1.0 BACKGROUND

The globalisation of world markets is driving Malaysia to remain competitive in the international market. The marketplace for HE is no exception. International students today are more aware of their rights and choices for further education. Their mobility has grown considerably over the past 20 years but the pattern has changed dramatically since the 1990s, and more so post September 11. They have become more demanding about getting their expectations and needs met. Besides that, increased economic cooperation and the impact of new technologies have further driven this sector to be more innovative in its response to rapid changes in market demands and needs.

Today, Malaysia is aiming at become a net exporter of education, and is promoting itself as an education destination by establishing offices in China, Indonesia, Vietnam, the United Arab Emirates and South Africa. The comparatively good value and social-cultural and religious similarities with this region are expected to increase the number of international students from the Middle East.

There is a real need for education to be a major foreign currency earner for Malaysia, even though profits should not be the primary concern of education. More importantly, the commitment is always to developing and providing world-class educational opportunities. In sum, HE has become top priority for the Malaysian government because her growth, development and progress are strongly dependent on achieving higher levels of excellence in education within the nation as well as internationally. In order to achieve this, MoHE has put internationalization as one of the strategic thrusts in the National Higher Education Action Plan Phase 1 (MoHE, 2007) with the objective to make Malaysia as the hub of educational excellence internationally. Since the inception of National Higher Education Action Plan in 2007 and the recently launched of the Phase 2 of the National Higher Education Action Plan (MoHE, 2011a), it is imperative that a measure of the degree of satisfaction by international students based on their education experience in Malaysia is obtained. Findings from such studies can provide useful inputs for improvement on the delivery systems of HE, increase the efficiency of the system and successfully-establishing Malaysia as the brand for HE within the region.