



## LIFELONG LEARNING FOR INMATES

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### ABSTRACT

Lifelong learning could not only be learnt by the public but also by inmates in prisons. Open University Malaysia (OUM) had given the opportunity to inmates in Sekolah Integriti Kajang (SIK), Kajang Prison to obtain higher education in their fields of interest. As a university, OUM emphasized on the concept of Service to Society – not only to the public but also to inmates in prison. All this while, a stigma exists; the inmates have no place in the society and their future is assumed to be bleak. Nevertheless, the perception is changed after collaboration between OUM and the Prison Department of Malaysia. This had given the inmates a learning opportunity in pursuing their studies from the first degree to the master's degree. Being a university that focused on online learning, OUM had provided a flexible learning system to the inmates. Hence, they were able to follow the courses in the programs offered to them. The role played by OUM in offering the education programs mark significant efforts in changing the path for inmates to lead productive lives in society. This had enabled a change in the society's perception towards the inmates in leading a better future after life in prison. The impact of education is especially evident in prison. Rigorous study gives prisoners the intellectual leverage they need to revise their views of themselves and leave prison better equipped to contribute positively to their families and communities. Studies have shown that those released prisoners who received an education had a significantly lower rate of recidivism.

Keywords: Lifelong learning, inmates, online learning, stigma and perception.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Lifelong learning is defined as an extensive learning in today's aspect of living. The concept of learning is meant as a flexible, diverse and available process at different times and in different places. Open University Malaysia through its "Service for society" activity provide lifelong learning environment to all walks of life in the society. The government through its various related departments plays a major role in fulfilling the responsibility to provide more educational opportunities through lifelong learning programs for the inmates. The educational empowerment for the inmates through lifelong learning programs is vital as it would enable them to be better persons after release. David & Judith (2001), claim

the concept of lifelong learning is concerned with promoting skills and competences necessary for developing general capabilities and specific performance in work situations.

Open University Malaysia provides the opportunities for educational programmes to the inmates in pursuing higher education. These educational programmes are absolute necessity if the chances of offenders obtaining employment and becoming law-abiding citizens upon release from prison are to be increased. Clearly, the implementation of inmate education is a win-win situation. Therefore, the continuation of the educational programmes for inmates must be maintained for the betterment of society as a whole. The prison restricted their movements, but will not control their minds and they can continue to get education. In actual fact, though they are being imprisoned, this does not necessarily mean that their freedom is fully restricted; as they could be considered as receiving certain 'privileges' particularly to further studies with consent from the authorities. In this respect, the prisons management understands offenders within all prisons institutions in Malaysia should not be left behind so as to enjoy the practice of the concept of democracy of education whilst imprisoned.

As such, it is hoped that the commitment of the Prisons Department towards providing more educational empowerment as lifelong learning programmes may help the department achieving its objectives to rehabilitate prisoners into becoming good citizens. Studies have shown that those released prisoners who received an education had a significantly lower rate of recidivism. Offenders have unique and varied educational needs. In order to meet the needs of inmate students, a range of teaching methods and techniques are being employed by OUM at SIK, including both individual and group instruction. Staff training programmes, competent teachers and better facilities are steps taken by OUM in ensuring that the principles of successful education programming are applied in every prison classroom. Gerber & Fritsch (1995) stated that adult education in prison could lead to a reduction in criminal behavior, to post release enrollment in education, to better post release employment history, and to fewer disciplinary problems.



According to Deputy Superintendent of Prison (DSP) Ranjit Singh, Kajang Prison has 3,790 inmates and 300 are juvenile delinquents in which, some of whom are of school-going age, deserve opportunities and avenues to further their studies. The high number of juveniles encouraged the Kajang Prison to approach OUM to offer degree programs to the inmates. In this regard, the collaborations involving between the Prisons Department and the Open University of Malaysia towards providing more flexible and accessible educational opportunities for the inmates inside the institutions should be commendable.

The cooperation between Open University Malaysia and the Kajang Prison, of Sekolah Integrasi Kajang (SIK) comprehends the duty to fulfill the objectives of democracy in education as per contained in the "Education for All" policy. The inmates could benefit from the prospects of the better implementation of lifelong learning educational programs within the prisons institutions through the bachelors and the master's degree program at OUM. The concept of education in prison had been implemented throughout the world, but at OUM the education obtained by the inmates is through the open and distance learning (ODL).

## II. OBJECTIVE

The paper highlights on the objectives to be discussed;

- a. The implementation of Lifelong Learning for inmates in prison by OUM.
- b. The opportunities for inmates to obtain higher education in the prison.
- c. The change of the society's stigma and perception towards the inmates who are seen to have no future after their sentence in prison.
- d. The achievement and the academic performance of the inmates who undergo the programs offered by OUM.

Open University of Malaysia agrees that the implementation of lifelong learning programmes within the prisons institutions is helpful towards ensuring an effective rehabilitation process of offenders due to certain factors; namely:

- a. Lifelong learning programmes implemented for inmates within the prisons institutions is one good platform for them to gain useful knowledge and skills that could guide them in becoming better persons.
- b. It is the responsibility of the Malaysia Prisons Department and OUM to provide a helpful medium of learning and teaching activities like lifelong learning programmes in order to achieve the objectives of rehabilitating the institutionalized inmates during the imprisonment.
- c. The accessibility nature of lifelong learning programmes facilitating all people of all ages and backgrounds to receive education through formal and informal learning approach is essential for institutionalized inmates to utilize similar educational opportunities during incarceration.

- d. The implementation of lifelong learning programmes within the prisons institutions through Open University Malaysia may assist the Prisons Department to develop these offenders towards producing better citizens who could socially contribute to the nations upon their reintegration into the society.

As such, we may also imply the Malaysia Prisons Department is committed towards providing adequate accessibility to educational rights for the inmates whilst their incarceration. Through and by implementing the lifelong learning programmes within the prisons institutions, it shows the Malaysia Prisons Department intends to bridge possible educational gaps between institutionalized inmates and the outside world.

All this while, a social stigma exists that each inmate undergoing punishment does not have the opportunity to study because they are facing a bleak future. This is because each inmate is to spend their life in prison until they finish their sentence. Nevertheless, the stigma has changed after OUMs' lifelong learning programmes gave the ray of hopes to the offenders to prove that they are not scum and still can contribute to the society.

OUM had gotten the idea to give opportunities to inmates to pursue their education after a family met OUM staffs at the registration for new students in August 2008. The family had stated their intention to obtain further information on the learning methods in OUM for their son who is in prison to further his studies at a higher level. After the family was given the explanation by OUM and the inmate's certificates of qualification were checked by OUM, they were offered to the OUM programmes.

The inmates face difficult challenges in coming back to the society. Prejudice against them had make it even worse. Therefore, having an opportunity to pursue their studies give them a second chance to return to the society upon their release. According to the Director of Rehabilitation and Cure Section, Prison Department of Malaysia, Prison Assistant Commissioner Darussalam Budin, this matter is relevant to the "Education for All" philosophy by the Organization of Education, Science and Cultures of the United Nations.

## III. HOW OUM IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAMMES FOR INMATES

### 3.1. Entry and Qualification

Since the year 2008, 10 inmates had been offered to do the lifelong learning programmes introduced by OUM based on their field of interests. According to Puan Kamariah Mohd Noor, OUM Registrar (2008), the 1996 IPTS Act and OUM regulations there are no hindrance to inmates to further their education at a higher level whether at a diploma, bachelor and master. OUM also did not put an age limit in its application as in OUM's entrance requirement except for the open entry process. The open entry enables the inmates without qualification such as diploma or Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM), but obtains a Sijil Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR), with the minimum age of 21 and had passed the entry requirement test. Nevertheless, inmates undergoing death

penalty are not allowed to enroll for the program unless they are pardoned by the Yang diPertuan Agong.

Based on DSP Ranjit Singh’s explanation, the inmates entrance to SIK is not an easy task in which they must go through the ‘inmates and family’ interview process (Azeezah Jameelah Mohd Mohideen 2011: 4). Thus, not all inmates will be qualified to undergo the SIK programmes because they will have to go through a strict selection from the prison’s management authority. This is to ensure that the inmates are genuinely interested to study and

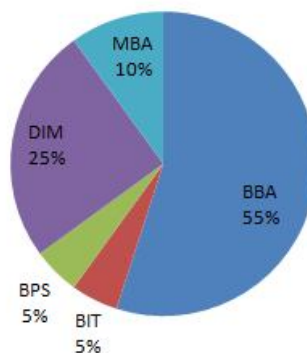
participate in the SIK programmes so that they could improve themselves. The Prison Director, Commissioner Abdul Wahab Kassim, stated there are two factors that make OUM as the best institution to help the inmates. First, the degree programs offered are well recognized by the Malaysian Qualification Agency of Malaysia (MQA). Second, the online blended learning approaches adopted by the university enable inmates to study without leaving the prison (Azeezah Jameelah Mohd Mohideen 2011: 5).

**Table 1**  
The Numbers of SIK Students in OUM

BRANCH_DESC	PROGRAM_ID	DEGREE	STATUS	INTAKE_DESC	Total
SEKOLAH INTERGRITI KAJANG	UNDERGRADUATE	BBA	ACTIVE	JANUARI 2009	1
				MEI 2010	1
				MEI 2012	1
				SEPTEMBER 2012	5
				JANUARI 2013	3
				<b>BBA Total</b>	<b>11</b>
	BIT	DORMANT		JANUARI 2009	1
	BPS	ACTIVE		SEPTEMBER 2013	1
	DIM	ACTIVE		MEI 2010	3
				SEPTEMBER 2012	2
	<b>DIM Total</b>	<b>5</b>			
	UNDERGRADUATE Total				
MASTER	MBA	ACTIVE	MEI 2013	2	
					<b>MBA Total</b>
MASTER Total					2
<b>SEKOLAH INTERGRITI KAJANG Total</b>					<b>20</b>

Table 1 above shows the numbers of SIK students for the diploma programmes, degree programmes and masters’ programmes from January 2009 to September 2013 semesters. There are 5(five) students enroll for the Diploma in Management programme , 11(eleven) students for the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) programme, 1(one) student for the Bachelor of Information Technology (BIT) programme and also 1(one) for the Bachelor of Political Science (BPS) programme.. The total number of SIK students doing the Bachelor Degree programmes is 18 students. In addition, there are two SIK students who are doing their Masters of Business Administration (MBA) for the May 2013 semester intake. The overall total of SIK students in the Kajang Prison is about 20 students. Based on Diagram 1, the favourite programme among the SIK students is the BBA programme percentage of 55 percent, followed by DIM by 25 percent, MBA programme by 10 percent, BPS and BIT each by 5 percent.

**The Percentage of SIK Students According to Programmes**



**Diagram 1**  
Percentage of SIK Students According to Programmes.



### 3.2 Types of Programmes

OUM Registrar, Puan Kamariah (2008) explained, OUM offered programs at the diploma, degree and masters levels to inmates in the prison. Although a number of 70 programs are offered at one time, the inmates are only allowed to undergo the program that do not involve lab and field work. Therefore, the inmates are only allowed to take up programs such as management, business administration, multimedia communication, Islamic studies and early childhood education. For the beginners, OUM had also provided special scholarships to the first 10 inmates enrolled to aid their study fees. On the other hand, other inmates who are interested in the OUM programs could do so by their own or sponsored by their family respectively.

For the 2013/2014 intake, there are seven inmates who are undergoing long term punishment will start their studies in the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) programme at OUM. This program will be conducted twice a month via open distance learning where they will follow the program in the prison. Tuan Darussalam Budin, highlighted that this group is the first to undergo the master's program. He also added that, the inmates who are interested and qualified will be given the opportunity to further their studies. Each inmates' study fees at the masters level will be sponsored by their own families (Sinar Harian, 1 November 2012).

### 3.3 Teaching and Learning

OUM practiced three main components in its learning methods such as face-to-face, online learning and self-learning. The duration per semester for the inmates following the OUM programmes are similar to other OUM students, which is 15 weeks. For each face-to face tutorial, the students will meet the lecturers 4 to 5 times for each course they take. Each semester, the students are allowed to register not more than 3 courses so it will not burden them and at the same time to maintain their grades. The

learning methods for the inmates in prison are the same with other OUM students and other universities in Malaysia (Rosnani Saad 2008).

In the beginning, the prison had no computer facilities and OUM generously contributed 4 computers to aid the teaching and learning process for the inmates. The prison allocated the usage of computer and internet by the inmates from 8 am to 5pm daily. The prison management authority will also monitor and access the usage of the internet whereby it is strictly only for the learning purposes in getting references from the OUM digital library which has 700,000 references online. Their study time is limited and they must fully utilize it for learning. The discipline factor also help the inmates to use quality time, said the SIK Assistant Commandant, Chief Inspector Ahmad Nasir Md Ali (Berita Minggu, 30 September 2012).

OUM had appointed lecturers from other higher institutions with expertise in their fields to teach the inmates. The face-to-face meeting between the lecturers and the SIK students for two hours time in which the lecturers will guide the students in special classes provided by the prison authority. The inmates' in SIK learning mode is similar to other OUM students whereby they need to follow the tutorials with the lecturers at the end of the week. The inmates will sit for the exams in the Kajang Prison, invigilated by the Chief Examiner appointed by OUM and monitored by the prisons' authority. According to Assoc. Prof Yon Rosli, some of the earlier inmates who registered for the OUM programmes have been released and still pursue their education. They attend tutorial classes as usual with other OUM students but their past records are kept secret. Through this, they could start a new life without any prejudice from the society (Rahmah Daud 2012: 7).

### 3.4 Students' Achievement

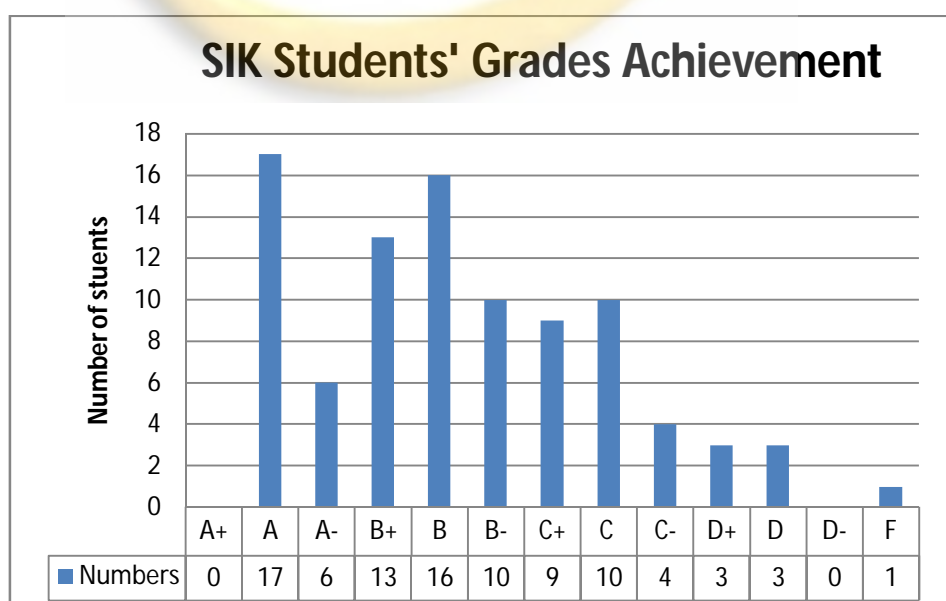


Diagram 2  
SIK Students' Grades Achievement Graph



Diagram 2 above shows the grade achievement of SIK students which were excellent, based on the result of the January 2012 to May 2012 semesters. Based from the graph shown 17 (seventeen) students obtaining grade A, 6 students with grade A-, 13 (thirteen) students with grade B+, 16 (sixteen) students with grade B and 10 (ten) students with grade B-. Compared to 9 students obtained grade C+, 10 students with grade C and 4 students getting grade C-. Meanwhile, 3 students with the lowest grade D+, 3 students with grade D and one student get an F. The results showed that the SIK students' achievement was good and satisfying with a small number of failures.

Diagram 3 and Table 2 below shows SIK students' achievement based on CGPA from January 2012 to May 2013 semesters for the BBA and DIM programmes. At the beginning, the students' achievement was not satisfied. As the semester proceeds to September 2012, their achievement was gradually improving to a better achievement. Two BBA students scored CGPA of 3.00 and

3.66 and another student scored CGPA of 3.70 to 4.00. Whereas, one DIM student scored CGPA of 2.00 to 2.49. In the January 2013 semester, the number of BBA students scoring CGPA of 3.70 to 4.00 gradually increasing to 3 students, 2 students obtained CGPA of 3.00 to 3.66, one student obtained CGPA of 2.50 to 2.99, 3 students obtained CGPA of 2.00 to 2.49 and two students obtained CGPA below 2.00.

The achievement for the DIM students was better. There was no student obtaining CGPA below 2.00 because all the 5 DIM students scored CGPA of 2.00 to 3.66. The BBA students' achievement getting better because there's no students scoring CGPA below 2.00. There were 3 BBA students who scored CGPA of 2.00-2.49, two students scored CGPA, of 2.50 to 2.99. 3 students scored CGPA of 3.00-3.66 and 3 students scored CGPA of 3.70-4.00. Overall, the SIK students' achievement for the BBA and the DIM programmes were getting better and improving.

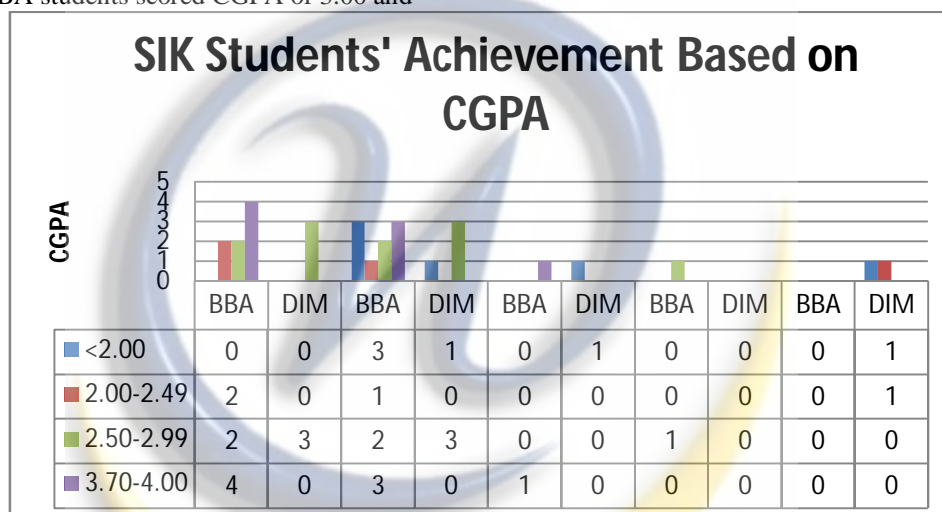


Diagram 3  
SIK Students' Achievement Based on CGPA.

Expr2	SEMESTER_DESC	DEGREE_ID	CGPA STATUS					Grand Total
			< 2.00	2.00 - 2.49	2.50 - 2.99	3.00 - 3.66	3.70 - 4.00	
132	MAY 2013	BBA		3	2	3	3	11
		DIM		1	2	1		4
131	JAN 2013	BBA	2	3	1	2	3	11
		DIM		1	2	1		4
123	SEPT 2012	BBA				2	1	3
		DIM		1				1
122	MAY2012	BBA			1	1		2
		DIM		1		1		2
121	JAN 2012	BBA				1		1
		DIM	1	1		1		3
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>

Table 2  
SIK Students' Achievement According to CGPA.

#### IV. THE EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAMMES

##### 4.1 *Change inmates life*

According to Peter Jarvis (2007), learning is a driving force in human living; we become ourselves, stimulus enriching our lives and making us truly human. The SIK Programs, introduced by OUM to the Kajang prison had given positive impacts to the inmates in the prison. An inmate, Hafiz who is following the Bachelor of Business Management said that the program had given him a new hope to further his studies. All this while, he had thought that he had lost his future after his sentence. With the SIK program, he had benefited his free time in prison by studying and it has been a ticket for him to have a new life after his release (Berita Minggu, 30 September 2012).

Another inmate, Sanjith who is studying the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) stated that he looks forward to further his study and plan to make the best out of his time behind bars. In the past, he did not complete his pre-law course due to his own mistakes that disappoint him and his family. He was determined to change all his mistakes to doing good deeds. Sanjith is expected to be released in 2016 and had portrayed that life behind bars has taught him to appreciate his family's sacrifice and his good life before this. He promised to help his mother to run a business after release because his family sponsored his study (Rahmah Daud 2012: 7).

Yus, another inmate at Kajang Prison is undergoing the BBA program. He mentioned that studying in SIK make him more appreciative of knowledge. He had only gained his Form Five education when he was involved with the wrong group and unable to further his study. He is thankful that life in prison had taught him many things on how to be a good person, more disciplined and more religious. He is very happy with the studies in prison and hopes the BBA program would benefit him and his family (Rahmah Daud 2012: 7).

Deputy Home Minister, Datuk Wira Abu Seman said the inmates studying in prison will quicken their attitude convalesce process. This will help them to get better jobs after prison. Based on past experience, most inmates find it difficult to get jobs after their release, resulting in them to commit in the crime activities again (Nazrai Ahmad Zabidi 2012: 12). The ongoing education program is hoped to provide a good knowledge, skills and develop positive thinking after they return to the society. Indirectly, the former inmates could contribute to the society and the country besides going back to their beloved family.

##### 4.2 *Recognition to OUM*

In conjunction with the 206th Malaysia Prison Day, The Vice Chancellor/President OUM Tan Sri Professor Emeritus Anuwar Ali was awarded the Pingat Bakti Setia which was the highest award by the Home Minister. The award is to recognized OUM's role and contribution in providing 'Service to society' in the aspect of lifelong learning to the inmates in prison.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

OUM suggested that more empirical studies should be carried out in the future to investigate what are possible constraints and challenges that the Prisons Department should face by the implementation of lifelong programs within the prisons institutions in Malaysia. And also, the government, private sectors and non-governmental agencies through their various related departments play a major role in fulfilling the responsibility supporting the Prisons Department to provide more educational opportunities through lifelong learning programs for the institutionalized children and young people in Malaysia.

##### 5.1 *Appendix*



Inmates were given explanation on the OUM programmes.



Meeting between inmates and family with the OUM Marketing Department.



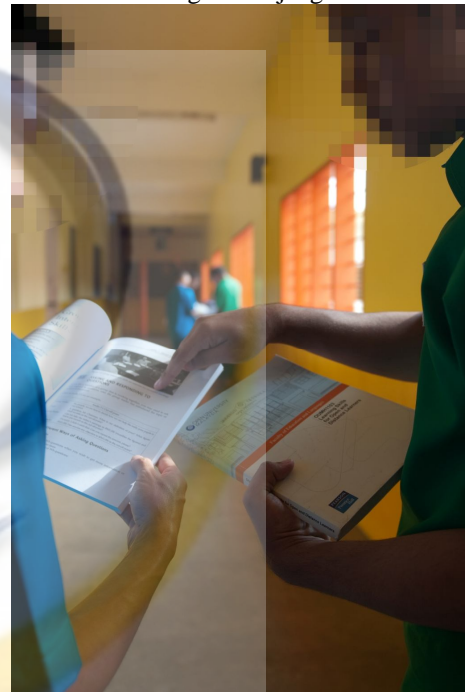
Inmates receiving their study offer to OUM from Dato' Hishamuddin Bin Tun Hussein.



Learning session between inmates and tutors at the Sekolah Integrasi Kajang.



Prof. Dr Zakaria Ismail handing the offer letters to an inmate at the Kajang Prison.



Inmates use OUM Module as their learning material.



An inmate going on-line learning at Sekolah Integrasi Kajang.



OUM President Tan Sri Anuwar Ali, awarded the Pingat Bakti Setia in conjunction with the Prison Day

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