunities are considered to be an essential service which can give people, especially the disadvantaged, access to positive social transition by reducing poverty and improving their status to become middle-class (World Bank, 2013, pp. 20-22).

Preece (2006) discussed the agenda of widening participation in regard to an individual country’s responsibility to provide educational access to marginalised people. Preece argued that poverty and lower socio-economic backgrounds are inhibiting many especially marginalised from an opportunity to education. Thus, formal education alone may not be able to reduce poverty; implementing a lifelong learning model recognises all contexts of learning: formal, informal and non-formal. Preece (2006) identified four causes that could make a person vulnerable not to get educated when young. They are children who work to support family financial issues and their consequent neglecting of school; living in rural areas with no facilities of secondary education; parents who could not afford

to pay children's education; and girls in families who often stopped schooling to care for siblings (pp. 117-118).

Bhola (2006) described how access to education has been broadened for adult learners. He said that traditionally, access to education is regarded as an opportunity to receive a formal education in purpose-built educational institutions that normally progresses through three stages: primary and secondary levels and then higher, or tertiary, education. Bhola (2006) noted that traditional formal education did not provide access to education for adults who had missed out on schooling at one point of the flow and were therefore "in need of out-school education" (p.44) in order to continue being active in social and economic activities. He added that the impact of globalisation and exponentially developing technology has necessitated adults to construct knowledge relevant to their circumstances through training and retraining. In this complexity, the change from the concept of adult education to adult learning encouraged governments to withdraw from their responsibility to support education provision for adult learners; adults now have "to pursue their own personal educational agendas as adults" (p. 45). Therefore, formal education expanded to include "all types of education and at all levels, delivered formally or non-formally" (p.45) in which adults have to take their own initiatives to learn. Thus Bhola (2006) said that at initial stages, the new institutions used a variety of "mobilisation strategies" to introduce adults to "adult education programmes and projects" (p. 61) and then the institutions gradually moved into offering continuing education opportunities via the concept of lifelong learning.

Grubb, Badway, and Bell (2003) highlighted that short courses are a form of non-credit education, which is becoming a characteristic of community colleges in America, to serve much-diversified learners. According to Grubb et al. (2003), the learners typically include "low-achieving students, school dropouts, mature students, and low-income workers" (p. 218). In this study they tried to understand how short courses can provide opportunities for the learners through three main programmes: upskill, hobby related courses, and skill training. Low-income workers preferred an upskill course as it could help them to gain a better employment position and income. Hobby related courses served the largest group of learners especially women in most community colleges as for using everyday

familiar skills. Other attractions of the courses were fees, time, and location of the colleges. Skill training helped mature students to obtain valid credentials while employed with higher-level technical skills and this was noted as the most worthy value of short courses (Grubb et al., 2003, pp. 220-222).

Baker (2013), in the American context, remarked that short courses are changing “as a result of new audiences, technologies, and institutional expectations” (p. 61). For Baker, short courses are non-credit programmes under the continuing education unit in a public institution. He added that currently short courses are not only limited to serving the disadvantaged constituents from a specific geographic community but also have grown to serve a larger and more distant sector of people. In this new demand, the courses themselves have branched out into various designs and delivery. Baker (2013) suggested four relevant changes. These include programme blending (courses showing multipurpose character to suit any learner); outcome design (courses having a specific goal of achievement); course delivery (courses having crucial preparation and delivery to achieve targeted learners’ learning objectives) and partnering (courses presenting opportunities for other providers to learn using college facilities) (Baker, 2013, pp. 64 - 65). Thus, Baker believed that future short courses might well become more orientated to professional development and technology awareness as the prevalent business model for many higher education institutions.

Houghton (2003), who became a disabled person in her later life, explored some opportunities available to disabled persons in Britain stereotyped who were as dependent on social security or welfare. She tried to understand why disabled people become welfare dependent from those with hearing and multiple physical disabilities. She realised many could not be employed because of the official terms used against them in all sectors at the national level. In this respect, she postulated that education could be a changer of public perception and help develop a positive relationship between disabled and mainstream people in Britain and she believed adult education is the significant contributor. With reference to some adult education activities at the British Disability Alliance (DAB), Houghton (2003) suggested at least four ways to raise the confidence of the disabled. These include “providing personal development courses based on some specific skills; creating new courses that are inclusive of physical and financial

support; making them independent through courses with entrepreneurial skills; and developing critical thinking” (Houghton, 2003, pp. 133-136).

Rumann, Rivera, and Hernandez (2011) presented some strategies appropriate for working with military veterans in community colleges in America. These include constructing a special programme so they can qualify for financial aid, preparing a separate area and assistance so they can be free to use new technology devices, and providing a counselling service to help them assimilate into civilian life (pp. 53-54). They found that the military veterans appreciated the additional support for the following issues they faced. They had some difficulties in adjusting to a college life after a regimented career; anxiety rising from their past identity often restricting their communication with other students; opinion differences with younger faculty members; discomfort at working with younger students; and, preference for army personnel as facilitators (pp. 54-56).

Myran and Ivery (2013) argued that creating a substantial number of middle-skilled talented individuals from marginalised social groups could bridge the gap between higher and lower earners. They need to upgrade themselves into middle skilled workers by earning credentials such as certificates, associate degrees, or professional licences. Therefore, Myran and Ivery (2013) suggested the following ways to improve the quality of life of each marginalised group. Low-skilled workers should upgrade their knowledge with new skills desirable for the workplace. Young adults with earnings not matched to their talent should be trained in a practical career skill, with minimum theory and a paid internship. Unemployed men could be provided with subsidised training to pursue a college degree. Finally, working graduates could be responsive to employers’ demands by training in areas for which they currently lack a qualification (Myran & Ivery, 2013, p. 50).

Brewster (2015) observed that community colleges could share and educate prison inmates through a partnership with local prisons where they are rehabilitated through developing skills in drawing, sewing, and painting. He conducted a study in a number of American prisons and found prison courses had neither an organised curricula nor explicit aim; this may also be the case in many other parts of the world. Thus, Brewster (2015) suggested creating a ‘natural partnership’

where community colleges work in partnership with prison authorities in order to have a positive impact on the learning of prison inmates. This partnership could also include shared administrative responsibility in terms of teachers, course development, and professional assistance. Brewster (2015) identified four benefits of such a partnership. These include providing learning experience in both community colleges' skill courses and prison skill courses; helping learners to gain a community college certificate after a course completion; providing updates about opportunities at community colleges through free counselling services; and teaching crucial skills such as entrepreneurial and communicative skills that are special to community colleges (Brewster, 2015, pp. 90-95). He said that such initiative could help prison inmates to be lifelong learners at a community college after their custodial period that also could reduce public stigma on them.

In a Malaysian study, Ragayah (2008) and Hatta and Ali (2013) examined the issue of income inequality in Malaysia. Ragayah used the Agricultural Census of 1977 to note the changes in household income distribution from 1979 to 2004. Household income is defined as income derived from a "group of persons normally living together, pooling their financial resources and eating from the same pot" (Ragayah, 2008, p. 115). Ragayah found that after 1990 income inequality increased between urban (at least 10,000 people) and rural (fewer than 10,000 people) areas due to the rapid growth of industrial jobs in the urban centres. More recently, Hatta and Ali (2013) have provided some suggestions for sustainable poverty reduction as they too noticed the incidence of poverty was higher in rural areas. In 2010 those living below the national poverty line, that is, those earning an average monthly household income of less than RM800 (NZ\$285), were considered to be disadvantaged. Hatta and Ali (2013) found that targeted support by means of subsidies alone was not enabling disadvantaged people's access to changes in the economy. Therefore, they suggested the following to prepare them for a knowledge economy. These include training young people in technical and vocational skills; focussing on industries that could support community activities; helping rural communities with capacity building training programmes to improve quality of life; providing support for those interested in becoming entrepreneurs; and helping farmers to increase production with modern agricultural technology (Hatta & Ali, 2013, p. 54).

Patel (2014) conducted a survey of students who dropped out of school in Malaysia. The survey was carried out involving 1200 parents from low-income families and among them 150 respondents had at least one dropout child who had already started to work. Dropouts in Malaysia are defined to be “the proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given school year which is no longer enrolled in the following year” (p. 2). Student dropouts were noted to be more evident during the transition period from primary to secondary level and within secondary level. By ethnicities, the Malay families had the most children drop out, followed by the Chinese and the Indians. The average age of dropouts was around 17 years old. They were often the eldest in the family, and the parents were earning RM300 (NZ\$208) to RM 2,200 (NZ\$786). The study found three main reasons which influenced students to decide to leave school before the high school results: “lack of interest for school, poor academic performance, and inability to afford school-related expenses” (Patel, 2014, p. 35).

Ismail and Azman (2010) studied learning styles useful for adult learners in non-formal education. They conducted a survey of 959 adult learners from 14 community colleges in Malaysia. The findings indicated that adult learners had almost equal preference for both learner-centred and teacher-centred approaches. They preferred personalised learning rather than class discussion or a competitive class environment. They also preferred lessons that could connect to what they already knew. Finally, they wanted lecturers who could use different teaching-learning styles and who gave friendly personal attention.

This discussion of pertinent literature has reinforced the view that broadening learning access into varied contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) via lifelong learning to allow more marginalised population to gain and to have educational opportunities to face uncertainties is of vital importance. Creating chances through education is a responsible way of governments to save people from further exclusion. Organised learning within a public educational institution, using a broader comprehensive curriculum such as short courses, is becoming more useful to help more people, especially the socially excluded. Such institutions are also increasingly modifying their spaces, facilities, pedagogy, and approaches to accommodate them.

The following subsection investigates the performance of community colleges according to the third direction of lifelong learning, active citizenship.

3.5 Lifelong Learning and Active Citizenship

This section explores literature that describes the relationship between lifelong learning and the concept of active citizenship and how they link to higher education and community colleges.

Active citizenship emphasises citizen responsibility rather than citizen rights (Birdwell, Scott, & Horley, 2013). Active citizenship is gradually changing the one-sided benefit for either a person or a government into a two-way responsibility. In this sense, civil rights are not only about a person casting votes, buying and owning property, having free school education, and following laws but also to the responsibility to demonstrate active citizenship by taking active social roles (Birdwell et al., 2013; Johnston, 2003). Active citizenship here significantly involves active and healthy participation in social, economic and political activities for a wider benefit for all (Johnston, 2003). In this way learning created through lifelong learning as Johnston (2003) has asserted, could be a practical path to involve more ‘qualified’ individuals to participate effectively in a community and help to bring changes in the community life.

Coare (2003) discussed the meaning of active citizenship in the context of politics and policies in Britain. Active citizenship is understood as active participation by different social actors in a local geographic community matter “to regenerate and reinvigorate” them (p. 45). It also involves the area of dominance of the social actors where they can exercise participation comfortably usually in a situation created for the interaction between citizens and local authorities. She believed that the social actors are sometimes government people who construct healthy relationships with communities in their spaces. Coare (2003) defined *community space* as a place where “everyone [knows] one another and one another’s business”, and with “common interest, shared values and aspirations” (p. 45). Active citizenship through lifelong learning outreach programmes can also address social inclusion of marginalised communities. The inclusion initiative is less explicitly politically motivated but is intended to enable people to be active contributors to the economy.

In American community colleges, Fiume (2009) commented that the service learning pedagogy helps to promote active citizenship for students. He stated that the pedagogy works for active citizenship through establishing a connection between student learning and civic engagement on an academic matter. Therefore, Fiume (2009) described *service learning pedagogy* as “both the service provided and the learning that stems from the service” (p. 80) to equally benefit student and community. Teachers primarily become the communicators, leaders, and directors in the service learning. Significantly, the justification is to meet the needs of more marginalised people within a community.

Hoskins and Deakin Crick (2010) attempted to explain civic competence as a distinct value acquired through an interconnected learning process between cognitive acquisition and practical experience in a real world. Their study was formulated as a key document pertinent to active citizenship suggested by the European Commission. They argued that education is not only an instrument for individuals to build academic abilities to gain a position in society but also “a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, responsibility, autonomy, resilience to build a sense of national identity” (p.126). These are all the combined qualities noted necessary in developing civic competence and that could happen perhaps unconsciously through community engagement activities. On other hand, lifelong learning involving continuous learning engagement through “an act of self-awareness, ownership, and individual responsibility” (p.127) can further build a competent learner with an ability to face constant changes. Therefore, Hoskins and Deakin Crick (2010) note that a positive significant relationship between lifelong learning activities and community engagement is a preferred way to produce young people with all the effective competences to be active citizens.

Michel (2015) added that communication competence and transversal competence are two more qualities employers expect from young people. He said that communication competence includes ability to listen, work in a group, show tolerance, and able to negotiate or compromise whereas transversal competence resides in entrepreneurship skills, the ability to take risk venturing into new areas. Michel (2015) asserted that active citizenship activities could build the competences needed in future working lives of young people.

Wenger and Trayner (2015) asserted that establishing a “community of practice” is a “key to improving performance” which involves “a process of collective learning in a shared domain” (p. 1). The following are three important characteristics of a community of practice. “*Domain*, a group of people which has an individual identity through shared interest and commitments; *community*, members within the groups interact and learn together through activities and discussions in the course of pursuing their interest; *practice*, members in the community produce resources through shared knowledge and experiences” (Wenger & Trayner, 2015, p. 2). The concept of a *community of practice* is believed to have as its origin the master-apprentice relationship in a traditional community where an apprentice learns his or her master’s skills through practising the skills together with the master (a traditional way of knowledge sharing). The concept of knowledge sharing is critical in an organisation where the community of practices’ characteristics become important. Thus, according to Wenger and Trayner (2015), knowledge sharing in an organisation (domain) among the people (community) happens when the practices involve “a collective responsibility, a connection across different sectors, and a link between learning and performance” (p. 4). Therefore, “community of practice” is based on sharing knowledge and learning to create a broader network of a learning community.

In the Malaysian context, active citizenship is enacted through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes in the community colleges. Chandler and Werther (2014) and Williams (2014) provided an understanding of the concept of CSR. CSR is a “behaviour of business which seeks to solve social problems in the wider society” (Williams, 2014, p. 5). It creates “a relationship between corporations and their societies” where it involves mutual responsibilities to bring a benefit to both sides from the relationship (Chandler & Werther, 2014, p. 6). The corporations can be public or private organisations for profit or non-profit providing different services to the societies in which they operate. Organisations create relationships with society or stakeholders, with a moral responsibility to advance their business, if it is for profit, while non-profit organisations work to improve the economic and social circumstances of people. According to Williams (2014), CSR programmes are potentially helping to

“enhance the quality of life of the least advantaged” (p. 5) in society with the sense of serving public good.

Chin and Harun (2015) and Ishak, Abdul Aziz, and Ahmad (2012) described the Malaysian form of *night market* as an informal sector able to function as “business incubators for aspiring entrepreneurs”(Ishak et al., 2012, p. 1). Chin and Harun (2015) explained that *night market* is an open business space with hundreds of mobile petty traders selling all kinds of foodstuffs and goods at one allocated area on one specific day each week. Ishak et al. (2012) said that it is a site of mixed Malaysian culture with customers and sellers involved in small hawker-style business transactions: “sellers bring all their business products in small trucks, set up their business stalls in the allocated place, and wait for the many strolling customers who visit one shop after the other” (p.2). A common environment in a night market would be “customers greeting friends along the way, acknowledging the traders, asking for prices of products, bargaining for some discounts, and they may choose to buy or just walk away” (Ishak et al., 2012, p. 2). According to Chin and Harun (2015), the night market business only needs minimal capital and thus it is becoming an earning space for many whom are not employed especially women and enterprising young people and also helping low salary workers to have some extra income. Therefore, they believed that the night market could be a business opportunity space for young people as it involves only minimal risk taking and investment.

This overview has shown that active citizenship could be enacted through community engagement programmes involving students in service learning. Service learning largely happens in a community space to provide an opportunity for students to build their civic competences in a real scenario through developing important skills for their future work life. In this manner, people from public and private sectors are meeting more marginalised people and building a caring society.

The next subsection examines community colleges under the final aspect of lifelong learning that involves appreciating the learning for a sense of personal fulfilment.

3.6 Lifelong Learning and Personal Fulfilment

This section explores literature that illustrates the links between lifelong learning and the concept of personal fulfilment, and how they relate to higher education and community colleges.

Personal fulfilment is an important component of lifelong learning that may bring positive personal benefits (Jones & Symon, 2001). Jones and Symon (2001) have identified three lifelong learning opportunities related to personal fulfilment: self-actualisation and self-expression activities, social mobility initiatives, and leisure pursuits (Jones & Symon, 2001). Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) identified three groups of adult learners: academic learners who learn to achieve a career goal; social learners who learn to escape some endurance, and self-development learners who learn to broaden knowledge (Merriam et al., 2007). Personal development is concerned about the latter two dimensions of learning. Two prominent concepts associated with personal development are *self-directed learning* and *transformative learning*, now briefly discussed.

Self-directed learning: Knowles (1975) was an adult educator who popularised the term *andragogy* for adult learning to distinguish it from pedagogy. He described *self-directed learning* as a self-initiative learning involving processes of analysing and determining learning goals, choosing a learning place (and, on occasion, an educator) and finally assessing the learning experience. Self-directed learning often happens with a teacher's guidance. The learning can be very meaningful because the learners are self-motivated adults. Such learning is frequently in the form of problem-based learning that links to personal life experiences. Self-directed learners do not learn for external rewards but they are usually moved by an inner drive to learn and grow for satisfaction and curiosity. Knowles (1990), derivative of the thinking of Cyril Houle, has identified three groups of self-directed learners: "goal-oriented learners who learn in their mid-20s to strengthen their position at work with a valid qualification; activity-oriented learners who learn to establish social contact; and learning-oriented learners, who learn for specific reasons" (pp. 46-47). Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) have stressed that self-directed learning is a personal responsibility. Personal responsibility is activated when self-directed learners take ownership of their

learning cognitively and emotionally and become responsible for their own decisions.

Transformative learning: Mezirow (1997), a sociologist often credited as the founder of transformative learning, interprets adult learning from an understanding of the “meaning of experience” (p. 5). Transformative learning becomes effective when an individual is able to self-assess his/her learning experience while minimising outside influencing factors. Transformative learning involves examination of a *frame of reference* where a new learning experience is comparatively assessed through number of previous learning experiences in life. The frame of reference encompasses cognitive assessment (habits of mind) and an emotional assessment (point of view). Thus, a new learning experience becomes worthwhile for personal fulfilment when one filters the experience cognitively through a critical lens while acknowledging already built-in cultural, social, educational, economic, or political experiences and the further refining of the outcome experience related to personal beliefs, feelings, values, judgements and attitudes. To achieve a different *frame of reference*, a bridging instrument may be learning programmes that challenge an individual’s assumptions and force the person to engage in critical reflection.

Illeris (2003) discussed more precisely transformative learning as three interconnected dimensions of adult learning: cognitive, emotional, and social. Cognitive learning is related to knowledge acquisition and emotional learning to development of our feelings in a social situation. Thus, cognitive learning helps individuals to develop skills and competence through knowledge construction while emotion learning connects to personal experience and feelings of success.

Baumgartner (2001) has pointed out the changes that have taken place in contemporary transformational learning. She delves into some empirical research conducted by several scholars using Mezirow’s original work. New transformational learning may reflect: more ideas and expression; an action built on trust; an adaptation to new contexts and culture; a team building activity to bring positive changes; self-development as a learner through online information (pp. 18-20).

Cranton (2006) expanded on Mezirow's transformative learning that prioritises educators as facilitators. She noted that effective educators are those who can facilitate students in transformative learning. These include teachers who are: "showing interest to students' learning and development always; willing to learn from their students' perspective; friendly and accessible and not hesitant to meet students outside class hours; able to listen and solve students immediate problems; being accommodative and open; and encouraging and helpful to students all through their learning phases" (Cranton, 2006, pp. 162-163).

The following are some studies in the literature which are pertinent to the notion of personal fulfilment.

Duay and Bryan (2008) conducted a study on older adults in the USA. They identified two reasons that could encourage older adults to return to study: keeping themselves busy with learning activities, and making their life interesting. The study investigated older adults' expectations of classroom learning from 36 adults aged between 65 to 88. Duay and Bryan (2008) identified three different sets of expectations to be influencing older adults learning: supportive and encouraging classrooms, interesting and motivating teachers, and learning materials close to students' life experiences. For older adults, the classroom became their social space to share experiences with other members, including their teacher.

Miller and Kissinger (2007) argued that rural communities are using their community colleges as a kind of "social engine" to find a new identity within their isolated geographical locations. The community colleges are becoming places to "bring a community together" such as schools, municipal offices, banks, and places of worship for a meaningful engagement (Miller & Kissinger, 2007, p. 27). Rural American community colleges gather and teach their local communities using non-credit programmes in leisure and economics education (Miller & Kissinger, 2007). They said that leisure education uses structured activities such as educational tours and recreational pursuits. Recreational pursuits, for example, a weight loss programme, help rural women to find a new identity within them once having successfully achieved their target weight, thus boosting their self-confidence and self-awareness. Working people take upskill and reskill financial

education to deal with new requirements and to build a new identity through new opportunities. In addition, working people are inspired to aim for a higher degree after gaining a qualification through education. Young people who engage in traditional jobs are diversifying their opportunity through education and breaking away from their traditional family identity (pp. 29-32).

S. A. Cohen (2014) investigated the connection between lifelong learning practices for leisure and self-development. Learning involving leisure is noted to have prevailed from historical times (as seen, for example, in ancient Greek civilisation) as “self-development activity and freedom of knowledge”, all according to the individual’s own choice (p. 203). Learning for leisure also involves self-awareness through stages of life experience to fulfil personal ability. Leisure-based learning tends to have “potential routes towards enhancing identity and experiencing personal fulfilment” (p. 204). According S. A. Cohen (2014), education based on leisure activities can bring significant positive practices for personal growth when the experiences are assessed with a sense of self-development and well-being.

Saccomanno (2017) argued that a person’s changing ambitions may influence continuous commitment and engagement of individuals in lifelong learning. Ambition here refers to “what someone feels they lack, and they desire to have in order to experience a feeling of achievement” (p.2). Ambition is also a motive to improve social mobility and to increasingly become a continuous achiever in life. In this sense, achieving an ambition is a personal negotiation of issues at work or family in order to remain relevant to a social order. Saccomanno (2017) identified three models for negotiating ambition. First, to achieve a personal professional goal one upgrades one’s knowledge with a higher grade or one already with a higher grade into a more specialised level. This is a continuous adjustment to already achieved ambition with newer requirements from the economy. Second, a woman who wants to achieve a better work-life balance may need to readjust her expectations in response to an actual loss in life. Usually this adjustment happens in a family between husband and wife because of family responsibilities one has to compromise by putting an ambition on hold. Finally, a person who is unable to continue being in a job anymore may have to find a work-life balance by considering other new opportunities to remain relevant to family (pp. 6-11).

In a study in Malaysia, Ibrahim et al. (2016) conducted a study of the ageing population. Older people, meaning those aged 60 years and above, are anticipated to reach 3.4 million, or about 11% of the total population, by 2020. It is important for Malaysia to consider the necessity for this increasing cohort to have active ageing through continuous engagement in learning (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c). In the Plan, community colleges have been acknowledged as public institutions and hubs for lifelong learning with a mission to help marginalised members, including senior citizens, in their personal growth. In Malaysia “learning for leisure has been the mainstay of most senior citizens’ programmes and activities” in non-formal education (Ibrahim et al., 2016, p. 252). According to Ibrahim et al. (2016), the University of the Third Age (U3A) was established, in 2007 mainly for retired public to make their life interesting with new learning experiences leading to healthy ageing by providing learning without external rewards but able to bring personal fulfilment and social benefits. They acknowledged that the U3A also works with the Hulu Langat Community College, one of the partnership institutions that teaches certain courses using its facilities. The U3A started in 2008 with 84 senior citizens and now has 630 registered members and 50 different courses (Ibrahim et al., 2016).

This above discussion has highlighted that an expected result of learning is personal fulfilment. Personal fulfilment usually involves a self-assessment of learning experience using cognitive, emotional and social dimensions. Lifelong learning is enabling many to stay on the track of learning as self-directed learners for various aims and ambitions that increasingly bringing a sense of personal fulfilment.

The next section examines challenges facing community colleges.

3.7 Community Colleges and Challenges

Community colleges have a major role as the people’s colleges, as has been asserted by Boone (1997): they have a commitment to “serve the educational needs of the people in its community” (p. 2). This significant obligation is increasingly becoming a tension for community colleges at the management and operational level, and even for those students who have already benefited from the colleges. This section delved into the literature on this topic.

Colleges' challenges

The OECD (2014) provided a report on the post-secondary vocational education and training sector that sits in between “school and university” as a sector of “less understood world of colleges, diplomas, [and] certificates” (p. 11). The programmes usually would be preparatory skills for occupations that take a period of training at least six months in full-time mode. According to OECD (2014), popular students for the programmes include “young school leavers; upskilling for working people in mid-career; second chances for working adults who dropped out of earlier education; and opportunities for career shifts” (p. 11). Some common problems of the sector in many countries identified to be “programmes not effectively reflecting labour market needs; having some difficulty in establishing partnership with local employers; programmes sometimes having limited training facilities; and curricula not being updated to meet changing industry needs” (OECD, 2014, p. 14). Other challenges specific to the sector include “highly fragmented systems; confusion about qualifications within a country itself; insufficient time to complete a programme; no clear transitions and articulation with other education sectors; and a variety of different names” (p. 14). Therefore, the OECD (2014) suggested a standardised international nomenclature for this sector which would augment its status: “professional education and training”, or PET, for all programmes more than six months’ full time (p.14).

Molesworth, Nixon, and Scullion (2009) examined the idea of market-oriented neoliberalism under the concept of consumer culture in British higher education affecting vocational institutions. The new culture seems to have restricted “traditional” pedagogic applications in teaching. They argued that higher education is moving into areas that demand both academic standards and customer satisfaction and encouraging vocational-based institutions to gradually adopt a business model in their institutional management in which a common practice is the use of the terminologies such as *director* for principals and *customer* for students. In this new business environment, students might have become more career focussed showing an interest in the courses with job guarantees. This change of interest is forcing teachers of “liberal” education to learn industrial skills on a regular basis to teach better their students. Some teachers are also intimidated by industrial experts who could possibly replace

them for having more relevance to students' needs (Molesworth et al., 2009). Arguably, the expansion of vocational-based institutions rewarding "weaker" students with a mission to access the "right" to enter higher education is becoming problematic for teachers and their position.

Teachers' challenges

Robson (1998) observed that the teachers of further education colleges in Britain are a cohort of different qualifications who often regarded as an "anomalous group, with an ambivalent status and unclear identity" (p. 586) with a "a weak professional boundary" (p. 588). Thus, Robson attempted to explain the teachers' situation from two perspectives, the workforce profile, and the nature of work. For the workforce profile, teaching in alignment with industrial needs, is noted to have a detrimental impact on the teachers' profession. According to Robson (1998), the teachers' ability to teach is only one consideration; more importantly, they have to keep themselves up to date with the all the recent industrial changes in their subjects. Furthermore, the preference of the colleges for industrial experts with more experience but untrained in teaching is reducing the value of the qualified teachers. Moreover, Robson (1998) asserted that the teachers' work is complex beyond only teaching. They are playing a significant crucial role in the administration from student enrolment to course development, as an official instruction from the higher management. Robson (1998) commented that such administrative tasks are very critical as they are "regarded as instrumental in achieving a promotion" (p. 590). One of the drawbacks of becoming a teacher in the colleges is identified to be he/she cannot specialise in any particular subject, as educators in other institutions do because they have to manage a wide range of programmes and students.

Ball (2003, 2012) has argued that issues of performativity are increasingly influencing teachers in government sectors because of the changing education policies encouraged by the World Bank or the OECD to member countries. The organisations have "burdened [teachers] with responsibility to perform" (Ball, 2012, p. 19). This culture of neoliberalism Ball (2003) defined as performativity that involves "judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change, based on rewards and sanctions as a measure of

productivity” (p. 216). Arguably, such focus is obliging teachers to modify their values as educators and work according to requirements which determine their performance quality. The new ethical belief that emphasises excellency is increasingly changing a sense of identity of teachers in commercial terms such as “providers, educational entrepreneurs or managers” (Ball, 2003, p. 218). In this scenario, teachers are struggling to upgrade their individual performance for the sake of appraisal and those under-performers may be “subject to moral approbation” (Ball, 2012, p. 20).

In a study in Malaysia, Jamil, Abd. Razak, Raju, and Mohamed (2014) examined teachers’ professional development programmes that can be either formal or informal. They explained that formal activities usually involve teachers attending programmes arranged by the Ministry of Education/ Higher Education to augment their critical knowledge especially in technical and computer skills whereas informal activities are teachers’ own initiation for their self-development. According to Jamil et al. (2014), Malaysian teachers have a crucial role in developing future human capital for the nation, therefore they are required to upgrade their knowledge continuously in the face of their students’ increasing expectations. In this circumstance, the Ministries offer professional development opportunities for teachers as “continuous in-service courses to improve professional skills and competencies” in the forms of “induction courses for new posts and management courses for those promoted to be head teachers” (p. 89). Furthermore, Jamil et al. (2014) asserted that for continuous in-service courses at state and national level, the Government allocates a sizable amount of yearly budget to ensure teachers’ practices are always relevant to their students’ demands. Using the budget, institutions are encouraged to conduct in-house training in crucial skills needed for individual institutions.

Students’ challenges

Zeidenberg (2008) argued that community colleges are facing problems of retaining students by enrolling more “weaker” students in respond to a contemporary economic demand where education is a determiner of better jobs and incomes. He explored the tensions in American community colleges over the decision to accept more ‘low income students and those relatively weak academic

achievement to continue education” (Zeidenberg, 2008, p. 53). He considered two interrelated problems, essential remedial education, and student retention to be directly affecting the colleges’ management. According to Zeidenberg (2008), remedial education is problematic when students not willing to go through another cycle of school subjects, get demotivated and decide to quit halfway through their study. Therefore, he concluded that a standard curriculum as in school appears to be a poor start for lower achieving students in the community colleges.

Furthermore, Zeidenberg (2008) identified that those students already enrolled in the main programme are having different problems altogether regarding completing their study. The students are having problems to follow all the subject requirements in which even a highly positive student finds it difficult to persevere. Some who are members of the first generation of their families to attend college have difficulty adjusting to a college life, where they sometimes distance themselves from the faculty members and other available resources. Zeidenberg noted that such circumstances are becoming a crucial issue in the American community colleges, where the number of enrolled students determines the funding. This is making the colleges’ management to be accountable for every student’s success or failure and the situation is becoming an ongoing stress for all at the college level.

Van Noy, Trimble, Barnett, and Wachen (2016) noted that community colleges’ students are having difficulty choosing the right course and continuing on the right track as different pathways distract them from their selection. They examined students at the Washington community college and identified an absence of guided pathways as the source of confusion. It is important for students to stay on the right track to reach their goals either to continue education or to find employment. Thus, Van Noy et al. (2016) suggested the following four guided pathways:

- Programme prescription: To create an opportunity for students to select subjects, especially electives and general education, as well as a set of mandatory subjects.
- Programme alignment: To establish a close link with local industries and the local labour market and prepare students for the industrial needs using

hands-on methods. Assist students in job search, placements, and in gaining extra professional certifications. Provide counselling services on continuing to higher degrees.

- Access to information: To make the college website as the primary source of information for students and parents by uploading and updating all information about courses and activities.
- Active advising and support: Teachers and administrators function as the active supporting teams for students by tracking their academic progress and accordingly providing career guidance. (pp. 271 - 277)

Van Noy et al. (2016) believed that the above guided pathways could facilitate students to be aware of their own responsibility either to move into employment or continue education.

3.8 Chapter Summary and Conceptual Framework

This chapter has examined community colleges as part of higher education with a greater focus upon lifelong learning in the development within the broader higher education context. With the expanding opportunities for higher education through diverse types of higher education institutions, community colleges seemingly have become a comprehensive institution to provide mainly higher education to a lower strata or the disadvantaged population in most countries. Lifelong learning appeared to be the strongest driver of the community colleges largely in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, in relation to its four aspects: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Findsen & Formosa, 2011).

Figure 3.1 illustrates the conceptual framework used for this entire study to address the main research question which was about the goals, achievements and challenges of Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs) in the context of lifelong learning. The next chapter describes the research methodology considered suitable for this study.

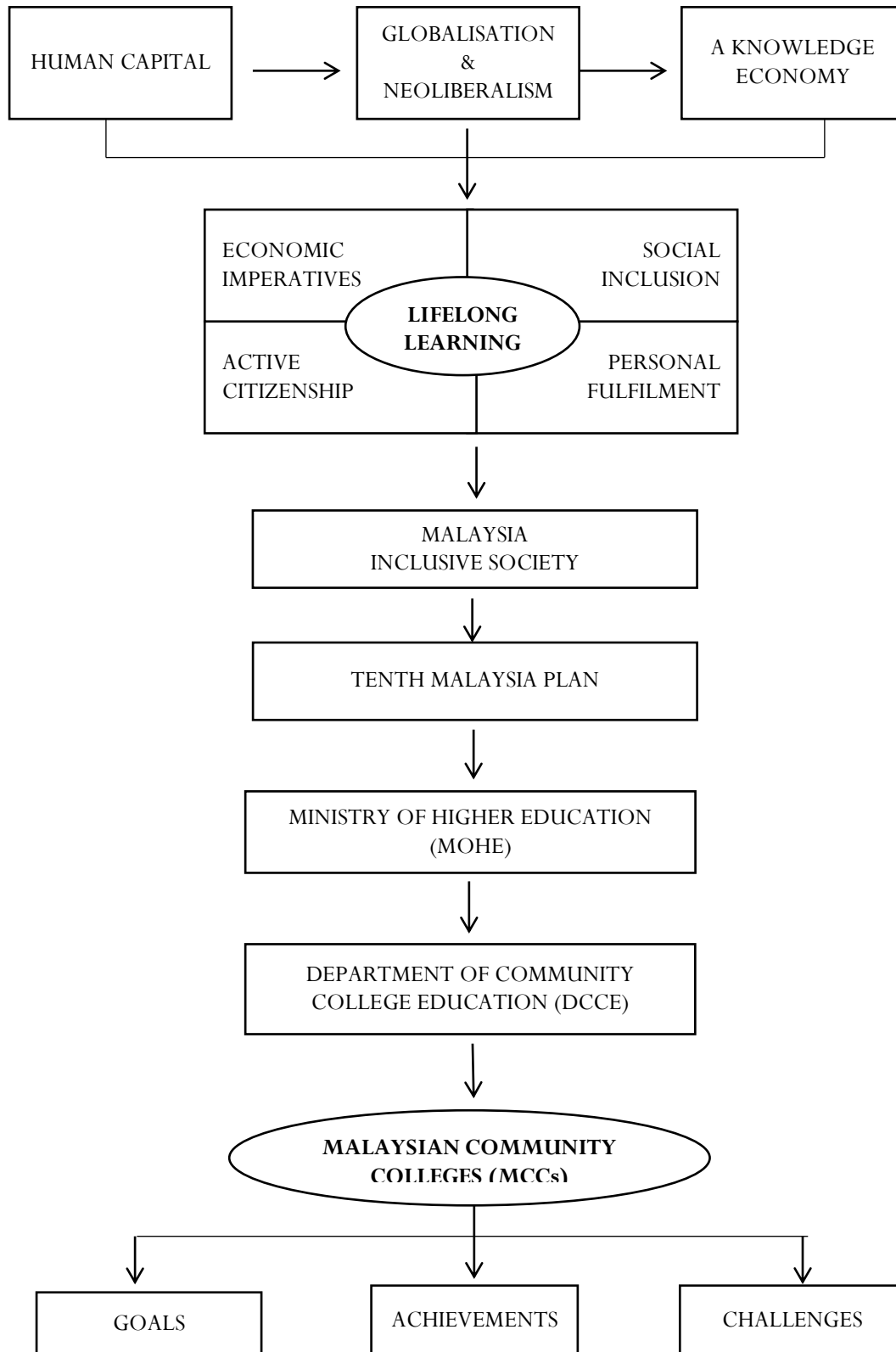


Figure 3.1. Conceptual framework

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and build knowledge about community colleges as a new phenomenon within Malaysian higher education. In order to do this, it has investigated their goals, achievements and challenges in the context of lifelong learning. As identified in the two literature chapters, community colleges are globally functioning as short-cycle post-secondary institutions with a strong mission to serve local communities (Boone, 1997; Chen & Wang, 2009; Punthumasen & Maki, 2009; Vaughan, 2000). With respect to this, finding out how Malaysian Community Colleges might be relevant to the higher education and the people of Malaysia particularly became a central exploration of this study. To conduct this qualitative research, I orientated myself towards the research methodology explained in this chapter. This research has better justified the significance by mapping out a research framework including consideration of philosophical assumptions, research paradigms, research methods, research design and appropriate data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2007; Neuman, 2011). As an essential structure to scaffold the entire study, the following research questions were formulated.

Central research question:

- What are the goals, achievements and the challenges of community colleges within Malaysian higher education and how are they related to lifelong learning?

Three subsidiary research questions:

- What are the goals of community colleges within Malaysian higher education?
- What are the achievements of community colleges within Malaysian higher education?
- What are the challenges of community colleges within Malaysian higher education?

Five sections outline the research methodology used in this study. Section one explains the qualitative research framework encompassing philosophical assumptions and their paradigms and multiple case study as the research design. Section two illustrates the six research methods used to generate data from the research context. Sections three to five describe the samples and selection, conceptual framework and ethical considerations and trustworthiness related to the research. Section four describes the process of data analysis using thematic analysis. Finally, the fifth section provides a brief summary of this chapter.

4.2 Qualitative Research Framework

This section presents the qualitative research framework used to conduct this qualitative study consistent with three essential elements as shown in figure 4.1: ontology, epistemology, and research design. This research used a constructive-interpretive paradigm including a multiple case study using six research methods and an analysis using thematic procedures. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) suggested that “a set of interpretive activities, [which] privileges no single methodological practice over another” is the process of exploring new phenomena in a qualitative inquiry (p. 11). Thus, in the following illustrations every element in the framework as in figure 4.1, justifies the practices used in the study.

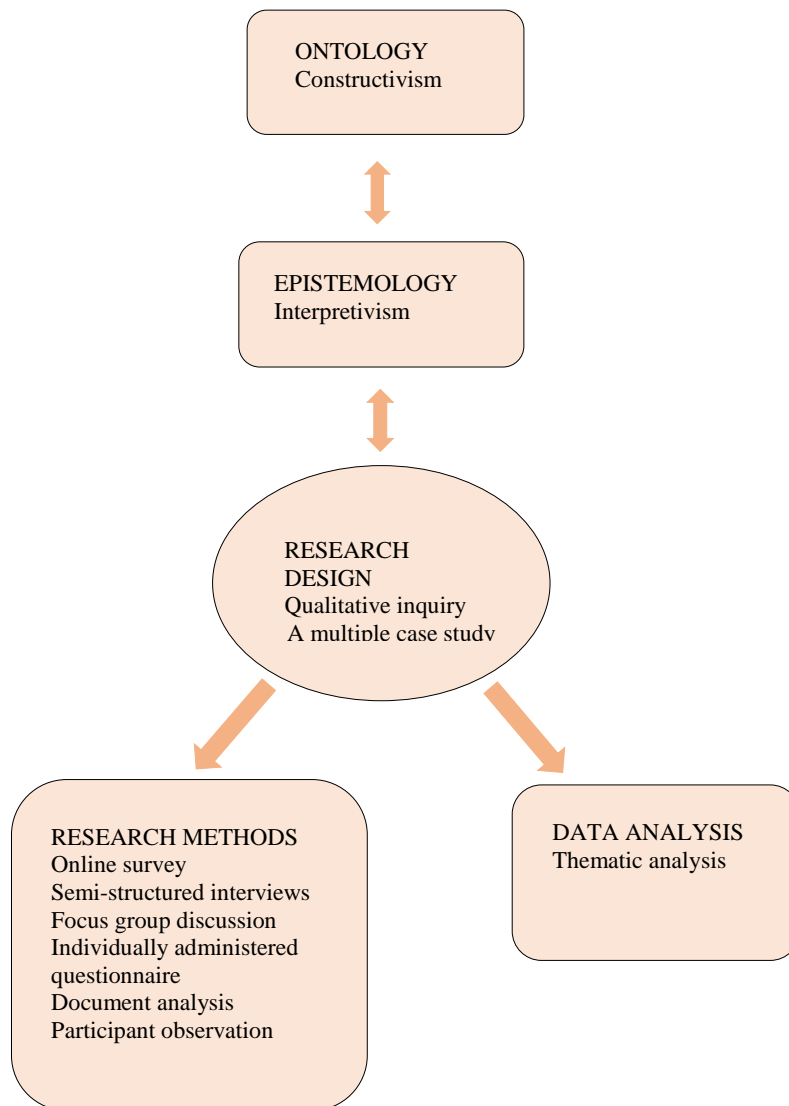


Figure 4.1. A qualitative research framework

4.2.1 Ontology and Constructivism

Ontology is anchored in a belief that nature is a reality/a social phenomenon in an abundant state readily available for people’s perception (Creswell, 2003; Forcese & Richer, 1973; Neuman, 2011). Ontology entails social phenomena perceived through our senses with a conceptual filter and constructed cognitively in our mind. As Forcese and Richer (1973) observed, it is what “we see, we hear, we smell, and we taste” that continuously register in our memory (p. 27 & 28). A social phenomenon is constructed through our experience and assumed to be with no single reality but subjective meanings of human experience (Creswell, 2003). Neuman (2011) argued that social phenomena exist in two states of understanding: realism and nominalism. A realist believes a phenomenon is out there,

independently without human interpretation and “waiting for us to discover [it]” while a critical realist interprets and illustrates a phenomenon, as subjective meanings through his/her own cultural values and experiences. Meanwhile, a nominalist believes humans cannot directly experience a phenomenon but can orientate to the phenomenon through “a lens or scheme of interpretations and inner subjectivity” (p. 92), including personal experience and culture.

This study, then, explored the rationale of goals, achievements and challenges of the phenomenon (community colleges) through the words/symbols articulated by their sub-populations (director, teachers and students) who were believed to have constructed subjective meanings of the phenomenon through their personal experiences. For this study, the sub-populations’ experiences were deconstructed using scheduled questions as a communicative tool at their community colleges’ sites to build new knowledge (Neuman, 2011).

4.2.2 Epistemology and Interpretivism

Epistemology signifies the ability to obtain accumulated experiences representing a phenomenon from the people closest to the phenomenon in the form of knowledge (Creswell, 2007; Forcese & Richer, 1973). Forcese and Richer (1973) stated that people have to imagine and communicate an experience embedded in their mind as knowledge by participating in the processes involved for interpretation of the experience. Thus, Creswell (2007) suggested that it is always better for a qualitative researcher to conduct his/her research at an actual place with the relevant participants to get to know more about what they are experiencing and practising.

The study was conducted at four community colleges located in four different places in Malaysia and consulted three sets of carefully selected participants in each college. This also created an opportunity to have direct significant contact with the social phenomenon (community colleges) and the social actors (directors, teachers, and students) and to learn about the phenomenon from its natural setting (L. Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2007; Neuman, 2011). Epistemology also refers to interpretation of knowledge constructed of a social phenomenon using systematic research methods at the research sites (L. Cohen et al., 2011). In this study, an online survey, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and

individually administered questionnaires became the medium of communication with directors, teachers, and students to deconstruct their built-in meanings and experiences about the community colleges. This represented the first process of interpretivism, as Crotty (1998) suggested, “how we know” from the empirical evidence generated for this study (p. 3). In the second process, empirical evidence in the form of data gathered from the sites are further interpreted to understand “what we know” from the data (Crotty, 1998, p. 3).

The second process involved interpreting and understanding of data from participants by searching for other possible influences to their interpretations in literature (Creswell, 2007). As Creswell (2007) suggested, the process of data interpretation has to be established from a belief that participants interpreted them from their personal experiences with a phenomenon through a consistent interaction with other social, cultural and historical factors close to them. In practice, the transcribed data were interpreted primarily using the four themes of lifelong learning: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Findsen & Formosa, 2011) to address the main research question that was framed under the context of lifelong learning.

Interpretivism also focusses on the way of reading a transcribed data: it has to be “a very close, detailed reading of a text [transcript] conducted to acquire a profound, deep understanding” so that subjective meanings of or among, words or phrases in the transcript can be characterised (Neuman, 2011, p. 101). In the process of characterising words or phrases in transcriptions, an interpretivist stance was taken to understand the meanings by considering every participant or a group of participants in a social context. It is believed that participants construct and interpret their experiences from their own orientation to the context and from their daily social interaction within the context (Neuman, 2011).

A thematic analysis was used to understand the three sets of interpretations (those of directors, teachers, and students) as respective individual or group experiences with community colleges having relevance to their goals, achievements, and challenges, the study set out to explore (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). As such, the four global market concepts (human capital, globalisation and

neoliberalism, a knowledge economy and lifelong learning) were also carefully considered to understand the subjective meanings of words or phrases in the transcriptions.

The underlying epistemological assumptions and the interpretive paradigm provided a basis for exploring community colleges in the context of lifelong learning, particularly in relation to a lower strata population, to which Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs) are giving a higher priority. The following research design, research methods and data analysis further shaped the detailed exploration of this study.

4.2.3 Research Design: A Multiple Case Study

The research focus of this qualitative study is underpinned by a constructive-ontology and an interpretive-epistemology that recognise the multiple realities (community colleges) and the multiple perspectives (directors, teachers and students) investigated for this study using a multiple case study approach (L. Cohen et al., 2011).

A case study may be a study of a single case or many cases related to a specific, complex, or integrated system (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) suggested that learning about a single case with a particular interest is an intrinsic case study and studying about many cases in order to understand some complexity within the cases is an instrumental case study. Yin (2014) argued that a single-case study usually has a single phenomenon and a multiple-case study has several. A multiple case study is understood as a useful approach for examining “same” and “contrast” outcomes of cases because the cases can be analysed both individually and collectively. As argued below, this study involved both the above domains.

In this study a number of cases (community colleges) were chosen to understand the phenomenon through many cases rather than just one (Stake, 1995). As Stake (1995) suggested, each of the carefully selected community colleges was *instrumental* as each had a particular insight in the Malaysian context. In this sense, every case was treated as an individual unit of analysis rather than one case being used as a sample to shed light on the other (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Thus, in a multiple case study every case can present both *uniqueness* and *commonality*

respectively. Yin (2014) expounded that every case of a multiple case study can be an individual unit of rich, detailed information.

Case study research is intensive and is carried out in a natural setting within its real-world context, and is not bounded by any specific methods of data collection methods or data analysis (Yin, 2014). Importantly, this study used more than one research method and engaged participants at different locations to examine the development and actualities of community colleges in Malaysia, with a specific focus on their goals, achievements and challenges in the context of lifelong learning. Details about the samples and selection have been provided in section 4.4. This case study research also showed that interviews, focus group discussion and participant observation as qualitative methods were particularly appropriate methods for this study where the aim was to listen to in-depth views from the sub-populations (directors, teachers and students) of the community colleges.

The following section describes the six research methods I used for this study.

4.3 Research Methods

This section describes the six methods I set out to use in this study for data collection: online survey, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, and individually administered questionnaire, document analysis and participant observation.

The focus of this study was to examine the selected case studies using multiple methods to enrich the quality of the collected data. Thus, I considered that using six methods would help to neutralise the disadvantages of a single method, given that individual research methods do have some limitations (Creswell, 2003, 2007). Using more than one method allows the methods to complement each other, especially when an inquiry is held at different places with different participants. Figure 4.2 shows the six methods as planned for use in this study.

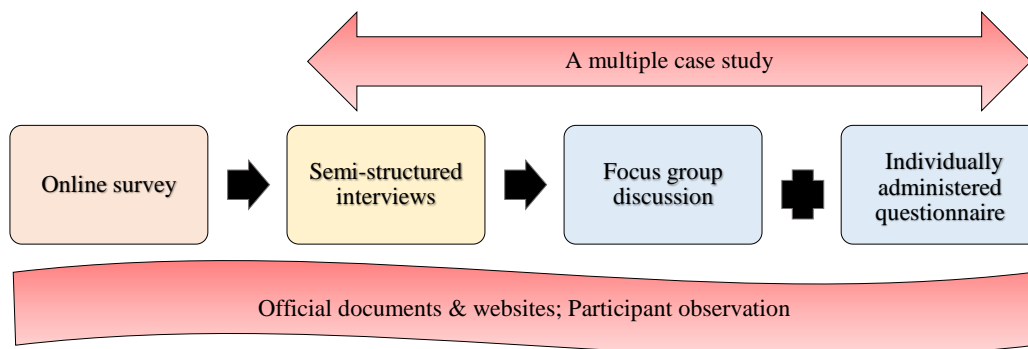


Figure 4.2. A six methods approach

I began with the online survey with all 90 directors of community colleges in Malaysia and then, I continued with a multiple case study procedures at four selected community colleges from four different parts in Malaysia. To administer the four case studies I used three different methods: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, and an individually administered questionnaire, at each site. At the sites, I also collected official documents and noted all significant and interesting matters in my research diary as my observational notes. Prior to each visit, I read the webpages of the four colleges for information about their programmes, staff, and students. I visited the Department of Community College Education (DCCE) at Putrajaya several times in December 2014 to gain official consent to conduct research at the community colleges, as well as obtain some official documents and software (a compact disk).

4.3.1 Online Survey

Surveys may support data collection through the use of a very rigid or less rigid pre-structured questionnaire designed for a target group (Sarantakos, 2005). Survey data can be in printed or oral form, but Sarantakos (2005) observed that the former is always easier to access through mail or email. Usually a survey is useful for gaining information from a large group but on occasion, it can be used in a small selected group to acquire some basic information as was intended in this study. The 90 directors of MCCs were involved in an online survey as the first stage of communication with the colleges. It is important to note that a survey requires a high degree of commitment from participants as it is solely a self-administered questionnaire and failing to receive that support may cause a survey to be ineffective (Sarantakos, 2005).

In this study, an *Online survey questionnaire* (Appendix 1a) of a less rigid pattern comprising close-ended and open-ended questions was prepared for the directors. To provide a standardised access through email, the questions were set up as an online webpage, Survey Monkey. This survey was actually intended to have an initial report on the community colleges from their directors. I believed a report from the directors might be useful to precede the following phase of the case study, site visiting. Thus, the survey link uploaded on the site of the Survey Monkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3LVBDPN>) was sent to the directors through their email by explaining that it was necessary for them to access the site through the web link and then submit their responses online. Regrettably, the survey failed to provide the intended result related to unexpected issues (as explained in subsection 4.3.1.).

4.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

In a qualitative study, interviewing is a powerful approach and one of the most commonly used methods to discover what people know about a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Sarantakos, 2013). Interviews are “not a neutral tool” to gather data but involve “active interactions between two (or more) people” in a significant face-to-face conversation and arriving at negotiated knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 62). Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured, depending on the position of a researcher regarding his/her knowledge about a phenomenon:

A structured interview is useful when the researcher is aware of what she does not know and therefore is in the position to frame questions that will supply the knowledge required, whereas the unstructured interview is useful when the researcher is not aware of what she does not know, and therefore relies on the respondents to tell her. (L. Cohen et al., 2011, p. 412)

Usually, a semi-structured interview takes a centre position in terms of a researcher’s knowledge about a phenomenon and the amount of knowledge required from an interviewee. In addition, semi-structured interviews can also supply rich data, as there is a degree of flexibility between interviewers’ questions and interviewees’ responses. In this study, I used semi-structured interviews to

collect data from selected directors, they being the persons of highest authority in their colleges and with the most influence on the direction of the colleges. The interviews were partially structured conversations in which I asked prepared questions in an orderly way and the directors gave their answers in an elaborative manner that I also audio-recorded (Neuman, 2011).

This study to an extent adopted the interview procedures of the semi-structured version. By using the research questions as a guide, the *Semi-structured interview schedule* (Appendix: 2a) was prepared as the “predetermined questions” steered the interviews into already “predefined areas of discussion” (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, p. 45). The schedule I arranged deliberately in areas covering the pursuits of this study: the goals, the achievements, and the challenges of the community colleges in Malaysia. At each of the interview sites, prior to meeting the directors for interviews, I built rapport with the selected community colleges by gathering information about the colleges from the administrative staff and teachers on at least three visits. On the day of interviews, I started the conversation with a brief introduction of myself and my research to the directors in hope of gaining their cooperation (Neuman, 2011). After the introduction phase, I let the directors shape the entire flow of knowledge, occasionally interrupting with a change of question or a prompt since this study was explorative in nature (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). In the interviews, I became an “active” listener to draw out the directors’ maximum “expert” and accurate knowledge about the community colleges (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) by carefully monitoring the content of answers and behaviour of the directors (Neuman, 2011).

All procedures of data collection were carried out between January and June 2015. Prior to visiting the selected sites, I also had the opportunity to verify the interview schedule (and focus group discussion schedules and individually administered questionnaire) with the DCCE’s curriculum development staff. This verification also helped to pilot the suitability of the questions. With their advice and help I also made the documents bilingual (English and *Bahasa Malaysia*, the national language of Malaysia) by interlining each English version with *Bahasa Malaysia*. This made the interview process even smoother as the directors were able to understand the questions exactly when they viewed them two days before the interview days (Neuman, 2011). All the interviews were conducted at the

selected sites on the dates and times agreed upon by the colleges' directors. Each interview took around 60 to 90 minutes. Of the four interviews, I was able to conduct two in English throughout while the other two were bilingual between English and *Bahasa Malaysia*. I transcribed all interviews verbatim and made the transcripts available for the directors to review; then I translated the two bilingual transcripts into English in a direct word by word translation with minor changes to the sentence structure to maintain the original meanings of words, sentences and expressions while preserving the thick description for analysis (Sarantakos, 2013).

4.3.3 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion is a way to gather rich and descriptive data from a small group of participants who generally “share common experience relative to the dimension under study” (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, p. 90). A focus group discussion may represent a two-way communication between a moderator and a small group of participants, usually around four to six members, in order to encourage healthy interactions among group members and produce detailed information (Krueger, 1998). Krueger (1998) adds that a focus group discussion is not an interview carried out in a group but will be an active discussion in a group where conversation builds in an easy, flowing manner. A researcher is the moderator in a focus group discussion. Ideally this group discussion would be a situation of minimal “embarrassment, fear or suspicion where respondents feel comfortable revealing information” (Neuman, 2011, p. 343). Krueger (1998) views the aim of such group discussion as being to hear the topic being discussed in a “variety of ways” and “uncovering” meaningful truths in a relaxed and friendly environment (p. 4). Thus, members of a focus group discussion may not be inhibited and this could allow a researcher to recognise new and contrasting themes developing within a topic.

In this study, I met teachers and students in two separate groups as the participants in two different focus group discussions at each selected site. Teachers and students became the second and third sets of participants interviewed directly after their directors' interviews and their consents at each selected site. The initial selection of teachers and students was established through individual directors' recommendation with a list of categories given by me (as explained in section 4.4).

Therefore, the samples and selection of teachers and students were not totally under my control. I involved the selected teachers and students in two separate focus group discussion at two different times using two separate *Focus group discussion schedules* (Appendix: 3a & 4a). As with the interview schedules, I prepared questions covering the pursuits of this study: the goals, the achievements, and the challenges. Teachers and students in their individual groups explored the questions moderated by myself as a researcher. Each discussion continued for 40 to 60 minutes and was also audio-recorded. All groups of teachers' discussions were bilingual while the students' were only in *Bahasa Malaysia*. I transcribed all transcripts verbatim and made these available to one teacher and two students to review from each group at every site with the consent of other group members. Then, as with the interviews, I translated all transcripts into English while maintained the meaning and intent of the originals (Sarantakos, 2013).

4.3.4 Individually Administered Questionnaire

After the focus group discussion I used one more data collection tool, the *individually self-administered questionnaire* (Appendix: 3c & 4c), with teachers and students. The two questionnaire sets were given to the teachers and students immediately after their focus group discussion, and participants were asked to respond in writing to seven open-ended questions. The aim of this add-on activity was to elicit other information as an additional resource from the group members that had not been revealed in the group discussion (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Krueger (1998) asserted that the strength of a focus group discussion is how well participants may agree or disagree collectively during the period of discussion. For personal reasons respondents often may or may not agree to things during group discussion (Neuman, 2011) and therefore a follow-up self-administered activity became useful to find out more about the teachers' and students' personal opinions.

In this individually administered questionnaire teachers and students in their individual groups spent around 15 to 20 minutes to complete all seven questions with short answers. As I distributed the questionnaire sheets immediately after group discussions, I managed to receive a completed set of questionnaire sheet

from most of the participants. The completed questionnaire sheets included only demographic details of respondents, not their names.

4.3.5 Official Documents and Websites

I collected a number of official documents and software relevant to the community colleges from the Ministry of Higher Education and the Department of Community College Education when I visited them to gain consent for the study. I acquired additional documents relating to the establishment of the community colleges from department heads and administrators on each of the four college sites. Merriam (2002) noted that written documents acquired at the sites of data collection are an excellent source of accurate data. In this study, the documents from the sites became additional sources of information on management, teachers, students, and activities of each of the colleges. Additionally, the colleges' websites constituted a permanent resource that I could access all through my study to keep myself updated with new developments in that information, especially at the selected colleges.

4.3.6 Participant Observation

Observation allows a researcher to witness occurrences and behaviour in social situations within a natural setting (L. Cohen et al., 2011). An observation in the field during data collection may produce real and valid data with a reality check always available through the fieldwork period. In this study, my observation started with the visits to the Government departments (the Economic Planning Unit, the Ministry of Higher Education, and the Department of Community College Education) to gain their written consent to conduct research in Malaysia. Then, for the purpose of data collection, I visited the selected case sites, community colleges located in different locations in Malaysia. I recorded all these observations, mostly in a logbook and some on my phone's voice recorder and camera. My recording covered important details such as the date of every visit, the opportunity to meet the departments' staff and the colleges' members, the environment and physical surroundings of each college, their distance from Kuala Lumpur and many more. This enabled me to understand the significance of physical settings, programmes, teachers, and students of the selected college sites that I refer to in Chapter 5 as a descriptive analysis of all selected case studies.

This observation allowed me to be “honest to the situation as it unfolds” in the descriptive analysis (L. Cohen et al., 2011, p. 458).

Participant observation refers to a researcher’s orientation in the process of data collection in order to generate more reliable data from everyday social settings of participants (L. Cohen et al., 2011). During collection of data procedure, a researcher can observe the behaviours of participants, usually in a small group, where the participants are well aware the person is a researcher with a research purpose for a short period only. I was involved in this way with all three methods of data collection; the semi-structured interviews, the focus group discussion, and the individually administered questionnaire and thus had the opportunity to observe the participants, moderate the questions and listen to their explanations and discussion and notice their emotions while audio-recording all the conversations on all selected college sites. I also had a chance to take a role in the research methods as an interviewer, a moderator, and a listener while observing all events and behaviours of participants “live” in a situation where I was able to actively elicit information negotiated between my participants and me as researcher. As an action plan for gaining access to the participants, I carefully worked on building trust with the selected colleges by visiting the sites at least three times before the actual dates of interviews. I had a casual random meeting with the directors and some teachers, administrators and students as a way to familiarise myself with the members (L. Cohen et al., 2011). My position as a former Malaysian teacher from rural areas helped me to mingle easily with the members of the colleges and made them more comfortable to accept my presence as a researcher.

4.4 Samples and Selection

This section describes the overall samples and selections used for this study. It begins with a description of two different samples: community colleges as the case and the members of the colleges as the participants all accessed using ethical procedures (as explained in section 4.6).

This study used two stages of sampling: case selection and participant selection within the cases, all following a standard procedure of ethical considerations (Sarantakos, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Purposive sampling was deployed as

a non-probability sampling technique. In a purposive sampling, a researcher can determine the selection of cases or participants through their own judgement, so I selected the four case studies and later the participants (Sarantakos, 2013). The fieldwork, involving an online survey and a multiple case study at four research sites, was conducted from December 2014 to July 2015 in Malaysia

4.4.1 Case Selection

A multiple case study may provide more solid and reliable evidence as it involves more than one case to investigate, within one case and across cases (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Stake (1995) believed that a systematic and strategic action plan in case selection would be useful to avoid unnecessary waste of time, which is a common problem for case study researchers during fieldwork. Thus, Stake (1995) suggested that accessibility, context, uniqueness, environment and participants are some important features to consider while selecting a case study. Yin (2014) pointed out that a standard procedure in identifying the second case after the first one is by looking at the already determined common characteristics list. In this way, the second case may have a new character for itself together with the common characters.

In this study, I followed the suggestions of Stake (1995) and Yin (2014) to select the four case studies. This whole selection process became a lot easier when I had the opportunity to peruse the first document that I obtained from the DCCE, the most recent statistics software (a compact disk) covering many elements related to the 90 community colleges in Malaysia (DCCE, 2013). Using those statistics, I developed the list of four common characteristics relating to all the community colleges: geographical locations, number of programmes, types of premises and gender of directors to represent a basic diversity across all cases for this study. Regarding the characteristics, I identified the following information:

- Geographical locations (only West Malaysia): East Coast (16 colleges); West Coast (60 colleges)
- Number of programmes: more than four programmes (12 colleges); four and fewer programmes (64 colleges)
- Types of premises: campus (18 colleges); shop lots (58 colleges)
- Gender of directors: female (19 colleges); male (57 colleges)

As the first stage of case selection, I determined West Malaysia as the broader context of geographical location for this study as it had 76 colleges, around 84 per cent of the total colleges in Malaysia in 2014 (DCCE, 2014). West Malaysia has 11 states and among them, I identified three states with at least ten community colleges to cover at least 40 per cent of the total colleges in West Malaysia: Perak with 13 colleges, Pahang with ten colleges, and Selangor with nine colleges. Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of all 76 community colleges in West Malaysia and the location of the four case studies.

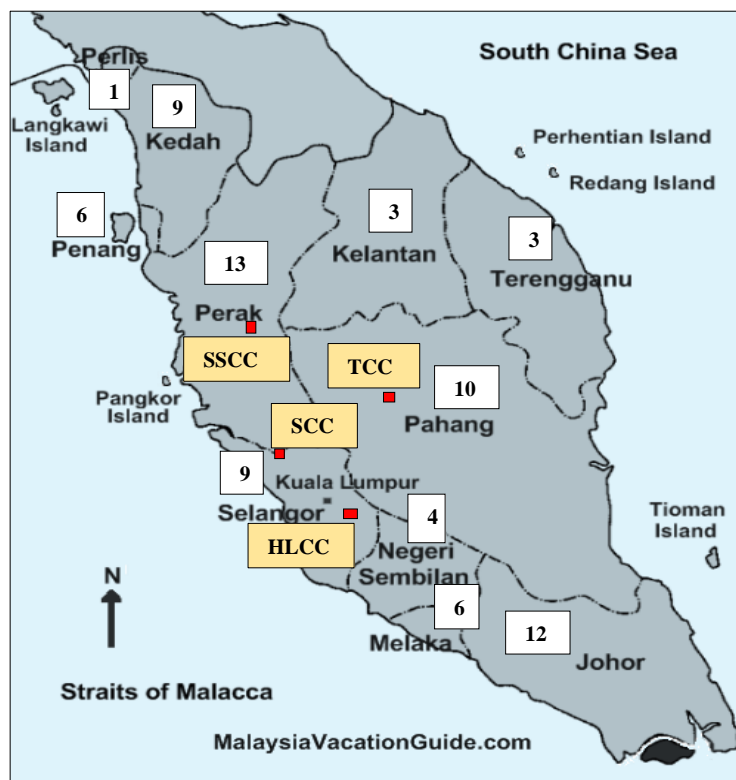


Figure 4.3. Distribution of community colleges in West Malaysia and the geographical locations of the four case studies

Source: Onlinemapfinder

Key: SCC Selayang Community College
 SSCC Sungai Siput Community College
 HLCC Hulu Langat Community College
 TCC Temerloh Community College

From the 32 colleges in the three states, I shortlisted 13 colleges which had at least four programmes and were established during the Eighth Malaysia Plan from 2001 to 2005. Of those 13 colleges I decided to choose the following four

colleges that constituted a balanced group with an individual character (Stake, 1995).

The first case, Selayang Community College (SCC), I selected because it was providing the most mixed types of programmes including one diploma, one special, one continuous and five modular programmes (see chapter 5 for courses description). An individual character of case one was the number of programmes. The second case, Sungai Siput Community College (SSCC), I also selected for its five mixed types of programmes, one special, one continuous and three modular programmes, and, most importantly, its location in a very remote area with an own campus. I identified the distinguishing feature of the case two college was the director, the only male among the four cases. The third case, Hulu Langat Community College (HLCC), was selected because it represented a densely populated parliamentary area and had made a row of shops their permanent college building. A distinctiveness of case three was its college building itself, a shop. Finally, I selected the fourth case, Temerloh Community College (TCC), mainly to have a variance from the other cases in the sense of geographical location. This college was located in the eastern region and offered only four modular programmes. Table 4.1 shows the characteristics of four case studies and the individual character of each.

Table 4.1. *Characteristics of the four selected case studies*

Case study	Geographical location (West Malaysia)	Number of programmes offered	Gender of directors	Types of premises	A distinct character
Selayang Community College (SCC)	West Coast	8	Female	Campus	More than 4 programmes
Sungai Siput Community College (SSCC)	West Coast	5	Male	Campus	Only male director
Hulu Langat Community College (HLCC)	West Coast	4	Female	Shop lots	Shop lots as permanent premises
Temerloh Community College (TCC)	East Coast	4	Female	Campus	Located in the East Coast

Source: DCCE (2013)

4.4.2 Participant Selection

The participants of this study were the members of Malaysian Community Colleges: directors, teachers, and students. All three sets of participants were involved in four different research methods: online survey, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, and individually administered questionnaire.

Participants for online survey: All directors from the 90 community colleges participated in the online survey, which acted as the first phase of communication with the community colleges. In order to carry out the survey, I had to contact the directors through their personal email, as they did not have a centralised server system. Later, I realised many of the email addresses I had been given were inactive, so I contacted the directors or their secretaries to request the details as well as explain about my study directly. This took around two weeks to sort out and resulted in only 54 confirmed email addresses. Then, I sent the questionnaires' electronic link through an *E-mail to director* (Appendix 1b) to all 54 directors accompanied by an *Information letter* (see Appendix 8) and the Malaysian Departments' *Letters of consent* (see Appendices 6 & 7b). I also presumed the explanation over the phone would be an additional source of information for the directors. However, after waiting a further around three weeks, I only received around six responses, which disappointed me. That number of responses would not be sufficient to serve my intended purpose of the online survey, where the emergent data were to supplement the next phase, a multiple case study. Actually, I had expected to identify around 20 community colleges based on some variations in the responses, and then to select at least six colleges to further reduce to four case studies using the above mentioned characteristics (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014).

Time constraints did not permit me to spend more time waiting for responses. Therefore, after a brief consultation with both supervisors, I proceeded with the next phase by reconceptualising the entire study as a multiple case study using other five research methods. This decision became crucial, as I had to complete the data collection within a six months period back in Malaysia. The poor responses also might be explained by the directors being occupied with their important end-of-year schedules, including examinations, recruitment and

auditing, which prevented them giving priority to my survey conducted in December. If I had waited longer I may or may not have received more responses, but the survey and my initial telephone calls did serve a purpose: the members of community colleges became aware of the significance of my study when I visited the Colleges. They might not otherwise have been as cooperative throughout the data collection period.

Participants for semi-structured interviews: The directors of the four community colleges selected became the four direct participants for semi-structured interviews. Each director would be an automatic participant when his or her college became a case study in this study. Since the on-line survey had not given me a good outcome, I decided not to have any electronic communication and proceeded to call the Colleges directly by phone. This became my second direct communication to the four case study sites. Over the phone, I introduced myself and requested permission for a casual visit to the sites. At the sites, I usually had a chance to meet the administrators who would introduce me to a teacher in charge of public affairs. Often I would introduce myself and explain about my study and the research methods involved for data collection to the teacher in charge in each college and what help I needed from them. The teachers were very helpful and they always arranged for me to meet the director. I also asked the teachers in charge to pass the *Semi-structured interview schedule* (see Appendix 2a) to their directors to give them some idea about the interview. For all these to happen, I frequented each college site several times. The visits enabled me to get to know more about the Colleges and their environments, administrations, programmes, classes, teachers, and students, all with the assistance of the teacher in charge or an administrator (L. Cohen et al., 2011).

On the appointed date and time for interview, I met the directors of each College at the sites, usually at their office space. Before every interview session, I made sure to tell the directors about the purpose of study and the importance of the interviews for me. I allowed them time to read the *Information letter* (see Appendix 8) and the *Director's research consent form* (Appendix 2b) and reiterated on their rights to decide whether to participate. I also informed them that the whole interview session would be audio-recorded and transcribed for them to check for accuracy. Table 4.2 shows the participants of semi-structured

interviews. As shown in the table, the four directors comprised three females and one male. One female director was of Chinese ethnicity and the other three were of Malay background. Among the 90 directors of Malaysian Community Colleges only five were of Chinese ethnicity and one of Indian origin (DCCE, 2013).

Table 4.2. *Directors as participants in semi-structured interviews*

Case study	Participants	Gender (Male /Female)	Ethnicity (Malay /Chinese /Indian)
SCC	1	F	M
SSCC	1	M	M
HLCC	1	F	C
TCC	1	F	M

Participants for focus group discussion: A small group of teachers and students in two separate groups in each college site became the focus group participants. The four directors selected the teachers and students after their interviews at every site so I sought permission for their participation from their directors themselves, using a *Permission sheet* (Appendix: 10). The directors with the assistance of the teachers in charge, helped me to prepare two separate lists of 10 teachers and 10 students, on the basis of the two separate criteria that I provided and as approved by the ethics committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato. The assumption was that participation would be voluntary. I specified that the teachers were to be a balanced gender mix with varying lengths of service and from different designations and departments. I also requested students of a balanced gender mix and with a broad range of ages from different programmes. From the two lists acquired, I made further random selection of six or seven members from each list. This number was based on a suggestion of Krueger (1998), who asserts that an ideal number for focus group discussion in a small group is six to eight participants.

Once participants had been selected, I met the teachers and the students for focus group discussion data generation. On that occasion, I conducted two sessions of focus group discussion at a place suggested by the teachers in charge at each site. Before the discussion, I explained briefly to the teachers and students the purpose of the meeting and the procedure of the discussion. It was important to make the teachers and the students comfortable with my presence as a researcher during the discussion (Krueger, 1998). The teachers and the students were also given the

Information letter (see Appendix 8) and permission gained for their participation using *Teachers' and students' research consent forms* (Appendices 3b & 4b). Prior to signing the consent forms, the teachers and the students were assured that their participation was supported by their directors and would not affect their employment or study. Both the documents were also used for the subsequent data collection method, the *Individually administered questionnaire* (see Appendices 3c & 4c). The teachers and the students were also informed that the whole discussion would be audio-recorded and transcribed for accuracy check with one or two members from the individual groups as suggested by them. The focus group discussion was conducted using two separate schedules (see Appendices 3a & 4a).

Participants for individually administered questionnaires: The teachers and the students who took part in the focus group discussion were also engaged in two separate *Individually administered questionnaires* (see Appendices 3c & 4c) immediately after completion of the discussion at each site. The teachers and the students responded to the seven open-ended questions and told not to write their names on the questionnaire sheets in order to protect their identity.

Table 4.3 and 4.4 show the participants of focus group discussion and individually administered questionnaires. Twenty-four teachers and 25 students participated in the study. Of the 24 teachers; 11 were males, 13 females from 105 males and 135 females in the four colleges. All were of the dominant Malay ethnicity. The 25 students were of mixed ethnicities - five students were from two other major ethnic groups, there being two of Chinese and three of Indian origin. Generally, the participants represented Malaysia's dominant Malay ethnic sector. During my visits to the four community colleges, I noticed that in all the colleges the majority of individuals were Malay. This may also explain the ratio of population in Malaysia almost 69 % is of them (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016).

Table 4.3. *Teachers as participants in focus group discussion and individually administered questionnaires*

Case study	Participants	Gender (Male /Female)	Ethnicity (Malay /Chinese /Indian)
SCC	7	1 (M) 6 (F)	7(M)
SICC	5	4 (M) 1 (F)	5 (M)
HLCC	6	2 (M) 4 (F)	6 (M)
TCC	6	4 (M) 2 (F)	6 (M)

Table 4.4. *Students as participants in focus group discussion and individually administered questionnaires*

Case study	Participants	Gender (Male /Female)	Ethnicity (Malay /Chinese /Indian)
SCC	7	2 (M) 5 (F)	4(M) 1(C) 2 (I)
SSCC	6	4 (M) 2 (F)	6 (M)
HLCC	6	4 (M) 2 (F)	5 (M) 1 (C)
TCC	6	4 (M) 2 (F)	5 (M) 1(I)

The next section explains the importance of a conceptual framework for this study.

4.5 Conceptual Framework

Stake (1995) emphasised the importance of drawing a parameter to keep the case studies investigation more or less within the boundary and to avoid the study drifting away from its original aims. According to Stake (1995), defining a boundary helps to strengthen the results of each case being investigated in a logical structure. Miles and Huberman (1984) recommended four bounding features: research questions, conceptual framework, sampling plan, and data analysis. These bounding features are discussed in this chapter.

A conceptual framework coupled with research questions tends to be the initial stage of the boundary in a study and principal drivers for undertaking research tasks. The conceptual framework has been represented in a graphic form in Chapters 3 (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 28). Miles and Huberman (1984) pointed out that a conceptual framework is able to guide a researcher in two aspects: preliminary knowledge on complex aspects of the intended study and identification of “the right participants” as study respondents during fieldwork. According to Miles and Huberman (1984), researchers of qualitative research normally prefer a loose initial conceptual framework that can allow room for emergent aspects during data collection. While a multiple-case study mostly provides comparable data across cases, a conceptual framework sets the path for a study to align in the intended direction. The conceptual framework also acts as a barricade, allowing researchers to work within the parameters of a study while eliciting data from study participants.

The conceptual framework for the entire study (see Figure 3.1) was mapped out using the three global market principles (human capital, globalisation and

neoliberalism and a knowledge economy) that were integrated with the concept of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning and its four fundamental domains: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Finsden & Formosa, 2011) as global ideas having a strong influence on the establishment of the Malaysian Community Colleges' (MCCs) were filtered through a top-down policy flow. This occurred from the Tenth Malaysia Plan to the Ministry of Higher Education to the Department of Community College Education to fulfil a national agenda (Malaysia inclusive society). This framework illustrated that the goals, achievements and challenges of MCCs were negotiated in the context of lifelong learning to address the main research question stated above.

The next section presents the crucial element of maintaining quality and trustworthiness in a research project.

4.6 Ensuring Quality and Trustworthiness

In this study, ethics “begins and ends with me as a researcher” (Neuman, 2011, p. 143). In Malaysia, the community colleges are a constituency of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) under the direct purview of the Department of Community Colleges Education (DCCE) (DCCE, 2012, 2013). It was therefore necessary to gain permission from the MOHE and the DCCE in order to have access to the community colleges and the members. However, a standard procedure in Malaysia for all researchers is to gain permission from the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) first, before proceeding to gain permission for access, especially in the public sector. At the university level, I had to formally apply for an ethics approval from the University of Waikato’s Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education prior to starting fieldwork in this research context. With respect to all these official requirements, I gained the *Ethics approval* (Appendix 5) from the University and I used the approval document as a supporting instrument to gain all other consent letters in Malaysia. I submitted an online application to the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) informing them of my intention and received their approval to conduct a study in Malaysia. Upon receiving a Letter of consent (Appendix 6) from the EPU, I proceeded with two other approvals personally at the MOHE and the DCCE. The MOHE said that a

letter from the DCCE would be sufficient to represent both of them. With MOHE's concern, I proceeded to the DCCE and provided them with a Letter to the DCCE (Appendix 7a) and gained their Letter of consent (Appendix 7b). In addition, the EPU and the DCCE were also furnished with an Information letter (Appendix: 8). At that point, having ethical approval from the University and two crucial consent letters from the Malaysian departments, I was able to access the community colleges and meet the participants.

In order to use the actual names of the selected colleges in my thesis writing, I requested permission from all four directors of the four case studies. To do this I visited on a fresh occasion all the colleges once more after returning to New Zealand, having previously completed data collection in Malaysia. Prior to the visits, I contacted the four directors through email and asked politely for their permission, and two directors gave an immediate positive reply. I then asked the other two directors personally. All four directors granted me the permission with a signature endorsed letter that I had prepared (Appendices 9a, 9b, 9c & 9d).

Trustworthiness is important in qualitative research. According to Merriam (1998), ethical approval acquired in the first stage of research could make the findings of research during data collection trustworthy. This study was conducted with the ethical approval granted on the 8 May 2014 by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the University of Waikato (see Appendix 5). In determining how dependable is the conduct of a research, scholars regard very seriously the two terms *validity* and *reliability* (Guest et al., 2012; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014), while in qualitative research *trustworthiness* is a commonly used synonym for *validity* (Guest et al., 2012).

According to Yin (2014), one of the strategies to increase the validity of case studies is the use of "multiple sources of evidence" (p.47). This study used documents, cases, research methods, and research participants as its multiple sources of evidence. There were four community colleges involved as cases for the collection of data. At each site, three interactive research methods were used to generate data from three sets of participants similar in nature as a source of multiple perspectives. Directors participated in semi-structured one-to-one interviews while teachers and students (in two small groups) participated in focus

group discussion and individually administered questionnaires. The schedules of the interviews and the focus group discussions were two standard sets used in all the four-research sites. Nevertheless, this study has limited generalizability, as the four cases of 90 community colleges constituted a small sample (L. Cohen et al., 2011). However, all the 90 community colleges are public institutions that come under the purview of the DCCE, the centralised administrator. The DCCE strongly takes control of curricula, activities and direction of all the community colleges. Therefore, the four cases may present significant similarities and could contribute to relevant theory supported by evidence gathered from the three levels of participants (L. Cohen et al., 2011).

Merriam (1998, p. 205) suggested two dynamics by which researchers can ensure *validity* when abstracting knowledge from social realities: “self is the prime instrument of inquiry” and “self-in-the-world”. *Self as instrument of inquiry* may be represented by the standard and systematic procedures that I established and used to select cases and collect and analyse data, and by my becoming a participant observer, as explained in the next section. *Self in the world* may be seen as being the position of me as the researcher working with participants who came from similar cultural backgrounds. In this sense, the significant validity of this study was ensured by me as the researcher being fully involved as a key instrument in the processes of the entire study (L. Cohen et al., 2011).

In this study validity was further ensured by the use of multiple methods at different points, referred to as triangulation (L. Cohen et al., 2011). Triangulation is a way to unfold the “richness and complexity of human behaviour” through a demonstration of multiple perspectives obtained from many research sites using many research methods (p. 195). In this study, triangulation resulted in a cross-sectional study of the same group of members using the same methods of study at four community colleges located at four different places in Malaysia. The final analysis using combined findings from all three perspectives (directors, teachers, and students) was expected to contribute to more robust results and meaningful data for the study.

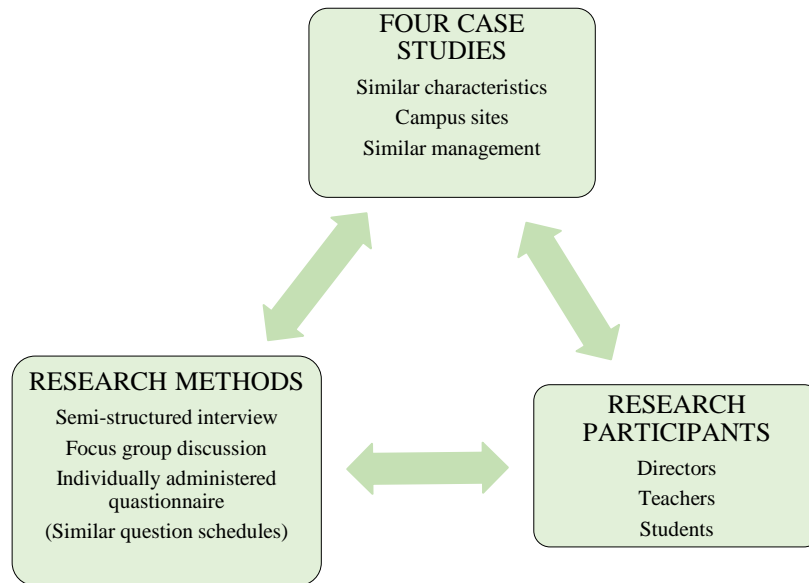


Figure 4.4. Triangulation of evidence

4.7 Data Analysis

This section explains thematic analysis as a method used to analyze the data generated in this study. It also explores the process of coding applied in the analysis.

Analysing data necessitates a systematic way of organising, integrating and examining amorphous details which appear in data generated during fieldwork for a better understanding of new information (L. Cohen et al., 2011; Neuman, 2011). Analyzing and presenting qualitative data works on “fitness for purpose” (L. Cohen et al., 2011, p. 537). The analysis also has to be able to develop an explanation showing complex plausible evidence in the context of the study (Neuman, 2011).

4.7.1 Thematic Analysis

This qualitative inquiry used an inductive thematic analysis suitable for describing an exploratory study with a content-driven approach, and focussing on themes emerging from primary data as sources for data analysing (Guest et al., 2012). Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised that an inductive approach may have themes strongly connected to the data themselves, or data-driven, with the process of coding being little influenced by a researcher’s “pre-existing coding frame” or “preconceptions” (p. 12). Essentially, this study intended to build knowledge

relating to an understanding of the goals, the achievements and the challenges of Malaysian Community Colleges through examining themes, which emerged from data, acquired from three different groups of participants. The data were from the transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions together with questionnaire responses, observational notes and official documents, all collected from the research sites and departments relevant to Malaysian community colleges. In this study, the analysing of data was an ongoing process that began with the analysis of official documents to determine four case studies and proceeded to analysis of the first transcribed data from the director of the first case study. As Guest et al. (2012) noted, such ongoing analysis may improve data collection processes at the research sites and is useful for generating more reflexive data for final analysis. Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2006) considered that it can provide clarity to the ongoing analytic processes and practices used in a study.

Guest et al. (2012) suggested that thematic analysis, in a qualitative study, reveals the richness embedded within the generated data and works beyond the regular patterns of a word-based analysis. They explained that thematic analysis requires researchers to conduct active interpretation of information in data searching for both direct and indirect ideas. Meanwhile, Braun and Clarke (2006) understood thematic analysis as a report of “experiences, meanings and the reality of participants” of a social reality through interpreting the meanings referring to a broader information in literature about the social reality (p. 9). They suggested that thematic analysis is a flexible way of approaching data in order to identify the potentially rich and complex themes within those data. Accordingly, the analysis for this study focussed on understanding the goals, the achievements, and the challenges of the community colleges internationally by examining the four underpinning influences of educational developments: human capital, globalisation and neoliberalism, the knowledge economy, and lifelong learning.

A theme in thematic analysis may reflect data related to the research questions and demonstrates a patterned sense of meaning within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theme need not necessarily prevail across the entire data set but primarily has to demonstrate relevance to the research questions: “[M]ore instances do not necessarily mean the theme itself is more crucial” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 10). Therefore, in determining a theme a researcher plays a vital role in evaluating the

theme by looking for its consistency of appearance both in single instances and across many data reflecting more perspectives. This suggests that when many participants refer to the same theme it may “convince us” that “they are reporting truthfully about the data” (p. 11). In this analysis, data from the three perspectives (directors, teachers, and students) compared and contrasted to determine those most relevant to the three research questions.

In this study, another alternative consideration of thematic analysis was a latent approach, which would help provide “a more detailed and nuanced account” of one group of themes “across the majority of the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 11). Latent class analysis interprets first level of themes found in data by interpreting them collectively into a broader underpinning concept, assumption, or idea. Therefore, latent thematic analysis could develop themes that not only explain meanings at a surface level but also interpret them as a reflection of other broader meanings of a social reality (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, all themes found for the goals, the achievements, and the challenges of community colleges were further categorised into four groups to represent four perspectives from lifelong learning: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Finsden & Formosa, 2011). In this analysis, I followed the six phases of analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006, pp. 16-25):

Familiarising oneself with data: I transcribed all three sets of data collected from one case study before moving on to the next one. I usually listened to one recorded interview and two focus group discussion and transcribed them verbatim, mostly with a mix of English and *Bahasa Malaysia*. However, data from students were transcribed largely in *Bahasa Malaysia*. Although I asked the questions mainly in English, participants were free to respond in their two most familiar languages (English and *Bahasa Malaysia*). I did not constrain the switching between the two languages, as my intention was to elicit rich information from the participants from their most comfortable position. Therefore, the first version of verbatim transcription was how it was heard in the recordings. The transcriptions were made available to the participants to check for accuracy before I translated the transcriptions into English. I used word by word direct translation to maintain the authentic meanings of thick descriptions in transcriptions; as Collins (1984)

asserted, “words are a mode of expression with greater open-endedness” (as cited in Neuman, 2011, p. 509).

This word by word translation was comparatively easy for me as it was the regular teaching practice in my English classroom in Malaysian schools. As mentioned earlier, it is commonplace for Malaysians to use dual languages while speaking and this was an advantage for me because such spoken language was very familiar and a bilingual translation helped me to understand the layered meanings in the data. As Neuman (2011) observes, the meanings were sensitive to context. I immersed myself in the data through repeatedly reading them aloud in their entirety to familiarise myself with them (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2007). I did this for every case study until the collection of data was completed in Malaysia as the preliminary stage of data analysis (Neuman, 2011).

The other five phases: generating initial codes; searching for themes; revising themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the report, are included in the discussion of the following two sections: tabulating data and coding data.

4.7.2 Tabulating Data

There are several ways to present and organise qualitative data, and deciding how to present the data of multiple perspectives has always been a challenging task (L. Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Neuman, 2011). Thus, as a qualitative researcher, I had to select a method that could systematically organise, integrate and examine the many transcripts to view the relationships and identify the patterns (Neuman, 2011) as the first stages of the production of initial codes and eventually the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To do this I used tables to integrate and present the data details in transcripts of every set of research method by carefully selecting participants’ responses from them (L. Cohen et al., 2011). This examination helped in condensing and viewing the different perspectives of participants on a single sheet of paper (Neuman, 2011). The tabulated data were transcripts from the four case studies, that is, the four interview transcripts of the directors; four focus group discussion transcripts each of teachers and students; and four lots of questionnaires responses each of teachers and students. Since the online survey had to be eliminated, the data analysis focussed on the above three methods only.

In this analysis, tables were presented following a question by question method by arranging participants' responses in a logical manner using the schedules entailed in all three research methods (L. Cohen et al., 2011). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that a qualitative researcher could use the different sets of questions employed to gather data from the different participants as anchoring questions in the analysis process as well as the research questions. Because the questions used to gather data were prepared on the basis of the research questions, analysing the answers through participants' responses may go towards answering the research questions. Table 4.5 shows examples of data details from four directors' transcripts tabulated for analysis purposes.

Table 4.5. *A sample tabulated data of four directors from four interviews*

Topic/Question	Director SCC	Director SSCC	Director HLCC	Director TCC
<p>GOALS: What is your personal opinion about the term 'community' linked to CCs? (More questions on goals)</p>	<p>To provide services to local community</p> <p>To make easier for community to come and learn in their own house means they can learn whatever they want to learn.</p> <p>We provide two types of courses, one for SPM leavers to obtain certificate of CC and the community around us we recommend them to take short courses.</p>	<p>From my opinion, CCs are very unique compared to other institutions because others only concentrate on full-time studies but not only full time but also LLL, I feel that is very unique.</p> <p>The word community means people surrounding us that means we have to focus more to people around us.</p>	<p>There is a significance because I believe it is for community. Actually, originally CCs supposed to serve people within a community, they find it is easy to embark on LLL courses, and also TVET full-time courses here so we have Hulu Langat CC, Shah Alam CC... so it is supposed to serve the people here.</p>	<p>This is because initially it was designed one college for one place more accurately for one parliament area. This college for this area and it serves the local community here that is why it is named CC and this is the reason why most of the CC do not have hostels.</p> <p>We are also known as CC because we are given a mandate to empower the local community by means of economy and that is why we have short courses, we train them to increase their income.</p>

<p>ACHIEVEMENTS: What is the role of CCs under the higher education system?</p> <p>(More questions on achievements)</p>	<p>It can provide graduates, human capital. It can produce individuals who are independent with entrepreneurship characteristics those who can work on their own and not depending on the Government.</p> <p>From the fact of human capital when we produce people with skills, they can help to develop the nation and the economy.</p>	<p>We are the lowest under higher learning institution.</p> <p>Our contribution... to help community like the one I said before all group of community.</p> <p>I think helping community is our main role, I think all can come here only if you cannot study you cannot come here.</p>	<p>We contribute to the manpower, we supply workers because we are demand driven, industry driven so what the industry wants we produce in terms of skills. We also turn our students into good students in terms of character and competence.</p> <p>Another contribution is for community. We customise certain courses for them.</p>	<p>Our country is moving towards being a developed nation so we have to empower our people in the sense that those students who have never had the opportunity to further study.</p> <p>We give opportunity to the less fortunate to continue education and let them learn skill; they can earn income for themselves as well as they can create job opportunity.</p>
<p>CHALLENGES: What are the main constraints of operating this CC?</p> <p>(More questions on challenges)</p>	<p>Unawareness of parents that CC are the MOHE and they think CCs are private institutions.</p> <p>Our challenges are the students themselves.</p> <p>We have a problem, the student recruitment.</p>	<p>Sometimes our budget, we have to use our creativity to overcome this budget. For example, we have to use our own staff to teach short courses. We have to encourage community to learn only the courses we have and not more than that.</p>	<p>The challenge is to get parents and students to consider CCs as a pathway to success. We have to recruit students from many schools if not they do not come to us.</p>	<p>Some of them think CC is a private college, so they do not have confidence.</p> <p>Maybe our existence in the education system is still new and people are not aware, just like polytechnics in early establishment.</p>

Table 4.5 shows the way the interview data were presented using a question-by-question method. The questions were taken from the *semi-structured interview schedule* (see Appendix 2a) prepared for the directors and organised starting from the questions on goals followed by questions on achievements and then those on challenges in the first column. The second to fifth columns from left to right represented the directors from the first to the last case study in the order that data were collected. The many responses in the directors' column before the subsequent question comprise all the responses to the preceding question. Once all data were entered using Microsoft Word, I printed onto hard copy to produce the initial codes.

Since I had already familiarised myself with the individual transcripts of the directors, the organisation of the transcripts' data in sequence in paralleled columns made it easier to compare and identify particular trends and similar features in answers from the directors (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The coding was done manually, using different colours of highlighters based on what appeared interesting in the data and sticky notes of different colours to indicate similar features related to economic, social, political or personal interests. Doing this manually also allowed more immediacy in terms of drawing boxes around sentences and phrases that I wanted to use verbatim in the findings chapters as shown in the sample (Appendix 11). In the findings report, the quotes in a verbatim form, I further made more clear and readable in a standard English language expression.

Although there are ways to analyse data electronically, I preferred doing so manually. I wanted to be able to discern complexities in the data that may or may not have been picked up by standard computer software, given that all the perspectives were presented in a word by word translation to English from a mix of English and *Bahasa Malaysia*. As L. Cohen et al. (2011) suggest, I wanted “to keep the flavour of the original data” by being the insider who is familiar with the culture of people in Malaysia (p. 539). I presented the data details of other transcripts from teachers and students and identified the initial codes in same way.

4.7.3 Coding Data Process

Open coding was the first phase of coding of this thematic analysis involving first examining the individual transcripts and later integrating the transcripts into tabulated data, with all findings for initial codes represented in the form of words or phrases (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Neuman, 2011). Open coding helped bring to the surface the hidden meanings in data that I examined when looking for answers to research questions, using the relevant literature as the context for the search (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Axial coding was the second phase, where the identified initial codes were grouped into themes (Neuman, 2011). Here, I sorted the initial codes into those showing some relation to economic, social, political or personal categories as quasi-categories in four columns on a separate piece of paper before I could further collapse all the sorted codes into different levels of themes. (Braun

& Clarke, 2006). Several initial codes not able to be fitted into any groups were discarded.

The final phase of coding was reviewing themes, where groups of themes within and between quasi-categories showing a meaningful coherence of idea were refined into three specific categories that are of importance to this study: goals, achievements and challenges related to community colleges. In all three new categories, titles of themes and subthemes were formed using significant words or phrases identified throughout the process of coding. While forming the titles, the themes and subthemes were consistently referred to over the entire data set to make sure they were accurately reflecting the evidence available in the data set and also representing a closest meaning to an intended set of findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In this analysis, I also interpreted all previously identified themes and subthemes under the three categories to fit in more nuanced meanings significant for this study, the latent themes. The latent themes were acquired from the contemporary and global educational initiative referred to as lifelong learning. Four aspects of lifelong learning represented these themes: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Finsden & Formosa, 2011). With respect to this, all the themes and subthemes identified for goals, achievements, and challenges took another grouping under the four aspects of lifelong learning.

The following table 4.6 demonstrates the examples of phases of the coding process.

Table 4.6. *Coding process*

Initial codes (words/phrases):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-orientated • Local community • Like a house • Parliamentary area
Theme:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To serve a local community
Category: Goals
Latent theme: Social inclusion

Initial codes (words/phrases):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSR programmes • Teachers serve community • Students learn in community space • Local industry help to colleges
Themes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To serve through the CSR programmes • To establish support from local industry
Category: Goals
Latent theme: Active citizenship

Initial codes (words/phrases):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer achieved high school results • The “left-out” students • Full-time programmes • A second chance
Themes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater help for the “left-out” students • Upskilling working adults
Category: Achievements
Latent theme: Economic imperatives

Initial codes (words/phrases):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to polytechnics • Becoming businessperson • Preferred skill courses • Familiar skills and short courses
Themes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-formal education for personal development • Formal education for personal fulfilment
Category: Achievements
Latent theme: Personal fulfilment

Initial codes (words/phrases):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unawareness about community colleges • Parents do not see the opportunity • Qualification providers • Enrol weaker group of students
Themes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher’s stigmatisation • Restricted credit provision
Category: Challenges
Latent theme: Personal fulfilment

In this study, analysis as Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 22) suggested, was an “ongoing organic process” (p. 22) in which I moved continuously back and forth between transcripts and tabulations while reviewing the themes and evidence to create a story which would tell about the researched data in the findings and discussion chapters.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has focussed on explaining the research methodology used to conduct this study. The research methodology essentially explains the interconnected stages of planning and execution of plans in this research. The study applied a constructivist-interpretive paradigm to position the entire data generation and data analysis processes. A multiple case study was adopted to conduct the investigation at the research sites in Malaysia, the community colleges. Four community colleges (case studies) and three groups, comprising some members of the community colleges (directors, teachers and students), were selected, using purposive sampling. Three methods of data collection were used to generate data from the three different sets of participants. Data collection and data analysis were conducted consecutively in a procedural manner as follows: selecting case study sites, identifying participants, gathering data at the college sites consecutively, transcribing data, translating data, tabulating data and coding data. Thematic analysis following inductive measures was employed by eventually connecting all the found themes relevant to research questions, with four aspects of lifelong learning as the latent themes. In respect to trustworthiness in this qualitative inquiry, the arguments were centred on ethical considerations, multiple sources of evidence, and participant observation.

The next chapter presents the profiles of the four case studies.

CHAPTER 5

PROFILES OF THE FOUR CASE STUDIES

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and build knowledge about community colleges as a new higher education institution in Malaysia in the context of lifelong learning. Chapter 4 provided a broad outline of the underpinning research methodology and design of this study. In this Chapter 5, I have specifically looked at the descriptive findings of the four community colleges that became the cases of this multiple case study and the details of participants directly involved in data collection procedures.

Five sections present more information concerning the context of the study. Section one demonstrates the national governing features of Malaysian Community Colleges that have been described in mission statements and goals. Section two describes the location and pertinent details of the four community colleges that were selected as the case sites. Section three presents the demographic characteristics of the participants, the three sub-populations (directors, teachers and students) of the four cases. Section four describes in detail the characteristics of every set of the participants based on the information collected and the direct observation during data collection procedures. The fifth section provides a brief summary of this chapter.

5.2 Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs)

This section describes the governing features of the Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs) involving the mission statements of the Tenth Malaysia Plan, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Department of Community College Education (DCCE) as three national level directives. The section also outlines the goals of the MOHE and the DCCE as the central goals spelled out for the MCCs.

5.2.1 Mission Statements

The Mission Statement of the Tenth Malaysia Plan is as follows:

The community college system provides a wide range of vocational and technical post-secondary education courses within the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). The 59 community colleges nationwide play critical roles in providing upskilling and retraining for the local community in diverse disciplines as well as encouraging lifelong learning across all population segments and age groups (Economic Planning Unit, 2011, p. 235).

The Mission Statement of the MOHE is as follows:

Community colleges play a key role in the development of human capital of the local community by providing the knowledge and skills and inculcating positive values and ethics through education, training and lifelong learning programmes. (MOHE, 2011b, p. 123)

The Mission Statement of the DCCE is as follows:

Leveraging on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and Lifelong learning as a means of developing local community into a knowledgeable and trained workforce to fulfil the demands of the world of work (DCCE, 2012, p. 5).

All three national mission statements aim to drive MCCs as higher education providers with a task to improve the position of local communities (the disadvantaged in Malaysian society) using vocational provision and lifelong learning programmes. Based on the above mission statements the central goals of the MOHE and the DCCE have been designed as noted in the next section.

5.2.2 Central Goals

The Goals of the MOHE are:

1. Increasing and expanding access to skills training and routes to tertiary education for secondary school leavers;
2. Providing a variety of progressive skills training programmes to improve the standard of living of the local communities;
3. Creating and fostering an entrepreneurial culture to support the socio-economic development of the local communities;
4. Cultivating lifelong learning culture to develop knowledge on means to improve the quality of life; and
5. Increasing and expanding collaboration with higher learning institutions, the industry and various agencies for the development of quality of life of local communities (MOHE, 2011b, p. 123).

The Goals of the DCCE are:

1. Providing an alternative pathway for high school leavers and the “left-out” of schooling with technical and vocational education;
2. Providing a lifelong learning opportunity for the local community to improve the quality of life;
3. Encouraging local private employers to use the facilities providing training courses for local employees;
4. Strengthening the relationship among local community, local authority and private sectors to work together improving the local area;
5. Allowing local communities to use the facilities for community activities; and
6. Extending counselling services for local communities advising on knowledge and career improvement (DCCE, 2012, p. 3)

The central goals of the MOHE and the DCCE have five common tasks for MCCs: to be an alternative pathway, to provide skill training, to establish lifelong learning opportunities, to foster entrepreneurial culture and to broaden access, all targeted for local communities. These goals will be explored in chapter 6 to see their relevancy to the findings on goals in this study. The following figure 5.1

depicts the MOHE and the DCCE as two central level managing sectors of MCCs at the local level.

5.2.3 Organisational Chart

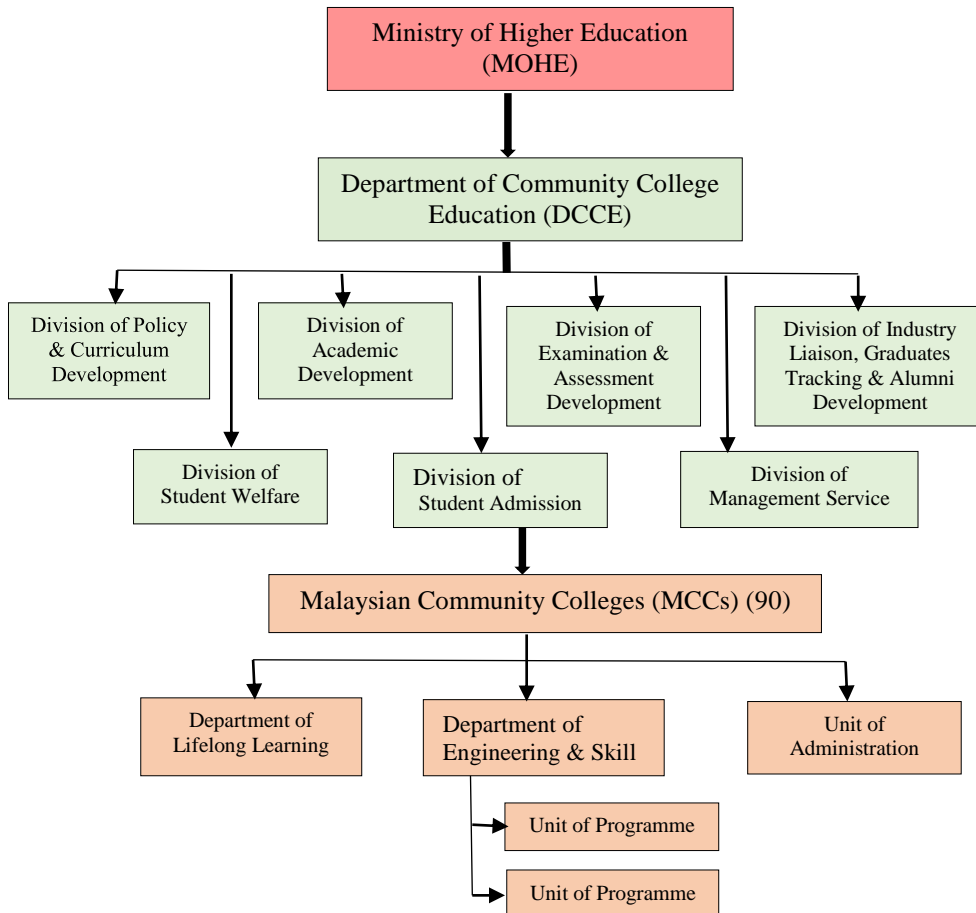


Figure 5.1. Organisational chart of Malaysian Community Colleges
Source: Adapted from DCCE (2013, p. 8)

Figure 5.1 shows the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) as the highest governing body of MCCs. The MOHE has appointed the Department of Community College Education (DCCE) as the central level management body of all the 90 MCCs. The DCCE has seven management divisions ranging from curriculum development to management service to directly administer all the MCCs using a uniformed directive. This shows that MCCs at local level have to strictly adhere to the instruction of the DCCE. At the local level management, MCCs only have two departments and one administrative unit. The Department of Lifelong Learning manages short courses while the Department of Skills and Engineering handles all full-time and modular programmes. Each unit of

programme represents one full-time/ modular programme of a MCC. The next section looks at the programmes developed and distributed by the DCCE to be offered at MCCs.

5.2.4 Programmes Offered

The following table 5.1 encapsulates the range of programmes offered to local community colleges.

Table 5.1. *Four different types of programmes in MCCs*

Continuous Programme	Modular Programme	Continuous Special Skills Programme	Short Courses (Clusters)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agro technology • Accountancy • Landscape • Mechanical manufacturing • Creative multimedia advertising • Tourism and adventure • Draughtsmanship • Event handling • Industrial maintenance • Interior design • Creative visual arts • Computer systems and support • Electrical technology • Construction technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquaculture • 2D Animation • 3D Animation • Computer software applications • Hairdressing • Fashion and clothing • Culinary arts • Hotel operations • Pastry skills • Electrical installation • Building maintenance • Furniture design and manufacturing • Light vehicle services • Refrigeration and air-conditioning technology • Beauty therapy and Spa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Pastry Skills • Basic Information Technology • Basic Photography • Basic Culinary Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic and multimedia • Automotive • Computer and information technology • Agro technology • Hospitality and tourism • Languages • Dressmaking • Interior decoration/craft/arts • Self-development • Health science • Construction • Religion • Industry programme • Business and entrepreneurship • Electrical and electronics

Source: Adapted from DCCE (2013, pp. 54-93)

As shown in table 5.1, the continuous programme offers two years full-time courses for young people and modular programme has accumulated credit courses for working people. Both these programmes offer valid qualifications (certificates or diplomas) through formal education. The continuous special skill programme has certificate courses for disabled young people especially for those with hearing and learning disabilities. Short courses are non-credit programmes establishing lifelong learning opportunities for local communities in the form of non-formal

education. The following four paragraphs explain in detail each of the programmes as noted in the DCCE (2013) document.

Community College Continuous Programme: This is a skill training programme related to industrial skills (DCCE, 2013). The full-time programme involves three semesters of theoretical learning and one semester of industrial training, all subsequently completed in around 16 months as shown on figure 5.2. The DCCE (2013) further explains that the highest qualifications are usually certificates with some exceptions up to diploma level. All courses are offered in compliance with the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) standards. The main aim of the programme is to enable students to master a demanding industrial skill and get immediate employment in an industry. Certain courses also help students to continue to a diploma at a polytechnic. This continuing programme is very suitable for high school students and the minimum requirement for entry is a pass in only one subject of the high school examination, either academic or vocational. In MCCs, this programme as well as the other three programmes is only for Malaysian citizens. The continuous programme has 15 courses and all 15 are distributed according to the number of community colleges in every state (see table 3.1). Findings showed that this programme is helping high school leavers with poor results to continue higher education. The students are categorised as the “left-out” students in the community colleges and the usage of the term has been justified in chapter 6.

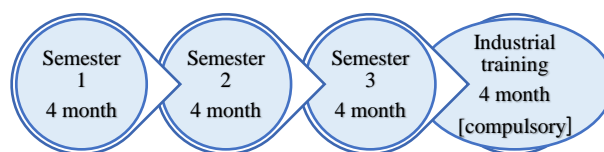


Figure 5.2. Community College Continuous Programme
Source: Adapted from DCCE (2013, p. 52)

Community College Continuous Special Skill Programme: This is a special consideration programme for the disabled young people with learning and hearing disabilities (DCCE, 2013). The aim is to empower the disabled with special skills that can lead to independent living. The DCCE (2013) reported that there are only five such courses available at five states: Certificate in Basic Pastry Skills (Pulau Pinang); Certificate in Basic Information Technology (Perak); Certificate in Food Processing (Negeri Sembilan); Certificate in Basic Photography (Pahang); and Certificate in Basic Culinary Arts (Selangor). The minimum entry requirement is the completion at a secondary school or the Special Education School or the Special Education Integrated Programme of the Ministry of Education. The Sungai Siput Community College which is one of the case study sites is offering the Certificate in Basic Information Technology for learning disability young people.

Community College Modular Programme: This is a credit accumulation skill training programme suitable for mature students and working adults (DCCE, 2013). Mature students are those beyond the standard enrolment age 17-23 of higher education institutions in Malaysia (Economic Planning Unit, 2001b). The learners have to complete all four theoretical modules on campus and the fifth module at industrial sites. The DCCE (2013) further emphasised that the first four modules can be taken as a combination of (two work-related skills and one generic skill or two work-related skills and two generic skills) at any one of the colleges. The important feature is that the first four modules would take around four months of learning in full-time mode each, at a time that suits learners and the fifth module is the industrial training as shown in figure 5.3. Industrial training is mostly optional for older workers with long-term work experience but it is not for new young workers who enter as the “mature students”. Since the programme involves older workers, they can articulate their skills and experience as the entry requirements under the Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), but for mature students their high school results are important. The programme can be completed in a minimum of 20 months but it will usually take longer as the learners are working adults. Most importantly, to qualify for a certificate the first four modules must be completed and the fifth, industrial training is optional. There are also 15 courses distributed among the number of community colleges in

every state (see table 3.1). Of those, 14 are already accredited by the MQA (DCCE, 2013). The findings in chapter 7 identified that this modular programme is helping working people considered low skilled. These learners are articulating their work experience into a valid qualification while improving their computer skills to the new requirement at the workplace. Some are also leaving their demanding jobs to be an entrepreneur; they learn in the courses together with the addition of entrepreneurial skills that as an important component to this programme.



Figure 5.3. Community College Modular Programme

Source: Adapted from the DCCE (2013, p. 52)

Short courses: Short courses are non-credit programmes with lifelong learning opportunities for local communities. The aim is “ to incalculable interest, to motivate, and to educate the communities” (DCCE, 2013, p. 87). They are noted as the most responsive programmes to local communities’ needs in the form non-formal education. Short courses can be conducted in a couple of hours to a maximum of 90 days. The DCCE (2013) further reported that the courses are to help local communities to improve their quality of life within a competitive society. They have a cluster of 15 main themes as shown in table 3.1. For example, in the theme *hospitality and tourism*, one can learn how to be a food caterer by learning Chinese, Indian or Western cuisine, making bread, and carving fruits for decoration. The fees are only around five to twenty Malaysian ringgit (\$NZD1.75 to \$NZD7.50) with some additional costs for raw materials. There are no specific entry or age requirements. Short courses constitute an excellent opportunity for varied community members to undertake lifelong learning locally and they are serving the largest group of learners of varied needs in all the four the community colleges researched, as the findings in chapter 6 and 7 illustrate.

The next section describes the four community colleges as the four case sites.

5.3 The Four Case Studies

This section describes in detail the four community colleges that were selected as case sites for this study. Location, atmosphere, staff and programmes of the four colleges have been described as four background information important to understand the cases. The information was acquired mostly through site observations and some documents collected at the sites and from the DCCE.

The four case studies were Selayang Community College (SCC); Sungai Siput Community College (SSCC); Hulu Langat Community College (HLCC) and Temerloh Community College (TCC), selected through purposive sampling as how has been explained in subsection 4.4.1. The SCC and the HLCC are located in the state of Selangor while the SSCC and the TCC are in Perak and Pahang respectively (see figure 4.2). As a matter of fact, the distance of the colleges are estimated from the capital, Kuala Lumpur, to draw an average distance that came about 111 kilometres. Kuala Lumpur became important, here because I am living around 20 Km away to the north. From Kuala Lumpur, the farthest is the SSCC at around 229 Km, followed by the TCC, about 136 Km, the HLCC, about 60 km, and the SCC, only around 18.3 Km. The following four subsections describe each of the cases, reflecting the order of data collection occasions.

5.3.1 Case Study One: Selayang Community College (SCC)

In 2003, Selayang Community College (SCC) started operation in a secondary school at Selangor as its temporary location. In 2006, SCC moved to a modern six-storey building with the campus spread across 3,402 square metres. Most of the facilities in its new building were what one would expect in a higher learning institution, including mock settings of a car workshop, restaurant, hotel suite and kitchen. In 2014, SCC was one of the eight community colleges in Selangor. My first visit to this College was on 24 February 2015.

SCC is located in a new township around Selayang, a district in Selangor, and can be considered as a metropolitan college. The township is a semi-urban site located about 18.3 km from Kuala Lumpur. The closest buildings to SCC were a magistrate's court, a national power station and new residential apartments. Within a range of approximately 5 km, there were government administrative

buildings, commercial banks and shops, a traditional Malay village, a densely populated housing settlement, medium-sized industry lots, primary and secondary schools, a general hospital, and a wholesale market. Because of the location, students for SCC came from a wide range of communities: civil servants, teachers, students, factory workers, housewives, traders, bank staff and nurses.

There were 71 teachers and 25 administrators. Of those teachers, three were senior academic personnel, including a director and two department heads, of the Department of Lifelong Learning and the Department of Engineering and Skills respectively. The other 68 teachers (53 male and 18 female) held various academic positions in SCC and among them, eight were programme unit heads of the eight full-time programmes offered at SCC. The 25 administrators were the supporting staff in management. By analysing the ethnicity of the staff, I found that 95 per cent were of Malay origin. In 2013, there were 632 students enrolled in SCC (DCCE, 2013).

In 2014, SCC received the “Six Stars” rating award from the DCCE, an award to acknowledge successful achievements against the projected plans at the beginning of that year. With that rating, SCC became the fourth MCC to receive such award among the 90 in 2014. In addition, SCC received the 5Cs certificate from the Malaysian Productivity Corporation (MPC) for meeting their 5Cs criteria: clean, courteous, comfort, careful, and co-operative in 2013.

SCC started with three programmes: Certificate in Fashion and Clothing, Certificate in Culinary Arts and Certificate in Pastry in 2003. By 2007, it had three more programmes: Certificate in Interior Design, Certificate in Hotel Operation and Certificate in Special Culinary Arts. The special culinary arts programme was designed for hearing-impaired young people. General Studies was introduced in 2008 to help full-time students with literacy, numeracy or computer problems. SCC also introduced a diploma programme in Games Art in 2013 as an upper level qualification from the certificates. Among the four case studies, SCC was the only college with a diploma programme. The Certificate in Interior Design was a continuous full-time programme especially for high school leavers, while the other five were modular programmes catering for all groups of learners; particularly working people and mature students (see subsection 5.2.4 for

three different types of programmes offered at Malaysian Community Colleges). Full-time continuous programmes also would come with the accreditation of the Malaysian Qualification Agency but the modular programmes would gain gradually accreditation upon reaching the required standard through the initiation of individual colleges. In addition, short courses were offered as lifelong learning courses for all people living in Selayang district and neighbouring SCC. In 2013, SCC offered 319 short courses to 4,362 participants (DCCE, 2013).

5.3.2 Case Study Two: Sungai Siput Community College (SSCC)

In March 2003, Sungai Siput Community College (SSCC) began its operation in a public secondary school while waiting for its new campus to be completed. In July 2004, SSCC moved into its own building. SSCC was among the 13 community colleges in Perak up to the end of 2014.

My first visit to SSCC campus was on 4 March 2015. It was located in an area surrounded by oil palm estates and that location could have been a deliberate positioning to help the remote communities working and living in the oil palm estates. The nearest town to SSCC was Sungai Siput, about 10 kms away. SSCC was only accessible by a narrow road but I managed to find the College through a trail of signboards along the way. The College was built on the highest ground in that area, perhaps to make it more visible for the surrounding community despite the location's isolation. Although SSCC was not accessible to many modern facilities because of that isolation the College itself was equipped with all kinds of new facilities such as lecture theatres, classrooms, a utility hall, computer labs, an exhibition area, a library, and car workshops. According to the director, the surrounding community often used some of the facilities.

SSCC could be considered a rural college. It was approximately 229 Kms away from Kuala Lumpur and located roughly 25 Kms away, between two of Perak's big cities: the capital, Ipoh, and the royal town, Kuala Kangsar. Generally, Sungai Siput was a quiet town mainly occupied by traders, villagers, rubber tappers, oil palm harvesters, and some Government employees. The small town still resembles a colonial town with old coffee shops and buildings remaining from around the 1930s. The local people have enduring memories of the British

colonisers who established and managed the huge rubber estates surrounding Sungai Siput in the 1930s.

The nearest settlement to SSCC was a traditional village next to a river, by the name of *Kampung Sungai Sejuk*, literally Cold River Village. Other geographical features I noticed around SSCC were traditional Malay villages, Chinese resettlement villages, estate quarters, a general hospital, public schools, and rubber and oil palm processing factories. This suggested that older students of SSCC might come from the less skilled labour communities such as oil-palm harvesters, rubber tappers, and plantation workers. Others might be village people, senior citizens, traders, and indigenous (original people) of Sungai Siput. SSCC has also expended considerable energy in recruiting students from the nearest schools for its full-time programmes.

SSCC had 55 teachers and 25 administrators. Of the teachers, 24 were males and 31 females. The teachers had to undertake various teaching, facilitative and administrative jobs. As in SCC, the three senior teachers were the director and two department heads. There were also five programme unit heads for five full-time programmes. In 2013, there were around 217 students enrolled in SSCC (DCCE, 2013).

SSCC started recruiting students in June 2003 and the College's first course was the Certificate in Computer Applications for around 60 students. In 2004, the College moved to its own campus and was able to offer three more certificate programmes: Certificate in Light Vehicle Services, Certificate in Electrical Installation, and Certificate in Tourism and Adventure. General Studies was included in 2008 to help those students with difficulties in literacy, numeracy and computer knowledge. In 2014, a Certificate in Special Information Technology was introduced to help young adults with challenging learning difficulties. During my visit, SSCC had only 158 students enrolled in the five certificate programmes. Of the five programmes, only the Certificate in Tourism and Adventure was a full-time continuous programme and the remaining three were the modular type (DCCE, 2013). Short courses were helping most local people living near SSCC with lifelong learning opportunities. Three popular short courses were culinary

arts, sewing and car maintenance. In 2013, around 1,260 participants had attended 46 different short courses at SSCC (DCCE, 2013).

5.3.3 Case Study Three: Hulu Langat Community College (HLCC)

Hulu Langat Community College (HLCC) was established in 2003. In the early stages of its operation, HLCC was different from the other two colleges. It had a chance to share premises and facilities with a technical school, which enabled the College to offer the Certificate in Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Technology, a very new programme among community colleges in 2003. The demand for the programme increased and HLCC had to move to rented premises in a shopping centre to cater for more students. In 2009, HLCC moved to its permanent campus comprising a row of shops. A line of five shops served the function of a community college with modified classrooms and utility places. In terms of space, the College was rather cramped. However, an advantage of HLCC was its campus location in a commercial centre, allowing people living in the surrounding area to know about the College. Perhaps because of its location, HLCC had always tended to have more applicants for their programmes than they have been able to accept.

During my first visit on 19 March 2015, the College was already on the list of “Five-star” Colleges and was hoping to get the conferment from the DCCE.

HLCC, like SCC, was located in Selangor but towards the southern part of the state in a district approximately 60 kms from Kuala Lumpur. HLCC was also positioned in a new township called Prima Saujana, which was 6 kms away from the nearest densely populated old town, Kajang. Prima Saujana was actually a rural area that had been newly developed with all necessary modern infrastructures without the surrounding villages having been relocated. This meant that shops and modern houses together with the remaining traditional villages surrounded HLCC. The College is also located in a district with many old folks’ homes and a prison. The Prima Saujana area had become a modern business hub and the students came from the widely varied local community, probably including people from the neighbouring house gardens, staff from Government departments, industry workers, home occupants, or prison inmates.

HLCC had 86 staff: 59 teachers and 27 administrators. The teachers comprised nine males and 50 females while the administrators were another nine males and 18 females. As mentioned earlier, the Certificate in Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Technology was its first programme and considered the pride of the College, and very popular throughout Malaysia. The programme always had more applicants every intake surpassing the actual number of students it could take. This popularity was due to the director's efforts because she eventually was able to offer all three levels of the programmes following the Malaysian Skills Certification System following compliance with the National Occupational Skills Standard of the Department of Skills Development (2015). The director had also secured the accreditation of the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) in Malaysia, and was negotiating with an automotive business in the USA for recognition of the College's training in car air-conditioning technology.

In 2004, HLCC introduced the Certificate in Information Technology but in 2013 this programme was replaced by a simpler version, the Certificate in Computer Software Applications. In line with the other community colleges, in 2008 General Studies was introduced to help full-time students. In 2009, a Certificate in Accounting started but the Certificate in Business Operation replaced this in July 2015. There were about 148 students in the three programmes at the time of my visit, roughly around 37 students in a programme (the number recommended by the DCCE per programme is around 40 students) (DCCE, 2012, 2013). All three programmes except the Certificate in Business Operation were modular programmes with flexibility in terms of course schedule, times and students, which might account for their popularity. As in other colleges, short courses served the local communities with lifelong learning opportunities with the help of the Department of Lifelong Learning. In 2013, HLCC served 4,285 participants with 289 short courses (DCCE, 2013).

5.3.4 Case Study Four: Temerloh Community College

Temerloh Community College (TCC) was also established in 2003 under a different name altogether, Mentakab Community College, before the new name effective in 2008. It also began its operation as HLCC in a technical school. The first programme was the Certificate in Information Technology offered to 30

students with only a director and three teachers to manage. In 2006, TCC moved to its new modern campus constructed on approximately 1.5 acres of land. My first visit to TCC was on 8 April 2015. The large campus had beautiful landscaping and gigantic wood sculptures contributed by its own students. TCC was a very new campus model compared with most of the MCCs. Some of its facilities were different from those of the other three case sites, in particular its display corridors, a general college hall, and its sports facilities.

TCC was in the eastern region of West Malaysia in Pahang and one of the ten colleges in that state in 2014. Compared to the west, the eastern region has always been the more traditional part of Malaysia, with moderate developments, dense virgin rainforests, conventional Muslim customs and many long established rural villages together with aboriginal settlements (Abdullah & Pedersen, 2003). TCC was two hours' drive from Kuala Lumpur, around 136 kms away by the east-coast highway. TCC was conveniently positioned between two big towns, Mentakab and Temerloh, in central Pahang, on a stretch of road formerly a rural road between the two towns. In early 2010, the road was rebuilt as a bypass route around the two towns, which meant TCC was about 2 kms from Mentakab and around 12 km from Temerloh. The two towns had a local history about the three communities traceable from the 1930s (Abdullah & Pedersen, 2003). At that time, Temerloh predominated, with many Malay traditional villages following the rich customs and culture of the Malay people. During that early period Mentakab had become a convenient suburb for the Chinese and the Indian people to live and practise their traditions and cultures. After independence in 1957, the two neighbouring towns combined under one local government, Temerloh, and started to share basic infrastructure and fundamental services for the benefit of the three main ethnicities. Thus, the growth of TCC had been strongly influenced by the three main ethnicities of the two towns.

After 2010, the bypass route has become a strategic point to relocate some government offices and schools. I also noticed the construction of three modern housing estates in that area during my visit. Thus, within about 20 kms of TCC, there was a road transport department, two new primary schools, a recreational park, two house gardens, a decade-old Chinese school, modern commercial centres, traditional villages and industrial plants. This suggests that the College

might have students representing different ethnicities from both modern and conservative backgrounds.

The 55 teachers and 18 administrators were the strength of TCC according to the director. Nineteen male and 36 female teachers engaged in various duties relevant to student affairs and eight male and ten female administrators provided additional support to the teachers and management. In 2013, there were around 239 students enrolled in TCC (DCCE, 2013).

In 2003, TCC started with the Certificate in Information Technology and changed to the Certificate in Computer Software Applications in 2013. In addition, Certificates in Fashion and Apparel, Building Maintenance, and Furniture Design and Manufacturing began in 2006 (DCCE, 2013). All were modular programmes, perhaps to provide more opportunities for lower achieving students to continue education with less rigid entrance criteria and class schedules. A Certificate in Furniture Design and Manufacturing was a distinctive programme allocated to TCC because of the main activity in that area: timber sawmills involved in the processing of logs harvested in the Pahang rainforests. However, the programme was found to be unsuitable, as is explained in Chapter 7. In 2015, TCC had an enrolment of about 120 students for full-time study.

In 2008, General Studies was introduced to help students with basic language and computer difficulties. The Department of Lifelong Learning offered short courses throughout the year to meet the needs of local communities through lifelong learning programmes. In 2013, TCC offered 147 short courses to 2,682 participants (DCCE, 2013).

The next section presents the demographic characteristics of the participants who were the contributors of data for this study and carefully selected as noted in subsection 4.4.1 under participant selection.

5.4 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

This section describes the demographic characteristics of three sets of members (directors, teachers and students) carefully selected from four case studies from four different locations who together comprised the main participants to provide information about Malaysian Community Colleges.

All three sets of participants at each site participated in the multiple case study procedures. One director and two groups of around six each of teachers and students represented the participants at each case site. In this arrangement, they were involved in three different research methods: directors in semi-structured interviews, and teachers and students in two separate groups in focus group discussions and individually administered questionnaires. In accordance with the sampling explanation given in Chapter 4, all were carefully selected to be the participants in this study. The following four subsections present all selected participants' demographic characteristics, taken in order from case study one to case study four in four lots of tabulated data.

5.4.1 SCC: Participants' Demographic Characteristics

The participants from the first case study, Selayang Community College, were one director, seven teachers and seven students. Table 5.2 shows their demographic characteristics. The participants have been arranged from director, followed by seven teachers and then seven students. Teachers and students have been organised in numerical order for easier reference in the findings and discussion chapters when quotes from them might become useful.

“Ethnicity” is shown on the table as Malay, Chinese or Indian, the three main ethnicities in Malaysia. “Service length” for teachers is their accumulated involvement as teachers mostly from schools, polytechnics and then to community colleges. Meanwhile for students, “service length” is their status in a programme, either full-time or part-time. “Department” indicates a teacher's attachment in SCC. There are two major departments, the Department of Engineering Skills that handles all the full-time programmes offered at SCC, while the Department of Lifelong Learning works particularly with students from the local community. Within the Department of Engineering and Skills selected

teachers headed a number of programme units offered at SCC. A “programme” is also a study programme a student might be engaged with at SCC. All these descriptions also apply to all four case studies.

Table 5.2. *SCC and the participants’ demographic characteristics (23-27 February 2015)*

Participants	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Service length (years)	Department/Programme
Director (D-SCC)	F	51	Malay	12	Head of SCC
Teacher 1 (S1-SCC)	F	43	Malay	16	General Studies
Teacher 2 (S2-SCC)	F	38	Malay	12	Interior Design
Teacher 3 (S3-SCC)	F	37	Malay	8	Culinary Arts
Teacher 4 (S4-SCC)	M	37	Malay	14	Creative Multimedia
Teacher 5 (S5-SCC)	F	39	Malay	13	Hotel Operation
Teacher 6 (S6-SCC)	F	39	Malay	12	Fashion and Clothing
Teacher 7 (S7-SCC)	F	42	Malay	14	Pastry Skills
Student 1 (S1-SCC)	M	22	Chinese	Full-time	Dip. in Games Art
Student 2 (S2-SCC)	F	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Interior Design
Student 3 (S3-SCC)	F	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Interior Design
Student 4 (S4-SCC)	F	30	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Fashion and Clothing
Student 5 (S5-SCC)	F	26	Indian	Full-time	Cert. in Pastry Skills
Student 6 (S6-SCC)	F	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Culinary Arts
Student 7 (S7-SCC)	M	21	Indian	Full-time	Cert. in Hotel Operation

SCC’s director was a woman aged 51 who had 12 years of working experience in four community colleges. She was a member of the dominant Malay community. Seven teachers (one male and six female) and seven students (two male and five female) from this College participated in the study. All seven teachers were members of the dominant Malay community, and represented seven different programme units at SCC. The service periods of the seven teachers ranged from eight to 16 years and included some years teaching in schools or polytechnics. All were aged in their forties. Students represented a mixture of Malaysia’s three

main ethnicities, perhaps because the College was located in a semi-urban area where such a mixture of all three ethnic groups is common (Abdullah & Pedersen, 2003). The seven students were engaged in six different programmes. Among the seven, one Chinese student was enrolled in the only diploma programme in the SCC. One mature female student in her thirties was taking a fashion programme and an Indian student aged 26 was taking a pastry course; perhaps both of them wanted to enhance their favourite skills to give themselves a better opportunity in life. The other four participants were high school students enrolled in programmes of personal interest to them.

5.4.2 SSCC: Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Sungai Siput Community College, the second case, had the same style of evaluation as the first case. In this College, one director, five teachers and six students participated in the data collection procedures. Table 5.3 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants from SSCC.

Table 5.3. SSCC and the participants' demographic characteristics (3-6 March 2015)

Participants	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Service length (years)	Department/Programmes
Director (D-SSCC)	M	58	Malay	22	Head of SSCC
Teacher 1 (S1-SSCC)	M	57	Malay	35	Department of Lifelong Learning
Teacher 2 (S2-SSCC)	M	35	Malay	10	Creative Multimedia
Teacher 3 (S3-SSCC)	F	37	Malay	9	Tourism and Adventure
Teacher 4 (S4-SSCC)	M	35	Malay	10	Electrical Technology
Teacher 5 (S5-SSCC)	M	40	Malay	12	Automotive
Student 1 (S1-SSCC)	F	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Tourism and Adventure
Student 2 (S2-SSCC)	M	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Tourism and Adventure
Student 3 (S3-SSCC)	M	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Light Vehicle Services
Student 4 (S4-SSCC)	M	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Light Vehicle Services
Student 5 (S5-SSCC)	M	25	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Computer Applications
Student 6 (S6-SSCC)	F	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Computer Applications

This only male director of the four case studies was 58 years old and previously had been teaching for almost 22 years in a polytechnic and SSCC. Five teachers (four male and one female) and six students (four male and two female) participated in focus group discussions and individually administered questionnaires. The director, all five teachers and five of the students represented the Malay ethnicity. Among the teachers, one teacher had 35 years of service experience, more than that of the director. This was probably why he became the Head of the Department of Lifelong Learning, to work with students of all ages and backgrounds from the local communities. The other teachers had only around ten years of service each, including a small period in schools, except for the automotive teacher, who came from the private sector. The average age of four teachers was 37 with the exception of the head teacher. Five of the students were high school leavers aged 19 and they were in three different programmes offered at SSCC. One automotive student aged 25 had enrolled in the programme after being an apprentice in a car workshop.

5.4.3 HLCC: Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Hulu Langat Community College had one director, six teachers and six students as participants in the data collection procedures. HLCC was the third case study. Table 5.4 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants from the HLCC.

Table 5.4. *HLCC and the participants' demographic characteristics (19-23 March 2015)*

Participants	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Service length (years)	Department/Programmes
Director (D-HLCC)	F	52	Malay	25	Head of HLCC
Teacher 1 (S1-HLCC)	M	39	Malay	12	Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning
Teacher 2 (S2-HLCC)	F	40	Malay	10	Creative Multimedia
Teacher 3 (S3-HLCC)	F	30	Malay	2	Accounting
Teacher 4 (S4-HLCC)	M	37	Malay	12	General Studies
Teacher 5 (S5-HLCC)	F	42	Malay	16	Dept. of Lifelong Learning
Teacher 6 (S6-HLCC)	F	32	Malay	7	Dept. of Lifelong Learning
Student 1 (S1-HLCC)	M	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Computer Applications
Student 2 (S2-HLCC)	F	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Computer Applications
Student 3 (S3-HLCC)	M	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Refrigeration and Air-conditioning
Student 4 (S4-HLCC)	M	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Refrigeration and Air-conditioning
Student 5 (S5-HLCC)	M	19	Chinese	Full-time	Cert. in Accounting
Student 6 (S6-HLCC)	F	19	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Accounting

HLCC's director was the only Chinese female director of all the 90 community colleges in Malaysia in 2014. She was 52 years old with a service experience of 25 years, starting from schools and proceeding to HLCC. Teachers and students showed an equal proportion of participation, with two males and four females and four males and two females respectively. Among the teachers, two teachers had only with fewer than ten years of service and they were new postings to community colleges immediately after graduating. The other teachers had transferred from schools or polytechnics. The six teachers represented four programme units and one department. The two teachers from the Department of Lifelong Learning had to prepare suitable short courses and promote them to the local communities from neighbouring residential areas, industries, or organisations, which were the source of their students. One of the six students was the only Chinese student enrolled in the accounting programme. They were 11 the

students enrolled straight from high school and studying in the three demanding programmes at HLCC. All were full-time students.

5.4.4 TCC: Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Case study four, Temerloh Community College, had participants from the east coast of West Malaysia, a variance from other cases' participants. The director was the self-selected participant for interview while the director selected the six teachers and six students as participants. Table 5.5 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants from the TCC.

Table 5.5. *TCC and the participants' demographic characteristics (10-16 April 2015)*

Participants	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Service length (years)	Department/Programmes
Director (D-TCC)	F	45	Malay	20	Head of HLCC
Teacher 1 (S1-TCC)	M	29	Malay	14	Dept. of Engineering and Skills
Teacher 2 (S2-TCC)	M	35	Malay	14	Dept. of Lifelong Learning
Teacher 3 (S3-TCC)	F	31	Malay	6	Building Maintenance
Teacher 4 (S4-TCC)	M	32	Malay	7	Furniture Design and Manufacturing
Teacher 5 (S5-TCC)	M	39	Malay	12	Multimedia and Resources
Teacher 6 (S6-TCC)	F	39	Malay	8	Fashion and Clothing
Student 1 (S1-TCC)	M	21	Indian	Full-time	Cert. in Building Maintenance
Student 2 (S2-TCC)	M	20	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Furniture Design and Manufacturing
Student 3 (S3-TCC)	F	21	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Fashion and Clothing
Student 4 (S4-TCC)	M	21	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Building Maintenance
Student 5 (S5-TCC)	M	24	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Computer Software Applications
Student 6 (S6-TCC)	F	21	Malay	Full-time	Cert. in Computer Software Applications

TCC's director was 45 years old, with 20 years' teaching experience in polytechnics and three in community colleges. The director and all six teachers were members of the dominant Malay ethnicity. Of the six teachers, two teachers were the heads for the Department of Lifelong Learning and the Department of Engineering and Skills respectively while the other four teachers each represented

one unit programmes. The teachers were a mixed group in their thirties and all of them had fewer than 14 years of teaching experience. Among the teachers, the fashion and clothing teacher was a local resident selected to teach because of her expertise. The multimedia teacher had a Master's degree in computing and he was a teacher in the TCC, teaching computer students. All teachers and students had equal gender representation (four male and two female). Among the Malay students, there was one Indian student enrolled in a building maintenance programme, because he wanted to continue his parents' business. The 24 year-old computer student was an outsider for the College, a mature student, not from the neighbouring community. All the other five students were high school leavers engaged in programmes of personal interest to them.

The next section describes the participants, the three sub-populations of the four case studies in individual sets.

5.5 Participants

Having briefly described the demographic characteristics of the participants in an earlier section, in this section I examine more intensively the characteristics of the three sets of participants: directors, teachers, and students, and their involvement in individual colleges.

The accounts of the three sets of participants closely relate to my observation during the fieldwork while I was involved in the data generation procedures at each case site. Apart from this, the opportunity that I had during my visits to meet many non-participants, especially administrators and some teachers at every case site provided additional supporting information, as did official documents acquired from the DCCE.

Henceforth, the reference to a participant is noted as the following, for example, D-TCC reads as *the director from Temerloh Community College*, T1-TCC reads as *Teacher 1 from Temerloh Community College* and S3-TCC reads as *Student 3 from Temerloh Community College*. Therefore, T1-TCC to T6-TCC refers to all six teachers from Temerloh Community College and S1-TCC to S6-TCC refers to all six students from Temerloh Community College. This formula applies to all participants in all four case studies. The following three subsections describe the

three sets of participants, starting from directors, then moving to teachers and to students.

5.5.1 Directors in Malaysian Community Colleges

Director is the highest ranked administrative position at the College level in Malaysian Community Colleges. A director's position comes under the regulation of the Higher Education Officials Service Scheme where he/she is a public employee under the Education Service Commission (2014). The Education Commission, that comes within the auspices of the Public Service Department, keeps a service record in reference to transfer, promotion, increment or other miscellaneous items of all employees, usually teachers in the Education sector (Education Service Commission, 2014). Within the Education sector, teachers get promotion and transfer into other public educational institutions based on their service. Thus, directors of the Malaysian Community Colleges were mostly former teachers at polytechnics and schools who received promotion to the directorship during the establishment of the first community colleges in 2003. In 2014, the demographic statistics of directors in community colleges was 71 males (79%) and 19 females (21%). If these directors are categorised according to ethnicity the data show that 93.4% were of Malay origin; Chinese 2.2%; Indian 1.1%; and other ethnicities 3.3% (DCCE, 2014). Of the four directors in this study, three were of Malay ethnicity and one of Chinese ethnicity; and three were female.

SCC: The director

The director of SCC (D-SCC) was of Malay ethnicity and in her mid-50s. She had 12 years of experience holding various leadership positions at four community colleges including SCC, but came to the position of director of SCC only in 2010. Prior to her engagement in community colleges, she was a teacher in three polytechnics. She graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Technology, Malaysia. She became the direct participant in a semi-structured interview upon my selecting the College. This director became the "icebreaker" of data collection procedure for this study. She was a very friendly person who even introduced me to her unit teachers to have a casual talk with them for more information. She also took the trouble to share with me much other information about community colleges whenever she happened to meet me in the

College and that generosity taught me, in my relative ignorance, much about the colleges from an experienced person's point of view.

SSCC: The director

The director of Sungai Siput Community College (D-SSCC) may have been new to community college life but he had almost 20 years of experience teaching in various positions in four polytechnics. He was promoted to director at SSCC in 2011. The only male director in my study, he had a very pleasant and friendly personality. He was in his late 50s and of Malay ethnicity. "I am a lifelong learner myself," he said; he gained his diploma in Mechanical Engineering from a polytechnic in 1980s, continued to a degree in the same field in a university after working for almost five years. During the interview, he gave me a clear account of the direction of his College, and how the College could be a help for its local community. He explained the genuine contribution of SSCC to two broad groups, high school students and members of the neighbouring communities. He was also clear in his qualified criticism of centralised management of programme allocation and student recruitment.

HLCC: The director

The director of Hulu Langat Community College (D-HLCC) was elevated to the position from that of schoolteacher in 2013. She was a member of the Chinese community in Malaysia and in her early 50s. She had started her teaching career in the 1980s as an English teacher in a secondary school, and in 2004 she gained promotion to lecturer in HLCC. In that position, she held several responsibilities besides teaching. One of her special experiences was that she had an opportunity to manage an expanded programme of the College helping people with short courses in her hometown, Johor, for one year. For that programme, she recruited and trained 3,500 short course participants, an achievement that later favourably positioned her for the appointment as the director of HLCC. During the interview, she was very energetic and informative and shared much information—about her work in the College. She spoke about her other involvements, mostly related to community education, especially for older adults, mentally challenged young students, prison inmates, and retired senior citizens. She had also established a collaboration connection with the University of The Third Age in Malaysia (U3A).

Overall, she exhibited considerable engagement in multiple directions, as encouraged by the policy of the Director General of Community Colleges.

TCC: The director

The director of Temerloh Community College (D-TCC) was also a member of the dominant Malay community and was in her mid-40s. She had a degree in Electrical Engineering from the National University of Malaysia. She had almost 20 years' experience in education, including eight years as director in three community colleges, all in East Malaysia. In January 2015 she was transferred from a college in Kelantan to TCC following an instruction from the DCCE. Before starting her service in her first community college in 2003, she was a senior lecturer in a polytechnic. This director has also been a member in the interviewing board deciding on selection of teachers for community colleges especially on the east coast of Malaysia. Because of her experiences of authority in higher education, during the interview she argued convincingly for the importance of community colleges to the nation's growth. She also shared some ideas about how community colleges could connect to local industry and relate to poor achieving students. She stressed the importance of creating hostel facilities in community colleges as a way to encourage more students to study. Although her position in TCC was less than six months old, she expressed her views in part by relating her experiences in previous colleges.

5.5.2 Teachers in Malaysian Community Colleges

Teachers in Malaysian Community Colleges are known as lecturers. Teachers like the directors are also employees of the Education Service Commission (ESC), that decides on their appointments, promotions and even terminations in the case of disciplinary problems (Education Service Commission, 2014). They are generally categorised as Education Service Officials with a specific position as Higher Learning Officials (Education Service Commission, 2014). There were 2,597 teachers working in 90 community colleges at the end of 2013. The five top specialisations of teachers out of 29 were General Studies (16 %), Building Maintenance (14 %), Electrical Installation (12 %), Computer Applications (10 %) and Tourism (10%) (DCCE, 2013). During data collection for this study, the teachers were involved in focus group discussions and the individually

administered questionnaire. Altogether 24 teachers (11 male and 13 female) participated from four case studies, and all were members of the dominant Malay ethnicity. There were very few other ethnicities available as the Chinese and Indians represented an average of only five per cent in the four case studies: SCC (7%); SSCC (6 %); HLCC (5 %) and TCC (2%). This may also represent the ratio of population where Malay (68.6 %), Chinese (23.4 %) and Indian (7.0%) in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016).

SCC: The teachers

In the Selayang Community College, one male and six female teachers participated in the two subsequent research methods. The seven teachers (T1-SCC to T7-SCC) were seven programme teachers, as shown in table 5.1. Among them, the oldest was T1-SCC, the General Studies teacher, who had a degree in Arts and Social Sciences. T2-SCC and T4-SCC facilitated the interior design and the creative multimedia programmes and each of them had graduated with a diploma from similar programmes. T3-SCC had the shortest service, with only eight years. She was teaching culinary arts students but she had graduated with a diploma in Business Administration. T5-SCC and T6-SCC were the same age and had almost the same length of service; they taught the hotel operation and fashion and clothing programmes, respectively. T5-SCC graduated with a degree in Tourism and Management and T6-TCC was a former student of the SCC who then continued study in a polytechnic to gain a diploma in Fashion Design. Lastly, T7-TCC, the pastry skills teacher, was an ex-home science teacher in a secondary school. The Ministry of Education gave her promotion in recognition of the high value of her skills in community colleges.

During the focus group discussion, all seven teachers shared their experience based on their daily teaching activities in the College. Most of them appreciated to have such a college for low achieving students, perhaps because of their former experiences with such students in schools. The discussion was mostly positive. Some teachers felt overwhelmed by a new challenge of working with their tertiary students. They found using more practical than theoretical teaching in classes to be something different from other higher education institutions. In the

individually administered questionnaires the teachers' comments did not vary much from what they had expressed in the focus group discussion.

SSCC: The teachers

Five teachers, only one of whom was female, participated for Sungai Siput Community College. The five teachers (T1-SSCC to T5-SSCC) taught five different programmes at SSCC, as shown in table 5.2. The most senior teacher, T1-SSCC, had the longest length of service and he became the head of the Department of Lifelong Learning to handle lifelong learning for communities. Previously T1-SSCC had taught technical students in vocational schools. T3-SSCC, the only female teacher in the group was a graduate from tourism and she was teaching the course. Another two teachers of the same age and service experiences, T2-SSCC and T4-SSCC, taught computer classes and electrical technology, respectively. Accordingly, T2-SSCC had a Diploma in Computer Applications and T4-SSCC had a Diploma in Electric and Electronics. Lastly, T5-SSCC taught automotive students. He had formerly been a lecturer at a private institution and was given a special offer to be a public employee because of a lack of teachers in automotive skills at community colleges. The Education Service Commission gave him this opportunity in 2005.

During the focus group discussion, the five teachers energetically debated the advantages and disadvantages of community colleges generally. They were expressing their struggles as though I was a representative to listen to their issues. The teachers showed their unhappiness over the location of their College in a remote area, as they could not conduct computer classes. They were not happy about receiving many less qualified students, which they felt required them to be versatile teachers in order to guide every student. However, despite the constant struggle, they said that eventually producing confident students was their greatest satisfaction. In the individually administered questionnaires, they described more specifically the support that they gave their students.

HLCC: The teachers

Two male teachers and four female teachers were participants from the Hulu Langat Community College. The six teachers (T1-HLCC to T6-HLCC) were teaching five different programmes at HLCC, as shown in table 5.3. T5-HLCC and T6-HLCC taught students coming for short courses from the local community as they were in the Department of Lifelong Learning. They had to choose and promote suitable short courses for the local community. T5-HLCC, the oldest and the longest serving in the group, had a degree in social studies and T6-HLCC had a diploma in quantity surveying. T3-HLCC, a new graduate of accounting, was teaching accounting students. T4-HLCC, who was teaching General Studies, graduated with a degree in arts and language. T1-HLCC was a mechanical engineer by profession who graduated from the National University of Malaysia; he helped the students in the Refrigeration and Air-conditioning programme. T2-HLCC taught multimedia students and had a diploma in that field. During the focus group discussion, the six teachers appeared to be diligently following what the director had already planned for them. They spoke carefully about their allocated tasks in a way that would not reveal any dissatisfaction. Many of the teachers acknowledged the College's contributions to its community by referring to their involvements. For example, the lifelong learning teachers said that they always have to be creative and innovative in recruiting more participants from their communities for short courses. In the individually administered questionnaires, the teachers wrote positive responses.

TCC: The teachers

Six teachers were the participants from Temerloh Community College. Four male and two female teachers (T1-TCC to T6-TCC) represented six programmes, as shown in table 5.4. Among them were two department heads with similar years of teaching experience. T1-TCC was the Head of the Department of Engineering and Skills and had graduated in electrical engineering. This teacher had particular experience in the development of programmes for community colleges in their early establishment. T2-TCC, who had a Malay Literature degree, was the Head of the Lifelong Learning Department. T3-TCC, a young female teacher, was teaching a building maintenance programme. With a degree in quantity surveying,

she had to teach older students coming for her programme, including ex-servicemen. T4-TCC was a furniture design and manufacturing teacher who graduated with an art and woodcraft diploma and a mechatronics degree. T5-TCC, who taught multimedia classes, also held the Acting Director's position for two years in TCC during the director's transition. He had double degrees in software engineering and he studied for his Masters at the University of Melbourne. T6-TCC taught the fashion and clothing programme and had been selected from the local community for her valuable skills in tailoring that were needed at TCC.

During the focus group discussion, the six teachers quietly elaborated on some issues concerning their responsibilities. They spoke strongly of their commitment to teaching students of all ages from the local community during weekends. The teachers were sad to be stigmatised as lower class teachers for teaching "uncomplicated programmes" for lower achieving students. They also explained about their social service to local departments and people on the platform of CSR programmes.

5.5.3 Students in Malaysian Community Colleges

Students in Malaysian Community Colleges include high school students, mature students, working adults, retired public employees, ex-servicemen, older adults, and housewives, regardless of age and qualifications (DCCE, 2012). The students can be divided into two main groups: full-time students and short-courses participants. The full-time students were high school leavers, mature students or military veterans taking either continuous or modular programmes as two years' study. In this study, those aged 24 and above were considered *mature students* following the national enrolment age of students to higher education level is 17 to 23 years old (Economic Planning Unit, 2001b). I only met high school leavers and mature students as participants in this study.

From 2003 to 2012, a total of 44,568 students graduated from the community colleges from the four most popular programmes across the country: Electrical Installation, Draughtsmanship, Computer Studies and Fashion and Clothing (DCCE, 2013). The short course participants were lifelong learners and they could be any individuals from local communities. In the same period, Malaysian Community Colleges enabled 1,031,158 people to become *lifelong learners*

through 45,949 short courses (DCCE, 2013). Diversified groups of students may signal that the community colleges are “special” among higher education institutions. The 25 students, comprising 14 males and 11 females, took part in the same data collection procedures as the teachers. Around 80 per cent of the students who participated were of Malay ethnicity, 12 per cent of Indian ethnicity and 8 per cent of Chinese ethnicity.

SCC: The students

Seven students participated from the Selayang Community College. All seven students (S1-SCC to S7-SCC) studied six different programmes, as shown in table 5.1. The mature student, S4-SCC, was a housewife and she intended to improve her favourite sewing skills by learning a fashion and clothing programme. The three younger students were immediate school leavers and they had enrolled in a programme of personal interest to them. Of the three, S2-SCC and S3-SCC were learning to be interior designers while S6-SCC wanted to be a culinary arts specialist. There were two students of Indian ethnicity: S5-SCC, a mature female student, studied pastry skills and S7-SCC learned hotel operation. Both of them showed interest in starting their own business. The only Chinese student in the group, S1-SCC, was continuing a certificate programme in games art that he had studied elsewhere to diploma level at SCC.

During the focus group discussion, the seven “contented students” appeared delighted to have been given an opportunity for further study. They said cheerfully that they could learn better as they had more practical and less theoretical learning. They felt fulfilled to have a chance to learn skills that they had chosen. In the individually administered questionnaires, the students noted their expectations of being able to continue education or find a better job after completion of their study at SCC.

SSCC: The students

Four male students and two female students participated in data collection procedures at Sungai Siput Community College. The six students (S1-SSCC to S6-SSCC) studied three programmes offered at SSCC, as shown in table 5.2. Five of the students were immediate high school leavers aged 19 and they became

students in SSCC after failing to secure a place in other higher education institutions. S3-SSCC and S4-SSCC preferred to study automotive industry skills. S4-SSCC also had experience doing apprentice jobs in a car workshop for three months while waiting for his high school results. The two planned to find jobs in the national automotive industry. Another two students, S1-SSCC and S2-SSCC, took a course in tourism because they wanted to have good communication skills that they believed would be useful for many jobs. Meanwhile, S5-SSCC and S6-SSCC were doing a computer course. S5-SSCC, a mature student, realised that he needed the skills to get employment as he had failed to impress his employer with his unsatisfactory high school results. S6-SSC wanted to be a computer administrator after graduating.

During the focus group discussion, the six spirited students spoke enthusiastically about how appreciative they were of SSCC. They felt that community colleges were very opportune for students like them. Most agreed that without SSCC they might not have had a chance to continue education at all in Malaysia's competitive academic environment. Some wanted to enter polytechnics and some wanted to be lifelong learners and continue learning more skills at SSCC. They were very happy with significant positive changes happening for them but also sad about some negative opinions expressed by family and public regarding their certificate programmes. In the individually administered questionnaires students were affirmative in their comments.

HLCC: The students

Hulu Langat Community College had six students participate in data collection procedures. The four male and two female students (S1-HLCC to S6-HLCC) were enrolled in three different programmes, as shown in table 5.3. All were aged 19 and had just completed high school, and they were learning some skills that could support their next goal. S1-HLCC and S2-HLCC were enrolled in a computer applications course. They aimed to continue at a polytechnic, also in a computer programme, using the community college certificate as a foundation. HLCC was the pathway to continue to the next level for them. Another two students, S3-HLCC and S4-HLCC, were taking HLCC's best-known programme, Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Technology. S4-HLCC particularly wanted to

specialise in servicing car air-conditioning systems. During weekends, the students worked in the car workshop setting of HLCC to practise their skills and gain some entrepreneurial knowledge. S5-HLCC, a Chinese student, was taking a popular programme, accounting. He was happy to study at HLCC because the fees were lower than at private colleges. S6-HLCC, a female Malay student, hoped to succeed in an accounting course that was feared by many of her friends. S5-HLCC and S6-HLCC also wanted to seek an opportunity to study at a polytechnic via the College.

During the focus group discussion, the six lively students were keenly focussed on achieving their next goal through a foundation at HLCC. They seemed well aware that the function of community colleges was to help them to continue their education. As their high school results had not made them eligible to go to polytechnics, they were trying the community college route. They were confident that they could find a job as a result of their exposure to practical knowledge at real work sites. In their individually administered questionnaires their opinions did not vary much from those expressed in the discussion.

TCC: The students

Six students from Temerloh Community College participated in the data collection procedures. Four male and two female students (S1-TCC to S6-TCC) studied four different programmes, as shown in table 5.4. The five high school leavers were already aged 20 and 21 and one was a mature student aged 24. S1-TCC and S4-TCC studied building maintenance skills. S1-TCC, the only Indian student in the group, wanted to continue his father's business more professionally. S4-TCC aspired to explore a new business area by knowing the skills in depth, and S5-TCC and S6-TCC were students in the computer software classes. S5-TCC was not a local student but he was at TCC because the programme of his choice was available there. He also preferred to study away from his hometown, as he wanted to gain new experience. S5-TCC and S6-TCC hoped computer knowledge would help them to fit into any employment. S2-TCC was a furniture carver so he had decided to learn furniture design and manufacturing skills and planned to help his parents who were already in the wood carving business. S3-TCC studied fashion and clothing and she aspired to open her own boutique, like

other senior students of TCC. She believed that tailoring skills could make her independent in life.

The focus group discussion made it clear that the six students had explored the world before deciding to enrol in a programme at TCC. They were very firm in their opinions and appreciated that attaining the skills and having the certificates that would broaden their options in the labour market. They also considered that community colleges were not only for them but also for communities living in that area. In the individually administered questionnaires, they expressed their gratitude for their teachers' efforts in helping them to be successful.

The next section provides a brief summary of this chapter.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a perspective on the governing features of MCCs and the descriptive findings of the four case studies. This investigation has looked into the context of each case study to better comprehend the actual situation of each site and the effects of that situation as they relate to this study.

The study investigated four case studies located at four different places in three different states in Malaysia. I visited the four case sites in the order of SCC, SSCC, HLCC and TCC. They represented 5 % of the 90 Malaysian Community Colleges. The four cases were carefully selected informed by four criteria: courses, directors, campus, and region; these identifiers were common features in all 90 colleges (DCCE, 2013). All four were located in West Malaysia; three of the cases in the western region and one in the eastern. SCC and HLCC were in the same state, Selangor, and they were both in new township areas. SSCC was established in a remote area to serve mainly the people working in oil palm plantations and the surrounding community. TCC was covering a large parliamentary area and had difficulty accommodating its many full-time students, as there was no hostel facility.

The participants from each case were the directors and two small groups (each comprising approximately six participants) of teachers and students. I met them personally at the sites after contacting them over the phone for the first visit at least two subsequent visits. The director of each case site was an essential

participant, and respective directors selected the teachers and students. Directors were involved in interviews and teachers and students in two separate groups took part in focus group discussions and then individually administered questionnaires.

The directors, all in their 50s, were former polytechnic teachers or schoolteachers who were promoted to the position around 2003 and later. Of the four directors, three were female, out of 19 female directors' altogether nationally. Teachers were promoted to positions as directors from polytechnics and schools to hold teaching positions in the new community colleges. Several new graduates with the skills needed for the Colleges had been posted directly.

The 24 teachers who participated in this study made up a small proportion (only 1%) of the total 2,597 community college teachers in Malaysia (DCCE, 2013). Hence, there is a need for caution in interpreting their experiences and views. All the directors and teachers were public employees under the Education Service Commission.

The students of the community colleges were of two main groups: full-time students and lifelong learners. Full-time students were high school leavers and lifelong learners were short-course participants. In 2012, there were 12,328 full-time students and 206,562 lifelong learners in all 90 community colleges in Malaysia (DCCE, 2013). In this study, I was able to meet only full-time students as the Colleges could contact them more readily. However, the directors, teachers and student participants all referred to short-course students.

The next three chapters discuss the results of this study. Chapter 6 is particularly focussed on the goals of community colleges within Malaysian higher education.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: GOALS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and build knowledge about community colleges as new phenomenon within Malaysian higher education in the context of lifelong learning. It has focussed here on how community colleges might be relevant to the higher education and Malaysian society in terms of their goals and achievements. It also has identified the challenges for MCCs as newcomers in the system.

All findings and discussion of this study have been organised in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, which look in turn at the three elements: goals, achievements, and challenges in the context of lifelong learning. As outlined in Chapters 4 and 5, data were collected from the sub-populations (directors, teachers, and students) and analysed using thematic analysis to develop the findings. Throughout all three chapters, the relevant findings have been organised under four latent themes of lifelong learning, the four fundamental domains – economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Finsden & Formosa, 2011) – for a broader discussion and understanding of this study.

In the Malaysian context, lifelong learning at a global level has positively influenced the development of the community colleges. The exploration of these institutional newcomers to higher education has located the findings on their goals, achievements and challenges, in this broader lifelong learning framework in an interrelated and permeable manner. This approach provides new insights into the higher education development especially in servicing the disadvantaged in the society. In many respects, social inclusion may have emerged, as a strong theme as the colleges' mission is seemingly to help the most vulnerable “at-risk” with educational opportunities as identified in Chapter 2. They are negatively affected by the subsequent higher education developments influenced by global market principles: human capital, globalisation and neoliberalism and a knowledge economy since its independence in 1957. Lifelong learning as the contemporary development in the higher education tends to have paved a new way to help the

disadvantaged through the community colleges and this is the focus of examination in the following three chapters. Figure 6.1 illustrates a connection among the three elements: goals, achievements and challenges with the four domains of lifelong learning in Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs).

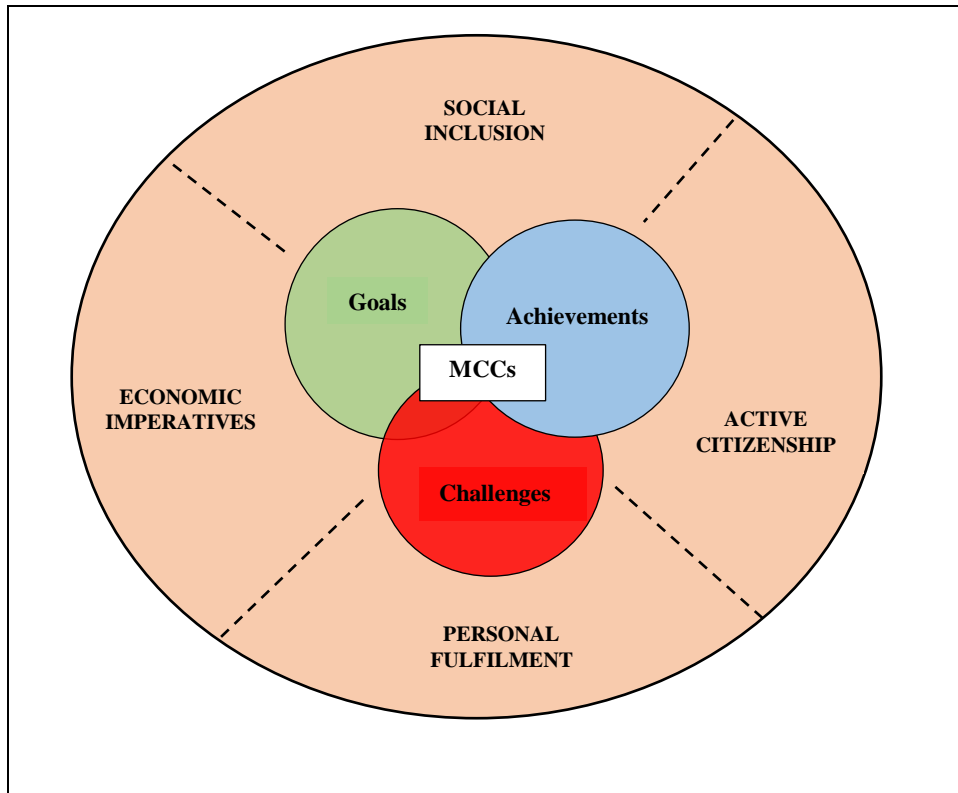


Figure 6.1. Lifelong Learning and Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs)

All three chapters address the overarching research question: What are the goals, achievements and the challenges of community colleges within Malaysian higher education and how are they related to the context of lifelong learning? It has been difficult to disentangle these three different perspectives (goals, achievements, challenges) but each of the following chapters emphasizes each element in turn to answer three subsidiary research questions:

1. What are the goals of community colleges within Malaysian higher education?
2. What are the achievements of community colleges within Malaysian higher education?
3. What are the challenges facing community colleges within Malaysian higher education?

As a note, the three chapters demonstrate all quotes from participants in an indented form. For teachers and students, an abbreviation of the actual name of the four community colleges (SCC, SSCC, HLCC, and TCC) has been hyphenated with T (teacher) or S (student) to identify them, and parentheses with FGD (focus group discussion) or IAQ (individually administered questionnaire) to indicate the two types of datasets involving them. For example, S2-TCC (FGD) reads as *the second student of Temerloh Community College from a focus group discussion*. As for the directors, I have used, as an example, D-SCC to read as *the director of Selayang Community College*.

In this chapter, five sections present the findings on the goals and address the first research question: What are goals of community colleges within Malaysian higher education? The first section describes goals that have a contribution to Malaysia's economy. The second section highlights two broader groups who become students at MCCs as two action goals. The third section explores goals with a social responsibility role to cultivate active citizenship values to the community of MCCs. The fourth section illustrates goals having the capacity to develop values of personal fulfilment for learners at MCCs. The final section provides a brief summary of this chapter.

The following provides a brief description of the findings on goals that have been grouped under the four aspects of lifelong learning as shown in table 6.1.

Table 6.1. *Malaysian Community Colleges and their goals*

Lifelong Learning Aspects	Findings
Economic Imperatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be a hub for lifelong learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting diverse learners 2. To provide qualification programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal education • An alternative pathway • Local industry skills • Using hands-on methods
Social Inclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To serve local communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term “community” • A hospitable college 4. To help the “left-out” students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the “left-out” students?
Active Citizenship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To be actors in the Corporate Social Responsibility programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers as “social actors” • Service learning for students 6. To establish support from local employers
Personal Fulfilment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. To provide a non-credit programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-formal education • Short courses as a conduit to lifelong learning 8. To provide a “second chance” education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity to achieve personal ambitions • Towards creating self-directed learners

Table 6.1 presents eight scenarios of findings describing the goals of MCCs. Each of the four aspects of lifelong learning has two goals. All the eight goals strongly connect to the aim of three important national mission statements: the Tenth Malaysia Plan, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), and the Department of Community Colleges Education (DCCE) and the central goals of the MOHE and the DCCE (see section 5.1). Lifelong learning appears to be the defining goal given that it also has been emphasised in all the three national mission statements (DCCE, 2012; Economic Planning Unit, 2011; MOHE, 2011b). One more goal for economic imperatives is to provide qualification programmes as formal education. This goal fulfils the function of MCCs as one of national vocational and technical education providers (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). The third and fourth goals have a connection to the social inclusion function where the “left-out” local communities are strongly identified as the two broader groups in most need of educational access. The fifth and sixth goals illustrate teachers, students and

employers social responsibility roles that are also cultivating active citizenship values in them. The final two goals demonstrate two types of programmes, non-formal and formal, with individual capacities to facilitate awareness in learners about their aspirations and personal development.

The following four sections examine the findings on eight goals of this study within the context of the central goals of the MOHE and the DCCE as noted in Chapter 5 and discuss them linked to pertinent literature. For a start, the following section looks at two goals that could benefit Malaysia's economy.

6.2 Goals: Economic Imperatives

This section presents findings of the first aspect of lifelong learning, economic imperatives with two goals: to be a hub for lifelong learning and to provide qualification programmes.

Economic imperatives demand the exploitation of human capital from a full range of people from professional and skill levels to participate in economic activities to support economic growth (Becker, 1993; Schultz, 1981; Smith, 1910). In this preparation, educational institutions from school to higher education become central to structure society in accordance with economic demands (Eade, 1997; Fitzsimons, 2017; Marginson, 1995) that also formal education/vertical integration in lifelong learning dimension (Bhola, 2006; Boshier, 2006; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Livingstone, 2002). Globalisation, neoliberalism principles, the knowledge economy, and their impact increasingly have changed people's behaviour expecting better educational access, especially in higher education for better economic participation (Ferguson & Mansbach, 2012; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Peters & Besley, 2006) and at the same time such rapid growth has also affected adversely certain sectors of people with minimal education (Brown, 2001; Illeris, 2006). To cope with growing educational demands, polytechnics started to emerge in the mid-1960s in many national systems (Barnett, 1996; Selvaratnam, 1986) and in the early 2000s community colleges may have been intended primarily to help the disadvantaged especially in Southeast Asia (Raby, 2009; World Bank, 2003). In this expansion, community colleges can be celebrated as capable of fostering more people with significant learning opportunities through

horizontal integration of lifelong learning (both formal and non-formal education) (Boshier, 2006; Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Wain, 2004; World Bank, 2003).

Following the global trend, Malaysia has significantly modernised a substantial segment of its population since independence through changes in plans and practices that emphasise mostly public higher education institutions (Economic Planning Unit, 2011, 2016b). Beginning from 2001, MCCs appeared as a new set of public institution focussing on local (rural) communities' educational opportunities (DCCE, 2012; Economic Planning Unit, 2001a; MOHE, 2011b). From 2011 onwards, lifelong learning took shape in the higher education policies and practices and facilitated new type of higher education for more people regardless of age, gender, and qualifications (MOHE, 2011a, 2011b). In this new learning domain, MCCs became a hub for lifelong learning for local communities as stated in the Vision Statement:

To champion Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and become a hub for lifelong learning. (DCCE, 2012, p. 5)

With this introduction, the next subsection looks at the defining goal of MCCs overall practices, to be a hub for lifelong learning.

6.2.1 To be a hub for lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is recognised as the third pillar of human capital development after school and higher education in Malaysia (MOHE, 2011a). Therefore, the phrase “Community college is a hub for lifelong learning” did not pose any surprise for all four directors and the teachers in this study. A director spoke at some length about the idea of implementing lifelong learning at MCCs:

In my opinion, community colleges are unique compared to other institutions. Others only concentrate on full-time education whereas we provide not only full-time programmes but we also concentrate on lifelong learning. I feel this combination is unique. Lifelong learning, here, means providing education to all, not only school students but also everyone, all those people living surrounding this College. People can come here to learn whatever they want, whatever skills and knowledge they want. (D-SSCC)

The director identified lifelong learning as a backdrop to the learning happening in local communities. With lifelong learning, he was confident MCCs could reach every level of local communities. The director's confidence is consistent with a statement in the Delors Report that suggests lifelong learning potentially could help more people to learn through a continuous learning engagement (Delors, 1996). This international trend of greater recognition of the importance of lifelong learning gained credence when the MOHE inaugurated the Enculturation of Lifelong Learning in 2011 (MOHE, 2011a). Lifelong learning started to provide support to all types of learning occurrences "formal educational institutions, non-formal experiences and informal self-initiated activities" in Malaysia (MOHE, 2011a, p. 5). This announcement made MCCs as one of the hubs for lifelong learning, especially for those learners emerging from local communities with a less established education background (DCCE, 2012, 2013) consistent with the three overarching mission statements (see subsection 5.1). The trend of lifelong learning becoming a defining feature of MCCs also reflects a similarity to other community colleges in Southeast Asia for example Taiwan, Thailand and Hong Kong (Chen & Wang, 2009; Punthumasen & Maki, 2009; Wong, 2015).

Recruiting diverse learners: As lifelong learning by definition implies continuing learning opportunities regardless of age and position, MCCs are positioned well to take any types of learners emerging from local communities. The head of the Lifelong Learning Department of SSCC commented this:

Lifelong learning is not only for students but also for all levels of community immaterial of age, even if you are old, you can learn something from this college. (T1-SSCC [FGD])

Another head of the same department spoke of her experience serving both students and community members:

Our working time on weekdays is for students and during the weekends, we have to teach courses following a demand that comes from local people and the Government agencies. (T5-HLCC [FGD])

The two heads shared their experience of managing different groups of learners coming from local communities who may represent any age, gender, or position. The "students" in particular, emphasized by the head teachers, are high school

leavers becoming full-time students at MCCs. Helping this group of students is the priority goal of both the MOHE and the DCCE. They listed this service as the first (see subsection 5.2.1) and noted the service as to be “expanding access” and becoming an “alternative pathway” for the students. The goal to help young people (the problematic group) with new educational routes is one of the central aims of institutions similar to MCCs in Britain and America (Bonham, 2005; Boone, 1997; Parry, 2005; Raby, 2009; Vaughan, 2000). These young people, together with mature-aged adult learners from local communities, are the target students (the disadvantaged sectors of local communities) of MCCs. In the American system, such service has been observed as *community education* and *community service* as two general routes to educate communities (Myran, 1978; Vaughan, 1997). In lifelong learning, they are identified as *formal education* and *informal education* (Boshier, 2006; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Formosa, 2016). Here, the students may be taking the community education/formal education route and the mature-aged adult learners the community service/informal education. Thus, these two routes are providing “better educational opportunities for low-income groups and disadvantaged students” as a goal of the World Bank (2003, p. 3) for community colleges in Southeast Asia. The two broader groups of learners will be examined under the social inclusion aspect in the next section.

In the following, I discuss the goal to provide qualification programmes that is demonstrating MCCs as a formal education provider within the higher education system.

6.2.2 To provide qualification programmes

Formal education: Formal education is a lifelong learning dimension that can be defined as a systematic process of knowledge gained using planned and developed curricula in an institutional setting (Boshier, 2006; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Formosa, 2016; Livingstone, 2002). In this way, MCCs are becoming a technical and vocational education provider at a level lower than polytechnics akin to the further education colleges in Britain (Idris, 2011; Parry, 2005). Accordingly, in Malaysia, around 40 % of high school leavers (of poor results) are the target group for MCCs in the full-time programmes (Idris, 2011, p. 120) that often described to be “jobs specific training for young school leavers”(OECD, 2014, p.

11). Malaysia aspires to produce skilled semi-professional graduates having certificates and diplomas from its polytechnics, community colleges and some private skill training institutes for its growing industries (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). As a matter of fact, the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) through its Eleventh Malaysia Plan has already in the track to create around 1.3 million new jobs at five new economic zones in which 60 % require graduates of industrial and business related skills (Economic Planning Unit, 2016a). In this attempt, Malaysia may be developing a way to make every service industry to be required to have qualified skilled young workers and establishing an innovative approach to increase human capital especially from disadvantaged young people for the knowledge economy (OECD, 2014; Schultz, 1981; World Bank, 2003). To achieve the goal, MCCs offer two types of qualification programmes as formal education, the continuous (full-time) and the modular, catering for young people and working people respectively (see subsection 5.2.4).

In support of the full-time programmes, the SSCC director explained about the courses available in his College:

Our College has four certificate courses, a two-year programme that is inclusive of an industrial training. The courses are full-time programmes catering for regular school students. All the programmes come from the headquarters [DCCE] and have an accreditation of MQA [Malaysian Qualification Agency]. (D-SSCC)

This director has clarified that the full-time programmes in MCCs are accredited courses at certificate and diploma levels by the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA). The programmes also come with industrial training as a special preparation for the high school leavers. In this way, MCCs also could remain as a formal higher education institution within the system. The following findings describe MCCs as being an alternative pathway for the students.

An alternative pathway: T4-TCC confirmed that MCCs are an alternative pathway for students with less desirable high school results:

It is a pathway for those who failed SPM. According to the statistics, every year there is a mixed output of SPM leavers. For example, if there are

50,000 SPM leavers in a year those who enter higher learning institutions are not many so where the rest would go becomes a query. Probably, community colleges can help those students to continue studying. (T4-TCC)

This teacher confirmed that a task of MCCs is to take in “unsuccessful students” to a higher study programme and this reinforces the priority goal as an alternative pathway for high school students (DCCE, 2012). As an alternative pathway MCCs are becoming a new route for the students where they can continue to a higher degree or find a job with their qualifications (Dougherty, 2002; Handel, 2007) that will be discussed further in Chapter 7. By including MCCs, Malaysian higher education also has acknowledged the recommendation of the World Bank (2003) where countries must have “institutional differentiation to accommodate diverse and growing demands of tertiary enrolment” (p. 48).

Since, MCCs are a target for students presenting with academic issues, they are designed to help the students with a modification in the course content and the pedagogy that emphasises industrial training and hands-on methods.

Local industry skills: Course content encompassing local industry skills are believed to be able to connect better to the students’ with talent (Leary, 2012; OECD, 2014; Russell, 2011). D-TCC expounded on this connection in detail by referring to several MCCs in the eastern region of Malaysia:

Let us start with the Rompin Community College from the south. In Rompin, we work with the fishery industry and fishermen there. We are training students to use solar technology to help fishermen to detect fish in the sea. When we ascend to Pekan, the Pekan Community College has an automotive programme that fits nicely into the automotive industry there. If we further scale up to Kuala Terengganu, a city known for batik industry, the college over there offers a batik course. If we go to Besut, the petroleum town, there are courses related to petroleum technology at the Besut Community College. Of course, it is not 100% perfect; however, it can help to achieve the nation’s vision to be a developed nation by 2020. (D-TCC)

This particular director had eight years working experience in three different colleges all in the eastern region. The experience enabled the director to explain to me very clearly the connection between a dominant industry in an area with a course related to the industry and a MCC. This may also explain the initiation of the Tenth Plan to create 1.3 million jobs as mentioned earlier. Such a close link of curricula to industries is also meeting the direct market needs as in the further education colleges in Britain (Parry, 2005). Moreover, such industrial connection, according to Dougherty (2002) and Goho and Rew (2009) can establish an access to continuing education for many mature students who are already in working position. Goho and Rew (2009) described that the corporative education model of the Canadian community colleges can create a reverse partnership between industries and community colleges, helping young people to continue working while studying with the concern of their employers. This effort may represent the fifth goal of the MOHE and the third goal of the DCCE which emphasises the creation of collaboration with local industry to train local employees (see subsection 5.2.1).

As an evidence of the effectiveness of course content based-on industry skills in Malaysia, a study by Kamin et al. (2010) asserted that young people always prefer to learn a course that could link them to available jobs in their vicinity. A teacher had an additional example for this case:

Students usually will be very observant of jobs around them. Like here, many boys like to hang around the car workshops and car-wiring yards because they like to see the people working there. When we offer such courses here [SSCC] and further at cheaper fees, they will grab the opportunity immediately. This is the reason why every semester we have full enrolment for these two courses. (T5-SSCC [FGD])

This teacher was observant of a common characteristic among local youths in his College area. The youths pay a lot of attention to certain jobs that interest them in their neighbourhood. The automotive teacher became aware of the trend when many youths of that group enrolled in his programmes. This example may also illustrate how the MCCs' courses are able to suit local young people's interest. Meanwhile, Kamin et al. (2010) also found that the national automotive industry

prefer local youths to work in their industry. This may be consistent with the pre-employment occupational training as noted by Dougherty (2002) that is helping high school students from poor background to learn industry skills of their interest and to work in the industry for a better salary. Apart from the content are made to suit students' levels, the teaching is also adjusted to industry standard.

Using hands-on methods: The use of hands-on methods can make “weaker” students learning easier (Abd Rahman et al., 2015; DCCE, 2012). Most of the teachers who participated in this study agreed that hands-on methods are able to help their students to learn better. T2- SCC explained:

Skill training courses here actually help the weak students who were not good in school. The courses use hands-on skills to make the learning easier for the students. The skill courses are mainly of technical skills of the TVET. The courses focus less academically and more on hands-on activities. (T2-SCC)

Hands-on teaching method has proven to be useful to the students learning as how the Government wanted it to be used as an approach in the community colleges when they were introduced: “provide hands-on training for school drop-outs, and school leavers” (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a, p. 113). This method is making learning less complicated for students as the learning concentrates more on practical experience rather than academic that is frequently not attractive to many students after their troublesome school life (OECD, 2014). Hands-on methods can also build a strong foundation before they transfer to a higher degree (Grubb, 2006). In reality, the students' learning in MCCs covers at a 75:25 ratio of practical to theory with hands-on training taking precedence over theoretical (Idris, 2011, p. 125). The example highlights how hands-on methods are helping students to learn at MCCs and this may help the students to retain in the programmes up to their completion. Retaining and making students in community colleges to complete their study has been argued as a challenge of the American colleges (Zeidenberg, 2008) and MCCs probably using a practical learning approach to solve the issue.

Students too agreed that a more hands-on style of engagement to be encouraging them to learn in MCCs. Four students:

I like community college because I like to do many practical activities. I like to do something about skill. (S1-SCC [IAQ])

I do not like to sit much in the classroom but I like practical. I like to learn skills by practising them. Because for me, theory is boring, it can make me forget fast. (S5-SSCC [IAQ])

I chose this community college because I like to learn skills. The style of learning here is very different. (S5-TCC [IAQ])

I chose this college because I will have a better job opportunity after learning skills techniques, here. (S2-SCC [IAQ])

These students had their own reasons to be a student in MCCs but they were particularly delighted over a common approach, the teaching method, probably a new experience for them from school. Hands-on methods can allow young people to make a quick connection to work through a skill programme that Russell (2011) notes as a path to future skilled jobs. In these examples, the four students excitement and confidence may have been caused by hands-on methods and their six months industrial training at real sites (DCCE, 2012). Therefore, all the three skill development elements: suitable local industry skills, hands-on methods, and industrial training are becoming the pulling factors for students at MCCs.

This section illustrates that lifelong learning is the underpinning goal and reason for MCCs to function as educational institutions for a diversified group of people within local communities. There is a particular interest to educate the disoriented students because of poorer high school results and geographical isolation. To accommodate the students, the course content and pedagogy is being modified to act as pulling factors for them to pursue education at MCCs. The next section continues to examine the two feeder communities – mature-adult learners and young people (high school leavers)—who are the principal students in MCCs from local communities.

6.3 Goals: Social Inclusion

This section presents findings of the second aspect of lifelong learning, social inclusion, strongly influencing the direction of Malaysian Community Colleges. Two action goals emerged consistent with this aspect: to serve local communities, and to serve “left-out” students.

Social inclusion in line with economic imperatives is often promoted by governments: to include “the disadvantaged” through educational opportunities and to increase their economic participation (Findsen & Formosa, 2011; OECD, 2014; Silver, 2015; World Bank, 2013) and in another term is *widening participation* (Bhola, 2006; Preece, 2006). As Findsen and Formosa (2011) assert, social inclusion is a “polite version for social exclusion” (p. 47), the term social inclusion is avoided in an explicit way. It may also becoming compatible with today’s education practices and policies all for economic betterment. At the same time, governments leaving the disadvantaged unattended also can be costly: they may be hampered from further sustainable growth dealing with other unfavourable social developments (Silver, 2015).

In 2015, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak’s, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, inaugurated the Eleventh Malaysia Plan and concluded as follows:

In short, we want everyone to attain prosperity and success. No one will feel left out or side-lined. It doesn’t matter whether they are farmers in the fields, fishermen, blue and white-collar workers, corporate figures, or intellectuals (*The Star*, 2015, p. 10).

This statement of the Premier clearly showed the Government’s accountability to all people of Malaysia but with a focus on the most disadvantaged in terms of access and participation in the social and economic developments. Social inclusion in Malaysian context has been defined as follows:

Inclusivity is a key principle in Malaysia’s national socio-economic development agenda, to ensure all citizens enjoy the fruits of growth and development regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and geographic location (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c, p. 1).

For the current five years Plan (2016-2020), the Government identified the most disadvantaged groups (B40 households, youth, women, rural communities, the elderly and people with disabilities) as those who have to be given extra care if the nation is to achieve stable economic development (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c). The Plan's suggestion is to maximise the usage of higher education institutions and skill training institutes in broadening educational access to more diverse group of people as a belief of the World Bank (2013), education is of vital importance to improving social inclusion. In this extended plan, MCCs are helping geographically isolated local (rural) communities with educational opportunities as suggested by Hatta and Ali (2013) for preparing disadvantaged people for a knowledge economy.

The following illustrates the two broader groups of MCCs' students who are part of communities in geographically excluded areas in Malaysia.

6.3.1 To serve local communities

The term “community”: The word *community* in “Malaysian Community College” has a link to local communities. Both the MOHE and the DCCE have identified “to serve local communities” as their second goal (see subsection 5.2.1) with intention to improve their quality of life. All four directors and teachers in the study agreed that MCCs are colleges closely affiliated with local communities. D-HLCC said:

Of course, the term “community” has significance to the name community college and I believe it is the community related to a college. Community colleges mostly serve people living in particular rural locations. That is why the colleges have names as such Hulu Langat Community College, Sabak Bernam Community College, and Shah Alam Community College. The names actually signify the place of service of each community college. If possible, we also have to serve the indigenous people living in that area. This is why we are “community colleges”. (D-HLCC)

This director in particular has broadened her service extensively to most neighbouring local communities to her College area. The director explained that a place name tagged along with the label of a *community college* is the service area of that particular community college in Malaysia. It also pointed to a selected

geographical location for the community colleges to serve (Boone, 1997; Vaughan, 2000). Accordingly, for the Hulu Langat Community College (HLCC) the serving community lives in the district of Hulu Langat or in other words, Hulu Langat is the service area of Hulu Langat Community College. The service area is also a selected parliamentary constituency in Malaysia as explained T3-SSCC:

This community college serves the local communities of this parliament, the parliament area of Sungai Siput. (T3-SSCC [FGD])

This demonstrates that an action goal for MCCs is to serve the local communities. Those communities have to live in a chosen geographical location and a parliamentary constituency perhaps covering a less developed area or a geographically isolated location in Malaysia. As explored in Chapter 2, they may be the gradually excluded people from the mainstream society as they were not able to cope with rapid global market developments and now they may be facing new challenges of the knowledge economy. Table 6.2 illustrates data on number of constituents need to be served by every MCC's nationwide.

Table 6.2. *MCCs and the number of constituents in the service list*

State	Number of MCCs		Number of parliamentary constituencies	Number of constituents
	Main campus	Branch campus		
Perlis	1	-	3	43,876
Kedah	6	3	15	56,395
Pulau Pinang	3	3	13	62,195
Perak	8	5	24	55,605
Selangor	5	4	22	85,511
Negeri Sembilan	4	-	8	61,769
Melaka	4	2	6	60,614
Johor	7	5	26	60,928
Pahang	7	3	14	52,310
Terengganu	1	2	8	93,174
Kelantan	1	2	14	68,057
Sarawak	3	3	31	41,694
Sabah	3	5	25	41,366
Wilayah Persekutuan	-	-	12	67,321
	53	37	222	850,815

Sources: Department of Community Colleges Education (DCCE, 2013, 2014) and Department of Statistics Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016)

Of the 14 states, MCCs are located in all 13 states except Wilayah Persekutuan which is considered a developed area in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). The total number of colleges is also distributed according to the

selected parliamentary constituencies in each state, probably in consideration of a particular geographical location. As shown in table 6.1, there were 90 community colleges divided into 53 main and 37 branch campuses across 210 parliamentary constituencies excluding the 12 in Wilayah Persekutuan at the end of 2014 (DCCE, 2014). In the same year, the colleges were serving around 850,815 constituents and each with an average of 65,447. This shows that there is a possibility of more community colleges to emerge in other less developed constituencies in the future.

MCCs geographical location shows a detachment from urban centres in Malaysia. This may explain why the local (rural) communities are considered important to the Colleges. In American community colleges, such positioning is understood as a deliberate purpose, to be of service to the community (Vaughan, 2000) and “to serve as centres for community development” (Myran, 1978, p. 4). Boone (1997) interpreted to be “people’s colleges” that “stay within community and help the community to grow” (p. 2). In short, an ultimate goal of community colleges is to serve their communities and perhaps in lifelong learning language to be creating a learning society (Delors, 1996). In this way, MCCs are also widening access to the most disadvantaged people who absolutely need an education service in order to be relevant to rapid changing circumstances (Bholra, 2006; Grubb et al., 2003; Preece, 2006).

In the following, I explain how MCCs are making themselves attractive to local communities who often shy away from college level education.

A hospitable college: One director wanted the local people to treat MCCs as their home. D-SCC explained.

Community colleges have a role as a service provider to their communities. Here, we allow more local communities to come and learn whatever they like. This college is like their “home”. They are free to learn whatever they want in this “home”. We are open and flexible. We are committed to provide our services for students and workers here. (D-SCC)

Selayang Community College (SCC) is well known for many Excellency Awards as rewards for their excellent service to local communities. One of the excellent

methods may be, as the director described here to allow local people to treat the College as their home. In this way, the director tended to create a strong sense of ownership from the local people. This action Vaughan (2000) states as a practice of developing a “unique culture” with the contributing communities (p. 2). Additionally, Boone (1997) described that such hospitality is to create an intertwined relationship with community, in his words “embedded in the fabric of its community” (p. 3). This hospitable relationship may also suggest a struggle of MCCs as being a newcomer within the higher education system. Therefore, the terms “open” and “flexible” are added as more ways to invite more participation. D-SCC extended those terms:

It is not only for students but also “open” for everybody. All can come here to get whatever knowledge they want, also whatever skills. We are very “flexible”. (D-SCC)

“Open and flexible” may be the touted characteristic attitudes adapted from the American community colleges that largely operate following ‘open access’ policy (Vaughan, 2000). The policy has been employed in the American colleges as a “corridor” of easy access for those not having a college level entry qualification and age to continue education. In Malaysia, “open and flexible” characteristics are as stated in the DCCE’s document:

“Open” means an access to a programme by anyone at a community college regardless of academic achievement, gender, age or job, while “flexible” means having a flexibility in course preparation, time, course duration and course fees (DCCE, 2012, p. 4).

Following the DCCE statement, one student’s comment was illustrative of the term “open” as meaning no restriction to age requirement:

Maybe community colleges do not bother about age, there are many already 26 years old, and are students here. (S4-SCC [FGD])

To explain the term “flexibility”, D-SSCC responded:

Community colleges are unique compared to other institutions because we only focus on people living in our area. We are unique. Our mission is

unique. We serve people living near our College. In fact, we create special programmes to serve the people. This is our unique culture. (D-SSCC)

Sungai Siput Community College is located in an area near to traditional villages. The director may be speaking out of his experience because of its potential students being physically and economically inactive as for their monotonous jobs and lifestyle (see subsection 5.3.2). Hence, the College has to modify and promote the programmes especially short courses to fit their interest, as short courses are non-formal/non-credit programmes for local communities as explored in section 6.4.

The above findings indicate that MCCs are intentionally placing themselves in selected geographical areas with readiness to provide a service to mature-aged adult learners in local communities; improving their ability and opportunity through lifelong learning provision (World Bank, 2013). Besides mature-aged adult learners, the young people as discussed in the next subsection are a privilege group for MCCs.

6.3.2 To help the “left-out” students

Who are the “left-out” students?: Helping students who are considered to be “left-out” is the priority goal of the MOHE and the DCCE as the goals are outlined in section 6.1. Here, the examination continues who could be the “left-out” students. The MOHE mentioned them generally as *secondary school leavers* but the DCCE specified them into two groups: *high school leavers* and the “left-out” students. However, at the college level they were only known as the “left-out” students. Almost all directors and teachers during interviews mentioned them as such. Upon an assumption, *secondary school leavers* and *high school leavers* may be those “left out” (disadvantaged) of the opportunity to access higher education because of rigid examination requirements meanwhile the *left-out* is clearly those “left out” of formal education for taking an early exit. As further investigation in Malaysian context, I examined statistics from the Ministry of Education.

In 2013, around 419,154 students aged 17 sat for the Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) examination (Ministry of Education, 2016). The Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) examination is a crucial high school examination that determines students’ next level of education: either to a upper secondary level,

a matriculation programme or a skill course (Ministry of Education, 2016). From those 419,154 students, 321,000 successfully enrolled into upper secondary education, matriculation and some skill courses, leaving behind around 98,154 students. The “residual” students might be those achieved less than average results and decided to discontinue education as not much choice left for them. These students could constitute the first set of students, the *secondary school leavers*, or the *high school leavers* mentioned. For the second set of “left-out” students, the following statistics may provide a partial answer.

Table 6.3. *Students who left mainstream schooling system in two key phases of transition.*

Level	2013	2014	2015	2016
Year 6 (Primary)	469 263	461 433	445 152	442 807
Form 1 (Lower secondary)	458 228 (<11 035)[2.35%]	452 550 (< 8 883)[1.92%]	434 231 (<10 921)[2.45%]	418 575 (< 24 232)[5.47%]
Form 4 (Upper Secondary)	439 919	421 896	403 047	416 730
Form 5 (Upper Secondary)	419 154 (< 20 765)[4.72]	416 067 (< 5 829)[1.38%]	393 550 (< 9 497) [2.35%]	393 315 (< 23 415)[5.62%]

Source: Quick facts 2016 (Ministry of Education, 2016)

As shown in the table 6.3, students tended to leave formal mainstream schooling in two key transitional phases in Malaysia. In the first transition, primary to lower secondary, an average of 3.05 % left over the four consecutive years. In the second transition, form 4 to form 5, another set of students left at an average of 3.51 % over the same years. As a combined result, 13,755 students left with primary education while 14,876 left without completing high school totalling to 28,631 students had dropped out of school education over the four years. This may indicate around 10 per cent of students are facing some form of difficulties to complete early formal education as Patel (2014) noted to be caused by three prominent reasons: “lack of interest in school, poor academic performance, and inability to afford school” (p. 9). MCCs do provide a “second chance” to these “residual” students to continue education. Such students in many community colleges are termed as “problematic students to enter university” (Bonham, 2005, p. 179); “graduates and non-graduates mostly from lower socio-economic society” (Grubb, 2006, p. 32); and “students from rural areas” (Punthumasen & Maki, 2009, p. 135). A clear note out of all these terms is that community colleges are helping a group of young people deprived of higher education opportunities. In some literature, these students are also termed to be “marginalised students”

(Bhola, 2006; Grubb et al., 2003; Preece, 2006). In this study I consider them to be the “left-out” students or “disadvantaged” of educational opportunities because of two circumstances: the very examination-oriented formal education and neo-liberal initiatives in higher education (Esa et al., 2009; Mohd Zain et al., 2017; Patel, 2014).

From two directors’ perspective the ‘left-out’ students were:

D-HLCC said:

They are the ones, I would say neither smart nor very smart. Maybe they had missed an opportunity to continue education. Maybe they were too playful during their school times. Maybe they were not able to see their future during school life. (D-HLCC)

D-TCC said:

They are mostly the children of the local people here. They pay a very low fee. They do not have to rent a house. They do not have to travel far. They can stay with their parents. They make their parents happy as they can do a study and at the same time help them. (D-TCC)

D-HLCC’s description could match the first set of students, those *secondary school leavers* and *high school leavers* who failed to achieve a good result to continue education. On the other hand, D-TCC felt her students were disadvantaged because of socio-economic issues. Perhaps, as evident in Patel (2014) study, these students eventually left school because it was too expensive; they frequently match the description of dropouts from the formal education.

From two teachers’ perspectives the ‘left-out’ students were:

T1-SCC said:

These students here have attitude problems that even cause them to have poor results in school and now they are the students here. (T1-SCC [FGD])

T3-TCC said:

I feel happy to have the opportunity to educate and train the “left-out” students with skills that can help them to succeed in life. (T3-TCC [IAQ])

T1-TCC had a negative opinion meanwhile T3-TCC was more positive about the “left-out” students. T1-TCC might have experienced students with “attitude problems” and T3-TCC seemed more compassionate, probably because her students were the ones facing socio-economic issues. Both the teachers probably noting their students are different from the regular higher education students. In addition, D-TCC emphasised that MCCs’ location is a benefit for poor students to continue education as they can help their parents with some extra household duties while studying; and this may be an international trend to locate community colleges in rural areas (Grubb, 2006; Punthumasen & Maki, 2009; Raby, 2009). The findings point out that full-time students in MCCs are educationally disadvantaged because of their negative attitudes during school, unsatisfactory high school results, socio-economic issues, and absence of nearby higher education institutions.

This section illustrates that parliamentary constituencies in less developed areas are considered to be the broader service areas of MCCs and every member living in the service areas is potentially one of their students. All the services will be further explored in the next chapter on the achievements of MCCs

In the first part of this chapter, the four goals reflected economic purposes and/or social inclusion goals. The next section explains two more goals emphasizing social responsibility roles for cultivating active citizenship values but in fact helping to reach more disadvantaged people in a service area.

6.4 Goals: Active Citizenship

This section presents findings of the third aspect of lifelong learning, active citizenship. I have found two goals in accord with this aspect: to be actors in the Corporate Social Responsibility programmes and to establish support of local industries.

Citizenship is not only about being a citizen and enjoying rights such as freedom to own a property, the right to vote, and to receive free education, but also involves participation with collective responsibility (Coare, 2003; Johnston, 2003). In this new outlook, it is imperative for every citizen to have the “knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values of a citizen to participate meaningfully in a

contemporary democracy” (Johnston (2003, p. 9). Modern democracy demands active participation of citizens in terms of actions and voices. In this sense, active citizenship is about “enabling people to participate more fully in the economic life of the community and country” out of self-awareness (Coare, 2003, p. 46). To raise this awareness, education may well be the main player.

Today active citizenship is increasingly important, as there is significant erosion for democratic processes in modern society (Fiume, 2009; Michel, 2015). For example in Malaysia, there was a news headline in a daily tabloid, The Star recently: “Former soldier charged with terrorism: student and another accomplice facing firearms and explosives charges” to make one wonder how such perilous elements easily influencing young minds (Habibu, 2017, p. 12). Building young people with strong moral and ethical values have been made necessary qualities to start from schools (Economic Planning Unit, 1991). However, this new style of involvement of a disproportionate number of the young people in deviant activities, often religious in nature, is worrying the nation’s leaders (Kaur, 2017; Michel, 2015). This incidence may be trigger a question on the value of built-in citizenship as Johnston (2003) argued instrumental patriotism such as saluting the flag and singing the national anthem weekly in school assembly is not applicable for a modern democracy. Fiume (2009) and Michel (2015) attribute such acts to the emergence of extremely individualistic lifestyle using digital devices. Therefore, taking students’ learning experience away into community lifestyle and their heritage may help the teachers as well as students to become a society with a sense of national identity (Chen & Wang, 2009; Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2010). MCCs are using the Corporate Social Responsibility programmes to serve their social responsibility that also meeting their active citizenship role.

The next subsection presents the first goal paving a way towards active citizenship.

6.4.1 To be actors in the Corporate Social Responsibility programmes

Active citizenship role was visible in data through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes where teachers and students participated to perform a curriculum requirement. In the CSR programmes, teachers use the community space to teach their students where both teachers and students can meet local people and get involved in their community activities. This goal is

noted as the third goal of the MOHE and the fourth goal of the DCCE (see subsection 5.2.1) related to fostering an entrepreneurial culture and to strengthen community relationship. As Williams (2014) observed, the CSR programmes involve “behaviours of business seeking to solve social problems in the wider society” (p. 5).

One director stressed the importance of the CSR programmes:

This is a community-based institution and it can only gain its strength by involving in all kinds of CSR programmes. (D-HLCC)

Another director said:

We have to do many CSR programmes that can help local communities with education and other social services. (D-TCC)

The CSR programmes create a direct connection for teachers, students, and local communities to meet and conduct activities together. The engagement of teachers and students in the programmes as actors is also noted to be a community service: an involvement in local community activities to provide and improve social skills of students (Myran, 1978). This relationship significantly is facilitating active citizenship values for teachers and students. The act of mobilising to meet more disadvantaged groups within local communities as suggested by Bhola (2006) may also resemble a strategy to promote MCCs to wider communities and introduce them to lifelong learning opportunities.

Teachers as “social actors”: Teachers contend with emerging educational needs of local communities through an adaptive role using the CSR programmes. One director noted with a sense of appreciation her teachers’ qualities:

For our community here, we ask them to take up short courses. We have various types of short courses specially arranged for them [members of the community]. These short courses are for everyone, even to those who are already 70 years old. Short courses could be for schoolchildren up to adults. The other day we had a junior chef course for young children. They learned how to make doughnuts. Our style of conducting these short courses is unique. We make the service very flexible so more people can join. (D-SCC)

Teachers tended to manoeuvre themselves skilfully in terms of time and tasks in order to help more local communities with educational opportunities. The director clarified that MCCs teachers do not have a fixed responsibility but always have to adjust to different learners needs from students of varied ages and backgrounds. The teachers are significantly contributing a “social service” to local communities that may demonstrate their social responsibility (Johnston, 2003). This extended practice of service learning can help more marginalised local communities to find an opportunity through lifelong learning (Bhola, 2006; Preece, 2006). In this service, teachers are using short courses as an educational instrument to connect with local communities and perform their professional tasks as responsible “social actors” within their domains (Coare, 2003). Short courses, a form of non-formal/non-credit education, will be explored in the next section on personal fulfilment.

Service learning for students: While teachers seemed to be obliged to involve students in community activities as part of their teaching duties, students considered it for an opportunity to mix with their surrounding community:

Here, in this College it is not only learning in the classroom but also getting an experience of doing programmes together with the community here. It is fun to work with them. For example, we do programmes together with the Youth Club and the Excursion Club here. (S2-SSCC [FGD])

This student very much enjoyed having a chance to work with the youth in the local communities. According to Fiume (2009) service learning is to establish a connection between student learning and civic engagement on academic matter. In this circumstance, teachers create an opportunity for students to socialise and develop their civic competences through community activities (Michel, 2015). On the other hand, the students are building their tolerance, communication skills and team work abilities important for active citizenship values (Fiume, 2009; Michel, 2015). Thus, service learning can allow students to acquire both cognitive and social values at the same time, unconsciously as the study Hoskins and Deakin Crick (2010) evident. By building such values important for work life while

studying, the students may be helped to engage more efficiently in their future undertakings.

Local employers as part of local communities exercise their social responsibility as explained next.

6.4.2 To establish support from local industry

Local industries provide external support through help with placement and employment for MCCs students. T2-HLCC explained:

We do not have much problem in placing students for industrial training. We do a tie-up with local industries over here. Most employers are happy to work with us. Through a report of previous year, we saw that around 95 % of the companies were happy with our students' performance. That is why many of our students have been absorbed into employment upon completion of their industrial training. (T2-HLCC)

This teacher was describing his students' required industrial training period of six months at an industrial site. For this to succeed, the Colleges have to work with local industries. The MOHE stated this as the fifth goal, collaborating with local industry and the DCCE saw as the third goal, to encourage local private employers to use the facilities (see subsection 5.2.1). In this scenario, certainly, a mutual understanding between MCCs and the local industries is important. For that to take place, teachers often communicate with suitable local employers and convince them to accept their students for practical attachment. In this way, the teachers and the employers are taking respective ownerships in preparing students in theoretical knowledge and work skills (Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2010). They argued that such engagement with students, can help the students to benefit positively from their teachers and encourage employers to take serious responsibility in training them into competent workers.

The findings above predominantly involve students learning outside the conventional context in community spaces and industrial sites as another way to educate the students in a more realistic manner. The CSR programmes are functioning as the curriculum expansion activities and their students' business behaviour is cultivating more effectively active citizenship values for those

involved. The next section describes two opportunities that can develop learners' awareness to appreciate learning.

6.5 Goals: Personal Fulfilment

This section presents findings of the fourth aspect of lifelong learning, personal fulfilment. I have found two goals closely aligned with this final aspect: to provide a non-credit education and to provide a "second chance".

Personal fulfilment is the fourth element in lifelong learning considered for this study with sentimental values (Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Raby, 2009). Raby (2009) asserted that community colleges can provide social mobility to the disadvantaged people through various educational opportunities. Personal growth focuses on individuals' achievement involving personal responsibility and self-directed learning (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). Nevertheless, adults' participation in education is sometimes connected to work life (Merriam et al., 2007) and changing personal aims throughout life (Saccomanno, 2017). Illeris (2003) identified educational engagement in a holistic sense involving cognitive, emotional, and social aspects. Ambition and personal aspirations are two interconnected elements motivating individuals to make a commitment to lifelong learning (Illeris, 2003).

Short courses function as non-credit programmes helping local communities to achieve their aspirations in life and enhance personal fulfilment.

6.5.1 To provide a non-credit programme

Non-formal education: Non-formal education consists of a degree of planned curriculum without sought-after credentials (Boshier, 2006; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Formosa, 2016). Short courses as a form of non-formal education range from plain to elaborated activities promising flexibility in terms of time, duration, age, qualification and participants (Boshier, 2006; Formosa, 2016). This flexibility may encourage many adults to initiate their own learning and achieve aspirations through self-evaluation of learning goals (Knowles, 1975). Malaysia has very diversified higher education institutions for its people to find their personal achievement through credit programmes but for the disadvantaged MCCs are emphasising non-formal/non-credit education for the function

(Economic Planning Unit, 2011). This role one teacher identified as the main direction of MCCs:

Community colleges have a task to improve the economy of their surrounding communities by educating them. (T1-HLCC [IAQ])

Short courses also function as non-formal education provision in the formal education environment at the Colleges. A full-time student observed this:

Usually, in the afternoons, we can see many outsiders using our spaces in this college. They come to attend short courses here, and they will be doing something of their interests. Community colleges never fail to give something to someone. They teach us [students], and give courses to communities. Uncles come here to learn to use computers, and aunts come here to learn to make cookies. Therefore, community colleges do serve our surrounding communities. (S2-TCC [FGD])

S2-TCC noticed the arrival of adult learners on his College campus, usually at odd times, to learn courses related to particular skills. Here, the younger students may be learning geared towards an upward career path and the mature-aged adults may be participating in educational activity for stimulation where both can encounter an opportunity for personal fulfilment (Jones & Symon, 2001). Usually short courses are scheduled at non-conventional times on purpose to create a conducive learning environment for adults who often engaged with other commitments in the working week (Illeris, 2003).

Short courses as a conduit to lifelong learning: Using 15 clusters of short courses (see subsection 5.2.4) MCCs are extensively creating a learning society for the local communities (Field, 2001; Wain, 2004). One student illustrated the position of short courses:

Short courses are for everyone, all people; anyone can come here and learn to make cake or to sew clothes or do anything. (S2-HLCC [FGD])

Short courses as lifelong learning programmes while addressing economic imperatives and social exclusion may also be paving way to achieve personal fulfilment for many people. In the MOHE and the DCCE, this goal is stated as to improve the quality of life of local communities (see subsection 5.2.1).

T1-TCC further elucidated that short courses can be adapted to serve more members within a local community:

The short courses, yes, are more relevant to community. When I newly joined the service in 2004, I knew that short courses are special; they are special for our communities here. They have more relevancies to the needs of local communities rather than the full-time courses. They are more to part-time programmes; there is no fixed time for participation. (T1-TCC [FGD])

T1-TCC was a member in the course development team when MCCs were still new in 2001. He strongly asserted that short courses should be comprehensive programmes for local communities and adaptable to more people as scholars have argued (Baker, 2013; Grubb et al., 2003; Vaughan, 2000). These courses are also changing to represent broader audiences in industries, universities, organisations or schools (Baker, 2013). Reflecting on Baker's observation, the findings found short courses to be relevant to the learning needs of varied groups and for different purposes.

An example of the alignment of short courses to locals' needs was the engagement of low-skilled workers from local Government departments and private sectors to learn computer skills. A teacher from the Unit of Multimedia shared his experience of teaching low-skilled workers:

I teach computer skills to those people who know nothing with basics and to those who know something with a newer version. (T5-TCC [FGD])

A teacher from the Department of Lifelong Learning said:

A goal of short courses is to build entrepreneurial skills in the participants, who are generally not interested in a serious kind of learning. (T5-HLCC [IAQ])

Two other teachers knew of university students also becoming participants. One said:

University graduates sometimes take up skill courses to refresh what they have learnt in a degree programme. (T3-HLCC [FGD])

In addition, the other commented:

Some will come to learn just for fun certain skills of interest such as baking. (T4-HLCC [FGD]).

All the above examples suggest that short courses in MCCs are not pre-occupied with one segment of the local population but relate to many interests and many groups.

The following explains MCCs help for wider communities in achieving their aspirations in life.

6.5.2 To provide a “second chance”

An opportunity to achieve personal ambition: Many of the students who participated in this study expressed their gratitude to study at the MCCs:

Our SPM results did not permit us to enter any other institutions, only community colleges want to take us in. Community colleges gave an opportunity to us. If there were no community colleges, what chances do we have to enter a polytechnic? Polytechnics definitely want a higher grade, so community colleges are the only pathway for us. (S6-TCC)

This student knew the only option to achieve her ambition was via study in MCCs. Other higher education institutions actually disappointed her and thus she was grateful to MCCs for having a study plan for her and others like her. S6-TCC wanted to continue to a polytechnic, as was perhaps the target of many students coming to MCCs. Two students remarked:

We can always go to polytechnics; polytechnics are like a big brother to community colleges. (S4-SSCC [FGD])

I chose a community college because it is a pathway for me to enter other higher education institutions such as polytechnics. (S4-HLCC [IAQ])

All three students had taken considerable “control over personal life circumstances” and deciding their “potential self-direction” as Brockett and Hiemstra (1991, p. 12) explain in relation to personal responsibility. They had found a new meaning in life as MCCs had given them fresh hope for continuing education and to move with their plan (Mezirow, 1997).

Emotionally distressed students may also find a “second chance” at MCCs. During the focus group discussion, many students strongly expressed their resentment against the rigid requirement of higher study programmes and were indeed pleased with MCCs to accept them. S4-SCC shared her experience:

Like me, I applied to many other institutions but I was not accepted, maybe my credits were not enough but when I inquired about the courses here with my results, they said I could straight register. (S4-SCC)

Another student said:

It is a hope for [me] to learn automotive skills and work in a national automotive service centre. (S4-SSCC [IAQ])

Several attempts to secure a place for a higher study programme might have caused the students to feel a lot of anxiety about their study. “Second chance” through the Colleges absolutely delighted them. They hoped a new social environment in the Colleges could support them change cognitively and socially (Illeris, 2003). As Illeris (2003) explains, positive personal changes may only develop in learners when they encounter emotional situations to strengthen their “mental energy, feelings and motivations” (p. 399). This change can prepare them for the next level of commitment. The students may go on to find a better connection to a higher degree or a good job and reach their personal goals.

Towards creating self-directed learners: Two contributory characteristics of MCCs are to provide a “second chance” and to build self-directed learners especially among mature-aged adults. The following three examples from three teachers describe different groups of lifelong learners emerging from local communities:

The army pensioners come here to learn. I feel they would be around 45 to 50 years old, and mostly would be married with kids. They will come here to learn fashion design. (T3-SCC [FGD])

Employers would send their workers for some upskilling courses available in this College. (T6-HLCC [FGD])

The demand for short courses mostly depends on the surrounding community; if there are more Government agencies, the demand will be more for professional knowledge such as IT. (T2-HLCC [FGD])

The three teachers had three different sets of students in mind. Their observations explained that MCCs students are neither a fixed group nor people with necessarily similar or anticipated learning needs and they may be following the changing trend of short courses suggested by Baker (2013). The army retiree was probably following a fashionable trend course in market to achieve his aspiration. The employees were probably learning a specific goal-oriented course to fulfil a work requirement. The public and private workers were probably learning computer course of multipurpose character to achieve a wish of sharing information with others digitally. All three sets of adult learners have shown an ownership for learning when adequate support received from MCCs (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991, p. 103) that may suggest a direction towards self-directed learners' attitude. In short, motives of self-directed learners can be multiple and changing as the above examples (Baumgartner, 2001; Knowles, 1975; Saccomanno, 2017).

The above findings indicate that two comprehensive programmes of MCCs are creating lifelong learning opportunities to meet diverse aspirations of adult learners and young people. Short courses with rich appealing packages are enticing more mature-aged adult learners to attempt learning for personal fulfilment while full-time programmes are helping young people to achieve their ambition by continuing education. With this exploration on the goals of MCCs, the next section provides a brief summary of this chapter.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented findings and discussion on goals of Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs), organised under the four domains of lifelong learning. The eight goals have demonstrated a strong connection to lifelong learning and vocational provision by emphasising community-based education as a special characteristic of this form of higher education in Malaysia. The goals allow for lifelong learning opportunities through community college education to those experiencing enduring challenges due to fast changing economic and social systems especially in the midst of Malaysia's transformation into a knowledge-

based economy. The Government has been taking proactive action to build a more integrated society that may have been overlooked in the turmoil of nation building since independence. The design of MCCs that is appropriately adopting lifelong learning ideas tends to be very much suitable to serve the country's purpose in the final lap to be a high income nation (Economic Planning Unit, 2016b). It also could be argued that Malaysian higher education has evolved through a struggle to form the first university from the British colonial rulers in 1930s to a position to educate its grassroots communities in the 2000s after almost seven decades of consistent planning. In this scenario, MCCs without much thought on profit making in the era of neoliberal initiatives, are conveniently locating themselves closer to the clientele whom most need their services have become gateways of personal development for economic and social benefits equally. These new institutions' ultimate goal is to serve the people of Malaysia who have been deprived of educational opportunities because of all sorts of issues encountered from past and present.

In this context, the goals have been designed in formal and non-formal education to suit MCCs learners who may constitute from one extreme to another – for example, young and old; instrumental and leisure skills; interested and non-interested; educated and non-educated; professionals and labourers. Therefore, MCCs are adapting their goals to fit the needs of diverse and varied types of learners. They are also attuning their pedagogy, curricula, approaches, and “customer” management to suit every type of learner. Generally, the goals have been developed to serve two broader groups of learners living in the selected parliamentary constituencies (rural communities) – young people (high school leavers with inadequate results to continue directly into further education) and mature-aged adults (with minimal/no formal education). The young people learn from formal qualification programmes in both formal (college) and informal settings (the community space and industrial sites) while the adults learn non-formal/non -credit programmes by using the facilities in formal setting (college). In this way, MCCs are helping to create a learning society using two key tracks of lifelong learning: vertical integration and horizontal integration (Boshier, 1998, 2006). As a matter of fact, the curricula are developed to directly focus on matters that closely match the demand for everyday skills, local traditional activities and

local industry's jobs with the intention to build lifelong learners related to skills that do not need a degree from university to practice or for higher academic qualifications to pursue. In this way, the task of fostering social inclusion in lifelong learning is being met for those participants who would struggle to learn unless a learning space is deemed attractive for them. By creating a learning space and skills-related programmes that can quickly be responsive, MCCs are becoming an affordable and accommodative educational institution for local communities and providing them with a "second chance" to fulfil their educational aspirations. Conclusively, the goals of MCCs are to enhance the prospects of the disadvantaged for attaining a knowledge economy and an inclusive society agenda for Malaysia all through lifelong learning.

With the findings on goals, the next chapter details their achievements.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: ACHIEVEMENTS

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore and build knowledge about community colleges as a new phenomenon through examining their goals, achievements, and challenges within Malaysian higher education in the context of lifelong learning. Chapter 6 presented findings and discussion about the goals of Malaysian Community Colleges and Chapter 7 continues on the second set, their achievements. Five sections describe this chapter and answer the second research question: What are the achievements of community colleges within Malaysian higher education. The first section illustrates findings that focus upon practices rewarding achievement of “left-out” students and working people related to economic purposes. The second section highlights achievements for the most disadvantaged people through lifelong learning opportunities. The third section describes findings related to values and norms of social responsibility to illustrate a sense of achievement towards active citizenship. The fourth section shares achievements with a sentimental value illustrating personal fulfilment. The final section presents a brief summary of this chapter.

In the following, an outline describes the main findings about achievements that were identified in data based on the goals in chapter 6. Table 7.1 shows Malaysian Community Colleges and their achievements in summary form.

Table 7.1. *Malaysian Community Colleges and their Achievements*

Lifelong learning aspects	Findings
Economic Imperatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A greater help for the “left-out” students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer pathway • Employment pathway • Entrepreneur pathway 2. Upskilling working adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small industry workers • Public sectors’ employees • Continuous support to graduates
Social Inclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. For people achieving financial independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex-servicemen prepare for post-retirement • Single mothers’ with everyday skills • Disabled students learn future work skills • Prison inmates and their facilitators 4. For citizens acquiring new knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older adults in computer classes • Low-skilled workers avoid structural unemployment
Active Citizenship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Social responsibility of teachers and students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping villagers • A disabled person saved his business • Voluntary service to flood victims • Learning real customer relationships 6. Social responsibility from teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital attendants learning English • Developing local young children • Collaboration with local industry
Personal Fulfilment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Non-formal education for personal development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An aspiration is achievable • Active ageing for older adults • All stay healthy 8. Formal education for personal fulfilment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public employee decided to enter business • A student satisfies a simple wish

Table 7.1 summarises the findings relevant to eight achievements distributed equally among four aspects of lifelong learning, two each with several examples. The first finding on economic imperatives explains three success pathways that are supporting the “left-out” students in full-time programmes and preparing them for future employments. Another finding describes an achievement for working people through upskilling programmes that are making them relevant to

workplace demands. These two achievements supported the goal to provide qualification programmes. Ensuring social inclusion incorporates two achievements significant to upgrading financial position and computer knowledge of the most disadvantaged people. These achievements matched well with the goal to serve local communities. The fifth and sixth findings suggest an achievement in the process of cultivating active citizenship through Corporate Social Responsibility programmes. The programmes concentrate on business behaviour to broaden access to community space and facilitate teachers' and students' social responsibility values. The final two findings describe a sense of achievement for personal fulfilment of students through their successful endeavour in non-formal and formal education.

The following section presents two findings on achievements that could help Malaysia's economy.

7.2 Achievements: Economic Imperatives

This section presents two findings on the achievements for the first aspect of lifelong learning, economic imperatives: greater help for the "left-out" students and upskilling working adults.

By 2000, through a consistent education and training expansion plan, Malaysia successfully produced leaders and professionals together with a sizable skilled workforce to support its economy (Economic Planning Unit, 2001a, 2006). In spite of this, there was a substantial group of the labour force with minimal education unable to face a challenging knowledge economy (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). In 2010, a remark made by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) emphasised this condition: "...58.0 % of the Malaysian labour force had only a secondary level education, 13.2 % had primary level education and 2.6 % had no formal education...[This] implies nearly 73.8 % ...is low-skilled" (OECD, 2013, p. 3). It suggested expediting human capital development at all levels. In this critical situation, MCCs may provide a good solution for those people mentioned in the remark, all with minimal formal education. Accordingly, findings show MCCs' as helping high school students and working adults to gain qualification programmes.

At all four case study sites, the participants drew a strong connection between full-time programmes and practices to educate young people (the “left-out” students) that I interpreted as three potentially successful pathways for them to reach their economic goals. The next section presents the three pathways.

7.2.1 A greater help for the “left-out” students

MCCs understand well that their students come from a special student demographic as outlined in chapter 6. There are two groups of young people with varied capacities and abilities seeking MCCs help. They might also have been “left-out” because of the neo-liberal initiatives in higher education, casting them as less competitive and excluded from the system (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Olssen & Peters, 2005). In this case, MCCs are of great support for the students as they are a priority goal of them (DCCE, 2012; Economic Planning Unit, 2001a; MOHE, 2011b). Throughout the data collection period, directors and teachers showed a clear understanding about this importance of providing pathways.

The following describes a transfer pathway for some students with fewer chances to continue education because of their inadequate high school results.

Transfer pathway: MCCs establish a permanent support to transfer their students into polytechnics programmes (Idris, 2011; Janang, 2014; Kamin et al., 2010). D-SCC expanded on this:

We empower the disadvantaged students to continue their studies but they may have to take a longer pathway. We create opportunities as well as the pathway for students to continue to a higher level. Usually, they will only go to a polytechnic. (D-SCC)

The director noted that MCCs have created a new longer route to help some “ambitious” students transfer into a polytechnic education. The full-time programmes offer two years foundation in most of the basic technical skills such as mechanics, electrical engineering, computing and management, amongst others to help students continue to a polytechnic education more confidently (DCCE, 2013). The strong foundation is mostly built by employing hands-on methods and industrial training. This is consistent with Thailand and Hong Kong community colleges where they help high school students to have an intensive two years pre-

degree programme before continuing to a bachelor's degree in university (Punthumasen & Maki, 2009; Wong, 2015). At American community colleges such transfer decisions are becoming a characteristic of their new high school students who prefer building a strong basis at the friendly community colleges before deciding to enter a university (Grubb, 2006; Handel, 2007). In Malaysia, polytechnics are one level higher than MCCs, and that position becomes convenient for MCCs to transfer their students into their diploma programmes. Both public institutions are producing skilled semi-professional graduates for growing industries (Economic Planning Unit, 2011).

As referred by S2-SSCC polytechnics are considered the students' "big brother institutions". Many students even showed their excitement to have such transfer opportunity from MCCs:

There are many polytechnics offering similar courses that we do here so we can go there. (S2-HLCC [FGD])

It can be easier to enter a polytechnic now because we can get the credits that the polytechnics want over here. (S3-TCC [FGD])

One more thing for us to continue education is not a problem at all; we can always go to polytechnics. (S2-SSCC [FGD])

It is important to note that MCCs are actually helping students from a lower socio-economic background with poorer academic results to continue education otherwise they may not be able to do so (Esa et al., 2009; Grubb, 2006; Patel, 2014). Grubb (2006) noted that American community colleges are positioning themselves as a pathway provider to help students from lower socio economic society with talents to move quickly into more advanced courses. In this case, the Malaysian Government is encouraging MCCs to become very affordable and friendly institutions. It wants more students with academic and financial issues but with talent to have a chance to continue education and eradicate the term "failure" from their young minds (Grubb, 2006; Idris, 2011). To execute the transfer process successfully, MCCs also consider other supportive measures for the students such as provision of literacy and numeracy skills, counselling services, and teachers' consistent support as suggested by Handel (2007) through comparable evidence from California community colleges. In this way, MCCs are

helping to reduce students with poor results eventually ending up to be unemployed or a factory worker as the study of Esa et al. (2009) noted.

The sense of excitement expressed by S5-SCC for having an opportunity to continue higher education may indicate an achievement of MCCs:

If I continue my study at a polytechnic, I can do something on information technology. I am confident that I can do well in a polytechnic. The two-year courses over here would be very helpful. Now, I am doing the basic technical skills and I believe that with this basic instruction I can be a better choice for a polytechnic education compared to new high school graduates. (S5-SCC [FGD])

This student expressed his confidence in moving towards a polytechnic education because he was receiving a good guidance from his computer classes. He may sound energised because the course itself develops within students a much sought-after new transferable skill in a knowledge economy (De Grip, 2006; Peters & Besley, 2006; Van Loo et al., 2001).

Within the broader group of “left-out” students, some appreciate transfer opportunity but many prefer joining employment straight from MCCs’ certificates.

Employment pathway: A director argued that MCCs have the ‘right’ skill courses so the students can easily find a job. D-TCC noted this as the most important task of MCCs:

We have programmes to match industry needs; a curriculum with some part of industry needs. This is our main role actually; we produce skilled workers to work in a lower skilled job. We want to fill the vacuum in the job market. For instance, we produce semi-skilled workers for different industries for all economic corridors. The greater KL [Kuala Lumpur] area only needs highly skilled workers. However, we can only produce semi-skilled workers. Many of our students are working at the tunnel boring construction sites for the light rail transit [LRT] project in Kuala Lumpur. (D-TCC)

This director actually mentioned an industry skill that has become a greater consideration for course content in full-time programmes (DCCE, 2012). The

courses are designed as such to help students with talent to fill the need for a skilled work largely needed in industries (Dougherty, 2002; Grubb, 2006). Dougherty (2002) described that such courses can help students to transfer directly into employment in American community colleges. Leary (2012) suggested the courses with service industrial components could prepare students to occupy the “unfilled jobs” that “do not require a traditional higher degree” (p.28). The institutional-industry alignment is becoming a strength of American community colleges for useful jobs in local industries such as technicians, electricians, computer operators or even chefs (Leary, 2012). In viewing the courses available at MCCs (see chapter 5) such as building maintenance, hairdressing, landscape design, or culinary arts, they are vocational courses of service industries that may not need require a student to have a university education (DCCE, 2012, 2013). This is actually the direction of MCCs for their students; producing skilled semi-professionals for all sorts of jobs in service industries that could make them entrepreneurs and self-employed if finding a job becomes difficult. This function may also indicate that MCCs are improving the vocational training quality from a lower level workers (Schultz, 1981) and producing human capital that is “adaptable to local use” (World Bank, 2003, p. 24) for Malaysia’s economy

Even though the above effort may look as though it is under-rating the role of MCCs, evidence from students showed this to be a positive achievement:

I chose this college because I know the job opportunity is higher after learning the skill that I really like here. (S1-SCC [IAQ])

I always like to learn something on skills and the skill that I like is here in this college. (S3-SSCC [IAQ])

I chose this college because it focusses more on skill courses and challenging too. (S6-HLCC [IAQ])

From the three students’ responses, there was a clear indication of satisfaction: they were happy because their courses could provide them with a better opportunity upon completion. Russell (2011) argued that building graduates with skills close to one’s “heart” could increase their confidence of learning. Attracting students to commit to skills courses may also reflect one of the achievements of

MCCs as was intended in the Tenth Malaysia Plan; to produce graduates with certificate and diploma qualifications as a skilled workforce in key industrial zones (Economic Planning Unit, 2011).

As further evidence of positive achievement, the following examples were positive statements of three students explaining how they believed they could benefit from their courses.

S4-SSCC was confident about his automotive course:

After finishing our studies, the chance of us getting a job is good. We just look at the course areas. Here, I am doing the automotive; it is more to do with vehicles, so the opportunities are there, definitely in car servicing companies such as Perodua [national car company] and Toyota. (S4-SSCC [FGD])

This automotive student was convinced his course could be a good path for him to find a job in an automotive industry. Being a student in the programme, he also felt being part of the growing industry in Malaysia. He strongly believed the car industry would have a place for him. To support the student's hope, the Malaysian automotive industry actually takes MCCs' students for internship and later gives them a job as Kamin et al. (2010) found in his study. In American community colleges, such courses are known to be demanding vocational courses that help students move directly into employment (Dougherty, 2002).

S3-TCC was learning a fashion design course:

I am taking the fashion design course. Now, I can make dresses. I think I can get jobs easily; however, once I have finished, I want to open my own boutique. I can be independent and support myself. (S3-TCC [FGD])

This student was learning dressmaking skills and the course for her was distinctive as it involved painstaking effort to learn. She strongly believed that only those having talent, creativeness, and interest could succeed in the specific vocational skill. Therefore, she decided to learn tailoring skills and planned to start her own business in the future. Producing graduates with specific skills are making them more independent as they do not have to directly meet employers' demands, an issue which is becoming a challenge for new graduates in Malaysia

(Hatta & Ali, 2013; Mohd Zain et al., 2017). Enhancing entrepreneurial skills is one of the ways MCCs' are employing to prepare their graduates that to be discussed as the next pathway for success.

Both the above students' positive outlook may have emerged out of the choice they had: skill courses matching their interest that could make them feel more confident about their future. Producing such confident graduates from lower achieving students may be a remarkable achievement of MCCs. This reflects a claim of Russell (2011) that an opportunity created to learn an appropriate skill can empower the person to face challenges in life.

In spite of these two pathways, students are also prepared with entrepreneurial skills as a next best option for eventual employment.

Entrepreneur pathway: The increasing competitiveness in economy could limit opportunities for academically less able students when they are not competent enough to manage fast changing industry requirements (Illeris, 2006; Van Loo et al., 2001). A nation can help its young people to excel academically and/or in business; Malaysia focuses on entrepreneurial excellence for young people (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c). Entrepreneurship education may fit a social inclusion initiative that prioritises “the rights of the minority groups” (Henry et al., 2005, p. 105). Therefore, entrepreneurial skills are threaded into course content as complementary input to help students with readiness for uncertainties (DCCE, 2012; Janang, 2014). In the following, the framework of entrepreneurship education suggested by Jamieson (1984) has been used to better understand how entrepreneurial skills are being taught for students' success into a business path. The framework has three phases: “education about enterprise, education for enterprise and education in enterprise”(Jamieson, 1984, p. 18).

Education about enterprise: Entrepreneurship components are included in the full-time programmes of a second year course curriculum. Education about enterprise involves learning theoretical business knowledge. A director provided the following information:

Here, we teach students how to start a business, how to write a business proposal. We only teach them the theory and when they start to work, they

will just follow whatever we taught them. We also teach them how to get funding from providers. We have one subject known as entrepreneurship in the last semester. I think all the students have to do this subject in their final semester. (D-SSCC)

This director described the various ways of blending entrepreneurial elements into the programmes. They involve theoretical knowledge and techniques to apply for a soft loan for starting a business. Scholars have found that entrepreneurship education can make learners to be more aware of business opportunities and brave in risk taking to start a business (Henry et al., 2005; Seth, 2017). The entrepreneurship education is enabling some young students to be innovative with business ideas consistent with Malaysia's growth (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c).

Accordingly, one student supported the need for innovation:

I want to open my own car workshop; I can learn here how to request a small loan, to start first. (S3-SSCC [FGD])

Another student supported the concept of starting a business:

If I do not want to continue our studies, I can open up my own business. If I want a support, I can attend follow-up graduate programmes especially for students who like to learn more about business. (S2-SSCC [FGD]).

These two students seem to have set their minds to be entrepreneurs after their college education. This may also suggest another notable achievement of MCCs where the students were positively trained to think for themselves (Mezirow, 1997).

Education for enterprise: Teaching entrepreneurial skills does not stop in the classroom but continues to take shape in a real-like setting. Education for enterprise involves constructing students' abilities, skills, and business tactics in a real-like environment (Jamieson, 1984). A director gave the details:

I opened a company for them by giving small start-up capital. We do business and at the same time, we train our students how to do business. Here, we have air-conditioning and car servicing business and the business is open to public every Wednesday. Since it is a registered company, all

can send their cars for servicing and a car wash will come as a free package. (D-HLCC)

The second phase involves students' participation in a real business setting on campus. In this manner, the Colleges connect students to concrete business operations and management under the guidance of their teachers to increase significantly their experiential learning (Jamieson, 1984). This may reflect engaging students in critical reflection to encourage transformative learning to take place more effectively (Baumgartner, 2001; Mezirow, 1997).

Education in enterprise: The success of entrepreneurial education is demonstrated when students eventually can start their own business. Education in enterprise is learning business behaviour in the workplace (Jamieson, 1984). T6-TCC shared her tailoring student's success as an achievement of entrepreneurial education:

Quite recently, a former student gave a call and shared her success with me. She said that she is earning RM3000 a month. She owns a boutique. She was lucky because she started in a fashion industry. She worked in a boutique and learned more skills before she could start her own business. Now, she is independent and earning more compared to her friends who only earn around RM1200. That is why we teach our students entrepreneurial skills. (T-TCC [FGD]).

After one year of working, this graduate opened her own fashion boutique and earned a better income than many of her course mates. "She is earning more than me" the teacher even remarked in her interview. As the teacher noticed, the student could reach the success more readily because she had the chance to work in the same industry for which her studies had prepared her. It could be that if there is continuity between a course and the workplace, together with entrepreneurial skills, the chance for students to be successful entrepreneurs is likely to be greater.

Hence, MCCs tend to employ three pathways: transfer, employment, and entrepreneur to help their "left-out" students to find success after community college education. In the next subsection, I discuss how MCCs are helping working people to achieve success through upskilling programmes. Directors and

teachers enthusiastically cited this help when a question arose as to who else MCCs serve as students besides “left-out” students.

7.2.2 Upskilling working adults

Upskilling programmes are becoming a lifelong learning opportunity for working people. The programmes are preparing those workers considered low skilled in a technology-orientated work environment for improved performance at the workplace (DCCE, 2012; De Grip, 2006; Illeris, 2006; Van Loo et al., 2001). There are two types of upskilling programmes supporting them at MCCs: modular programmes and short courses (see chapter 5). In particular, the modular programmes have credits accumulation flexibility by validating their work experience to continue learning. This flexibility with minimal formal education is an attraction for working people as they can attain a formal qualification for their work (DCCE, 2012; Economic Planning Unit, 2001b, 2006). In the following four scenarios, MCCs have helped to upskill different groups of employees from local communities.

Workers in small industry: Small industry owners use the facilities and the programmes available as an opportunity to improve their long-term traditional business (DCCE, 2012). T2-TCC, gave an example of how an owner of a tailoring business successfully upskilled her two workers:

Upskill programmes are for those who are already in work. For example, here, there is a woman who owns a small tailor shop, and she has two workers. The woman as well as her two workers is good at making women’s clothing. She wanted to make men’s clothing and decided to send her workers to us. Of course, she cannot send to a private trainer, it will be expensive for her. Therefore, she sent her workers to us. Good, we also had the course that she wanted. In this way, she added a new skill for her business. (T2-TCC [FGD])

This teacher identified the success of a small business owner using the TCC’s modular programme. Small businesses may not take much risk in business expansion as they usually operate with limited resources and customers (Henry et al., 2005; Seth, 2017). However, an attractive package with an affordable rate of the TCC might have inspired the owner to transform her business with a new skill

(Henry et al., 2005; Seth, 2017). For this expansion to happen the tailor upskilled her two workers with a promise of an extra salary to match their talent (Myran & Ivery, 2013). The tailor's positive decision eventually succeeded where she started to have new customers and fulfilled her promise to her two workers. This reflects a suggestion made by the Learning and Work Institute (formerly known as NIACE) that is influential in creating a Big Society in Britain. It says that the very first move to encourage a disadvantaged adult to learn is through "sparking their interest in learning as a way of improving their prospects" (Russell, 2011, p. 17). In this case, the TCC has created an opportunity to help the small business owner and her workers to gain some new achievements in life.

In the second domain, MCCs helped public employees from local government agencies to achieve a proficient of computer knowledge.

Public sectors' employees: Computer intervention in all sorts of work is becoming a challenge for every worker to work efficiently in both public and private sectors (Brown, 2001; Drucker, 1993; Peters & Besley, 2006). Of that, an immediate threat is the prospect of becoming a skill obsolete person related to the negative impact of globalisation and new knowledge economy (De Grip, 2006) and Van Loo et al. (2001). By paying attention to the remarks of directors and teachers during interviews, I realised that a crucial service of MCCs is to make public employees more computer savvy individuals.

MCCs allow local public employees to take advantage of their service to improve their computer knowledge and meet new changes in the work environment. T4-SCC described the service to public employees:

Community colleges are also centres for upskilling of those employees in the Government departments. With short courses, we help the Government supporting staff, classified in Group I and II. They usually need to use many computer applications in their work, and when the applications are upgraded, the staff need to upskill with the new application. They will seek our help. There are also some staff who do not have any experience using computer applications, and for them, we also upskill them with some basic computer skills. (T4-SCC [FGD])

T4-SCC was a computer teacher and he provided this account. Usually, a lower ranking category of public employees seeks the help of MCCs to become conversant in their computer knowledge. They are largely administrators who had been keeping files and records by hand but now they have to enter data onto computer system, thus making their daily task less difficult (Drucker, 1993; OECD, 1996). Thus, operating and managing basic computer applications are vital for them. If they fail, they can become a skills obsolete person among their co-workers that may also jeopardise their position as a public employee. This may also suggest a reason for public employees seeking the help of MCCs. The role is consistent with the study of Leigh and Gill (2009) that emphasised community colleges in America have taken a new position as an alternative institution for workers who intend to reskill at moderate cost. In Malaysia, these public institutions are becoming very convenient locations with facilities and facilitators at no cost for the Government employees.

Continuous support to graduates: A shared opinion expressed by most teachers was their effort to provide ongoing support to their graduates so they could enjoy continuous success in their careers. One teacher said:

Our relationships do not end here, in this college, but it is an ongoing relationship. The students always keep in contact with us for seeking opinions and solving problems. (T7-SCC [IAQ])

Teachers provide moral and professional support to their graduates continuously so the former students could achieve a higher position in their career. An automotive student knew about this support:

Yes, I have the interest. I like my automotive course because I like to know more about vehicles. If I want to learn more, probably I will come here, again. Actually, I want to open my own car workshop so definitely I will come here to learn. Over here, even I can learn how to request small loan to start a small business first. (S3-SSCC [FGD])

This student seemed to understand well that his relationship with his teachers and the College would not end upon his graduation and vice versa. The teachers are always ready to extend plenty of support to their former students and this is evident in the automotive student's assertive expressions. In MCCs, the teachers

show interest in students learning and development that Cranton (2006) noted as characteristic of educators who are committed to see their students achieving success through transformative learning. In this case, a significant support of teachers is encouraging the disadvantaged young people to engage continuously in learning to achieve their new vocational needs. The teachers are also helping to create lifelong learners and setting a path of learning society for local communities (Delors, 1996).

The following explained the teachers' readiness with support to their graduates:

Successful students always look for us; the students always want to participate in all our programmes and want to better use the skills they have learned here. (T1-TCC [IAQ])

Students expressed their sense of appreciation to their teachers' admirable support:

My relationship with the lecturers here is like between parents and children. They will go to a great length to help us. (S4-SSCC [IAQ])

They [teachers] are very student friendly and always ever ready to provide us information other than skills that we are supposed to learn here. (S5-HLCC [IAQ])

The three above examples provide evidence of a teacher-student relationship that is very ethical and affectionate. The relationship may reflect a community of practice where teachers and students constitute the community of MCCs, learning and sharing together information and building a sense of identity in their domain, the local communities (Wenger & Trayner, 2015). Such strengthening of identity may also promote MCCs' achievement to the local communities.

The above findings notes that a notable achievement of MCCs that could benefit Malaysia's economy is their significant practices in preparing young people for a worthy employment or a higher degree programme otherwise they may not even attempt for one because of their unfavourable circumstances. MCCs are also allowing working people to be adaptable to computer knowledge as the new requirement at the workplace. The learners are also cultivated with entrepreneurial culture so they can be self-employed in case finding jobs do not work. The next section looks at the achievements related to social inclusion.

7.3 Achievements: Social inclusion

This section presents two findings on the achievements of the second aspect of lifelong learning, social inclusion: for people achieving financial independence and for disadvantaged citizens acquiring new knowledge.

The World Bank (2013) asserted social inclusion to be a way to unite people “confronted with unique barriers” from “fully participating in their country’s political and economic life” through two visionary goals: “ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity” (World Bank, 2013, p. 1). Social exclusion depends on how the term is nationally defined. In the case of Malaysia, a person having less income and less technological knowledge may be perceived as excluded using the following terms: low-income households, less competitive persons, low-skilled individuals or older adults (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c; Hatta & Ali, 2013; Ragayah, 2008). In this context, I organise findings in this section into two areas of social inclusion: for people achieving financial independence and for disadvantaged citizens acquiring new knowledge. These are also the contexts of emphasis for social exclusion in Malaysia.

Building a cohesive society has been prioritised since independence through Malaysia’s aspirational nation building agenda (Economic Planning Unit, 1966, 2016b). At present Plan (2016-2020), Malaysia’s primary vision is “anchoring growth to people” focussing on their social, economic, cultural and spiritual growth (Economic Planning Unit, 2016b, p. 1).

The Eleventh Plan states:

Inclusivity is a key principle in Malaysia’s national socio-economic development agenda, to ensure all citizens enjoy the fruits of growth and development regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c, p. 1).

The 11th Plan’s main goal is to reduce the income gap between urban and rural populations. Thus, creating an opportunity for financial independence has been an attempt to help the poor segment of population to earn more than the national poverty line monthly income (Hatta & Ali, 2013; Ragayah, 2008). In 2010 it was RM800 (NZ\$285) and in 2014, it was RM 2,537 (NZ\$906). At the present state,

the most vulnerable can be identified to be “the B40 household, youth, women, children, the elderly, and PWD [the people with disability] (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c, p. 24).

In this section, I highlight how MCCs can be a help for the people in a deprived position to achieve financial independence and learn new knowledge for a better participation in world activities. Most directors and teachers identified a service to people in the positions of a single mother, a military person, a prison inmate, a low-skilled worker, or a disabled person as examples of the most disadvantaged constituting other types of students besides young people and working people.

The following subsection discusses some findings describing achievements related to financial independence.

7.3.1 For people achieving financial independence

By MCCs dealing with vulnerable at-risk financial issues, in a way is also addressing their barriers of exclusion in the wave of ongoing changes in a competitive economy (Silver, 2015; Van Loo et al., 2001; World Bank, 2013). The following are four groups of the serious disadvantaged being taken care by MCCs.

Ex-servicemen prepare for post-retirement: MCCs teach ex-servicemen skills to prepare them for a life after military service. They are also the only veteran students in the full-time programmes. T6-HLCC explained:

We have many participants from military personnel who are about to go on optional retirement. They will come here to learn some technical skills for their living after retirement. They will learn skills such as computers and air conditioning servicing for about 18 months. (T6-HLCC [FGD])

This teacher had an example of an inclusion service of helping military veterans to continue their financial independence after their retirement. The veterans are the permanent students of MCCs fulfilling a responsibility of the Ministry of Defence for ex-servicemen. They are the members of the Corporation of Ex-Armed Forces Affairs (PERHEBAT) in Malaysia. They have to take a full-time training course for at least 18 months before their contract of armed service comes to an end (DCCE, 2012). Usually, they are taught familiar technical skills such as

car repairing or air-conditioning servicing with entrepreneurial components. This is to make them act as entrepreneurs with small financial assistance. This service, Rumann et al. (2011) described in the USA as constructing a special programme for military veteran to qualify them for financial aid. In similar way, MCCs are directly becoming responsible for the future of the ex-servicemen, who otherwise have to survive only on pension scheme. Such circumstances may make them face an exclusion in terms of “respect and recognition” from family and society (World Bank, 2013, p. 15). However, coping with these discipline-oriented veterans is a challenge for young teachers in MCCs, as will be seen in Chapter 8.

Single mothers with everyday skills: MCCs help single mothers to convert their everyday skills into a business opportunity. D-SCC explained:

Let us say that there is a single mother with no educational background. How can she improve her life? Here, we can make her independent by teaching her some skills, for example to bake cakes. She can use this skill to improve her living. Usually, here, we help communities to increase their knowledge through our short courses. For example, for this single mother we taught her how to make cookies and bake cakes. With this new knowledge, now she is earning some extra income for her family. She is making and selling cakes and cookies for her friends and neighbours. (D-SCC)

This director described a service related to single mothers. They, with their minimum qualifications, are becoming financially independent through capitalising on their everyday skills. Arguably, this service is a help for women who often are stereotyped in relation to their “deep rooted tangible social norms and beliefs” in most societies (World Bank, 2013, p. 8). For them, everyday skills such as baking, cooking, or knitting in the form of short courses are becoming useful. Grubb et al. (2003) highlighted that the largest group of learners in American community colleges are in such hobby related courses. As Baker (2013) identified, the courses are also popular for their multipurpose and business opportunity character. In this example, the mother learned new varieties of baking and useful marketing skills to successfully start her own home business. Such straightforward approaches may help women especially mothers at home who are

often confined with dreary house chores, to find some excitement in life with some extra income for themselves.

Disabled students learn future work skills: MCCs prepare disabled young people for their future independent living. D-HLCC explained about a support to such students while in school:

We have one service that we are proud to do. We do tie-up programmes with [name of schools]. We do the programmes not with their ordinary students but with their disabled students. We train these students with some relevant skills courses together with entrepreneurial knowledge as they mostly would not be able to continue education after school. Therefore, we take the initiative to train these students while they are in schools until they have the confidence to do their own business with the skills they have learned. Usually, the training will be for two years. (D-HLCC)

This service of HLCC is helping disabled young people to find their financial independence, which is very important in their position to have a better future. The students are trained in specific vocational skills together with business tactics for two years, for their personal development and independent living after school. Houghton (2003) argued that disabled students potentially could face exclusion from a very young age because of the term “disabled person” used on them. This could make them experience exclusion among family members, friends, and school that may also cause them “to set a much lower bar for themselves” than average individuals (World Bank, 2013, p. 14). Therefore, the HLCC is helping the students to learn “right” skills according to Houghton (2003), to build them into critical thinkers to face future challenges. After school, these students can also continue learning in one of the Colleges as they have already been guided into a career path. This may suggest “a targeted support in addition to schooling” to the disabled where their abilities are developed towards an more secure economic career (World Bank, 2013, p. 15).

Prison inmates and their facilitators: Prisoners are commonly members of marginalised communities in many societies and live in isolated circumstances (World Bank, 2013). D-HLCC described an initiative taken to teach prison inmates:

We also have prison inmates as participants but we have to teach them in the prison itself. Once we had a chance to teach them foot reflexology and Spa therapies. Usually prisons will have good sewing facilities. At times, we use the facilities to teach women inmates some simple sewing techniques. We also teach them English. Nevertheless, the problem is the prison environment and strict security. Very intimidating. Some of my lecturers are scared to teach the inmates in the prisons. (D-HLCC)

The director of HLCC was tempted to extend her service to inmates, as there was a prison in her service area. She tried to teach prison inmates some useful skills for application after prison that also can support them with financial independence after release. Brewster (2015) suggested that community colleges should share their programmes with prison to help prison inmates to foster new skills. In this case, although the director had a good intention to help the inmates, her failure to get support from her teachers forced her to discontinue the service. The regular teachers may have experienced insecurity while working with the socially excluded inmates because prison is an instance of “physical space” tending to “solidify the processes of exclusion”(World Bank, 2013, p. 12). Thus, as Brewster (2015) recommends, MCCs can attempt to create a partnership with prison authorities where the prison officers themselves become the trainers for selected courses. Usually, a norm in society is to treat prison staff as inferior because of their jobs (World Bank, 2013); therefore, in becoming a teacher for returning prison inmates at MCCs the teachers may create a new identity for themselves. By establishing a working partnership with prisons, MCCs may be able to change people’s perception on both prison inmates and their staff in Malaysia.

Non-credit courses with a mix of entrepreneurial components are helping underprivileged people to achieve their financial independence. These courses are also contributing to some marginalised groups to build on new knowledge as discussed in the next subsection.

7.3.2 For disadvantaged citizens acquiring new knowledge

One of the underlying aims of MCCs is to bridge the digital gap between urban and rural areas (DCCE, 2012; Economic Planning Unit, 2001b; Ibrahim et al., 2016). Because of the aim, MCCs' specific locations away from urban developments are also meant to help computer knowledge to the most disadvantaged in those areas (Economic Planning Unit, 2001b, 2006). This has become important as information technology has potentially the ability to play a new role of social inclusion in today's circumstances (World Bank, 2013).

Older adults in computer classes: Older people, who could be marginalised in society because they are already considered "old", are returning to MCCs' as new sets of students. T5-TCC elucidated some useful ways to teach older adults:

For senior citizens, we always do courses, especially for those who have retired. We also want them to learn something, to improve their lifestyle knowledge instead of being not knowing anything. Usually, they will come to learn some IT stuff. For example, the older aunts will come to learn how to use the Internet. We simply teach them how to search for recipes using the Internet. Older uncles like to learn how to access blogs because they want to know the latest happenings. We have to teach them very slowly so they could understand. (T5-TCC [FGD])

This piece, while quite patronising in tone, makes it clear that MCCs have a way to make older adults computer-savvy. In Malaysia, the number of older adults aged 60 and above is expected to be around 3.4 million people in 2020 and by 2035, Malaysia may experience a high population of aged people (Ibrahim et al., 2016). This growth may cost heavily when it comes to health management; thus, Malaysia has already started this effort with the help of some public and private institutions and charity organisations, to create awareness for senior citizens about healthy living (Economic Planning Unit, 2016b). One of them is MCCs; they help older adults in their service areas. In the above account, both male and female older adults were enthusiastic about learning to use the Internet. Therefore, seniors were taught in an area that could best interest them although the curriculum looked gender specific; women learned to browse Internet searching for recipes while men learned through accessing blogs. This new knowledge

pursuit can also be a variation for older adults from their religious activities in Malaysia (Ibrahim et al., 2016). They are becoming more active cognitively and keeping their life interesting with resourceful social and political matters as they now have the opportunity to learn new requirements of today's world (Eade, 1997; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; World Bank, 2013).

Low-skilled workers avoid structural unemployment: Working adults with only primary education can use their long-term work experience as a basis to learn new knowledge for changing job requirements. T2-HLCC elaborated on the use of a modular programme:

We provide opportunities for the working community to upgrade their knowledge through modular programmes. The programmes are actually the flexible version for working people. Employees attend the programmes using their work experience for minimum fees. Sometimes, employers sponsor them. They can have our certificates upon completion. (T2-HLCC [FGD])

This teacher explained about a programme accepting work experience as entry-level recognition. Such recognition is becoming helpful for low skilled workers with long-term experience to fulfil a new work requirement and avoid structural unemployment (Brown, 2001; De Grip, 2006; Illeris, 2006; Van Loo et al., 2001). The programmes are helpful in the sense of workers learning the actual course content and urging them to become competent in basic skills of handling computers (DCCE, 2012). In this context, the workers tend to transform their own work experience into a qualifying certificate as well as learning new knowledge as a useful requirement for jobs at their workplace (OECD, 1996; World Bank, 2013). This style has a national recognition as the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) in which working people use “knowledge and skills acquired through formal education and working experience” to engage in learning (Economic Planning Unit, 2016a, p. 24). Such flexibility illustrates an opportunity to upgrade low skilled workers' relevance to their workplace by earning certificates and professional licences through community colleges (Myran & Ivery, 2013).

In the above findings, MCCs works on an understanding that education is a meaningful tool to establish financial independence and protect the dignity of a person from further exclusion. Lifelong learning opportunities through short courses are becoming useful to meet diverse needs and create new opportunity, again through maximising the learning using entrepreneurial components. Under social inclusion, the function of MCCs as hubs of local communities for lifelong learning is becoming clearer. People, who often have not a consideration for a college level education, are getting an opportunity, once again in Malaysia. The next set of findings examines the achievement through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes that are cultivating a sense of active citizenship for teachers and students.

7.4 Achievements: Active Citizenship

This section explains the achievements of active citizenship through CSR programmes, which include: social responsibility of teachers and students, and social responsibility from teachers.

As outlined in chapter 6, MCCs are embarking on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes to reach out to disadvantaged people within local communities to increase their awareness of the outside world (DCCE, 2012). This may be a way to create a “collaborative relationship” through “civic engagement” (Fiume, 2009, p. 75). MCCs are using CSR programmes to meet local communities needs with an emphasis of social responsibility from a public institution to the people in its domain (Chandler & Werther, 2014). Here, the people are in local communities and MCCs’ teachers and students are the “social actors” providing the social service mainly education-based, for them. To carry out the task, the content of full-time programmes is becoming useful to apply in facilitating community’s activities and the theoretical components tend to match local employers work scopes at the sites. CSR programmes are conduits to connect MCCs with community and employers; however, the values and norms of social responsibility important for active citizenship are developing while teachers, students, and communities together are more overtly involved in the programmes.

The following presents the first scenario of findings describing achievements of active citizenship involving teachers and students.

7.4.1 Social responsibility of teachers and students

Service learning helps teachers and students together to perform civic engagement activities in community space (Fiume, 2009). Service learning establishes a situation for teachers to use off campus space to construct students' knowledge while building their positive social responsibility values (Fiume, 2009; Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2010). This, Vaughan (1997) identified as edge activities where the Colleges establish an interaction with the outside world. In another Asian context from Malaysia, such community service is actively practiced in Taiwanese community colleges as civic engagement to develop their grassroots communities (Chen & Wang, 2009).

Helping villagers: Teachers and students meet neighbouring villagers through a scheduled monthly visit. T5-HLCC talked about the visits:

For CSR, we will go to the villages in our area every month. We will take this opportunity to promote our new programmes to the youth there. Usually, we will jointly organise a Village Clean-up programme and a cooking competition. The villagers will be the participants. Sometimes, we also do cultural shows. All this we do with the help of our students. In this way, we equally contribute to each other; the villagers provide us the place and we provide them with our services. (T5-HLCC [FGD])

This teacher described their occasional visits to villages near her College. During the visits, students carry out community activities as planned while teachers take the opportunity to introduce new programmes and recruit the overlooked young people in the villages (Fiume, 2009; Michel, 2015). According to Myran (1978), such developments should suit the "natural grain" of local community's lives (p.3). During the meetings, teachers let their students conduct pre-planned programmes for the villagers that focus on improving villagers' awareness and students' leadership qualities (Chandler & Werther, 2014; Fiume, 2009). These regular visits also have established a positive relationship with the villagers where the residents became comfortable to convey their problems through them to local authorities. Chen and Wang (2009) also confirmed this trend in Taiwan as part of grassroots communities' engagement. For the villagers in their isolated position,

they needed someone with whom to share their problems and experiences, such caring acts can influence young people to change positively into better citizens.

Within this context, one student shared his experience being part of a band with local youths:

This College, besides teaching, also involves us in community programmes, for instance with the Youth Club. One popular programme we do together is STOMPERS. It is a band created out of all kinds of used items such as old cans and plastic containers as the music instruments. I am proud to say we usually perform at villagers' weddings. Something not even was my dream. Now, we are doing a lot of training, we want to win in the competition involving all community colleges. (S2-SSCC [FGD])

This student was excited to have an opportunity to work together with local youths. Teachers in all MCCs have arranged such a combined activity as a way to promote their colleges to local youths while appreciating the youth's contribution and building the students' level of tolerance. Such an activity may have made the youths to feel their presence as important and worthwhile; an action to build young people into healthy citizens through active social roles (Birdwell et al., 2013). The combined youth-student band also has grown into a yearly national inter-competition among all MCCs. This can be considered an instrumental achievement of MCCs to develop a sense of identity in a shared domain of the Colleges (Michel, 2015; Wenger & Trayner, 2015).

A disabled person saved his business: Disabled people can count on the teachers and students help. T3-HLCC spoke about an incident that saved a disabled entrepreneur's business:

In one more case, we helped a disabled entrepreneur for making his business more organised. I did it with the help of my students. We went to his shop and we used all our expert knowledge in accounting for organising his accounts. We also repaired and painted his shop. We rearranged the things in his shop. Finally, the shop was more presentable for customers. (T3-HLCC [FGD])

This accounting teacher with her students collectively undertook an impressive job where their effort saved an almost ruined business of a disabled entrepreneur. They together might have demonstrated considerable social responsibility to a community who often are stigmatised because of their disability (Houghton, 2003; World Bank, 2013). In this practical experiential learning, the students might have enriched their theoretical knowledge while contributing a community service (Fiume, 2009; Mezirow, 1997) and the teacher might have been accommodative and open-minded in completing the task (Cranton, 2006). They may have been positively encouraged to appreciate diversity, a vital behaviour to achieve active citizenship (Michel, 2015). In this effort, the disabled businessperson continued his business and sustained his financial independence as benefits for him.

Voluntary service to flood victims: This socially desirable quality of volunteerism was plainly observed when teachers and students worked together to help flood victims. When there is a big flood, the first-response volunteer teams often include the teachers and students. T2-TCC recalled an extensive social service that is becoming a yearly affair:

We [teachers] are also involved in the social work, usually with the help of our full-time students. As you are aware, last December [2014], the big flood, we helped the people in our area. During that time, those who could cook, were cooking; those who could sew, were sewing; those who could repair the buildings, were repairing buildings; and those who could do wiring maintenance, were fixing the wiring. It was really good teamwork. (T2-TCC [FGD])

This teacher was referring to a major flood in the eastern region that had necessitated help from the teachers and students of MCCs, especially from the nearest colleges to the affected areas. Many of the participants in this study also spoke about the service to emphasise their effort devoted to the calamity. One student said:

During the big flood the other day, our college was involved in cleaning up of the affected schools in Kelantan. (S3-SCC [FGD])

Another director sighed:

Community colleges do not only serve our people here, sometimes we also have to bring our students to help flood victims that happen every year.
(D-SSCC)

It appears that the members of MCCs were heavily involved in helping the flood victims in several ways. In the first example, the teachers and students worked as a team to help the victims by combining their ideas, knowledge, and skills as operational resources. Their social responsibility demonstrated the spirit of active citizenship to community in their domains; teachers and students turned out to be the social actors determined to help fully in the mission (Coare, 2003; Michel, 2015). This effort may signify a greater achievement of CSR programmes because they have comfortably encouraged the teachers and students to perform their socially responsible role every year (Chandler & Werther, 2014; Coare, 2003). Another achievement of this event is that it may have promoted the new institution in a positive light to many Malaysians, who tend to regard vocational and technical fields as an “unattractive pathway”, as noted in the Eleventh Plan (Economic Planning Unit, 2016a, p. 18).

Learning real customer relationships: Teachers always plan innovative ways to make their students’ learning meaningful and successful. One student described her experiential learning engagement with her three friends in a night market environment:

The college also gives training for us at the actual business spaces, for example in the night market. We will sell our products together with the traders. Therefore, we have to think of a product suitable and easy to sell to the night market customers. Usually, lecturers will help us to get the product from wholesalers. On night market day, we will sell our products and the traders’ products together. It will look as though we are helping the traders but the truth is we are learning the business tactics from them.
(S6-TCC [FGD])

S6-TCC illustrated her working experience with a night market trader; an informal business sector involving aspiring mobile traders and a varied crowd of customers (Chin & Harun, 2015; Ishak et al., 2012). The College has utilised night market as a platform for their students to learn everyday crowds’ behaviour.

In Malaysia, night market resemble a real Malaysian culture and lifestyle of all levels of people (Chin & Harun, 2015). People usually gather and shop for all sorts of useful goods at much cheaper rates from hawker-style mobile traders who assemble once weekly in a space allocated by a local authority. In the huge business ground, one can witness hundreds of traders handling huge volumes of customers of varied characteristics and needs (Ishak et al., 2012). The four students might have picked up useful business behaviour in a plain and realistic manner, which is important in triggering a critical mind for innovative business ideas from the customers of diverse ethnicities and age groups (Seth, 2017). This opportunity also would have developed their civic competences that can happen in community engagement activities (Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2010). This communal engagement may also have revealed to the students the real site of Malaysians' lives: building the students into more compassionate citizens to engage in a healthy cultural relationship among three main ethnicities. These circumstances, according to Houghton (2003), can create conditions and opportunities for constructing good citizens.

The next three scenarios demonstrate the achievements of social responsibility involving the teachers.

7.4.2 Social responsibility from teachers

Teachers are not only teaching full-time students but they are also handling different groups of learners of varied ages and positions emerging from local communities. Thus, the teachers' social responsibility is to encourage a broader group of local communities to benefit from their educational service.

Hospital attendants learning English: Teachers sometimes receive different types of educational requests from local communities. T5-TCC described a help to situation of help to hospital attendants:

Occasionally, we also act to certain organisation's specific needs. For example, once a month we will go to the General Hospital here to teach English to the hospital attendants. The hospital director wished that his staff would be able to say simple phrases such as "Good morning", "Good afternoon", and "May I help you?" The director wanted his low qualified staff to learn some English. (T5-TCC [FGD])

This teacher noted a local assignment that wanted his colleagues and himself to improve English proficiency of hospital attendants at the site. It was a special request from the hospital director. Here, the teachers demonstrated social responsibility role to construct a healthy relationship with the communities in their service area (Coare, 2003; Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2010). In this circumstance, even the hospital director was exercising his autonomy to the teachers to help his lower ranking staff in his attempt to be positively responsible to them (Coare, 2003; Johnston, 2003). The director was probably exploiting the function of MCCs as lifelong learning enablers for local communities. This behaviour of public organisations treating MCCs as a centre for educational services shows is a demonstration of the role of a “social engine” for society; the rural community colleges in America provide a similar service (Miller & Kissinger, 2007).

Developing local young children: Teachers planned school holiday activities for young children. T4-TCC explained:

For schoolchildren, during their school holidays, we try to offer all kinds of programmes. Usually, the students in Kuala Lumpur will have many places to visit by just paying, but here, we try our best to make available those kinds of activities such as communication skills, socialising skills and mostly on children’s leisure activities, for the students here. (T4-TCC)

This teacher shared his experience of preparing a school holiday programme for young schoolchildren in his neighbourhood. The teachers ensured the activities have some equivalency to paid school holiday programmes in the urban centres such as the English Camp and the Leadership Camp. Actually, they intended to provide the rural children to have a similar holiday experience as the urban counterparts (Johnston, 2003). This reflects the teachers’ civic duty to young children: setting out a safe and meaningful holiday for the children so they can have a healthy growth (Chen & Wang, 2009; Coare, 2003). These teachers may have achieved a sense of pride by being proactive in responding to a social problem that a rural child may face as he/she is growing up (Cranton, 2006)

Collaboration with local industry: Teachers have to establish a connection with local employers for training their students at industrial sites and in this connection; they are the persons in charge dealing with the employers. T1-TCC said:

We also have collaboration with industries. In this collaboration, it is more of us working together with them. We request the industries to provide spaces for students' industrial training. Once the students have completed their training, they may be absorbed into the industries. (T1-TCC [FGD])

One director said:

We collaborate with industries for students' industrial training. Now, we have the Games Art diploma course, a new course, and for that, we even work with an international company, the Code Master, for the sake of our students. Now we have around ten students doing this course. (D-SCC)

Teachers may enter into long-term agreements with local employers for immediate employment:

They [local companies] employ our trained students. They are willing to provide some extra training to fit their requirements before employing our students. This is possible because of the long-term understanding with those companies. (D-SSCC [FGD])

Teachers have always played a significant role in students learning but MCCs' teachers are probably going an extra mile. They have to negotiate with relevant local employers for their students' placement as well as employment. Teachers work collaboratively with local employers most of the time to benefit their students with practical experience in real sites. In this understanding, teachers take the trouble to arrange suitable industrial sites for their students while employers take qualified students as interns and train them into competent workers (Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2010; Michel, 2015). In this quasi partnership, values of active citizenship can be seen both ways; teachers preparing students with work skills to meet employers' expectation while local employers creating an effective skilled worker from the interns (Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2010). In such a case, when teachers cannot locate a suitable local industry for particular courses, it can be problematic for their students' course completion and this issue is discussed as a challenge in chapter 8. Sometimes, as in the third example, MCCs create a

stronger agreement with companies where they grant students' placement and then employment with some additional coaching to suit individual companies' requirements. Such a network enabled by local business organisations and supported by MCCs shows their responsibility to their immediate society who are also their customers (Chandler & Werther, 2014). This teamwork is helping many students to find a job in local industry. D-SCC said:

Ninety per cent of our students can get jobs. Some students the companies themselves will come here to recruit, and some can get offers immediately after their industrial training. (D-SCC)

The substance of this remark may be considered the greatest achievement of MCCs through their full-time programmes. Given that most students able to find employment suggest that the students are learning a skill needed for the industries. This also is testimony to the hard work and responsibility of teachers in shaping the students to be a good citizen and competent workers through varied approaches.

In these findings, teachers and students are behaving to resolve some educational issues in the community in off campus manner. By establishing a constructive connection with local communities and local employers, teacher and students are serving their social responsibility role while meeting their active citizenship values. The next section describes an outcome of achievements as a sense of personal fulfilment.

7.5 Achievements: Personal Fulfilment

In this section, discussion continues on findings to demonstrate personal fulfilment, the final aspect of lifelong learning considered for this study. Two scenarios of findings: non-formal education for personal development and formal education for achieving an aspiration.

For every learner at MCCs, a decision made to return to learning may arise from various reasons but an important aspects relates to the "second chance" is personal fulfilment (Baumgartner, 2001; Knowles, 1975, 1990; Mezirow, 1997; Saccomanno, 2017). Lifelong learning in the forms of formal, non-formal and informal dimensions is increasingly providing meaningful opportunities for

learning for people of varied purposes and needs (Boshier, 2006; Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Wain, 2004). In MCCs, formal and non-formal education both plays significant roles in educating local communities of diverse aspirations. Learning that can bring a change in terms of cognitive, emotional and social development from accrued learning and experience to influence subsequent behaviour, most often aligned to personal development (Baumgartner, 2001; Illeris, 2003; Mezirow, 1997).

The next subsection presents the first set of findings relevant to personal development out of engagement in short courses.

7.5.1 Non-formal education for personal development

An aspiration is achievable: MCCs are hubs for lifelong learning and in that capacity they are educating many adults in local communities who come with varied aspirations. Short courses as non-credit programmes as explored in chapter 6 are becoming suitable to facilitate adults' learning (DCCE, 2012; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Formosa, 2016).

The following three examples explain how distinct an aspiration of adults meant for personal fulfilment. T4-SCC commented upon a working adults' requirement for developing expertise within the knowledge economy:

Community colleges also give lifelong learning opportunities for the working community; they usually come to learn computer. (T4-SCC [FGD])

S1-SCC in his playful comment mentioned a straightforward hope of mothers at home:

If your mother knows how to make cookies, she can come here to learn different types of cookies and she can start her own business and be more independent financially. (S1-SCC [FGD])

T6-HLCC noted seasonal demands for baking course from some professional people:

During the fasting month, demands will be there for certain types of short courses from teachers and nurses here. They like to learn new designs of curtains and mostly newer types of cookies and cakes, as they want to be trendy with preparation for their “raya” [Ramzan festival]. (T6-HLCC)

The three examples have varied contributory factors for personal fulfilment to connect with very different aspirations. As Saccomanno (2017) argued, contemporary personal aims are diverse and appear throughout life. Looking at the examples, the first showed workers with lack computer skills to learn them to fill their knowledge gap at the workplace. Merriam et al. (2007) have pointed to the reality that aims of adults nearly always have a connection to a phase of work life. In the second example, mothers could find a new experience in life if they change their familiar skills into moneymaking business. Meanwhile, teachers and nurses have fulfilled their wish to be part of a fashionable festive occasion. All these may suggest the diversity of motivations for learning is becoming possible because of lifelong learning opportunities through non-credit programmes. MCCs can be innovative in meeting the aspirations for learning of ordinary citizens.

Active ageing for older adults: HLCC collaborates with the University of Third Age (U3A) to help its members. They tend to be retired public workers learning at a later age for personal development. D-HLCC explained:

We also have collaboration with the University of Third Age (U3A), which is an affiliation of the University Putra Malaysia (UPM). U3A is our signature programme. Last year we carried out many programmes for them. We do this tie-up with U3A because we want to help senior workers from the Public Service Department (PSD), mostly the retirees. They will come for the DIY classes such as baking, electrical work, and car repair. The university will send their students here. They are indeed full fee-paying members and they will just attend for their DIY classes. I think it is part of their course requirements. (D-HLCC)

The director described a special programme with the U3A members in which HLCC has a role. The members are the senior citizens who have reached their retirement age at 60 and facing the third phase of life (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016; Ibrahim et al., 2016). Now, they are learning for personal

fulfilment and well being (Ibrahim et al., 2016) and to keep themselves busy with learning activities (Duay & Bryan, 2008). The U3A also establishes opportunities for some in achieving certain aims after retirement such as becoming U3A facilitators and ICT instructors (Ibrahim et al., 2016). For many, HLCC is a partner college teaching them hobby related skills such as car servicing and baking skills since it has the facilities to do so. In this manner, after years of bureaucratic life, these senior citizens are learning to lead a healthy less-stressful lifestyle. They may have new social contacts to share experience among them as evident in Duay and Bryan (2008) study. In the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, it has been clearly indicated that post-retirement adults need to be supported with lifelong learning activities so they could become better aligned to active ageing (Economic Planning Unit, 2016b).

All stay healthy: Some MCCs help their community members to stay healthy and fit through organised recreational activity. The director of HLCC spoke of a weekly activity:

Here, every Friday, we do a programme: musical aerobics with the community here. A retired army person helps us with the programme voluntarily. The response usually will be very good. We even have something like “The biggest loser competition”, a weight loss programme for participants. We usually take attendance and provide a testimonial for those who have full attendance after a month. This is how we engage our surrounding community with our programmes. (D-HLCC)

It appears that MCCs also have a task to keep their surrounding community healthy, as explained by D-HLCC. The College has a weekly musical aerobic exercise for the residents where they meet, interact, and establish healthy community living. Physical exercise as a leisure activity has been widely researched with evidential proof of its positive satisfaction for people (S. A. Cohen, 2014). MCCs teachers are the main organisers and a representative from the local communities conducts the activity. By bringing the community together, such structured leisure activity can help them to move towards achieving a target out of self-awareness for example, in managing their health and weight (S. A. Cohen, 2014; Miller & Kissinger, 2007). This also signals a positive development

in the neighbourhood as S. A. Cohen (2014) argued, lifelong learning practices involving leisure can bring new life experience for personal growth.

The following explains the second set of findings on personal fulfilment through full-time or modular programmes.

7.5.2 Formal education for personal fulfilment

A public employee decided to enter business: MCCs have no limitations as to who can be their students and this position is helping many the Colleges to fulfil their aspirations. T2-HLCC shared a success story of a brave public employee:

There was one interesting case in Melaka College where a public worker took optional retirement and joined the hotel catering course at that College. He wanted to start his own business. That time he was already 40 plus of age and he managed to complete the course. Now he is doing well in his homestay business. Therefore, community colleges are open to all. (T2-HLCC [FGD])

This man took the risk of tendering his resignation with a hope to become a businessperson through the help of a MCC. The worker's courageous decision shows the character of a lifelong learner who decides to re-train to achieve a new goal in life (Knowles, 1975; Saccomanno, 2017). In this case, a MCC was probably convenient to him in terms of negotiating moderate fees and easy educational access to achieve his new aspiration. As Saccomanno (2017) may have argued, the 40 year old public worker decided to fulfil his ambition because there was an attractive opportunity for him to make a career change. Perhaps, he wanted to be more relevant to the changing economic situation and to experience increased fulfilment in earnings, and the homestay business became a reality. This may be an example of how people self-access their learning experience through adopting a new frame of reference (Mezirow, 1997).

A student satisfies a simple wish: S5-TCC expressed:

Like me, I am learning a fashion design course. I do not have to buy clothing anymore; I can make my own dresses. (S5-TCC [FGD]).

This student was quite clear about her intention after completion of her fashion design course. She wanted to make her own dresses as an outcome of critical reflection of the course experience that aligned to was also a personal achievement through her goal oriented learning (Knowles, 1990; Mezirow, 1997). This student negotiated her learning for a personal purpose, and her aim was to become a student at TCC (Saccomanno, 2017).

University graduates learn skills in practice: University graduates seek to learn skills matching their theoretical knowledge and to refine their readiness for employment at MCCs. One director believed that university graduates should seek their services:

Community college is a place for gaining skills. It is not only for the less fortunate but also for those who have graduated with diplomas or degrees or are already in work. This is because if you have a degree it does not mean that you are skilful in your work. You have to improve your practical skills. They can always come to community colleges to learn hands-on skills. (D-TCC)

An accountant teacher confirmed that university graduates do seek their service:

Usually university graduates will take skill courses to refresh what they have learned in universities. For example, accounting graduates always attend my classes; they want to learn the practical part of accountancy. (T3-HLCC [FGD])

Clearly, university graduates are seeking the help of MCCs to be proficient in their particular job requirement. This decision is positioning the graduates as self-directed learners under personal responsibility (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Knowles, 1975). In Malaysia, among employers' expectations of university graduates who are mostly theoretical expert is able to make independent decision in case of technical problems (Mohd Zain et al., 2017). In this situation, MCCs can boost the prospects of graduates through the Colleges' emphasis on teaching using hands-on methods. The fact that university students are coming to MCCs may reflect their social and emotional encounters in the workplace that prompts them to improve their practical and emotional knowledge (Illeris, 2003). The graduates can build trust with MCCs as a new context and culture of learning for

experiencing a positive significant transformation for their job needs (Baumgartner, 2001).

The above findings have enabled learners to construct some positive life experiences that might have emerged out of their long time/short term aspirations and ambitions. MCCs with their diverse and innovative courses are potentially helping every learner to experience learning differently and this tends to develop an awareness within themselves of newer feelings of personal fulfilment. Here, learners are not chasing a qualification to achieve a sense of personal fulfilment but they are plainly achieving some sought of satisfaction through simple positive engagement. With this exploration on achievements of MCCs, the next section provides a brief summary of this chapter.

7.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented findings and discussion on achievements of Malaysian Community Colleges, organised under the four domains of lifelong learning. The eight scenarios of achievements have been attuned to success of individuals facing a complex competitive economy. They were largely disadvantaged economically and socially among Malaysian society. The achievements have also illustrated three influential elements (economy, social and personal) that usually become the propelling factors for individuals to engage in lifelong learning activities, and such engagements may explain the functions of creating a “tomorrow society”/ a learning society through lifelong learning (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001). Furthermore, a deeper meaning of achievement is established through the active citizenship and personal fulfilment domains by expanding/linking learning to community/personal development. All the achievements have been premised on the two routes of lifelong learning opportunities, formal and non-formal/non-credit programmes and ongoing initiatives and support of the teachers in MCCs.

Within this context, the findings across the achievements have demonstrated learning for economic benefit as an important factor to engage people with learning again. In this capacity, young people (high school leavers) with poorer results to continue education are learning to gain a valid qualification to show their demanding employers and achieve a stable position in their work life. Working adults (low skilled) often challenged for their position in the workplace

by computer technology and other novel demands, are learning the skills to achieve better economic outcomes in their jobs. So, MCCs are establishing a comfortable connection between formal education and through very flexible entry requirements encourage more successful lifelong learners to emerge related to their own self-interests and reorienting themselves into new economic requirements consistent with the direction of lifelong learning (Wain, 2004). However, in MCCs all these positive developments are only happening with their aggressive promotions and teachers' initiations. In this way, MCCs are improving the numbers of people with human capital through achieving valid qualifications for Malaysia's increasingly growing local industries focussing in rural areas (Economic Planning Unit, 2011, 2016c).

Another important embedded component of the formal and non-formal programmes that brings new hope and achievement for learners at MCCs is entrepreneurial skills which become very accommodative to creating "brave" lifelong learners from young people and mature-aged adult learners. In practice, entrepreneurial knowledge has been merged with instrumental /specific /every day skills to be suitably innovative and adjust to the varied communities' needs – for example, retired military personnel/ passionate students /single women and create opportunity to achieve financial independence. Many learners are becoming self-employed individuals and providing work opportunities for other members in local communities – for example, the public employee who started a homestay business. A remarkable achievement of non-formal/non-credit programmes is that they have encouraged women to be lifelong learners employing everyday skills and plainly entrepreneurs with effective business ideas.

Findings have also highlighted that "true" success in learning is not confined to academic abilities especially for young people but significantly related to the external environment involving people and their activities. In this sense, MCCs are preparing their students with practical abilities (at community spaces and industrial sites) to develop their ability to think critically and solve problems which are argued to be important competencies for success at the workplace (Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2010; Michel, 2015). The engagement with the outside world is enhancing the students' social responsibility values – for example, they learned to care for isolated villagers. In spite of this, the teachers, on their own

have successfully created a sense of belonging connected to local people and organisations where they are frequently requested for a service – for instance, they made hospital attendants proficient in English and helped young school children to experience a productive school holiday. These external activities are importantly enriching humanistic values in teachers and students and building a healthy relationship between MCCs and their communities. Additionally, the learning space that is very hospitable in delivery created by MCCs increasingly is fulfilling multifceted aspirations and ambitions of local communities ranging from instrumental to leisure activities. MCCs’ position within local communities is more likely a “social engine” suggested by Miller and Kissinger (2007). They are providing educational activities to improve the quality of life of the geographically deprived communities in Malaysian society. Thus, MCCs’ achievements are complex; they not only engender success stories related to young people’s academic qualifications but help their local communities flourish through engaging with lifelong learning opportunities.

With these meaningful achievements for local communities, MCCs are also facing some challenges that the next chapter discusses.

CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: CHALLENGES

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore and build knowledge about community colleges as a new institution through examining their goals, contributions and challenges within Malaysian higher education in the context of lifelong learning. Chapter 6 presented the findings on goals and Chapter 7 continued with the achievements. This final chapter on findings and discussion presents challenges facing the community colleges to answer the third research question: What are the challenges of community colleges within Malaysian higher education?

In this chapter, challenges emerged out of data of the three different sub-populations (directors, teachers, and students), the main perspectives of different participants in this study. The data are restricted to four community colleges in Malaysia. Challenges here have been identified to be both pragmatic and conceptual. Some challenges had relevance to the centralised management of the community colleges by the DCCE. Most challenges showed a strong connection to teachers as being directly involved in students' learning as well as some crucial administrative tasks. One external challenge that overtly pressurised the colleges was their reputation in Malaysia. Thus, findings related to challenges are also presented under the four aspects of lifelong learning as in the two previous chapters.

Five sections cover the challenges in this chapter. The first section describes challenges that could inhibit MCCs' support from/for the economy. The second section explains problematic positions of MCCs that may create some issues in carrying out their obligations regarding social inclusion. The third section examines student recruitment, a task concealed within an imposed duty for some teachers in MCCs. The fourth section presents challenges troubling teachers and students about their position in the colleges because of their public perception.

The final section provides a brief summary of this chapter. Table 8.1 shows Malaysian Community Colleges and findings on their challenges.

Table 8.1. *Malaysian Community Colleges and their Challenges*

Lifelong Learning Aspects	Challenges
Economic Imperatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Imposed curricula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inappropriately allocated computer course • Furniture technology is not relevant to local industry • An outdated fashion course 2. Appointment and management of teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty becoming skill obsolete
Social Inclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Institutional reputation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind-set change • Too many institutions 4. The fear of student diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students of diverse age • Courses requiring diverse skills
Active Citizenship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Student recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraisal issues • Teachers recruiting students
Personal Fulfilment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Teacher's stigmatisation 7. Restricted credit provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate-only courses • Low salary potential

Table 8.1 presents seven scenarios of findings describing challenges facing MCCs as a new institution within the higher education system. The first challenge describes certain difficulties that the teachers are facing in dealing with centralised curricula mandated by the DCCE. The second challenge highlights teachers' positions, as public employees and teachers of dominant courses on industry skills. The third challenge is about the colleges' reputation that is not attractive to many parents and students. The fourth challenge questions teachers on their abilities to manage "students" of varied background and age groups. Active citizenry imposed a management challenge to the teachers that required them to be student recruiters in order to attain a better appraisal from their superiors. The sixth and seventh challenges may be an acquired challenge of the teachers and students from the colleges' reputation in Malaysia.

The next section looks at challenges of MCCs in managing the institutions for economic needs.

8.2 Challenges: Economic Imperatives

This section presents two challenges of economic imperatives: imposed curricula; faculty becoming skill obsolete.

Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs), a newcomer in the higher education system, have a prominent role in educating largely local communities in the rural areas (DCCE, 2012). The higher education institutions either private or public fall under a central control of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) as the Ministry wants to maintain a desirable standard and quality within its institutions. To maintain programmes' standards and quality the Ministry seeks the guidance of the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA, 2017). Under the supervision of the MOHE, MCCs have two higher authorities, the DCCE and the MQA. This central control at times can be problematic for MCCs as their mission is not solely on their campuses but also beyond into the community's space. In the interviews, the central directives were repeatedly raised as a point of tension in the comments of many participants with positions of authority in MCCs, mainly directors, head of departments and teachers.

In the first set of findings, I discuss problems that may result from the imposed centralised curriculum.

8.2.1 Imposed curricula

MCCs listen to the DCCE that regulates instruction to them from the Ministry of Higher Education and the MQA (DCCE, 2012). The director, D-SSCC, remarked on having limited autonomy in this power relationship:

Tourism! Why is it here that I cannot answer? The instruction just comes from the DCCE. If, the courses are not relevant, that is beyond our control. Some courses come with an approval of the MQA so we have to accept them. Actually, the entire instruction comes from the DCCE; we just receive whatever is given to us. (D-SSCC)

This director confirmed that their course curricula are an instruction from the DCCE with an accreditation from the MQA (DCCE, 2012). The director's expression notes a clear indication of uneasiness at the college level because he has to listen to the DCCE. Looking at the courses (see chapter 5); there are two

sets of courses including 15 continuous and 15 modular programmes from which a few selected courses are distributed almost in an equal manner to every MCC (DCCE, 2013, 2014). The continuous programmes come with the MQA standard while modular programmes gradually get the accreditation when a requirement is met (MQA, 2017). They are lifelong learning opportunities for adult learners with a connection to local industries (DCCE, 2013). However, the strategy of the DCCE is noted to have some flaws, as revealed by the criticisms of two teachers and one director in the following three examples.

An inappropriately allocated computer course: One teacher noticed a scheduled computer course did not match his College location:

The courses distributed in every college are almost the same, and I feel the DCCE is not that aware of the courses allocation, maybe they have to do more study. Here, for example, we have the IT course but in our area, to get the internet is difficult so how are we supposed to teach the IT students? It is a problem (T2-SSCC [FGD]).

This computer teacher described the problem of being required to teach his computer students when the College did not have a stable Internet connection. From my observation, I feel the College location itself is a problem as it is located deep in a plantation estate surrounded by oil palm trees. This teacher was not pleased and thus he called for reconsideration of courses' allocation at the national level. In fact, the Government is attempting to bridge a technology gap between the urban and rural areas through MCCs (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). This is evident in chapter 7, when MCCs attempt to teach computer skills for older adults and low skilled workers. In this context, SSCC is one of the 14 colleges to teach the computer course to rural communities (DCCE, 2013). However, the DCCE might have avoided this particular problem if it had been proactive and consulted the College or local level authorities before deciding on the course distribution. Furthermore, many rural areas are still under the development of fast Internet access (Economic Planning Unit, 2016c).

Furniture technology not relevant to local industry: One director noticed that a special course was not suitable:

When I talk about relevancy to community, I think the first three courses [computer software applications, fashion and apparel, and building maintenance] can provide job opportunities. The jobs can be anywhere and not necessarily in this neighbourhood. But the challenge is the furniture technology course that I feel has no connection at all with the community because here the furniture shops are not making anything locally, they are just buying from outside. Here, there is no factory to make furniture, which means students cannot find a job. (D-TCC)

This director considered that a course with a better connection with a local industry might be an easier transition for students to internship and employment. Thus, she was not happy with a special course, furniture technology, awarded to her College. TCC is one of the three MCCs that has been selected to teach this course. The course may have been a special consideration to TCC based on its geographical area, located in Malaysia's sawn timber processing industrial area (DCCE, 2013). However, the director felt the course was not suitable because there were no furniture-manufacturing people in that area besides those processing timber logs. This highlighted a point of tension between the governing authority, the DCCE, and the lower level of the relatively powerless MCCs. This may indicate another weakness of the DCCE with the claim of constructing courses to meet the need of local industry, is increasingly being questioned.

An out-dated fashion course: Another teacher believed her course curriculum was not following changing trends:

From the fact of curriculum, I think we still have to make a major improvement. As for the fashion course, the challenge is how many types of new skills of the industry a community college can provide because the competition is very high. Many private institutions out there have a better course package for students. Therefore, students start to question us, what is the capacity of our community colleges to meet their demands. (T6-TCC [FGD])

This teacher, a facilitator of a fashion design course, was rather apprehensive about the upward trend of a fashion industry and the increasing demands from the local students for the course. She was not happy with a fixed kind of curriculum for a modular programme popular among women participants. Modular programmes can upgrade relevant traditional small businesses and create more entrepreneurs in the rural areas (Abd Rahman et al., 2015). She is equally worried about losing her students if responding to changing trends in the fashion industry is not high on the DCCE's agenda. This teacher in particular was a selected industry expert from the local people because of her skill and thus she could easily foresee flaws in her course (Molesworth et al., 2009; Robson, 1998). This problem is also consistent with employers' complaints about automotive students at their sites, for industrial training, whom they felt not updated with new changes in automotive curricula (Kamin et al., 2010). This reflects that teachers have limited autonomy to make any changes to their curriculum. Hence, the DCCE has to consider evaluating their programmes frequently so the courses offered can be on par with competitive market needs. They need to consider at least some attractive courses for women to increase their participation.

The three above examples, note a confusion arising from imposed curricula that mainly results from lack of communication between the DCCE and the MCCs. The DCCE may have a reason for behaving so rigidly but at the college level, it often prevents them from carrying out their services effectively. In the second group of findings, I discuss complexities faced by the teachers in MCCs as educators under the directive of the Ministry of Higher Education.

8.2.2 Appointment and management of teachers

The centralised management is also influential in the process of appointment and later the management of teachers at MCCs. These teachers' appointment comes under the Public Service Department and the Education Service Commission as the institution is Government owned. Therefore, the teachers are a subset of the public service employees whose services are monitored by the Education Service Commission and the Ministry of Higher Education (DCCE, 2013; Education Service Commission, 2014). Since, they are part of public employees; they have to be responsive to constant changes in policy and practice and adhere to various

initiatives of the Ministry, implemented to improve teachers' quality of teaching (Jamil et al., 2014).

An imposed directive to the teachers is that their performance is also monitored according to Key Performing Indicators (KPIs) as part of higher education lecturers. D-HLCC explained:

The lecturers have to perform for their Key Performing Indicators (KPIs). All the lecturers have to teach the short courses participants and each lecturer has to manage around 150 participants per year, in addition to their full-time commitment to teaching about 20-25 hours per week. If they do not achieve their KPIs then their appraisal will be low. (D-HLCC)

Here, the director noted clearly the importance of KPIs for MCCs' teachers. Their KPIs include teaching fixed numbers (by searching) of non-credit students and enrolled full-time students in regular classes. In this case, every teacher must look for 150 non-credit students who may be out there among local communities to fulfil his/her KPIs requirement. Such KPIs may also burden the teachers as they involve year-end evaluation from their directors that will be seen in section 8.3.1. As a matter of fact, KPIs adhere to yearly assessment standards set by individual MCCs on their annual projects for the DCCE's record (DCCE, 2012). Thus, KPIs tend to recommend directors' assessment on teachers, if not as Ball (2003) asserted, they may be subject to moral disapprobation.

Faculty becoming skills obsolete: There is a problematic trend emerging around the teachers in MCCs based at these four sites. They too can become skill obsolete if they are not open to changing trends in industrial skills. A department head explained this struggle:

We lecturers always have to go for training especially in courses that often have changes in the skills, such as electrical and mechanical. Sometimes we can use the allocation provided by the Government for our professional development. The Ministry appoints most of us here because we have a vocational or technical skill but it is not enough, we have to learn more and more skills. (T1-SSCC [FGD])

This head of the department used his administrative position to explain his teachers' difficulties as staff in MCCs. The teachers are mostly graduates from polytechnics and universities under the higher education scheme selected to be teachers at the community colleges (Education Service Commission, 2014). They may have basic knowledge in vocational and technical education but may not be up to date with fast changing industrial skills and the teaching expert. From a small survey of the DCCE document, I realised the largest cohort of teachers had only general education followed by a study in one of engineering, electrical, computer or tourism, as other four main academic groups (DCCE, 2013). Therefore, they need to attend professional development courses in order to be sufficiently knowledgeable about their teaching subjects (Jamil et al., 2014). If not, they may be a qualified person vulnerable to skill obsolescence for having skills no longer relevant to current needs (Illeris, 2006). The need to update teachers' knowledge with industrial skills through professional development may be related to the concept of consumer culture, which is giving importance to customer (student) satisfaction (Molesworth et al., 2009).

These teachers are consistently choosing to learn new things in order to keep their civil appointments valid. A teacher of an electrical course noted:

I have gained lots of experience through visiting industrial sites and observing the people at work by building a connection with relevant industry. (T4-SSCC [FGD])

Moreover, a teacher of a culinary arts course said:

I always have to take some private coaching classes to strengthen my culinary skills. I have to keep myself updated with changes in the industry so I keep contacting the industry people on new developments. (T3-SCC [FGD])

Here, the teachers are becoming lifelong learners themselves to learn new things that could be worthwhile for their teaching. They are adjusting to informal and non-formal learning approaches as a way to keep themselves updated with new developments in their everyday practices (Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Jamil et al., 2014). These teachers as Illeris (2006) identified are the "educated" vulnerable group who can use their former knowledge to learn new skill and would not be so

likely to face skill obsolescence as industry workers (Van Loo et al., 2001). However, this performance-oriented culture may sometimes view educators as seeking individual performativity for institutional excellence beyond what might normally be expected from teachers (Ball, 2003, 2012). Teachers are increasingly challenging their own identity as educators who are supposed to impart their knowledge to students (Ball, 2012).

In the above examples, the teachers as Government staff have to adhere to prescribed responsibilities. These teachers are also dealing with ongoing change in industrial areas in response to students' expectations, thus avoiding being criticised as less experienced to teach them (Kamin et al., 2010). The next section presents challenges facing MCCs in regard to realising their social inclusion agenda.

8.3 Challenges: Social Inclusion

This section presents findings on the challenges, which face MCCs in their commitment to enabling more of their local communities' disadvantaged members to become lifelong learners. Two challenges I have identified in accord with this aspect are: institutional reputation and the challenge of teachers multi-tasking.

Malaysia encourages MCCs to provide lifelong learning opportunities to their local communities "within easy reach" to those "available at their doorsteps" (Idris, 2011, p. 128). This rationale directly implicates them as providers of lifelong learning programmes and the teachers as the facilitators of the programmes for local communities. However, people often have a negative perception towards MCCs and this was a disappointment for all three groups of participants in this study. Actually, the Colleges are designed to educate more disadvantaged people through social inclusion practices but unfortunately for several reasons the public has appeared to judge them prematurely.

The next subsection discusses how the people of Malaysia tend to ascribe a second-rate ranking to MCCs.

8.3.1 Institutional reputation

An excerpt from the Prime Minister's speech in the Tenth Malaysia Plan, 2010 states:

In a developed nation, vocational and technical education actually has become one of the most preferred courses by students as it has a good job prospect. On the other hand, in our country it is the last choice because of people's perception on limited job prospects. (DCCE, 2013, p. 49)

MCCs are one of the key vocational institutions that are one level lower than polytechnics in Malaysia (see chapter 6). This view, together with the position of MCCs between a secondary school and polytechnic or other higher education institutions, has made them very vulnerable to different perceptions (Idris, 2011; Ismail & Azman, 2010; OECD, 2014). One director said:

We are the lowest under the classification of higher education institutions in Malaysia. (D-SSCC)

On the list of the higher education institutions, this director placed the community colleges in the last place. As such, MCCs tend to be even marginalised in the higher education system akin to the Britain further education (Robson, 1998). Given this lower position, one teacher said:

Our biggest problem here is the people's mind-set. They feel vocational and technical educations are second-class education. (T2-TCC [FGD])

Institutional reputation is very important for any institution's public position and continuance, especially for parents and students. However, the under-acknowledged status of MCCs is becoming increasingly challenging, for several reasons, outlined below. That these Colleges mainly focus on vocational and technical education is also a barrier enabling social exclusion of them (World Bank, 2013).

Mind-set change: Some members of the public interpret MCCs as private institutions because of the word "college" in the title. D-SCC said:

We have almost 80 colleges but sadly, parents are not aware. They do not know community colleges are under the Ministry of Higher Education. They think community colleges are private institutions. (D-SCC)

One teacher said:

The confusion is in the usage of the term “college”. People tend to ignore the content of promotions. We tried to do promotions in many ways but still people ignore them, thinking that it is a promotion of a private institution and the fees must be high. (T4-HLCC [FGD])

The above observations are illustrative of a surprising assumption that affects people’s perceptions of MCCs. People tend to have stereotyped the term “colleges” to private institutions and not showing further interest in knowing about them (World Bank, 2013). Such an attitude must affect their ability to attract more participants and fulfil their social inclusion commitment. I myself encountered many curious Malaysian faces and attitudes when I talked about my study to them. A possible explanation is that MCCs have been mostly located in rural settings to help their disadvantaged local communities, and so have been treated as inferior as to and less popular than their urban counterparts have. Nevertheless, an immediate problem amid this confusion is MCCs’ student recruitment.

Too many institutions: It appears that many higher education institutions are available to serve students in Malaysia in a competitive environment:

The enrolment is very poor and it is difficult for us to find students because there are too many institutions. I believe there is still the stigma in community that sees community colleges as the last choice. People still cannot see the benefits and the pathway due to the stigma. (T4-TCC [FGD])

This teacher raised another point, the “many institutions”, and this might be a plausible reason why MCCs are not getting much attention from the people (potential enrollees). Malaysia has 578 higher education institutions comprising both public and private, of which 90 are MCCs as shown in table 7.1(DCCE, 2014).

Table 8.2. *Enrolment in higher education institutions in Malaysia (2016)*

Higher education Institutions (HEIs)	Number of HEIs	Number of students
Public Universities	20	560,559
Polytechnics	32	89,503
Community Colleges	90	21,468
Private Universities	53	232,198
Private Foreign Branch Campus	7	16,259
Private University Colleges	26	39,407
Private Colleges	350	197,099
Total	578	1,156,493

Source: Quick Facts 2016: Malaysia Educational Statistics (Ministry of Education, 2016)

All these institutions can at one time serve around one million students in Malaysia. In this expanded diversified institutional mix, the role of MCCs is increasingly becoming crucial as being a newcomer in the system with a remark of “ a less understood world of colleges, diplomas, [and] certificates” (OECD, 2014, p. 11). A conservative belief that higher education institutions are only to produce graduates with bachelor’s degrees is further hampering MCCs actual mission: a new higher education emerged out of neo-liberal practices to help the vulnerable at risk (Davies & Bansel, 2007).

The next section look at the teachers’ work challenges.

8.3.2 The fear of student diversity

All four directors noted that MCCs’ teachers face very heavy workloads. One director gave a snapshot of lecturers’ jobs in MCCs:

Lecturers here have to do many different scopes of work. They have to teach many classes. They have to do administrative jobs. They have to fulfil the communities’ demands and their working time is not fixed. Therefore, it is a pressurised job being a lecturer here. (D-SCC)

The directors were well aware of the work required of a teacher in MCCs. The teachers have to assimilate into a culture that may be unique: serving every educational demand emerging from local communities and high school students (Chen & Wang, 2009; Dougherty, 2002; Punthumasan & Maki, 2009; Vaughan, 2000).

Students of diverse age: In MCCs a teacher may have students who range from five to 80 years of age, and who arrive with different hopes. One teacher explained this challenging task:

We must be quick to adapt to situations. Just imagine from Monday to Friday we teach full-time students. On Saturdays, we teach primary schoolchildren how to colour and then on Sundays we teach aunts who are already in their 60s to cook in the cookery class. This is our life here. (T5-TCC [FGD])

It appears that the teachers have a fixed routine to teach full-time students on weekdays and then again over the weekends, when new sets of students arrive. The challenge here is to adjust time and course preparation to facilitate and satisfy each group of students. Participants may come for different purposes from a beginners baking class to a complicated course such as car servicing (as the examples in chapter 7). Here, the teachers are actually responding to economic issues of lifelong learning participants (Janang, 2014). In this scenario, teachers are facing a complex teaching and learning situation that may not create an opportunity for them to specialise in any particular subject as do many other teachers (Robson, 1998). This situation may also question their quality as “teachers” and may stigmatise them to low grading standards as discussed in subsection 8.5.1.

Courses requiring diverse skills: The teachers’ challenge is not only the students but they also have to equip themselves with new skills and knowledge all the time to manage different courses. Another teacher explained this:

I am a graduate of a computer background but I cannot rely on IT alone to be a lecturer here. I must know IT. I must know cooking. I must know how to make furniture and maintain furniture. I must know sewing. I must know a lot of things. Whatever the needs of the community here, we must be able to provide. (T4-TCC [FGD])

Here, the teachers must learn many skills; otherwise, they may not be able to handle the varied groups of students. MCCs seem to be well aware that teaching local communities in a wider context can only be successful if the teachers are committed to learn new skills always and all the time. The institutions are using a portion of yearly budget to provide in-service training for their teachers (Jamil et

al., 2014). Such training may cause anxiety in some teachers as it involves continuous learning of courses that have little interest in terms of improving their professional qualification. Some might also ask how much a teacher can learn in order to accommodate constantly changing adult participants and teach predominantly lower-level courses. This may discourage teachers from carrying out their duties with real commitment. One teacher said:

Lecturers at community colleges can become a real problem if they do not have the passion and interest to teach. It is a challenge to retrain teachers who have lost interest in teaching to a demand here. We have to send them for two weeks training to boost their spirit. In the training, they would be drilled on the bright side of producing successful students. The lecturers will be motivated in this attitude. (T4-TCC [FGD])

This statement demonstrates that some teachers experience a degree of mental stress as they deal with a very different culture of teaching and learning, and one that is probably not at all what they anticipated in becoming a higher education educator. To orientate teachers into the MCC culture the Ministry has both an induction programme and continuous in-service professional development programmes (DCCE, 2012; Jamil et al., 2014). It is possible that these teachers are getting frustrated over extra-imposed training for lower level skills hardly resulting in any job satisfaction. Nevertheless, this new broadened responsibility is definitely creating confusion for many MCCs' teachers, as propounded by this director:

All lecturers here are full-time lecturers; there are no part-time lecturers, as we can't afford to pay them. All lecturers here have to handle everything solely. We have many things in compliance to the DCCE plan. It is easy for them [the DCCE] to say but we know how difficult it is. (D-SCC)

This director herself seemed to be disappointed with certain practices at MCCs and teachers may equally feel the tensions. Their job scope is to fulfil an institutional mission shaped by the DCCE. The next example points to one situation commonly encountered by teachers in MCCs.

As explained in Chapter 7, ex-servicemen are the only veterans in full-time programmes. However, these mature students are problematic for young teachers in MCCs:

At times, we have to face problematic students from the PERHEBAT [retired army officers' society]. Very often, we lecturers will be younger and it is difficult to gain their [ex-servicemen's] respect in the class. The challenge is teaching them. Sometimes they will be more knowledgeable than the teachers in the courses, they are enrolled. We have to do a lot preparation to teach the ex-servicemen, who usually come with negative attitudes. Many only come here to get a valid certificate to work - that is all they want. (T3-TCC [FGD])

This young teacher described very clearly the ordeal of facing more mature as well as more experienced, adults in her class. She had trouble managing the adult students who were in her class after their military life. For the veterans, learning is a need to gain a skill at their mid-age and use that skill to lead a regular civilian life (Rumann et al., 2011). However, the presence of those mature full-time students was challenging for the young teacher: specifically, to make them stay focussed on the lesson and follow her teaching. In addition, they might have already known the skill and were only attending to gain a valid certificate. The veterans may be behaving in such way because they are not comfortable in the class for reasons as identified by Rumann et al. (2011) in their study. Whatever the reasons were the good intentions of MCCs dealing with this specialised sector of the population tends to result in problems for regular teachers. As Ismail and Azman (2010) suggested in regard to teaching adults in MCCs, the young teachers need to be innovative in designing the class using friendly and student-centred learning style with more challenging activities. Or else, MCCs can consider appointing facilitators from the military background itself to handle their personnel, as suggested by some scholars (Myran & Ivery, 2013; Rumann et al., 2011).

MCCs have a problem probably through being a new entry into the system in an era when the other institutions have already established themselves to provide postsecondary education to many students. They are like invisible colleges that potentially have attractive packages and promises for students. The next section

examines further challenges for teachers brought about by MCCs' commitment to active citizenship. Teachers are becoming student recruiters.

8.4 Challenges: Active Citizenship

This section presents findings on the challenges of active citizenship that I observed in the teachers' work in student recruitment.

In MCCs, fostering active citizenship through educational activities is important as a way to encourage stronger societal values and economic success (Michel, 2015). In addition to a standard on-campus practice, MCCs encourage their teachers to involve students in various local community activities to bring a collective benefit (Fiume, 2009) where teachers are also recruiting students as discussed in chapter 7. Again, teachers, arguably the backbone of the staffing, tend to be facing a continuous challenge. Findings highlight one challenge here, student recruitment.

8.4.1 Student recruitment

Appraisal issue: MCC teachers have little choice but to get involved in student recruitment. If they fail to do so, they may not be eligible for year-end performance measurement. One director said:

Teachers have to find participants for short courses to get their appraisal "right" in the Key Performance Indicators [KPIs]. They have to go to schools to recruit students. For example, yesterday the SPM [high school examination] results were out and all of the teachers were in schools to look for students. (D-SSCC)

The director may sound intimidating but he might be just following a directive from the DCCE. He may just want to fulfil a goal to increase student enrolment as a new institution in a competitive market. This task is consistent with the Britain colleges where student recruitment is seen as a crucial administrative task (Robson, 1998). In this case, as mentioned earlier, the teachers' KPIs include student recruitment. Every MCC is required to set a target number of students at their year-end report to receive a budget from the DCCE. This budget can only be used based on the number of students in the enrolment list throughout a year (DCCE, 2012). As a compliance of the budget, teachers are expected to recruit

students and get rewarded year-end appraisal by the directors. This evaluation helps MCCs to deal with student recruitment, which this study's findings have demonstrated consistently to be one of their critical challenges. The DCCE is perhaps trying to get a quick solution to a crucial problem through this assignment of teachers. On the other hand, the increased emotional stress to which this expectation brings means that this task goes beyond their responsibilities as educators.

Teachers recruiting students: During interviews, teachers in all four Colleges had much to say about student recruitment. One teacher said:

Maybe out there still many do not know about this College and we have to do more promotion so that we can recruit more students. (T3-SSCC [FGD])

Another said:

Not many know about our College so we have to go and meet the community here to promote our courses to them. We need to find students. (T2-TCC [FGD])

One more teacher added:

Our relationships with this College must change. We are asked to do too many irrelevant tasks other than teaching. We are doing administrative jobs as usual and besides that, we have to search for students for both full-time and short courses. Our commitment is very high. (T3-SCC [IAQ])

All three teachers appear to have taken the job of finding students as a core responsibility in order to meet their target for performance appraisal. Here, the teachers may appear to be carrying out a civic responsibility but in fact, they have been tied to external values of control that answer to the requirements of performativity. They are being required to "translate complex social processes and events into some simple figures or categories of judgement", as performativity is described by Ball (2003, p. 217). By recruiting students, these teachers have already created a new identity for themselves as student recruiters (Ball, 2003). One teacher expounded on the different roles of the teachers in MCCs:

We are here, everything, promoter, teacher, trainer, motivator; we are the one. (T4-TCC [FGD])

However, in acting as recruiters, teachers may be establishing a closer relationship with their local communities that can also lead to the enrolment of more valuable students in their programmes and produce more quality graduates (Michel, 2015).

MCCs' teachers are undertaking a crucial administrative task, student recruitment, to get a good appraisal from their directors at the year-end evaluation. They not only have to recruit students but also need to enrol a fixed number of quantifiable students and this pre-set task is causing some teachers to experience undesirable pressure. The next section examines findings that could be a challenge to the personal fulfilment goals of teachers and students.

8.5 Challenges: Personal Fulfilment

This section presents findings on challenges to personal fulfilment. Teachers and students are the active players in MCCs, with their educational involvement bringing some form of satisfaction for them. However, a disparaging remark from a circle of friends and relatives can affect their sincere involvement in the Colleges, and this can be a challenge for personal fulfilment. Two challenges I have identified in this aspect: teacher's stigmatisation and restricted credit provision.

The next subsection points out a source of tension for teachers caused by their colleagues.

8.5.1 Teacher's stigmatisation

The public, by perceiving MCCs as less popular institutions is affecting the teachers' feelings. This is becoming a very specific personal challenge for their profession. One teacher explained:

My personal opinion, it is not an issue of teaching here but the real problem is outsiders' stigma. When people see a community college as their last choice, they tend to relate to us teachers here as less good. In fact, we are from various education backgrounds and some of us even have masters [the degree]. In addition, we learn new skills here every day. We are upgrading our skills always, not like those lecturers in polytechnics and universities. I am proud to have both education and skills but also sad with people's thinking. It is shocking. (T4 -TCC [FGD])

This teacher expressed deep resentment towards his teacher-friends having hardly any appreciative comments about MCC teachers. They are being treated as “second-class” teachers within the profession itself. MCCs are often on the verge of being placed at the bottom of all higher education institutions, and this is further casting doubt on the ability of the teachers (Robson, 1998). These colleges perhaps cannot escape from such treatment as globally community colleges as post-secondary institutions are regarded as lower status institutions for offering lower level qualifications (OECD, 2014; Robson, 1998). One teacher clarified:

When we send our students for competitions that involve all other higher education institutions in the zone, the organisers will be always sceptical of what our students can do. They will look at us teachers differently as though what can we do with weak students. That is sad but our students are good, most of the time they will be the champions. (T6-SCC [FGD])

This comment was illustrative of a direct treatment of scepticism from other higher education teachers. In this case, they were sceptical about the students’ chances of success in the competition. This may also reflect a social belief that only educational settings with higher achievers can be a source of excellence. Therefore, greater challenge for the MCCs’ teachers is people’s attitude, directly affecting their practices at MCCs. This dubious status is disturbing not only to teachers but also to students, as I discuss in the following subsection.

8.5.2 Restricted credit provision

MCCs provide a new two years pathway programme to the next level of higher study (Department of Skills Development, 2015). Thus, MCCs award qualifications mainly as certificates, and only a few diplomas. In the qualification hierarchy a certificate is placed at Level 1-3 to indicate “one field of study without any specialisation” (MQA, 2017, p. 27) that requires a minimum of 60 credits from four semesters on aggregate. Under this construction, the task of MCCs is to produce certificate holders with lower level industrial skills out of approximately 40 per cent of the annual high school students (Idris, 2011). This placing tends to disadvantage MCCs; the fact that many parents do not favour them is also affecting students who undertake the courses. Students are frequently lacking any positive support from family members. One director mentioned this:

The parents always relate community colleges as no good for having low fees certificate courses. Parents think it is cheap and keep it as the last option for their children. (D-HLCC)

This shows that many parents are clearly not in favour of MCCs; they are ambitious and wishing to see their children succeeding with a higher qualification. In this sense, students who are pursuing study at MCCs may be regarded as the less capable for undertaking a higher level study programme. Thus, students of MCCs are often belittled by negative comments as seen in the following examples.

Certificate-only courses: Students already enrolled in a programme were still unsure about their decision to study at one of the MCCs.

S4-HLCC expressed his embarrassment:

Most of our friends are pursuing a diploma and here we are only taking a certificate course. We feel a bit down, very low to do a certificate course here. Polytechnics have a higher status and people really appreciate their qualification. (S4-HLCC [FGD])

S6-SCC was anxious about what others think of him:

Some believe that a certificate course of community colleges has no value. They are always sceptical on what we can do by learning sewing and cooking. They value diploma and degrees but not a certificate. (S6-SCC [FGD])

S5-SSCC shared the reaction he received from his family members:

I have many cousins similar to my age. Some of them have diplomas and some are studying in universities. They will ask me where I am studying and the moment I mention community college, they will just turn away by saying, "Oh... certificate only". (S5-SSCC [FGD])

These three students were plainly rather disgruntled to be learners in a certificate course only. The ridicule of family members and friends might encourage them to discontinue their courses. As Zeidenberg (2008) identified in his study, community colleges students can easily decide to quit halfway through their study resulting from their own inability to adjust to the social circumstances. In this case, students who are really enthusiastic about their study being confused by their own

close relations and this may contribute to a decision to the quit. Therefore, a challenge for MCCs is to motivate their students, despite public perception, to persevere and complete all required standards and learning outcomes to receive a valid credential (MQA, 2017). A guided pathway using four structured ways as suggested by Van Noy et al. (2016) in the USA may be a help for MCCs. It could place students on a productive track from the very first day of their enrolment and they may not be easily influenced by any negative remarks from outside people.

Low salary potential: A belief that a certificate will only qualify the recipient for a low salary is also discouraging to potential MCC mature students. One teacher said:

For automotive, the demand is there, but it is only the students who do not apply for the course because they feel having a certificate in automotive will only qualify them for a little salary but a lot of work and long working hours. They prefer an easier job with more salary. (T5-SSCC [FGD])

Here, the expectation that a certificate holder could only gain a modest salary is keeping some mature students away from MCCs. This teacher's anxiety seems to be supported by a national level perception of students of MCCs that they "will only qualify at a technician level for jobs and not any higher such as supervisory positions" (Idris, 2011, p. 124). This kind of disapproving endorsement may have disposed potential students not to consider study at MCCs at all. However, MCCs may overcome such barriers by building a community identity that includes and represents all their successful certificate holders, possibly through lifelong learning, as evidence to share with their local communities, particularly the younger generation (Wenger & Trayner, 2015).

MCCs' teachers and students may have been undervalued because they are closely associated with an already underrated higher education institution. A challenge of MCCs is to create a positive transformational space for teachers and students to reduce their anxiety produced primarily by external factors.

The following provides a brief summary of this chapter.

8.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented findings related to challenges of Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs), discussed under the four domains of lifelong learning. The findings uncovered significant challenges for MCCs those mostly involving teachers as they are dealing with two levels of directives, the DCCE and their directors. MCCs as a newcomer within expanded higher education institutions may find it difficult to convey their new higher education mission to people. The teachers are facing challenges as the mediators to foster lifelong learning for an educationally-deprived segment of local communities. Thus, MCCs are facing unsettled environments in terms of their curriculum, teachers' duties, teaching and learning procedures and student enrolment as challenges.

Centralised management of the DCCE is restricting MCCs practices at the College level. They seem to be committed to embrace the national mission and goals stringently as they are publicly funded institutions defined to serve educationally-deprived people in Malaysian society. In this sense, MCCs are creating a new culture within higher education using lifelong learning as the vehicle for their local communities. This new scenario is actually very different from earlier higher education provision and practices in the system; thus, making it difficult for MCCs to spell-out their realities to the public at large. A need to promote themselves to their clientele is increasingly becoming their challenge.

A distinguishing feature of MCCs from other higher education institutions is their student demographics and of those, a revealing characteristic is their students varying levels of academic ability. Therefore, they tend to use a dominant discourse to suit their prevalent learners of practical technical and vocational education linked to industrial skills. This dominant discourse is actually shaping the teaching and learning practices of MCCs and inevitably posing some challenges to teachers and students.

Findings revealed that the teachers have to orientate themselves continuously to ongoing industry changes in order to retain curricula relevance related to their student expectations. The diversity of students from local communities is becoming another challenge for the teachers where they have to match their styles of teaching and knowledge to ever changing needs. MCCs with a lower reputation

are not an attraction for ambitious parents so they have to exploit their teachers' services for student recruitment with a promise of a positive annual performance appraisal. The acquired reputation is also affecting negatively the teachers' services and students' learning in the Colleges. Finally, the teachers are consistently questioning themselves for having the feeling of alienation as teachers at MCCs.

The next chapter brings the final conclusion and implications for this study

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study was to construct an exploratory knowledge about community colleges as a new public higher education institution in Malaysian system in the context of lifelong learning. This study emerged out my professional experience as a teacher dealing with a lower stratum of young people and my personal interest on lifelong learning that has been shaping my educational journey. My initial knowledge about community colleges was an institution advocating lifelong learning opportunities for young people from a deprived background. These colleges in their infant stage did not really impress many scholars, in Malaysia, so I decided to investigate them as an opportunity to continue my educational journey.

In order to achieve this aim, as outlined in Chapter 4, I conducted a qualitative inquiry using a multiple case study approach. For the field study, I carefully selected four community colleges from four different parts in Malaysia (see figure 4.3). At each site, I consulted three sub-populations (directors, teachers and students), explored their constructed thoughts about community colleges in terms of goals, achievements, and challenges (see section 4.3) using three main interactive research methods (see section 4.2). Additionally, documents from the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Department of Community College Education (DCCE), I used as informative data. Throughout this study, I adopted a constructivist-interpretive approach in terms of collecting, analysing (thematic analysis), and reporting data.

As outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, I wanted to find the theoretical significance of the establishment of community colleges within Malaysian higher education in the context of lifelong learning. To establish an understanding, I examined and constructed a conceptual framework out of the three global market principles (human capital, globalisation and neoliberalism and a knowledge economy) to understand their influences on the arrival of lifelong learning as the new agent of higher education development and establishment of community colleges in

Malaysia around 2000s (see figure 3.1). I believed all four principles would have strongly impacted upon local higher education policies and practices especially after becoming an independent nation from Britain in 1957. Of particular interest, I also explored the formation of the first university to understand changes in the provision of formal education as Malaysian society continues to evolve.

The theoretical examination showed a positive connection to the establishment of Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs) in the era of lifelong learning. MCCs emerged out of the global developments (human capital, globalisation and neoliberalism and a knowledge economy) prompting consistent restructuring in the Malaysia Economic Plans that eventually introduced lifelong learning with better higher education policies and practices to help the structurally disadvantaged population through them. They might have been disadvantaged geographically, economically and socially; these have been identified by the World Bank (2013) as social exclusion factors. In this study, “the disadvantaged” are those people living in a less developed area with limited access to educational opportunities and they are economically and socially deprived because of a competitive education system and challenging economy in Malaysia. Community colleges may have come to help salvage the conditions of the disadvantaged.

Within the Malaysian context, lifelong learning came as a new focus to place knowledge in a broader context from 2011 onwards (see subsection 2.5.1). This new development has placed MCCs in a position to provide new types of higher education opportunities for the disadvantaged primarily in lifelong learning context acknowledging its four fundamental aspects: economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Finsden & Formosa, 2011). Therefore, the final conclusion has been presented under the four aspects of lifelong learning addressing their relationship to its context.

In Chapters 6, 7 and 8, I have presented findings and discussion of goals, achievements and challenges in three individual chapters. In this chapter, I draw key findings of the three elements to answer the overarching research question: What are the goals, achievements and the challenges of community colleges within Malaysian higher education and how are they related to lifelong learning?

Thus, the first section demonstrates key findings on MCCs and their goals, achievements, and challenges in Table 9.1 with an outline describing the findings. The next four subsections discuss the findings in detail under the four aspects of lifelong learning. Section two summarises the key points of this study. Section three explains the theoretical and the methodological contributions. Section four states the significance of MCCs while section five explains the limitations of this study and directions for future research. Section six provides some recommendations based on the challenges identified in this study. The final section provides some implications for policy and practices for the Malaysian Government in connection with the future development of MCCs.

9.2 Malaysian Community Colleges and their Goals, Achievements and Challenges

This section discusses key findings of MCCs and their goals, achievements and challenges under the four aspects of lifelong learning. In what follows, I have demonstrated all key findings of the goals, achievements and challenges in Table 9.1. A brief outline describes the main facts about the findings.

Table 9.1. *Malaysian Community Colleges and their Goals, Achievements and Challenges*

Lifelong Learning Aspects	GOALS	ACHIEVEMENTS	CHALLENGES
Economic Imperatives	1. To be a hub for lifelong learning 2. To provide qualification programmes	1. A greater help for the “left-out” students 2. Upskilling working people	1. Imposed curricula 2. Appointment and management of teachers
Social Inclusion	3. To serve local communities 4. To help the ‘left-out’ students	3. For people achieving financial independence 4. For disadvantaged citizens acquiring new knowledge	3. Institutional reputation 4. The fear of student diversity
Active Citizenship	5. To be actors of Corporate Social Responsibility programmes 6. To establish support from local communities	5. Social responsibility of teachers and students 6. Social responsibility from teachers	5. Student recruitment
Personal Fulfilment	7. To provide a non-credit programme 8. To provide “second chance” education	7. Non-formal education for personal development 8. Formal education for personal fulfilment	6. Teachers’ stigmatisation 7. Restricted credit provision

Table 9.1 shows MCCs and their key findings characterising their goals, achievements and challenges. I found the overarching goal is to become hubs for lifelong learning and this has been shaping the functions and practices in reality. This understanding became clear through my examination of the findings in this study under the four aspects of lifelong learning where the goals are positioned. MCCs have been influenced by the idea of lifelong learning on creating “tomorrow’s society” or “ a learning society” or “learning throughout life” (Delors, 1996) that was framed according to the four aspects of lifelong learning (Field, 2001; Findsen & Formosa, 2011), which I used in this investigation.

The significance of two forms of lifelong learning, formal and non-formal (Boshier, 2006; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Livingstone, 2002), can be observed in their goals to provide qualification programmes (full-time and modular), and non-credit programmes (short courses), respectively. These two programmes are mainly used as the instruments to help reposition quality of life for local communities by meeting their educational needs. Local communities are specified into two broader targeted groups – young people and mature-aged adults – and they have been disadvantaged in terms of educational opportunities. There are three main circumstances (location, finance and social beliefs) in Malaysian society that are quickly changing while following global trends. Here, the social inclusion function started to appear from the point of need to educate much-diversified groups of local communities. In order to cope this demanding situation, they provide services in two ways: on campus and off campus that Vaughan (1997) described as the core and the edge activities for the American community colleges.

To fulfil the off campus service, MCCs broaden access to community spaces to benefit both staff and citizens positively. This facilitates the teachers and students social responsibility to local communities in the service domain and promotes MCCs to them. The external services are enabled via Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes (CSR) administer a sense of active citizenship. MCCs are new access institutions included within Malaysian higher education for the local communities. In this position they allow for a “second chance” providing very different learning experiences for their returning students and to create an opportunity for them to achieve personal fulfilment goals.

To note some remarkable moves towards achievements through these goals, MCCs are helping women with few or no qualifications to achieve their financial independence through building upon everyday skills and entrepreneurial knowledge (see subsection 7.2.1). They are also making older adults cognitively active through computer accessibility. As for the challenges, MCCs are often confronted concerning their reputation by parents and students that inevitably locate their teachers and students as victims of criticism. More achievements and challenges are discussed in the next four following subsections.

9.2.1 Economic Imperatives and MCCs

Findings on goals demonstrated dominance towards the economic urgency consistent with the required goals of the two governing bodies, the DCCE and the MOHE (see section 6.1). I found the goals are strongly meant to help a lower strata Malaysian society living in less developed areas (see table 6.2 and the illustration) to experience a good quality of life. This function has been reinforced when they became the hubs of lifelong learning for local communities in 2011 (section 6.1.1). The idea to provide education for less fortunate local communities might have been imported from the original mission of the American community colleges (Boone, 1997; Myran, 1978; Vaughan, 1997) but with an added emphasis on lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is becoming the defining characteristic of MCCs similar to other community colleges in Southeast Asia (Chen & Wang, 2009; Punthumasen & Maki, 2009; Wong, 2015). This concern within higher education for a diversified population, highlighted the importance of qualification programmes in the form of formal education as organised and systematic learning in lifelong learning context (Boshier, 2006; Formosa, 2016). Formal education is providing a “second chance” as a new meaningful opportunity for those who might have been the “casualties” of globalisation, neo-liberal initiatives and a knowledge economy (Brown, 2001; Davies & Bansel, 2007; De Grip, 2006; Illeris, 2006; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Van Loo et al., 2001). Those “casualties” are identified in the findings as young people with inadequate school experience and adults in local communities with low income and low skills (see subsection 6.2.1 and 6.2.2).

Young adults continue to be the priority group in common with systems in other countries (Bonham, 2005; Dougherty, 2002; Grubb, 2006; Parry, 2005; Punthumasen & Maki, 2009). In MCCs these young people constitute the “left-out” students (see subsection 6.2.2). This makes it essential as shown in the findings to make explicit minimum high school entry requirements in order to locate them as regular students in a full-time programme recognised by the Malaysian Qualification Framework (see table 5.1 and the programmes’ descriptions).

Findings highlighted an achievement of MCCs through creating three clear opportunity routes – transfer, employment, and entrepreneurship – for the “left-out” students matching their interests and ability (see subsection 7.1.1). Some students take the transfer route to a polytechnic that usually accepts them for a diploma programme and this pathway is the most important function in many community colleges (Handel, 2007; Parry, 2005; Punthumasen & Maki, 2009; Wong, 2015). Many go into immediate employment in a skilled job after building their competences and this function has been illustrated as occupational training for a lower skill job (Dougherty, 2002; Leary, 2012; Russell, 2011). In addition, all students are equipped with entrepreneurial knowledge as a crucial part of their curriculum in case the other two routes are no longer open and this approach follows an almost similar framework suggested by Jamieson (1984). The entrepreneurial components are designed to make a difference at MCCs and may prepare young adults to face current challenges and future uncertainty (Henry et al., 2005; Seth, 2017).

Low skilled workers, and a new group potentially becoming low skilled as a consequence of so called knowledge economy, constitute other significant economically disadvantaged working people consistent with many studies (Brown, 2001; De Grip, 2006; Illeris, 2006; Leigh & Gill, 2009; OECD, 2013; Van Loo et al., 2001). Findings strongly showed evidence that upskilling programmes are a road of achievement for many types of working people to continuously engage in learning for a better performance at their workplaces (see subsection 7.1.2). They prefer engaging with qualification programmes as workers because of flexible timetables, cheaper course fees, and use of their work experience for entry acceptance in accord with the Economic Planning Unit (2016c) (see subsection 2.5.1). For instance, a tailor upskilled her two low-skilled

workers with a new skill and expanded her business to the next level, which also contributed to the attainment of a higher salary for the workers. This category of low skilled worker has been noted as a classic vulnerable “at-risk” person (Illeris, 2006) yet a person with talent (Myran & Ivery, 2013) whom Russell (2011) argued important to be cared for in terms of new opportunity. Public sector employees amid the lower income group learn computer courses for regular upgrading of their computer skills with new applications to avoid skill obsolescence, as identified by authorities such as De Grip (2006) and Van Loo et al. (2001). MCCs’ graduates (young adults) constitute a continuous and permanent upskilling audience; they receive job specific skills and sector specific skills to support their career to avoid economic obsolescence in a competitive economy (De Grip, 2006; Illeris, 2006; Van Loo et al., 2001).

Apart from the fact that formal education has helped different groups of disadvantaged people, findings also indicated that a challenge was faced by MCCs through the curriculum imposed on them (see subsection 8.1.1). The DCCE claimed that the curriculum was distributed according to a pre-established procedure to every MCC (see section 5.1), but at the college level, it posed some problems. For example, a computer teacher complained about the difficulty he had to face in his computer classes as the Internet service was frequently interrupted in his College area. A director was dissatisfied with a course special to her College that had only a limited connection to the local industry despite it being supposed to be relevant. Another teacher felt that her fashion design course was not following the newer trends and changes in the industry. These challenges are consistent with a remark of the OECD (2014); a challenge for a post-secondary institution is their overtly industry-based curriculum modifications to meet the needs of quickly changing industries. This also raises a question of the effectiveness in MCCs of a curriculum largely dependent on industry-based skills. Concurrently, these fast-changing industrial skills are also challenging the teachers’ relevance to their students’ needs as predicted by Molesworth et al. (2009). This tends to put the teachers under continuous pressure as they have to consistently upgrade their knowledge and skills to industrial relevance and standards (see subsection 8.1.2), noted to be fulfilling a performativity agenda (Ball, 2003, 2012). In this condition, findings support the suggestion that some

professionally-educated group, such as teachers, can also face a situation defining them as skill-obsolete persons if their professional development is not on a par with changing requirements of work (De Grip, 2006; Illeris, 2006; Van Loo et al., 2001).

9.2.2 Social Inclusion and MCCs

While the economic imperative has direct relevance to economically disadvantaged people (they undergo the impact of economic changes), it is through social inclusion initiatives in education that they can better reconnect to society. This is also an attempt of widening access in higher education (Bhola, 2006; Preece, 2006). I strongly believe that this function of social inclusion is the one which best distinguishes MCCs from other higher education institutions in Malaysia. In this alignment, findings noted MCCs as providing individuals considered socially disadvantaged because of lack of academic achievement, material conditions, age or disability factors, with an opportunity to improve their ability and to gain higher financial benefits (see subsection 6.1.1 and 6.2.1). This showed relevance to serving geographically excluded local communities who are poor and/or lack useful knowledge (World Bank, 2013). In this lifelong learning context, non-formal education in the form of short courses is playing an effective role as solid non-credit programmes following a systematic approach (Baker, 2013; Findsen & Formosa, 2011; Grubb et al., 2003).

These findings highlight some roads to achievement of the vulnerable in Malaysian society (see subsection 7.2.1). For example, disabled school students received an early intervention programme blended with entrepreneurial skills to foster independent living after school. Low-income workers and retired army personnel who have only traditional work experience and a regimented lifestyle respectively, developed new career paths by adopting essential life skills and entrepreneurial knowledge. The findings highlighted a belief of MCCs that skills with business knowledge can empower and improve self-esteem of less fortunate people, consistent with the suggestion that if the “right” skills are provided to disadvantaged communities, they can make progress in life (Russell, 2011). One director even attempted to establish a partnership with prison authorities so that the inmates can become lifelong learners at her College. This signified an attempt

to improve people's condition in a stark example of exclusion (World Bank, 2013). This group achieved their financial independence; meanwhile older adults who are often intimidated by computer technology are learning at MCCs (see subsection 7.2.2). They are familiarising themselves with the new knowledge to be active cognitively and resourceful; every nation wants their older citizens to become more active citizens (Duay & Bryan, 2008; Ibrahim et al., 2016).

The positive initiatives towards social inclusion have also brought associated challenges. One of the most spoken challenges by teachers and students was that of MCCs receiving disparaging remarks from people at large and these comments are directly affecting them emotionally and physically (see subsection 8.2.1 and 8.4.2). Another challenge faced by the teachers was their personal ability to manage and provide benefits to the widely varied and different capacities of students who may range from as young as five years old to an older person of 80 years old (see subsection 8.2.2). For instance, a young teacher was upset dealing with mature army veterans who perceived themselves as more experienced than she was. An outcome of this challenge is for teachers to frequently engage themselves in professional development programmes at the Ministry and institutional level (Jamil et al., 2014), and this may boost their individual and collective credibility as teachers.

9.2.3 Active Citizenship and MCCs

As another function of MCCs, active citizenship includes making contact with socially deprived people living in local communities, perhaps not in a position to enrol in the Colleges' programmes for individual reasons. This constitutes one more important goal in fulfilling their mission alongside social inclusion (Bhola, 2006; Preece, 2006). In comparison with the function of other community colleges, this role serves the purpose of civic engagement similar to serving grassroots communities in Taiwan (Chen & Wang, 2009). In the American community colleges, it is known as community education/service or edge activities (Boone, 1997; Myran, 1978; Vaughan, 1997; Wang, 2013). In MCCs, the conduit for working outside the conventional context is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes that encourage teachers and students to act as social actors with business behaviour (Chandler & Werther, 2014; Williams,

2014). Findings clarified the style of CSR programmes as similar to service learning (Chen & Wang, 2009; Fiume, 2009; Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2010) (see subsection 6.3.1). In this external engagement, informal learning that largely involves experiential knowledge (Findsen & Formosa, 2011) may have taken place in the process of the off campus delivery of the non-formal education for students and teachers. This kind of learning essentially helps to cultivate values for active citizenship.

As findings reveal concerning achievements (see subsection 7.3.1), in one case, teachers and students made a monthly visit to neighbouring villages to conduct community activities and to recruit previously overlooked young people for new programmes. In another instance, teachers in MCCs formed a local band encompassing students and local young people and that effort has helped the student-youth band to grow into a competitor in yearly inter-MCCs competition. Such activities may have built students' civic competence and created a new sense of identity for themselves (Michel, 2015; Wenger & Trayner, 2015). In another case, an accounting teacher together with her students, saved the business of a disabled entrepreneur and maintained his financial independence. Houghton (2003) asserted this type of intervention to be an opportunity to develop a positive relationship with a disabled community. A sense of solidarity among all MCCs is their nationwide CSR contribution to natural disasters as instanced in assisting flood victims. Coare (2003) noted that this kind of activity encourages the sharing of common values and aspirations.

Active citizenship also reflects the responsibility of the government employees to the community in their domain (Coare, 2003). Findings illustrate that teachers by themselves respond to frequent requests from the underprivileged in local communities (see subsection 7.3.2). As one example, teachers taught English language communication skills to hospital attendants and that activity fulfilled their own duty of civic responsibility and helped MCCs to construct healthy relationships with its community. In another instance, in order to narrow the learning gap between rural and urban children, teachers planned programmes which allowed rural children to experience similar activities to those available to city children. This suggests the importance of community building regardless of social circumstances as also experienced in Taiwan (Wang, 2013). As another

example, for the sake of students' placement and employment, teachers worked together with local employers in what might be regarded as edge activities. This co-operation is consistent with collaborative ventures for mutual benefit of the Community college and the community (Vaughan 1997).

The services described above show teachers have some autonomy and they do not necessarily feel they are being forced to be involved in the external activities. However, in the task of student recruitment, teachers have considered this to be challenging as it may relate to a year-end appraisal by their superiors (see subsection 8.4.1). These findings are consistent with the issues of performativity that are increasingly influencing teachers to perform as private sectors' employees (Ball, 2003, 2012). This challenging commitment has been rationalised as social engagement of teachers to local communities by the DCCE (2012) but it may jeopardise teachers' core work as a "teacher" (Ball (2003).

9.2.4 Personal Fulfilment and MCCs

In the context of the MCCs, personal fulfilment is primarily about personal benefits experienced by an individual as a result of being engaged in lifelong learning through various available opportunities. Personal development may be bringing some positive changes to self, emotionally and physically after an involvement in lifelong learning activities (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Knowles, 1975). Findings relate short courses ranging from a simple hobby-related activity to learning a new employment skill appropriately, enabling many citizens to fulfil their aspirations in terms of their goals of personal fulfilment (see subsection 6.4.1). For many mature learners in MCCs, having a "second chance" enabled new experiences in life as worthwhile, bringing the possibility of new personal changes (Mezirow, 1997). For example, in the desire of a mother who wanted to earn some income from her everyday skills and in the wish of a teacher who wanted to produce creative baking for festive occasions, these straightforward aspirations could be accomplished through studying in MCCs. Findings on the achievements (see subsection 7.4.1) showed how retired senior citizens sought personal development in later life through engaging in some relaxing new leisure skill or learning activity, as recorded in the literature elsewhere (Duay & Bryan, 2008; Ibrahim et al., 2016). A group of senior residents took part in a weekly

exercise programme with the aim of staying healthy, interpreted by S. A. Cohen (2014) and Miller and Kissinger (2007) as learning for leisure. These indicate the range of ways MCCs help to fulfil people's aspirations and their individual development.

As a variation from short courses, formal qualification programmes were helping to fulfil more "serious" life aspirations (see subsection 6.4.2). For example, a public worker quit his 20 years career and successfully studied a hotel management course to start his own home-stay business (see subsection 7.4.2). One young student enrolled in a fashion design course to eventually open her own boutique (Knowles, 1990). In the midst of achieving such aspiration, young adults are challenged by restricted credit provision (see subsection 8.4.2). They are sometimes tormented by negative remarks from family members and friends because they are only learning for a certificate programme qualifying for low award. Such an economic-centric mindset is also keeping some young people away from the Colleges. Amid findings on challenges, teachers and students experience negative perceptions about vocational and technical skill providers such as community colleges (OECD, 2014; Robson, 1998).

The next section presents a summary of the key points of the present study.

9.3 Key Points from the Study

The following is a summary of key points of this exploratory study:

- MCCs' goals, achievements and challenges potentially showed a commitment to educate geographically, economically and socially disadvantaged local communities;
- MCCs have been intentionally located in less developed areas in order to meet people's diversified needs;
- MCCs exhibit the behaviours of social inclusion, and are fully committed to help less fortunate citizens to combat exclusion and attain a better economic position through education;
- MCCs, as public higher education institutions, have been designed to promote lifelong learning especially to meet the learning needs of the disadvantaged;

- MCCs function as an alternative pathway for young people who are hindered from an entry into further education by not having sufficient credits to do so;
- MCCs produce skilled semi-professionals for local industries from local young people;
- MCCs help working people to enhance their social mobility in a demanding knowledge economy;
- MCCs meet wider educational benefits of people irrespective of age, position and educational level, using short courses as a key mechanism for both vocationally-oriented and liberal education;
- MCCs emphasise entrepreneurial components in curricula to nourish creative thinkers with innovative minds who can be self-employed and create more job opportunities for others in local communities in a challenging economic climate;
- MCCs employ the Corporate Social Responsibility programmes to build young people with positive values and norms of active citizenship, which are vital to combat individualistic lifestyles appearing within this modern democracy of Malaysia;
- MCCs create different types of learning engagement for disadvantaged and others to achieve their personal aspirations;
- MCCs are becoming accessible, affordable and user-friendly options for many to re-engage with learning according to principles of lifelong learning and this is significantly developing lifelong learners for local communities.

The following three sections discuss the contribution, limitations and recommendations for further research. In the final section, implications for policy and practice for the Malaysian Government have been spelled out.

9.4 Contribution of the Present Study

This section provides the theoretical and methodological contributions of the present study. The theoretical contribution uses findings from this study to apply to real practical situations. The methodological contribution describes the thematic analysis used in this study as illustrative of qualitative inquiry.

9.4.1 Theoretical contribution

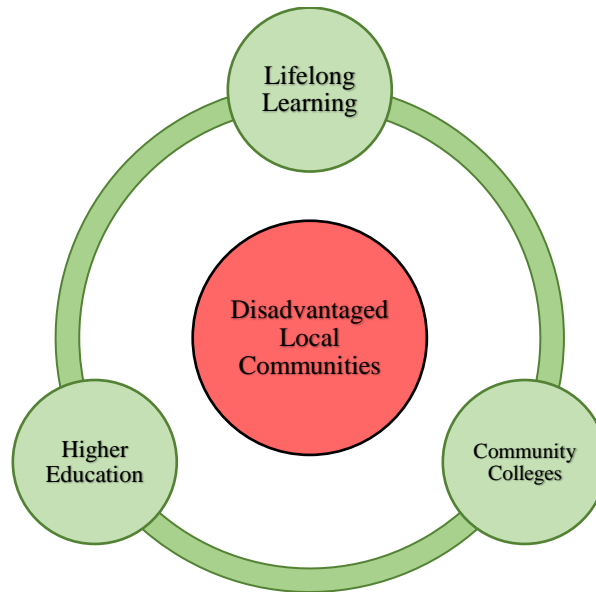


Figure 9.1. *Theoretical contribution*

Figure 9.1 demonstrates three revolving concepts: lifelong learning, higher education and community colleges that provided the theoretical basis for analysing the findings in this study. Findings described the mission to provide educational opportunity for the structurally disadvantaged in Malaysian society via the three concepts. All community colleges in Malaysia have a centralised direction defining their goals and practices from the Ministry and the Department; hence, the findings in this study have closely resonated with the directions of the two governing bodies. In this sense, the suggested practical theoretical contribution may be comparable to Southeast Asian countries who want to use lifelong learning as a vehicle via community colleges to provide a higher education opportunity for the disadvantaged. The contribution especially would be useful for countries who wish to improve the quality of life for people in relatively

poor material conditions in the wake of global competitiveness. The following are the contributions from this study:

- A developing country can encourage its lower strata population to have higher education as a “second chance” if the country makes an effort to locate a community college that is publicly funded close to the population. The population partly may have been overlooked in the process of rapid development of economies following a global trend.
- By dedicating specifically one higher education institution such as a community college to care for the disadvantaged, governments can plan and meet the educational needs through appropriate curricula and pedagogy. Such a commitment may contribute to improve the lives of those people living in impoverished conditions, as asserted by Schultz (1981). Community colleges in Malaysia are special higher education institutions taking care of the disadvantaged.
- Planning and organising activities around the four fundamental domains of lifelong learning – economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Finsden & Formosa, 2011) – can widen access to more people within a specific domain and tackle their educational aspirations more efficiently. The findings in this study showed practices of community colleges in Malaysia meeting the imperatives of lifelong learning.
- Lifelong learning focussing on improving knowledge and skills blended with entrepreneurial components can provide access for those less qualified academically, especially for women and rural dwellers to learn and to improve their family income. Community colleges in Malaysia are establishing such opportunity through short courses as non-credit programmes capitalising on building on everyday household skills;
- Corporate Social Responsibility programmes with their emphasis on business behaviour are creating a new way to provide service learning and to broaden access to the most disadvantaged people and simultaneously serve an active citizenship role. Community colleges in Malaysia capitalising upon CSR programmes for their contribution to society.

9.4.2 Methodological contributions

The study methodologically may also point to how thematic analysis can enhance understanding of the ambitions and realities of these higher education institutions. The thematic analysis engaged the ideas and practices contributed by Braun and Clarke (2006). It used a flexible analytical framework to involve diverse stakeholders (see subsection 4.4.1). It utilised different scheduled questions prepared to represent similar topics for interviews as a guide in the search for themes across the entire data set from three different perspectives. It also used a tabulating data method to compare and contrast emerging patterns four sets of data (see subsection 4.4.2).

This study employed an alternative use of thematic analysis in the “latent” theme lifelong learning. This approach gave room to interpret the entire findings in this study of community colleges under the four domains of lifelong learning; economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Finsden & Formosa, 2011).

9.5 Significance of the Present Study

- Community colleges constitute a new phenomenon as only a decade-old institution within Malaysian higher education. Previously, these institutions had not been studied rigorously and this may make this study the first serious investigation into their goals, achievements and challenges in Malaysia.
- This study has demonstrated lifelong learning via community colleges can be useful to provide educational opportunities for geographically, economically, and socially disadvantaged local communities of varied needs to meet challenging competitive economy of Malaysia.
- This study has also contributed to an understanding of the concept of lifelong learning as an aspect of higher education development, which is having a significant effect on global higher education in Southeast Asia. This empirical study investigated evidence for how the four aspects of lifelong learning (meeting economic imperatives, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment) (Delors, 1996; Field, 2001; Finsden &

Formosa, 2011), have been integrated into the purposes and practices of community colleges in Malaysia.

9.6 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This section delivers limitations of this study that can be a consideration for future research.

This study was a qualitative inquiry that attempted to use an online survey design as the first phase of data collection. It was intended to gain a broader understanding from all directors of community colleges. However, the survey was not fruitful and limited the breadth of data to be analysed. Therefore, an online survey based on a quantitative study maybe useful to gain broader empirical evidence on the goals, achievement and challenges of community colleges from all their directors' perspectives.

This study modestly used a multiple case study involving four community colleges from four different parts in West Malaysia. Small samples methodologically demonstrate a limitation to generalise the findings to all community colleges. In this sense, a case study using a larger sample involving both West and East Malaysia's colleges can increase the quantity of data and provide more robust empirical evidence, for generalisation beyond the findings in this study.

The study revealed that there are not always effective linkages between industrial skills to full-time programmes thus limiting some students' prospects to engage in industrial training, an important component of the programmes. It would be useful for future research to more explicitly focus on the actual connection between full-time programmes' curricula and local industries' employment needs.

This study revealed that teachers in the community colleges are questioning themselves about their professional status as "lecturers" and having to deal with "lower strata" learners. In this study, the perspectives of teachers might have been limited by a discussion conducted in a group. In dealing with this conundrum, I would encourage a future study to look at individual teachers' perceptions that could delve deeper into their personal ideas and feelings about their position in the

colleges. This may shed more light to reframe their position within the broader context of higher education “lecturers”.

This study only had the opportunity to consult students from full-time programmes and they were limited to young people aged 17 to 24. However, in actual practice, community colleges and their “students” are diversified into many different groups in terms of age, academic qualification, and status in society. Thus, a future study investigating other groups of learners, especially mature-aged adults, may provide a better understanding on the practice of care of MCCs to Malaysian society. I would strongly recommend a study on non-credit programmes (short courses) to better understand whether MCCs are meeting learners’ needs at all levels of local communities.

Finally, the study participants were limited to three sub-populations of community colleges (directors, teachers, and students). In reality, community colleges have to create a network with wider stakeholders occupying a constituency including political representatives from three main ethnicities, local employers of industries, governmental and non-governmental organisations. They are the external support team of these colleges as they are mostly dealing with local communities. Therefore, a future study involving other stakeholders could explore their respective perspectives about the colleges’ contribution as being hubs of the local communities’ lifelong learning.

9.7 Some Recommendations

This section gives some recommendations emerging out of some challenges identified in this study. The recommendations may be useful for the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Department of Community College Education (DCCE) as the direct governing sectors of Malaysian Community Colleges (MCCs).

In this study, I noticed that young people with an aspiration to continue to a higher study programme are only able to do so in a polytechnic (see subsection 7.1.1). The MCCs are also criticised for providing restricted credits, certificates (see subsection 8.4.2). Therefore, developing a stronger articulation with further/higher education would be useful for young people. This may be created through

considering a continuity in programme as a clear pathway (offered in a package form) from certificate to diploma to degree, by linking with other relevant higher education institutions as suggested by Van Noy et al. (2016). For example, a Certificate in Hotel Management to a Diploma and then to a Degree in Hospitality. This continuity could be promoted as an incentive of community college education during student recruitment: a young adult could hold a degree in the field of his/her interest by the end of the sixth or seventh year.

Finally, in this study, I realised that teachers often are burdened with a student recruitment agenda (see subsection 8.4.1). This issue could be solved if the teachers' take a proactive action to collaborate with school principals in secondary schools to identify potential students and then promoting the programmes to them. The promotion can be for the students and their parents with an appropriate arrangement with the school.

9.8 Implications for Policy and Practice

This section provides some implications for policy and practice for the Malaysian government that could help the Malaysian Higher Education and the Department of Community College Education in connection with the future development of community colleges.

Malaysia needs to implement a more transparent policy with a clear direction for community colleges focussing on disadvantaged adults in rural areas more than young people. The curricula should provide an educational opportunity for the disadvantaged adults to improve their social mobility as community colleges are the only public institutions really concerned for them. Young people can always opt for many other providers who are always willing to help them in various ways to build their skills and knowledge.

Malaysia needs to consider whether to impose a robust monitoring system related to the Malaysian Qualification Framework to provide official recognition to a curriculum of community colleges. In this way, community colleges can initiate branding of their curricula and the graduates could be a proud holder of community college certificates.

Malaysia needs to implement a policy that could provide the authority for community colleges to collaborate with any non-governmental and welfare organisations and help their disadvantaged communities within the organisations. Community colleges should be more explicitly defined as the institutions with the “power” to care for the welfare of the disadvantaged through diverse educational opportunities.

Finally, Malaysia needs to consider developing a policy that gives autonomy to community colleges at the institutional level in making decisions, amendments or suggestions following their individual community needs in terms of courses and plans recommended by the DCCE. This could allow every community college to accommodate sensibly to the needs of their individual communities following the original mission of the colleges, to serve local communities.

9.9 Final Statement

As being a former teacher involved in teaching students from a lower strata position, I developed a compassionate feeling for a group of young people in deprived material conditions to continue their education. In my capacity as a teacher, I had helped many of my students to find a place in higher education institutions after their high school. My actual help was only possible towards the students with “good grades” but not to the majority without such achievement. There has long been a need to positively advantage students in the lower echelons of society. I was always hoping for new higher education opportunities to emerge for students with poorer backgrounds who struggle with compulsory education in high schools. I believed community colleges might provide greater options; hence, that intrigued me to conduct this study on my own accord. My initial naïve understanding about the colleges was only just another higher education institution with “welfare” educational benefits for poorer communities. In exploring this study, I was amazed at how committed the colleges were in educating disadvantaged people of all age groups and positions in Malaysia. Indeed, community colleges are worthwhile institution as proponents of inclusive pathways designed to help more people with educational opportunities via lifelong learning in Malaysia.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1a – Online survey questionnaire

ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian higher education: Goals, achievements and challenges

Instructions:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is important to me in how I can design my next stage of study. This survey should take about 20 minutes of your time. Your answers will be completely anonymous.

This survey is divided into two sections; Section A on general information about your institution and Section B requires your responses to the statements given.

In order to progress through this survey, please use the following navigation buttons.

- *Click the NEXT button to continue to the next page*
- *Click the PREVIOUS button to return to the previous page*
- *Click the EXIT button to submit your survey*

SECTION A

Please select the best option

1. State the location of your Community College in Malaysia.
 - Perlis
 - Kedah
 - Pulau Pinang
 - Perak
 - Selangor
 - Wilayah Persekutuan
 - Negeri Sembilan
 - Melaka
 - Johor
 - Pahang
 - Terengganu
 - Kelantan
 - Sabah
 - Sarawak

2. When was the college established?
 - 2001
 - 2002
 - 2003
 - 2004
 - 2005
 - 2006
 - 2007

3. Which is the best range to indicate the number of staff currently employed in your college?
 - < 30
 - 31- 60
 - 61 – 90
 - 91 -120
 - > 120

4. Which is the best range indicates the current enrolment of students in your college?
 - < 100
 - 101 – 200
 - 201 – 300
 - 301 – 400

- 401 – 500
 - 501 – 600
 - 601 – 700
 - 701 – 800
 - 801 – 900
 - 901 – 1000
 - > 1000
5. Rank the students in your college with the number (1, 2, or 3) indicating '1' as the most number of students?
- Secondary school leavers []
 - Working adults []
 - Unemployed youths []
6. Programmes at the community colleges are grouped in clusters. Indicate all the clusters that are offered in your college.
- Agro Technology
 - Automotive
 - Building
 - Business & Entrepreneurial
 - Computer and Information Technology
 - Electrical & Electronics
 - Graphics and multimedia
 - Health Services
 - Hospitality and Tourism
 - Industrial Programme
 - Interior Design / Handicraft
 - Languages
 - Religion
 - Self-development
 - Sewing/Dressmaking
 - Other (Please specify) _____

SECTION B

Please write the best response

7. Please state the number of courses offered within the following programmes in your college.
- National Modular Skill Certificate [_____]
 - Community College Modular Skill Certificate [_____]
 - Community College Continuing Skill Certificate [_____]
8. Please state the number of students enrolled in the following programmes in your college
- National Modular Skill Certificate [_____]
 - Community College Modular Skill Certificate [_____]
 - Community College Continuing Skill Certificate [_____]
 - Short courses [_____]
 - Diploma Programme (Work-based Learning) [_____]
9. Name the most popular certificate programme in your college
- .
- [_____]
10. List all the higher learning institutions collaborating with your college.
- _____
 - _____
 - _____

11. Who do you see as having a vested interest in your community college?

12. What do you see as the major purposes of this community college?

13. Since the establishment of your college, what is the number of students who have used the college as a pathway for higher education.

14. List the name of employers / companies who are collaborating with your college for the Diploma programme of Work –based learning ?

15. Do you think your community college is helping the local community to acquire education and training?

Yes

No

Please comment: _____

16. Do you think your community college is reaching all level of communities?

Yes

No

Please comment: _____

17. Do you think your community college is moving towards the nation's aspiration?

Yes

No

Please comment: _____

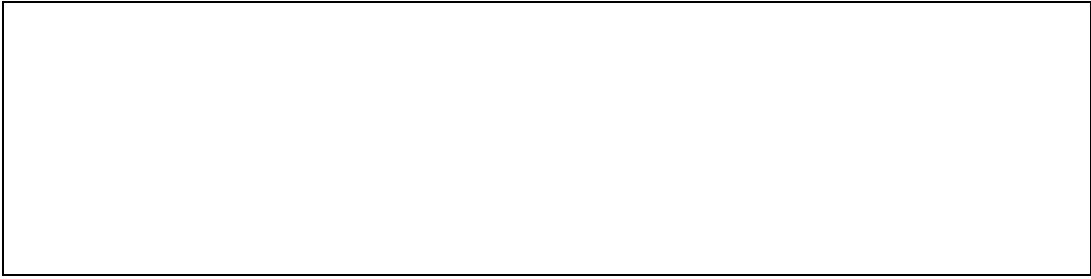
18. What do you see as the major benefits of this community college to your community?

19. What are the major issues faced by this community college?

20. Since the establishment of your College, what has been the most significant change in direction?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR KIND COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS SURVEY

Is there anything you would like to comment or add? Please write here.



Thank you, you have successfully completed this online survey, just click on the "EXIT" button, and your questionnaire will be automatically sent to me via e-mail, without any identification of the your e-mail address. All the information will be treated in complete confidence.

Appendix 1b – Email to director (online survey questionnaire)

From: nachia@infoquest.com.my

To: [e-mail address of Director]

Title: **Invitation to be a Participant of the Online Survey Questionnaire**

Dear Tuan/Puan,

Salam sejahtera. Permit me to introduce myself. I am M Nachiamal AV Muthiah, a student at the University of Waikato, New Zealand would like to invite you to be the participant of online survey questionnaire on the characters of community colleges in Malaysia.

Allow me to explain the nature of the study. My area of interest is higher education and lifelong learning and, in particular, community colleges which have recently emerged in Malaysian higher education. I would like to analyse the directions of community colleges within Malaysian higher education. The study will explore the actual positioning of community colleges by identifying and interpreting their roles as community orientated and lifelong learning enablers. It is primarily a qualitative study using two methods of data collection, a survey and an in-depth one-to-one interview with selected 20 directors together with a group administered questionnaire with around five students at each site. An online survey questionnaire will be sent to all the 98 directors of community colleges. The questionnaire will be sent via e-mail once the participation is confirmed. Your feedback on the questionnaire will guide me in finalising the second stage of data collection.

I would be delighted if you could be a participant by replying to this mail. All the information you provide will be strictly confidential, and your name will not appear on the questionnaire. Once you complete the online survey, just click on the 'exit' button on the last page of your survey, and your questionnaire will be automatically sent to me via e-mail, without any identification of your e-mail address. If you agree to be the participant just reply to this mail with the word "YES" so I could send the online survey questionnaire.

In regards to this survey, I have attached the Letters of Consent from the Ministry of Higher Education and the Department of Community Colleges Education together with the Information Letter that explains my study and the contact persons for your kind attention.

Thanking in advance.

Kind regards,
Nachia

Appendix 2a – Semi-structured interview schedule

Research Title: An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian higher education: Goals, achievements and challenges

A. Ice-breaking

- Greet the participant and introduce myself
- Explain briefly the purpose of my presence
- Allow the participant to clear any doubts before proceeding with interview

B. Goals of Community Colleges

Community

- What is your personal opinion about community colleges and the term ‘community’ linked to it?
Are there any particular characteristics about this college that set it apart from others in the higher education system?
- What is your opinion about the goals of community colleges?
- To what extent do you think the goals guide the vision of your college?

Administration

- I am sure there are administrators and lecturers employed in your college.
Do the lecturers need to have some special qualification to be employed here?
Are the lecturers employed on a full-time basis?
- Please describe briefly the contribution of administrators and lecturers in the operation of this college.
Are there any special departments (recruitment, admission, evaluation, and counseling)?
- How do you promote your courses in your college?
Do you have a webpage?
How do you use social media?
- In terms of funding for your institution, where does most of the money come from (grants, district government, federal government, politicians)?
What are the financial aid policies for students?
How many students have received each type of aid for the past two academic years?

Curriculum

- What is the scope of the programmes offered at your college?
Are there any special courses offered in this college to set it apart from other community colleges in the state/ nation?
- To what extent are the courses offered in the community colleges different from the four year institutions’ courses?
In what way do these courses help your students to access higher education?
- How does this community college develop its competency standards?
Does it follow any quality assurance ratified by the Malaysian higher education system (learning outcomes, levels)?
If so, in what ways?
- Do you have any special collaborative programme(s) with local community/ employers?
If so, please describe them (e.g. the goals and content of the programme; who developed the programme ; who does the evaluation; how the procedure of the programme; who the participants are)?

Students

- Can you tell me the total number of students currently enrolled in your college?
Are there any particular characteristics about these students?
What are the demographics’ of students at your college?
- To what extent do you distinguish traditional students from non-traditional students?
Are there potential types of students not yet recruited into this community college?
Do you have any specific recruitment criteria?
What is the minimum qualification for entry?
- What are the characteristics of: full- time and part-time students in your college?
Who are the full-time students (e.g. transfer students to college or university; pursuing vocational training for certification, up skilling, professional development) and who are the part-time students (e.g. pursuing vocational training for no credit; pursuing

C. Achievements of Community Colleges

- Can you please briefly describe the role of community colleges under higher education system as you see it?
To what extent do community colleges support the mission of higher education (in producing highly skilled workers, knowledgeable community)?

- Please give your views on how much do you agree with this statement stated in Blueprint of Lifelong learning:
“Community colleges as a hub of lifelong learning”

D. Challenges of Community Colleges

- What are the main constraints operating on the work of community colleges?
- Are there points of conflict in the missions of community colleges?
If so, how has this community college managed?
- What do you see as the major issues facing community colleges?

E. General Views and Opinions

- What is your personal opinion about the responses of local community towards community colleges in Malaysia?
- Our nation is moving towards the Vision 2020, in your opinion, how important is community colleges to the future of Malaysia?
Is there anything else you would like to add or express about our discussion today?
Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.

Appendix 2b – Research consent form for directors

Research Title: An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian higher education: Goals, achievements and challenges

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read the **Information Letter** and have details of the study explained to me. I have discussed and understood the nature of the study and I agree to participate in this study, whose conditions are as follows:

- I understand my participation is voluntary for this study.
- I understand I may withdraw from the study at any time and may withdraw my data up until the transcripts verified.
- I understand that the study is aimed at exploring the above area. For this purpose, semi-structured interview will be conducted on my community college site on date and time agreed by me.
- I understand I have access to the interview schedule three days before the agreed date.
- I understand that the interview will be one-to-one and last for about 60-90 minutes and asked based on the goals, contributions to stakeholders/society, and challenges of my community college particularly and community colleges of Malaysia generally.
- I understand that the interview I give and the information it contains will be used solely for the purpose defined by the study in the **Information Letter**.
- I understand that at any time, I can refuse to answer certain questions, discuss certain topics or even put an end to the interview without prejudice to myself.
- I understand that to facilitate the researcher's job, the interview will be audio-recorded. However, the recording will be transcribed for me to check, alter if needed, signed and returned to the researcher.
- I understand that the interview data will be handled so as to protect my confidentiality. No names will be mentioned and the information will be coded.
- I understand that if I have any questions about the research at any time I can contact the researcher, as follows:

M Nachiamal AV Muthiah
Mobile: 012 339 2214

E mail: nachia@infoquest.com.my

- I understand that if I have any concerns I can contact one of the University of Waikato research supervisors as follows:

Professor Brian Findsen
Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 838 4500 Ext 8257
Email: bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz

Professor Tina Besley
Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 856 2889 Ext 6246
Email: t.besley@waikato.ac.nz

Signed: _____

Appointment date and time:

Name: _____

Appendix 3a – Focus group discussion schedule for teachers

Focus Group Discussion schedule for Teachers

Research Title: An exploration of community colleges within Malaysia higher education:
Goals, achievements and challenges

Order of proceedings:

- (a) Greet participants
- (b) Thank participants for coming and remind them that this meeting will take approximately 60 minutes:
40 minutes of discussion and 20 minutes of responding to written questions
- (c) Remind participants that I want to record the focus group discussion for my records. Ensure privacy, confidentiality and their right to withdraw.
- (d) Remind participants about signing the consent form.
- (e) Check whether participants have any questions.

Explanation for the teachers:

I am collecting information on the goals, contributions and challenges of community colleges from the main stakeholders of this college. I have completed an interview with the director and will be conducting a focus group discussion and an individually administered questionnaire for students. I appreciate your contribution in this session. I am particularly interested in your thoughts, experiences and perspectives during the moderated discussion, by me. I intend that all of you have equal chance for comment. Once we have completed the discussion, I would like all of you to respond to open-ended questions in written form individually.

Themes to discuss in focus group:

- (a) Goals of community colleges
 - What do you understand the goals of community colleges to be?
 - Who do you see as the main participants of this community college?
 - In your view, what motivates people to enter community colleges?
 - To my understanding community colleges comprise of diversified students. To what extent do you feel able to meet their need?
 - Which courses do you see as popular among the students and why?
 - To what extent do the courses offer chances for students in (i) gaining employment or (ii) further study, on completion of their study?
- a) Achievements of community colleges
 - What do you see as the main achievements of this community college to its local community?
 - In what ways are community colleges effective places for (i) education and training (ii) lifelong learning?
 - What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of a community college for students?
- b) Challenges of community colleges
 - What do you see as the main challenges for a teacher in a community college?
 - To what extent do you agree that 'Community colleges modify their courses to suit everyone's need'?
 - Regarding teaching, to what extent are you satisfied with the courses you teach?
 - In your opinion, how should a community college serve its community?

Appendix 3b – Research consent form for teachers

Research Title: An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian higher education: Goals, contributions and challenges.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read the **Information Letter** and have details of the study explained to me. I have discussed and understood the nature of the study, and I agree to participate in whose conditions are as follows:

- I understand my participation is voluntary for this study.
- I understand I may withdraw from the study at any time and may withdraw my data up until the questionnaire has been submitted.
- I understand if I choose to withdrawal from the study, the director will not be notified.
- I understand that the study is aimed at exploring the nature of community colleges. For this purpose, a focus group discussion and an individually administered questionnaire will be organised on my community college site, on a negotiated date and time.
- I understand that the focus group discussion will be based on my involvement as a teacher in the college.
- I understand that the focus group discussion will last for about 30-40 minutes and will be audio-recorded to facilitate researcher's analysis.
- I understand I have to write my responses, individually, to open-ended questions at the end of discussion in the questionnaire sheet given.
- I understand that the information of the discussion and responses to the questionnaire will be used solely for the purpose defined by the study in the **Information Letter**.
- I understand that the data of discussion and questionnaire will be handled so as to protect my identity. Pseudonyms will be used.
- I understand that if I have any questions about the research, at any time I can contact the researcher as follows:

M Nachiamal AV Muthiah
Mobile: 012 339 2214
E mail: nachia@infoquest.com.my

- I understand that if I have any concerns, I can contact one of the University of Waikato research supervisors as follows:

Professor Brian Findsen
Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 838 4500 Ext 8257
Email: bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz

Professor Tina Besley
Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 856 2889 Ext 6246
Email: t.besley@waikato.ac.nz

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3c – Individually administered questionnaire for teachers

Individually Administered Questionnaire for Teachers

Thank you for participation in this study. Your feedback is very much appreciated. Please take around 20 minutes of your time to complete this survey. All information will be treated in complete confidence.

Please write or circle your details below:

Department: _____

Length of Service: _____ years

Age: _____

Designation: Full-time /Part-time

Gender: Male/ Female

Ethnicity: Malay/ Chinese/ Indian/Other

Please write your best response for the questions below:

1. What is it like being a teacher in a community college?

2. How important do you consider community colleges to be within Malaysian higher education?

3. To what extent are you satisfied with your relationship with (i) students (ii) the institution?
Please explain.

4. State anything you like or dislike about the course you are teaching?

5. How do you keep up with developments in your discipline?

6. What do you see as the primary responsibility of community colleges for their communities (e.g. personal development; educating citizens; assisting economic development; helping disadvantaged students to learn)?

7. Please make any other comment concerning your involvement with this community college?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix 4a – Focus group discussion schedule for students

Focus Group Discussion Schedule for Students

Research Title: An exploration of community colleges within Malaysia higher education:
Goals, achievements and challenges

Order of proceedings:

- (f) Greet participants
- (g) Thank participants for coming and remind them that this meeting will take approximately 60 minutes:
40 minutes of discussion and 20 minutes of responding to written questions
- (h) Remind participants that I want to record the focus group discussion for my records. Ensure privacy, confidentiality and their right to withdraw.
- (i) Remind participants about signing the consent form.
- (j) Check whether participants have any questions.

Explanation for the teachers:

I am collecting information on the goals, contributions and challenges of community colleges from the main stakeholders of this college. I have completed an interview with the director and have conducted a focus group discussion and an individually administered questionnaire with teachers. I appreciate your contribution in this session. I am particularly interested in your thoughts, experiences and perspectives during the moderated discussion, by me. I intend that all of you have equal chance for comment. Once we have completed the discussion, I would like all of you to respond to open-ended questions in written form individually.

Themes to discuss in focus group:

- a) Goals of community colleges
 - How important is this community college to you?
 - What are the pulling factors for you to be a student of this community college?
 - In what ways do you think this community college able to help you to fulfill your dreams?
 - To what extent are you satisfied with the courses of your study? Why?
 - What do you see as your chances of (i) gaining employment or (ii) further study, on completion of this study?
- b) Achievements of community colleges
 - What do you see as the main contributions of this community college to your community?
 - To what extent do you agree that community colleges serve a special group of students or academically unprepared students? How?
 - What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of being a student of this community college?
- c) Challenges of community colleges
 - What do you see as the main challenges of being a student in a community college?
 - Community colleges have ‘something for everyone’. Do you agree with this statement? Why?
 - Regarding learning, to what extent are you satisfied with the courses you learn?
 - In your opinion, how should a community college to help you?

Appendix 4b – Research consent form for students

Research Consent Form: Students

Research Title: An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian higher education: Goals, achievements and challenges.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read the **Information Letter** and have details of the study explained to me. I have discussed and understood the nature of the study, and I agree to participate in whose conditions are as follows:

- I understand my participation is voluntary for this study.
- I understand I may withdraw from the study at any time and may withdraw my data up until the questionnaire has been submitted.
- I understand if I choose to withdrawal from the study, the director will not be notified.
- I understand that the study is aimed at exploring the nature of community colleges. For this purpose, a focus group discussion and an individually administered questionnaire will be organised on my community college site, on a negotiated date and time.
- I understand that the focus group discussion will be based on my participation as a student in the college.
- I understand that the focus group discussion will last for about 30-40 minutes and will be audio-recorded to facilitate researcher's analysis.
- I understand I have to write my responses, individually, to open-ended questions at the end of discussion in the questionnaire sheet given.
- I understand that the information of the discussion and responses to the questionnaire will be used solely for the purpose defined by the study in the **Information Letter**.
- I understand that the data of discussion and questionnaire will be handled so as to protect my identity. Pseudonyms will be used.
- I understand that if I have any questions about the research, at any time I can contact the researcher as follows:
M Nachiamal AV Muthiah
Mobile: 012 339 2214
E mail: nachia@infoquest.com.my
- I understand that if I have any concerns, I can contact one of the University of Waikato research supervisors as follows:

Professor Brian Findsen
Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 838 4500 Ext 8257
Email: bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz

Professor Tina Besley
Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 856 2889 Ext 6246
Email: t.besley@waikato.ac.nz

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4c – Individually administered questionnaire for students

Individually Administered Questionnaire for Students

Thank you for participation in this study. Your feedback is very much appreciated. Please take around 20 minutes of your time to complete this survey. All information will be treated in complete confidence.

Please write or circle your details below:

Year of Study: First / Second

Programme of Study: _____

Mode of programme: Full-time /Part-time

Age: _____

Gender: Male/ Female

Ethnicity: Malay/ Chinese/ Indian/Other

Employment (if any): _____

Please write your best response for the questions below:

1. What made you choose to study at a community college? How did you know about it?

2. How do you think community colleges are viewed in your community?

3. To what extent are you satisfied with your relationship with (i) teachers (ii) institution? Please explain.

4. State anything that you like or dislike about the course that you are doing?

5. What do you see as positive outcomes of studying at this community college?

6. What do you see as the primary responsibility of this community college for your communities (e.g. personal development; educating citizens; assisting economic development; helping disadvantaged students to learn)?

7. Please make any other comment concerning your participation with this community college?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix 5 – Ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee, the University of Waikato

Dean's Office
Faculty of Education
Te Kura Toi Tangata
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Phone +64 7 838 4500
www.waikato.ac.nz



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

MEMORANDUM

To: M Nachiamal AV Muthiah
cc: Professor Brian Findsen
From: Associate Professor Garry Falloon
Chairperson, Research Ethics Committee
Date: 8 May 2014
Subject: Supervised Postgraduate Research – Application for Extension of Ethical Approval (EDU0105/13)

Thank you for your application for an extension of ethical approval for the project:

**An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian Higher Education:
Goals, contributions and challenges**

It is noted that you have changed the project title (as written above) and revised the research questions and the purpose of the study statement, in line with the new title. You also wish to include teachers as participants and have amended the data collection methods to include a preliminary focus group discussion to be audio recorded, followed by the completion of an individual questionnaire.

Thank you for providing copies of all new participant documentation.

I am pleased to advise that your application has received ethical approval.

Please note that researchers are asked to consult with the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee in the first instance if any further changes to the approved research design are proposed.

The Committee wishes you all the best with your research.

Associate Professor Garry Falloon
Chairperson
Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 6 – Letter of consent to conduct research in Malaysia from the Economic Planning Unit.



UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI
Economic Planning Unit
Jabatan Perdana Menteri
Prime Minister's Department
Block B5 & B6
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62502 PUTRAJAYA
MALAYSIA



Telefon : 603-8000 8000

M NACHIAMAL AV MUTHIAH
No 37, Persiaran Bestari 2, Templer Bestari,
48000 Rawang
Selangor
Email: nachia@infoquest.com.my

Ruj. Tuan:
Your Ref.:

Ruj. Kami:
Our Ref.: UPE: 40/200/19/3141

Tarikh:
Date: 28 August 2014

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA

With reference to your application, I am pleased to inform you that your application to conduct research in Malaysia has been *approved* by the **Research Promotion and Co-Ordination Committee, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department**. The details of the approval are as follows:

Researcher's name : **M NACHIAMAL AV MUTHIAH**

Passport No./ I.C No : **660921-08-5058**

Nationality : **MALAYSIA**

Title of Research : **"An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian higher education: Goals, contributions and challenges.**

Period of Research Approved : **7 Months**

2. Please collect your Research Pass in person from the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, Parcel B, Level 4 Block B5, Federal Government Administrative Centre, 62502 Putrajaya, Malaysia and bring along two (2) colour passport size photographs.

* "Merancang Ke Arah Kecemerlangan"

3. I would like to draw your attention to the undertaking signed by you that you will submit without cost to the Economic Planning Unit the following documents:

- a) A brief summary of your research findings on completion of your research and before you leave Malaysia; and
- b) Three (3) copies of your final dissertation/publication.

4. Lastly, please submit a copy of your preliminary and final report directly to the State Government where you carried out your research. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



(MUNIRAH BT. ABD MANAN)

For Director General,
Economic Planning Unit.

E-mail: munirah@epu.gov.my

Tel: 88882809

Fax: 88883798

ATTENTION

This letter is only to inform you the status of your application and **cannot be used as a research pass.**

Appendix 7a – Letter to Department of Community College Education, Malaysia

M Nachiamal AV Muthiah
No 37, Persiaran Bestari 2,
Templer Bestari, 48000 Rawang, Selangor.

To,

Director General
Department of Community Colleges,
Ministry of Higher Education,
Level 6 & 7, Galeria PJH,
Jalan P4W, Persiaran Perdana,
Precint 4, 62100 Putrajaya.

Dear Sir,

Seeking Permission to do Research in Community Colleges

With reference to the above I M Nachiamal AV Muthiah, a student at the University of Waikato, New Zealand, would like to seek your kind permission to do a study in community colleges.

Allow me to explain the nature of the study. My area of interest is higher education and lifelong learning and, in particular, community colleges which have recently emerged in Malaysian higher education. I would like to analyse the directions of community colleges within Malaysian higher education. The study will explore the actual positioning of community colleges by identifying and interpreting their roles as community orientated and lifelong learning enablers. It is primarily a qualitative study using two methods of data collection, a survey and an in-depth one-to-one interview with selected 20 directors together with a group administered questionnaire with around five students at each site. An online survey questionnaire will be sent to all the 98 directors of community colleges to get their feedback. Later, an in-depth one-to-one interview will be conducted with 20 selected directors of community colleges based on zoning and some significant features identified from analysing the online survey questionnaire. The interviews will be conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule on community college site. At the community college in which the director is interviewed, a group administered questionnaire will be conducted involving around five students of different programmes of study with the permission gained through the director. Furthermore, as for more details regarding this study, I have enclosed the **Information Letter** which describes briefly the framework of my study.

As for your kind information, I have already gained the consent from the Division of Planning and Research of Ministry of Higher Education to do my research. I hope my request will be kindly accepted, so I could proceed with my studies. I would be grateful if the department could furnish me with some information and data regarding the community colleges which will be very much helpful for access to the institutions.

Thank you in advance.

Please acknowledge your consent by signing below:-

Appendix 7b – Letter of consent from the Department of Community College Education, Malaysia



JABATAN PENGAJIAN KOLEJ KOMUNITI
Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia

Aras 6 & 7, Galeria PjH, Jalan P4W
Persiaran Perdana, Presint 4
62100 PUTRAJAYA
MALAYSIA

Tel : 603-8000 8000
Faks : 603-8888 7211
Portal Rasmi : www.jpkk.edu.my



No. Ruj : KPT/JPKK/BDPK/100-2/511d.2 (287)
Tarikh : 29 Januari 2015

Datin M. Nachiamal AV Muthiah
No. 37, Persiaran Bestari 2
Templer Bestari, 48000 Rawang
Selangor

Tuan,

MEMOHON KEBENARAN UNTUK MENGENDALIKAN KAJIAN DI KOLEJ – KOLEJ KOMUNITI

Dengan segala hormatnya surat tuan bertarikh **27 Januari 2015** adalah dirujuk.

2. Sukacita dimaklumkan bahawa pihak kami telah menerima surat permohonan tuan bagi memohon kebenaran untuk mendapatkan maklumat kajian akademik di kolej – kolej komuniti tersebut.
3. Sehubungan itu, sukacita dimaklumkan pihak kami **tiada halangan** serta **memberi kebenaran** kepada tuan bagi menjalankan kajian di kolej-kolej komuniti tersebut. Tuan juga dimohon untuk membuat pembentangan hasil kajian tersebut kepada pihak kami setelah selesai.

Sekian, terima kasih.

“ BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA ”

Saya yang menurut perintah,


(**ZAINAB BINTI AHMAD**)
Pegawai
Bahagian Dasar
Jabatan Pengajian Kolej Komuniti

PENERAJU KOMUNITI BERILMU & BERKEMAHIRAN
Pengiktirafan Amalan 5S daripada 

Appendix 8 – Information Letter

Date: []

Dear [EPU/ MOHE/DCCE/Director/ Teacher]

Research title: An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian higher education: Goals, achievements and challenges

Research objective: To explore and build knowledge about community colleges as a new phenomenon within Malaysian higher education.

Interest of study:

I am M Nachiamal AV Muthiah, a student at the University of Waikato, undertaking research for my PhD degree in the Faculty of Education. My area of interest is higher education and lifelong learning and, in particular, community colleges in Malaysia. I have twenty years of experience being a teacher in the primary and secondary schools especially in the rural and semi-urban locations of Malaysia. Generally, the students from these localities would have limited opportunity to further their studies for higher education due to social, economic and financial constraints. Higher education has played a paramount role in re-engineering and restructuring the Malaysian society and has become an important mechanism to produce high ranking intellectuals to lead the nation. Community colleges emerged within the Malaysian higher education system during the period of higher education transformation from elite to mass education. Community colleges carry the mission of providing a quality and holistic education to all levels of society.

Purpose of study:

I intend that my study on the directions of community colleges within Malaysian higher education can explore the actual positioning of community colleges by identifying and interpreting those roles as community orientated and lifelong learning enablers. The purpose of my study is to develop greater understanding of the directions of community colleges within the Malaysian higher education

Procedures of data collection:

As part of the data collection, I am using two main approaches: a survey method and an in-depth one-to-one interview together with a group administered questionnaire. The participants of this study will be the selected members of the community colleges in Malaysia. They are the *directors*, and *students* who will be my samples.

a) *Online survey questionnaire for 90 Directors*

Online survey questionnaire will be my initial data collection. It will be sent to all the 98 directors of community colleges. The consent for participation from directors will be gained through e-mails before sending the online survey questionnaire via e-mail

b) *In-depth one-to-one interview for 20 Directors*

Once the online survey is completed, the second stage of data collection is an in-depth one-to-one interview. The in-depth one-to-one interviews will be conducted with 20 selected directors of community colleges based on zoning and some significant features identified from analysing the online survey questionnaire. The directors will be sent the documents through post, to get their initial consent for participation. Then, the interviews will be conducted on community colleges' sites using semi-structured interview schedule at agreed date and time. The semi-structured interview schedule will be sent via e-mail to the directors three days before the agreed date for interview

c) *Group administered questionnaire for 100 Students*

The students of 20 community colleges with around five students at each site, in which the directors have been interviewed, will be involved in a group administered questionnaire. The students who are selected by their directors will be arranged in a small group of usually five. Each student will be a representative of different programmes of study in their respective colleges. The students will be given the opportunity to discuss in groups and respond to the open-ended questions.

I am inviting you to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, the following will be your involvement:

Be a participant of online survey questionnaire. You will be contacted through e-mail, requesting for participation on online survey. Your participation need to be confirmed by replying the e-mail. Then, an online survey questionnaire will be sent to you via your e-mail.

In keeping with good research practices, I would like to inform you of your rights:

1. Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time and may withdraw your data up until the questionnaires have been submitted.
2. All the information you provide will be strictly confidential, and your name will not appear on the questionnaire. Instead, your questionnaire will contain an identification code that is known only by me and will not be attached to the general survey. Once you complete the online survey, just click on the "exit" button on the last page of the survey, and your questionnaire will be automatically sent to me via e-mail, without any identification of your e-mail address.
3. All data I collect will be confidential, protected and stored in a safe secured place. I will only use you a code instead of your name to help me in identifying your data and for maintaining my files and, at all times I ensure that your privacy is protected by using pseudonyms in my final thesis and for any publications or presentations that I do.
4. The data I collect is to be used for my PhD and will not be passed onto any other person. In the event that I need to discuss the data I collect from you with my supervisors, pseudonyms will be used.

If you have any questions about the research, feel free to contact me. My contact details are as follow:

M Nachiamal AV Muthiah
Mobile: 012 339 2214
E mail: nachia@infoquest.com.my

If at any stage you have any concerns about this research and would like to speak to one of my University of Waikato supervisors directly, their details as follows:

Professor Brian Findsen
Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 838 4500 Ext 8257
Email: bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz

Professor Tina Besley
Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 856 2889 Ext 6246
Email: t.besley@waikato.ac.nz

**Appendix 9a – Letter of authorisation to use actual name from Selayang
Community Colleges**

To,

Te Whiringa School of Educational Leadership & Policy
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato,
Hamilton
New Zealand.

Dear Sir,

Permission to use the actual community college name in the thesis

I have given the consent to your PhD student, Datin M Nachiamal AV Muthiah, to use the college name in her thesis. I do not have any issue regarding its usage.

Thank you



.....
The Director,
Selayang Community College
Selangor,
Malaysia

ROSLINA BINTI LAPANDITAH
Pegawai
KOLEJ KOMUNITI SELAYANG
KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN TINGGI

**Appendix 9b – Letter of authorisation to use actual name from Sungai Siput
Community College**

To,

Te Whiringa School of Educational Leadership & Policy
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato,
Hamilton
New Zealand.

Dear Sir,

Permission to use the actual community college name in the thesis

I have given the consent to your PhD student, Datin M Nachiamal AV Muthiah, to use the college name in her thesis. I do not have any issue regarding its usage.

Thank you


ZULKIFLI MD. ABDULLAH
Ketua Jabatan Kejuruteraan Dan Kemahiran
..... Kolej Komuniti Sungai Siput

B/p
The Director,
Sungai Siput Community College
Selangor,
Malaysia



**Appendix 9c – Letter of authorisation to use actual name from Hulu Langat
Community College**

To,

Te Whiringa School of Educational Leadership & Policy
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato,
Hamilton
New Zealand.

Dear Sir,

Permission to use the actual community college name in the thesis

I have given the consent to your PhD student, Datin M Nachiamal AV Muthiah, to use the college name in her thesis. I do not have any issue regarding its usage.

Thank you


.....
B/P The Director,
Hulu Langat Community College
Selangor,
Malaysia



**Appendix 9d – Letter of authorisation to use actual name from Temerloh
Community College**

To,

Te Whiringa School of Educational Leadership & Policy
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato,
Hamilton
New Zealand.

Dear Sir,

Permission to use the actual community college name in the thesis

I have given the consent to your PhD student, Datin M Nachiamal AV Muthiah, to use the college name in her thesis. I do not have any issue regarding its usage.

Thank you


.....
The Director,
Temerloh Community College
Selangor, **HJ. ISMAIL BIN SAMSUDIN, AMP**
Malaysia Pengarah
Kolej Komuniti Temerloh
Pahang Darul Makmur

Appendix 10 – Permission sheet of teachers'/ students' participation from director

Permission for Teachers/Students Participation Sheet

To: Director []

Research Title: An exploration of community colleges within Malaysian higher education: Goals, achievements and challenges

CONSENT FOR TEACHERS'/STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION

I have read the **Information Letter** and have had details of the study explained to me. I have discussed and understood the nature of the study, and I agree for my teachers' participation in whose conditions are as follows:

- I understand that my teachers'/students' participation is voluntary in this study and my consent would not compel them to be participants.
- I understand that the study is aimed at exploring the nature of community colleges. For this purpose, a focus group discussion and an individually administered questionnaire will be organised for the teachers and students on the community college site, at a mutually agreed time and place.
- I understand that the focus group discussion will be conducted in a small group and last for about 30- 40 minutes.
- I understand that the focus group discussion will be audio-recorded to facilitate the researcher's analysis.
- I understand that the topic for discussion and the responses that the teachers/ students give in the questionnaire will be used solely for the purpose defined by the study in the **Information Letter**.
- I understand that to facilitate the researcher's analysis, the questionnaire sheet will be collected by the researcher. However, to protect the teachers'/students' identity, pseudonyms will be used.
- I understand that if my teachers/students have any questions about the research, at any time they can contact the researcher as follows:
M Nachiamal AV Muthiah
Mobile: 012 339 2214
E mail: nachia@infoquest.com.my
- I understand that if I have any concerns I can contact one of the University of Waikato research supervisors as follows:

Professor Brian Findsen

Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 838 4500 Ext 8257

Email: bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz

Professor Tina Besley

Department of Policy, Cultural
and Social Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
Phone: +64 7 856 2889 Ext 6246

Email: t.besley@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix 11 – Sample of tabulated data and coding processes

Focus Group Discussion – Teachers

SCC

Goal of CEs: To upgrade socio-economic status of community by increasing income of local community especially those surrounding us and we also make available the long-life learning not only for students but to all levels of community immaterial of age, although you are old you can learn something from this college

Goal of CEs: To act as a pathway for SPM leavers, in accordance with statistics there are a number of mixed output of SPM leavers every year for example in that year if there is 50,000 SPM leavers, those who are entering higher learning institutions are not that much, 3% where has the rest of the students gone, so CC prepare the platform for them to continue studying.

Call 0193

TOPICS	Teachers CC One	Teachers CC Two	Teachers CC Four	NOTES
Goals of community colleges	This CC is for those students who are not excellent, an opportunity for those students less excellent in their academic to acquire skills in the field of technical and vocational	could see that I upgrade the socioeconomic status of community then by increasing the income of local community especially those surrounding us and we also make available the long-life learning not only for students but to all levels of community immaterial of age, although you are old you can learn something from this college	More to education through technical and vocational training One more thing is the lifelong learning that is known as TVET All the courses involve hands on training and are more to technical site There are two ways of teaching carried out in CC - we teach full-time and at the same time we teach community. I mean lifelong learning Our working time on weekdays is contributed to students while during weekends we do courses in accordance	To act As a pathway for SPM leavers, in accordance with statistics there are a number of mixed output of SPM leavers every year for example in that year if there is 50,000 SPM leavers, those who are entering higher learning institutions are not that much, 3% where has the rest of the students gone, so CC prepare the platform for them to continue studying. Next, is for community, encouraging them to become lifelong learners. CC is also for reskilling and upskilling for those in departments maybe if

2 or jobs in CEs

LLL opportunity from trs perception

Goal for left-out CEs

Goal of upskilling and reskilling

Who needs computer skills - low skilled - no exposure

For civil servants what are the popular courses Government sectors.

only computer skills never use

Local community for example he is already good in one field but want to learn other skills and would like to try new field, this means giving opportunity to community to venture into new fields	This CC serve the local community of this parliament, parliament area of Sungai Siput.	with skills that are con. here, even gover... some skills can come here too, it is not only for government staff but also for private companies staff
CC also gives lifelong learning, we give opportunity to those community in the working industry, school leavers for full-time and furthermore it is nearer to local community. There are 84 colleges almost one in every district all over Malaysia	That's why CCs do not have hostels for students and those students that come from outside of this area will be placed in rental houses with reasonable rental	On the most of the institutions such as U, poly and ITM are catered for okay results students but CCs make available courses for students who do not have that good results, so the opportunity for this type of students is here and this is because of the minimum entry requirement and for me this is also an advantage because here the method of teaching is skill-based therefore it is focused to low-achievement students and they are the one who do not like to study but when we teach them skills they can do.

Why CGs?

<p>influence people to enter CCs</p>	<p>choose CC, they say it is because the field of skills that they want is here, secondly is the cheaper fees, thirdly nearer to home</p> <p>First is the course, relevant to one's need, the industry too is nearer to the learning place, and then the entry requirement is minimum, as we only offer certificate courses isn't it.</p>	<p>But the advanced programmes always changes so we cannot focus that's why we try to accept students that come to our college not from one point but to talk to them what is our strong point to come and join our college</p> <p>But the one that motivate students to come here, I feel the requirements to come are not very high. As a lot, just pass exam you pass you can come in that's all, ours do not have standard, not very high but very low. It gives a lot of training we are not much of academic we are more of practical, like in my course tourism I do a</p>	<p>for example for the CSR programmes we take the initiative to go the villages to promote our programmes by doing</p> <p>for the CSR programmes are chosen based on the ability to increase the villagers income</p> <p>There was one religious school - a very new school and not very stable - they requested our courses</p>	<p>cooking, fashion ... a popular course among single mothers who eventually start their own business after learning the skills</p> <p>Those without or failed SPM but aged 17 years and above and would like to study, can take up SMK programme for 4 months to qualify for any programmes in a</p> <p>In SMK programme they will learn Malay language, Science, History, Mathematics, Basic computer and English</p> <p>This SMK is a new programme which was started only in September, a special programme for those students who want to enter college but do not have SPM certificate, and this 4</p>	<p>Simple mothers often come here to learn about in the cooking prog</p> <p>remedial</p> <p>Remedial check in analysis.</p> <p>look in transcript pg 3</p>
--------------------------------------	---	---	--	--	--

Why CGs - easier to industry Grad

Min. Opium, minimum entry requirement

CSR prog for villagers

AC helping religious sch with prog.

<p>Challenges of community college</p> <p>main challenges for a teacher in this CC</p>	<p>competition with vocational colleges, our great competitor because they have courses until diploma</p> <p>Students prefer vocational and technical colleges as they can acquire diploma straight instead of CCs that only offer certificate, a waste of two extra years for certificates!</p> <p>Some targets of too colleges and institutions which have similar kind of fields and courses with hostel and allowance, everybody has to fight for these limited students</p>	<p>Those let students prefer to work than studying because one of the reasons for this group of students to finish their SPM is to work with a better salary</p> <p>Competition with SKM providers, students are more recognised with the SKM than CC Certificate</p>	<p>Of course as we explained earlier, our main challenge is the students themselves. usually the students will enter with minimum requirement and for them the biggest challenge is to succeed... therefore we have to make sure the students will be able to make a decision after they have attended an 18 months programme with us - want to continue to study or want to open a business or want to work ... and definitely we do not want them to be unemployed... so</p>	<p>From the fact of curriculum we still have to do a lot of improvements</p> <p>I believe the main problem(s) T&P itself, as the lecturers of CC (the age range) of students is diverse like what I said just now from the age of 4 years old to 80 years old and then this is for short courses and then for the full-time courses the students will be of a background that they cannot go anywhere else and then from the fact of skills knowledge and skills itself as lecturers of CCs we could not have only one skill for instance myself is a</p>	<p>Challenges of SS</p> <p>challenge - diverse group of SS</p> <p>professional development SI as lecturer</p> <p>AC - challenges they hr. - fr comm went</p>
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SS recruitment challenge

prefer to work than study SS - challenge

courses challenges include no opt out state

Too many institutions as competitors

challenges too many institutions

