Social Inclusion Practices of Elite Universities in Australia and Malaysia: A Comparative Perspective

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Management)

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Rosmi Yuhasni Mohamed Yusuf

27 July, 2015
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DEDICATION

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APL  Accreditation of Prior Learning
APUCEN  Asia Pacific University Community Engagement Network
AQF  Australian Qualification Framework
ARC  Australian Research Council
ATAR  Academic Tertiary Admission Ranking
CAE  Colleges of Advanced Education
CCA  Commonwealth Compact Agreement
GO8  Group of Eight
HECS  Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HELP  Higher Education Loan Program
HEPP  Higher Education Participation Programme
KIP  Key Intangibles Performance
KTP  Knowledge Transfer Program
MNHESP  Malaysia National Higher Education Strategic Plan
MOSTI  Malaysian Ministry of Science
MQA  Malaysian Qualifications Agency
NEM  New Economic Model
NEP  National Economic Policy
OBE  Outcome Based Education
PHEI  Private Higher Education Institutions Act
QAMU  Quality Assurances Management Unit
SCL  Student Centred Learning
SES  Socioeconomic Status
TAHES  Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System
TEQSA  Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency
THE  Times Higher Education
UCTC  University Community Transformation Centre
UNESCO  The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET  Vocational Education and Training
ABSTRACT

Social inclusion as a concept in higher education features the broader elements of outreach activities, access initiatives and engagement of students in the teaching and learning process. The increased importance of social inclusion approaches is attributed to awareness that insufficient skills and incompetent levels of education may lead to poverty and social exclusion. Despite government emphasis on greater social inclusion, elite universities are still widely perceived as socially exclusive institutions. The influence from government and increasingly competitive higher education market have arguably been dictating these universities’ capacity in revamping their existing practices and formulating and implementing more socially inclusive ones.

The objective of this thesis is to explore and investigate the practices of social inclusion in elite universities in order to analyse how adaptive and responsive to calls for social inclusion elite universities are to the influences of government policy frameworks and higher education market features. This thesis explores how participants within four selected elite universities in Australia and Malaysia perceive the influence of multiple institutional logics on their practices of social inclusion. The research contributes to understanding how a plurality of institutional logics affects social inclusion practices in elite universities, which has implications for higher education institutions, governments, academics, the wider community and future research.
The context of the thesis is the evolving higher education policies at the macro level and the instantiation of higher education market-driven practices in the two selected countries. The thesis is underpinned by the two theories of institutional logics and strategic responses to institutional processes, which predict a pattern of strategic adaptation to multiple and conflicting external institutional logics as the outcome of interpretations of participants within the elite universities at both the meso and micro levels. On the basis of the theoretical underpinnings and literature on the two external institutional logics, a conceptual framework and a set of propositions are framed accordingly.

This thesis utilised a cross-country-based case study approach, with four elite universities as the primary sample cases. The four elite universities selected across the two countries are denoted A1, A2, M1 and M2. 18 officers attached to the task of coordinating initiatives related to social inclusion across the four elite universities were interviewed. Primary data were collected via face-to-face and telephoned semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions were designed accordingly to obtain insights from university administrators on the possible effect of government policies and higher education market features on the practices of social inclusion. A total of seven policy makers and government officers at the federal and state levels and 13 academic experts across the two countries were also interviewed. Input from the government officers and academic experts was used to triangulate the primary data gathered from the key participants within the four selected elite universities. Primary data was also triangulated with information obtained from the social inclusion strategic planning and other official documents from the four elite universities.
The findings revealed that social inclusion practices of elite universities in both countries are affected more by government policy frameworks than by the higher education market features and they do not seem to be adapting innovatively in broadening their social inclusiveness. Also, patterns of adaptations are country-specific and are not cross-country influenced. A similarity of practices between elite universities in each country is evident. In Australia, patterns of adaptations may include one of mixed or active, whereas in Malaysia adaptations are either passive or mixed. The findings also revealed that the internal value of academic elitism and the element of quality from the higher education market features have significantly shaped the extent of social inclusion practices across the four elite universities. Overall, the key findings of the thesis indicated that the conceptualisation of social inclusion practices of the four elite universities is underpinned not by purely economic rationalities but by shared socially constructed meanings from embedded values within the two groups of government and market logics in Australia and Malaysia.
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

(i) Refereed Conference Proceedings and Abstract
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

Social inclusion has been the overarching theme that underpins the public policy reform agenda in many developed countries and in a few developing countries in recent years. The imperative of social inclusion is informed by the greater awareness of government in ensuring that public organisations are socially inclusive and accessible to everyone, irrespective of their social background. As a consequence, this will create a socially inclusive society, with everyone having the opportunity and the right resources to participate in key economic, social and community activities. In Australia, the social inclusion reform agenda was initiated in 2008 by the federal government through a set of principles of social inclusion as a guide to all public and community organisations on the importance of undertaking a socially inclusive approach for meaningful societal engagement (Australian Government, 2010). In Malaysia, the public policy reform agenda has also been implicitly informed by the concept of social inclusion, as evidenced in the development of government policy such as the New Economic Model in 2010 (National Economic Advisory Council, 2010). The aspiration for social inclusion in Malaysian public policy has also been mooted through the government’s racial integration concept of ‘1Malaysia’ since 2010 (Su-Lyn, 2010). The ‘1Malaysia’ concept adopts the principles of social justice and inclusivity to ensure that government policies are able to benefit all Malaysians, irrespective of their ethnic origins.

In the context of higher education, social inclusion focuses on the elements of access, equity, transition and engagement of students, which also includes the element of empowerment and
provision of equal opportunities to participate (Bosanquet, Winchester-Seeto & Rowe, 2012). In Australia, the articulation of social inclusion aspiration has been explicitly established through the policy recommendation of the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008). Under this policy recommendation, the Australian federal government has fixed a national target of 20% of participation in higher education from people within the group of low socioecon
omic backgrounds. The aim of widening participation within the context of social inclusion in Australian higher education has also included a bachelor degree attainment target of 40% by 2020 for young people between the ages of 25 and 34 (Bradley et al., 2008). In Malaysia, a similar target of social inclusion in higher education is evidenced through a bachelor degree attainment target of 50% by 2020 of people between aged 17-23, as outlined in the Malaysian national higher education strategic plan in 2007 (Sirat, 2009).

Against the background of the government’s policy targets for social inclusion in higher education across the Australia and Malaysia, elite universities are gradually being pushed to diligently align their missions and values with multiple institutional logics that reflect the government’s political and economic agenda. Accordingly, the emerging and evolving logics at the macro level that rationalise the need for higher education expansion have exerted greater pressure for the elite universities to collectively undertake the role of social engineering for the purpose of social inclusion (Putnam & Gill, 2011). The pressure for social inclusion in higher education is also underpinned by societal expectation on the universities’ role in the realisation of social justice and fairness in higher education (Jiang, 2009) and societal environment changes in student demographics (Gumport, 2000; Naidoo, 2003). In view of the above, the elite universities’ capacity to adapt and respond to the multiplicity of logics at the macro level
requires both structural and operational flexibility (Scott, 2006). Also, the social engineering task of the elite universities entails them tapping deeply and indiscriminately into the pool of able students and broaden the social base of their student population (Tapper, 2007; Wintour & Adams, 2013).

The way that the embedded multiple logics of the government and market affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities and resultant patterns of adaptation have not been clearly highlighted in the extant literature. On this subject, research on organisational adaptation in higher education must be established through the link between micro and macro levels (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2011). From that perspective, capacities of the elite universities to adapt and respond for social inclusion can be understood through the interpretive capacities of the actors within the micro level on the evolving institutional logics at the macro level. For example, how do decision makers within an elite university perceive the values and meaning of the macro level institutional logics for social inclusion? How and to what extent do elite universities adapt to a set of institutional logics that would eventually explain either a generic or a specific pattern of social inclusion practices across the higher education sector? These questions necessitate a research approach that frames the perception on the external institutional factors and the embedded logics and their effect on social inclusion practices by participants within the elite universities themselves. Since organisational practices are the outcomes of institutional logics (Friedland & Alford, 1991), adaptation for social inclusion as a case of organisational adaptation in the context of the elite universities requires an understanding of their perspectives on external institutional logics. Therefore, the micro-level perspectives of the norms, values and meanings of the multiple logics at the macro
level and the strategic approaches taken at both the meso and micro levels as a consequence to external pressures for social inclusion seem to be an under-developed area in higher education-related discourses.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

The rationale of the research is informed by four primary reasons. Firstly, this research will improve the policy makers’ understanding of the ideal model of social inclusion that is preferable in the context of an elite university. The extant literature acknowledges that there are variations in social inclusion practices across public higher education providers (Bowl & Hughes, 2013; Butcher, Corfield & Rose-Adams, 2012; Cotton, Kneale & Nash, 2013; Stevenson, Clegg & Lefever, 2010). Different interpretations of the ideal concept of social inclusion at the government level, within individual universities and across individuals within the universities, are noticeable (Butcher et al., 2012; Sheeran, Brown, & Baker, 2007). Taking into consideration the reasons above, this research will assist policy makers’ understanding of the ideal concept of social inclusion that can be realistically implemented in elite universities.

Secondly, this research addresses understanding on how the seemingly conflicting logics from the external institutional factors such as government and market can be utilised to enhance the practices of social inclusion in the context of the elite group of universities. This rationale is framed on the basis that elite universities are forced to change against a background of contradictory expectations from the government and higher education market forces which can also complicate their visions and aspirations for global excellence (Cockcroft, 2008). The perceived tension between government aspirations for social inclusion as an inevitable
consequence of mass participation in higher education and the elite universities’ aims for academic excellence and prestige suggest an inevitable paradox. This paradox is further complicated by the competing philosophical rationale underpinning the social inclusion practices (Stevenson et al., 2010). It is, therefore, likely that reconciling the social inclusion paradox rests upon the perception and rationalisation of participants within the respective elite universities.

Thirdly, previous research assumes a passive adaptation approach to conforming with external pressures for social inclusion (Bowl & Hughes, 2013; Butcher et al., 2012; Graham, 2010; Greenbank, 2004; Stevenson et al., 2010). This perspective limits understanding of the nature of adaptation to external pressures for social inclusion. No previous research has grounded the perspectives of strategic-oriented theories within the neo-institutionalism stream (i.e., Besharov & Smith, 2014; Lawrence et al., 2011; Oliver, 1991) that can be utilised to explore the capacities of public universities to adapt for social inclusion. On that basis, the third rationale of the research will contribute to the literature by utilising strategic oriented neo-institutionalism as the underpinning theory to explain the extent of findings.

Fourth, cross-country research conducted on this specific area has been scarce. In view of the above, this research examines and compares the ways elite higher education providers across two different countries adapt and respond to a set of identified external institutional pressures for the purpose of social inclusion.
1.3 THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

A comparative study that explores the elite university’s social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia is justified by several factors. Firstly, it is justified based on the difference between the two nations in terms of their resource mobilisation in higher education. As of 2010, official figures suggest that the government of Malaysia has invested about 1.69% of GDP in public tertiary education, while in contrast the Australian government spent 0.8% of its GDP for public higher education (Guan, 2014; Jericho, 2014). This data suggests an intriguing perspective for this research, as it shows that government subsidisation of higher education in Malaysia is significantly higher in comparison to Australia. Government expenditure on public higher education institutions is important because it might suggest that non-government contributions to Australian universities’ operating revenues reflect a greater scale of market driven activities (i.e., international fees and other commercialisation activities) across Australian public universities. As a result, social inclusion practices of Australian public universities might be affected by lack of government funding. Secondly, social inclusion practices are context-specific. The positive effects of various social inclusion interventions such as financial assistance and possible reforms in admission methods might vary by jurisdiction. In this respect, different policy frameworks and governance structures in relation to higher education in both countries, and the historical trajectories of higher education with strong British influences and economy structures of both developed and developing nations, are thought to provide a solid foundation for a comparative study between the two nations. A basic comparison between the features of the higher education sector across the two countries is shown in Table 1.1.
Table 1.1: Australian and Malaysian Tertiary Education Sector

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Australia</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Education Qualification:</strong></td>
<td>Higher Education Qualification:</td>
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<td>All post-secondary education that leads to the award of certificates,</td>
<td>Level 5 – Level 10. All post-secondary education that leads to the award</td>
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<td>diplomas and degrees, Masters Degree and Doctoral Degree (Malaysian</td>
<td>of a diploma or advanced diploma, Associate Degrees, Bachelor Degrees,</td>
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<td>Qualifications Framework)</td>
<td>Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Vocational Graduate</td>
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<td>Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Vocational Graduate Diploma, Masters</td>
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<td>Degree and Doctoral Degree (Australia Qualifications Framework)</td>
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<td>Universities (11).</td>
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<td>Non-aligned Universities (14).</td>
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1.3.1 The Australian Context

Public higher education in Australia was originally placed under the constitutional obligation of the nation’s six states. In 1974, the responsibility to fund public higher education sector was fully assumed by the federal government as a consequence of agreements made with the states and territories and the sector was primarily publicly funded up to the mid-1980s (Marginson, 1997). To date, there are 37 self-accrediting public universities and two private universities founded through government legislation. The 37 public universities and another one non-university are classified as Table A higher education providers and these institutions are federally funded (see Table 1.1). Different phases of higher education expansion in Australia are closely associated with the specific milestones achieved by the government for social equity. The four significant phases discerned are post-World War II nation rebuilding, the expansionist phase during the Whitlam Labor government in the 1970s and its maintenance under the Fraser Coalition government, the neoliberal phase underpinning the restructuring of Australian public higher education sector in the late 1980s under the Hawke Labor government, and the Gillard government’s Labor social inclusion agenda in 2008 (Carson, 2009; Gale & Parker, 2013). The four phases will be elaborated in the following paragraph accordingly.

First, the period after World War II witnessed the starting point of a transition from elite to mass higher education system in Australia. Prior to that, the higher education sector was deemed purely elitist, with only six public universities established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and approximately 20,000 students enrolled across those universities. It is also claimed that access to higher education during the 19th century was limited to the social and economic elite of society and to the sons of the privileged elites who could not make it to
England for post-secondary education (Gale & Parker, 2013). After World War II and up until today, accessibility to higher education has been the priority of all elected governments, with different implementation of equity strategies and inclusion models between them (McCaig, 2011). The government’s foremost initiative during the period after World War II was to address the demand for limited university places in Australia (Gale, 2012). It was highlighted that, in the latter half of the twentieth century, the population of Australian from the 17 to 22 year old age group who attended higher education was not more than 4%. By 1995, increased participation from this age group was noticeable at 30%. The increased involvement of the Australian federal government in dictating the states’ higher education system was noticeable in the period between 1942 and 1951 (Gale & Parker, 2013). During this period, federal government initiatives for broadening participation were initially focused on the provision of financial assistance in the form of a competitively allocated university scholarship that covered living allowances and tuition fees. This was also meant to boost the number of graduates in specific fields of science and engineering. Also efforts were made via the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme to encourage post-secondary training for returned service personnel (Forsyth, 2014a, 2014b). The number of university scholarships was then increased between the period of 1951 to 1961 with approximately 55% of fulltime students enrolled in higher education recipients of either a state or federal scholarship (Carson, 2009).

Second, in the 1960s, the federal government began to target the rural population in Australia for inclusiveness in higher education through participation (Wyn, 2009). In 1961, based on recommendations made by the Martin Committee, the aim of equitable access in higher education was initiated by the federal government. During this era, non-university higher
education providers were strengthened to allow institutions such as the Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE), vocationally oriented teaching institutions and institutes of technology to undertake roles to widen higher education access for Australians, specifically for the baby-boomer generation (Moodie, 2008). At this stage, under the Menzies Liberal-Country Party government, higher education was structured on the basis of a binary system, where CAE institutions were funded on the basis of teaching, whilst public universities were funded both on the basis of their teaching and research activities (Dudley, 2009). The binary system has enabled a significant increase in student enrolments with 100,000 of the total 273,000 made up of students from the CAEs and institutes of technology (Marginson, 1997).

Third, in 1974, the Tertiary Education Assistant Scheme (TEAS) was introduced as an income support scheme which targeted mostly students from the middle- and low-income families (Carson, 2009). During the same year, university fees were abolished and the Whitlam Labor government took total responsibility for funding higher education (Gale & Tranter, 2012). During the 1970s, higher education enrolments grew considerably in general, but nevertheless the overall enrolment from low socioeconomic groups was not actually encouraging quantitatively (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003). The pattern of inequalities of the pre-war years endured under the highly stratified binary system of higher education (Anderson & Verboorn, 1983). It is also noticeable that the composition of students from low socioeconomic groups under the binary system was vastly skewed towards CAEs and newer universities (Gale & Tranter, 2012). At the end of the 1970s, public expenditure for higher education was reduced by the Fraser government as a response to the impact of economic recession. It is argued that social equity initiatives in higher education were badly affected by the
funding cuts (Gibbs, 2011). The 1980s marked an important milestone in the Australian broadening higher education agenda, as the whole nation was preparing against the eventual impact of economic recession that had accordingly forced government acceptance of economic rationalism as an approach to governing the public sector. In 1988, a white paper on higher education was issued by the then Minister of Education, John Dawkins, that paved the way for a large-scale restructuring of the Australian public higher education sector. The binary system was abolished and both the higher education and the CAE sectors were encouraged to merge under the new Unified National System (UNS) (Roche, 2003).

The user-pays Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) was first introduced in 1989 under the UNS with a primary intention to address the demand side of higher education. The HECS was introduced on the understanding that private gains from higher education would last a lifetime and students should bear part of the cost of higher education (DEST, 2003). HECS was then regarded as both a quasi-market and equity mechanism, since payment of a HECS debt can be deferred until a student earned an identified threshold income (Gale & Tranter, 2012) and accordingly lessen the public expenditure to support massification (James, 2007). As a result, participation in higher education did not require a student to pay fees at the time of their enrolment. The number of HECS allocated places in public universities was also fairly negotiated between the universities and the government (Raciti, 2010). Nevertheless, the HECS scheme has managed to improve the number of students of low socioeconomic status (SES) participating in higher education (James, 2007).
In 1990, a national social equity framework was established through the policy ‘A Fair Chance for All’ (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1990). The framework enlisted six equity groups as government priorities for targeted support and funding. The main objective of the social equity framework was to achieve proportional representation in the student population so that it would closely reflect the composition of the Australian population as a whole (Gibbs, 2011). Equal representation was conceptualized as the measure of social equity in higher education (Gales & Parker, 2013). Another important aspect of Labor government social equity reform in the early 1990s was that it had deliberately shifted the equity responsibilities in higher education from the federal government to the individual public universities via direct funding, equity indicators and reporting requirements (DEET, 1990). The role of universities in social equity was further reinforced in 1996 through recognition that the intricacy of educational disadvantage is partly attributable to the higher education system itself. As a result, public universities were asked to properly integrate their equity planning and policy with their mainstream strategic planning and policy (Ramsay, 1999).

In 2003, a blueprint for higher education reform was proposed by the Howard Coalition Government in its paper ‘Our Universities: Backing Australia’s Future’ (Nelson, 2003a). Fee-paying undergraduate places were introduced, with a subsequent launch of a scholarship program, the Commonwealth Learning Scholarship Program, as a key equity intervention. The scholarships were again targeted to assist indigenous, rural and low-income students with the increased costs associated with higher education. Equity funding was increased during this period via a performance-based model to support outreach and student support activities, with a particular focus on low-SES students (Carson, 2009). However, the targeted equity groups within
the national policy framework were then reduced, as participation rates of women, people from non-English backgrounds and people with disabilities had shown remarkable progress, whereas focus on the other three equity groups, low-SES, students from rural areas and those with indigenous background, remained unchanged (Gale & Tranter, 2012).

The fourth phase of the Australian higher education expansion is marked by the introduction of social inclusion agenda by the Labor government in 2008. The relationship between the Australian equity framework in higher education and social inclusion was made official in 2009 on the basis of recommendations by the Bradley Committee (Bradley et al., 2008). The idea that a just society could be achieved through growth and participation in higher education was articulated through the Bradley recommendations. The Committee recommended that by 2020 the participation of students from low socioeconomic groups must at least achieve a national target of 20%. This target is considered achievable but ambitious, taking into consideration the current enrolment rate of undergraduate students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, which has been static at between 15 and 16% (Phillimore & Koshy, 2010). Furthermore, the Bradley Committee has also recommended a target of 40% for the attainment of a bachelor degree of those aged 25-34 by 2020. The current formalisation of the Australian social equity framework, which is based on the Bradley recommendations, has reinforced a similar obligation imposed during the early 1990s on public universities for social equity (Gibbs, 2011). The current equity framework also maintains that equal representation defines equity and accordingly it reflects the approach of both the previous Labor government and the current Coalition government to advance social inclusiveness in the Australian public higher education sector.
1.3.2 The Malaysian Context

The history of access, social equity and inclusiveness in the context of Malaysian higher education sector is centred on the issue of inter-ethnic participation, underpinned by the race nationalism political ideology of the government. Whereas the Australian history of higher education expansion and the underpinning higher education policy frameworks have been varyingly dictated by specific policy objectives of either the Coalition or Labor governments, the Malaysian higher education expansion and associated macro-level policies underlying it have been governed and prescribed by the National Front and its predecessor, the Alliance Party government, made up of a coalition of ethnic-based political parties since 1957. The expansionary stages of the Malaysian higher education sector can be identified in three distinctive phases. Lee (2004) asserts that the three periods of expansion were the period during the British colonial era between 1904 and 1957, the period of reconciliation, which reflects the government initiatives to narrow the socio-economic gap between races, underpinned by the New Economic Policy, and finally in the post-regional financial crisis period during the decade of the 1990s.

Access to higher education during the British colonial government in Malaya was only made possible for a small elite group of Malays from the feudal class (Selvaratnam, 1988). Underpinned by the British educational policy, two tertiary institutions were established during the period: the King Edward VII College of Medicine in 1905 and the Raffles College in 1929. The controlled expansion of higher education through the minimal establishment of only two institutions during this era was purposely intended by the British colonial authorities to suppress the critical awareness and intellectualism of the colonized society (Ismail & Musa, 2007). In
1949, the two colleges were joined together to form the University of Malaya (Lee, 2004). The establishment of the two colonial tertiary institutions had only benefited the Chinese immigrants in urban areas (Ismail & Musa, 2007) and hence societal polarization and economic imbalances were remarkably noticeable during the first phase of limited higher education expansion.

Higher education expansion and growth between the neo-colonialism period after political independence in 1957 and 1969 was consciously slow. The government was more inclined to believe that public budget should be allocated to primary schooling, since returns from higher education were presumably lower than the returns from primary schooling (Sivalingam, 2006). The University of Malaya, which was formally established in 1962 after approximately 100 years of British occupation in Malaya, remained the only public university available within this period, but the higher education system in general was essentially elitist, with admission on the basis of academic merit (Lee, 2004). Also, at that point in time, MARA Institute of Technology (ITM) was first established in 1967 to cater for the inclusion of ‘Bumiputera’ students into higher education. The Institute was later granted university’s status in 1999 (Shaari, 2011). The actual starting point of transition from elite to mass higher education system in Malaysia occurred in the early 1970s. At the beginning of the 1970s, only 0.6% of the Malaysian population from the age group 19-24 was enrolled in higher education.

The May 13, 1969 racial riots were the major turning point that initiated change to the socio-economic and socio-political landscape of the country. Ethnic economic, social and educational imbalances between the major ethnic of Bumiputera (i.e., sons of the soil) and non-Bumiputera were recognized as the symptom that caused the inevitable ethnic conflict (Lee, 2010). For that
reason, the government acknowledged that corrective measures and concrete political actions were needed to close the disparity in the distribution of income between the main ethnic groups. Inequalities of educational opportunities must be first corrected with a set of presumably appropriate affirmative actions (Selvaratnam, 1988). The National Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced as a reconciliation instrument to restructure Malaysian society and fostering national unity in the aftermath of the 1969 racial conflicts. As a result, an ethnic quota system for admission to public universities was introduced and the selection process was tightly administered by a Central Processing Unit to coordinate the implementation of the quota system (Lee 2004, Selvaratnam, 1988). Participation of the predominantly Malay Bumiputeras in public universities increased greatly, with a corresponding decline of the non-Bumiputra enrolment as an intended consequence of the NEP (Wan Muda, 2008).

By 1975, there were already five public universities, each with its own distinctive roles, in Malaysia. However, the objective underpinning the expansion of higher education at this time was not underpinned by the need to address the issue of excess demand for higher education. Instead, a rationale for expansion was justified on the basis of forecast demand for sub-professionals instead of university graduates (Sivalingam, 2006). As a result, the expansion of higher education between the 1970s and 1980s did not actually expand the capacity of public universities to meet the demand for higher education. In support of this, evidence shows that in 1980 approximately 19,515 Malaysian students, 60.5% of whom were non-Malays, sought higher education abroad, compared to 20,045 local enrolments in public universities (Sivalingam, 2006).
The period between 1981 and the end of the 1990s reflects greater access to higher education made available by the private higher education sector. Democratisation of access to higher education within this timeframe was predominantly informed by an increased acceptance of neoliberal norms by the then government. At this point in time, Malaysian public policies were guided by the imperative of privatisation and industrialisation (Sato, 2005). By the mid-1980s, demand for higher education was greatly affected by the global economic recession. The Malaysian ringgit was devaluated as a result of the economic recession and the cost of higher education overseas increased accordingly. As a result, demand by non-Malay students for higher education in local public universities was greater against the background of the constraining ethnic quota system (Marimuthu, 2008). A policy to expand the role of the private sector as a provider of higher education was then introduced in the Sixth Malaysia Plan to overcome the two problems of excess demand and outflow of foreign exchange (Marimuthu, 2008; Mukherjee 2010). The liberalisation of the Malaysian private higher education sector was part of the measures taken by the government to reduce public expenditure in higher education, meet demand for skilled and semi-skilled human resources, and accordingly foster the greater role of the private sector in economic development (Marimuthu, 2008). In 1996, the Private Higher Education Institutions Act (PHEI) was then applied as a legal framework to facilitate the establishment of private higher education providers, upgrading their status from colleges to universities and also establishing public-private partnerships between institutions in higher education. As of 2013, 484,963 local students were enrolled in Malaysian private higher education institutions (Ministry of Education, 2013).
In 1997, the National Higher Education Fund Act (Act 566) was established as a quasi-market equity mechanism to address the demand side of higher education. Higher education loans are available to students in both public and private higher education institutions. Similar to the primary objective of the HECS loan in Australia, the National Higher Education Fund Corporation in Malaysia has greatly assisted and contributed to increased enrolments of domestic students in private universities (Mukherjee, 2010). By 2000, about 8.1% of the population from the group 19 to 24 was reportedly enrolled in higher education and this has also effected changes to the educational profile of the labour force, reflecting an increasing proportion of employed individuals with higher education credentials (Mukherjee, 2010).

The meritocratic system for admissions to public universities was reintroduced in 2002 as part of the government initiatives to increase the quality and accountability of the public higher education sector. Other notable developments associated with the efforts to make the higher education sector more socially inclusive for Malaysian society were the establishment of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2020 in 2007 and 2010, respectively, that listed widening access and enhanced quality as one of the strategic thrusts to transform the Malaysian higher education system (Wan Muda, 2008). The Malaysian Higher Education Strategic Plan made it clear that the public higher education sector is currently been primarily guided by the neoliberal characteristics and state-centric models (Sirat, 2009). The Phase 1 Strategic Plan also recommended an attainment target of 50% of the cohort of 17 to 23 years of age to have at least a bachelor degree by 2020. As at 2008, about 24.4% of the Malaysian population from the age group 19 to 24 were already enrolled in the higher education.

Other than the specific focus of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan, the future
direction of social equity and inclusiveness in the Malaysian higher education sector are also indirectly driven by the broader policy frameworks of the New Economic Model (NEM) launched in 2010. The NEM as a successor to the highly controversial NEP, and serves as a blueprint with its strategic reform initiatives to turn Malaysia into a high-income nation by 2020. The NEM also identified the educational sector as one of 12 national key economic activities (National Economic Advisory Council, 2010). In the specific area of education, one of the thrusts explicitly mentioned in the NEM is capacity building through access to better education for all Malaysians (Rodrigo & Mansor, 2013). It is therefore interesting to observe the impact of the NEM on specific social inclusion and equity practices in the public higher education sector.

1.4 DEFINING SOCIAL INCLUSION

In general, social inclusion refers to opportunities, resources and human capability, and it reflects how choice and capacity are made available for both individuals and populations to participate effectively in society (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2010; Hayes, Gray & Edwards, 2008). Klasen (2000) suggests that education is important in the context of social inclusion, since it provides the required skills and academic credentials for social networks and for people to make informed choices and accordingly to assist them to participate in cultural, economic and political activities. Interventions for social inclusion therefore should be targeted to ‘at risk’ populations, such as people with disability or those coming from low-income backgrounds (Australian Government, 2010). For the purposes of this research, disadvantaged students are considered to be within an ‘at risk’ group that requires intervention for social inclusion in higher education. Following Gascon (2013) and Wierenga, Landstedt and Wyn (2013), disadvantaged students
include indigenous people, people with a disability, people of low socio-economic status (SES) and people coming from under-represented schools.

**Figure 1.1: Basic Components of Social Inclusion**

Source: Naylor, Baik and James (2013).

This research also suggests that the term ‘social inclusion’ is uniquely underpinned by the three interrelated components of outreach, access, and participation and completion (Figure 1.1). In this respect, social inclusion embeds the notion of opportunities, resources, capability and strategies. Accordingly, the term ‘social inclusion’ in this research reflects a set of initiatives, interventions or practices in the higher education sector that covers the three broad areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion at undergraduate level. The working definition of social inclusion utilised here is derived from the critical interventions framework (Naylor et al., 2013). This framework for social inclusion initiatives in higher education features a typology of initiatives aimed at assisting universities to pinpoint necessary areas for effective
social inclusion intervention. The framework identifies three critical areas for intervention to achieve the objective of social fairness in higher education (Figure 1.1).

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The primary objective of this research is to provide an account of the ways in which elite higher education institutions adapt and respond to external institutional logics for social inclusion practices. In particular, it explores and investigates the pattern of elite public universities’ social inclusion practices as a result of government higher education policy frameworks and higher education market features. It also aims to uncover variations between the four selected elite universities in Australia and Malaysia in regard to social inclusion practices. Hence this research utilises institutional logics and strategic responsiveness to institutional pressures as its underpinning theoretical framework (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Oliver, 1991). Based on the extant literature on organisational adaptation and responsiveness in higher education, the theoretical underpinning and the conceptual framework, the following primary research question addresses the research objectives. Firstly, the overarching research question is: How do government policy frameworks and higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia? Two subsidiary research questions are also formulated to assist understanding of the influences of external institutional factors in higher education on elite universities’ social inclusion practices: How do government policy frameworks affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia? How do higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia?
1.6 APPROACHES TO THE INQUIRY

This research utilises a qualitative research design. It adopts an interpretive view to explore the pattern of public elite universities’ social inclusion practices across two countries, Australia and Malaysia. Insightful and in-depth understanding of ways in which the elite universities adapt and react to external institutional logics for social inclusion justifies the chosen interpretivism paradigm. Comparative multiple case studies of four public elite universities are employed in order to observe the pattern of adaptation of social inclusion practices across four elite universities and cross-country variations between Australia and Malaysia. Hence a total of 18 semi-structured interviews were completed with senior officers drawn from the four purposely selected public elite universities in Australia and Malaysia. An additional 20 interviews were conducted with academic experts, equity practitioners and government officers from related ministry and regulatory bodies in higher education for the purpose of data triangulation. A set of semi-structured interview questions was utilised to elicit primary data.

1.7 THESIS STRUCTURE

This remainder of the thesis is structured around nine chapters, as follows. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive overview of social inclusion as a concept in higher education and the features of social inclusion in the three areas of outreach, access and participation and completion. Chapter 3 outlines the development of a conceptual framework and generation of research propositions via a literature review of the theoretical underpinning and associated literature on higher education. Research questions and propositions are articulated accordingly. Chapter 4 justifies the research methodology and the selection of qualitative methodology, the interpretive paradigm and the multiple cases research design. It also rationalises the selection of an elite group of universities
as sample cases. In addition, techniques pertaining to data analysis, credibility and ethical considerations are explicitly outlined. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 report and analyse the case results of the four selected cases from Australia and Malaysia, respectively. Chapter 7 presents a cross-case analysis of the four cases within-country and a cross-case analysis of all four cases between countries. Chapter 8 summarises the major findings of the thesis. It also highlights the relationship between the findings and the theory underpinnings. Chapter 9 presents the conclusion and answers the research questions. The core findings of the research are summarised. A discussion of the implications for policy, practice and theory are also presented. Chapter 9 ends with limitations and potential recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2 SOCIAL INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This research aims to explore the practices of social inclusion of elite public universities via their adaptation and responsiveness to external institutional factors. On the basis of the stated aim and objective, the three key elements of the social inclusion interventions needed (i.e., outreach, access, and participation and completion) will be reviewed in this chapter. Section 2.1 provides an overview on the imperative of inclusive education in general. Section 2.2 addresses the essential elements of social inclusion as a concept in this research. Sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 elaborate in detail the key elements of social inclusion interventions in the three areas of outreach, access and participation and completion. Section 2.3 concludes the chapter with a set of definitions of social inclusion that will inform the criteria for data analysis in Chapter 3.

2.1 SOCIAL INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

Social inclusion has been an important agenda in the socio-economic and socio-political policy context of governments in both developed and developing countries. The notion of social inclusion has gradually ascended into the domain of university social responsibility as a prominent concept, reflecting higher education institutions as socially relevant institutions. The call for social inclusion approaches in higher education is also prompted by an increased awareness that low levels of education and skills are both a cause and consequence of social exclusion (North & Ferrier, 2009). Nevertheless, to date initiatives and progress made to cater for the needs of marginalised and disadvantaged groups in higher education have been vague,
varying in degree as a reflection of the university’s response to public policy reforms and the market demand.

The discourse on social inclusion has been conceptualised according to the context of a particular country. For example, in Australia, the overarching term of social inclusion underpins the public policy reform agenda (Australian Government, 2010). In the specific context of higher education, the two terms of equity and social inclusion have also been interchangeably used to reflect social fairness aspirations (James, 2008). In Malaysia, the term ‘social inclusion’ is based largely on a broader context of public policy to overcome the incidence of poverty (National Economic Advisory Council, 2010; Yusoff, 2013). In the UK, the term ‘widening participation’ is preferred in government policy discourse. However, these terms are all related to increased awareness of society about inclusive education. Inclusive education in particular engages various perspectives of educational reform and special education needs for disadvantaged, underserved and marginalised groups. Inclusive education seems to be a generic concept in both the pre-tertiary and tertiary education sectors where the focus is on the process of integrating all learners, irrespective of their social class and ethnic background (UNESCO, 2009).

Social inclusion in education encompasses the learning and teaching environments with intervention at the systemic level, such as the utilisation of inclusive pedagogy. Inclusive education as a term has its legitimate recognition through several United Nations’ related policies. The affirmative principle of inclusive education has been stressed in a UNESCO declaration during the world conference on special educational needs. This declaration prescribed the general responsibility of government on the importance of inclusive education and
quality of education to all. The UNESCO statement reads: ‘Adopt as a matter of law or policy the principles of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise’ (UNESCO 1994, p.ix). This general statement is then followed by a more specific focus on the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in pre-tertiary education.

In particular, schools must be inclusive in a way that they ‘…must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities’ (UNESCO 1994, p.11). It can be seen that the push for inclusive education internationally requires an education system that is capable, with appropriate policies and resources in place, of catering for the educational needs of disadvantage groups (Jelas & Mohd Ali, 2014). In this regard, pushing for an inclusive education agenda is not an easy task, since perception of the status quo is that inclusive education is about being socially inclusive of the disabled. Slee (2013) argues that inclusive education is not just meant to cater for disabled group, but to reflect the need for educational reconstruction and reform for societal change.

Even though in international social policy circles a broad policy statement on inclusive education has been issued through UNESCO (UNESCO, 2009), its conceptualisation at the national level by both the governments and higher education institutions has been conflicting and somewhat vague. As a contemporary social policy approach, the concept of social inclusion in Australia, for example, has been formalised by the federal government with an aim to overcome problems
of poverty and disadvantage (Australian Government, 2010; Buckmaster & Thomas, 2009; Morrison 2011). In the context of the broader Australian public policy, the main thrust of the policy is to enable participation and enhance social mobility in the social economic mainstream. Conceptualisation of social inclusion in higher education is justified on the basis of democratisation of access to higher education by having proportionate representation of identified under-represented groups (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011). Therefore, the intent of the previous Australian Labor Government in 2008 was primarily to ensure that all public higher education institutions were accessible to all Australians (O’Connor & Moodie, 2008).

As far as social inclusion is concerned, government intervention in Australian higher education sector has been narrowly focused on statistical indicators of participation and attainment as the main objective (Keevers & Abuodha, 2013). Social inclusion in that higher education sector has been conceptualised in contrast to the international convention of inclusive education. Even though the UNESCO convention on inclusive education is primarily targeted to the pre-tertiary education sector and for a specific targeted equity group, its application has a broader resonance in the higher education landscape and therefore is considered relevant (UNESCO, 2009). In particular, the Australian government conceptualisation of social inclusion in higher education is primarily involved at the point of entry to university rather than with intervention on the exclusionary process that generates the state of exclusion for disadvantaged groups (Keevers & Abuodha, 2013). In other words, the conceptualisation of social inclusion from the lens of disadvantage is flawed, since it does not lead to intervention on inequities (North & Ferrier, 2009). Accordingly, policy intervention to address inequities in higher education must be
directed in a more comprehensive manner to allow for more focus on the role of relational features to address inequities (Sen, 2000).

The policy implications of the Australian government’s participation targets in higher education are affecting universities significantly. As a consequence, reforms have been initiated to boost processes that support the targets. The discourse on inclusive higher education in Australia is shaping up intensively against a narrow definition of inclusion by the federal government in favour of a broader activity that will support social inclusion in higher education. In this context, social inclusion in higher education is conceived from the perspective of providing spaces for marginalised groups rather than creating university places (Gale & Mills, 2013). A thorough understanding of the difference between equity practices as an outcome for achieving structural diversity in the form of a more socially representative university sector, and equity practices as an outcome of educational activities to engage marginalised students, is important to inform the correct principle underpinning social inclusion aspirations in higher education (Milem, 2003). In Malaysia, the conceptualisation of inclusive education has only been fully recognised at the pre-tertiary level of education, with specific a focus to cater for children with special needs at primary school. The Malaysian Education Act 1996 (1998) provides the legal framework to guide practices at the school level (Jelas & Mohd Ali, 2014). However, the focus of inclusive education has not yet been explicitly recognised in the specific setting of higher education.

Initiating institutional change in regard to embedding policies of inclusion requires a deep understanding of best practice models and related institutional reform (Sellar & Storan, 2013). To support the imperatives of this reform, some studies have shown that barriers to participation
in higher education for non-traditional students are attributable to the efforts of universities themselves (Archer & Hutchings, 2000; Bowl, 2003). Social inclusion approaches are not integrated and well-collaborated across different units in the university (White, 2011). It tends to be the case that social inclusion initiatives are too generic and universities are said to legitimize the deficit view of non-traditional students’ cultures (Thomas, 2005). In support of this, Jones and Thomas (2005) observe that universities’ institutional change for social inclusion as a result of government policy directives is not substantial when necessary initiatives for widening participation are lacking. In this respect, institutional change for social inclusion in higher education institutions are presumably guided by the interrelated discourse of widening participation and inclusion in higher education. This discourse is related to debates surrounding the appropriateness of social inclusion practices on the basis of the underlying models and underpinning ideologies (Naylor et al., 2013).

2.2 KEY ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

This section discusses the key elements of social inclusion and related issues surrounding the elaboration of interventions needed to support the objective of social fairness in higher education. The extant literature shows that a definition of social inclusion in higher education is contested (Kilpatrick & Johns, 2014). It is viewed from multiple angles, from sociologists to equity practitioners (Burke, 2013; Gale, 2012). The essence of these views is presented in a specific but connected theme of access, widening participation, equity, equality and diversity and lifelong learning (Butcher et al., 2012). Reconciling these myriad definitions as to what constitutes an ideal social inclusion concept and the related components is challenging. Possible
patterns of social inclusion are presumably reflected on the basis of different underlying models and ideologies (Kilpatrick & Johns, 2014).

However, a commonality between these conceptual differences can be extracted from the basic activities or interventions involved that are reported in the literature. The components of social inclusion are based on features of good practice, irrespective of the underpinning ideologies and concepts (Barnes, 2007; Cuthill & Schmidt, 2011; Lane, 2011). There are three main areas: 1. outreach activities, 2. access, and 3. participation and completion. These three areas require necessary intervention in a student’s life cycle in respect of organisational practices and commitment for social inclusion (Naylor et al., 2013). This life cycle perspective of social inclusion encompasses community learning and outreach interventions, which include ‘pre-enrolment, transition from school to university, the full range of social and academic experiences while at university, and effective career development and guidance resulting in appropriate student employment’ (Cuthill & Schmidt, 2011, Naylor et al., 2013).

2.2.1 Outreach Activities

Outreach components are broad activities which require active and long-term collaborations with schools, the community and other related external stakeholders (Naylor et al., 2013). The engagement activities are basically targeted at non-participants in higher education or those outside the university. The main objective of this type of intervention is to remove barriers to higher education and create learner identity, facilitating transition and enhancing the motivation and self-esteem of the targeted group (Burton & Bradshaw, 2011). Outreach activities feature a range of interventions, with the majority of these arranged for aspiration-building and raising
attainment interventions for non-traditional learners and young people (Moore, Mountford-Zimdars, & Wiggans, 2013). Previous studies suggest that a number of high impact activities are thought to be effective, such as programs that focus on students’ preparation for universities and programs that aspire to attract potential students into specific areas of university study (Gale & Sellar, 2009).

Evidence shows that outreach interventions are positively meaningful if these are focused on the basis of community needs (Cuthill & Schmidt, 2011; Stanley & Goodlad, 2010). For example, targeted participants in outreach interventions consist of groups such as learners from low-SES backgrounds, disabled learners, vocational leaners, adult learners etc.. Furthermore, in Australia, for example, previous studies indicate that intervention must begin early at the primary school level, as evidence shows that year 12 completion rates are significantly lower for learners from low-SES backgrounds, those from remote backgrounds and from indigenous communities (James, 2008). This suggests that lower participation in higher education for certain group of learners is related to lower year 12 completion rates, especially for schools located in regional or non-metropolitan areas (Fleming & Grace, 2014; Naylor et al., 2013).

Outreach activities to raise aspiration for higher education must also be targeted at students in non-metropolitan areas, as evidence shows that low-SES and rural background students prefer to opt for non-higher education pathways, such as seeking entry to vocational studies rather than higher education (James, 2008; Kilpatrick & Abbot-Chapman, 2002). Utilising this evidence, Naylor et al. (2013) propose that raising aspirations for higher education must then be initiated
for students undertaking vocational pathways with corresponding efforts by the university to make clear the pathways from vocational level to higher education.

Effective outreach engagement also utilises communication with the specific targeted groups pertaining to matters related to stimulating career interest, any specific admissions process and other higher education-related information. Foskett and Johnston (2010) argue that underrepresented groups rely mostly on informal sources of information, such as from their close family and friends. This implies that higher education-related information should be channeled through a socially embedded network rather than the conventional approach through formal sources of information. This will require a change of approach for the university to think about access to high quality and engaging materials for underrepresented groups (Moore et al., 2013).

2.2.2 Access and Selection Activities

Access and selection activities are primarily associated with student selection policies and a robust admission process on the basis of fair access. This area of social inclusion is a precursor to diversity in the student population because of the number of ways in which higher education institutions are looking to broaden the social mix of their students are conditional on their admission processes (Bekhradnia, 2003). Since admission processes are generally perceived as one of the important areas for social inclusion, public policy initiatives are in place to address the admissibility of certain identified equity groups or underrepresented groups in countries such as Australia and the UK (Bravenboer, 2013; Gale & Parker, 2013; Greenbank, 2006a). In Australia, government incentives for increased access for targeted equity groups in public universities are articulated in the Higher Education Participation Programme (HEPP). HEPP is the main source
of funding for public universities which enable them to draw on a wider range of applicants from related equity groups (Gale & Parker, 2013).

In the UK, however, government funding is not designed as an incentive for public universities to enroll students from identified working class groups but is considered a reimbursement that reflects the cost incurred for recruitment and support (House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, 2009). Even though the UK’s funding model has a different underlying objective for reimbursement instead of incentive, as in the Australia’s case, the mechanism used is similar, in that allocation of funds is based on the number of students recruited. Therefore it is clear that government incentives to guide admission practices are available in some countries but it is not clear whether these incentives shape a university’s fair admission procedures for social inclusion (Bekhradnia, 2003).

Universities’ strategies for social inclusion in the area of access are focused on their pathway programs and providing financial support to enable greater transition from secondary schools and other unconventional routes (Naylor et al., 2013). Outreach activities to recruit students from a particular school through partnership arrangements between universities and schools are the most typical approach to facilitate this transition. In Australia, for example, data shows that 50% of low-SES applicants seeking entry to university are from secondary schools (Gale & Parker, 2013). As a result, pathway programs which focus on the preparation of secondary school students for success in higher education are perceived as the most viable strategy by a university to support greater social inclusion. Access can also be structured via a program targeted to recruit students through a specific course arranged for a specific duration. Upon completion of the
course, students are then able to secure a place for undergraduate-level study in that particular university (Morgan-Klein & Murphy, 2002). For example, foundation studies are considered the most common practices for a pathway available for potential entrants to university. Foundation studies are helpful to build academic and social capital for students from equity groups and also for the university to provide a necessary university simulation experience or ‘institutional habitus’ for this group of students before their endurance is tested at the higher level of undergraduate study (Cocks & Stokes, 2013).

Pathway programs through unconventional routes are another recognisable social inclusion approach in higher education to enable participations of students from underrepresented groups. This route of entry to higher education is also associated with applications from those who do not have prior school qualifications or from the vocational sector (Gale & Parker, 2013). Evidence, however, shows that the pathway from the vocational sector to higher education is impeded by the problem of clear articulation of the pathway route between the two sectors (Moodie & Wheelahan, 2009). In this respect, much effort is needed to strengthen the pathway programs between higher education and the vocational sector to assure social inclusion (Langworthy & Johns, 2012). This is supported by evidence from Australia, which shows that only 7% of those who applied for undergraduate studies held either incomplete or completed vocational qualifications (Gale & Parker, 2013). It can be seen that the VET (vocational education and training) pathway does not have a strong impact on elite universities. For elite universities, the value of vocational qualifications is not highly rated and the pathway arrangement is only deemed feasible for courses with low demand (Greenbank, 2006b). As a consequence, less
prestigious universities are more appreciative of the viability of the unconventional pathway route via the vocational sector.

Flexible provision is another mechanism commonly cited in the literature as a mechanism for widening participation (Aird, Miller, Van Mergen, & Buys, 2010; Morgan-Klein & Murphy, 2002). This type of access mechanism involves a systemic structuring of modes and curricula to suit a certain targeted group of students, such as those who prefer to further their higher education studies on a part-time basis. Access as flexibility is commonly associated with the use of formal accreditation to recognize prior learning achievement, such as the accreditation of prior learning (APL) and credit transfer (Morgan-Klein & Murphy, 2002). However, the utilisation of flexible provisions is not strongly highlighted in the policy discourse of social inclusion and widening participation, even though its effectiveness has been well-acknowledged and accepted for adult learners (Aird et al., 2010). In Australia, various other mechanisms are utilised as strategies for social inclusion in the area of access. Palmer, Bexley and James (2011) describe initiatives such as the special consideration of educational disadvantage schemes, special entry access schemes and bonus point schemes. In spite of these unique initiatives, the impact on enrolment of non-traditional learners from equity groups is minimal (Gale & Parker, 2013).

The provision of financial support in the form of scholarships or fee rebates is another initiative in the area of access for social inclusion. Previous studies suggest that students from the low-SES group and those coming from non-metropolitan areas are more inclined to associate higher costs with tertiary level education (Carson, 2010; James, 2002). On this subject, the government acknowledges that overcoming financial hardship of identified disadvantaged students is
important for increasing their access to higher education. For that reason, the government of Australia has restructured the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) to assist students with the costs associated with higher education studies (Carson, 2010). A similar higher education loan scheme which is based on socioeconomic status is made available for students in Malaysia at the undergraduate levels to assist them with tuition fees (Zainal, Kamaruddin, & Nathan, 2009). In Australia, different schemes of needs-based and merit-based equity scholarships are commonly provided by all public universities as a targeting initiative to reduce financial difficulties of disadvantaged students (Naylor et al., 2013).

2.2.3 Participation and Completion Activities

Retention initiatives are the most comprehensive areas cited in the literature pertaining to strategies for social inclusion (Devlin & O’Shea, 2011; Palmer et al., 2011). This area of social inclusion is broadly perceived as important by both government and the universities themselves. For governments, costs associated with student retention are highly regarded as part of their substantial public investment. For that reason, the consequences of students dropping out from their studies are to be minimized, if not totally avoided (Norton, 2011). For universities, efforts made to recruit students need to be translated into successful completion or graduation rates (Yorke & Thomas, 2003). Irrespective of the complexity involved in measuring retention rates (Norton, 2011), government initiatives in this area have nevertheless been greatly noticeable, because completion rates are useful quantitative measures of success (Palmer et al., 2011). There are also two other core activities and strategies which contribute to students’ retention and their success: student support strategies and learning and teaching strategies (Gale & Parker, 2013).
According to the literature, the provision of physical and psychological space that reflects and suits the diversity of students is also pertinent for the purpose of social inclusion (Norton, 2011; Thomas, 2011). Central to the main objective of creating spaces for marginalised groups in higher education is the importance of having a socially inclusive teaching and learning system in place. The notion of socially inclusive pedagogy is strongly echoed in the higher education literature, which focuses on transformative remedies to allow for socially just social spaces in higher education. For example, Keevers and Abuodha (2013) articulate the concept of a socially inclusive pedagogy based on a practice-based approach. This approach conceptualises social inclusion as an ongoing practice, in contrast to the end-state social inclusion approach focusing on affirmative remedy by way of merely achieving proportional representation in higher education. It proposes a dynamic practice of respect, recognition, redistribution, representation and participation, belonging and connectedness, which is related to facilitating students’ experience in higher education (Burke, 2013). A distinctive contribution to social inclusion in this regard requires initiatives to provide necessary infrastructure and resources that will enable effective relational features with the students (Thomas, 2002).

Within a similar context of a practice-based approach, the term ‘engagement’ is also used to describe a necessary intervention process for social inclusion. Engagement is part of social inclusion interventions by a university and related to the provision of support services to improve retention rates. It is argued that a successful attainment target of the Australian federal government to achieve 40% of all 25-34 year olds with bachelor degree qualifications is dependent on university inclusive activities for student retention (Gale, 2010). These particular activities can be both academic and non-academic activities (Tinto, 2010). Menzies and Nelson
(2012) acknowledge the initiative of peer programs to facilitate students’ engagement with an aim of enhancing student learning experience and outcomes. This initiative is considered important, since students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds do not have equal capacity to succeed in a university learning environment, in contrast to those coming from the advantaged family backgrounds. In order to ameliorate this exclusionary impact, the process of inclusion is identified to include a university-wide peer program that involves active monitoring of student engagement during their first year enrolment in the university.

Inclusion practices in regard to support services for students are related to the challenge to reduce attrition and to cater for a growing diverse student population. Naylor et al. (2013), for example, suggest that adult learners from low-SES and indigenous backgrounds are highly likely to be those that most require sufficient student support such as the provision of childcare facilities. Also, support services such as online learning facilities, library services and online discussion forums are highly regarded by low-SES students as effective support services to enable successful completion of their first year studies (Devlin & O’Shea, 2011). Studies suggest that conventional approaches to an already institutionalised support system in universities will have to be reconceptualised (Jacklin & Le Riche, 2009).

From the sociological point of view, the new approach to inclusive support will have to recognise the values brought by the increased diversity of the student body instead of a system which reacts to perceived student problems. A proactive approach to inclusive support that reflects the interdependency between institutional cultures and student characteristics is needed (Jacklin & Le Riche, 2009). From a specific context of inclusive support in an elite university,
developing inclusive teaching and support activities that recognise diversity are even more demanding, because of the institutionalised culture of excellence and elitism (Simister, 2011). In that respect, capacity building of internal academics is important for undertaking the challenge. This view is shared by Keevers and Abuodha (2013, p.53), who believe that social inclusion is an approach that ‘encompasses the need to sediment inclusive practices in classrooms through to teaching teams, schools, faculties, service units and the institution’.

2.3 SUMMARY

This chapter elaborates the concept of social inclusion in higher education with primary reference to the international convention on the imperative of inclusive education. In accordance with the UNESCO convention on inclusive education, social inclusion has now been considered a contemporary social policy approach in higher education in a few developed countries such as Australia and the UK. This chapter also discusses the key elements of social inclusion for the purpose of this research. Based on extant literature, social inclusion in the context of this research includes a set of initiatives, interventions or practices in the higher education sector that covers the three broad areas of outreach, access and participation and completion at the undergraduate level. On the basis of the definition outlined in this chapter, the term ‘social inclusion’ and its features will then be utilised to form the criteria of data analysis. The criteria of data analysis, conceptual framework and the theoretical underpinnings will be further elaborated in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this chapter is to establish a cohesive link that reflects an interconnected affiliation between the conceptual constructs and the theoretical underpinnings. Literature in the area of strategic sociological new institutionalism is presented as the foundation for this research. Section 3.1 introduces the open system approach as a basis of the theoretical themes of this research. Section 3.1.1 reviews the literature on the adaptation behavior of universities in higher education as the consequence of institutional influences. Section 3.2 to sub-section 3.2.2 evaluates the primary theoretical lenses of strategic-oriented new institutional theory. Section 3.3 focuses on the development of constructs for the conceptual framework of the research. It elaborates on the essential constructs of external institutional logics and the associated beliefs systems and values in higher education. Section 3.4 synthesises the literature on the two constructs which make up the two primary elements of the conceptual framework. Section 3.5 proposes the conceptual framework on the basis of the extant literature and theoretical underpinnings. Section 3.6 provides an overview of the elaborated theories and the connectivity with the research approach. Sections 3.7 and 3.8 articulate the research questions and propositions, respectively, as the outcome of the research content, problem statement and stated objectives. Section 3.9 elaborates the criteria to be used for data collection and analysis of the case results. Section 3.10 summarises the chapter with a brief overview on its essential elements.
3.1 THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR AS AN OPEN SYSTEM

The evaluation of the strategic neo-institutionalism theory utilised in this research will be preceded by an overview of the open system theory. Organisational reaction to evolving institutional logics can be understood in accordance with the approach of open systems theory. Open systems theory follows the cue of a general system theory that originally emerged under the purview of biologists (Katz & Kahn, 1966). This theory builds upon the notion that organisational environment is dynamic and not stable. As a result, a closed system model, with an assumption that an organisation is static in a stable environment with adoption of traditional bureaucratic structures, is invalid in a relatively dynamic environment (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Scott (2001) acknowledges that, since organisations are entrenched in both technical and institutional environments, they are in a position to respond to these environments accordingly. The manner of their responses to external environmental demands, however, is not rigid but differs in accordance with the level of external complexity and uncertainty. Also, organisation capacity to respond is also conditional upon the nature of available resources and engagement in strategic action (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Oliver, 1991; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The open system approach views a system where ideas and feedback are exchangeable between organisations and their external environment. In this regard, it underscores the importance for organisations to be inclusive with their external environment for survival (Morgan, 1997).

An open system approach has calibrated and conceptualized a broader understanding of organisation in social sciences in contrast to closed system models (Suchman, 1995). The conceptualisation of organisation within the open system approach focuses on the relationship between the characteristic of a system and its subsystems where organisations are embedded.
within interrelated subsystems. Papadimitriou (2011) explains that it is important for organisations to identify and eliminate possible dysfunctions and ensure functionality of their goals and strategies, culture, technology, behaviour and processes and structure. The identification and elimination processes are possible outcome of an organisation’s approach to establish congruency and conformity with the larger system. Moreover, achieving congruency in a dynamic environment leads organisations to further growth and equilibrium between sets of interrelated subsystems in social systems (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Furthermore, the open system approach also highlights the influence of external environments upon organisations’ acquisition of resources and how this will then be produced as outputs returned to the external environment (Harrison, 2005).

The open system approach is applicable in the context of higher education institutions. Primarily, universities have common generic characteristics just like other organisations, such as their own sets of goals and visions, hierarchical structures and systems, bureaucratic administration and officers involved in decision-making processes in formulating institutional policy (Papadimitriou, 2011). From an open system perspective, universities are considered multifaceted organisations with distinctive characteristics (Gornitzka, 1999). For example, Bastedo (2006a) claims that adaptation of universities to new practices must be considered after contemplating multiple stakeholders from both internal and external sources. As a consequence, universities are regarded as unique by organizational theorists, because factors like goal ambiguity, complexity of task, distinctive professional and academic values and environmental susceptibility might distort universities’ objectives for an overall change process (Enders, 2004). Finally, since higher education institutions are accountable to multiple stakeholders with
occasionally differing demands, their distinctive characteristics have been increasingly associated with multi-tasking capabilities as a consequence of undertaking different assignments from different actors in the environment (Bastedo, 2006b, 2007).

One of the main focuses of the open system approach in higher education research is to identify adaptation of universities to changes as a result of external pressures (Scott, 1992). The notion of institutional change by organisational actors in higher education is grounded on the very basic premise of interaction between internal actors of the organisation and actors external to the organisation. In this respect, an open system approach recognises that a university as an organisation does not exist in a vacuum: initiating necessary responses to external institutional forces involves negotiation with various parties (Van Vught, 2007). It can be seen that responses to change, especially in relation to universities’ internal practices, are difficult, since universities primarily function as loosely coupled systems (Gumport & Sporn, 1999). Therefore, integration and synchronisation of specific practices across all units seem challenging. For example, Csizmadi (2006) acknowledges that universities’ adaptation to quality management practice in Hungary is significantly delayed as a result of independency between institutional units and their processes.

However, Fisser (2001) reveals through a case study of a university that a high level of involvement is achieved in the integration of new forms of Information and Communication Technology in the university’s teaching and learning processes. Accordingly, adaptation and responsiveness of a university to external institutions can be understood from the perspective of sociological institutionalism that considers the integrated elements of regulative, normative and
cultural cognitive systems (Scott, 2003). This perspective assumes that valued dimensions from the external environments are internalised within an open system approach if they are deemed fit with already established beliefs and norms (Suchman, 1995).

3.1.1 Organisational Adaptation in Higher Education

The extant literature on the open system approach in section 3.1 suggests that the adaptation and responsiveness pattern behaviour of a university are the consequence of the interaction between the internal actors within the university and the powerful actors that sit within the macro level of the system. Also, the open system approach predicts that organizations adapt in a strategic manner to acquire resources from external actors at the macro level. The following section will draw some literature pointers on the adaptation behavior of universities in higher education against the background of multiple external institutional pressures.

The extant literature on organisational adaptation in higher education is primarily grounded in three primary streams. The first stream focuses on the structure and models which reflect the idealism of higher education institutions and the corresponding effects of societal environments on the adaptation of these models (Baldridge, 1971; Clark, 1977; Clark, 1987; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Olsen, 2007; Sporn, 1999). The second stream strives to form collective evidence on the impact of various reforms and trends perpetuated by societal environments and their corresponding effects on the higher education system, universities and individuals within a university (Coady, 2000; De Zilwa, 2007; Jongbloed, 2003; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Vaira, 2004). The third stream looks at the strategic adaptation
approaches as modes to adapt and alter societal environments (Cameron & Tschirhart, 1992; Tierney, 2004).

Through the review of higher education literature, it seems that the term ‘adaptation’ is used for a process of change in organisation (Cameron, 1984; De Zilwa, 2007; Van Schalkwyk, 2010). According to Cameron (1984, p.123), adaptation refers to modifications and alterations in the organization or its components in order to adjust to changes in the external environment. Its purpose is to restore equilibrium to an imbalanced condition. Adaptation generally refers to a process, not an event, whereby changes are instituted in organizations. Adaptation does not necessarily imply reactivity on the part of an organization (i.e., adaptation is not just waiting for the environment to change and then reacting to it) because proactive or anticipatory adaptation is possible as well. But the emphasis is definitely on responding to some discontinuity or lack of fit that arises between the organization and its environment.

Adaptation as a process of organisational change can also be understood from the perspective of several theories such as population ecology theory (Cameron, 1984), life cycle theory (Cameron & Whetten, 1981), contingency theory (Sporn, 1999), and, most prominently, through institutional theory (Maassen & Gornitzka, 1999; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Nevertheless, conceptualisation of adaptation from the perspectives of these theories is against the background of dominant external institutional pressures and minimal strategic involvement of internal organizational actors. Also, the literature on organisational adaptation tends to separate strategic change and design change and fail to establish a connection between the two areas for
competitive advantage (Carley & Lee, 1998). Strategic adaptation as a term, however, is used to implicitly reflect a particular strategic motive based on a specific context (Van Schalkwyk, 2010). In higher education, for example, strategic adaptation can be described as a strategy to adapt to what situation is prescribed by external institutions, as a strategy to adapt at institutional level (Cosser, 2003; Tierney, 2004) and as a strategy to adapt to functions and academic-related activities of a university (Van Schalkwyk, 2010).

Higher education literature on organisational adaptation has also been structured under the banner of different themes which actually sit within the tradition of organisational change. Different themes, such as organisational idealism, organisational development, organisational design and organisational learning, have been extensively utilised in the literature to capture the essence of organisational change (Gumport, 2000). The salient point underpinning all these themes is the imperative of organisational adaptation to societal environments. There is now a considerable literature addressing a wide range of issues related to the need to adapt as a consequence of rapid changes in external environmental factors happening at local, national and international levels.

Previous empirical works on the adaptation of universities to government policies for broadening participation have been accomplished with a similar focus on the conceptualisation and implementation aspects of widening participation and the influence of associated policies upon institutional practices. In a specific context of elite universities, Zimdars (2010) and Featherstone (2011) explore the impact of government’s policy statements on the admission practices of elite universities in the UK. Skene and Lopez (2013) investigate the effectiveness of an alternative
pathway program for low-SES students in one of the elite universities in Australia. Also, the impact of policies at the macro level on widening participation practices of non-elite universities have also been sufficiently established from the extant literature. Greenbank (2004) investigates the influence of political and economic influences on the development of a selected number of public universities in the UK and how organizational culture is mediating the dominant impacts of external influences. Bowl and Hughes (2013), Butcher et al. (2012), Graham (2010), Stevenson et al. (2012), for example, explore the interpretation of widening participation practices in UK public universities against the background of competing discourses, policy initiatives and changing policy environments. From a different angle, Supple (2013) utilises disability students’ perspectives and explores how university policies are translated into practices in regard to a specific equity group in the university. Cunningham (2011) explores the understanding of widening participation among lecturers and staff at the senior level and how this is affecting their widening participation practices.

Other external variables that have been commonly connected with organisational change in higher education are industry linkages and engagement with specific group of stakeholders at both local and regional levels for knowledge and technology transfer (Brown, Archer, & Barnes, 2008; Thorn & Soo, 2006), adaptation to industries’ preference for needed skills and the necessary changes to the curricula and course structures (Leitch, 2006; Papayannakis, Kastelli, Damigos, & Mavrotas, 2008), adaptation to global rankings for reputation and income generation (Altbach & Knight, 2006; Noir sur Blance 1999; Peters, 2003), innovation capacities for national and internal competitiveness (Goldstein & Luger, 1997; Gunasekara, 2004; Williams & Kitaev, 2005), and the shift towards market-driven entrepreneurship (Gibb, Haskins, Hannon, &
Robertson, 2012; Marginson & Considine, 2000). From another perspective, adaptation and change in higher education institutions are also presumed by the government as a way out of problems related to cost efficiency in the public sector, quality, management efficiency and access to higher education (Gumport, 2000). Most of the variables that initiate changes are prompted by government directives that consider the corresponding dependency of public universities on taxpayers’ money (Weerts, 2007; Williams, 2009).

3.2 STRATEGIC NEO-INSTITUTIONALISM-ORIENTED THEORIES

The literature seems to suggest that strategic adaptation is associated with strategic neo-institutionalism theories (Suddaby, 2010; Thornton & Occasio, 2008; Westenholz, 2011). For example, universities’ strategic adaptation to avoid dependence on external resources, their rationales for differentiation or non-isomorphic behaviors instead of homogeneity, and their quest to enact environments that fit with organization values and norms are commonly explained from the lenses of strategic response to institutional pressures theory and institutional logics theory (Bastedo, 2007; Gumport, 2000; Maassen & Gornitzka, 1999). Both theories shape understanding on an organisation’s strategic approaches for responsiveness and its capacity for change. These theories are interested in the relationship between an organisation and its external environment and its propensity to change against a background of contradictory expectations and multiple conflicting logics at the macro level. Over the years, these theories have been developed and refined in different perspectives to guide the understanding of how organisations react to external forces that in turn will shape organisation policies, procedures and programs (DiMaggio, 1988; Fligstein, 1997; Suddaby, 2010).
Early stream institutional theory assumes the powerful capacity of macro forces as a major determinant explaining organisation orientation towards conformity, which in turn led to an identical pattern of isomorphism within fields of activity (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Meyer & Rowan 1977). The current stream of strategic neo-institutional theory, however, acknowledges the active roles of human agency. Compliance with institutional pressures for legitimacy cannot be sufficiently explained on the basis of an actor-less evolutionary view of institutional change (Fligstein, 2001; Hensmans, 2003; Oliver, 1991; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005;). The new stream of sociology institutionalism inquiry looks into the active roles of ‘institutional entrepreneurship’ and strategic choice in organisational responses to environmental change and the pressures for adaptation (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000; Powel & Bromley, 2013). This line of thought goes against the traditional perspective of the theory, which disregards human agency and relies heavily on the stability aspect through conformity to external institutional pressures (Castel & Friedberg, 2010). Institutional entrepreneurship is claimed by Garud, Hardy and Maguire (2007) to be ‘…a concept that reintroduces agency, interests and power into institutional analyses of organisations’ (p.2). It reinforces the active roles and skills of the institution leadership to negotiate multiple and conflicting external institutional demands (Bastedo, 2007; Perkmann & Spicer, 2007).

From the perspective of strategic neo-institutionalism, a rational actor view is recognised, together with traditional institutional arguments, to explain the diversity of organisational adaptation and change processes (Hensmans, 2003). The juxtaposition of the old and new streams of neo-institutional theory generates a better understanding of how a passive organisational adaptation process for conformity can be strategically influenced on the basis of
rationality, strategic choice, interest and power (Garud et al., 2007). The strategic approach of neo-institutional theory accordingly overcomes the concern of a passive approach by emphasising the action of internal actors and how it affects institutions (Lawrence et al., 2011).

The concept of institutional entrepreneurship and strategic agency extends beyond the traditional institution rationales for certainty and survival through the constructs of interest and power of organisational actors, as opposed to the old static focus on institutional rules, standards and norms (Fligstein, 1996). Therefore, current perspectives of strategic neo-institutional theory recognise institutionalisation as a process which is ‘profundly political and reflects the relative power of organized interests and the actors that mobilise around them’ (DiMaggio, 1988; p.13). The focus of strategic agency and institutional entrepreneurship is premised on strategic interactions between organisational actors in a perceived intense political process with aims of creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions (Garud et al., 2007; Lawrence et al., 2011).

However, the focus on strategic agency has been subject to criticism on the basis of the over-contextualisation of power presumably owned by the organisational actors and agents to initiate organisational change and their resistance to change. Suddaby (2010) claims that the roles of strategic actor and the initiatives to resist institutional pressure have been overstated as a result of palpable preference of some institutional researchers to repackage elements of some other theories into the neo-institutional streams. Suddaby (2010) asserts that

…the institutional research agenda with ideas from other theories, the enthusiastic stampede to a hyper muscular view of institutional entrepreneurship has, just like the prior stampede to identify examples of isomorphism, caused theorists to overlook the
central point of the institutional hypothesis, that is, understanding how and why organisations attend and attach to meaning to some elements of their institutional environments and not others. (p.15)

Based on a similar perspective, Lawrence et al. (2011) disagree with the irrational increase of attention to the role of the entrepreneur as a change agent. The rational dimension of institutional entrepreneurship is actually confined within the context of institutions and for that reason ‘…downplaying their institutional embeddedness… is unable to offer a viable endogenous explanation of institutional change within the tenets of institutional theory’ (Lawrence et al., 2011, p.5). Suddaby (2010) suggests that a new approach to neo-institutional research must attend to the basic ideational elements of institutional theory by looking at how organisations interpret the ideational elements of rationalised myths, and legitimacy, taken for granted, instead of looking at the outcome of institutional processes. Organisations must be subjected to interpretive systems as opposed to the current focus of institutional theorists on elements outside organisations as a focal point to study the outcomes of institutional influences on organisations (Suddaby 2010). In relation to that, Lawrence et al. (2011) propose three major categories of institutional work that must be integrated to allow for a comprehensive perspective that combines strategic agency (i.e., agency roles to initiate changes) and organisational motivation for adopting changes (i.e., organizational capabilities to interpret the meaning of systems within the institutional context). The three suggested categories are creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions (Lawrence et al., 2011).
In conclusion, extant literature on strategic agency and institutional entrepreneurship strongly opposes to the notion that passive compliance to norms and rules prescribed by external institutional factors is the primary source of stability for an organisation. In this respect, responses and adaptation are rather strategically initiated on the basis of rationality.

3.2.1 Institutional Logics
The long-term endurance and survivability of organisations is enhanced via adapting and responding reasonably to external pressures in a highly open-system institutionalised landscape (Scott, 2001). The manner of adaptation and responsiveness can be inferred via the logics interpretation of plural rationality from the external institutions. In this respect, the logic of institutions is defined by Friedland and Alford (1991, p.248) as ‘a set of material practices and symbolic construction which constitutes its organising principles and which is available to organisations and individuals to elaborate’. In other words, institutional logics provide a foundation for strategic agency and actor interest by comprehending institutional meanings and organisational interest within organizational fields (Friedland, 2013a, 2013b). The perspective of institutional logics connects the macro perspectives of social cultural systems and cultural persistence at both the meso and micro levels as a precondition of institutionalisation (Perrini, Russo, Tencati, & Vurro, 2011). Institutional logics also highlight the importance of both normative and cognitive legitimacy in such a way that they implicitly postulate ‘what goals or values are to be pursued within a field or domain and indicate what means for pursuing them are appropriate’ (Scott, Ruef, Mendel, & Caronna, 2000; p.171).
Prevailing institutional logics via different levels at macro, meso and micro provide organisational actors with a template of socially constructed categories for action as a result of cumulative blueprints of interactions between institution and agent (DiMaggio, 1997). The link between institution and action is inferred through the logics of institutions in such a way that it operates ‘through a movement between internal identification and external objectification’ (Friedland, 2013b, p.586). As a result, actors within the organisational fields are guided by shared values and beliefs, and changes are initiated within or across organisational fields if the shared values are deemed dominant (Reay & Hinings, 2009). In this regard, Thornton (2004, p.12) elaborates that ‘institutional logics, once they become dominant, affect the decision of organisations…’.

Institutional logics provide the accounts on how institutional environments can be influential and delimit the aims of organisations via the constructs of meaning and action (Thornton, 2004).

The fundamental assumption of institutional logics rests on the symbolic focus of institutionalisation and the collective presumption of rationality and interpretive schemes that drive the actors’ behavior towards the logic of appropriateness (Greenwood, Diaz, Li, & Lorente, 2010; Lounsbury, 2008). Therefore, the prevailing logics of the organisational fields re-establish the importance of cognitive cultural symbols within the stream of mainstream institutional analysis (Greenwood, Oliver, Suddaby, & Sahlin-Anderson, 2008; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Also, the other fundamental assumption of institutional logics is on ethical beliefs which are culturally defined (Cloutier & Langley, 2013; Tan & Wang, 2011). Within a particular country, institutional logics define ethical or moral behavior of the organisational actors within an organizational field (Tan & Wang, 2011).
An organisational field might also comprise multiple and conflicting logics. Different sets of belief systems, norms and values are embedded at multiple levels of society (i.e., macro), organisations (i.e., meso) and individual social actors (i.e., micro) (Friedland & Alford, 1991). The three levels of society, organisations and individual social actors are essential and the conceptualisation of logics within the three levels give rise to the plurality of logics. Since an organisational field is made up of multiple logics, variation in practices can be observable as a result of dissimilarity in their cognitive orientations (Lounsbury, 2007). Thornton and Ocasio (2008) argue that contradictory logics underpinned by multiple sources of rationality can lead to an observable pattern of heterogeneity and institutional agency among organisations. Furthermore, contradictory logics are able to survive in stable organizational fields for a persistent period of time (Lounsbury, 2007).

New logics consisting of a design archetype or a set of belief systems, norms and values may be able to induce changes within an organisational field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Greenwood & Hinings, 1998; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Organisational change occurs as a result of the displacement of the old with new logics, and in most cases, there will be two or more differing belief systems co-existing within an organizational field (Reay & Hinings, 2009). Co-existing logics can somehow be temporary in nature if the values and beliefs attached to them are not maintained by a group of powerful actors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Therefore, institutional logics can only be sustainable within an organisational field if they are being continuously supported and maintained by actors with a strong political will (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). However, old logics are sometimes maintained even though the acceptability of new logics is widely pronounced and rationalised at the organizational field level (Reay & Hinings, 2009). In
In this respect, Khan, Munir and Willmott (2007) show that the seemingly displaced old logics are sometimes preserved via hidden activities by actors within the organisation. And lastly, Reay and Hinings (2009) posit that two or more logics can co-exist through collaborations of actors within an organisational field.

Besharov and Smith (2014) provide a framework to analyse the instantiation of multiple external logics and the compatibility and centrality of these logics within the core functioning aspect of an organization. The framework elaborates how heterogeneity of logics can be accommodated within an organisation. The framework also explains that the extent of logics centrality and compatibility at the organizational level are conditional upon the extent of socialization with the field actors and the nature of an organisation’s mission and resource dependency. Besharov and Smith (2014) categorise four ideal types of organisation in accordance with the types of logic multiplicity: contested, estranged, aligned and dominant. An aligned organization, for example, features a no-conflict situation, as both the centrality and compatibility of external logics are perceived high and consistent with the core actions of an organisation.

From another perspective, conflicting institutional logics reflect the struggle for legitimacy among organisational actors (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). The concept of legitimacy as abstract resources implies that organisations will have to conduct themselves in a manner perceived compatible with and acceptable on the premise of societal norms, values and beliefs, even though they are not proven to be efficient economically (Suchman, 1995). On this subject, the element of legitimacy from the neo-institutional stream seems to align with the underlying assumption of institutional logics, as organisations tend to endorse certain practices and identities.
as a consequence of the logic of appropriateness (March & Olsen, 1998; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). As a result, organisational actors act in accordance with presumably bounded norms and values which have been implicitly defined by the relative legitimacy of each logic.

The underlying premise of new institutionalism predicts isomorphism behaviors, stability and homogeneity in practices as a result of the same challenges and opportunities gained from legitimacy. However, scholars from the stream of institutional logics argue that the paradox of standardization in practices and structure of the new institutionalism is inevitable as a result of the active approach of strategic agency (Friedland, 2013b). The strategic agency approach is justified in the face of competing multiple logics that emerges within a specific organisational field. The following section elaborates further on the limitations of legitimacy as a concept in neo-institutional theory.

3.2.1.1 Legitimacy

Institutional theory has been criticised, despite of its wide acceptance in the social sciences literature for its capacity to explain the institutionalisation of a particular socially constructed system for legitimacy purposes. The streams of criticism on institutional theory can be viewed from two different perspectives. First, scholars criticise the focus of institutional theory on the importance of stability and uniformity of environmental impact that leads to conformity behaviors. From this perspective, it has been argued that institutional theorists have overlooked the sources of original change and the unquestionable role of power in the development of an organisation (Bastedo, 2006a). Since the rationales of attending to the legitimacy criterion for an organisation are proximately caused by uncertainty in the external environments, neo-
institutional theory explicitly views adaptation as a viable organisational strategy and organisational actors as mere passive change agents. This perspective of a passive change process underpinning neo-institutionalism through pure environmental determinism is nevertheless a little too narrow in its conceptualisation. DiMaggio (1988) propounds a better conceptualisation of the theory through consideration of the role of individuals within the organisation as active change agents.

Secondly, it has also been highlighted that attaining legitimacy involves a complex process, since it is basically socio-political and cognitive in nature (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). Since the legitimation process can be distorted by problems like bounded rationality and information asymmetry, this may lead to inaccuracies in evaluation made among stakeholders and the validity of the legitimacy conferred. For that reason, there have been concrete efforts to address these shortcomings by focusing on how actors within organisations engage themselves in strategic actions within the institutional framework to manage legitimacy (Oliver, 1991; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Suchman, 1995).

In spite of the claims made for the significance of legitimacy, the importance of acquiring legitimacy from the sources of external environments may prove to be detrimental if the values and norms infused are deemed incompatible with the internal values of the organization (Oliver, 1991). For example, Vartiainen (2004) highlights the flawed conception of legitimacy. Legitimacy is not a one-sided concept and mutual acceptance is required from internal actors in their understanding of values, practices and norms that can be considered as legitimised. In other words, the sources of external legitimacy must be cautiously considered, together with internal
values and norms embedded in an organisation (Oliver, 1991). External legitimacy is not easily attained and therefore it requires a proper adaptation to already strong internally embedded values and norms.

Problems of legitimacy are highlighted in the extant literature with a focus on inevitable conflicts as a result of competing values from a passive approach to managing legitimacy (Amaral & Magalhaes, 2002). For example, Friedland and Alford (1991) indicate that practices and values driven by several constituents from the external environment may not be in congruence with each other and, as a result, each of these values may need to be negotiated by the organisation, with the possibility of conflict. Furthermore, Suchman (1995) asserts that a passive approach to managing legitimacy is not doing any good for organisations because this form of institutionalisation accepts myths and beliefs without much thought. Furthermore, Dacin (1997) conceptualises legitimacy as a short-term dimension and the reacquiring process must be continuous. In support of this, Lawrence (1999) suggests that the need to maintain a legitimate practice is a difficult task since it depends on their continual reproduction in social action. Legitimacy is also not purely based on constraints exerted externally; internal legitimacy of an organisation must nevertheless be achieved concurrently. In the higher education sector, for example, defiant behaviour on isomorphism forces is well-acknowledged in the extant literature (Bastedo, 2007; Covaleski & Dirsmith, 1988). Defiant behavior under external environment pressures is anticipated when universities are forced to inculcate the culture of entrepreneurs and corporatisation (Coady, 2000; Hinkson & Sharp, 2002; Miller, 1998). Acknowledging legitimacy as a core and substantial element, in contrast, might be useless for an organization such as a university.
Passive adaptation as a strategy for conformity is nevertheless debatable in relation to higher education institutions. The primary reason is because particular attention must also be directed to matters regarding institutional identity in the context of higher education institutions (Amaral & Magalhaes, 2002). This is supported by Sonpar, Pazzaglia and Kornijenko (2010), who argue that other institutional forces must be taken into consideration, as these forces too might have influence on an organisation to prioritize different values. For example, Larsen (2000) reaffirms the imperatives of academic freedom as an internal value that should be considered together with external values brought by external isomorphic forces. In other words, changes in organisations’ characteristics and practices might or might not be happening as a result of passive compliance with isomorphic pressures, if factors such as values, norms and cultures which form the internal legitimacy of an organisation are relatively more prevalent (Oliver, 1991).

The foregoing discussion on legitimacy-seeking behaviour in institutional theory implies that passive adaptation behaviour of organisations to external institutional pressures is highly debatable if institutional identity and internal values of an organization are strongly preserved and historically embedded as a primary guiding principle.

3.2.2 Strategic Responses to Institutional Processes

A framework to reflect organisational active responses to external institutional pressures and their active responsiveness behaviors is presented in a typology consisting of five types of organisational responses: acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance and manipulation (Oliver, 1991). These modes of responses reflect the roles of organisational actors initiated at the firm level, and consist of passive to active resistance conditional upon the five institutional
antecedents of context, content, cause, control and the constituents involved. Oliver (1991) proposes three distinct types of acquiescence strategy, habit, imitation and compliance, for the organisation’s strategic responses to institutional processes and changes. Habit refers to blind adherence or unconscious consistency in relation to certain values and norms, whereas imitation resembles mimetic isomorphism as a pattern of organisational conformity to institutional pressures. Imitation might be possible as a result of conscious or unconscious imitation of a trusted institutional model. Imitation as a strategy might be appropriate in a situation where there are uncertainties with regard to the best practice within the environment and imitating practices of a legitimate organisation is considered necessary (Galaskiewics & Wasserman, 1989). Compliance, on the other hand, is presumably the more active version of an acquiescence strategy, because it involves a conscious obedience to institutional values, norms and requirements. Compliance is strategic in the sense that the outcome will lead to self-rewarding benefits, especially through gaining social support and potentially access to resources.

Conflicting institutional demands with different logics or inconsistencies between different legitimacies acquired might result in a compromise strategy being adopted by an organization. Oliver (1991) predicts three types of strategy to accommodate these differences and inconsistencies. Balancing requires an organization to achieve an acceptable compromise in its response to several pressures in institutional processes. In this perspective, an organisation’s strategy is based on the need to achieve parity between several external constituents who bring with them different values and expectations. The second type of compromising strategy relates to partial conformity of an organisation towards pressures exerted by external environments. In the case of partial conformity, organisations can choose to conform to only a minimum level of
conformity to external constituents’ demands. In higher education institutions, for example, mimetic isomorphic forces might compel a university to adapt to certain trend of phasing out courses which may not be profitable or popular, with low enrolment of students every semester, but one or two courses might also be maintained to meet demands from certain minority groups in society.

Bargaining, the third type of compromise strategy, involves an active form of negotiation process with external constituents. In this case, the strategy requires an organisation to negotiate for concessions for the purpose of achieving mutual agreement with external constituents in relation to certain targets or objectives. For instance, a particular university might negotiate on certain acceptable level of outputs with regard to industry-impact research as a result of strict evaluation of research outputs imposed upon universities by government or other influential external constituents. A university would then be able to balance the amount of resource allocations, for example, in producing civic participation or engagement type of research. In particular, higher education-related academic literature is totally silent on bargaining strategy in managing legitimacy conflicts, but some exists in relation to acquiring and maintaining moral legitimacy in the context of civic responsibility practices of universities (Boyle, 2004).

Avoidance is the next group of strategies according to Oliver’s (1991) typologies of strategic response. This group of strategic responses is the most cited in institutional theory-related literature (Jamali, 2010) and is also associated with the stream of resource dependence theory (Karlsson & Honig, 2009). Three distinct tactics are associated with the strategy of avoidance; concealment, buffering and escape (Oliver 1991). Concealment is related to the organisational
tactic of utilising symbolic compliance with institutional rules. The main objective of concealment is to disguise non-conformity and this might suggest a window-dressing approach, with rational plans in place, although no implementation is actually intended (Jamali, 2010). Buffering is similar to the principle of de-coupling (Westphall & Zajac, 2001), where the main objective is to lessen institutional focus on a particular organisation’s technical operations. In other words, buffering ‘refers to an organisation’s attempt to reduce the extent to which it is externally inspected, scrutinised or evaluated by partially detaching or decoupling its technical activities from external contact’ (Oliver, 1991, p.155). Escape, on the other hand, refers to change of organisation goals and activities to suit a less constrained environment (Witt & Lewin, 2007).

Responsiveness initiatives in the form of defiance might take the forms of dismissing, challenging or attacking. Dismissing implies a strategic orientation to ignore institutional rules and values. This is possible when the cost involved to disassociate the organisation from institutional norms is perceived as low (Ingram & Simons, 1995). Challenging, on the other hand, positions an organisation in an offensive mode of responsiveness. It resembles the active orientation of institutional entrepreneurs whose roles are to initiate changes and to challenge the status quo imposed by the current institution (DiMaggio, 1988). Attacking as a mode of responsiveness takes a somewhat aggressive stand by confronting existing institutions in a manner that reflects a move to ‘assault, belittle, or vehemently denounce institutionalised values and the external constituents that represent them’ (Oliver, 1991, p.157).
Finally, Oliver’s (1991) typologies of responsiveness strategies refer to manipulation as perhaps the most active mode of responsiveness to institutional pressures. Manipulation reflects an active attempt to change the existing institutions through greater exertion of power on related sources (Pache & Santos, 2010). It consists of three distinct modes of active responsiveness: co-opting, influence and controlling (Oliver, 1991). Co-opting is consistent with the theory of resource dependence, where the external institutional actors who have control over the resources are convinced to join the organisation, perhaps at the executive level of management. This neutralises institutional opposition and accordingly allows support for legitimacy. Influence, on the other hand, refers to a responsiveness strategy to shape the already dominant institutional values and beliefs. In this case, active approaches such as lobbying, engaging in public discussions and debates, or even attempts to shape external evaluation standards, are deemed necessary (Oliver, 1991). Controlling, however, is meant to explicitly dominate and disrupt the sources and processes of institutionalisation. In particular, this mode of responsiveness is thought possible when institutional expectations are deemed fragile and insubstantial.

In conclusion, the theory of strategic responses to institutional processes predicts a variety of strategic actions that can be initiated by an organisation as a mode of responses to external institutional pressures. These responses can be either actively or passively pursued by the organisational actors.
3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

On the basis of the extant literature of strategic neo-institutionalism theory, the following section focuses on developing the conceptual framework in accordance with pertinent and specific issues of institutional logics in higher education.

3.3.1 Values and Belief Systems

As elaborated in Section 3.2.1, institutional logics comprise of a set of shared belief systems (Friedland & Alford, 1991). According to Tan and Wang (2010), values and belief systems are defined as ‘an individual’s enduring beliefs which serve as his or her latent guides for evaluations of the social world’ (p.376). Universities are driven by a complex set of values and belief systems (Kezar, 2001). Logics and the belief systems embedded in the external institutions are essential for higher education institutions, since the shared beliefs and values from external sources are presumed to be the organising principles in organizational fields (Kezar, 2001). Therefore, as the master and organising principles, the prevailing logics and belief systems are able to constrain or enable universities to pursue their objectives and practices within the strictures permissible by the environment (Gumport, 2003). Values and belief systems in higher education can be observed through organisational narratives, and a greater function of higher education for the society can then be understood (Birnbaum, 2000). Birnbaum (2000) explains that past narratives on higher education have values such as social justice, democracy, civic participation and personal virtue attached to them. Gumport (2000), for example, highlights the two dominant institutional logics in higher education. The two logics of societal institution and industrial institution have their own sets of values, such as the values of trust and scholarship for the social institution and accountability and efficiency for the industrial institution.
Clark (1983) introduces three sources of logics at the macro level, each with its own belief system and values (i.e., state, market and academic professionals within the institution of higher education) that contribute to the dynamics of a particular higher education system. For instance, the governance of the higher education system in research, learning and teaching activities is a manifestation of the combined functioning of the belief systems and values embedded between the three different institutions of the state, market and academic professionals (Clark, 1983). The three logics have their own modes of coordination, and may operate in isolation or in a quasi-exclusivity mode that will then shape the national systems of higher education. Therefore, a higher education system is coordinated by these three logics, with possible conflict as a result of the conflicting logics embedded within these three authorities. Accordingly, Clark’s conceptualization of logics has sparked interest among scholars for cross-national research in higher education that looks at authority relations between the stated coordinating factors in a comparative international context (Kandiko, 2010).

There is increased interest for scholars in the field of higher education to engage in the discourse of convergent and conflicting institutional logics (Bastedo, 2009; Gumport, 2003; Rizvi & Lingard, 2011). Gumport (2003) presents a case study on how the two multiple logics of the social institution and the industrial institution are rationalised within the landscape of US community colleges for legitimacy. Gumport concludes that the coexistence of the two conflicting logics is beneficial to community colleges, as the two logics have assisted them to legitimately negotiate various types of activities for their survival. Bastedo (2009), on the other hand, looks at the role of convergent institutional logics in higher education policy development in the US. Bastedo discovers that the ideology of rationalisation has managed to converge on
multiple sources of conflicting logics; this has contributed to the literature on the understanding of both normative and cognitive dimensions of policy process.

The following section reviews the historical trajectory of the broader macro societal context of higher education and the associated values and belief systems on the basis of Clark’s (1983) sources of belief systems and Gumport’s (2003) presentation of two dominant logics of social institution and industrial institution.

3.3.2 Logic of a Government in Higher Education

Throughout the literature, the logic of government in higher education has been commonly associated with the service function of a university. The service function of a modern university as prescribed by Bonnen (1998) is associated with the role in fulfilling the agendas of the government as a social institution. The university as a societal institution can also be equally viewed from the perspective of an instrumental organisation (Olsen, 2007) or a pragmatic model of a university with functions primarily to serve the society, as opposed to a constitutive institution reflecting a kind of conscience for specific values of knowledge and traditions (Docherty, 2011). In the early 1960s, higher education in Australia was shaped by the federal government, especially on the provision of courses taken by students trained for professional and technical positions in the government sector.

Government centralism was clearly evidenced in 1941, when a scheme of financial assistance was established for students having financial difficulties. At the same time, this scheme was also intended to address the workforce shortage in areas assumed critical by the federal government.
Universities were then functioning as ‘service stations’ or state facilities for the government to provide qualified manpower and there was a clear link between academic careers and immediate demand to fill bureaucracy positions in the government. The rise of scientific disciplines in the early 1960s in Australian higher education was also influenced by the government policy of employing graduates from academic disciplines such as engineering and other technology-related courses (Forsyth, 2014a).

The service function that reflects the logic of government in coordinating a higher education system is grounded in the hegemony of economics and neoliberalism discourses. As a result, public universities are required to reposition themselves amidst reshuffling in the structure and the imperative of adapting to changing conditions at times when resources are scarce (Nybom, 2008). The concept of a service function as prescribed by the logic of government is not a new phenomenon in Australia. Indeed, the earlier establishment of Australian public universities had signaled a movement toward and prioritizing of instrumental education as opposed to liberal education (Sinclair Jones, 1996). A paradigm shift as a result of global socio-economic pressures has also prompted a radical swing from knowledge diffusion to knowledge production and increased importance of equipping graduates with high-level skills for upward mobility. In this respect, increasing participation in higher education is thought a viable strategy to increase the proportion of capable graduates with the flexible skills needed by the country. Knowledge economy discourses are dominating the societal role of public universities and, in particular, the responsibility undertaken to increase social inclusion. The governments of both Australia and Malaysia also look at higher education as a platform to enable community cohesion and social inclusion.
In Malaysia, the government’s logic that prescribes the service function of a university is deeply rooted in the nation’s philosophy of higher education. This philosophy then defines the role of universities in training knowledgeable workers, which reflects the needs of a newly independent country. As a result, the first public university was established in 1949 to fulfill government aspirations for qualified trained workers in the public sector (Morris & Sh.Attar, 2007). The service function is also reflected in other reasons behind the establishment of public universities, such as the role in restructuring the social and economic sectors, fostering racial integration, and meeting the needs of certain segments of Malaysian society and, recently, the associated globalisation challenges for a knowledge economy (Morris & Sh.Attar, 2007). The functional roles of public universities in Malaysia, which sit within service idealism, are also similar to those advocated by international bodies such as UNESCO. To date, the current national higher education strategic plan and the new economic model have their priorities for inclusiveness as a guiding principle in the public sector (Jayasooria, 2012), accordingly affecting the public universities’ service function paradigm.

3.3.2.1 Social Justice
The logic of government in higher education and its relationship with the value of social justice can be observed from two perspectives. The first perspective looks at the contribution of higher education and how social justice is enabled through participation and attainment of academic credentials (Meyer, 2013). The contribution of higher education for social justice in this respect necessitates universities to expand access to non-traditional participants. At the same time, contradictory objectives in relation to this strand of the belief system are noticeable, as the preferred re-allocative approach to social justice is perceived to be in conflict with the elite
reproduction approach (Singh, 2011). The re-allocative approach as a value in higher education necessitates public universities widening their access, irrespective of an individual’s social background (Singh, 2011). This approach is justified in various government policy discourses as a means to produce high-skill human capital through a meritocratic selection system (Singh, 2011). The re-allocative approach as a basis of social justice is also linked with facilitating upward social mobility in an open society (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008). The elite reproduction approach, on the other hand, reflects the social processes that reproduce the privileges of the non-working class of society through access to higher education (Moore, 2004). However, from a theoretical point of view, the processes of elite reproduction occur imperfectly and this as a consequence legitimates the re-allocative approach to social justice as a guiding principle to social inclusion and equity in higher education (Moore, 2004).

The second perspective of the government logic in higher education and how it is related to social justice is based on the impact of cultural change and citizenship in society in general (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008). This perspective is related to the perceived third mission of community engagement and partnership. The impact of globalisation generates sudden transformation in a society and its economy, subsequently influencing the direction of political and public policy frameworks of any government. In this context, the new global economy brought about by the forces of globalisation inevitably leads to a generic understanding of the concept of a knowledge society. A knowledge society is derived from an understanding of the shift from material goods production to a pervasive influence of information and communication technologies as a result of technological breakthroughs (Valimaa & Hoffman, 2008). A knowledge society also denotes the shift from resource-based to knowledge-based development.
(Scott, 1997). The perspective of social justice in relation to a knowledge society is about the creation and knowledge for the cultivation of society. A greater role is assumed by universities in this aspect as an agent of transmission of social change necessitated by other actors in society (Brennan, Enders, Mousselin, Teichlet, & Valimaa, 2008). Moreover, the service function of universities within the domain of the knowledge society requires them to assist both their outputs (i.e., graduates) and non-participants with multiple and transferable skills for the engagement of highly complex tasks and technologies (Naidoo, 2009). According to Zaijda, Majhanovich and Rust (2007), this dimension of a university’s service function relates to the contribution of higher education to the wider society for the achievement of equity and social justice.

The value of social justice is transferred through the medium of policy instruments. Policy is generally defined as referring to both written and verbal statements which set the guidelines and boundaries in framing institutional practices (Harrison & Pelletier, 2000). Scholars in the institutional tradition believe that policies might act as a strategy, drivers of entrepreneurship behaviors, drivers of symbolic action amongst the recipients and the organizing principles that trigger organizational change (Bastedo, 2007).

The primary value of social justice is embedded within the core public policy of the Australian and Malaysian governments, and is also intended to address the social inequality in higher education participation. In Australia, the value of social justice is evident from the policy statements of ‘A Stronger Fairer Australia’ and Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System (TAHES), and it is prominently reflected in the definition of social inclusion: ‘Social inclusion means building a nation in which all Australians have the opportunity and support they
need to participate fully in the nation’s economic and community life, develop their own potential and be treated with dignity and respect’ (Australian Government, 2009, p. 2). On a similar note, the value of social justice is equally prevalent from the policy statement of the Malaysian New Economic Model (NEM) 2010 and it meshes with higher education reform in Malaysia (Campbell, 2010).

The value of social justice in social inclusion is a somewhat progressive version, with interventions focusing on the area of enhancing capability, participation and engagement (Cocks & Stokes, 2013). This level of inclusion entails a range of social justice-oriented interventions to support the principle of human rights and egalitarian society, human dignity and equality of opportunities to participate in societal-related activities (Cocks & Stokes, 2013). For that reason, activities like community engagement and partnerships, school outreach, learning networks and peer mentoring are becoming pronounced within a university’s core activities (Gidley, Hampson, Wheeler, & Bereded-Samuel, 2010).

The focus of inclusion activities in higher education is essentially built on the realisation of social justice on the basis of dismantling barriers to inequality, exclusion and misrecognition (Burke, 2013). On the face of it, a wide body of literature on social inclusion is concerned with the relationship between social justice and the initiatives taken to enable a just social structure. The value of social justice in higher education and its infusion into social inclusion has been explored in a useful manner by Gale (2000). Approaches of social inclusion underpinned by social justice can be grouped into three perspectives of distributive, retributive and recognitive. Gale’s distributive perspective calls upon a fair proportional distribution of basic resources to
disadvantaged individuals. This line of thought is based on John Rawl’s principle of distributive justice, which emphasises the equal distribution of material and social goods (Gale, 2000). From the viewpoint of a political theorist, Fraser (1998) accentuates the related social justice claims in relation to the perspective of distributive justice by associating it with the politics of redistribution.

The politics of redistribution underlines the idea of redistribution of resources and opportunities and redistributive policies are the instruments needed to uphold social justice (Fraser, 1998). Burke (2013) recognises the importance for redistribution claims in social inclusion, as this will enable fair access to resources needed by the less privileged students such as in financial assistance and other opportunities that are available. However, the perspective of distributive justice and claims for redistribution in social inclusion are still considered insufficient in higher education, since intervention for social inclusion has been primarily considered at the point of access (Nelson, Creagh, & Clarke, 2009). In other words, the distributive perspective of social justice in education reinforces the deficit view of social justice, which is premised on simple equality as opposed to equity. The process which an individual will have to go through to acquire such goods or materials is completely disregarded by this perspective (Gale, 2000).

The retributive justice perspective, on the other hand, relates to fairness as an intended outcome, and this is attributed to the talent and efforts of individuals (Gale, 2010). The notion of fairness in this respect is achieved primarily through competition for social goods and materials (Nelson et al., 2009) and is not concerned about equality. Rizvi and Lingard’s (2011) conceptualisation of ‘market-individualism’ resembles the perspective of retributive justice in higher education. In the
context of government logic in higher education, this perspective reflects the importance of merits and standards as the basis for fair admission to higher education institutions (Singh, 2011). Gale (2000) argues that entitlements to participate in higher education, on the basis of retributive justice, is dependent upon academic performance and high achievers should be rewarded accordingly based on their efforts and expected contributions. Gale and Tranter (2011) observe that the neoliberal and market vision of the Australian higher education system during the previous Howard government in 1996 exemplifies the adaptation of retributive justice as a guiding belief system. During this era, higher education was subject to competition, choice and accountability as government priorities. As a result, social inclusion initiatives of higher education institutions during this era were acclimatised by a legitimate pattern of social stratification on the basis of merit (Gale & Tranter, 2011).

The assemblage of social justice value within the neo-liberal market logics in the Australian and Malaysian higher education policy frameworks seems to suggest a retributive justice model of social inclusion. This model is considered a reformist model and it is believed to have been initiated by the British government during the mid-1970s with a focus on vocationalism and instrumentalism in higher education. The main thrust of this model is based on a democratic ideology to promote mass participation in higher education and access discourse is normally positioned within the strand of utilitarian (Jones & Thomas, 2005, 2006). However, the democratic intention to broaden participation in higher education is in fact subsumed by the economic objective, driven by the concern that social inclusiveness is vital for the economic prosperity of a nation (Singh, 2011). The vocabulary of social justice echoes utilitarian perspectives that see a close relationship between participation in higher education and its
contribution to the economy (Jones & Thomas, 2006). In this respect, public policy in regard to higher education must be receptive to the needs of the economy.

Social inclusion practices on the basis of retributive justice put much emphasis on curriculum reform as a pre-condition to support the economic objectives of the government. Curriculum design, implementation and assessment are articulated based on graduate employability and the nation’s development of human capacity and as a knowledge society. It also aims to address structural barriers to participation by way of financial assistance provisions and compensatory pre-entry activities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This approach of social inclusion is particularly linked with the non-elite universities. Retributive justice model of social inclusion features add-on initiatives which are not integrated with the core activity of a university. For example, Yorke and Thomas (2003) report that student support activities, such as peer mentoring and other learning support mechanisms, are treated separately from the primary teaching and learning activities of some universities. In addition, the economistic model of inclusion is preferred more by the non-elite universities as a result of their pragmatic concerns over their institutional survival (Morgan-Klein & Murphy, 2002). In other words, this model of inclusion fits with a particular survival strategy, which some consider as very useful marketing strategies for long-term financial viability.

Extant literature suggests that values attached to the social inclusion-related policies in Australia and Malaysia are based on the rationalisation of social justice within neo-liberal policy objectives. For example, based on Australian higher education policy reforms, Rizvi and Lingard (2011) poignantly argue that neo-liberal market efficiency logic has been rationally converged
with the social justice value embedded in the Bradley higher education policy recommendations. Rizvi and Lingard argue that the two values of equity and academic excellence have been assembled and articulated through the value of market efficiency. The convergence between social institution’s logics and neo-liberal market efficiency logics is also prominent in the Malaysian National Higher Education Strategic Plan (MNHESP) and the Malaysian New Economic Model (NEM). In this regard, the primary objective of the Malaysian government public policy is to bring the country out from the middle-income trap (Campbell, 2012, 2013). For that reason, the implicit economic values embedded in the higher education policy frameworks are justified by the government as a means to alleviate social inequality.

On the other hand, social inclusion practices based on the recognitive perspective are built upon the foundation of empowering self-identity and self-esteem of social groups by way of recognition through the process of empowerment (Burke, 2013; Fraser, 1998). Social justice is achieved through democratic processes under fair conditions of equal opportunity that take into consideration the interest of the least advantaged (Fraser, 1998; Gale, 2000). In the context of higher education, the perspective of recognition entails fostering self-respect and facilitating self-identity through their learning experience. Furthermore, the recognitive perspective of social justice seeks to overcome barriers to social inclusion as a result of the complex operation of exclusion and misrecognition at various levels of academic activities. In order to ameliorate unintended exclusionary practices, a university’s social inclusion interventions must be able to navigate between the complexity of socio-cultural and the process of empowerment that would undermine the social inclusion objective (Burke & McManus, 2011).
There have been growing criticisms on the ambiguity of social justice value articulated in the government’s social inclusion agenda (Gale & Parker, 2013; Gale & Tranter, 2011; James, 2007; Marginson, 2011; Rizvi & Lingard, 2011). Prominent scholars in the area of access and equity of Australian higher education observe flaws in the conceptualization of social justice as a value underpinning the government objectives of social inclusion. Marginson (2011) contends that the objective of ‘proportional fairness’ now being articulated in the 20% inclusion target for low-SES students is somewhat problematic. The Australian government’s aspiration of a 20% inclusion target does not aim to enhance the capacity of low-SES’ students to compete; instead, fairness is thought achievable at the point of entry into higher education. In other words, Marginson echoes the perspective of recognitive justice by way of having a continuous program of engagement that includes empowering and resourcing of excluded participants at all stages of higher education study. On this subject, according to Andreu and Brennan (2012), the need to adequately resource historically excluded groups of participants is crucial since ‘inequalities in higher education for working-class students could occur at different stages of the higher education process’ (p.102). Gale and Parker (2013) outline the apparent flaws in the conceptualization of social equity by reason of increased geographical mobility of high-SES students in Australia. They claim that proportional representation of all Australians in higher education is not possible, since an increasing number of Australians are pursuing their degree studies outside the Australian higher education system. Social justice as a value underpinning the social inclusion strategy of the policy frameworks is, therefore, only realistic for certain targeted groups.
In conclusion, extant literature suggests that the value of social justice within the logic of the government has been very influential in shaping the practices of social inclusion across all public universities. As a result, government policies embedding the value of social justice in higher education can be a dominant factor that dictates the social inclusion practices of the elite universities.

3.3.3 Logic of the Market in Higher Education

Higher education reforms in many countries have been established and coordinated in accordance with the logic of the market (Teixeira, 2006; Varghese, 2009). This perspective recognises market logic and its associated features as a powerful source coordinating the higher education system and its related activities (Mendiola, 2012). Features of the higher education market within the logic of the market are based on the two broader sets of consumer-student sovereignty and producer-institution sovereignty (Chattopadhyay, 2009; Jongbloed, 2003).

Consumer-student sovereignty as a market feature empowers the student in terms of the freedom to select providers and product. It also empowers the student in terms of getting adequate information on prices and the quality of the degree offered (Chattopadhyay, 2009). Producer-institution sovereignty as a feature of the higher education market, on the other hand, empowers the universities in terms of the freedom to specify product, efficient allocation of resources and freedom to determine prices (Chattopadhyay, 2009).

Fagerlind and Stromqvist (2004) claim that the dual principles of neo-liberal economics and market capitalism have shaped the market orientation of higher education. Study of the adaptation of universities to market logic gained strong interest among scholars by the end of the
twentieth century (Sporn, 1999). In that respect, the discourse on contemporary trends in higher education such as privatisation (Johnstone, 1999), marketisation (Bok, 2003) and quality (Westerheijden, Stensaker, & Rosa, 2007) is also associated with the transformation role of universities and the coordinated impact of market logic in higher education. These transformation processes are gradually achieved through both the combination of bureaucratic power and the political priorities of the government (Clark, 1983). Ironically, higher education market logic is regulated and sustained by the government as a function of politics and policy at the macro level (Marginson, 2004).

Extant literature describes how the impact of higher education market logic and its associated features upon the practices of social inclusion can be both direct and indirect. An indirect impact is through government reform of the higher education sector, which may involve perpetual restructuring of higher education institutions and their governance with an aim of achieving greater efficiency and productivity. The other side of government reform involves the utilisation of quasi-market mechanisms for financing and evaluation of higher education providers (Chattopadhyay, 2009; Kent, 2012). New Public Management (NPM) is also generally understood as a public sector reform perpetuated by neoliberal market logic (Marginson, 2009). The core elements of NPM are to reduce waste and inefficiency, and to safeguard the public interest by prudent spending and restructuring of the public sector to obtain a functional level similar to that of private enterprise (Pusey, 1991). NPM is claimed to be able to affect a nation’s public higher education system and accordingly will shape the academic practices of public universities (Naidoo, 2009).
Public universities are embedded within a quasi-market environment, even though the market logic in higher education does not feature strong buyer and seller relations. In the absence of capitalist market drivers and absolute profit motives, the logic of the market is steered by the government (Marginson, 2009). Therefore, the logic of the market in higher education does not feature a full-fledged conventional market system but rather a quasi-market system driven by the efficiency objective of the government to instill competition between higher education institutions (Meek, 2000). Whilst NPM has had indirect impacts on social inclusion (i.e., performance indicators, quality assurance practices, etc.), a quasi-market system imposes a more direct impact, since it is reflected through the policy initiatives to address both the demand and supply sides of higher education (Kirby, 2011). From the perspectives of NPM and higher education market features, competition and the imperative of quality management emerge as key factors shaping the landscape of the public higher education sector (Marginson, 2004; Naidoo, 2009). The element of competition has also propelled universities to become innovative in their academic practices.

3.3.3.1 Competition and Reputation

Marginson (2004) asserts that there are four different layers of competition in higher education that affect each other: the capitalist market, economic market competition, pre-market competition for social status in education, and the pre-market world of lived educational practice. The two layers of pre-market competition for social status in education and economic market competition raise particular concern for propagators of social inclusion (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008). The nature of competition for reputation occupies the pre-market competition for social status with no buyer and seller transaction going on (Marginson, 2004). There are two facets of
competition in this pre-market competition layer. Firstly, students seek social advantage from attending prestigious and elite universities, and, secondly, universities themselves are competing for producer status. The theory of positional goods, however, implies that elite universities are immune from market competition as a result of the peculiar nature of the positional goods offered (Marginson, 1998). The nature of competition for reputation conforms with views that there is a close relationship between social class and education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Accordingly, elite universities set their sights on bright students from middle to high socioeconomic backgrounds at the expense of those from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Coates & Adnett, 2003). Furthermore, the reproductive nature of social class as a result of status competition is also facilitated by the layer of economic market competition (Marginson, 1998).

Economic market competition involves competition between higher education providers for students at national and global levels (Marginson, 2004). This type of economic market competition for private and public revenues has been even more pronounced during the NPM era (Marginson, 2009). For example, market competition is reflected in the current demand-driven funding system policy of the Australian federal government, which removes quota systems for domestic students in public universities (King & James, 2013). As a result, Australian public universities are funded for domestic student places in accordance with market demand. In this aspect of competition, the element of reputation is becoming associated as one of the important drivers for universities and it places importance on quality in student intakes, student learning processes and graduate employability (Udam & Heidmets, 2013). As a result of this competition, the logic of the market has led to a widespread belief that the concept of student empowerment
as a consumer is important for student retention and engagement (Naidoo, Shankar, & Veer, 2011).

The empowerment of students as consumers entails public universities reassessing the viability of their students’ engagement programs, relationship marketing and other internal initiatives with an objective to meet consumer demands (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005; Raciti & Ward, 2003). As a result of this consumerism metaphor, students are now regarded as important stakeholders for universities and there is a need to improve the quality of the university’s educational process via student satisfaction surveys (Naidoo et al., 2011). The notion of students’ empowerment as consumers is also reinforced by regulatory obligations. In Australia, for example, higher education providers are becoming more attached to the metaphor of consumerism as a result of the new higher education standards framework and accountability to their students via the new regime of consumer guarantees (Corones, 2012).

The two interrelated values of competition and reputation have also necessitated public universities intensifying their external marketing and branding initiatives to attract student enrolment (Douglas & Edelstein, 2013). In this regard, certain relationships between universities and prospective students are initiated from the outset with an objective of enabling students to make informed choices (Naidoo et al., 2011). For this to occur, universities are required to provide students with greater access to information on course content, tuition fees and the quality of degree programs offered (Jongbloed, 2003). However, there is little evidence to show that student choices of higher education providers are strongly associated with factors such as the level of tuition fees (Jongbloed, 2003).
Enrolments of international students are also underpinned by values of competition and reputation. The literature shows that entrepreneurship behavior such as competing for international students is driven by the government’s trade liberalisation objectives (Harman, 2005), the objective to become the regional hub of higher education (Yean, 2013), and the university’s own mission for global expansion and prestige (Tayar & Jack, 2013). Enrolments of international students in the Australian public higher education sector have been consistent since 2002, with an annual income generated slightly over AUD2 billion (Nelson, 2003b). Similarly, in Malaysia, a target enrolment of 100,000 international students has been outlined in the Ninth Malaysian Plan (Government of Malaysia, 2006). It has also been suggested that Australian public universities use various income streams to subsidise research and research training activities. Larkins (2011) comments that this happened as a result of a funding gap from the Australian federal government for research activities between 2002 and 2008. In this context, revenues earned from international student fees and the Commonwealth Grant Scheme for teaching purposes can be used to cross-subsidise research activities. This may have serious implications for resources needed to maintain the higher cost of retaining the low-SES students, particularly in elite universities whose research activities are so important to their status. What is not clear, however, is the indirect impact of the increased focus of internationalisation on the social inclusion approaches of elite public universities (Scott, 2012).

Marginson (2009) compellingly claims that the primary outcome of the values of competition and reputation is related to NPM, underpinned by the regime of government political control of higher education rather than by a functionalist capitalist market. The mixed character of higher education as both public and private goods does not allow a total recognition of the market as a
logic to coordinate the higher education system. In this respect, factors like status competition among public universities, indirect effects of higher education, public good characteristics of knowledge and the economic social character of higher education itself have been constraining the acceptability of pure market logic as the master organising principle in the public higher education sector (Marginson, 2009).

Proponents of social inclusion nevertheless claim that the values of competition and prestige are delineating the overall objective of increasing participation of disadvantaged students in higher education. Increased market competition between public universities will intensify and reinforce the hierarchy among public universities via positional status (Raciti, 2010). As a consequence, the reproduction of social class in elite universities is being facilitated by both the dynamics of market competition and inherited patterns of segmentation. For instance, Cervini (2011) claims that the demand-driven funding system will induce the elite group of universities to become more selective, in contrast to less prestigious public universities. Similarly, this also leads to the strengthening of institutional hierarchy in the public higher education sector. Obviously, underpinning the process of hierarchy-making in higher education is the capitalist system, with serious moral implications (Biao, 2010). Furthermore, increased marketisation activities underpinned by the values of competition and reputation might result in a shift of focus in outreach activity to raise aspirations for higher education. Public universities might focus disproportionately on prospective young applicants who are about to finish secondary school relative to younger students who still at an earlier stage of schooling (Miller, 2011).
On the basis of the extant literature, the value of competition within the logics of the market is very prominent and has been highly regarded as a guiding principle that shapes the entrepreneurial behavior of all public universities. In this respect, the value of competition in higher education is predicated to be able to infuse a negative impact on the practices of social inclusion.

3.3.3.2 Quality

The importance of quality as a value has been also widely associated with NPM and market logic in higher education (Marginson, 2009; Udam & Heidmets, 2013). Quality is becoming prominent during the transition period from elite to mass higher education participation, increased competition for international students and increased focus on research activities in public higher education sector (Naidoo, 2009). The quality framework has been one of the major assessment instruments by the government to steer higher education providers to enhance performance and accountability in view of the constraint in public resources (Rosa & Amaral, 2007). The extant literature suggests that the higher education quality framework has been used as an interventionist template to force universities to attach the value of quality to the logic of the market (Marginson, 1997; Meek & Wood, 1998). The adoption of the quality assurance framework within the national higher education system has been both associated with public universities’ long-term strategic plan and new management processes (Rosa & Amaral, 2007). In the first case, the value of quality is closely associated with the consumerism approach in higher education and the rationalisation of education as a consumer product. From this perspective, the quality assurance framework via the practices of internal and external audits is tied to the logic of the market (Tuchman, 2009). As a result, higher education providers emphasise the value of
quality as a basis to market themselves and accordingly their academic programs (Marginson, 2009). The latter case frames the quality assurance framework as a new management process to ensure efficiency in academic governance via tools such as the total quality management (TQM). In both cases, Williams (1993) postulates, the logic of the market has been the underpinning idea that propels the metaphor of consumerism and new management processes for efficiency.

Williams (1993) also posits that the value of quality from the logic of the market has propelled public universities towards developing programs for continuous quality improvement, participation of academics in quality management practices, increased focus on students’ demands and institutionalisation of formal management techniques and procedures to reinforce quality. As a result of the increased acceptance of quality as a value, practices such as internal and external quality audits have been a common practice across the public higher education sector (Kanji & Tambi, 1998; Kanji, Tambi, & Wallace, 1999; Naidoo, 2009). There has also been increased attention to associate institutional quality culture at public universities that values social inclusion as part of its core elements (Coates, 2005; Shah, 2013). One of the primary aims to associate quality practices with social inclusion is to enhance the code of practice and to develop a comprehensive social inclusion quality procedure. In this respect, a comprehensive social inclusion quality procedure ‘necessitates a shift away from supporting specific student groups through a discrete set of policies or time-bound interventions, towards equity considerations being embedded within all functions of the institution and treated as an ongoing process of quality enhancement. Making a shift of such magnitude requires cultural and systemic change at both the policy and practice levels’ (May & Bridger, 2010, p.6).
On a similar note, Shah (2013) proposes a robust quality assurance framework for enabling students made up of six interrelated components. The quality assurance framework for social inclusion encompasses audit processes on factors related to students’ learning experience, such as building aspirations, student resourcing, inclusive curriculum design, teaching assessment, tracking performance and academic staff rewards (Shah, 2013). Quality regulatory bodies such as the Australian Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) are entrusted by their governments to undertake periodical institutional audits for quality and performance assessment (Keating, 2010; Shah, 2011). Stella and Baird (2008) comment that the impact of regulatory requirements for quality in the area of social inclusion has been very prominent in Australia. The requirement for audit and progress reports on equity has managed to drive public universities to improve in particular social inclusion areas earlier identified during institutional audit cycles conducted by the quality agency (Stella & Baird, 2008). External institutional audit on equity and social inclusion of Australian public universities is focused on the university’s institutional goals and the impact of internal self-assessment audit reviews prepared by each of the public universities (Stella & Baird, 2008)). Naidoo (2009) asserts that increased focus of institutional quality audits on social inclusion initiatives will indirectly put further pressure on elite universities to reassess the social backgrounds of their students’ population for the purpose of social inclusion.

In conclusion, the value of quality within the logics of the market has not been directly and comprehensively attached to the practices of social inclusion in higher education. However, the impact of quality can nevertheless be prominent, and gradually being accepted into the framework of social inclusion in higher education.
3.4 A SYNTHESIS OF THE LITERATURE

Based on the review of literature, it is apparent that the two constructs of government policy frameworks and higher education market features are the primary external logics that can possibly shape the adaptation behavior of public universities for social inclusion. The value of social justice that underpins the government policy frameworks in higher education, for example, has been influential in coordinating higher education academic activities (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008; Singh, 2011). On the basis of institutional logics and strategic neo-institutional theories (i.e., Besharov & Smith, 2014; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Lawrence et al., 2011; Oliver, 1991), it seems to be the case that government policy frameworks that embedded the value of social justice and underpinned by various political and economic imperatives from the logic of government will be strategically and rationally adapted by elite universities for the purpose of social inclusion. The literature also acknowledges that the conceptualisation of social justice by the government is very much contested for the purpose of social inclusion intervention in higher education (Gale & Parker, 2013; Marginson, 2011; Rizvi & Lingard, 2011). Strategic adaptation to government policy frameworks for social inclusion can nevertheless be predicated on elite universities’ capacities to act strategically in accordance with their aspirations for academic excellence (Marginson, 2011). Also, the contested nature of the social inclusion model based on the perspective of retributive justice raises the issue of conformity across all public universities (Gale & Parker, 2013; Rizvi & Lingard, 2011).

The review of the literature indicates that academic activities are also subject to the coordinating impact of market logics (Jongbloed, 2003; Marginson, 2004; Teixeira, 2006). Within the logics of the market, the values of competition, reputation and quality are prominent and can have an
impact on the practices of social inclusion (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008; Coates & Adnett, 2003;Marginson, 2009). The literature predicts that the effect of market logics and underpinning values on social inclusion practices are substantial and may possibly limit access of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to the group of prestigious and elite universities (Coates & Adnett, 2003, Marginson, 1998). In view of this, the literature on the strategic adaptation of the elite universities for social inclusion as a result of the government policy frameworks and pattern of adaptation appears to be incomplete. Moreover, it seems that there is also a lack of evidence from the literature to support that fact that elite universities are primarily attached to market logics and their social inclusion practices are negatively affected as a result. On this basis, this research aims to explore the social inclusion practices of elite universities and how the two primary logics of government and market will affect their overall practices of social inclusion.

3.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

The foregoing discussion put forward a justification for the underpinning theories and associated research constructs which underpin the objective of the research. It also forms the rationale in preparing a conceptual framework for this research. A conceptual framework consists of a set of broad ideas and principles extracted from related areas of enquiry (Reichel & Ramey, 1987). Therefore, a well-articulated conceptual framework is meant to guide a researcher on his quest to make sense of the research findings. A conceptual framework is also meant as an overview of the overall context of the research (Smyth, 2004).
Figure 3.1: A Conceptual Framework of the Research

Figure 3.1 shows the interaction between the two main coordinating external logics at the macro level (i.e., government and market) borne by the two constructs of government policy frameworks and higher education market features, and elite universities’ social inclusion practices. The conceptual framework also reflects the trajectory of social inclusion practices across the two countries, underpinned by the evolution from an implicit to explicit type of university social responsibility. This evolution of university social responsibility is consistent with the core assumption of institutional logics that logics are historically dependent (Thornton
The two main constructs of the government policy frameworks and higher education market features are based on Clark’s (1983) conceptual idea of higher education coordinating belief systems, Olsen’s (2007) concept of instrumental organisation in higher education and Gumport’s (2003) classification of societal and industry logics in higher education. The two presumably conflicting external logics of government and market in the conceptual framework accordingly attach a different set of values, such as social justice, competition and reputation and quality (i.e., Brennan and Naidoo, 2008; Marginson, 2009; Varghese 2009). Social inclusion practices of elite universities are depicted from the critical intervention framework of Naylor et al. (2013). The construct of institutional adaptation is derived from the analytical framework of strategic adaptation as elaborated in Section 3.9.1. The analytical framework of strategic adaptation is meant to classify the variations of strategic adaptation of social inclusion practices across the four case institutions.

3.6 OVERVIEW OF THE THEORIES UNDERPINNING THE RESEARCH

Figure 3.2: Theoretical Underpinnings the Research
Figure 3.2 summarises the theoretical selection for this research and how it is connected to the main objective of the research. The primary objective of the research is to provide an account of the ways elite higher education institutions adapt and respond to external institutional pressures for social inclusion practices. To achieve this objective, two sets of theoretical concepts, namely, the theory of institutional logics and the strategic responses to institutional processes, are selected, and each one is closely related to the main and subsidiary research questions of the research.

Institutional logics are able to explain the capacity of the selected elite universities to adapt for social inclusion as a result of their cognitive and normative interpretation of the belief systems and values from related external institutional logics (i.e., government and market logics) at the macro level. Institutional logics also predict the strategic and active roles of agency and institutional entrepreneurship among the participants at both the meso and micro levels (Friedland & Alford, 1991, Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). The perspective of institutional logics also explains that logics multiplicity can co-exist within an organisation that is conditional upon factors such as interaction of institutional actors and the degree of resource dependency (Besharov & Smith, 2014). As a result, the selected theory might be able to explain a possible active and strategic approach for social inclusion as a result of the perceived logics.

The strategic responses to institutional processes theory are also used to complement institutional logics theory (Oliver, 1991). This theory predicts the strategic and active roles of agency and institutional entrepreneurship among participants from the case units. Accordingly, the strategic-
oriented nature of the theory is able to explain the elite universities’ capacity to strategically adapt for the purpose of social inclusion.

Table 3.1: Links Between Theories and Adaptation Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Logics</th>
<th>Government Policy Frameworks &amp; Higher Education Market Features Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic adaptation to multiple conflicting logics of external institutions (micro and meso level interpretation reflecting institutional entrepreneurship and strategic agency)</td>
<td>The external institutional logics are infusing the socially constructed belief systems, values and norms for social inclusion that affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities. Adaptation to these logics is predictably strategic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 encapsulates the probable outcomes of the elite universities’ adaptation capacities for social inclusion predicated on their mutual exchange of values, beliefs and shared logics of action with the two external coordinating logics (i.e., government and market). The link between theories and the probable outcomes is rooted in the perspective of an open system approach which recognises organisations as embedded in various environments that are both technical and institutional, and to which they must react (Katz & Kahn, 1978). The conceptualisation of social inclusion by elite universities is, therefore, historically contingent and partly explained by the acceptability of conflicting logics exerted by multiple external institutions (Gumport & Pusser, 1999). The research questions that follow are structured to explore the pattern of adaptation of elite universities for social inclusion as a result of the exigencies of the external institutional logics in government policy frameworks and higher education market features.
3.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Agee (2009), the idea of qualitative inquiries requires a researcher to probe the kinds of questions which centre on the why and how of human relations. A well-structured qualitative research question can presumably ‘articulate what a researcher wants to know about the intentions and perspectives of those involved in social interactions’ (Agee, 2009, p.432). This is a study of social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia. It attempts to explore how elite public universities contextualise their social inclusion practices as a result of government policy frameworks and higher education market features. It also aims to explore variations between the four selected elite universities in Australia and Malaysia in regard to social inclusion practices. The principal research question and its related sub-questions are thus closely associated with main content area and the objective. On the basis of the literature, theoretical constructs and conceptual framework, the following research questions are framed:

Primary Question:
RQ1: How do government policy frameworks and higher education market features affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia?

Subsidiary Questions:
RQ1.1: How do government policy frameworks affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia?
RQ1.2: How do higher education market features affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia?
In the context of the research, the primary research question captures the broader views and it is also associated with the main theoretical constructs which underpin the research. The two subsidiary questions accordingly follow the logic of the primary question through confining it to specific articulated areas of inquiry.

3.8 RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

Research propositions are one of the essential elements in a qualitative research design (Yin, 2003) and they reinforce a ‘story about why acts, events, structure and thoughts occur’ (Sutton & Staw, 1995, p.378). On the basis of the literature review on logic of a government in higher education (i.e., section 3.3.2) and logic of the market in higher education (i.e., section 3.3.3), it is argued that social inclusion practices of the elite universities and their pattern of adaptation are influenced by the two above-mentioned logics. The research thus advances the following set of propositions with an aim to validate them:

Global Proposition P: Government policy frameworks and higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia.

General Proposition P1: Government policy frameworks affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia.

Sub-Proposition P1.1: Government policy frameworks affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia.

Sub-Proposition P1.2: Government policy frameworks affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Malaysia.
General Proposition P2: *Higher education market features affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia.*

Sub-Proposition P2.1: *Higher education market features affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia.*

Sub-Proposition P2.2: *Higher education market features affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Malaysia.*

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 summarise the sets of sub-propositions and the indicators used to verify them with the data available:

**Table 3.2: Matrix of Sub-Propositions and Verifiable Indicators (1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Propositions</th>
<th>Verifiable Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposition P1.1: Government policy frameworks affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia.</td>
<td>The extent of social inclusion initiatives in the area of outreach, access and participation and completion based on the extent of strategic adaptation and practices (as outlined in Table 3.4 and Table 3.5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposition P1.2: Government policy frameworks affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Malaysia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.3: Matrix of Sub-Propositions and Verifiable Indicators (2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Propositions</th>
<th>Verifiable Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposition P2.1: Higher education market features affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia.</td>
<td>The extent of social inclusion initiatives in the area of outreach, access and participation and completion based on the extent of strategic adaptation and practices (as outlined in Table 3.4 and Table 3.5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposition P2.2: Higher education market features affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Malaysia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sub-propositions P1.1, P1.2, P2.1 and P2.2 are thus positioned to explore the adaptation pattern of the elite universities to the external logics of government and market for the purpose of social inclusion in the three areas of outreach, access and participation, and completion.

3.9 CRITERIA FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

On the basis of the critical interventions framework elaborated in Chapter 2 and the two underpinning theories of institutional logics and strategic responses to institutional pressures, this section attempts to expound and classify the way social inclusion practices and their variations are likely to be adapted across the elite universities. This research proposes that elite universities may strategically adapt in different ways to external environmental factors such as government policies and the market. This assumption is consistent with the research question in this research: ‘How do government policy frameworks and higher education market features affect elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia?’

The ‘how’ question in the context of this research looks at how different institutional logics (i.e., macro, meso and micro) impact elite universities’ social inclusion practices and how elite universities adapt strategically to changes in their social inclusion practices, such as outreach, access, and participation and completion. In order to facilitate data collection and analysis, the ‘how’ question, associated with institutional logics and strategic response, has been reflected in the main research proposition: ‘the government policy frameworks and higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia’. It is argued that values and belief systems embedded within government policy frameworks and
higher education market features may trigger the strategic behaviour of elite universities in framing and implementing their social inclusion practices.

In an increasingly competitive and internationalising higher education market, universities could be considered strategic actors being consistently influenced by external factors such as market conditions and public policy imperatives to act strategically, underpinned by the plurality of external logics (Bastedo, 2009; Gumport, 2000). However, as indicated earlier, the criteria to indicate strategic adaptation of social inclusion may vary on the basis of Maassen and Gornitzka’s (1999) perspective on the integration of strategic theory on higher education organisational adaptation, Oliver’s (1991) framework of strategic response and adaptation, Besharov and Smith’s (2014) dimension of centrality and compatibility of multiple logics, and the assumption of strategic agency of the organisational actors to rationalise the seemingly conflicting external logics (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Lawrence et al., 2011).

Accordingly, the concept of strategic adaptation in relation to a university’s social inclusion practices can be defined as follows:

Values and norms espoused by the external coordinating logics (government and the higher education market) are appropriately recognised by participants in the specific environment where the elite university is socially embedded. These values and norms are deemed to be strategically aligned and adaptable to the broader social inclusion aims of respective elite universities. Adaptation, in this regard, focuses primarily on a set of identifiable social inclusion practices underpinned by conscious attempts for compliance or response.
As highlighted earlier, the extent of strategic adaptation may vary across elite universities and, for that reason, De Zilwa’s (2007) adaptation categorisation can be utilised to explore the pattern of such variations. According to De Zilwa, the extent of a university’s adaptation to external environmental pressures to certain practices can be categorised as either pro-active or passive. De Zilwa considers pro-active modes of adaptation as active reactivity through innovative approaches in dealing with external institutional pressures. A passive mode of adaptation is reflected by inertia and incompetency to adapt as a result of conflicting internal organisational cultures and values.

Following De Zilwa, this research will use a tentative measurement scale in relation to categorising such practices. However, as a mixed adaptation response is possible, a new category of ‘mixed’ strategic adaptation has been included in the scale. The three levels of strategic adaptation, therefore, may include active, mixed and passive. The following will elaborate on the combination of strategic elements mentioned earlier and the components of the critical interventions framework as a basis to classify the variations of strategic adaptation of social inclusion practices across universities.
3.9.1 Extent of Strategic Adaptation

Table 3.4: Extent of Strategic Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation of Practices</th>
<th>Verifiable Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Active                 | 1. Active move to formalise social inclusion practices.  
                         | 2. Wider scope of the related social inclusion practices.  
                         | 3. High awareness of the importance of related social inclusion practices. |
| Mixed                  | 1. Moderate move to formalise social inclusion practices.  
                         | 2. Reasonable scope of related social inclusion practices.  
                         | 3. Reasonable awareness of the importance of related social inclusion practices. |
| Passive                | 1. No or little move to formalise social inclusion practices.  
                         | 2. Limited scope of related social inclusion practices.  
                         | 3. Limited awareness of the importance of related social inclusion practices. |

Table 3.4 outlines the essential characteristics of strategic adaptation applied in this research. The three levels of adaptation are implicitly behaviourally strategic in essence. For the purposes of this research, variation of adaptation for social inclusion is acknowledged by the evidence of formality via the availability of internal policies prescribing the general approaches in each of the three areas (i.e., outreach, access, and participation and completion). In a specific context of government policy influence, variation of adaptation is also reflected through the scope of social inclusion practices.

The scope of social inclusion practices varies in accordance with the implementation of the associated components of social inclusion deemed necessary in the literature (see Chapter 2 and
Table 3.5). In a specific context of the higher education market features’ influence, variation of adaptation is based on the extent of awareness identified by the participants on the relationship between related areas of social inclusion and supporting activities.

3.9.2 Key Elements of Social Inclusion Practices

Table 3.5 shows the key and main indicators of social inclusion practices that can be associated with the three areas of outreach, access and participation, and completion. Active adaptation for social inclusion as a result of government policy frameworks and higher education market features will feature all the key elements presented in Table 3.5. The key indicators of social inclusion are compiled on the basis of the critical interventions framework (Naylor et al., 2013) and the literature on each of the three key areas of social inclusion, as elaborated in Chapter 2.

Table 3.5: Essential Components of Social Inclusion for Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion</th>
<th>Adaptation to Key Elements of Social Inclusion (Government Policy Frameworks)</th>
<th>Adaptation to Key Elements of Social Inclusion (Quality)</th>
<th>Adaptation to Key Elements of Social Inclusion (Competition &amp; Reputation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>• Partnerships with external stakeholders&lt;br&gt;• Community engagement&lt;br&gt;(Gidley et al., 2010; Foskett &amp; Johnson, 2010; Cuthill &amp; Schmidt, 2011: Moore et al., 2013)</td>
<td>• Formalised quality assurance practices and policies.&lt;br&gt;• Involvement of external auditors&lt;br&gt;(Shah, 2013)</td>
<td>Formalised practices and policies:&lt;br&gt;• Innovative involvement of non-disadvantaged students/international students in outreach and community engagement projects&lt;br&gt;• Open days&lt;br&gt;• Innovative marketing initiatives to increase the awareness for higher education&lt;br&gt;(Gale &amp; Sellar, 2009; Naylor et al., 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>• Pathway Programs</td>
<td>• Formalised</td>
<td>Formalised practices and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.10 SUMMARY

This research is intended to provide an understanding of the ways elite higher education institutions respond and adapt to external institutional factors and, accordingly, embedded logics at the macro level, for social inclusion. In other words, social inclusion practices in elite universities are framed in accordance with the pattern of organisational adaptation as a proxy of organisational change.

This chapter provided an overview of the literature background of this thesis and it consisted of three primary parts. Following a review of literature on the open system approach in higher education, the first part of this chapter reviewed the stream of strategic-oriented neo-institutionalism theory that appears to be generally suited for this research. On the basis of the theoretical underpinning, two external institution logics were accordingly identified as the government and the market. These two external logics are supported by the two constructs of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation &amp; Completion</th>
<th>Financial Support/ Scholarships (Morgan-Klein &amp; Murphy, 2002; Langworthy &amp; Johns, 2012; Gale &amp; Parker, 2013; Cocks &amp; Stokes, 2013)</th>
<th>quality assurance practices and policies</th>
<th>policies: • Innovative Marketing activities that address intakes of disadvantaged students (Gale &amp; Sellar, 2009; Naylor et al., 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Inclusive Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Non-academic engagement activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Preparations for employment (Jacklin &amp; Le Riche, 2007; Gale &amp; Parker, 2013, Keever &amp; Abuodha, 2013; Naylor et al., 2013)</td>
<td>▪ Formalised quality assurance practices and policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Involvement of external auditors (Shah, 2013)</td>
<td>▪ Involvement of external auditors (Shah, 2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Formalised practices and policies:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Innovative involvement of non-disadvantaged students to address participation of disadvantaged students (Naylor et al., 2013)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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government policy frameworks and higher education market features. The two external logics, and their associated belief systems and values, form the basis of the research conceptual framework and they are identified and established based on the conceptual constructs proposed by Clark (1983) and Gumport (2003).

The conceptual framework assumes that conceptualisation of social inclusion practices of elite universities occurs through a dynamic interaction between elite universities and their external environment within a belief system and values prescribed by the two external institution logics in higher education. The second part of this chapter focuses on the development of the overarching research question, its subsidiary questions and the propositions based on the synthesis of the literature. The last part of this chapter outlines the essential elements that are utilised to guide data collection and analysis. The essential elements for these prescribe essential components of social inclusion initiatives and the verifiable indicators used to classify the pattern of social inclusion adaptation.
CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter outlines the methodology of the research. Section 4.1 begins with a discussion about the selected research paradigm. It describes the chosen paradigm which forms the basis of the methodological framework utilised to address the objectives of this research. This is then followed by Section 4.2 on the research design. Section 4.3 justifies the sample cases and the selection of participants as the unit of analysis for the purposes of data collection and triangulation. Section 4.4 explains the structure and design of the interview questions. Details pertaining to the variety of research activities undertaken during this research and the data collection process are also included in this chapter in Section 4.5. Section 4.6 addresses issues of validity, reliability and integrity of the research. Section 4.7 highlights the data analysis stage and the coding procedures. Section 4.8 reports the ethical considerations of the research. Section 4.9 provides the summary of the chapter.
4.1 NATURE AND APPROACH OF THE RESEARCH

The following section explicates the underlying paradigmatic assumption of this research. This is important since the chosen paradigm helps to shape the nature and approach of the researcher in his selection of the right methodology and the research design.

4.1.1 Theoretical Research Paradigm

There are different beliefs and views involved in the process of research. These differences are reflected through how one views and interacts with their surroundings. Therefore, variations are observed through different ways of conducting research. A researcher’s belief and the ways of conducting a research are bounded by an underlying basic philosophical assumption of a particular study. This philosophical assumption is commonly referred to as a paradigm. A paradigm is made up of ‘its own unique set of assumptions regarding ontology, epistemology and methodology’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The paradigm chosen guides the researcher on an appropriate methodological approach.

A theoretical research paradigm is ‘a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher’ (Wahyuni, 2012, p.69). In addition, Guba and Lincoln’s (1994, p.107) conceptualisation of a paradigm implies the reflection of a researcher’s pattern of belief and approaches that frame his inquiry within a connected framework or ‘…a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holders, the nature of the “world”, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts’. In other words, choices of methodology framework and how the method of
inquiry is being structured by a researcher need to be clarified in accordance with a research paradigm.

This research utilises an interpretive view because this is deemed the most appropriate, considering the objective of the research outlined in Chapter 1. Interpretivism suits the nature of the research questions, which aim to explore how the specific practices of social inclusion can be affected by the two evolving external institutional factors of government and market. It seeks an in-depth understanding from the participants within universities of the various ways in which elite universities interact with external institutional forces. An interpretive view is deemed necessary since detailed investigation into social phenomena such as the widening participation practices of universities involves interpretation of subtleties and ambiguities attached to the ideology underpinning such practices (Graham, 2010). A qualitative approach is considered essential in higher education research where certain actions and behaviours of different key institutional actors that shape and have been shaped by the policy frameworks are difficult to quantify (Nilphan, 2005).

The interpretivism paradigm is based on its ontology of assuming the nature of reality as being socially constructed and subjective (Wahyuni, 2012). Therefore, ‘ontological constructivism (i.e., interpretivism) views both “reality” and “knowledge about reality” as a construction, constructed by individuals, groups or others’ (Collin, 2003, p.23). Interpretivism as an epistemology implies the need for interaction and dialogue between the researcher and research participants (Wahyuni, 2012). Epistemological interpretivism requires an interpretivist researcher
to ‘focus upon the details of situation, the reality behind these details, subjective meanings and motivating actions’ (Wahyuni, 2012, p.70).

Interpretivism as an epistemology assisted the researcher to interact with research participants on a complex social science phenomenon (social inclusion practices) and it focuses on how social interpretations and interactions can be influenced by their frames of reference (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Interpretivism believes that participants’ construction of social realities and how do they make sense of meaning is an important task of social inquiry. Therefore, truthful discovery of the world and how it is linked to certain underpinning causes are deemed unnecessary (Green, 2005). As a result, researchers within the interpretivist paradigm have to acknowledge that total understanding of a particular social reality being studied is not achievable but can only be a reflection of how one interprets and explains the subjective meaning of the observed behaviours.

Research looking specifically at the governance and organisational aspects of higher education has been framed within a single paradigm that is either functionalist, interpretive, critical or postmodern (Kezar & Dee, 2011). However, a vast majority of research in higher education has been conducted in accordance with the positivism tradition via a deductive approach and testing causal relationships between variables (Milam Jr, 1991). Even though the positivism or functionalist theoretical paradigm is dominant in the area of higher education research, interpretivist and critical paradigms are also growing significantly in number (Kezar & Dee, 2011). Therefore, a single focused paradigm is preferred because a multi-paradigm inquiry in the
field of higher education research is difficult and can be contradictory in both ontological and epistemological assumptions.

4.1.2 The Researcher of the Study

One particular factor which shapes the paradigm orientation of a researcher is knowing where they actually come from. As a result, the paradigm assumptions of a researcher are in fact a reflection of one’s own biography of previous working experiences and personality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). The researcher thus believes that his ontological and epistemological orientations are partly influenced by his job as an academic in a public university in Malaysia. The researcher was previously assigned a task of administering a bachelor degree program in his institution. The researcher was sometimes asked by the university to conduct outreach activities with school communities to raise their aspirations for higher education participation. Over a period of time, through involvement with school communities, the researcher realised that the understanding of the underpinning motivation factors for a particular academic activity could not be attributed to and gauged by a positivism paradigm and through a quantitative assessment. An interpretivist approach was needed to fully capture the existence of multiple and subjective realities embedded in the perceptions of schooling communities on higher education. The researcher also believes that his working background helps to navigate through certain complications faced throughout the research process. In Malaysia, for example, a thorough method of inquiry into the issue of access and equity must be handled carefully, since it is considered a very delicate socio-political issue involving different races (i.e., Malay, Chinese, Indians etc.). The task of establishing reliable contact with policy
makers in Malaysian public universities was made possible because the researcher himself is an academic serving at a Malaysian public higher education institution.

4.2 METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This section explains the methodology of the research. Consistent with the ontology and epistemology assumptions underpinning this research, an inductive assumption has been utilised for the research process. This research adapts a qualitative inquiry based on an interpretivist assumption with an aim to uncover contextual knowledge that shapes a particular social phenomenon (Scotland, 2012). The following section provides a detailed explanation of the methodology and its design. It justifies the selection of qualitative study as a methodology paradigm to answer the research question. This is followed by an explanation of the selection of case studies as the research design.

4.2.1 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative methodology is considered the most appropriate for this research because the question is structured in a way that enables understanding of a certain phenomenon happening in relation to university practices of social inclusion. Moreover, a phenomenon can be understood, explored, described and interpreted by applying a qualitative method, since this enables a holistic understanding and theory construction (Al-Busaidi, 2008). Qualitative research permits an in-depth investigation into how people interpret and make a case of peculiar circumstances, and this assists the researcher into probing the underlying social meanings which cannot be accomplished by way of a quantitative inquiry (Matveev, 2002). Qualitative inquiry employs certain tools and strategies (i.e., interviews, observations etc.) to enable better understanding of the complexity
embedded in social situations. These tools and strategies are deemed relevant where the research questions are exploratory in nature, such as those like ‘how’ and ‘why’ (Yin, 2003).

For the research, the context requires that elite universities’ social inclusion practices should be explored in a natural setting with greater involvement of the researcher where subjective interpretations of respondents are noted and analysed accordingly. Furthermore, the research context justifies the use of qualitative interpretation in the research (Nelson, 2008). The research context aims for a rich and contextualised understanding of elite university’s pattern of adaptation for social inclusion through the intensive study of particular cases (i.e., a total of four elite universities in two different countries). On this subject, the context intends to examine the phenomenon (i.e., social inclusion practices) rather than establishing a general proposition related to the phenomenon.

Previous research on the practices of widening participation in higher education, with a university as a sample case, has been conducted in accordance with the qualitative tradition (Graham, 2010; Greenbank, 2004). Furthermore, Asgedom (2004) claims that qualitative inquiry is more appropriate to capture the dynamics of a particular higher education system of a country. This is supported by the fact that different countries have a specific and unique set of higher education governing systems (Olsen, 2007). This rationale is also supported by the fact that inter-linkages between different governing forces of higher education cannot be simply explained by utilising a survey method (Asgedom, 2004).
4.2.2 Case Study Research Design

Eisenhardt (1989) defines the case study approach as ‘a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings’. The application of a case study design is preferred for research imposing questions like ‘how’ and ‘why’ and accordingly it is also suitable when in-depth and comprehensive investigation is required to comprehend a complex issue (Yin, 2003). A multiple case study approach will be used because it is useful to explore multiple cases in a natural setting by the application of various methods for the purpose of obtaining in-depth knowledge (Collins & Hussey, 2003). A multiple case study research design will also allow for theoretical replication with an assumption that different cases selected will exhibit a different set of contradictory results (Yin, 2003).

A case in the context of a method of inquiry can be defined as ‘a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context’ (Punch, 2009, p.119). Furthermore, different types of case studies as a method of inquiry can be grouped into three main categories: the intrinsic case study, the instrumental case study and the collective case study (Stake, 1995). An intrinsic case study aims to enhance a researcher’s understanding of a specific case undertaken or when ‘…we have an intrinsic interest in the case’ (Stake, 1995, p.3). The instrumental case study, on the other hand, is aimed to enhance a researcher’s understanding of a particular issue by using a specific case as a medium. Stake (1995) claims that an instrumental case study as a method of inquiry is necessary when there is ‘a need for general understanding, and [we] feel that we may get insight into the question by studying a particular case’ (p.3). Lastly, a collective case study is an extension of the instrumental case study, where the main objective is to include multiple cases
for better insight into a certain phenomenon or population (Punch, 2009). Therefore, a collective case study implies ‘...important coordination between the individual studies’ (Stake, 1995, p.3).

A collective case study approach is justified based on its aim of exploring the strategic approach of elite universities to adapt to external coordinating logics and the resultant pattern of adaptation which reflects their social inclusion practices. Furthermore, in the field of higher education research, a case study approach is considered beneficial because it allows the researcher to examine both the micro and macro issues affecting the decision-making aspects of the key policy informants of the respective institutions (Ruddy, 2008). Essentially, Leisyte (2007) claims that ‘a researcher would use the case study method when aiming to cover contextual conditions believing that they might be highly pertinent to the phenomenon of study’ (p.70).

In this research, a comparative case study method enables a detailed understanding of the rationale and context of different elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia. According to De Vaus (2008, p.252), a comparative cross-national research design, which is structured on a case-based basis utilises a ‘cultural and interpretive model in that it is taken for granted that any behaviour, attitude, indicator or event can only be understood within its historical, cultural and social context’. This implies that a specific understanding of academic practices such as social inclusion can be appreciated in accordance with a specific set of historical, cultural and social contexts. Furthermore, it is argued that research on higher education should be comparative as a result of factors such as institutional dynamics which shape the nature of higher education sectors across different regions and countries (Olsen, 2007; Ruddy, 2008; Valimaa, 2008). Bryman (2004) explains that a comparative inquiry employs
methods of probing conflicting cases. In particular, a comparative inquiry will enable diverse and richer understanding of a social phenomenon when it is conducted with two or more conflicting cases (Bryman, 2004; Pauwels & Matthyssens, 2004). Comparative inquiry has been undertaken in previous research, focusing on the issue of equity and widening participation practices of selected public higher education institutions (Graham, 2010; Greenbank, 2004). In the context of this research, government policy frameworks are thought to be able to shape the social inclusion practices of the selected group of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia. Building upon Burton Clark’s (1983) set of external coordinating logics, this research is methodologically designed to explore cross-country differences and similarities of the elite universities’ social inclusion approaches between two countries.

Another strength of a cross-country comparison is to ensure a valid construction of a concept that is applicable across the countries proposed for the comparison (Rose & Mackenzie, 1991). Antonucci (2013) claims that there are different vertical levels commonly utilised in a cross-country higher education research. These four different levels are globalisation trends, social policies in higher education, institutions and student experience. A cross-country comparison must be able to clarify the inter-linkages between different vertical elements and how a particular concept is related to each of these elements. Therefore, this research focuses on the concept of social inclusion in higher education as a universal concept applicable to the public higher education sector everywhere.
4.3 THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION ON THE SELECTION OF CASES

This research adopts a multiple case study design. In the context of a comparative multiple case study research design, the selection of each case must be reasonably justified to either predict similar or conflicting outcomes on the basis of a justifiable reason for theoretical replication (Yin, 2003). This research utilises multiple units of analysis and multiple sources of data within a case in accordance with its main objectives and research questions. Accordingly, the conceptual framework of this study is built on the basis of Clark’s (1983) higher education coordinating belief systems and Gumport’s (2003) classification of societal and industry logics in higher education. For that reason, relevant individuals were identified from both the Australian and Malaysian higher education sectors as the key unit of analysis for this research.

Any decision on sampling strategies needs to be considered on the basis of the contextual nature of the phenomenon under investigation. The outcome of the social inclusion practices is envisaged based on the coordinated impacts of different external institutional logics. On the basis of that, appropriate coverage of participants who might be able to comprise information-rich cases is needed. Jones, Torres and Arminio (2006, p.66) explain that purposive sampling is needed for ‘information rich cases that hold the greatest potential for generating insight about the phenomenon of interest’ (p.66). Therefore, utilising the research’s conceptual framework helps to identify the coverage and selection of participants needed, based on the scope of the research.

In this research, a multiple unit of analysis is treated as a case. A case is made up of key informants who are entrusted to undertake the task of social inclusion within that particular elite
university. Perspectives from representatives of the government and external academic experts are also used to corroborate views of key informants within each elite university. Within each individual case, the views of university administrators, selected government officers and selected academic experts were explored. Figure 4.1 illustrates the idea of a multiple case study research design utilised in this research, which involves a multiple unit of analysis within a case. Figure 4.1 also depicts a cross-country comparison as a basis of the empirical analysis.

**Figure 4.1: A Multiple Case Study Research Design**

The following sub-sections elaborate on the selection of cases and the research’s unit of analysis in detail. It begins with the selection of elite universities. This is then followed with justification on the use of other sources of data.
4.3.1 Elite Universities as a Sample Case

Public universities with the status of ‘elite’ are chosen as the sample cases. The technique of ‘purposive sampling’ is applied, where certain selection criteria were fixed. Merriam (1998, p.61) suggests that ‘to begin purposive sampling, you must first determine what selection criteria are essential in choosing the people or sites to be studied’. Three primary indicators have been used in this research to select public universities which comply with the term ‘elite universities’: 1. high talent concentration, 2. reputational factor, and 3. revenue diversity. These indicators synthesise different scholarly perspectives in the literature on the various interpretation of the term ‘elite’ universities and the major characteristics of universities belonging to this specific group.

Firstly, an ‘elite’ university is indicated by a high level of talent concentration, which is based on the quality of undergraduate students and the number of senior academic staff. In this respect, highly selective admissions processes are a reliable indicator of the quality of students they are able to enrol. Apart from admission characteristics for undergraduate enrolments, the theoretical sampling of this research is also guided by the concentration of academic intellectuals which reflects on the term ‘elite’. In Australia for example, Gallagher (2011, p.45) states that ‘these institutions (elite) also attract high quality academic and administrative staff, through recruitment processes that are open to national and international competition…’. Therefore, this research applies two basic indicators of high admission averages and high concentration of academics from senior lecturer rank and above as indicators of high talent concentration that reflect characteristics of an elite university.
In Australia, the selective nature of the elite group of universities for undergraduate admissions is gauged by way of their inclination to admit secondary school leavers with a high score at the Year 12 assessment system, known as the ‘Academic Tertiary Admission Ranking’ or ATAR. ATAR is an assessment system to measure perceived capability of school leavers for higher education in Australia (King & James, 2013). In comparison, two systems are utilised as a measurement of school leavers’ academic capability for admission to public universities in Malaysia. Both systems require a high score attainment in two different examinations of the Malaysian higher school certificate and matriculation. In addition, both systems are assessed based on the score achieved as reflected in a Cumulative Grade Point Average or CGPA. However, the two systems of examinations differ in terms of their parameters. The Malaysian higher school certificate is linked with the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, whereas the matriculation scores are made up of the combination of examination and course work (Clark, 2014). The two sets of examinations, which act as a realistic indicator for school leavers’ readiness and capabilities for higher education, reflect the meritocracy system of student allocation in Malaysian public universities (Pak, 2013).

In relation to high concentration of academic expertise as an indicator of an elite university, this research utilises the category of senior lecturer and above as a basic indicator of established academic expertise in Australia. This research relies on the system of academic ranks in Australian public universities. There are five levels of academic rank and the position of reader or associate professor and professor occupy the top two levels of D and E (Farrell, 2009). The classification of academic ranks enables this study to identify the exact numbers of those occupying the top two levels in Australian public universities as a proxy for high concentration
of academic expertise in an elite university. Data on the classification of academic ranks of each public university in Australia is available from the Department of Industry of the Australian federal government. Similarly, the official number of academics carrying the title of professor in Malaysian public universities can be obtained from the database compiled by the National Association of Professor Malaysia.

The second indicator is based on the reputational factor. Elite universities score highly in terms of strong recognition received on the basis of the quality of research undertaken. In Australia, for example, the Excellence in Research report provided annually by the Australian Research Council (ARC) assesses the quality of research performed by Australian public universities. Similarly, evaluation of the quality of research and number and amount of grants secured by public universities and other research organisations is made available by the Malaysian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI). Another indicator of academic quality of higher education institutions is based on the yearly international university ranking system produced by organisation such as Times Higher Education (THE). The ranking reflects an objective measurement against the institutional activities of research, teaching, knowledge transfer and international diversity (Saisana & D’Hombres, 2008).

The last indicator is based on the factor of revenue diversity. Elite universities are known for their propensity and entrepreneurial effort for income diversification (Marginson, 2009). In this respect, elite universities are different from others in relation to having different sources of income, especially in securing competitive research grants and revenues from research commercialisation activities (Gallagher, 2011). In Australia, for example, income from sources
such as investments and donations are significantly being acquired by the ‘The Group of Eight’ universities, a top-tier subset of public universities, and is greater than the combined income from the same sources acquired by other public universities (Marginson, 2009). Another factor which differentiates elite universities from the others is income generated from internationalisation activities, such as from international students’ fees (Marginson, 2009). Data for this indicator is made available through the Australian government’s Department of Education website. For Malaysian cases, similar data is available to the public through the annual financial performance report of each public university.

In the specific context of the Malaysian case, five primary public universities fit the theoretical sampling criteria for an elite university, even though these universities do not meet the requirement of all three essential sampling criteria. The indicator of strong capability in research activities as a proxy of an elite university fits the five public universities in Malaysia. This is because the Malaysian government, through its Strategic National Higher Education Plan, bestowed the status ‘research universities’ on the five public universities in 2010, granting them greater autonomy that enabled a distinctive contribution from each of the five public universities in the area of research innovation and quality (Abdullah & Rahman, 2011). Therefore, the selection of universities with an ‘elite’ status as the sample cases is rather straightforward in Malaysia. In Australia, on the other hand, the term ‘research universities’ is not officially designated by the federal government for any particular group of universities; rather, the term is self-proclaimed by certain group of universities on the basis of their distinctive mission and vision. For that reason, to justify the selection of certain public universities in Australia as elite requires this research to utilise certain sampling criteria based on the available literature.
For the purpose of this research, four public universities, two each from Australia and Malaysia that fit the criteria of the research sampling, each with its distinctive historical imperatives and impressive research traditions, were selected as the primary sample to conduct the multiple case studies. Even though the cases selected are four different higher education institutions, the unit of analysis is pitched at the level of individuals who are responsible for policy decision-making process at their respective institutions. According to Staples (2010), views from the selected individual participants in a case study research design are methodologically relevant to the views representing the organisation. Therefore, insights from the selected individuals representing the elite universities are important to guide the overall research objectives of this research.

4.3.2 Triangulation: Government Officers

Input from policy makers and higher education officers at the federal and state levels are used to triangulate the primary data gathered from the key participants within the four selected elite universities. For that reason, officers from the relevant department of higher education were selected by applying a purposive sampling method. In Australia, participants within two levels of higher education departments were purposely selected. Firstly, the executive officer from the equity department of the higher education division at the federal level was selected and interviewed. Secondly, to complement the view obtained from the federal level, two executive officers from the Department of Education from two states were also selected and interviewed. In Malaysia, a similar approach was taken, but no higher education officer at state level was involved, because the Malaysian higher education regulatory body is wholly organised at the federal level. Three higher education executive officers were chosen and interviewed.
Perspectives of the government officers are meant to assist this research from two different angles. Firstly, government bureaucrats are policy informants in a broad area of higher education. They are responsible for implementing government policy in the area of equity and social inclusion. Secondly, higher education market features are being driven by government. Insights gained from government officers were useful for exploring the effect of higher education market features on social inclusion practices of elite universities.

4.3.3 Triangulation: Academic Experts

Insights from academic experts in higher education were sought to increase the trustworthiness and reliability of data gathered from key informants within the four selected elite universities. Selection of participants from this group was made on the basis of the following criteria. External academics for the purpose of data triangulation are related to two main groups. The first group is made up of influential scholars with active publications in the area of equity and social inclusion across the Australian and Malaysian public higher education sector. The first group is selected purposively, based on the number of publications they had in the area of equity and social inclusion in higher education. The second group consists of officers from academic associations representing public universities in the two countries. The key informants of the research are presented in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1: Key Informants of the Research

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<th>AUSTRALIA = 19</th>
<th>MALAYSIA = 19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elite University Australia 1 (A1)</td>
<td>Executive Officers (EO-A1) = 4 interviews</td>
<td>Executive Officers (EO-M1) = 5 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite University Australia 2 (A2)</td>
<td>Executive Officers (EO-A2) = 4 interviews</td>
<td>Executive Officers (EO-M2) = 5 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite University Malaysia 1 (M1)</td>
<td>Government Officers (SGOVAU) = 2 interviews</td>
<td>Government Officers (FGOVM) = 3 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite University Malaysia 2 (M2)</td>
<td>Government Officers (SGOVAU + FGOVAU) = 2 interviews</td>
<td>Government Officers (FGOVM) = 3 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Experts (AEA) = 4 interviews</td>
<td>Academic Experts (AEA) = 3 interviews</td>
<td>Academic Experts (AEM) = 3 interviews</td>
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4.4 DATA COLLECTION

This research has utilised data from both primary and secondary sources. Having multiple sources of data is pertinent because a rich set of data is required to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, ‘social inclusion practices’, undertaken in this research. To frame the focus of the study in accordance with its chosen paradigm, the objective and subsequent research questions and propositions, the following data collection methods were used. Three main phases of the data collection process (i.e., in-depth face-to-face interviews, telephone-based interviews, document analysis, etc.) are explained in the next sections.

4.4.1 In-Depth Face-to-Face Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were employed to serve as primary sources of data. The advantage of an interview is that it allows richer descriptions of the phenomena under investigation (Punch, 1998). Semi-structured interview questions were utilised as part of the interviewing method of inquiry. An
individual face-to-face semi-structured interview enables the researcher to comprehend a thorough understanding of the perspective derived from individuals on the basis of new and complex event, and this leads to effective facilitation of different views of individuals (Kong, Lee, Mackenzie, & Lee, 2002). Comprehensive facts are provided in addition to insider views by way of interviewing with an objective of minimising gaps in theory which are specific in the literature. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview is flexible in that it enables considerable freedom for the interviewee in answering and at the same time focus on topics of the proposed research (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

In the context of this research, a total of 19 interviews, including four semi-structured face-to-face interviews in Australia, were conducted with each cohort of Malaysian and Australian participants from the three groups cited earlier. For Australian participants, utilising face-to-face as an interviewing method of inquiry was deemed impractical considering the geographical aspects of the country and the location of the two primary sample cases. Furthermore, other groups in the sample cases, such as academic experts, are based sporadically across the huge continent of Australia. A telephone-based interview was thus conducted with most of the participants, as will be explained in a subsequent section.

English was used as a medium of communication during the interviews with all participants in both countries. Even though Malay language is the official language of Malaysia, the participants in Malaysia were more comfortable speaking and reflecting their views using English. All interviews were audio-recorded and were conducted in the office of the participants. Data collection in Malaysia was conducted in two phases. The first phase of face-to-face interviews
was conducted from January to the end of March 2013. The second phase of interviews with some other participants from elite universities in Malaysia was throughout December 2013. In Australia, the researcher undertook the same task from June to late August 2013.

4.4.2 In-Depth Telephone Semi-Structured Interviews

The use of the telephone as a medium of data collection in this research was essential, since most of the participants involved in Australia are geographically dispersed and are based far away from the researcher. The use of the telephone in qualitative data collection is endorsed by Cachia and Millward (2011), who claim that ‘this method provides good quality textual data on par with that obtained using face to face interview media that can be examined using qualitative data analysis’ (p.266). Fifteen semi-structured in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with Australian participants in between June and August 2013. These interviews took between 15 minutes and an hour, depending on the nature of the grouping they were allocated in the research’s sample cases. All interviews were digitally audio–recorded, with consent obtained beforehand from the participants. Also, some handwritten notes were also made during the interviews to complement the audio recording.

4.4.3 Critical and Reflective Process of Interviews

The following section describes the researcher’s reflection on the pre-interviewing and post-interviewing experiences in both countries. Overall, the interviewing process went smoothly. Upon receiving the necessary approval from the ethics committee, the researcher started compiling lists of participants and sending out invitation letters by mail. In most cases, the consent forms were sent to the participants with the research invitation letter when contacts were
first initiated. After a week or two, the researcher made a phone call or email to participants to confirm their availability. Once confirmation was obtained, the researcher proposed a date and time based on the participants’ convenience. The whole interviewing process was started by providing the participants with the research consent form to ensure voluntary participation. Also, all participants were given the guarantee that their identity would not be revealed and valuable information gained would be treated as confidential.

However, some difficulties emerged during the process, especially in the researcher’s own country, Malaysia. Firstly, participants for this study comprised high-ranking officers from participating elite universities. Similarly, representatives of the higher education division of the Malaysian government are from among high-ranking bureaucrats. Securing appointments with these two groups of officers was not easy and the researcher needed to do follow up calls on a number of occasions. For that reason, the researcher took four months in total to secure access to the two groups of participants.

Secondly, sensitivity issues in regard to race and politics in Malaysia prohibited the participants from engaging freely in a few potentially controversial questions in the Malaysian context. The data collection experience that the researcher had with Malaysian participants was totally different from that with Australian participants. In Australia, the participants were critical and willing to reveal information, even though questions were sometimes politically controversial, whereas Malaysian participants were more protective and this therefore required the researcher to probe carefully so that they did not feel threatened. This point is noted earlier by Greenbank (2006b) in similar research conducted with higher education institutions on the issue of widening
participation. Greenbank says that ‘…interviewees only provide their perspective and what they are willing to reveal. Policy makers are likely to be very sophisticated and adept at providing accounts that are institutionally and politically acceptable’ (p.50).

In relation to the second issue, the researcher overcame the difficulty of obtaining data by employing triangulation method by way of documentary analysis available from the respective institution. Furthermore, with regard to the issue of sensitivity, the researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines underpinning the research and anonymity is taken seriously, since the phenomenon of social inclusion in higher education is a politically sensitive issue in Malaysia.

4.5 DESIGN OF THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following section describes the nature of interview questions and how these are framed for the overall objective of the research. One primary set of semi-structured interview questions was drafted to gather data necessary to achieve the overall objective of the research. This one set of questions was needed to assist the qualitative research design explained earlier. For the purpose of the research, interview questions were drafted based on the conceptual framework, propositions and research questions outlined in Chapter 3.

A semi-structured face-to-face interview fits with a particular research objective that aims to explore a specific social phenomenon or practice (Kong et al., 2002). A semi-structured interview question is aligned with the primary objective of this study that aims to explore and provide an account of the ways elite higher education institutions are seeking to adapt and respond to external institutional pressures for social inclusion practices. According to Qu and
Dumay (2011, p.246), ‘the semi structured interviews involves prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses’. Table 4.2 shows the focus of each of the subsidiary questions of the thesis and how data is related to each of the relevant institutions and their unit of analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Sources of Data</th>
<th>Focus of Queries/Themes</th>
<th>Subsidiary Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with executive officers (state and federal)</td>
<td>How do government policy frameworks affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia?</td>
<td>How do higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with governmental documents, university’s strategic plan (etc)</td>
<td>(i) Government policies to address the issue of social inclusion in higher education.</td>
<td>(i) Higher education market frameworks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovative social inclusion initiatives, innovative marketing, innovative social inclusion practices.</td>
<td>Innovative social inclusion initiatives, innovative marketing, innovative social inclusion practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional documents (government documents, university’s strategic plan etc.)</td>
<td>Institutional documents (government documents, university’s strategic plan etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with government executive officers (state and federal)</td>
<td>Interviews with government executive officers (state and federal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with academic experts</td>
<td>Interviews with academic experts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Research Questions and the Corresponding Themes
4.5.1 Interview Questions

The interview questions were designed specifically for participants from the four selected elite universities in Australia and Malaysia. The main objective of the questions is to obtain insights from university administrators on the possible effect of the two main carriers of external institutional logics: government policy frameworks and higher education market features. To achieve the stated objective, questions are divided into two sections, which correspond with the two sub-research questions utilised in this research (see Appendix D). All questions are open-ended to allow for in-depth interrogation by the researcher and flexible perspectives from the participants. The focus of this set of questions was on the basis of specific major themes. The first section interrogates the awareness of government policy frameworks, the practices of social inclusion in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. The second section explores the perspectives of participants on the university’s innovative activities for the purpose of social inclusion in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. Innovative activities in the context of this research explore the extent of innovative market-driven activities and the indirect effect of the intakes of international and highly qualified domestic students on social inclusion initiatives. The second section also aims to ascertain the awareness of participants of the relationship between quality assurance practices and social inclusion practices. A similar set of questions was then used to interview officers from the department of higher education in both countries and other academic experts. Interview questions were drafted in English. For participants from Malaysia, the use of English as a medium of conveying the intent of the researcher was acceptable, since English is the second language in Malaysia and most of the participants involved were academics with a good proficiency in English.
4.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY OF THE RESEARCH

Trustworthiness in a qualitative research setting can be established by way of conforming to the four elements of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility requires adopting an established research method within a qualitative framework and utilising different approaches of triangulation (Shenton, 2004). Credibility is grounded on internal data validity. Internal validity focuses on the data fit within a given theoretical framework (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Triangulation refers to ‘the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings’ (Bryman, 2004, p.1). The following sub-section elaborates on the various methods of data triangulation to ensure the credibility of this research.

4.6.1 Document Analysis

For the purpose of cross-validating information against other forms of data collection, content analysis of various documents is used to allow triangulation for understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Bowen, 2009). Greenbank (2006b) also states specifically in the context of a higher education research that ‘…interviews combined with documentary research provide a form of triangulation that enables the researchers to determine the truth’ (p.50). Considering this, printed documents from a variety of sources were used both as secondary data and to cross-validate data obtained from the interviewing process.

Firstly, data obtained from interviews conducted with officers from the selected elite universities were corroborated with official documents made available by participants from the participating universities. These documents may include the selected university’s strategic action plans in the
three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion that are also publicly available from the institution’s website. Also, a few audio-recorded conversations from forums and radio interviews on the issue of social inclusion were utilised for data triangulation.

4.6.2 Interview as a method of triangulation and verification

Another approach of data triangulation utilised in this study is by using multiple respondents within a chosen case organisation. For example, four executive officers from a chosen elite university were interviewed to ensure credibility and consistency of data. Similarly, equity practitioners and academic experts who were not from the elite universities included in the sample cases were interviewed for cross-validation of data. Therefore, this study also applies data triangulation within the primary data obtained from the interviewing process. In the case of ambiguity detected from information obtained from interviews after the transcribing process, further verification was sought by email with the particular respondent. This stage of data verification is important since ‘the researcher is able to complete the circle of authentication with participants by allowing them to provide input into the research process’ (Jones et al., 2006, p.99).

4.6.3 The Elements of Transferability, Dependability and Conformability

Transferability is related to the ability to externally validate a particular research finding. It refers to the extent of generalisation and replication of research findings in another research setting (Merriam, 1998). However, the peculiar in-depth nature of a qualitative research renders generalisability unrealistic, since qualitative inquiries are bounded by a specific time and context in which they transpire (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Lincoln and Guba (1985)
stress that a researcher in a qualitative tradition should be able to present contextual information and a sufficiently thick description of the research phenomenon to enable others to make sense of both the context presented and possible comparative with others’ perspectives.

This research adheres to the element of dependability as a proxy of trustworthiness by highlighting the important research process in details, especially on the research design and sampling issues, to ensure congruency between the chosen paradigm and methodology that should appear consistent over time and across researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, the element of conformability requires the researcher to have all the important stages of the research audited by both the primary and secondary supervisors. The audited research processes include stages starting with the identification of the research problem at the beginning of the candidature up until the process of managing and analysing the empirical evidence. In addition, appropriate data triangulation was also utilised to lessen the effect of the researcher’s bias.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS
The primary aim of data analysis is to understand how the unit of analysis within the research’s multiple sample cases makes sense of social inclusion practice against the background of two primary carriers of external institutional logics: government policy frameworks and higher education market features. To achieve this aim, data analysis was conducted systematically for the arrangement of unstructured data obtained from the data collection process. The process of data analysis actually started the moment the interview recordings were transcribed by the researcher. This strategy is considered necessary, as, according to Stake (1995), ‘there is no particular moment when data analysis begins’ (p.71). In regard to the transcribing process, one
important consideration taken for the researcher is the number of hours to complete all the recorded interview files. For that reason, only about 30% of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher and the remaining 70% were outsourced to professional transcribers.

Once the transcription was complete, the systematic data analysis stage was initiated manually by the researcher. Huberman and Miles (2002) explain that data analysis in a qualitative study must be conducted in a thorough manner and for that reason qualitative data analysis is made up of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and verification). Data analysis was conducted manually using the word processor application without the assistance of qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo or ATLAS.ti. Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwood and Axford (2004) assert that qualitative analysis software is able to manage the data analysis process systematically, but the actual analysis process is underpinned by the analytical and interpretive thinking of the researchers themselves. For that reason, manual analysis will allow the researcher to become immersed in the overall process of organising and sorting of all data gathered from interviews and document analysis.

4.7.1 Coding Procedures

Coding is a process deployed to break down, compare, conceptualise and assign categories of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It aims to identify and segment key themes from the literature and common themes ascertained from the data collection process. These themes are highlighted manually and are then followed by a more detailed thematic analysis. Emerging new themes also have to be observed during the coding process. Data were thus subsequently coded in accordance with a priori coding and inductive coding (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013). The six phases of
thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were utilised to facilitate the data analysis stage. For the purpose of this research, certain categories or codes (i.e., a priori codes) are assigned to each subsidiary research proposition to structure the initial data analysis (see Appendix E and Appendix F).

The method of analysing cases was also established using Stake’s (1995) recommendations to do both direct interpretation of each individual case and aggregation of data through cross-case analysis. The researcher is also aware of new emerging themes that can be observed during the coding process. New categories or codes can be identified from each case analysed and this therefore requires the researcher to be aware of such possibilities. Therefore, the two stages of direct interpretation and data aggregation were conducted to analyse individual cases and cross-case synthesis, respectively. The final stage of data analysis was conducted for the synthesis of identifiable patterns and themes with the theories underpinning the research’s conceptual framework.

4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher had to consider sensitivity issues when data collections were conducted in Malaysia. Approval from the researcher’s university ethic committee was obtained and this study was therefore classified as a low-risk research project (see Appendix C). In addition, certain procedures were undertaken to ensure overall research integrity. Firstly, all participants were provided with a plain language statement for an overview of the research project and their rights as a participant (see Appendix A). Secondly, an informed consent form was also provided prior to the interviewing process to ensure voluntary participation (see Appendix B). Finally, all
participants agreed to be audio-recorded. Participants were also assured that data collected would not be used for other purposes and their identities would not be disclosed. All recorded audios from the interviews are to be kept in a secure location for a period of five years.

4.9 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an account of the research design and the approaches undertaken for data collection. The nature and purpose of the research are explained in accordance with the chosen paradigm. Sample cases, the unit of analysis and organisations involved are justified on the basis of the research objective and methodological approach. Data collection techniques and method of analysis are defined, based on the relevant protocols. The researcher’s position in relation to the philosophy underpinning this research is also shared in order to reflect the overall paradigmatic orientation.

Chapter 5 initiates the empirical section of this thesis by presenting the results from the four selected cases in the form of both within- and cross-case analysis.
CHAPTER 5 PRESENTATION OF DATA: CASE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

(AUSTRALIA)

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents within-case results and analysis of two elite universities (A1 and A2) from Australia. The main objective is to explore how elite universities adapt to government policy frameworks and higher education market features for social inclusion. The chapter is structured around sub-propositions P1.1 and P2.1. Sections 5.1 to 5.3 present the results of A1; Sections 5.4 to 5.6 present the results of A2. Section 5.7 provides a brief summary of the overall case results.

5.1 OVERVIEW OF CASE A1 (ELITE UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA 1)

Case A1 is one of the oldest and biggest universities in Australia and is affiliated with the Group of Eight (GO8) association of universities. As of 2012, it has approximately 30,000 domestic students enrolled at the undergraduate level and a total enrolment of approximately 11,000 overseas students.
Figure 5.1: Operational & Strategic Divisions for Social Inclusion Initiatives of A1

Figure 5.1 shows the divisions responsible for social inclusion initiatives. The social inclusion initiative of the university is headed by the vice-chancellor. The task of monitoring the implementation of social inclusion initiatives is assumed by the director of the equity office. That director monitors implementation undertaken by separate units, such as the office of pro vice-chancellor (indigenous education) and the office of deputy vice-chancellor (academic). The office of student affairs, the office of prospective students and deans of faculties undertake relevant social inclusion tasks under directives from the senior deputy vice-chancellor (academic). The director of the equity office reports on social inclusion directly to the senior deputy vice-chancellor on a regular basis. The arrows signify the chain of reporting responsibility for social inclusion activities that must be initiated from the deans of academic faculties and the division of student affairs.
5.1.1 Demographic of Interviewees

**Table 5.1: Profiles of Interviewees for Case A1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the equity office</td>
<td>EO1-A1</td>
<td>Strategic guidance to other divisions entrusted with undertaking social inclusion initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the deputy vice chancellor (academic) office.</td>
<td>EO2-A1</td>
<td>Senior advisor to the deputy vice chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the office of prospective students</td>
<td>EO3-A1</td>
<td>Recruitment and admission process of prospective students. Manage and coordinate inclusion-related activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the student affairs division</td>
<td>EO4-A1</td>
<td>Coordinate support services for students’ engagement within the university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As reflected in Table 5.1, the participants interviewed in case A1 are selected from each of the departments associated with the task of social inclusion.

**Table 5.2: Profiles of other Interviewees for Case A1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Officer State Government Australia 1</td>
<td>SGOVAU1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Officer State Government Australia 2</td>
<td>SGOVAU2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts with publications and contributions in the area of social inclusion.</td>
<td>AEA1, AEA2, AEA3, AEA4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 shows the profiles of other participants within the Australian higher education sector whose views are utilised in this research to corroborate and triangulate the data obtained from participants of case A1. Two executive officers from the state government were interviewed. SGOVAU1 is a senior officer who looks at implementation of higher education policy at the state level; SGOVAU2 is a state officer who manages and coordinates programs in regard to training services and professional development. Four academic experts currently serving in other Australian public universities were also interviewed.
5.2 THE EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The first part of the case results highlights the effect of government policy frameworks on the social inclusion initiatives of A1. It is presented on the basis of two major themes: 1. Practices and 2. Problems of Adaptation. Across these two major themes, a specific pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable.

5.2.1 Practices

Practices of social inclusion across A1 are reported on the basis of the sub-themes of policy objectives, agreement, outreach, access, and participation and completion. Policy objectives highlight the internal policy objectives that underpin the social inclusion practices of A1. Agreement describes the nature of agreement entered by the university with the government to undertake social inclusion initiatives. The three sub-primary themes of outreach, access, and participation and completion indicate the specific social inclusion interventions that have been initiated by A1.

5.2.1.1 Policy Objectives

Internal values and principles are regarded as essential elements that guide the university’s social inclusion objective and aims. These values include (i) pursuit of excellence, (ii) creativity and independent thinking, (iii) honesty and accountability, (iv) mutual respect and diversity, and (v) supporting people. The social inclusion objective of the university has been ideally reflected as part of the university’s mission and vision. Democratisation of access to higher education as a value from the federal government’s TAHES policy statement is recognisable in the university’s mission statement. One participant (EO2-A1) believed that, in a democratic society like
Australia, the element of democratisation of higher education must be realised through proportionate participation of all socioeconomic groups. In this respect Australians should be given an equal opportunity to participate at the higher levels of education. However, equal opportunities for higher education must also be aligned with university traditions of academic excellence and elitism. All academic experts also agreed that the internal value of ‘academic excellence’ has been strongly embedded within the internal culture of the university. In this respect, the social justice and democratisation values from the government policy frameworks are perceived to conflict with the culture of academic elitism. The two seemingly conflicting internal and external values will then have to be carefully considered in order to realise the government’s aspiration of equity and social inclusion in higher education.

The university objective and aims of social inclusion at the undergraduate level are also underpinned by the TAHES policy objectives of human capital development. The task of social inclusion is closely associated with the development of human capital through supporting a diverse and dynamic workforce in the state. All participants from A1 believed that the university has an important role to improve the social inclusion aims of the state government by enhancing the socio-economic activities of the people. One participant stated goals:

*Improving productivity, the workforce participation, improving employment outcomes, improving earnings and as a means towards improving greater social inclusion...*

(EO1-A1)

Social justice is highly regarded by the state government. In this context, social inclusion in public universities across the state has been primarily aimed to increase participation of the low-SES community, migrants and indigenous people in higher education. A participant from the
state government commented that participation of low-SES community members in higher education is even more crucial in the state:

[Social inclusion] is a very important issue because ...the state has higher proportion of people from low-SES background than many of the other jurisdictions in Australia…

(SGOVAU2)

5.2.1.2 Agreement

Whilst the equity initiatives in the university have been around at the organisational levels for some time, TAHES and other related government policy frameworks are thought to be very influential. This was reflected by one of the participants from the university:

There is no question that the new framework around social inclusion has got the university’s focus on their priority. (EO2-A1)

The commitment to the current social inclusion agenda is reinforced by the agreement made between all public universities and the Australian federal government. The agreement covers a three-year period and it outlines equity performance targets. One participant commented that the agreement provides an incentive for the university to undertake social inclusion initiatives:

The fact that this [social inclusion] is now discussed by the Commonwealth Government when it comes to negotiating the Compacts [the agreement] with each university, I think that’s a very good outcome. But basically, it provides the sharpness of focus. (EO3-A1)

An academic expert commented that funding from the higher education participation and partnerships program (HEPPP) policy incentive has enabled the university to widen the scope of social inclusion practices in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion which would otherwise be difficult because of financial constraints:
As long as they [A1] tick the box and they get the funding from the government for ticking the box, that’s where they are at. To push it any further than that would probably be ... cost negative for the university. (AEA1)

5.2.1.3 Outreach

Outreach projects are formally outlined in both the equity and diversity action plan and long-term learning plan. The outreach initiatives are also informed by the values of democratisation and social justice from the TAHES policy statement. Most of the initiatives for outreach and engagement programs with schools are undertaken collectively by the office of prospective students, the faculties and the research faculties. One of the recognisable outreach programs is tutoring support for indigenous populations that has been arranged and managed by university student ambassadors. A partnership with a non-profit organisation to raise higher education aspirations for disadvantaged young people across the state through a program known as ‘TLL’ is also an on-going recognisable outreach initiative. There is also an outreach initiative known as the ‘YSP’ that utilises the talent of a few selective undergraduate students to build rapport with selective secondary schools within the state for the purpose of facilitating transition from school to university.

The university has also been involved in outreach projects to build aspiration for higher education for Year 8 and 9 students at secondary schools around the state, together with other public universities in the region. Partnerships with identified under-represented secondary schools are developed through a consortium of public universities in the state. Since 2011, the university has built strong partnerships with 15 lower socio-economic schools across the state. In
terms of the depth of the university’s outreach activities, the university has incorporated teacher training in critical thinking with the aim of building capacity within selected schools. Also, outreach activities with schools include in-school presentations aimed at building aspirations towards tertiary study and breaking down perceived barriers. One participant from the university suggested that outreach projects with under-represented secondary schools are undertaken on the basis of a formal agreement made between the public universities and the state government:

*For the last three years or more, every university has been doing widening participation work that they had to sign off on, and it was a contract with the state government... It[outreach] is an activity that we have to do because we have agreed to it, and every other university is doing it.* (EO1-A1)

An academic expert confirmed that the university has been quite prolific in its outreach activities to help promote awareness for higher education among the under-represented communities in the state:

*The outreach activities went ahead on a very high-profile, public relations-based program, which benefited numbers of young people. There’s no doubt about that.* (AEA2)

5.2.1.4 Access

According to participants, the university’s internal strategy for student access is informed by the two values of human capital development and social justice embodied in the TAHES policy statement. Most of the access initiatives are built around the university’s special admission scheme, preparatory programs and scholarship programs. Social inclusion approaches in the area of access for disadvantaged students are formally structured on the basis of merit, with special
entry schemes for applicants from the identified equity groups. The special admission scheme includes the provision of a bonus rank scheme. For applicants from a low socio-economic background, a specific identification of secondary schools and socio-economic status of applicants allows additional points to be added to the applicants’ Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) scores. A bonus rank scheme for incoming applicants from the equity groups is also provided for Year 12 students who lodge their application during the same year. This provision is meant to encourage applicants from equity groups to not defer their applications until a few years later.

Access initiatives are strategised to address the intakes of young people from disadvantaged groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders people and adult learners. Intakes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students are handled by a specific unit within the university. Another initiative in the area of access is noticeable via the university’s pathway programs that are structured and standardised across all faculties. The university tertiary preparation programs for applicants who apply to undertake undergraduate studies are managed by the university’s preparatory college at one of its three campuses. Bridging programs are also made available to adult learner applicants. Preparatory studies are structured to cater for the admission of mature age students into undergraduate programs. The university’s preparatory courses are managed by the university’s own preparatory college and also in collaboration with two other public universities in the state. Pathway and bridging programs are also available for applicants from low socioeconomic groups, applicants from rural areas and from indigenous groups.
Provision of scholarships is regarded by all participants from the university as one of the most important initiatives for social inclusion. For example, a total of $2 million for undergraduate scholarships was made available in 2011. Programs known as ‘YA’ and the university link access program, for example, are in place to address problems of financial hardship of low-SES students. The program is funded by philanthropic donations from organisations around the state and it targets secondary school students from Year 10 and above. One participant asserted that the internal scholarship initiatives are part of the university’s strategy for student access:

*It was the philanthropy that drove the young achievers program and the young scholars program. Those really are the two main strategies [for access] that the university is using...* (EO1-A1)

5.2.1.5 Participation and Completion

The participation and completion elements of social inclusion are guided by a formal policy that covers inclusive practices for students’ engagement. Other related inclusion policies include the university disability policy, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy and the equity and diversity policy. A formal policy for inclusive practices such as the university engagement plan, which is related to the university strategic plan, outlines the necessary intervention aspects related to the learning cycles of the identified equity groups. The university’s social inclusion strategy in the area of participation and completion is underpinned by four main elements. First, it aims to maintain the retention and success of a diverse student population at undergraduate level. Second, it aims to provide the best student learning facilities to enhance the student learning experiences. Third, it focuses on the technology aspects that support the students’ learning experience. Fourth, it strives to focus on the quality of services provided and the
importance of assessment practices. One of the social inclusion initiatives in the area of participation is through the provision of university strategic teaching and learning grants for low-SES students. The strategic teaching and learning grants are funded by the HEPPP scheme and are intended to support activities such as the ‘thrive’ university program, which includes innovative teaching methods, monitoring of student progress, academic transition support programs, and peer mentoring programs for low-SES students at the undergraduate level.

The other two groups targeted by the university in the area of participation are indigenous students and students with a disability. The participation and completion elements of these two groups are guided by two distinct policies. An inclusive study environment is needed to support the learning and teaching experiences of the two groups. For example, the essential characteristics of the indigenous community have to be taken into consideration for social inclusion when they are enrolled in the university. An initiative taken by the university to provide support to indigenous students is the homework support program, which is a collaborative project with other indigenous organisations and other stakeholders. Even though the nature of curricula across the university undergraduate programs has not been standardised to cater to the specific needs of indigenous students, initiatives are taken to improve participation and retention based on the university’s formal policy on inclusive practices. The university also organises a diversity week on a regular basis to express appreciation of the diversity of its student population.

The university’s ‘thrive’ program is a social inclusion initiative that provides support for first-year undergraduate students. The objective of this program is to assist the transition of four
targeted groups of students in their first year of study. These four groups are students from rural areas, low-SES students, indigenous students and students who are among the first from their family to attend higher education. For example, the ‘thrive’ program includes social enrichment programs and a peer-mentoring program to monitor the progress of identified at risk disadvantaged students is also in place. Another initiative for social inclusion identifiable is the preparation of disadvantaged students for work after graduation. This initiative is managed and coordinated by the appointed career advisers within the university’s career hub.

Two academic experts said that the university is in a better position to push its social inclusion initiatives in the areas of participation and completion to a greater extent than other public universities across the state. One of these commented that The university has better resources to undertake their inclusive activities seriously and if you look at the retention rates of students from the statistic, they are doing quite well (AEA4). Another participant from the state government also confirmed that resources are one of the important factors that enable the university to retain the targeted equity students within the university’s tradition of academic excellence:

The amount of low-SES students enrolled might be small relative to other public universities but the concentration of resources will definitely help the disadvantaged students in the area of teaching and learning (SGOV2).

5.2.2 Problems of Adaptation

All four participants from the university suggested that challenges inherent with the federal government short-term funding and internal academic culture are two factors which could most
impede their on-going commitment to social inclusion. Concern about the sustainability of government funding for social inclusion activities was raised. A cautious approach to social inclusion across the university might be inevitable as a result of uncertainty on the availability of funding from the federal government. For example, financial resources to be committed for social inclusion activities must be carefully considered and planned before real commitments are entered into with other stakeholders to undertake partnership programs. One participant also pointed to the issue of sustainability surrounding the funding of low-SES places:

*The problem with government funding in these areas is relatively short term... We have no guarantee that there is going to be ongoing support in terms of funding to enable the university to maintain strategies that by nature should be long term.* (EO1-A1)

The internal culture of the university is considered another factor that might adversely influence effective implementation of social inclusion initiatives. The lack of understanding of the university’s policy between different units entrusted with roles to undertake social inclusion initiatives is a concern for the university. Therefore, convincing internal staff of the importance of the social inclusion agenda is a challenge for the management of the university. One participant asserted that the university’s policy for social inclusion has not been cohesively integrated across all necessary areas of social inclusion:

*I think in essence there is a strong level of commitment to social inclusion, but I think, I don’t know, that we necessarily got all our policies [integrated] around recruitment, outreach, admissions, etc.* (EO3-A1)

Similarly, an academic expert echoed the same sentiment, that it is quite difficult to coordinate social inclusion practices across various departments within a university:
I see the much more challenging task is to make sure that it’s understood by the people within the university. That’s much harder than convincing a few politicians. (AEA2)

All of the academic experts also believed that one of the problems to effectively engage in social inclusion initiatives is the clarity of the government’s objective for social inclusion. In this case, social inclusion in higher education is commonly perceived by equity practitioners as a very complex area and more thought is needed to ensure better understanding of the concept across the higher education sector. An academic expert asserted:

I think it’s a very complex area... If you look at the literature, there will be lots of definitions of social inclusion in the broader literature... It’s a complex issue and it’s something that is very hard to get agreement on. (AEA4)

To ensure better implementation of the social inclusion agenda, the university has proposed some recommendations as a response. One participant argued that their response to the policy frameworks through market research is underpinned by the lack of reliable quantitative data that can be used to correctly inform the social inclusion practices of public universities in Australia. Another participant also suggested that a new model of outreach activity for social inclusion has been proposed to the government to improve representation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This model requires a sustainable funding system and consistent collaboration to be conducted between different organisations around the state.

One participant stressed that the university has also mooted ideas to improve the accessibility of low-SES students into higher education. A proposal submitted to the federal government calls for the expansion of the demand-driven funding system in sub-bachelor degree programs. A transition of low-SES students from the sub-bachelor degree programs into undergraduate degree
programs can thus be made possible without compromising academic standards. One participant believed that differentiation of the scope of social inclusion practices would have to be highlighted by the university as a result of limitations of necessary data that can be used to propel the university’s practices further and also to actively position itself as a benchmark for social inclusion in the sector.

5.2.3 Emerging Pattern of Adaptation

Table 5.3: Impact of the Government Policy Frameworks on A1 Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to the Government Policy Frameworks</th>
<th>Problems of Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Active Adaptation</td>
<td>1. Sustainability of government funding for social inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Active Adaptation</td>
<td>2. Lack of integration in practices as a result of internal culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Active Adaptation</td>
<td>3. Lack of clarity on the concept of social inclusion itself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5.3, the university adaptation to the related Australian government policy frameworks can be identified as active in all three areas of social inclusion. Evidence suggests that the university adaptation to the policy imperatives in the three broad social inclusion areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion is active and strategic. Strategic adaptation is identifiable from the case results as the four values of social justice, democracy, human capital development and diversity associated with the government policy frameworks are acknowledged by participants and perceived to be compatible with the internal values and social inclusion aims of the university.
The perceived compatibility and centrality of the external values from the government policy frameworks have been convincingly projected through an active internalisation of social inclusion-related activities across the university. Active adaptation is also assumed as a result of the competency of the university to clearly outline social inclusion aims and objectives in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. The seemingly active adaptation is also driven by the agreement made between the university and the federal government on annual social inclusion targets.

Evidence of a formalised initiative, and high recognition of external values that reflects a pattern of active adaptation for social inclusion as a result of government policies, are observable from the following list:

i. Strong awareness of the policy incentives provided by the federal government. HEPP funding is available to support the social inclusion initiatives of outreach, access and participation.

ii. Outreach activities for social inclusion are formally outlined in the university equity and diversity action plan.

iii. Outreach activities to raise aspirations for higher education among students in under-represented schools are conducted in the form of partnerships with other public universities in the state.

iv. A formal outreach activity to raise aspirations for higher education has been jointly organised with a non-profit organisation across the state.

v. A formal outreach activity in the form of a tutoring program has been organised with indigenous secondary school students across the state.
vi. In the area of access, a special admissions scheme for undergraduate studies is available to cater applicants from identified equity groups.

vii. A specific unit to handle admissions and other social inclusion initiatives for indigenous students exists within the university.

viii. Bridging or preparatory courses for identified equity students and adult learners are managed by the university’s subsidiary colleges and other public universities around the state.

ix. Scholarship programs are made available to assist students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds.

x. In the area of participation and completion, the university’s social inclusion practices are guided by formal policies such as the university disability policy, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy and the equity and diversity policy.

xi. A formal policy of inclusive practices addresses engagement and aspects of identified equity students throughout their learning experiences in the university.

xii. A strategic teaching and learning grant is available to support the teaching and learning engagement of students from low-SES backgrounds.

xiii. The homework support program is established to address engagement issues for indigenous students.

xiv. A program known as the ‘thrive’ program to provide support services to identified equity students as means to facilitate the transition from school to university.

xv. Diversity week is organised regularly to acknowledge the cultural aspects of students from various socioeconomic backgrounds.
Career advice is provided by appointed career counsellors for low-SES students to prepare themselves for work after graduation.

Effective implementation of social inclusion practices is also a challenge, given the uncertainty of government funding and the lack of clarity on the scope of social inclusion interventions articulated by the government policy frameworks. Thus a pattern of active adaptation in the three areas of social inclusion does not necessarily reflect effective implementation across the university.

5.3 THE EFFECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION MARKET FEATURES

The second part of the case results highlights the effect of higher education market features on social inclusion initiatives of A1. It is presented on the basis of two major themes: 1. Practices and 2. Problems of Adaptation. Across these two themes, a specific pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable.

5.3.1 Practices

Practices are reported on the basis of the two sub-primary themes: competition and reputation, and quality. The sub-primary theme of competition and reputation highlights both the direct and indirect effects of market-driven activities on the practices of social inclusion. The sub-primary theme of quality shows the direct effect of quality management practices on the practices of social inclusion.
5.3.1.1 Competition and Reputation

In the area of outreach, almost all participants agreed that the university’s initiatives to raise aspirations of young people from lower socio-economic schools are primarily intended as part of their support to the ongoing social justice aspirations of the government’s social inclusion aims in higher education. One participant commented that innovative efforts in the area of outreach are not competitively driven by the desire to consolidate their market position; innovative efforts are guided by the awareness of suitable empowerment approaches to engaging with the disadvantaged community.

Minor innovative market-driven activities to attract disadvantaged students are recognisable through outreach activities with schools and open days on the main campus. For example, information on the available pathway programs is distributed and explained to potential applicants from targeted equity applicants. For adult learners, the outreach activity includes critical thinking and effective writing programs to increase their academic preparedness for tertiary study. The university is also utilising current undergraduate students who are employed on a casual basis to develop and facilitate practical sessions within their faculty for outreach activities. Three disciplines where involvement of undergraduate students for outreach activities is recognisable are engineering, psychology and pharmacy.

However, an academic expert suggested that most of the university’s outreach activities are actually meant to address the elements of reputation and prestige rather than competitive market positioning. Moreover, the university’s market-driven approach through its outreach activities is
less innovative and has only a minor impact in terms of achieving the intended objective of widening participation and social inclusion:

They [the university] didn’t reach the potential audience that they could have reached. So that’s the sort of disconnect that was happening [in outreach activities]. (AEA2)

The international student market is regarded by all participants as one of the important strategic areas being actively pursued to address the element of competition and reputation. Intakes of international students are viewed as one of the university’s global strategies to ensure a sustainable and diverse international student profile. Internationalisation is presumed to be an activity that will enable the university to enhance its institutional credentials by attracting a diverse population of international students. Enrolment of international students is considered a priority for the university, since income gained from international students can be utilised to cross-subsidise other areas, especially to support teaching and learning activities for undergraduate programs and the provision of equity scholarships. From this perspective, one participant argued that the intake of international students is not constraining but is complementary to the objective of social inclusion:

No, there is no [negative] effect [of internationalisation] on our equity and inclusion initiatives. In fact internationalisation has been important because of the capacity for international students to cross-subsidise, to cross-subsidize other areas. (EO1-A1)

One participant stated that enrolment of international students is considered part of the university aims for diversity and social inclusion. From this perspective, the integration of different cultures is considered important to enrich local students’ experience and engagement. The element of diversity brought by international students to the university is very much valued. Competition for
places in the undergraduate programs does not happen as a result of increased numbers of applications from offshore applicants:

*International students in this university are 25% of the student body. It is certainly important that we find that space and it [diversity] is good for our students. We hope that we gain a lot of benefits from having 124 countries represented on our campus. We see internationalisation as an important agenda for us. But we don’t see competition with low-SES Australian students.* (EO2-A1)

An academic expert asserts that the university has made a substantial investment by increasing the amount spent on advertising and promotion to attract international students. However, the university access strategies to address the intakes of domestic disadvantaged students have not been innovatively pursued for the purpose of consolidating the university’s market positioning.

The university focus on the participation aspects of students at undergraduate level is informed by a formal policy known as the ‘university advantage’. Overall, academic activities to support the learning and engagement aspects of undergraduate students are planned and managed through each of the academic faculties in accordance with the general guideline prescribed by the ‘university advantage’ policy. The ‘university advantage’ policy is formulated with consideration given to the overall student population within the university. For targeted equity groups, a dedicated program such as the university’s ‘thrive’ program is in place to support the learning experience of low-SES students.
A participant from the university nevertheless asserted that being innovative to engage targeted equity students’ learning experience is not part of the university’s strategy for market positioning and competitive advantage:

*I don’t really think that efforts taken to address the participation of equity students are based on the competitive nature of the higher education market.* (EO2-A1)

Another academic expert made a similar comment:

*The competition for domestic and international students might have forced A1 to articulate a convincing policy statement for teaching and learning that reflects their uniqueness in practices... but for social inclusion this [teaching and learning] has not been greatly highlighted.* (AEA3)

5.3.1.2 Quality

Internalisation of quality assurance practices across the university is associated with the requirement to conform with the quality standards of the regulatory body of Australia. One participant stated that quality assurance is actively pursued through a formal institutional framework of quality management and is part of the university’s strategic planning. For that reason, all academic activities are subjected to a consistent and rigorous audit processes:

*There are continuous audit processes across the university. Both research and teaching activities are also subject to an extensive external audit. Of course the university takes it [quality] seriously.* (EO3-A1)

The task of reporting the progress of equity targets to the regulatory agency for quality and the federal government higher education participation and partnership program is assumed by the director of prospective and student equity office. For example, the university’s outreach program
team collects and analyses data for internal evaluation and to underpin continuous improvement. Also, the team provides regular updates on progress to the deputy vice-chancellor academic and other university donors. Nevertheless, the requirement for reporting on the progress of equity targets is not viewed as constraining on-going initiatives for social inclusion. One participant stated that admission of low-SES applicants is conducted with careful observance of the standards of academic quality:

Well, I don’t think we actually lower our academic standard. We have tried to reach out with the bonus scheme so as to make it more accessible. (EO3-A1)

In respect of accessibility strategies for social inclusion, provisions of the university’s foundation studies and pathway programs are periodically audited by the external regulatory and quality assurance agency. Also, the university’s bridging and pathway programs are also being audited to meet the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Quality assurance practices also address the participation aspect of the identified equity groups in the university. Periodical involvement of external auditors from the state government to assess the quality and viability of the university’s outreach activities and teaching and learning activities has also been a part of the university’s social inclusion initiatives. Most of the participants believed that the quality assurance standards imposed help them to effectively offer outstanding learning and teaching experiences that, it is hoped, enhance outcomes for students from diverse social and cultural contexts. One participant commented that the internal policy of inclusive learning known as the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Plan (TLEP) is closely subjected to a rigorous internal audit assessment across the university:

The internal audit team looks into this matter [inclusive learning] that I call inclusive learning experience. We have experts and practitioners within the university who look
after the scope of inclusive learning. This will probably be an efficient way to tackle the problems of early drop-outs for the non-traditional students. We also have special learning programs for the indigenous students. (EO3-A1)

Also, there are various quality assessment tools being utilised to gauge the quality standard of the university’s inclusive learning. One participant commented that one of the tools used for quality assessment in the area of teaching and learning is known as the student experience survey (SES), which is conducted every semester. In the area of community engagement and outreach activities, a similar quality assurance process is conducted via the development of internal self-assessment audit to meet rigorous external regulatory expectations. Some of the evidence that needs to be presented to the external panel of audit includes details on community and regional engagement programs that have been established by the university within a specific period of time. An external academic noted that public universities in Australia have been forcefully pushed to institutionalise the quality culture within their social inclusion strategic planning as a result of the ongoing quality monitoring process proposed by the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) of the Australian government:

The periodical institutional audit conducted by TEQSA has been a useful tool for the government to instil the culture of quality for social inclusion across all public universities. (AEA2)

5.3.2 Problems of Adaptation

Adaptation to market practices for the purpose of social inclusion is nevertheless deemed not feasible as a result of a few specific factors identified by participants of case A1. One participant noted the problem in regard to the implementation of quality standard within the university’s
objective of social inclusion is related to administrative burden involved in gathering data on social inclusion activities for reporting purposes. Another participant believed that the current quality framework of social inclusion within the university is not thoroughly integrated between academic schools and the divisions entrusted to coordinate social inclusion practices. The same participant also asserted that it is also often difficult to source academic and faculty staff to assist with outreach projects. On the other hand, an academic expert posited that a standardised quality framework for social inclusion among public universities in Australia will not help to achieve diversity of practices among all universities. For that reason, equity targets should not be necessarily attached to periodically reporting requirements for social inclusion.

5.3.3 Emerging Pattern of Adaptation

Table 5.4: Impact of Higher Education Market Features on A1 Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>1. Administrative burden of reporting (quality).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Passed Adaptation</td>
<td>2. Integration of quality frameworks across all social inclusion practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Passed Adaptation</td>
<td>3. Lack of diversity in social inclusion practices (quality).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5.4, the university pattern of adaptation to higher education market features has been primarily mixed in the area of quality management and mostly passive in the area of innovative market-driven activities. Evidence from the interviews and document analysis, and
corroborated by views from academic experts, suggests that quality has driven the university to adapt quality assurance practices for the objective of social inclusion (i.e., outreach, access, and participation and completion). Mixed adaptation is justified as a result of the lack of a formal document that sets out an overall quality strategy for social inclusion across the three areas. Quality practices are officially recognised as a result of the government’s periodic audit cycles, which require the university to report on the progress made on equity targets but have not been prominently featured and specifically highlighted on their own.

However, evidence does not convincingly indicate that there is a strong relationship that can be established between competition and reputation and the three areas of social inclusion. Based on the perspectives of the participants, competition and reputation seem to have only a marginal impact on university social inclusion practices in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. In the area of outreach, evidence of a minor innovative market initiative for social inclusion is in evidence, but it is not primarily intended to address domestic students’ market competition.

In the area of access, intake of international students has also been indirectly recognised for cross-subsidisation of funding to support social inclusion activities. However, this perspective has not been formalised within the university’s strategic planning for social inclusion. In the area of participation and completion, a comprehensive policy of inclusive learning has also been highlighted within the university’s strategic planning but has not been directly assumed by participants as innovative market-driven activities. In this regard, the internalisation of innovative market-driven activities has not been directly related to the university’s social
inclusion initiatives. Therefore, competition and reputation from the market elements are perceived as minimally compatible by participants for the objective of social inclusion.

Evidence of a moderate move to formalise social inclusion and reasonable recognition of external values that reflects a pattern of mixed adaptation for social inclusion as a result of higher education market features is observable from the following example:

Implementation of quality assurance process and audit assessment on social inclusion initiatives across the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion.

Evidence of a passive move to formalise social inclusion and minimal recognition of external values that reflects a pattern of passive adaptation for social inclusion as a result of higher education market features is observable from the following examples:

i. Marketing activities underpinned by the objective of widening participation to raise the awareness of applicants from targeted groups are recognisable through the outreach activities and open days but have not been innovatively conducted to address the specific needs of targeted applicants from equity groups.

ii. Outreach activities with students from secondary schools via students’ initiatives from a particular faculty have been casually planned and impeded by the lack of involvement of academic and faculty staff.

iii. Elements of cultural diversity from international students have been recognisable to participants but how these can be innovatively pursued to assist domestic disadvantaged students is not clearly shown.
iv. Cross-subsidisation of international students’ tuition fees to fund social inclusion-related activities has been acknowledged but has not been documented and formalised.

v. Inclusive teaching and learning policy has been formalised but the empowerment objective for a specific group of equity students has not been highlighted by the university to attract low-SES students.

It can then be concluded that a passive pattern of adaptation for social inclusion as a result of the direct effect of market competition via evidence of innovative market-driven activities and the indirect effect of the market via the intakes of international and local non-disadvantaged students is justifiable.

5.4 OVERVIEW OF CASE A2 (ELITE UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA 2)

A2 is the oldest public university in State Y. The university is also a member of the Group of Eight (GO8) universities. Total enrolments of domestic students or Commonwealth-supported places at undergraduate level as of 2011 are approximately 17,000. International students comprise approximately 6,000 across all undergraduate degree programs.
The university’s social inclusion and equity initiatives are organised within a group comprised of three main executive officers with three different portfolios of participation and engagement, academic and student services. Figure 5.2 shows that the three primary executive officers are supported by three primary offices of the deputy vice-chancellor (academic), student equity and indigenous and student services. Deans of every faculty report to the office of the deputy vice-
chancellor academic in respect of social inclusion initiatives. The university’s initiatives for equity and social inclusion for the identified equity groups or disadvantaged students are spread across the three primary officers and headed by the three primary executive officers. The arrows signify the chain of reporting responsibility for social inclusion activities that must be initiated by the deans of academic faculties and the division of student affairs. The other two divisions of engagement and research manage community outreach projects that are not directly related to initiatives for internal undergraduate students.

5.4.1 Demographics of Interviewees

Table 5.5: Profiles of Interviewees for Case A2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the university’s student equity office</td>
<td>EO1-A2</td>
<td>Monitoring the overall initiatives of social inclusion in A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the university’s deputy vice-chancellor engagement office</td>
<td>EO2-A2</td>
<td>Implement social inclusion initiatives, such as reviewing the process of undergraduate selection and the establishment of equity innovation grants for students from low-SES backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the university’s deputy vice-chancellor academic office</td>
<td>EO3-A2</td>
<td>Responding to academic-related issues of identified equity students in the university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the university’s student services office</td>
<td>EO4-A2</td>
<td>Manage factors that relate to safe learning environment for both staff and students in the university. Address issues related to student support services for identified equity students enrolled in the university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As reflected in Table 5.5, participants interviewed in case A2 were selected on the basis of the portfolios that are assigned in regard to the implementation of the university’s social inclusion initiatives.
Table 5.6: Profiles of other Interviewees for Case A2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Executive Officer at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.</td>
<td>SGOVAU3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Officer Indigenous and Equity Branch, Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Higher Education.</td>
<td>FGOVAU1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Academics in Australian Public Universities (3 interviewees)</td>
<td>AEA5, AEA6, AEA7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.6 shows the profiles of other participants within the Australian higher education sector whose views are utilised to corroborate and triangulate the data obtained from participants of case A2. Two government officers were interviewed. SGOVAU3 is a senior executive officer working at the state department of education who manages matters pertaining to policy development and implementation of education at all levels in the state. FGOVAU1 is a senior officer responsible for the development of programs related to equity and indigenous groups at the higher education division of the federal government. Three external academics (AEA5, AEA6 and AEA7) are academics working in other public universities within state Y.

5.5 THE EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The first part of the case results highlights the effect of government policy frameworks on the social inclusion initiatives of A2. It is presented on the basis of two major themes: 1. Practices and 2. Problems of Adaptation. Across these two major themes, a specific pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable.
5.5.1 Practices

Practices of social inclusion across A2 are reported on the basis of the sub-themes of policy objectives, agreement, outreach, access, and participation and completion. Policy objectives highlight the internal policy objectives that underpin the social inclusion practices of A2. Agreement describes the nature of agreement entered into by the university with the government to undertake social inclusion initiatives. The three sub-primary themes of outreach, access, and participation and completion show the specific social inclusion interventions that have been initiated by A2.

5.5.1.1 Policy Objectives

The social inclusion aims and objectives of the university are formally outlined under the university’s growing esteem strategy and a social inclusion plan. The social inclusion plan of the university is underpinned by the university four primary long-term objectives. These objectives are associated with: 1). acknowledging diversity of staff and students of the university, 2). increasing the number of staff and students from diverse social groups; 3). effective engagement in teaching; and 4). learning and contribution to research in the area of social inclusion in Australia. The tasks to achieve these objectives are undertaken collectively by the three primary executive officers, with close assistance provided by two other executive officers who assume the portfolios of deputy vice-chancellor (engagement) and deputy vice-chancellor (research). Apart from traditional identified equity groups such as the low-SES students, indigenous students, disability students, regional students and students from non-English speaking background, international students are perceived equally important for the university’s social inclusion initiatives.
The three core internal principles of justice, equity and excellence guide their aspirations for social inclusion. Other than the three key principles, the university academic activities are dictated by the core values of ethics and quality, advancing social welfare of the surrounding communities, intellectual collaboration, moral responsibilities and human rights, preserving principles of academic freedom, sustaining diversity and sustainable and safe learning and working environments, explicitly articulated by the university’s Statute 1.7. All participants agreed that some of these internal values are aligned with the values of democracy and social justice from the government policy frameworks. Nevertheless, the values infused by the policy frameworks such as social justice are viewed as a challenging factor that needs to be reconciled accordingly, especially in the area of access. One participant commented:

...academic excellence is also an important value. So here we have the fundamental challenge ... the fundamental challenge is the highest achievers in schooling are typically from advantaged social groups. So what we have to weigh up in our selection is commitment to high achievement and commitment to social inclusion. These are not easy to marry. (EO1-A2)

Human capital development and social justice are thought to be consistent with university internal values of advancing the economic welfare of the state and Australian communities in general. Most of the participants commented positively on the government’s focus to increase the numbers of high-skilled workers for global economic competitiveness. For that reason, the objective of the higher education policy reforms is viewed as a timely intervention to propel public universities towards widening higher education participation to all social groups.
One participant from the state government also recognised the importance of the social inclusion agenda at the state level. The state government perceived that the current federal government policy frameworks have a strong focus on both human capital development for workforce participation and social equity for participation in higher education. The espoused values of human capital development and social justice from the current social inclusion policies are shared and understood by the state government as a basis for increasing active participation of disadvantaged communities in socio-economic activities:

...helping them [the society] get up and into training then by getting them into employment where actually that for me is the major step into social inclusion...

(SGOVAU3)

5.5.1.2 Agreement

Two participants from the university (EO1-A2, EO4-A2) and an external academic expert argued that it is slightly difficult to undertake the role of social transformation for under achievers from disadvantaged social groups. However, the university commitment is nevertheless being propelled by the federal government’s ‘Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System’ (TAHES) policy statement and reinforced by the yearly ‘mission-based compacts’ agreement made with the federal government. The current targets on participation and attainment for identified equity groups are recognised positively by all participants. According to one participant, the current policy frameworks have in fact renewed their interest in and commitment to social inclusion:
So, this university like most universities has always had some commitment to social inclusion but this has been focused and sharpened as a result of the national policy framework. (EO1-A2)

The university commitment in the area of social equity has also been reinvigorated by the current policy frameworks. One participant also stated that the current policy frameworks are loaded with even more incentives for public universities to perform well in the area of social inclusion. The revamped objectives of social inclusion by the (then) Gillard federal government are viewed as an effective driver for elite public universities to undertake social inclusion initiatives seriously:

...I think that the elite universities have always had a commitment to social inclusion. It’s something that has always been in their policy framework. I feel that the federal policy direction since 2008 has given more force and more legitimacy to that... (EO2-A2)

5.5.1.3 Outreach

One university social inclusion strategy is built around the outreach activities coordinated by the engagement office within the university. The outreach activities to widen participation with schools and other stakeholders are funded through the equity innovation grant available from the government’s HEPP. Some of the notable outreach projects that have been successfully conducted are such the learn, experience, access professions (LEAP) program that the university is involved with, along with other public universities around the state. The LEAP program is coordinated by the state government and is funded via the HEPP. The university has also been
conducting a tutoring program two weeks during the summer for secondary students from disadvantaged backgrounds from across the state.

A student welfare outreach team (SWOT) that targets students from disadvantaged secondary schools across the state is also formalised as part of the summer school program to conduct tutoring classes for subjects from the science streams. The objective of the program is to guide this group of students in their preparation for the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) examination. Most of the participants stated that the outreach activity is a primary activity to build aspirations for higher education and it is aligned with the government’s aspirations for social justice. One participant posited that the current policy frameworks have driven the university to intensify its outreach activities with secondary schools around the state and planning is outlined in the university’s integrated social inclusion action plan known as the social inclusion barometer:

*The university is also conducting a greater number of outreach programs in schools. With the aim of bringing in kids from non-traditional backgrounds.* (EO2-A2)

The other initiative of the university’s outreach activities is to formally recognise community service projects as part of the university’s credit subjects and co-curricular activities. Most of the community service projects are formalised through partnerships with non-profit organisations. The community service projects are strongly recognised by the management of the university as part of the university’s growing esteem strategy. To realise that, the university has introduced two academic subjects which have a strong focus on community service. This type of outreach activities is thus formalised and is greatly acknowledged by academics and faculty members as part of their academic activities. Outreach activities are not only aimed to build aspirations of the
community for higher education. A participant clarified that outreach activities are common activities across all academic faculties for public engagement. This type of outreach and engagement activity is formally realised through the university’s community access program. Public and community engagement activities are sometimes informally organised by some faculties as a means to share academic knowledge with the public via public lectures and school visits.

One participant from the federal government stated that outreach activities to raise the awareness of disadvantaged communities for higher education have been one of the preferred initiatives by an elite university like A2. Even though much can be improved in terms of partnership with remote secondary schools around the state and wider partnership collaboration with other stakeholders, outreach activities have been steadily accepted as a norm within the academic culture of the university:

If I measure that by where A2 spent their money, as a proxy for how institutionalised it is, I would say that... outreach kind of activities. (FGOVAU1)

It also appears that the scope of partnership for outreach activities with the state government has been constrained by the presumably limited authority of the state government in higher education. A participant from the state government added that most of their social inclusion initiatives are focused within the vocational sector and that would have probably constrained the university’s collaborative efforts in outreach partnership with the state:

We have primary responsibility for the vocational training system but only have limited influence and responsibility for the higher education. (SGOVAU3)
5.5.1.4 Access

Increasing the diversity of the university’s student population and upholding the principle of social justice have been university aims for social inclusion in the area of access. The university’s social inclusion strategy in the area of access is also motivated by the participation and attainment targets from the federal government’s TAHES policy statement and the policy incentive of the demand-driven funding system. Two specific groups of applicants from the low-SES and indigenous backgrounds are specifically considered in the university strategic planning in the area of access.

For indigenous applicants, the strategy to increase access of indigenous Australian students is outlined under the university reconciliation action plan targets. Implementation of the admissions scheme for applicants from indigenous backgrounds is managed by the director of the indigenous unit. For applicants from low-SES backgrounds, a specific grant known as the equity innovation is in place to enable the university to identify potential students from their secondary school. Also, a specific undergraduate degree program known as new generation degrees has been formulated to increase the number of enrolment of applicants from the indigenous community and low-SES backgrounds.

A special admissions scheme into the university undergraduate programs is formalised under the university’s access program, known as ‘access A2’. Through ‘access A2’, a special minimum ATAR scores is fixed for applicants coming from groups of disadvantaged financial background and those from identified rural areas. A special entry access scheme is also available for applicants from identified under-represented schools, applicants with a disability, applicants
from non-English speaking backgrounds, applicants with difficult personal circumstances, applicants who are recognised as indigenous Australians and mature-age applicants. The ‘access A2’ program seems to have contributed to an increased number of applicants from identified under-represented schools around the state. One participant commented:

With our access A2 program; once upon a time there were many schools in the state from which we did not get applicants. Now, last year we received access A2 applications from I think almost every school in the state. (EO1-A2)

Pathways for adult learners have also been clearly articulated within the university’s access strategy for social inclusion. A special pathway program known as the non-school leaver entry pathway is made available for applicants without a recent study history. This requires a student to register for a single subject that can be selected from the list of subjects being offered across 11 academic schools. Applicants are required to satisfy some course prerequisites and undergo a special aptitude test via the university’s community access program (CAP).

For applicants from identified remote areas in Australia, a pathway program known as the regional gateways framework is organised through partnerships with Training and Further Education (TAFE) institutes around the state to facilitate transition of students into undergraduate programs. The regional gateways framework pathway program is funded by the state government’s regional partnerships facilitation fund. Facilitating transition from school to university is one of the objectives that underpins the university’s access program. The university access program has been conducted with ten under-represented schools across the state and it has both the characteristics of outreach and access initiatives for social inclusion. The access program with the ten selective schools is a three-year program that aims to build the capacity and
skills development of secondary schools’ students to undertake study at tertiary level. The three-year access program features collaboration of undergraduate students across faculties as mentors to organise skills workshop and on-campus experiences. At the end of the program, selected students will be offered a place to study at the university.

The university’s social inclusion initiatives in the area of access are also built around the provision of access and equity scholarships. For example, applicants who lodge their application to study at undergraduate level through the special entry access scheme are also entitled to be considered as potential recipients of various equity scholarships. Some of the equity scholarships are provided by non-profit organisations. Applicants from financially disadvantaged backgrounds who apply for a bachelor program in the discipline of agriculture are also entitled to be considered under the agriculture scholarships scheme provided by external organisations and philanthropic bodies in the state.

An academic expert (AE7) asserted that the university’s access strategy has been greatly motivated by two primary factors. Firstly, it is motivated by the policy participation target to achieve a certain percentage of participation of equity students. Secondly, it is also related to the university’s own aspiration to reflect diversity in the undergraduate student population.

5.5.1.5 Participation and Completion

In the area of participation, inclusive teaching and learning practices in the university are informed by a formal inclusive policy issued by the deputy vice-chancellor academic. It prescribes guidelines and strategies for designing course materials, teaching delivery and course
assessment. The aim is to support participation and academic engagement with students of diverse cultures in the university that are consistent with the aim of human capital development and diversity outlined from the TAHES policy statement. One participant commented that specific policies of inclusive teaching and learning are also aimed to maintain the success ratio of students from low-SES backgrounds, disabled students and indigenous students. The extent of resources available to ensure effective engagement of undergraduate students in the area of teaching and learning is considered important, and a university-wide strategy for inclusive engagement at undergraduate level is a generic prescription to guide other academic faculties. One participant noted:

*The university also has some other resources to support the specific equity group like the disability action plan and the indigenous education strategy. The strategies issued for inclusive teaching and learning are general guidelines for all faculties.* (EO3-A2)

Empowerment of students from identified equity groups underpins one of the university objectives for social inclusion in the area of participation. One participant (EO2-A2) believed that students from equity groups must be given ample opportunity to assimilate with the surrounding learning environments of the university. Empowerment of disabled students is realised through the provision of disability liaison officers and academic support workers. This group of students must also be made comfortable to make use of the facilities available to enhance their study experience:

*... we provide that space [feeling of inclusive] so that students could not only meet people who have similar experience themselves but so that they can feel empowered to get action on the issue that might directly affect them...* (EO2-A2)
Support services to advise on the career path of disadvantaged students are also provided by the division of student services. The support provided to advise disadvantaged students on future employment opportunities is part of the university’s new student services mode. Acquisition of graduate attributes has also been part of the aims to prepare equity students for employment. Equity students are required to attain graduate attributes via participating in extra-curricular activities which might be non-academic. Social inclusion initiatives to enable successful completion and graduation of students from identified equity groups are also considered important. A participant believed that completion rates of equity students is perceived as crucial, as well as graduate employment, which is being consistently accessed by higher education stakeholders. For that reason, completion rates of equity students is one of the primary indicators of quality for stakeholders:

We have to be proactive in our support services for this area, since employment rates of our graduates are one of the principal indicators for a world class university. It is not just to support the targeted equity groups but in general the essential skills needed by industry must be addressed... (EO4-A2)

An academic expert asserted that the university has been doing exceptionally well to retain the targeted equity students via the internal policies that they have to support the participation aspects of the related group of equity students:

The retention rates of elite universities are very high and they are high amongst all cohorts. (AEA5)
5.5.2 Problems of Adaptation

Participants from case A2 and a few academic experts interviewed have raised issues that could most hinder their on-going commitment to social inclusion. One of the problems identified is related to the difficulties of increasing the number of enrolments from identified equity groups at the undergraduate level. One participant indicated that the schooling sector must be given more focus by the government before public universities can be pushed to undertake the role of social inclusion more seriously. Acknowledgement of the inequality of education received by identified equity groups at the school level underpins the main concern of elite universities across the state:

*The fundamental core issue is that some groups do better in schooling in Australia than others. Now, one might argue that universities can’t fix all of the problems in schooling. If we’ve got underperforming schools, if we’ve got communities that are educationally disadvantaged, and we do, why is it that the university has to fix that? (EO2-A2)*

If the fundamental problems in the schooling sector can be rectified, elite universities would be in a better position to enrol more students from identified equity groups. For that matter, one participant noted, intensive efforts taken in the area of outreach activities to raise aspirations of higher education for the identified equity groups can be a waste if the fundamental issue in the schooling sector remains unchanged:

*... If the schooling sector was a completely level playing field, we would have the same representation of low-SES students as we do of other SES students... So, that is a challenge. So it’s not just all raising aspirations of low-SES students to come to university... (EO1-A2)*

An academic expert also confirmed that public universities should not solely bear the burden of undertaking the social transformation of disadvantaged students. Responsibility of social
inclusion must be coordinated through proper cooperation between the schooling sector and public universities:

…it [responsibility] lies with the school sector, and it lies with the universities working with the school sector, and it lies with addressing educational issues from primary schools all the way up. (AEA6)

In the view of another academic expert, the seemingly soft regulatory enforcement on elite universities to increase access and intakes of disadvantaged students has enabled a university like A2 to prioritise elitism based on academic skills:

I imagine there would be a great deal of negotiation at that university to government level, [that] individual university, and I can assure you that, whenever one of the elite universities is negotiating with the government, they have a lot more sway with the government than other universities. (AEA5)

Another academic expert also believed that elite universities should be required to assist the social inclusion agenda through their expertise to produce evidence-based research:

It seems that A2 and the rest of the elite universities are making a point here: we can do good research to inform the policy, even though we enrol few of these equity students. (AEA7)

Most participants also stated that the university policy responses to the government-associated social inclusion policies are underpinned by the intention to improve policy effectiveness. One (EO1-A2) stated that the government participation aims for the identified equity groups must not be limited to participation at the undergraduate level. For example, the current demand-driven funding model must be expanded to increase participation of applicants from identified equity groups at the postgraduate level.
Refining the policy mechanism for the correct measurement method of socioeconomic status of Australian youth has also been among the main priorities for some policy makers within the university. This has been through recommendations via working papers and suggestions made through on-going dialogues with the federal government of Australia. One participant (EO2-A2) commented that all the initiatives taken to enhance the effectiveness of government policy are meant to project the perception that elite universities are active contributors in the policy arena for social inclusion.

All participants from the university agreed that one of the messages the university would like to convey to the government is that effective contribution for social inclusion cannot be absolute in all areas. A particular university might have a strong focus in the area of access and managing effective transition pathway programs and some other public universities might have strong foci in the area of teaching and learning, for example. A participant commented:

*I don’t think that we are going to be the one that are necessarily leading the charge on social inclusion particularly when we are so far behind the rest of the country, with regards to low socio economic inclusion [access]... I think that we do have the possibility of being Australia’s or national leaders in regards to a lot of the other areas in social inclusion [participation and completion].* (EO3-A2)
As shown in Table 5.7, the university’s adaptation to the Australian government policy frameworks can be identified as active in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. Active adaptation is recognisable across the three areas, as the entire key elements proposed from the critical interventions framework are identifiable from the case results. Adaptation is considered active and strategic, as participants are able to recognise the three values of social justice, human capital development and diversity as the primary values that drive the government social inclusion frameworks. The external values that underpin the government policy frameworks are perceived compatible with the university’s internal values, aims and objectives of social inclusion. As a result, active internalisation of social inclusion initiatives in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion is clearly in evidence. Active adaptation is justified as a result of the competency of the university to outline the social inclusion aims and objectives in the two areas of access and participation and completion. An active move to formalise social inclusion practices and a high recognition of external values that reflects a pattern of active adaptation is observable from the following examples:
i. Formalised initiatives for social inclusion across the university have been extensively propelled by an annual agreement entered into by the university with the federal government of Australia. This agreement outlines the participation target of students from identified equity groups.

ii. The university reconciliation action plan is formally in place to address the admission and participation issues of students from indigenous backgrounds.

iii. A unit known as the institute of indigenous development is formally established to cater for the social inclusion elements of indigenous students and other social inclusion initiatives with external stakeholders.

iv. The equity innovation plan is awarded to academics within the university to organise outreach activities with identified low-SES students from secondary schools around the state.

v. A specific undergraduate degree program is made available to cater for the learning and cultural experiences of indigenous students.

vi. A special admissions scheme for applicants from identified equity groups is formally structured at the undergraduate level.

vii. A special pathway program known as the non-school leaver entry pathway facilitates admission of adult learners into the university’s undergraduate programs.

viii. A special pathway program known as the regional gateways framework facilitates transition of vocational students into the university undergraduate programs.

ix. There is provision of equity scholarships for applicants from identified equity groups. The equity scholarship scheme is funded from a variety of internal and external sources.
A formal policy issued by the academic division guides the practices of inclusive teaching and learning across the university.

In the area of participation and completion, the objective of empowerment of disadvantaged students underpins the engagement aspect of disadvantaged students.

Tutoring programs for year 11 and year 12 students from the identified disadvantaged schools is formalised under the summer school program.

Involvement in the learn, experience, access, professions (LEAP) with other public universities across the state stimulates the interest of low-SES students in higher education.

5.6 THE EFFECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION MARKET FEATURES
The second part of the case result highlights the effect of higher education market features on social inclusion initiatives of A2. It is presented on the basis of two major themes: 1. Practices and 2. Problems of Adaptation. Across these two themes, a specific pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable.

5.6.1 Practices
Practices are reported on the basis of the two sub-primary themes: competition and reputation, and quality. The sub-primary theme of competition and reputation highlights both the direct and indirect effects of market-driven activities on the practices of social inclusion. The sub-primary theme of quality depicts the direct effect of quality management practices on the practices of social inclusion.
5.6.1.1 Competition and Reputation

Innovative initiatives in the area of outreach and community engagement have been primarily associated with the element of service learning and scholarship of engagement by one participant from the university. Competition between higher education providers in Australia is not considered a major factor that guides the planning and organisation of community outreach activities within the university. One participant commented:

As a research university, community engagement must be strongly institutionalised as this is something that all universities are aware of. We are not actually competing in this area [community engagement]. (EO2-A2)

Being innovative in the area of outreach is based on the university’s third mission (public engagement) and is also aimed at enhancing the personal growth of the students themselves.

Outreach activities to increase the awareness of the disadvantaged community for higher education participation are regarded by one participant as an important social inclusion initiative. A participant commented that outreach activities are meant to address the imperative of social justice more than the intention for economic objectives:

It has been stated clearly that we believe in meritocracy and we accept anyone, regardless of their socioeconomic background. We reach out to the disadvantaged community as our commitment to social fairness and equity. This group of students might end up studying in other universities of their choice. (EO1-A2)

Increased market-driven activities to address the intakes of domestic and international students are thought by one participant (EO3-A2) to be a common feature for the elite group of universities and also other public universities in Australia. The focus on the intakes of both the
domestic and international student markets is extensively through a consistent marketing effort throughout the year. For example, active marketing activities are managed with external stakeholders to promote the brand of the university and its undergraduate degree programs to prospective local and international applicants. Intensive marketing efforts aim to increase the number of top scorer post-secondary schools applicants are also made together with the objective to increase the number of applicants from targeted disadvantaged groups. The primary objective of the marketing and public relations team is not purposely to address the intake of academically advantaged applicants but is also intended to address the intake and participation of students from equity groups. In regard to efforts to attract international students, one participant was of the opinion that diversifying the sources of income to support social inclusion initiatives in the two areas of access and participation has indirectly driven marketing activities:

*Attracting international students require us to market ourselves on the basis of our quality and prestige. Communicating our brand and reputation is one of the innovative ways to attract foreign students. At the end of the day, we’ll be in a position to make use of the revenues... to cross-subsidise, for example [for social inclusion].* (EO3-A2)

Increased focus on enrolling, retaining and engaging the brightest local and international students is thought by one participant to be the primary outcome of prestige-seeking behaviours within the elite group of universities and also competition between public universities in Australia. One participant argued that decision makers within the university decide on the intake numbers of local students based on university capacity and the uncapped student demand policy of the federal government.
From another perspective, a consistent intake of local students from advantaged academic backgrounds into university undergraduate programs does not seem to conflict with the aims of social inclusion for identified equity groups. A positive impact on participation and retention of students from equity groups can be expected when they are placed together in the same learning environment with a group of high performing students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. The peer-tutoring program is an example of how the positive contribution of high performance students can be realised to improve the engagement and retention of students from equity groups. In the area of access, a separate quota to accommodate the intake of applicants from equity groups is also available in certain undergraduate degree programs.

Competition for international students is also indirectly affecting university approaches for social inclusion. On this subject, many of the social inclusion initiatives that are being targeted for students from identified equity groups are similarly organised for international students. Some of the noticeable social inclusion initiatives are organising inclusive induction programs, peer study groups, group tutoring programs, student accommodation and provision of international scholarships. Two of the participants affirmed (EO1-A2, EO3-A2) that the social inclusion programs arranged for the two targeted groups are meant to be complementary, with a similar academic resources being utilised by the university. Also, the talents of some undergraduate home-based students have been fully utilised by the university to increase variations of its community engagement programs.

An external academic (AEA7) commented that increasing social inclusion for international students has been prioritised by a university like A2. Social inclusion activities in the area of
participation and completion for international students are becoming more pronounced, since international students are one of the main sources of revenue for public universities in Australia. As a result, there are similarities between social inclusion initiatives targeted to the two groups of international students and domestic equity students.

5.6.1.2 Quality

All respondents acknowledge the importance of quality management for social inclusion. One participant argued that social inclusion initiatives are managed within the parameters of the national regulatory framework that define a framework for standards in higher education. Internalisation of quality audits within the requirements of the regulatory frameworks for social inclusion is becoming a major focus for the university:

*The responsibilities to undertake quality assurance practices [for social inclusion] in this university are spread across the university. In all areas of social inclusion, in particular... teaching and learning, the role is headed by the quality assurance committee.* (EO3-A2)

In the area of outreach, annual reporting on progress and activities is undertaken by the pro vice-chancellor (engagement). The report is then compiled and submitted to the department of education at the federal level as part of the annual reporting requirement of the compact agreement between the university and the federal government. One of the mechanisms in the area of access is to rigorously look at the background of applicants and sort them based on the entry scheme that has already been put in place for identified equity groups. One participant agreed that the admission of students through the special entry scheme is on the basis of their
academic capabilities and the audit assessment of the entry scheme will ensure that quality standards are preserved:

In reality it is [quality audit] not a constraining factor, because we know that the students that we are bringing in from disadvantaged groups are highly talented and do very well. So they’re not bringing down the academic standards. (EO2-A2)

Periodic involvement of external auditors for audit exercises in a few areas of social inclusion is greatly anticipated, because of the primary motive to preserve the academic standard of students from equity groups. One of the participants stated that:

it [the quality agency] wants universities to demonstrate that they’re enrolling students who are able to succeed and that they have the support and the teaching systems that enable those students to succeed. (EO1-A2)

Furthermore, all respondents agreed that responses via quality audit cycles from the external parties are necessary to ensure that ongoing social inclusion practices are managed and implemented within the desirable standards of quality. One participant argued:

I think their [external auditors’] focus is more on the quality of provision of higher education, quality of teaching, quality of services, quality of resources. (EO1-A2)

In the area of participation and completion, internal quality audit on the aspects of inclusive teaching and learning is conducted periodically across all faculties within the university. One of the pertinent aspects that has been continuously emphasised by the internal quality team is the area of cultural inclusive teaching and assessment materials. On the subject of social inclusion, the faculty of arts has been one of the most audited faculties for inclusive teaching and learning because it hosts the largest cohort of targeted equity students.
Two academic experts (AEA5, AEA6) posited that quality management for social inclusion has been increasingly accepted as a tool to align the university’s aspiration of academic excellence and social inclusion. One added:

*Definitely having a strong policy on quality assurance for the university’s teaching and learning will help the university to maintain their excellence retention rates at the undergraduate levels.* (AEA6)

Another realised that the benefit of quality as a value has been fully acknowledged by elite universities as a guiding principle for social inclusion:

*You cannot understand social inclusion without also understanding the imperative of quality, internationalisation... without also understanding how the resources are distributed.* (AEA5)

5.6.2 Problems of Adaptation

Adaptation to market practices for the purpose of social inclusion is nevertheless deemed not feasible as a result of a few specific factors identified by participants of case A2. A participant from the university acknowledged that integration of social inclusion practices and quality must be understood by related divisions across the university. Much of the confusion is associated with understanding of the concept of social inclusion as only related to accessibility of students from targeted equity groups. A thorough understanding of the relationship between social inclusion and quality has not been fully captured as a result of the lack of understanding among the academic staff.
Another identifiable problem is related to the marketing activities aimed at potential applicants from targeted equity groups. One participant (EO1-A2) argued that the approach taken so far can be further improved through having a more direct approach to build aspirations and capacity of equity students for higher education. The current marketing strategy seems to be utilising a competitive marketing approach reflected through the dissemination of information about programs and others during the university open days’ events. Also, according to the same participant, only a small part of the HEPP funding has been utilised to fund marketing activities for social inclusion.

5.6.3 Emerging Pattern of Adaptation

Table 5.8: Impact of Higher Education Market Features on A2 Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to the Higher Education Market Features (Competition and Reputation)</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to the Higher Education Market Features (Quality)</th>
<th>Problems of Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>1. Mismatch between the overall concept of social inclusion and quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>2. Marketing approach for social inclusion has not been fully acknowledged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5.8, the university pattern of adaptation to higher education market features for social inclusion has been primarily mixed and passive in relation to quality management and innovative market-driven activities, respectively. Evidence gathered from interviews with both participants from the university, government officers and other academic experts suggest that quality has been reasonably perceived to be positively associated to each of the three areas of
social inclusion (i.e., outreach, access, and participation and completion). Quality as a guiding principle for social inclusion is justified by the level of awareness that the participants have of the relationship between quality and the three areas of social inclusion. The awareness of participants is related to the audit requirements of the regulatory body on widening participation and social inclusion activities. Participants are also aware that periodically involvement of external auditors is needed to preserve the quality elements of the university’s social inclusion practices. However, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the level of awareness exhibited by the participants has been translated into an integrated quality assurance policy that connects the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and engagement. Therefore, a mixed pattern of adaptation for social inclusion as a result of quality assurance practices is justifiable on the basis of the available evidence from interviews and related documents.

Nevertheless, evidence indicates that competition and reputation are moderately perceived to be positively associated in each of the three areas of social inclusion. In the area of outreach, awareness of the need to utilise the appropriate marketing approach to attract applicants from targeted equity groups is not strongly reflected from the interviews. As a result, the scope of outreach activities of the university to increase the awareness of the disadvantaged community has been framed within the identical marketing objective to attract all social groups of potential applicants. The potential contribution of academically talented students to assist the university’s community engagement is not well-highlighted by participants. In the area of access, most awareness is related to the indirect and positive impact of competition on social inclusion via the enrolment of international students. This is associated with cross-subsidisation of funds to support the activities of social inclusion. Furthermore, social inclusion initiatives for
international students are also co-related to the same initiatives for targeted equity students. In the area of participation and completion, awareness of participants is related to the quota attached for the intake of equity students and the few academic support programs that can be assisted by academically talented students. However, all these initiatives have not been recognised and strategically formalised by the office of participation and engagement. Therefore, a passive pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is observed as a result of the direct effect of competition and the indirect effect through the intakes of international and local non-disadvantaged students.

5.7 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the case results of the two Australian elite universities showing the pattern of adaptation for social inclusion in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. The evidence of adaptation is also presented based on other social inclusion-related official documents supplied by the participants or otherwise publicly available from the respective universities’ websites.

Based on the pattern of adaptation of A1 and A2 on government policy frameworks and higher education market features, a similarity in social inclusion approaches can be recognised across the two cases. It is also commonly pronounced across the two cases that government policy frameworks have been very influential, whereas higher education market features have not had an effect to any substantial extent.

Chapter 6 presents and analyses the results of the two Malaysian cases.
CHAPTER 6 PRESENTATION OF DATA: CASE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
(MALAYSIA)

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents within-case results and analysis of two elite universities (M1 and M2) from Malaysia. The primary objective is to reveal the pattern of social inclusion adaptation of two Malaysian elite universities to the two constructs, government policy frameworks and higher education market features. The results and analysis of the two sample cases are structured around sub-propositions P1.2 and P2.2. Sections 6.1 to 6.3 present the results of M1; Sections 6.4 to 6.6 present the results of M2. Section 6.7 provides a brief summary of the overall case results.

6.1 OVERVIEW OF CASE M1 (ELITE UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA 1)

M1 is one of the primary public universities in Malaysia. Established in 1969, the university has a total enrolment of approximately 20,000 students at undergraduate level across its 17 academic schools on its main campus. M1 was first officially recognised as a research-intensive university in 2007. The related social inclusion initiatives of M1 are not formally organised across a specific department with specific portfolios. However, the three primary and interrelated divisions associated with the works of social inclusion are the division of academic and international affairs, division of student affairs and development, and division of community and industry linkages (see Figure 6.1).
Figure 6.1 shows that the three primary divisions are supported by a small number of subdivisions associated with activities of social inclusion. These subdivisions work closely with the three elected deputy vice-chancellors and other academic faculties. The division of academic and international affairs is responsible for social inclusion initiatives in the area of access and participation. The division of student affairs and development deals primarily with participation, engagement and completion. The division of industry and community networks is entrusted with the responsibility to conduct pre-access and other outreach initiatives. The arrows signify the chain of reporting responsibility for social inclusion activities that must be initiated from the third cluster of management up to the vice-chancellor.
6.1.1 Demographic of Interviewees

Table 6.1: Profiles of Interviewees for Case M1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the office of deputy vice-chancellor (academic &amp; international affairs)</td>
<td>EO1-M1</td>
<td>Implementing policy in relation to selection process and post-access initiatives for social inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the office of deputy vice-chancellor (industry &amp; community networks)</td>
<td>EO2-M1</td>
<td>Implementing policy in relation to external social inclusion initiatives with the communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the office of deputy vice-chancellor (student affairs &amp; development)</td>
<td>EO3-M1</td>
<td>Implementing policy and monitoring the overall implementation of social inclusion initiatives in the area of student supports, engagement and completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Academic School 1</td>
<td>EO4-M1</td>
<td>Implementing social inclusion-related activities at the faculty level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Academic School 2</td>
<td>EO5-M1</td>
<td>Implementing social inclusion-related activities at the faculty level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 shows the selection of participants for case M1 and their corresponding responsibilities in regard to the associated elements of social inclusion.

Table 6.2: Profiles of other Interviewees for Case M1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the Ministry of Higher Education</td>
<td>FGOV-M1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the Ministry of Higher Education</td>
<td>FGOV-M2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the Malaysian Qualifications Agency</td>
<td>FGOV-M3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Academics in Malaysian Public Universities</td>
<td>AEM1, AEM2 &amp; AEM3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 shows the profiles of other participants across the Malaysian higher education sector whose views are utilised to corroborate the data obtained from participants in case A1. Three government officers were interviewed. FGOV-M1 served as a high-ranking officer at the Ministry of Higher Education entrusted to assist the minister on the overall implementation of higher education policies in Malaysian accredited universities. FGOV-M2 is an executive officer reporting to the two ministers on matters pertaining to higher education policy implementation.
FGOV-M3 is a high-ranking officer from the government’s regulatory agency with primary responsibility to monitor and evaluate reports and manage institutional audits on Malaysian higher education institutions. Finally, AEM1, AEM2 and AEM3 are academics working in other public universities across the country.

6.2 THE EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The first part of the case results highlights the effect of government policy frameworks on the social inclusion initiatives of M1. It is presented on the basis of two major themes: 1. Practices and 2. Problems of Adaptation. Across these two major themes, a specific pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable.

6.2.1 Practices

Practices of social inclusion across M1 are reported on the basis of the sub-themes of policy objectives, outreach, access, and participation and completion. Policy objectives highlight the internal policy objectives that underpin the social inclusion practices of M1. The three sub-primary themes of outreach, access, and participation and completion depict the specific social inclusion interventions that have been initiated by M1.

6.2.1.1 Policy Objectives

All participants agreed that the university’s internal academic values are one of the pertinent aspects that guide their social inclusion objectives. Nevertheless, external values from the Malaysian National Higher Education Strategic Plan (MNHESP) 2007 and the New Economic Model (NEM) 2010 are taken seriously by participants as far as their objective of social
inclusion is concerned. One participant added that, even though social inclusion is not part of a clearly defined national agenda, elements of it are reflected in the policy frameworks (MNHESP and NEM). All participants agreed that values from both the policy frameworks and the university’s mission and vision statement informed their aspirations for social inclusion. One participant commented that such aspirations must be framed within the specific context of Malaysia and must not reflect from practice of other developed countries. Also, all values must be understood and acknowledged within the context of a developing country like Malaysia:

*People thought it [M1] was going to be another Harvard in Malaysia, and Oxford in Malaysia... It should be Harvard, Oxford, or Cambridge, but in the context of developing countries. So the model [social inclusion] that was perceived to be successful in the West may not necessarily work within the developing countries. That’s where I think the value [local interpretation of social justice] comes in... (EO4-M1)*

Two participants acknowledged that the elitist nature of the university must also be reflected and conceptualised within the context of a developing country. As a result, the university’s model of social inclusion has been explicitly framed from the developing countries’ concept of ‘bottom billions’. The concept of ‘bottom billions’ signifies a commitment of social justice to enhance socio-economic activities of the society. In this respect, one of the university’s aims for social inclusion is to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of poorer communities in the state. Another respondent added that the concept of ‘bottom billions’ reflects the commitment of the university to be inclusive of both participants in higher education (i.e., students) and other non-academic stakeholders. For example, inclusivity is also meant to help society via high-impact research:
We talked about transforming higher education: in fact, if you look at our statements, you’ll see the words ‘bottom billions being used’… So even if we do engineering things, we should also like, find ways of bringing water to the poor; those who don’t have water, for example. (EO1-M1)

All participants agreed that the concept of ‘bottom billions’ applies to the overall objective for social inclusion. One respondent commented that the concept within the university must be understood as integration between the activities of research, teaching and community engagement:

*The university has focused on the bottom building... targeting those people who are at a disadvantage, so in doing research... in terms of the admission.... So, I think we are quite holistic in that manner.* (EO1-M1)

One respondent, on the other hand, believed that the university initiatives for social inclusion are guided and shaped by the particular elements of ‘democracy’, ‘human capital development’ and ‘lifelong learning’ from the two policy frameworks of MNHESP and NEM:

*The national higher education strategic plan [MNHESP] consists of seven primary thrusts. I think M1 has a strong focus, especially on all of the thrust outlined from the policy, for example, lifelong learning, equity and so on. Also the two values of democracy and human capital development from the NEM are also substantial to our objective [social inclusion].* (EO1-M1)

The external values of social justice, democracy, human capital development and lifelong learning are four interrelated values associated with the wider national agenda to realise the nation’s development goals. A participant from the government commented that higher
education is a proper medium for developing human capital and it is highly regarded in the context of a developing country like Malaysia:

We need graduates with positive character... [who are] able to think creatively and can critically engage... Universities are in a position to supply this type of trained manpower. (FGOV-M1)

6.2.1.2 Outreach

One participant stated that outreach community engagement initiatives are guided by the social justice and human capital development objectives of the NEM and MNHESP policy frameworks. For example, community engagement is related to the critical agenda project (CAP) outlined from the Knowledge Transfer Project policy statement, which forms part of the MNHESP policy framework. The university’s objective and aim of outreach community engagement activities are formalised by a strategic action plan that has two primary objectives. First, it is a platform to train students for moral capacity development and inculcating them with appropriate soft skills. Second, it is designed to empower the surrounding community and enable its members to participate actively in socioeconomic activities. The university’s outreach community engagement activities for social inclusion are intended to empower two groups of participants at the same time. As one respondent commented, it is not primarily for the benefit of the surrounding community; rather, these activities are also aimed at enhancing the social capital networks of undergraduate students:

When we transfer knowledge to them [the community] and teach them to solve problems, we bring our students with us. So my students are trained. They do
internships there, they help solve the problem. So we train our students to go to the society... (EO2-M1)

Activities arranged to raise aspirations for higher education among disadvantaged communities around the region are managed and coordinated within the university’s action plan of community engagement. Most of the outreach activities that aim to widen participation in higher education are also managed separately by the academic faculties across the university. As far as the outreach community engagement activities are concerned, a special evaluation scheme has been formalised across the university to encourage a greater involvement of academic staff in such activities. For example, the university has a key intangible performance (KIP) evaluation that goes against the norms of other public universities in Malaysia. Academics are becoming more attached with community works because they know that the outcomes can be fairly evaluated in the university’s staff performance indicators.

All academic experts believed that outreach initiatives of the university have been coordinated in accordance with the third stream activity of engaging with the community for knowledge production. In this respect, most of the initiatives are not to raise the aspirations to higher education among rural and isolated schools but are reflected through increased community partnership activities with external non-academic stakeholders. This type of community service projects is meant to utilise the insights and experience of a particular targeted community for knowledge production.
6.2.1.3 Access

All respondents suggested that the university access initiative to enroll academically disadvantaged students has not been formally recognised within the university’s social inclusion initiatives. One participant mentioned that the MNHESP does not actually propel the university to implement innovative admission practices for post-secondary schools applications. The selection process of post-secondary school applicants at the undergraduate level, which is purely based on academic grades, is constraining the university from being fairly innovative in its access initiatives:

*Again, in line with the national aspiration of the Ministry of Education... We have to go [selection of undergraduates] on merit. I say it should be merit, unless you have special entrance to the system by different ways, like a disadvantaged group.* (EO1-M1)

The initiative to address the admission of academically disadvantaged students from under-represented groups is at the discretion of faculties and therefore *ad hoc* across the university. Admission policy and pathway programs for disadvantaged students have not being standardised across all faculties. The quota necessary to accommodate students from disadvantaged backgrounds is dependent on the consideration of each academic faculty. One respondent commented that no specific formal guideline is in place to address the admission of applicants from academically disadvantaged groups:

*We don't have a clear policy so to speak like... this is our policy statement. I think what we have been doing, because [of] the nature of our field and discipline, we just do it without a guided statement. But we do it informally or like an ad hoc thing. I think it is our nature to help the people, so, whenever there is a case, we will accept them [disadvantaged students]*. (EO5-M1)
All respondents also acknowledged that the MNHESP does not define targeted equity or disadvantaged groups for participation in higher education. As a result, identification and definition of disadvantaged students are based on each academic faculty’s interpretations. In the absence of a specific policy guideline, initiatives taken by the university to define its own groups of disadvantaged or under-represented students in the area of access are on a case-by-case basis:

*Government does not have a specific interpretation of who is to be included in the group of disadvantaged students. Take for example, Indian students... We consider them as a very disadvantaged, they have the minimum [academic grades], they can come in if that what is meant by inclusivity. That’s what M1 has been doing and it has become not a written policy but part of our strategy to get the disadvantaged group.* (EO1-M1)

A formalised effort for social inclusion in the area of access is nevertheless pronounced through admission of applicants with prior working experience into some diploma, sub-bachelor and undergraduate degree programs. One respondent confirmed that the thrust of lifelong learning and human capital development from the MNHESP is driving the university’s alternative pathway programs for adult learners:

*We are also having special entrance schemes for those with prior and sufficient working experience. The requirements for entry are very much lower than normal.* (EO1-M1)

Financial aid to assist the enrolment of disadvantaged students is provided through two channels: firstly, through the national education loan scheme managed by the government, and, secondly, through the provision of ‘zakat’, managed by M1’s division of student affairs. One participant commented that the university has limited provision for internal funding to assist disadvantaged students and it is considered by all faculties on a case-by-case basis:
Funding to assist financially disadvantaged students is not commonly available. What we have been doing is to consider all applications and forward these applications to the bursary [office] for their consideration. (EO5-M1)

The pathway programs for adult learners into all academic programs are managed by the division of academic and international affairs and the school of distance education. There are three specific pathways programs available to applicants with sufficient prior working experience. The first pathway program is known as the second channel of undergraduate intake, which is available for all undergraduate programs. The second pathway program is a scheme for undergraduate study in the field of social science and it is made available for applicants who are working in the government sector. The third pathway program provides special admission to cater for those with considerable working experience in the field of art and those with strong experience in sport. One respondent commented that the pathway programs have also been part of their social inclusion initiatives:

I believe that our initiative to encourage applicants from the three groups [adult learners, art and sports applicants] is actually part of our social inclusion practices.

With the autonomy we are having, this is what we have been doing. (EO1-M1)

Most of the academic experts believed that access initiatives of the university are not substantially innovative in addressing different pathway and transition programs that deal with a wider scope of targeted applicants. One of the reasons is that the university is still attached to the broader socio-political belief of the current ruling government. Efforts to increase participation of certain groups of applicants must be understood against the background of a sensitive socio-political environment. Also, two academic experts argued that, as a designated research university, a focus to enroll disadvantaged groups of students from a particular ethnic group has
not been one of the immediate strategic priorities, since this has been comprehensively assumed by more ethnic-based public universities.

6.2.1.4 Participation and Completion

The participation and engagement of undergraduate students across the university are managed and coordinated by the two divisions of academic and international affairs and student affairs. The division of academic and international affairs handles matters related to policy and guidelines for inclusive teaching and learning across all academic programs within the university. The division of student affairs addresses matters related to student support services, programs to enhance socioeconomic skills and development of soft skills and character building among undergraduate students. The task of implementing and coordinating programs to support the objective of inclusive teaching and learning is assumed by the university's centre of academic excellence and student advisory and development (CDAE). The objective of inclusive teaching and learning across the university is reflected through the focus on lifelong learning and student centered learning (SCL). One participant stated that the focuses on the two elements of lifelong learning and SCL are aligned with the MNHESP policy objectives.

An inclusive engagement action plan is formalised in the area of students’ support by the division of student affairs. For example, the action plan addresses the residential facility for undergraduate students which must be considered based on the capacity that can be offered. In that respect, the university will not allow students to be accommodated externally and a policy is issued to make it compulsory for all students to apply for an internal residential hostel place.
One of the other objectives related to human capital development is to produce holistic graduates. The division of student affairs has a consistent program to address this and works closely with all academic faculties. The two aspects of leadership and communication skills are addressed by the university as part of academic initiatives to prepare students for jobs, as a respondent commented:

*The two aspects [communication and leadership] are very important for social inclusion. We can’t just take them in and let them alone to acquire the skills. We have a consistent program to address the needs and skills required by the industry.* (E03-M1)

The action plan for students’ development has been issued by the division of student affairs. Some of the engagement initiatives for undergraduate students are coordinated through collaboration made between the student affairs division and the academic faculties. As noted by one respondent:

*Every semester we’ll have a joint program between the faculty and the student affairs division... what we call as a holistic student development program. It is deemed as a preparation program for those who are about to graduate. It helps them [students] to acquire the skills necessary for employment.* (EO5-M1)

One respondent also highlighted that a support initiative is also important to address the participation aspects of disabled students. For example, efforts by the university to allocate a one-stop centre for disabled students are considered innovative, though it is a common initiative in other public universities in Malaysia. A formalised action plan to address the employability of undergraduates is coordinated by the division of students’ affairs. Programs to enhance employability of undergraduate students are jointly managed by the federal government economic planning division.
Two academic experts argued that participation and engagement of undergraduate students are broadly similar across all public universities in Malaysia. Specific programs for social inclusion have only been narrowly focused on the group of disabled students and little has been done to empower other groups of disadvantaged students. One academic expert commented:

*I don’t actually notice any initiative taken by the university to empower students coming from the polytechnic and technical institutes.* (AEM3)

Therefore, social inclusion practices in the area of participation and completion for the group of disadvantaged students are framed within a generic objective to empower students from all social groups.

6.2.2 Problems of Adaptation

One participant acknowledged that the main problem in assuming an effective role for social inclusion is the lack of an available pool of candidates whom they will be able to identify as disadvantaged and under-represented. Furthermore, the university is not offering sub-bachelor degree programs to post-secondary school applicants and that constrains their contribution to enroll under-represented students:

*We don’t actually get involved with SPM [Secondary School Academic Certificate] level candidates... So our pool is already smaller... So if they are so poor that they can’t even go to school, we have already miss them out. Also, those who are poor who only manage until SPM also, we don’t even have that ‘pool’ to look at, at the moment.* (EO1-M1)

Two participants recognised that assuming the task of transformative higher education is not easy. One of the constraining factors for social inclusion is the expected cost involved in
engaging with academically disadvantaged students. One respondent elaborated that it is a huge challenge for the university to engage effectively with academically disadvantaged students and substantial resources might be needed to overcome entrenched disadvantage through proper student learning experience:

You must be aware there are special challenges when you bring in students from that group [academically unprepared] with a different background. They have challenges in terms of grappling with English as a medium of instruction. You have to give them more support. (EO4-M1)

Uncertainty and lack of understanding of social inclusion as a concept are also regarded by one participant as barriers to effective practices in Malaysian public universities. Initiatives for social inclusion in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion can be considered as something very new to the university. One of the reasons is that, even though the university was established in 1969, social inclusion aims were only considered recently as a result of the newly acquired status of research university. One respondent commented that the idea of social inclusion is still very new and it is not well understood across the university:

I think this idea of transforming the group of disadvantaged students as a segment of the population has just been mooted out by our administration very recently... We need more time to be innovative in the sense of targeting this group of student [disadvantaged students]. (EO4-M1)
6.2.3 Emerging Pattern of Adaptation

Table 6.3: Impact of the Government Policy Frameworks on M1 Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to the Government Policy Frameworks</th>
<th>Problems of Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>1. Lack of candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>3. Lack of understanding of the concept of social inclusion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 6.3, university M1 adaptation to Malaysian government policy frameworks for social inclusion can be identified as mixed in the area of participation and completion, and passive in the areas of outreach and access. In outreach, a pattern of passive adaptation is recognisable on the basis of the activities organised by the university to raise aspirations for higher education among disadvantaged and rural-based schools across the country. Evidence from both participants interviewed and related documents suggests that the university has limited scope for outreach activities with schools to widen participation but an extensive set of ad hoc community engagement projects that have been coordinated by the division of industry and community network within the university. Strategic adaptation for social inclusion in the area of outreach is also recognisable, as the participants from the university are able to identify and relate the two values of social justice and human capital development embedded from the NEM policy frameworks. Passive adaptation in the area of outreach is also corroborated by the lack of formalised and coordinated efforts to engage with the schooling sector for widening participation. A formalised action plan that outlines the university strategy to engage students...
from disadvantaged schools is also not in evidence from the available documents. Nevertheless, a formalised effort to encourage active involvement of academics in community engagement projects is identifiable via the use of KIP as a mechanism of evaluation.

Evidence indicates that the university’s pattern of adaptation for social inclusion in the area of access is passive. Strategic adaptation is identifiable from the participants’ recognition of ‘lifelong learning’ as a guiding principle from the policy frameworks. The value of ‘lifelong learning’ is reflected through the formalised pathway programs to address the participation of adult learners in a few designated undergraduate degree programs across the university. A structured mode of study such as distance learning for undergraduate programs is also made available for adult learners and those who are in employment. Pathway programs are designed to cater for participation of adult learners. Based on the number of pathway programs that the university has in place, passive adaptation is noticeable as a result of the limited scope of targeted applicants.

Furthermore, a formalised action plan to assist intakes of academically disadvantaged students or non-traditional students is not available. The provision of scholarships or financial aid to identified disadvantaged students is limited and to a certain extent can be competitive and require students to apply individually. The education loan scheme provided by the government has not been specifically designed to cater for the needs of disadvantaged students and is available to all applicants, irrespective of their financial backgrounds. Considering the pathway programs offered and financial support scheme for disadvantaged students, the university adaptation for social inclusion in the area of access is passive and strategic.
In the area of participation and completion, a mixed pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable from the evidence. Strategic adaptation in this area is guided by external values (human capital development, democracy and lifelong learning) from the policy frameworks. A pattern of mixed adaptation is recognisable as a result of the formalised action plan for students’ engagement coordinated by the two divisions of academic and international affairs and student affairs. Nevertheless, there is no strong evidence to suggest that a specific engagement program has been constructively designed to empower the learning experience of identified disadvantaged students. The overall objective of student participation and engagement has been comprehensively intended to address the empowerment of all undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds without any specific acknowledgement or strategy to address students from specific disadvantaged backgrounds. Evidence from participants also suggests that factors such as cost to retain disadvantaged students and lack of understanding of the concept of social inclusion in higher education justify the pattern of mixed adaptation in the area of participation and completion.

6.3 THE EFFECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION MARKET FEATURES
The second part of the case result highlights the effect of higher education market features on social inclusion initiatives of M1. This is presented on the basis of two major themes: 1. Practices and 2. Problems of Adaptation. Across these two themes, a specific pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable.
6.3.1 Practices

Practices are reported on the basis of the two sub-primary themes of competition and reputation, and quality. The sub-primary theme of competition and reputation highlights both the direct and indirect effects of market-driven activities on the practices of social inclusion. The sub-primary theme of quality depicts the direct effect of quality management practices on the practices of social inclusion.

6.3.1.1 Competition and Reputation

One respondent argued that, for a primary research university in the country, competition and reputation would need to be properly addressed in the context of Malaysian higher education. Even though a focus on the international student market has been regarded as a major feature of the MNHESP policy framework, its prospect for income generation is not strongly perceived by all Malaysian public universities. The higher education market rationales of competition and reputation in the international student market are perceived differently by the university, as a participant commented:

*Internationalisation will enrich diversity. The problem is, people define internationalisation too narrowly. To them, it’s just getting international students in and the prospect to generate revenues.* (EO4-M1)

Another respondent stated that the government rationale for internationalisation is underpinned by commercialisation, prestige and cultural imperatives. Intake of international students, nevertheless, must be construed from a cultural perspective for goodwill and diversity. A participant believed that intake of international students must be prioritised by M1 in accordance with the benefit gained from multicultural citizenship:
Because they [the government] treat internationalisation in higher education as a commodity that is tradeable. To some extent, yes. But more importantly, the goodwill..., the philosophy of higher education that talks about nation-building, building a citizen of different values, has this different perspective. (EO1-M1)

The objective to achieve diversity is embedded within the university’s strategic plan for international students. International students are supposed to be able to enrich the learning experience of local students. Another participant assumed that meaningful contribution of international students can be achieved through collaboration with the community to address the socio-economic problems of disadvantaged communities. The talents of international students have been utilised for outreach projects which are mutually beneficial for both sides (i.e., the university and international students):

In our field, the more international students involved in the community network, the more things [community engagement] we can do, and they [international students] also learn from us on how we deal with disadvantaged communities. (EO5-M1)

Community outreach activities have been coordinated and jointly organised by the divisions of industry and community networks. One participant argued that active involvement of undergraduate students in some of the innovative community outreach projects is primarily intended to empower and enhance their social capital networks and at the same time to prepare them with sufficient soft skills. Undergraduate students are a valuable resource that the university has to assist the university in social inclusion activities via outreach projects:

Outreach projects will benefit both the students and the community. As I said earlier, this is a training provided for social inclusion. (EO2-M1)
All participants agreed that innovative marketing programs to attract international students, and numerous other exhibitions organised to attract the attention of local applicants, are primarily planned and organized without specific consideration given to the intake of an identified under-represented group of applicants from secondary schools. However, there have been specific efforts during marketing road shows across the country to offer information on some of the university’s specific pathway access programs for the group of adult applicants.

In relation to the elements of competition and reputation, which are reflected through the intake of academically talented domestic students, all respondents agreed that the objective of academic elitism is achievable through greater participation of academically talented students. However, internal initiatives to increase the number of intakes of academically advantaged students are not constraining the university’s effort to assist intakes of applicants from financially and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. One respondent stated, for example, there are different schemes of financial assistance available for students from both groups. Another respondent added that engaging students from commonly represented groups would have to be made together with other students from less represented groups:

*I don’t see they [different groups of students] are competing and Indian students, for example, who might be coming from less well-known secondary schools, are learning from their peers coming from the more reputable secondary schools.* (EO5-M1)

Achieving a balanced ethnic composition among the undergraduate student population is also considered an important factor. For that reason, the intake of high achiever students from secondary schools does not seem to have a negative impact on the intake and engagement of students from under-represented groups. Moreover, innovative market-driven initiatives, such as
designing course content and curricula, are not related to factors such as sensitivity and demands of local students and none has been undertaken to suit the academic preferences of disadvantaged students.

In the area of participation and completion for social inclusion, a program known as e-mentoring has been both managed and coordinated by the school of distance education to facilitate the learning experience of adult learners via the distance learning programs. A mentoring program to assist the learning experience of academically disadvantaged students has also been a prominent feature in all other faculties across the university.

Two academic experts interviewed believed that the influence of market competition has not been substantial in dictating the direction of the university’s social inclusion practices. One commented:

*University M1 has not been competitive commercially-wise in regards to social inclusion.*

*If they [M1] are doing it [social inclusion], it is driven probably by other factors but not because of the market.* (AEM1)

In regard to innovative market-driven initiatives for social inclusion, one academic expert also claimed that many of the university innovative activities are noticeable in the area of community engagement. However, none of the activities to raise aspirations for higher education with disadvantaged and under-represented communities are innovative and ground-breaking. An academic expert therefore added:

*Outreach activity to raise aspirations for higher education has been a typical meaningless initiative by the university [M1]. I don’t expect a long-term meaningful*
effect as the outcome of this type of activity [raising aspirations for higher education] (AEM3).

On the subject of market competition as a result of acquiring international students and academically talented home-based students and the indirect effect to social inclusion, two academic experts professed that participation of students from all backgrounds is becoming important for the purpose of student diversity and academic prestige. For that reason, participation of international students and academically talented students is a common feature in a university like M1. However, the indirect negative effect on the engagement and accessibility of students from under-represented groups is not foreseeable, since there is quota on the intake of international students. Also, one academic expert asserted that the principle of meritocracy determines the intake of students, regardless of their social background:

_Everyone stands a chance if he or she is academically prepared... It is not because of competition and also because of prestige. M1 stands by the principle of meritocracy. Market competition does not constrain the university initiatives, if any, to address the intake of students coming from under-represented backgrounds._ (AEM1)

6.3.1.2 Quality

One participant stated that the university’s outreach community engagement projects, for example, are guided by the university’s signature concept of ‘bottom billions’ and sustainable higher education. For that reason, initiatives to engage external auditors and other stakeholders, such as with the Asia Pacific University Community Engagement Network (APUCEN), are highly regarded for preserving the quality of their outreach projects:
We are being audited on the type of programs that we have with the community and the industry, and this involves each of the clusters within the division. So it is kind of like we just don’t talk of quality just for the sake of academic excellence, but we associate quality with our outreach programs. (EO3-M1)

A specific academic program such as distance education for adult learners is also subjected to a heavy internal and external quality control mechanism. In the area of access for adult learners, intensive external reviewers and assessors are involved to review the content and intake mechanisms of distance learning programs and full-time undergraduate programs that are offered under the special intake schemes for a specified group of adult applicants.

Nevertheless, there is no specific quality assessment by external auditors to look into matters that address inclusion of specific groups of under-represented students. Therefore, a participant believed that the workload involved to meet the regulatory requirements for quality is in place, irrespective of the nature of students being selected:

_The regulatory body is just ensuring the program is of quality level. It does not trickle down to individual level, to students’ level… As the institution, we have to prepare the documents. This doesn't involve the students. I don’t think the students are affected in one way or another. With or without the disadvantaged groups, we’d still have to do it._

(EO4-M1)

The Malaysian Quality Framework (MQF) has impelled the university to implement its own university quality council that will then coordinate matters related to quality management. The quality academic program committee which is attached to the university’s division of academic and international affairs works closely with representatives of each individual school within the
A participant from the division of academic and international affairs commented that the university quality centre has a rigorous internal audit assessment of all student-centred learning (SCL-) related activities via the use of a Self Review Report (SRR). The task of auditing matters related to inclusive teaching and learning practices is headed by a Quality Academic Program Committee. SRR is conducted by all internal auditors attached to each of the schools and faculties within the university. A specific academic program such as distance education for adult learners is also subject to a heavy internal quality control mechanism. The other two participants from the divisions of student affairs and community networks also confirmed that internal auditors from the unit of central internal audit are involved in the assessment of quality of programs related to social inclusion, such as student development programs.

A participant from the government quality agency asserted that the imperative of quality across the university’s social inclusion initiatives has not been explicitly addressed by the university in the self-review portfolio submitted:

*These [social inclusion practices] are some of the areas that the university has included in their submission [self-review portfolio]. However there is no specific indication that the assessment and report are made for the purpose of social inclusion.* (FGOV-M3)

Accordingly, areas related to access and participation and completion are mostly highlighted by the university in the self-review portfolio. Also, activities and initiatives of community
engagement are a common feature highlighted throughout the report. Nevertheless, a specific assessment on outreach activities with schools for the purpose of widening participation has not been commonly highlighted in the self-review portfolio.

6.3.2 Problems of Adaptation

Adaptation to market practices for the purpose of social inclusion is nevertheless deemed not feasible as a result of a few specific factors identified by participants of case M1. One participant asserted that the innovative initiatives to address outreach widening participation aims, intakes and retention of disadvantaged and under-represented students are not prominent across the university because of the institutionalised belief among the academics within the university that social inclusion and innovation are not interrelated. The culture of innovation is much more prevalent in relation to community outreach projects and research capabilities among academics. One academic expert also concurred that the culture of innovation for social inclusion in Malaysian higher education is still not widely accepted as a norm within the academic culture. For that reason, the government would have to take the lead to inculcate the element of innovation in activities related to social inclusion.

As far as quality is concerned, social inclusion is implicitly associated with quality, but awareness of it has only been mooted by the external regulatory agency and more work is needed to achieve the desirable level of quality for the purpose of social inclusion. A participant from the government also commented that awareness of the concept of social inclusion and quality itself in Malaysia is very vague and not well understood. For that reason, the bureaucrats from the ministry would have to be informed about the concept of social inclusion itself as a practice
in some developed countries. As of today, it has been narrowly understood and public universities are also not properly guided as a result.

6.3.3 Emerging Pattern of Adaptation

**Table 6.4: Impact of Higher Education Market Features on M1 Adaptation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to the Higher Education Market Features (Competition and Reputation)</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to the Higher Education Market Features (Quality)</th>
<th>Problems of Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>2. Lack of awareness at both meso and macro levels on the link between social inclusion and quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 6.4, the university pattern of adaptation to higher education market features for social inclusion has been primarily mixed and passive in relation to quality management and innovative market-driven activities. Evidence from the interviews with participants suggests that the value of quality has been reasonably associated with the two areas of access and participation and completion. As a result, internal and external collaboration of quality audits and assessments are prominent in the two above-mentioned areas of social inclusion. However, the extent of evidence can only support a pattern of passive adaptation for social inclusion in the area of outreach. In this regard, quality management has not been specifically focused on the outcomes and assessment of outreach activities aimed at widening participation among disadvantaged applicants from secondary schools. However, assessment and the self-review report have been comprehensively conducted on community engagement activities. Even though the scope of
quality practices involved in the two areas of access and participation and completion is extensive, the focus on quality aspects of disadvantaged student learning cycles is missing. Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that the three areas of social inclusion are integrated for the purpose of quality audits. Therefore, based on the extent of activities involved and the level of awareness of the participants, adaptation for social inclusion as a result of the practices of quality assessment and audit can only be considered as mixed.

Competition and reputation are minimally perceived to be positively associated to each of the three areas of social inclusion (outreach, access, and participation and completion). Whilst competition and reputation are supposed to have driven the competitive and innovative behaviour for social inclusion, these elements have not been recognised by the participants. As a result, innovative market-driven activities for social inclusion are only recognisable from community engagement projects, not from the outreach activities conducted to raise aspirations for higher education among disadvantaged schools and students. Innovative behaviour to empower the disadvantaged students’ learning experiences is also very limited in its scope of practices.

In respect to the indirect effect of competition on social inclusion practices, the intake of international students is construed in accordance with the imperative of diversity, but how this can be utilised to empower the learning experiences of disadvantaged students has not been clearly articulated by M1. Consideration of quotas for disadvantaged students for the purpose of diversity is also not clearly highlighted in the strategic planning of the university. Therefore, a passive pattern of adaptation for social inclusion as a result of the direct effect of competition
through innovative market-driven activities and the indirect effect through the intake of international and local non-disadvantaged students is justifiable on the basis of the available evidence.

6.4 OVERVIEW OF CASE M2 (ELITE UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA 2)

M2 is one of the oldest public universities in Malaysia. The establishment of M2 was purposely made to enable more professional Malays to develop the nation towards gaining independence status in 1957. To date, M2 is one of the five specific designated research universities in Malaysia. As of 2014, local student enrolment across all undergraduate programs stands at nearly 9,000 and approximately 800 students are also enrolled from a total of 52 countries.
The related social inclusion initiatives of M2 are not formally organised around a specialised unit or division. The informal task of undertaking roles related to social inclusion at the undergraduate level is structured informally across three primary divisions. Social inclusion tasks are collectively undertaken and headed by the deputy vice-chancellor (academic), deputy vice-chancellor (student affairs) and deputy vice-chancellor (research and innovation). Figure 6.2 shows that each of the three main divisions of academic and international affairs, student affairs, and research and innovation is assisted by their corresponding division of the centre of continuing education, the division of student empowerment and the division of community and industry relations. The deans of all academic faculties are also indirectly involved in matters related to the university’s social inclusion planning.
The deputy vice-chancellor (academic), with the help of the director from the centre of continuing education, look into matters related to initiatives to enrol specific targeted groups of adult learners. Also, some initiatives address participation of undergraduate students for social inclusion with the help of all deans. The deputy vice-chancellor (student affairs) and the division of student empowerment are both working to address matters related to student services and implementation of soft skills programs for undergraduates. The deputy vice-chancellor (research and innovation) and the division of community relations take responsibility for managing activities related to community engagement and transformation. The arrows indicate the chain of reporting responsibility for social inclusion activities that must be initiated from the third cluster of management up to the vice-chancellor.

6.4.1 Demographic of Interviewees

**Table 6.5: Profiles of Interviewees for Case M2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Key Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the office of deputy vice chancellor (academic &amp; international affairs)</td>
<td>EO1-M2</td>
<td>Managing the academic and entry requirement policies for the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the office of deputy vice chancellor (student affairs)</td>
<td>EO2-M2</td>
<td>Monitoring and implementing policies in relation to student support and student activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive officer at the office of deputy vice chancellor (Research &amp; Innovation)</td>
<td>EO3-M2</td>
<td>Implementing policy and monitoring the overall implementation of social inclusion initiatives in the area of community engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Academic School 1</td>
<td>EO4-M2</td>
<td>Implementing social inclusion-related activities at faculty level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Academic School 2</td>
<td>EO5-M2</td>
<td>Implementing social inclusion-related activities at faculty level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5 shows the selection of participants for case M2 and their corresponding responsibilities in regard to social inclusion.
Table 6.6: Profiles of other Interviewees for Case M2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Officer at the Ministry of Higher Education</td>
<td>FGOV-M2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Officer at the Malaysian Qualifications Agency</td>
<td>FGOV-M3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Academics in Malaysian Public Universities</td>
<td>AEM4, AEM5 &amp; AEM6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.6 shows the profiles of other participants within the Malaysian higher education sector whose views are utilised in this research to corroborate the data obtained from participants in case M2. Two government officers were interviewed. FGOV-M2 is an executive officer reporting to the two ministers on matters pertaining to higher education policy implementation. FGOV-M3 is a high-ranking officer from the government’s regulatory agency with primary responsibility to monitor and evaluate reports and manage institutional audits on Malaysian higher education institutions. Finally, AEM4, AEM5 and AEM6 are academics working in other public universities across the country.

6.5 THE EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The first part of the case results highlights the effect of government policy frameworks on the social inclusion initiatives of M2. It is presented on the basis of two major themes: 1. Practices and 2. Problems of Adaptation. Across these two major themes, a specific pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable.

6.5.1 Practices

Practices of social inclusion across M2 are reported on the basis of the sub-themes of policy objectives, outreach, access and, participation and completion. Policy objectives highlight the internal policy objectives that underpin the social inclusion practices of M2. The three sub-
primary themes of outreach, access, and participation and completion depict the specific social inclusion interventions that have been initiated by M2.

6.5.1.1 Policy Objectives

The core values of the university are considered by all participants as pertinent factors that shape their social inclusion objectives. The ten internal core values are listed within the mission and vision of the university and participants viewed some of those as substantially related to the university’s objective of social inclusion. For example, the university’s internal values of meritocracy and social responsibility primarily dictate their understanding and direction for social inclusion. The external values associated with the Malaysian National Higher Education Strategic Plan (MNHESP) and Malaysian New Economic Model (NEM) 2010 are also presumed by all participants as guiding the university’s long-term strategic planning for social inclusion. One participant confirmed that the MNHESP and NEM are influential for M2, as the two outline some of the core thrusts for the university’s strategic planning and their implicit scope of social inclusion:

_The strategic plan [Malaysian National Higher Education Strategic plan 2020] outlines seven main thrusts. I think four of those [access and equity, lifelong learning, research and innovation, quality of teaching and learning] are related to our objectives for social inclusion._ (EO3-M2)

Even in the absence of a specific government policy target for social inclusion for equity groups of students, one participant stated that the four thrusts of access and equity, lifelong learning, research and innovation and quality of teaching and learning define the university’s aims for social inclusion. In general, university strategic planning is in alignment with the government’s
broad aspiration for social inclusion. For example, the value of democracy from the MNHESP policy framework is preserved by observing the university’s internal value of meritocracy:

*It is about being fair to everyone [meritocracy]. The university accepts anyone as long as they are qualified. As one of the primary public universities in the country, the value of excellence must always be highlighted and preserved across all our academic activities.* (EO1-M2)

One participant also stated that the objective of human capital development through the provision of distance learning for certain group of students (adult learners) is one of the social inclusion focuses that can be identified from the MNHESP policy framework. In that respect, some of the university’s social inclusion initiatives in the two areas of access and participation are closely related to the objective of human capital development. Another participant also recognised the element of social justice from the NEM policy framework as one of the drivers of the university social inclusion practices in the area of community outreach. Recognition of social justice as an important element from the NEM policy framework will have to be reflected by public university via active outreach engagement with the community.

A government officer confirmed that the university social inclusion initiatives are broadly based on the Malaysian government policy frameworks:

*As a public university, M2 follows very closely to the government agenda of social fairness as reflected from the government policy frameworks.* (FGOV-M2)
6.5.1.2 Outreach

The university’s internalisation of community outreach activities is both propelled by the overarching government policy framework on community engagement and its own aspiration to utilise their academic resources as part of its on-going social inclusion initiatives. For example, one of the primary factors that pushes the university in the area of outreach comes from the government’s knowledge transfer program (KTP) policy, issued in 2011. The KTP has required all public universities to set up their own university community transformation centre (UCTC). For that reason, all community outreach programs are centrally coordinated by the university’s community and sustainability centre.

The imperative of KTP necessitates the university making use of both of their intellectual resources and physical infrastructure for outreach activities. The outreach activity to raise aspirations for higher education among financial and academically disadvantaged community members has been one of the initiatives for social inclusion and it has also been recognised in the university’s official outreach policy. Outreach initiatives to raise aspirations of the disadvantaged community for higher education have been conducted either via the university’s community and sustainability center or through collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Also, one participant commented that community outreach activities such as community services are frequently organised and conducted by units within the students’ affair division:

I think every year the university can easily reach like 50 programs where we will go out to remote areas. Now we have even started another unit here at student affairs known as the non-residence unit. For this unit, we will do activities with people outside the campus. (EO2-M2)
One of the objectives of the centre is to empower the community to undertake socio-economic activities. A participant acknowledged that this community outreach initiative is propelled by the Malaysian NEM policy objective:

*The NEM has a focus for inclusiveness and to empower and equip the disadvantaged community with skills to undertake basic socio-economic activities.* (EO5-M2)

The NEM policy outlines a generic target to facilitate the socio-economic activities of the bottom 40% lowest income groups and is closely associated with the development of societal entrepreneurial skills. Therefore all participants agreed that initiatives to conduct community outreach activities are aligned with the government’s macro policy target to elevate and improve the socio-economic activities of the identified bottom 40% lowest income earners.

Community outreach initiatives by some faculties are formally coordinated through the provision of academic credit for certain subjects. Academic staff are also being asked to conduct community engagement projects and they are encouraged to document the outcomes through research publications for academic promotion. Another element of the university’s community engagement projects is by doing community service works. This element of community work is not associated with formal academic curriculum and is regarded by the university as a project that will benefit both their communities and their students.

A participant from the government stated that most of the initiatives of the university have been primarily focused on organising activities with the community living near the main campus:

*They are driven by the government’s knowledge transfer program and it is more like an engagement program with the non-academic communities.* (FGOV-M2)
One academic expert, however, asserted that the outreach activities of M2 have not been commonly associated with the task of raising aspirations of the community for higher education. The university has been active in community outreach projects to assist the targeted disadvantaged community in socio-economic activities. Most of the activities to increase the awareness and aspiration for higher education with the targeted disadvantaged schools have not been intensively planned and highlighted in the university’s outreach policy.

6.5.1.3 Access

The university’s social inclusion strategy in the area of access has been primarily formalised for adult learners. A formalised pathway for mature aged applicants is managed by the university’s centre of continuing education unit. Applicants with previous work experience are entitled to apply for sub-bachelor programs, such as executive diplomas or other professional development programs. A participant stated that the objective of social inclusion for the group of adult learners is aligned with the aspiration of government for lifelong learning, as outlined in both the NEM and MNHESP. Another participant commented that the focus on adult learners under the NEM is primarily related to the government objective for human capital development.

Social inclusion initiatives in the area of access are also available through the provision of scholarships for applicants from disadvantaged financial backgrounds. Scholarship schemes are offered to students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, for example, the ‘Hajar Zainuddin’ scheme, which is available for students undertaking courses such as engineering and economics at the undergraduate level. One participant stated that efforts have been made by the
university to ensure consistent and continuous provision of scholarships through collaboration with external parties:

We do have many avenues to obtain scholarships, and many of them are funded by our internal funds, including our bright spark program, and all these scholarships from various companies... (EO3-M2)

In regard to academically disadvantaged and disabled students, one participant admitted that the university does not have a formal policy in place to address a special admissions scheme. Decisions to provide places for students such as those with a disability and the academically disadvantaged are primarily on an *ad hoc* basis across all faculties. On this subject, the decision to enroll students from disadvantaged backgrounds lacks a specific policy framework:

*We don’t really have a special policy, but I believe we should. No such things here like having a certain percentage target for the enrolment of disadvantaged students* (EO3-M2).

All three academic experts interviewed shared a similar view of the university’s access strategy for widening participation. In most cases, the university focus on access for the purpose of social inclusion has been primarily concentrated with the group of adult learners and little or no initiative has been taken to address the participation of other disadvantaged applicants. One academic expert, for example, asserted:

*M2 doesn’t have the same aspiration like a university such as M3, so they probably don’t have a specific pathway program to address people coming from the really marginalized group of the society.* (AEM6)
6.5.1.4 Participation and Completion

Participants from the university stated that the objective of inclusive teaching and learning has been embedded within the university’s teaching and learning policy. The objective of inclusive teaching and learning of the university is informed by the human capital development and lifelong learning values from the MNHESP and NEM policy frameworks. One participant also commented that the implementation of outcome-based education (OBE) curricula and the use of a student-centred learning approach across the university are aligned with the objective of inclusive teaching and learning. The student-centred learning approach has the aim to empower students throughout their learning experiences and has been an important component of higher education policy in Malaysian public universities.

Another participant, however, confirmed that the university social inclusion initiatives for student engagement at the undergraduate level have not been specifically aimed against a specific group of students. In most cases, the engagement activities for students at the undergraduate level are meant to address the participation of all groups of students without a specific objective for a particular group of disadvantaged students. The objective of empowerment underpins most of the programs managed and coordinated by the division of student empowerment and research unit. The objective of empowerment is reflected through programs to build graduate attributes and the character of students and also as pre-employment preparation. Empowerment activities include a peer-coaching program, workshops to develop interpersonal skills and initiatives to develop the soft skills of students. As preparation for jobs, industry engagement programs through the efforts of the community and sustainability centre are utilised as a foundation to expose students to further working experiences. One participant stated:
Without sufficient exposure to the industry, they [the students] will have no direction after their graduation. For me, it is very important, especially for first year students, to get them linked with the industry. (EO2-M2)

A participant noted that the objective of empowerment for students’ engagement is aligned with the government’s objective of human capital development from the Malaysian NEM policy. However, most of the participants stated that the coordination efforts by the division of student affairs for social inclusion within the university have not been formally and widely recognised as part of the overall social inclusion aims and objective of the university. In this respect, one participant indicated that the lack of recognition on the efforts made by the division of student affairs for social inclusion in the area of participation and completion is attributed to the fact that it has not been properly articulated by the government in related policy frameworks.

Another common social inclusion initiative in the area of participation is the provision of comprehensive inclusive policy and empowerment programs for disabled students. The inclusive policy for disabled students includes four primary elements of disabled student management, building accessibility and environment, learning and support and career preparation. Matters pertaining to the needs of disabled students are handled by the counselling career & disability section within the division of student affairs. A participant commented that the university has been trying to accommodate the needs of the disabled students via the provisions of physical facilities, such as accessible lecture halls and residential colleges within the university. This is also confirmed by one participant from the government:

Among all public universities… the university [M2] has the best facilities for the disabled students. (FGOV-M2)
All academic experts believed that the participation and completion initiatives for social inclusion within the university at undergraduate level have been generic and formalised to include all students, without attention to specific groups of students. However, detailed attention has been given to the participation aspects of disabled students through physical facilities and formalised learning support programs.

6.5.2 Problems of Adaptation

All respondents felt that there were two main issues that might have constrained their objectives of social inclusion at the undergraduate level. The first issue related to the scope of autonomy given for student selection. One participant argued that autonomy given by the government to M2 is not absolute and only applicable to certain identified operational areas. Therefore, having no autonomy for selection of students at the undergraduate level potentially constrains the university’s social inclusion initiative in the area of access and the possibility to be innovative via special provision of admission schemes. One participant commented that it is important for the university to be given the freedom to develop alternative selection processes for social inclusion:

*It is very difficult to discriminate the really good students from the rest of them. And the grades only tell part of the story. This is the less elitist approach of M2. We should have a selection process to determine this, but the centralized system only goes through grades. There is no other approach [selection for social inclusion]. There is no interview, nothing.* (EO3-M2)

The second issue is related to the structure of higher education providers in Malaysia itself, which prohibits total implementation of social inclusion by the designated public research
universities. A participant stated that the stratification of Malaysian public universities is based on the government’s expectations and evaluations of the best possible contribution of each and every public university. Different clusters of public universities have their own distinctive contribution to the country. The government of Malaysia does not expect a university like M2 to increase its undergraduate intakes, whereas other groups of universities are already in a position to do that. On that account, the nature of public university stratification is explicitly pronounced and outlined in the government higher education policy strategy. The nature of differentiation within the public higher education sector in Malaysia has forced M2 to focus on other areas which might not match the objective of social inclusion at the undergraduate level. One participant noted:

*If you look at the way research universities are structured, they are meant to be elitist. We were told [by the Ministry] to increase the postgraduate programs and the postgraduate students that we have and limit the amount of undergraduate students. You cannot do both [elite and inclusive] at the same time, since you’ll be constrained by your resources if you are trying to do both, like taking in large numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students.* (EO3-M2)

Likewise, academic experts believed that, as a research-intensive university, the responsibility to widen participation in higher education should not be placed upon a university like M2. In this case, the diversity of Malaysian higher education should enable different niche areas to be pursued by different public universities. In the case of social inclusion, other comprehensive universities are in a position to effectively assume the role.
6.5.3 Emerging Pattern of Adaptation

Table 6.7: Impact of the Government Policy Frameworks on M2 Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to the Government Policy Frameworks</th>
<th>Problems of Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>4. Limited scope of autonomy for student selection at the undergraduate levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 6.7, the university’s adaptation to the Malaysian government policy frameworks is mixed in the area of participation and completion, and passive in the two areas of outreach and access. The evidence shows that the university has not been intensively involved in community outreach programs to address the aspirations and empowerment of young disadvantaged people from the schooling sector. However, the results show that the external values from the policy frameworks (social justice, human capital development, lifelong learning) have been recognised by the participants within the university. Community outreach projects have been strategically managed and guided by the principles and values from the policy frameworks. The limited scope of outreach programs to raise participation and aspirations for higher education is noticeable, but active involvement in community outreach activities for knowledge dissemination are prominent. On the basis of less formalised social inclusion practices, the university’s limited scope of outreach activities for widening participation and recognition of external values, it can be inferred that a pattern of passive adaptation to the government policy frameworks is recognisable.
In the area of access, the university’s pattern of adaptation for social inclusion can be classified as passive. Other than the limitation imposed on student selection, the scope of pathway programs within the university’s access strategy is limited. Nevertheless, the pattern of adaptation is considered strategic, because the external value of democracy has influenced the university’s internal value of meritocracy. Evidence from the interviews also suggests that most of the university’s access initiatives have been conducted in accordance with the government aspiration for lifelong learning. This is pronounced through the objective to increase participation of applicants who might want to further their studies whilst having full-time jobs. It is also evidenced in the provision of scholarships to financially disadvantaged students. Therefore, on the basis of limited pathway programs for widening participation and other initiatives in the area of access, a pattern of passive adaptation is recognisable.

A pattern of mixed adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable in the area of participation and completion. It is evidenced through a formalised set of activities organised and planned to address the engagement aspects of undergraduate students. Disabled students are the primary target for social inclusion at the undergraduate level. A set of inclusive policies for the group of disabled students is available and formalised via the division of student affairs. Nevertheless, an active level of adaptation cannot be justified from the results, as coordinated efforts by the two divisions of academic and international affairs and student affairs for a wider scope of engagement activities are not recognisable. The strategic element of the adaptation in the area of participation and completion is identifiable as a result of the empowerment objective that underpins the objective of social inclusion. The strategic nature of university adaptation in the area of participation and completion is also evidenced as a result of positive recognition of the
external values of human capital development and lifelong learning from both the MNHESP and NEM policy frameworks. Overall, a pattern of mixed adaptation is justifiable, since the empowerment initiative has been primarily generic across all groups of students and the targeted group of social inclusion in the area of participation and completion has only been explicitly formalised for a particular group of disabled students.

6.6 THE EFFECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION MARKET FEATURES

The second part of the case result highlights the effect of higher education market features on social inclusion initiatives of M2. It is presented on the basis of two major themes: 1. Practices and 2. Problems of Adaptation. Across these two themes, a specific pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable.

6.6.1 Practices

Practices are reported on the basis of the two sub-primary themes of competition and reputation, and quality. The sub-primary theme of competition and reputation highlights both the direct and indirect effects of market-driven activities on the practices of social inclusion. The sub-primary theme of quality depicts the direct effect of quality management practices on the practices of social inclusion.

6.6.1.1 Competition and Reputation

One participant argued that activities to address the intakes of both home-based and international students have been organised via events such as open days and other engagement projects undertaken by academic faculties. Marketing initiatives have been undertaken by distributing
brochures and information handbooks via various media. Efforts to attract international students are considered primarily to align with the MNHESP policy statement to be the hub of higher education within the region of South East Asian. However, all the participants agreed that initiatives to address the intakes of domestic and international students are not related to market competition between public universities in Malaysia. Also, one participant asserted that market-driven activities in the area of outreach have not been primarily intended to increase the participation of students from disadvantaged groups, with the exception of intakes of adult learners. A participant confirmed the marketing strategies are intended to support the internationalisation agenda of the government:

*Efforts made [attracting international students] are actually based on the aspiration coming from the government. They would like to see the increase in the number of international students.* (EO1-M2)

The two elements of competition and reputation, however, are not perceived by all participants as among the important factors that could have propelled the university to increase the intake of international students. For example, fulfilling the national agenda of internationalisation is regarded as a collective responsibility of all public universities in Malaysia. Much of effort by the university to fulfill the government agenda of internationalisation is based on the idea of enriching diversity among students and academic staff. The enrolment of international students has been positively regarded as a catalyst to enrich the experience of local students:

*It is the government policy again that we should have at least 5% of the international students. It is okay to have them so that our local students can learn from them, but we want only good international students.* (EO2-M2)
Moreover, the intensive focus on attracting international students does not appear to be primarily considered on the basis of financial viability or to gain a consistent stream of income from international student fees. A consistent flow of income from the international student market is very minimal in Malaysian public universities, where a quota is attached to the number of enrolments at undergraduate level. Decision making on the intakes of undergraduate students is also based on capacity of resources that the university has in place. However, another participant posited that the university is not in a position to decide on the ideal composition of students because intakes are centralised and handled by the Ministry. Therefore, innovative marketing activities to address the intake of students from non-traditional groups cannot be fully realised at university level.

In the area of participation and completion, the involvement of non-disadvantaged and international students to assist the learning experience of academically disadvantaged groups has been informally planned through peer mentoring study groups. Even though the mechanism of peer mentoring differs between faculties, the primary objective of this program is to secure the involvement of academically capable students as a mentor for other students. One respondent from the university affirmed that ongoing support for disadvantaged students in the area of participation has been occasionally supported by the group of academically talented students on a continuous basis. However, the peer mentoring study group is not something that is unique in the context of Malaysian public universities:

*I’ve also noticed a similar initiative going on in other universities. Nothing special about it [peer mentoring groups]. We thought that it might be useful and will be a common practice in all faculties.* (EO5-M2)
Two academic experts believed that the university’s initiatives for social inclusion in the area of outreach are not guided by domestic market competition and reputational factors. One commented:

*I don’t feel that some of the minor activities that the university has established with rural based schools are meant to address market competition. It is more like an effort that they volunteer for their social responsibility.* (AEM6)

In the areas of access and participation, two academic experts asserted that competition to enrol the highest academically capable students have only indirectly help academically disadvantaged students to participate effectively in their studies. In regard to international students, one expert expressed a benefit derived from cultural integration:

We all know that the university is not competing for international students on a commercial basis. What we know is that participation of international students is very useful for our students. It [participation of international students] helps our students to become tolerant and appreciative of other ethnic groups. (AEM5)

6.6.1.2 Quality

Academic practices across the university are primarily governed by the university quality manual. The university’s quality assurance management unit (QAMU) is responsible for undertaking periodical audit assessment of academic-related activities across all academic faculties. The internal quality assessment program committees at each of the faculties across the university undertake perform self-appraisal tasks that include collection and analysis of data related to the faculties’ academic programs for quality improvement. Internal quality auditors are
involved in the periodic assessment of community outreach programs organised by the university’s community and sustainability centre. One participant commented:

*the community engagement includes research and teaching components. These two components are being assessed in terms of the outcomes and effectiveness.* (EO3-M2)

Intensive involvement of internal auditors across the university is also related to the autonomy given to the university in the area of teaching and learning. The internal audit teams at each of the faculties will perform audit assessments related to items such as curricula design, learning outcomes, student selection and support services, and academic program review. The quality assurance of those activities is guided by a formal quality procedure issued by the internal committee. The intake of mature aged applicants into sub-bachelor degree programs and the quality of programs offered are also subject to internal audit assessment. One participant stated that some of the university quality assurance initiatives may indirectly enhance the quality of their inclusive learning and teaching initiatives and the students’ support services:

*They [internal audit teams] are also looking thoroughly at all aspects of the OBE [outcome-based education] curricula and areas such as students’ support services, which I think might be good for the disabled students* (EO2-M2).

External involvement in quality management is also formalised through the involvement of external auditors. As far as the university’s policy for inclusive teaching and learning is concerned, the appointment of external parties is meant to verify and validate the outcomes of the university’s internal audit assessments. External auditors appointed are academics serving across other public universities. A participant stated that external quality reviewers are able to provide guidance for the university to implement their own inclusive teaching and learning that suit their academic objectives. Also, further external quality audits conducted on their teaching
and learning activities will help to improve the outcomes of their learning activities and activities associated with graduation. The involvement of external auditors is also intended to preserve the quality of their community outreach programs for social inclusion. Another area of focus for the external auditors is the intake of adult students into the university’s sub-bachelor degree programs.

One government officer stated that the university’s social inclusion initiatives and its quality practices are actually aligned indirectly, as a result of the regulatory and periodic assessment reviews undertaken by the university’s quality assurance management unit (QAMU). The government officer further commented:

\[
\text{the indirect impact of the quality assessment practices on M2 is mostly noticeable in the area of participation. Also, the quality awareness is most likely driven by the government’s strategic objectives in higher education rather than the market element of quality. (FGOV-M3)}
\]

6.6.2 Problems of Adaptation

Adaptation to market practices for the purpose of social inclusion is nevertheless deemed not feasible as a result of a few specific factors identified by participants of case M2. Higher education market features have not been fully realised within the context of social inclusion practices at the undergraduate level. Firstly, a participant from the university stated that it is difficult to embed the culture of quality within the specific area of community outreach program. In this regard, the manner of quality evaluation of the outcomes from the community outreach
programs is unclear. The current evaluation mechanism used by the internal quality team to quantify the outcomes of programs is problematic, as noted by one participant:

*We don’t actually have an evaluation system that can be used by the auditors to accurately gauge the effectiveness of our community engagement programs. Currently, it is assessed based on the level of satisfaction of the participants, but how do they [auditors] know that it has actually benefited the targeted groups?* (EO3-M2)

A participant from the government commented that, as with other public universities, the overall alignment of quality to social inclusion practices has not been well-integrated within the university internal quality framework. Most of the focus is on the standard of teaching and learning and more thinking is needed to integrate social inclusion.

6.6.3 Emerging Pattern of Adaptation

**Table 6.8: Impact of Higher Education Market Features on M2 Adaptation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to the Higher Education Market Features (Competition and Reputation)</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to the Higher Education Market Features (Quality)</th>
<th>Problems of Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table 6.8, the university pattern of adaptation to higher education market features for social inclusion can be classified as passive in relation to quality management and innovative market-driven activities. A pattern of mixed adaptation for social inclusion is
recognisable in the area of participation and completion for the purpose of quality. A pattern of mixed adaptation is justified as a result of the moderate moves to formalise social inclusion within the context of quality assurance. The pattern of mixed adaptation is also partly confirmed by the perspective of the government officer interviewed. A pattern of mixed adaptation is also justified as a result of the involvement of external auditors in the quality audit process across the area of participation and completion. However, active adaptation cannot be inferred, because the three areas of social inclusion are not comprehensively integrated with the overall university quality framework. Also, a pattern of active adaptation is not recognisable, since the objective of quality for social inclusion is not particularly focused on a specific disadvantaged group of students. Overall, the value of quality from the higher education market features has been poorly described by participants from the university and had little impact in participation and completion initiatives. In the areas of outreach and access, quality has only been marginally aligned with the objective of social inclusion.

The evidence suggests that the logic of the market has only been passively adapted by the university for social inclusion, as there are a few market-driven social inclusion innovative activities. Most of the participants realised that the values of market competition and reputation that underpin the intakes and engagement of non-disadvantaged home-based and international students are not primarily meant for financial purposes. In other words, a financial objective does not propel the university to compete for international students; the primary driver of the international student intake is related to increasing the diversity of the student population. However, there is insufficient evidence to show that the reinterpretation of market logic has been reflected through a formalised action plan to address the inclusion of disadvantaged students.
across the university. The participants’ awareness of the imperative of innovation for social inclusion in the three areas is profoundly limited and there are few innovative market-driven practices.

6.7 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings of two Malaysian elite universities. Based on the analysis, a similar pattern of adaptation is observed in the two cases. The influence of the government policy frameworks is very prominent, whereas the influence of the higher education market features is less substantial in dictating the social inclusion practices of the Malaysian elite universities. On the basis of the case results presented in Chapters 5 and 6, Chapter 7 will present the cross-case and cross-country analysis.
CHAPTER 7 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

7.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the cross-case and cross-country analysis of the four elite universities studied. The objective of this chapter is to uncover similarities and differences across the four cases on the pattern of social inclusion adaptation and accordingly form the rationales to answer the primary research questions of the thesis. This chapter is structured based on the primary constructs identified from the conceptual framework in Chapter 3. Section 7.1 presents the cross-case analysis of the A1 and A2 cases from Australia. Sections 7.2 presents the cross-case analysis of cases M1 and M2 from Malaysia. Section 7.3 provides cross-country comparisons. Section 7.4 concludes with an overview of the findings.

7.1 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS (AUSTRALIA)

The following section synthesises the results from cases A1 and A2. Similarities and differences between cases are also corroborated by cross-validation with other sources of data such as interviews with academic experts attached to other selected Australian public universities.
Table 7.1: Impact of the Government Policy Frameworks on A1 & A2 Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation From Case A1</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation From Case A2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Active Adaptation</td>
<td>Active Adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Active Adaptation</td>
<td>Active Adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Active Adaptation</td>
<td>Active Adaptation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Problems of Adaptation              | 1. Sustainability of government funding for social inclusion.  
2. Lack of integration in practices as a result of internal culture.  
3. Lack of clarity on the concept of social inclusion itself. | 1. Active involvement of the schooling sector needed.  
2. Soft regulatory enforcement. |

7.1.1.1 Similarities Across Cases

Evidence across both Australian cases suggests that there are great similarities in the adaptation behaviour to government policy frameworks for social inclusion in all three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion (Table 7.1.). It is also perceptible across cases that a similar set of external values has been commonly recognised by participants to be relevant to the related policy frameworks of social inclusion in Australian higher education. For example, the external values of social justice, human capital development and diversity are commonly perceived by participants across the two cases as the overarching external values attached to social inclusion activities. Also prominent in both cases were the strategic motives underpinning the active capacity to adapt. These strategic motives were driven by the inclination to align the universities’ set of internal values with the external values of the government policy frameworks. In both cases, ‘academic elitism’ is the primary internal value that guides their social inclusion aims and objectives.
One academic expert believed that human capital development is primarily linked with the Australian government objectives of social inclusion in higher education. The rationale of human capital development is explained by the perceived importance of the knowledge-based economy and widening participation in higher education.

Evidence from both cases shows that active adaptation to government policy frameworks for social inclusion is triggered by policy incentives of the federal government via the provision of funding. The active proliferation of social inclusion initiatives in the area of participation and completion in both cases is directly related to the financial incentives of the HEPP funding provided by the federal government of Australia. Most of the academic experts interviewed supported the analysis that participation and partnership components of the HEPP scheme are the primary drivers to propel the two cases towards social inclusion.

Evidence from both cases suggests that active adaptation to the government higher education policy frameworks for social inclusion is justified through incentives to support the inclusion of learners from all groups in the universities’ academic programs. Social inclusion initiatives in both cases extend beyond the already identified targeted equity groups in the policy frameworks. Additional initiatives of social inclusion are also undertaken in both cases to address the participation of mature learners. A pattern of active adaptation in both cases is also noticeable from the integration of social inclusion aims across outreach, access, and participation and completion. In both, the integration of the three areas is clearly evidenced via formal action plans and strategic planning with the divisions entrusted with the implementation of social inclusion initiatives.
Initiatives to support the aim of social inclusion in both cases are also similar. In the area of access, a special admissions scheme for the targeted equity group of applicants is noticeable in both cases. Specific pathway programs to address admission of applicants from the group of mature adults and non-school leavers are evident in both cases. In the area of participation and completion, a specific policy for inclusive teaching and learning is formally in place in both cases. Both cases also have a variation of specific equity scholarship schemes to address the financial needs of students from identified under-represented groups. A specific division that handles the engagement and participation of indigenous students is also recognisable across the two cases.

The pattern of adaptation to government policy frameworks in both cases is characterised as active and defensive. Results of both cases interestingly indicate that both universities have been defensive and active, with policy recommendations via responses in policy dialogues and dissemination of research papers on issues related to widening participation and social inclusion. The primary motivation underpinning defensive behaviours of the two cases is on protecting their current approaches to social inclusion practices. Both cases assume that their current social inclusion practices are effective in the area of participation and engagement of targeted equity students. The other motivation that drives defensive behaviours of both cases is their intention to take a differentiated role in social inclusion. In both cases, the participants agree that each university should be able to assume an effective role in social inclusion based on their niche and capabilities. In that respect, undertaking an active role to conduct research in the area of social inclusion is regarded as a positive contribution that can be made.
7.1.1.2 Differences Across Cases

A noticeable difference in outreach approaches for social inclusion between the two cases is related to the nature of partnership engagement undertaken and the support given by the state government. From the case results, A1 seems to assume a comprehensive role through engagement with other public universities across the state. The outreach approach by A2 to raise aspiration of higher education with under-represented schools has, however, been mostly a stand-alone effort. However, active coordination for outreach projects by the state governments is recognisable in both the two cases. One academic expert commented that the slightly different approaches to outreach projects in both cases is related to the networks of equity practitioners within all public universities across the two states. The approach to formalise community engagement projects is also slightly different between the two Australian cases. For A2, initiatives are taken to recognise community service activities within the university’s two academic subjects, whilst this feature is not evident from case A1.

Results of the two cases also reveal that social inclusion initiatives can be constrained by some identified problems. Participants across the two cases perceived different constraining factors that are substantial for effective adaptation of social inclusion practices. Participants from A1 cited uncertainty of funding, clarity of the government social inclusion agenda and conflict of internal values as major concerns. Participants from A2 perceived that a proactive role needs to be undertaken by the schooling sector to complement the role currently being assumed by the higher education sector, and, in addition, soft regulatory enforcement by the government does not help to effectively push the elite group of universities. These constraining factors are perceived by academic experts as either a justification to cautiously adapt to the government
aims and objectives of social inclusion in higher education or to preserve the culture of academic elitism. These constraining factors are also affirmed by almost all academic experts interviewed as a set of factors that explain the lower than national average participation rate of under-represented groups in the two cases.

7.1.1.3 Evidence from Document Analysis

Institutions’ strategic plans and any sub-plans or strategic documents related to social inclusion are also analysed to corroborate the evidence obtained from the interviews conducted. The Commonwealth Compact Agreement, which are publicly available, are utilised as the primary documents to unearth the similarities between A1 and A2. The Commonwealth Compact Agreement (CCA) signifies the initiatives of all Australian public universities on social inclusion. Evidence from the above mentioned documents suggest that the primary goals of A1 and A2 for social inclusion are to increase the access of applicants from the low-SES group and those from indigenous backgrounds. For example, CCA of A1 reads: ‘A1 is committed to improving access and outcomes in undergraduate education for people from low socio-economic and indigenous backgrounds. A1’s capacity to respond to the challenges was strengthened in 2010 with the establishment of the office of prospective students, scholarships and student equity and the adoption of a number of recommendations that will underpin the important work of A1’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit’.

Furthermore, A1’s 2011-2015’s learning plan also states that one of the overarching goals of the university is to ‘seek to attract, support and retain high achieving students, giving additional priority to the participation and success of students from low SES students and indigenous
CCA of A2 also briefly elaborates on the intended integrated approach to social inclusion, ‘The University’s mechanism for achieving these goals includes a Social Inclusion Statement that includes strategies for integrated outreach, recruitment and selection practices and a commitment to at least maintaining the already high success and retention ratios for students from equity groups’. The CCA of both A1 and A2 also outline the intended strategies for social inclusion and previous initiatives taken in the areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. A comprehensive document of social inclusion depicting goals, targets and performance is only made available by A2 via a document known as ‘A2 social inclusion barometer’. On the other hand, A1’s strategic plan does not actually outline the performance and specific initiatives of social inclusion comprehensively. However, it is also clear from the CCA and other strategic plans of both universities, the stated social inclusion initiatives and strategies do not actually embed a pure empowerment approach. A pure empowerment approach for social inclusion is defined as an approach ‘that moved beyond building educational capital to a
strength-based approach that valued and drew on the cultural capital of diverse groups’ (Kilpatrick & Johns 2014, p.38).

Another similarity between A1 and A2 on goals of social inclusion is to increase participation of the targeted group of under-represented students in graduate work programs. On this aspect, the CCA of both A1 and A2 clearly exhibit the commitment to facilitate the transition of students from under-represented groups from undergraduate to postgraduate study. A comprehensive plan to empower the accessibility and participation of disabled students is also evident from A1 and A2 via their documentation of disability action plan. Table 7.2 summarises the similarities and differences of social inclusion goals and strategies as outlined in CCA and other strategic plans of both A1 and A2.

Table 7.2: Documentation of Social Inclusion Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Goals of Social Inclusion</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access of Low-SES and Indigenous Students</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access of Low-SES and Indigenous Students into Post-Graduate</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.1.2 Adaptation to Higher Education Market Features

Table 7.3: Impact of Higher Education Market Features on A1 & A2 Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Initiatives</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to Higher Education Market Features of A1</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to Higher Education Market Features of A2</th>
<th>External Values Associated With the Higher Education Market Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Competition &amp; Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Competition &amp; Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Competition &amp; Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Integration of quality frameworks across all social inclusion practices.</td>
<td>2. Marketing approach for social inclusion has not been fully acknowledged.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.1.2.1 Similarities Across Cases

Perspectives of participants across the two cases indicate that there is a similarity in the pattern of adaptation to higher education market features’ associated activities for social inclusion (Table 7.3). Evidence from both cases suggests that there is a reasonable level of awareness among participants on the alignment of quality as an organising principle in the three areas of social inclusion. The reasonable level of awareness of the importance of quality across the three areas of social inclusion is related to two major factors. Firstly, it is partly associated with the requirement of the Australian quality regulatory agency, TEQSA, on reporting the progress made on activities related to widening participation and social inclusion. As a result, periodic engagement with external auditors is evident across the two cases. Secondly, awareness of the participants is also partly influenced by the internal value of ‘academic excellence’ that underpins the academic culture in both cases. However, evidence from both also suggests that an integrated quality assurance guideline that covers all three areas of social inclusion is not recognisable. On that basis, a pattern of mixed adaptation to the quality assurance practice for social inclusion can be concluded across the two cases.

On the other hand, evidence from both cases indicates that a similar pattern of passive strategic adaptation for social inclusion is recognisable from the direct effect of market competition and reputation. This effect is based on the extent of innovative market-driven activities to address the intakes of disadvantaged students. Passive adaptation for social inclusion as a result of the indirect effect is also pronounced across the two cases. This is judged by the number of activities undertaken to address the intakes of international and home-based non-disadvantaged students and the utilisation of those activities for social inclusion. The values of competition and
reputation that are supposed to drive innovative marketing approaches to recruit and retain undergraduate students are only minimally attached to the social inclusion activities across the two cases. Almost all the participants interviewed were able to positively relate the benefits from the marketing activities and engagement of non-disadvantaged students with social inclusion practices. However, the extent of participants’ awareness of the potential benefits is not corroborated by a formal action plan that specifically outlines the aims of widening participation and social inclusion. Therefore, it appears that the values of competition and reputation as a guiding principle from the higher education market have not been able to inculcate the element of innovation into the social inclusion practices of the two cases in Australia.

7.1.2.2 Differences Across Cases
A pattern of both mixed and passive adaptation to the values of quality, and competition and reputation for social inclusion, respectively, is also justified as a result of identified problems that are recognisable but different across the two cases. For example, participants from A1 believed that the commitment to provide a periodical report on the progress and quality aspects of activities related to social inclusion could be a burden to administrative staff. Similarly, the instantiation of quality as a value for social inclusion is not properly integrated across the three areas of social inclusion. Divisions entrusted with the task of managing initiatives of social inclusion within the university are not coordinated in terms of preparing a comprehensive report on quality.

On a different note, participants from A2 perceived that the value of quality has been attached to the practices of social inclusion but the positive outcomes for social inclusion can nevertheless
be constrained by lack of understanding among the academic staff on the overall framing of quality across the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. Also, market-driven activities have not been specifically framed to target applicants from the targeted equity groups. Innovative market-driven efforts are further needed to raise the interest of applicants from identified equity groups, whereas current competitive marketing practices are rather meant to address the intakes of applicants from non-disadvantaged groups.

7.1.2.3 Evidence from Document Analysis
An implicit recognition of quality as an overarching principle for social inclusion is evidenced in both the CCA of A1 and A2. In this respect, quality is attached to the overall teaching and learning’s objective of A1 and A2 with no specific reference made to participation of students from the under-represented groups. For example, CCA of A1 states that one of the university’s quality goals is to ‘develop strategies to ensure the retention and success of an increasingly diverse student body’. On a similar note, the CCA of A2 also indirectly recognises quality as a guiding principle for social inclusion. For example, CCA of A2 outlines that ‘the university is committed to attracting students of the highest academic potential, regardless of background, and enabling them through an outstanding curriculum and university experience to develop as globally aware professionals, citizens and community leaders’. On the basis of the CCA of both universities, quality as a value is not explicitly attached across the three areas of social inclusion.

7.1.3 Conclusion
A cross-case comparison within-country in Australia shows that the two cases of A1 and A2 have similar adaptations to both the government higher education policy frameworks and higher
education market features for social inclusion. The embedded external values from Australian government policy frameworks such as social justice, democracy, human capital development and diversity have been highly regarded and accordingly guide the direction of social inclusion practices in both cases. As a result, adaptation via various forms of social inclusion initiatives in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion has been primarily active and strategic.

A similar pattern of adaptation for social inclusion as a result of the policy frameworks has also been substantially guided by the internal value of ‘academic excellence’ in both cases. On that basis, adaptation for social inclusion across the two areas of access and participation has been intended to preserve the value of ‘academic excellence’. The cross-case results also reveal that policy incentives within the government higher education policy frameworks have been strongly regarded in both cases as the main driver that intensifies social inclusion practices. The case results also indicate a defensive type of behaviour across the two cases via policy responses underpinned by the intention to justify current practices and a preference for differentiation on the best possible contribution that can be achieved.

The results of both cases also indicate that values of quality, and competition and reputation from the higher education market features have not been properly recognised with the social inclusion aims and objectives. Above all, adaptation to the values of quality, and competition and reputation for social inclusion has been mixed and passive, respectively, in both cases. Therefore, innovative behaviours to engage effectively to a wider cohort of potential students from targeted equity groups are not prominently evidenced across the two cases.
7.2 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS (MALAYSIA)

The following section compares the results from cases M1 and M2. Similarities and differences between cases are analysed accordingly.

7.2.1 Adaptation to Government Policy Frameworks

Table 7.4: Impact of the Government Policy Frameworks on M1 & M2 Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation From Case M1</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation From Case M2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of Adaptation</td>
<td>1. Lack of candidates</td>
<td>1. Limited scope of autonomy for students’ selection at the undergraduate levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Higher cost to retain and engage disadvantaged students.</td>
<td>2. Stratification of higher education public universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Lack of understanding of the concept of social inclusion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.1.1 Similarities Across Cases

Perspectives of participants and the extent of evidence from available documents across the two cases suggest a very similar pattern of adaptation for social inclusion as a result of Malaysian higher education policy frameworks (see Table 7.4). The case results indicate that there are primarily two different patterns of adaptation for social inclusion recognisable across the two cases (passive and mixed). There are similar awareness and recognition internally of the external values attached to each of the three areas of social inclusion. A pattern of passive adaptation is identifiable across the two cases in the area of outreach. This is based on the lack of formalised initiatives and lack of long-term partnerships with external organisations to raise aspirations and empowerment of disadvantaged communities for participation in higher education.
In regard to outreach activities, participants from both cases acknowledge a similar set of external values, such as human capital development and social justice, from the Malaysian New Economic Model (NEM) 2010 as a guiding principle that propels their internalisation of outreach activities. External values such as social justice is commonly acknowledged across the two cases, and adaptation is evidenced through a formal establishment of a division to coordinate community and outreach projects. Also, community empowerment has been cited as one of the objectives for outreach across the two cases. However, evidence from both cases indicates that community outreach programs with non-academic stakeholders for mutual knowledge sharing and transfer are preferable and formalised in relation to outreach programs with disadvantaged schools to raise aspirations for higher education. An academic expert corroborated that community outreach-related activities have been one of the major elements in all Malaysian public research universities since 2007 as a result of the Ministry’s requirement to establish a deputy vice chancellor position that oversees the engagement initiatives for the community and industry.

A similar pattern of adaptation in the area of access is also prominent across the two cases. Participants from both cases regard lifelong leaning as the primary value from the MNHESP policy framework that shapes their access initiatives for social inclusion. Nevertheless, a pattern of passive adaptation is recognisable across both cases, as most of the access initiatives and pathway programs, such as the ‘alternative channel’ program, are focused on the intake of adult applicants. There are few access initiatives to address the intake of applicants from the other under-represented groups in either case. Initiatives in the area of access have been primarily intended to address the imperative of lifelong learning elements for adult learners. Therefore,
access strategies across the two cases have focused on addressing the intake of adult applicants into the university’s sub-bachelor degree programs and a few designated undergraduate degree programs. Both cases also highlight meritocracy as a fundamental internal value that must be highlighted throughout the student intake decision-making process. As a result, it is also commonly recognisable that the internal value of meritocracy has confined the initiative to addressing the intake of other under-represented groups into the undergraduate degree programs. One academic expert commented that the government objective to widen the access for higher education via the policy frameworks will not affect research universities because of the highly differentiated nature of the public higher education sector.

A similar pattern of adaptation in the area of participation and completion is identifiable across both cases. In this regard, a similar approach to address the participation aspect of undergraduate students is made via the application of student-centred learning (SCL) approaches and other provisions for student support. However, direct acknowledgement of social inclusion initiatives via the empowerment of a particular group of under-represented students has not been prominent across both cases, as engagement initiatives across all faculties in the area of teaching and learning have been very generic. Therefore, a mixed pattern of adaptation is justifiable across both cases, since interventions for a particular group of disadvantaged students for social inclusion are not clearly evidenced and defined. An academic expert validated that the concept of social inclusion through formalised intervention initiatives for student empowerment in the area of teaching and learning has not been properly understood across all Malaysian public universities.
7.2.1.2 Differences Across Cases

Differences across the two cases are mainly attributed to the perceived compatibility of internal values with external values instantiated from the government policy frameworks, and the scope of social inclusion initiatives in the two areas of access and participation and completion. From the case results, participants from M1 have primarily recognised the specific value of social justice in the context of a developed country. This specific value is known as the ‘bottom billions’ principle, which must be comprehensively recognised within university strategic planning for social inclusion. On the other hand, participants from M2 regarded the two internal principles of ‘meritocracy’ and ‘social responsibility’ as essential principles that guide the university’s social inclusion planning at the undergraduate level. The other minor difference noticeable from both cases is on the perceived importance of external value from government policy frameworks in the area of access. On this subject, participants from M1 believed that ‘human capital development’ and ‘lifelong learning’ are the two primary values that must be recognised and reflected through university student intakes at the undergraduate level. However, participants from M2 only viewed ‘lifelong learning’ as the overarching external value from the government policy frameworks that needs to be reflected in the area of access.

A minor difference is also recognisable from case M1 because of the difference in the scope of undergraduate degree programs that they are offering for adult applicants and the specific nature of the pathway initiative. For example, M1 has put in place a specific undergraduate degree program for applicants with a strong background in sport and a few other degree programs to cater for mature aged applicants with sufficient work experience. However, M2’s social inclusion initiative in the area of access is limited to the provision of sub-bachelor degree
programs to cater for the demands of adult learners. Another noticeable difference between M1 and M2 is related to the greater focus of M2 on the participation aspect of disabled students. In this respect, a significant provision of physical facilities for disabled students is prominent from case M2.

Perspectives of participants from both cases are also not similar in regard to perceived constraint on effective implementation of social inclusion initiatives at the undergraduate level. From the case results, participants of case M1 recognised that factors such as a limited pool of applicants from the disadvantaged backgrounds, costs involved in retaining disadvantaged students and unfamiliarity with the concept of social inclusion in higher education are constraining their social inclusion objective. In contrast, participants of case M2 assumed that social inclusion initiatives are limited because of the lack of autonomy given to the university to select students at the undergraduate level. Moreover, the differentiated nature of the Malaysian public higher education sector is limiting the social inclusion initiatives of the research universities.

7.2.2 Adaptation to Higher Education Market Features

Table 7.5: Impact of Higher Education Market Features on M1 & M2 Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Initiatives</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to Higher Education Market Features of M1</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation to Higher Education Market Features of M2</th>
<th>External Values Associated With the Higher Education Market Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Competition &amp; Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation</td>
<td>Competition &amp; Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and Completion | Passive Adaptation | Passive Adaptation | Competition & Reputation
--- | --- | --- | ---
Problems of Adaptation | 1. Unfamiliarity of innovation for social inclusion. 2. Lack of awareness at both meso and macro levels on the link between social inclusion and quality. | 1. Quality evaluation mechanism in the area of outreach. 2. Lack of an integrated quality manual in all three areas of social inclusion. | 

7.2.2.1 Similarities Across Cases

Table 7.5 describes the pattern of adaptation of cases M1 and M2 on higher education market features. In general, adaptation across the two cases on the three associated higher education market features’ values (competition and reputation, and quality) are noticeably similar in relation to the direct effect of innovative market-driven activities on social inclusion and the indirect effect of intakes of internal and home-based non-disadvantaged students. Evidence across the two cases also seems to suggest the patterns of adaptations are very similar in regard to quality assurance management for social inclusion. It is also interesting to note across the two cases that the awareness of participants of the relationship between external values and social inclusion is only clearly associated with the value of quality. On this subject, interviews conducted with participants across the two cases indicate that the two values of competition and reputation have not been properly recognised for the purpose of social inclusion interventions in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. However, there is a reasonable level of awareness on how the value of quality can be attached to the three areas of social inclusion.

As a result of the limited level of awareness on how the values of competition and reputation can be attached to the three areas of social inclusion, only a handful of innovative market-driven activities are recognisable across the two cases. Based on the evidence, innovative activities can
only be primarily associated with community outreach projects as one of the elements of outreach activities for social inclusion. However, innovative market-driven activities to address the aspirations of young people from disadvantaged groups are not recognisable across the two cases. The values of competition and reputation have also been conceptualised similarly by all participants in regard to the intake of international students, for example. Across the two cases, the intake of international students is meant to enhance diversity within the student population and is not meant to address competition for resources and status. However, there is no proper evidence either to suggest that the value of diversity has been innovatively exploited and utilised to assist the social inclusion objective of home-based disadvantaged students at the undergraduate level. It is also noticeable that the value of competition has not propelled the university to compete for the intake of high achiever students, as non-innovative marketing activities are recognisable across the two cases. Also, there is no ample evidence either to suggest that the two values of competition and reputation have guided the two universities to be innovative in teaching and learning activities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. For that reason, passive adaptation is prominent because social inclusion initiatives in the three areas across the two cases are also not propelled by the innovative behaviours commonly associated with the two values of competition and reputation.

On the other hand, participants from both cases have managed to relate a close relationship between the value of quality and the two areas of social inclusion. Evidence from the two cases suggests that internalisation of quality assurance practices across the two areas of social inclusion (access and participation and completion) has been strongly driven by the thrust of the Malaysian National Higher Education Strategic Plan (MNHESP) 2007, rather than by the quality
objective of market competition. In particular, the dual thrust of ‘improving the quality of teaching and learning’ and ‘enculturation of lifelong learning’ in the MNHESP policy framework are closely related to the quality objective across the two areas of social inclusion. However, the objective of quality has only been aligned to the area of outreach community activities, because the engagement function of a university has now been widely accepted among all public universities in Malaysia. However, no evidence can be established across the two cases between the objective of quality and outreach activities to raise aspirations of disadvantaged communities for higher education participation.

Also, the objective of quality has been aligned to a specific area of access strategy across the two cases, most primarily evidenced from the intake of adult learners into some designated sub-bachelor and bachelor degree programs. As a result, it can be noticed across the two cases that the value of quality has only been minimally aligned to the overall aim of social inclusion because it has not been comprehensively and widely perceived for the specific aim of social inclusion across a wider targeted group of disadvantaged students. On the basis of this, a pattern of mixed adaptation in the area of quality management for the purpose of social inclusion is justified across the two cases.

7.2.2.2 Differences Across Cases

A minor difference across the two cases is recognisable in the area of quality management practices for social inclusion. On this subject, M1 uses the external association, the Asia Pacific University Community Engagement Network (APUCEN), to benchmark their community engagement projects against the standard prescribed by the association. On the other hand, M2
only responds to suggestions offered by external auditors appointed to gauge the effectiveness of their community engagement projects.

Another noticeable difference can be attributed to the perception of participants on the perceived impediments to implementing social inclusion initiatives. Participants in case M1 realised that a thorough understanding at the ministerial level and among policy makers within the university of the concept of social inclusion in higher education is needed if there is to be total appreciation of the value of quality across the three areas of social inclusion. Moreover, participants in case M1 argued that innovative practices for social inclusion have not been the norm because innovation, underpinned by the market element, has only been remotely connected with the objective of social inclusion. On a different note, participants in case M2 noted that the quality evaluation mechanism currently being used to gauge the effectiveness of outreach projects for social inclusion is insufficient and questionable. Also, an integrated quality manual that integrates the three areas of social inclusion has not been considered, since the relationship between the three areas is not clearly understood by policy makers within the university.

7.2.3 Conclusion
A cross-case comparison within-country in Malaysia indicates a similar approach to adapting for social inclusion as a result of government higher education policy frameworks and higher education market features. From the government policy aspect, the embedded guiding principles of social justice, human capital development, democracy and lifelong learning have been reasonably identified by the participants and these primarily guided the extent of social inclusion practices. As a result, adaptation via various forms of social inclusion initiatives in the three
areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion has been reportedly mixed and passive across the three areas.

Evidence across the two cases also indicates a pattern of mixed and passive adaptation as a result of the external values of quality and competition and reputation, respectively. The value of quality has been reasonably attached to the two areas of social inclusion across the two Malaysian cases, even though an integrated quality framework that addresses the specific aim of social inclusion for a specific group of disadvantaged students is not pronounced across the two cases. On the other hand, the values of competition and reputation from higher education market features have not been reasonably attached for the purpose of social inclusion. Awareness of participants from the two cases suggests that the external values of competition and reputation from the market have not actually driven public universities to compete for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result of the lack of innovative market-driven activities involved for the purpose of social inclusion, an active or mixed pattern of adaptation is not justifiable.

7.3 CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS (AUSTRALIA AND MALAYSIA)

The following section analyses the results from both within-country cross-case analyses. Similarities and differences between Australia and Malaysia will be used as a basis to answer the research questions.
7.3.1 Adaptation to Government Policy Frameworks

Table 7.6: Government Policy Frameworks and Cross-Countries Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation From Case A1 and A2</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation From Case M1 and M2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Active Adaptation (A1)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active Adaptation (A2)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Active Adaptation (A1)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active Adaptation (A2)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Active Adaptation (A1)</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (M1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active Adaptation (A2)</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (M2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of Adaptation</td>
<td>1. Sustainability of government funding for social inclusion.</td>
<td>1. Lack of candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Lack of integration in practices as a result of internal culture.</td>
<td>2. Higher cost to retain and engage disadvantaged students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Lack of clarity on the concept of social inclusion itself. (A1)</td>
<td>3. Lack of understanding of the concept of social inclusion. (M1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Active involvement of the schooling sector is needed.</td>
<td>Limited scope of autonomy for students’ selection at the undergraduate levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Soft regulatory enforcement. (A2)</td>
<td>2. Stratification of higher education public universities (M2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3.1.1 Similarities Across Countries

Similarities in the pattern of adaptation to the government policy frameworks across all four cases are not significantly in evidence and are only recognisable in regard to the inclusion of adult learners and initiatives for community outreach. It is apparent from the Malaysian cases that the two external values of lifelong learning and human capital development from the MNHESP policy framework have intensified access initiatives for the group of adult learners. A
similar set of external values from the policy frameworks is also perceived in the two Australian cases, but a stronger focus on the inclusion of mature aged applicants is noticeable in the two Malaysian cases. A remarkable similarity across the four cases is noticeable in regard to community outreach projects. Adaptation across the four cases has been very active in regard to dissemination of knowledge to the community via community outreach projects. Similar community programs and targeted participants have been identified across the four cases. Also, most of the community programs for social inclusion have been integrated with university strategic planning across the four cases. Another similarity across the two countries is that meritocracy has been strongly perceived in all four cases as a principle that guides student intakes at the undergraduate level. Perception on the constraint on social inclusion across the two countries is also similar in that limited understanding of the concept of social inclusion has been regarded as the most substantial factor that impedes implementation.

7.3.1.2 Differences Across Countries

The pattern of adaptation to government policy frameworks across both countries is remarkably different in all the three areas of social inclusion. In the area of outreach, a similar pattern of active adaptation to government policy frameworks is prominent across the two cases in Australia, whereas the two Malaysian cases are recognisably passive. Active adaptation in the two Australian cases occurs as a result of a formalised action plan and wider scope of initiatives that the two universities have in terms of partnership and the depth of outreach programs with schools. In the two Malaysian cases, a preference for community outreach programs for knowledge dissemination and sharing is rather prominent, with a limited scope of outreach programs with disadvantaged schools for the purpose of increasing access to higher education.
A different set of external values attached to the policy frameworks is nevertheless recognisable by participants across the two countries. Participants from the two Australian cases perceived the two values of social justice and democracy as the two dominant external values that drive their outreach activities, whereas Malaysian cases regarded social justice and human capital development as the two relevant values from the policy frameworks that guide their outreach initiatives for social inclusion. The marginal difference between the two sets of values perceived suggests that the Malaysian government higher education policy frameworks are more inclined to increase the variation of community outreach projects for knowledge sharing and dissemination across all public universities in Malaysia. On the other hand, recognition of external values such as democracy among Australian participants seems to suggest that Australian higher education policy frameworks are more inclined to engage Australian public universities with the type of outreach activity partnerships with schools for widening participation.

In the area of access, a different pattern of adaptation is also recognisable across the two countries. Both cases from Australia demonstrate an active pattern of adaptation in the area of access via active internalisation of access initiatives. Active internalisation of access initiatives from the two Australian cases is reflected through various structured and formalised pathway programs to enable greater access for a variety group of applicants from the identified equity groups and adult learners. Furthermore, large provision of equity scholarships is made available in the Australian cases to support the accessibility of targeted equity groups to their universities.
The two Malaysian cases have a limited capacity to adapt for social inclusion in the area of access. A pattern of passive adaptation from the two Malaysian cases is based on the limited scope of initiatives that the two universities have within their access strategies. Access initiatives are only meant to cater for a specific group of targeted applicants. In the two Malaysian cases, the focus for social inclusion is primarily on intakes of adults and those with working experience into designated sub-bachelor and undergraduate degree programs.

In the area of participation and completion, a different pattern of adaptation to the social inclusion policy frameworks is also recognisable across the two countries. The two Australian cases have actively adapted, whilst the two Malaysian cases exhibit a mixed pattern of adaptation. The two Australian cases have been strongly propelled by the federal government’s funding incentives of the HEPP scheme. As a result, a specific inclusive teaching and learning action plan is in place to cater for all undergraduate students and also a specific group of targeted equity students.

On the other hand, the two Malaysian cases have a similar student-centred learning approach to empower students’ learning experiences at the undergraduate level. However, the approaches of student-centred learning have not been explicitly recognised as part of an integrated strategy to achieve the aim of social inclusion. Therefore, direct recognition of a link between teaching and learning activities for targeted equity students and social inclusion strategies is only prominent in the two Australian cases.
## 7.3.2 Adaptation to Higher Education Market Features

### Table 7.7: Higher Education Market Features and Cross-Countries Adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Social Inclusion Practices</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation From Case A1 and A2</th>
<th>Pattern of Adaptation From Case M1 and M2</th>
<th>External Values Associated With the Higher Education Market Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (A1)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M1)</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (A2)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (A2)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (A1)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M1)</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (A2)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (A2)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Completion</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (A1)</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (M1)</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (A2)</td>
<td>Mixed Adaptation (M2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (A2)</td>
<td>Passive Adaptation (M2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem of Adaptations</td>
<td>1. Administrative burden of reporting (quality). 2. Integration of quality frameworks across all social inclusion practices. 3. Lack of diversity in social inclusion practices (quality). (A1)</td>
<td>1. Unfamiliarity of innovation for social inclusion. 2. Lack of awareness at both meso and macro levels on the link between social inclusion and quality. (M1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Mismatching between the overall concept of social inclusion and quality. 2. Marketing approach for social inclusion has not been fully acknowledged. (A2)</td>
<td>1. Quality evaluation mechanism in the area of outreach. 2. Lack of an integrated quality manual in all three areas of social inclusion. (M2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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7.3.2.1 Similarities Across Countries

Table 7.7 indicates that a slightly similar pattern of adaptation to the value of quality for social inclusion via the internalisation of higher education market features related activities is noticeable from all four cases across the two countries. Evidence from the interviews and related documents shows that the value of quality has been reasonably attached to the three areas of social inclusion across all four cases. On this subject, participants’ awareness of the importance of quality as a guiding principle for social inclusion is derived from both the relevant quality regulatory agency’s requirements and national higher education quality frameworks. As a result, the quality element of the higher education market features has been driven by the government’s higher education action plans and accordingly this affects the understanding of quality and its imperative for social inclusion practices.

However, even though quality as a guiding principle has been reasonably accepted and recognised for the purpose of social inclusion, its applicability has not been fully realised and integrated across the three areas of social inclusion. Based on the problems of adaptation (see Table 7.7), there are similarities in the identified problems across the four cases. One of the similarities is that quality as a value has not been understood in a specific context of social inclusion because of two primary factors: firstly, lack of understanding of the concept of social inclusion, and, secondly, as a guiding principle that underpins the social inclusion practices. The interplay between the two factors justifies the pattern of mixed adaptation of quality management across the four cases.
A similar pattern of adaptation to the external values of competition and reputation is also perceptible across the four cases. A pattern of passive adaptation is common because the values of competition and reputation have not been properly attached and appreciated across the three areas of social inclusion. Innovative market-driven activities to address the intakes of applicants from disadvantaged groups are not pronounced across the four cases in the area of outreach and access. In the two Australian cases, for example, innovative market-driven activities are only primarily shown to address the intake of all applicants into undergraduate degree programs without a specific innovative approach to cater for disadvantaged groups. In the two Malaysian cases, innovative market-driven approaches have also not been recognised in either cases (i.e., addressing the intake of all applicants or the intake of specific applicants from identified disadvantaged groups).

However, evidence across the four cases shows that innovative initiatives are recognisable from the activities of community outreach that is not intended to increase the access of disadvantaged students to higher education. In this case, greater utilisation of undergraduate students is evident to assist the objective of community outreach programs for knowledge dissemination. Nonetheless, innovative initiatives to utilise non-disadvantaged undergraduate students to help empower the learning experience of disadvantaged students are only minimally reflected across the four cases. For that reason, the two external values of competition and reputation from the higher education market features have not driven innovative behaviours for the purpose of social inclusion across the four cases.
7.3.2.2 Differences Across Countries

The primary difference across the two countries is in quality management and its relationship to social inclusion. Evidence from the two Australian cases shows that the quality management reporting requirement must be met across each of the three areas of social inclusion as a result of regulatory requirements. The reporting of social inclusion initiatives in each of the three areas will then be submitted to and audited by the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) of the Australian government as part of the quality monitoring process. Each of the three areas of social inclusion is subjected to a rigorous quality assessment process annually. However, the two Malaysian cases are also subjected to an annual quality reporting requirement by the Malaysian regulatory authority, but the provision of reports on quality for social inclusion has not been articulated explicitly as one of the elements for audit assessment.

7.4 MAJOR FINDINGS FROM CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS

There are four major similarities that can be elaborated from the cross-country analysis. Firstly, quality management from the higher education market features has been commonly regarded by almost all participants across the four cases as an activity that is closely attached to social inclusion practices in the two areas of access and participation and completion. Secondly, community outreach initiatives for knowledge sharing and dissemination with non-academic external stakeholders have also been commonly identified by almost all participants across the four cases as one of the preferred practices for social inclusion. In this respect, a formalised action plan and a division to coordinate community outreach-related activities are noticeable as a result of the government policy frameworks across the two countries.
Thirdly, in the area of access for social inclusion, it is observable from all cases that the principle of meritocracy has been strongly perceived as the core element that shapes the intake and selection process of students into undergraduate programs. For that reason, accessibility of students from under-represented and disadvantaged groups is primarily based on academic capabilities measured by their secondary school examination performance. Fourthly, accessibility of applicants from the group of matured adults has also been a common feature of social inclusion strategy across the two countries. The inclusion of mature adults into some undergraduate programs across the two Australian cases has been conducted without a proper policy guideline and incentive at the national level to address the objective of lifelong learning. In contrast, the objective of lifelong learning from the government higher education policy frameworks has managed to spur active initiatives to address the intake of those with sufficient working experiences via structured units and pathway programs in the two Malaysian cases.

Also, there are three major differences that can be highlighted from the cross-country analysis. First, it has been acknowledged by participants of the Australian cases that a set of policy incentives which is made available by the federal government has managed to propel their social inclusion initiatives in all three areas. Agreements made on a yearly basis between all public universities and the federal government in relation to social inclusion and equity targets have also triggered an active adaptation in the two Australian cases. In contrast, social inclusion initiatives by the two Malaysian cases have not been driven by policy incentives. Indeed, adaptation in the two Malaysian cases for social inclusion as a result of the policy frameworks has been realised without a considered obligation imposed via agreements or other financial incentives.
Secondly, the social inclusion initiatives across the two Australian cases are explicitly recognised across the three areas as a result of Australian government recognition on the basis of the TAHES policy statement. In contrast, the concept of social inclusion has not been explicitly recognised by the Malaysian government in any of policy statement, even though practices that make up the components of social inclusion have already been in place in the two Malaysian cases.

Finally, the other major differences between the social inclusion practices across the two countries are related to the scope of groups identified and the scope of social inclusion practices. The scope of practices in the two Australian cases is also wider and cover multiple groups of students assisted by a comprehensive social inclusion policy at the national level. In contrast, the social inclusion practices of the two Malaysian cases are constrained by the lack of understanding of the concept of social inclusion in higher education. As a result, the observed pattern of adaptation can be only mixed and passive in a few areas of social inclusion because of limited comprehension of the concept among policy makers within the universities and the Ministry.

7.5 SUMMARY
The cross-case within-country analysis in Australia and Malaysia indicates that a pattern of adaptation for social inclusion is similar in the two elite universities in Australia and is also recognisably similar in the other two elite universities in Malaysia. The two Australian elite universities have been adapting actively in all the three areas of social inclusion as a result of the government higher education policy frameworks. The pattern of adaptation for social inclusion
in the two Australian elite universities as a result of the direct and indirect effect of higher education market features has nevertheless been mixed and passive. For the two Malaysian elite universities, adaptation to the government higher education policy frameworks for the purpose of social inclusion has been primarily passive and only recognisably mixed in the area of participation and completion. The cross-case analysis between the two Malaysian elite universities also reveals that the pattern of adaptation for social inclusion as a result of higher education market features has been prominently passive in the two areas of outreach and access. A mixed pattern of adaptation to the direct effect of higher education market features via the value of quality is only identifiable in the area of participation and completion in the two Malaysian elite universities.

A cross-country comparison indicates that there are similar features in the focus of quality, meritocracy, inclusion of adult learners and community outreach engagement in the four elite universities. However, features such as policy incentives for social inclusion, integrated social inclusion policy, specific target groups for social inclusion and explicit recognition of social inclusion practices are only distinguishable in the two Australian elite universities.

Chapter 8 will present answers to the analysis and discussion on the research propositions on the basis of the findings derived from the cross-case within-country and cross-country comparisons in this chapter.
CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

8.0 INTRODUCTION

The major research findings will be analysed and discussed in accordance with the assumptions made by the sub-propositions and primary propositions of the research. Discussion and analysis of the findings are on the basis of the two sociological institutionalism theories. Sections 8.1.1 – 8.1.4 analyse the answers to sub-propositions 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2. Sections 8.1.5 – 8.1.7 provide answers and analysis to general propositions and global proposition on the basis of the analysis and discussion on the sub-propositions. Section 8.2 concludes the chapter with an overview on the essential findings of the overall analysis.

8.1 DISCUSSION

The following section analyses the answer to each sub-propositions and primary proposition of the research in accordance with the two sociological institutionalism theories of institutional logics and strategic responsiveness to institutional pressures.
8.1.1 Analysis and Answer to Sub-Proposition P1.1

Figure 8.1: A1 and A2 Adaptation for Social Inclusion (Government Policies)

Sub-proposition 1.1 predicts that government higher education policy frameworks in Australia will shape the direction of elite universities’ social inclusion practices. The associated Australian higher education policy frameworks attached to this proposition are the primary policy statement, Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System (TAHES) 2009, and the policy incentives of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPP) 2009. Figure 8.1 summarises the pattern of adaptation for social inclusion as a result of government policy frameworks in Australia. It can be seen from Figure 8.1 that the two cases from Australia have generally actively adapted in all three areas of social inclusion.

The case results of the two elite universities from Chapter 6 strongly indicate that the Australian government policy frameworks have been very influential in shaping the understanding and implementation of social inclusion initiatives. Other than the value of social justice, participants
from both Australian cases recognise other values, such as human capital development, diversity and democratisation as core values from the policy frameworks that explain their active adaptation for social inclusion.

Findings of the two Australian cases are consistent with Rizvi and Lingard’s (2011) and Gale’s (2000) propositions that the guiding principle of social justice has been articulated by the Australian government policy frameworks in accordance with the belief in ‘retributive justice’ and market individualism. The perspective of retributive justice that underpins the governments’ conceptualisation of social justice is consistent with the identified value of meritocracy in each of the four cases and it has been strongly preserved throughout the access initiatives for social inclusion as is apparent from the case results. The preservation of the internal value of ‘academic excellent’ from the two Australian cases is consistent with Besharov and Smith’s (2014) contention that the instantiation of elitism value occurs without a significant conflict with the values from government logics, as the association that represents the two Australian universities selected is very influential across the Australian higher education sector.

Similar capacities to adapt in the area of access indicate the strategic orientation of the two elite universities to accommodate the external guiding principle of social justice and the internal guiding principle of meritocracy. Furthermore, the value of social justice from the government logic has been long advocated and continuously sustained by the previous Australian federal government (McCaig, 2011). Therefore, a pattern of active adaptation evidenced in the two Australian cases occurs as a result of the historically structured social justice value over time.
Legitimacy-seeking behaviour is also part of the assumption made by institutional logics theory (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). From the case results, recognition of a similar set of values within the interpretive scheme of government logics derived from the government policy frameworks is mostly reflected through a high capacity to internally adapt for social inclusion. From the perspective of institutional logics, the strategic intention of the two Australian elite universities is explained by the initiatives to maintain societal legitimacy without having to compromise the two guiding principles of the government and the neo-liberal market. In this case, the Australian federal government has managed to rationalise the two seemingly conflicting logics through proper processes of policy interpretation at the macro level. As a result, the different sets of belief, ideas and values from the two dominant logics are viewed as compatible with each other for the objective of social inclusion at the meso level of the two Australian elite universities.

The case results indicate that capacity to strategically adapt is very active in the two Australian elite universities. Findings from the two cases are aligned with Oliver’s (1991) typology of compliance and compromise as two of the predicted patterns of organisational strategic responses to conflicting institutional logics. The active adaptation to the various external values within the government logic in the two cases can be associated with the typology of compliance and compromise, since the case results indicate that the two elite universities have the strategic intention to re-project the value of social justice in accordance with their internal value of academic elitism.
The capacity to actively adapt for social inclusion from the two Australian elite universities reflects both the active and defensive nature of adaptation to planned change outlined in the government’s higher education reform agenda. Findings from the two universities also indicate that an active capacity to comply and compromise with external values embedded within the government logic occurs at a high level of conformity. Adaptation for social inclusion is thus active as a result of policy reform but it is also being compromised to ensure flexibility, as is evidenced in the active capacity of the two Australian elite universities to provide recommendations for policy improvement. Strategic adaptation of the two universities is predictable because the two cases are attached to a powerful and influential association of elite universities, and they are also prominently known for their aspirations to become world-class, research-excellent universities. Their strategic adaptation for social inclusion is therefore consistent with the assertion that management’s internal values and goals will determine the extent of the organisations social responsiveness (Strand, 1983).

On the basis of logics of centrality and compatibility (Besharov & Smith, 2014), each of the Australian cases can be described as an ‘aligned’ organisation, since the degree of compatibility and centrality of the external values from the government logics are high across the both. Minimal conflict occurs because the internal value of ‘academic elitism’ has been accommodated through continuous dialogue and exchanges of opinions with the Australian federal government. Minimal conflict with the external values instantiated from the policy frameworks is also justified because ‘academic elitism’ has been long-established in the historical context of the two Australian universities. Findings of the two cases also imply that active and strategic adaptations are not primarily meant to displace existing values borne by the policy frameworks but rather are
initiated as a means to rationally integrate the seemingly conflicting value of social justice with the already established internal value of academic elitism.

Taking into account all available evidence from the interviews and documents, the government higher education policy frameworks in Australia have, through clear policy incentives, influenced, even propelled, the nature of social inclusion practices of the two universities. Sub-proposition P1.1 is therefore confirmed by evidence that established across the two cases.

8.1.2 Analysis and Answer to Sub-Proposition P1.2

Figure 8.2: M1 and M2 Adaptation for Social Inclusion (Government Policies)

Sub-proposition 1.2 also predicts that government policy frameworks in Malaysia influence the direction of elite universities’ social inclusion practices. In Malaysia, the government’s higher education policy frameworks attached to this proposition are the Malaysia National Higher Education Strategic Plan (MNHESP) 2007 and the New Economic Model (NEM) 2010.
Participants from the cases acknowledged a similar set of values from the related policy frameworks, such as social justice, human capital development and diversity, as the overarching guiding principles for social inclusion. Findings for the two universities also indicate that the inculturation of lifelong learning has been strongly rationalised and emphasised by the government via the New Economic Model (2010) policy frameworks as a core element of social inclusion practices across all public universities in Malaysia.

Figure 8.2 summarises the pattern of adaptation for social inclusion as a result of government policy frameworks in Malaysia: the two cases show a limited capacity to internally adapt, especially in the area of outreach and access, and only a demonstrably mixed capacity in the area of participation and completion. Practices of social inclusion across the two cases are very much constrained as a result of the government’s policy. In Malaysia, the implicit and incomprehensive nature of the related social inclusion objective within the government policy frameworks has nevertheless managed to intensify social inclusion practices of the two cases in areas such as community engagement for knowledge dissemination and participation, but only limited influence is apparent in the area of outreach in order to raise aspirations for higher education and access. Interestingly, influence of government policy frameworks in the area of participation and completion has been indirect, which resulted in a pattern of mixed adaptation of social inclusion across the two cases.

Findings of the two Malaysian cases are also consistent with Rizvi and Lingard’s (2011) and Gale’s (2000) assumptions that the guiding principle of social justice has been articulated by the government policy frameworks in accordance with the belief in ‘retributive justice’ and market
individualism. The compatibility and centrality of social justice as a value from the government logics has been instantiated across the two cases as a result of the dominant relationship that the government has with Malaysian public universities and also the lack of other professional bodies representing the two universities. Based on Besharov and Smith (2014), centrality of social justice from the government logics with the university’s internal value of academic excellent or elitism is very high, as the mission and objective of the two cases are not in conflict with the government’s definitive aspiration towards social inclusion in higher education. From this perspective, each of the two cases can also be described as an ‘aligned’ organisation, with minimal conflict with the internal value of ‘academic elitism’. On this subject, the government itself has not compromised the internal value of ‘academic elitism’, nor it has been preserved strongly by the universities via dialogues or policy debates.

Moreover, the conflict between the internal value of ‘academic elitism’ and the external values from the government logics is not substantial, because ‘academic elitism’ has yet to be strongly institutionalised as a result of the two universities’ own historical trajectory. For example, the status of an elite university was only recently acquired by the two universities in 2007, in accordance with the government’s acknowledgement of a cluster of research-intensive universities in its higher education strategic planning (Sirat, 2010).

Findings of the two Malaysian elite universities reflect a compliance type of strategic response, as outlined by Oliver (1991), and are also consistent with legitimacy-seeking behaviour (Suchman, 1995; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). It can also be inferred from the case results that compliance with the external values borne by the Malaysian National Higher Education Strategic
Plan (MNHESP) has been strategically intended to acquire legitimacy from the government as the primary funder of public universities. In this respect, the construction and preservation of meanings underpinning the external values of social justice, lifelong learning, human capital development and democracy are dominantly created and maintained by the Malaysian government at the macro level. The combined dominant position of public sector bureaucrats and politicians from the ruling party is essential to the process of creating and sustaining the government logic in the Malaysian higher education sector. On this subject, Sirat (2010) confirms that the Malaysian higher education state-centric approach is a long-standing tradition and is still very much prevalent in the relationship between state and public universities. For that reason, the lack of strategic agency to initiate active policy feedback for social inclusion is clearly evidenced from the two Malaysian cases as a result of the lack of strong political will and this can be observed in the process of logic construction.

Taking into account all available evidence from interviews and documents, the government policy frameworks in Malaysia have moderately influenced the nature of social inclusion practices of the two elite universities. Sub-proposition P1.2 therefore can only be partially affirmed by the evidence that has been established across the two cases.
Figure 8.3: A1 and A2 Adaptation for Social Inclusion (Quality)

Sub-proposition 2.1 predicts that higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of the Australian elite universities. Figure 8.3 compares the pattern of adaptation of the two universities to the value of quality for social inclusion. The two cases have a similar pattern of adaptation across the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. Evidence suggests that the value of quality has been reasonably attached to the practices of social inclusion and is affecting the social inclusion practices of the two cases.
Figure 8.4 compares the pattern of adaptation to the values of competition and reputation for social inclusion across the two universities. Evidence suggests that the pattern, as a result of the external values of competition and reputation, has only been passive across all three areas of social inclusion. Awareness of participants and the extent of social inclusion practices in the three areas indicate that the external values of competition and reputation have not been properly attached to the aims of social inclusion. Evidence also shows that innovative practices from market-driven activities and innovative involvement of non-disadvantaged students for social inclusion have been minimal across both cases.

From the perspective of institutional logics theory, the interpretive scheme of quality from the higher education market logic has been reasonably recognised across the two elite universities and accordingly it influences their practices of social inclusion. Results indicate that quality as an embedded value has been reasonably regarded for social inclusion as a consequence of the
government’s formalisation of a quality framework via several major indicators of quality assurance processes across the higher education sector (Stella, 2010).

The value of quality has been formally recognised within the context of social inclusion in Australian higher education via the regulatory requirements of TEQSA (Stella, 2010). Results of the two universities indicate that adaptation via quality management practices has been mixed and formalised across the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. The value of quality from the logic of higher education market features has been directly recognised and attached by the two Australian cases to the practices of social inclusion.

Moreover, the case results of the universities show that mixed adaptation for social inclusion via the practices of quality management are underpinned by two primary forces: firstly, the efficiency of quality assurance as a regulatory instrument to instill quality culture in social inclusion practices is triggered by the strong quality regulatory requirements of the government; secondly, mixed adaptation is related to the strategic intention of the two universities to attach the value of quality as part of their objective of academic excellence. In other words, social inclusion practices of the two Australian universities are framed within the objective of academic excellence. In this respect, the compatibility and centrality of quality as a value from market logics are reasonably high and are well-blended with the internal value of academic elitism of the two universities. As a result, minimal conflict with the core objective of social inclusion across the two cases is prominent.
Overall, findings of the two Australian elite universities are consistent with the assertions made that social inclusion practices have increasingly been associated with the internal culture of quality in public universities (Shah, 2013; Vranesevic, 2014). Also, adaptation of quality management practices in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion reflects the change of elite universities’ social inclusion strategic planning and objectives. The value of quality from market features is not just primarily meant to empower a student consumerism approach and to define the scope of new management process; it has also been explicitly framed by both the government and the elite universities as an organising principle for social inclusion.

The literature suggests that the values of competition and reputation from the market logic may strengthen the hierarchy of public universities, and propel innovative behaviours and increase approaches of consumerism as a result of economic market competition for students (Marginson, 2004; Raciti, 2010; Raciti & Ward, 2003). In other words, the literature predicates that adaptation to the values of competition and reputation in public universities may run counter to the primary objective of social inclusion (Cervini, 2011; Naidoo, 2000; Raciti, 2010). Findings of the two Australian cases show that adaptation to the values of competition and reputation via innovative market-driven activities by competing for students and innovative practices to empower students have not been primarily realised for the purpose of social inclusion, nor for the sole purpose of an economic objective. Across the two Australian cases, the values of competition and reputation have also been reconceptualised at both micro and meso levels within a context of non-economic rationales.
For the two Australian universities, status competition seems to be a primary guiding principle that shapes the intake policies for undergraduate students, but nevertheless the value of diversity has also been rationalised within the context of status competition to acquire moral legitimacy. In the area of outreach activities, market-driven approaches of the two universities to raise aspirations of young people from the disadvantaged community for higher education, for example, have not been innovative but rather very moderate. This is consistent with McCaig’s (2010) contention that elite universities in the UK have been using the widening participation agenda as a means to gain moral legitimacy throughout their outreach marketing activities. McCaig (2010, p.12) argues that

pre-1992 institutions use widening participation to soften their reputation as austere, elitist institutions closed off to the needs and desires of the majority. Such institutions appeal to the meritocratic instinct: they sell the message that, if you are good enough you can get in here, whatever your background.

Therefore, it seems to be the case that higher strategic agency behaviour is noticeable from the two Australian cases, as status competition and diversity are properly rationalised as a frame of reference to fulfil collective societal expectations on the moral aspects of higher education. Overall, sub-proposition 2.1 can only be partially supported across the two Australian cases, since only the value of quality has been reasonably attached to the practices of social inclusion.
Sub-proposition P2.2 predicts that higher education market features will affect the social inclusion practices of the two Malaysian elite universities. Figure 8.5 indicates a similar pattern of adaptation to the value of quality via quality management for social inclusion across the two Malaysian elite universities. The value of quality has been fairly aligned with the aims of social inclusion across the area of participation and completion but only minimally aligned with the other two areas of social inclusion. Evidence also shows that perspectives of participants on the importance of quality as a guiding principle are driven by the government quality framework in higher education. In Malaysia, the regulation of the quality framework by the Ministry of Higher Education has propelled universities to internally engage intensively for quality via their quality assurance management policies and procedures in the area of student selection and support services, curriculum design and learning outcomes, educational resources and assessment of students (Kanji & Tambi, 1998)). However, as indicated by the findings of the two cases, these
internal quality control mechanisms have not been primarily recognised as a primary quality framework for social inclusion. On the basis of that, the value of quality from the higher education market features has only been marginally affecting the social inclusion practices of the two cases.

Figure 8.6: M1 and M2 Adaptation for Social Inclusion (Competition and Reputation)

Figure 8.6 compares the extent of adaptation for social inclusion of the two elite universities as a result of the external values of competition and reputation. Evidence can only justify a passive adaptation for social inclusion on the basis of their innovative market-driven practices and innovative involvement of students for the purpose of achieving the objectives of social inclusion. Perspectives of participants in the two cases suggest that the values of competition and reputation from higher education market features have not been attached for the purpose of social inclusion. In other words, with the exception of community outreach programs, innovative activities are not evident across the two cases in all other areas of social inclusion.
For the two Malaysian elite universities, the intake of non-disadvantaged and academically talented students at the undergraduate level is not related to the element of competition or for the purpose of economic market competition. Accordingly, the values of competition and reputation from higher education market features have been reconstructed at the micro level by participants from the two cases. For example, intakes of non-disadvantaged home-based and international students have been utilised to assist the universities’ outreach initiatives with the community. Also, in the area of access, participants from the two cases perceived diversity as the dominant organising principle that displaces the presumably typical construct of consumerism that underpins the values of competition and reputation. As a result, intake of undergraduate students at the two Malaysian elite universities has been strategically considered with the objective of achieving diversity for social inclusion.

Reconstruction of ideas and meanings that underpins the values of competition and reputation for social inclusion is also closely related to the government’s long-term higher education strategic plan (Sirat, 2010). In other words, the way the two Malaysian elite universities perceive the values of competition and reputation in higher education is meant to align with the government’s implicit objective of social inclusion. As a result, the consumerism element commonly associated with the higher education market is not prevalent in Malaysia. The centrality and compatibility of the competition and reputation values from the market logics across the two Malaysian cases are influenced by the social welfare objective of the Malaysian government within the New Economic Model 2010 public policy framework. The centrality and compatibility of the two values of competition and reputation on the core objective of social inclusion is low, as it is heavily influenced and shaped by external actors from the government bureaucracy.
Findings in the two Malaysian cases are consistent with the contention that higher education market features do not represent a functioning capitalist market via the embedded values of competition and reputation (Marginson, 2009; Sirat, 2010). The extent of social inclusion practices of the two elite universities, and the pattern of mixed adaptation via practices of quality management, show that the values of competition and reputation are not framed within the context of economic market competition. Passive adaptation for social inclusion via non-innovative market-driven activities to compete for disadvantaged students also indicates that economic market competition is irrelevant as a guiding frame of reference for social inclusion. In this respect, the logic of higher education market features in Malaysia is primarily attached to the efficiency motive of the government to centralise its control of public universities, rather than to push public universities to pursue economic objectives (Sirat, 2010). On the basis of this, sub-proposition 2.2 can also be only be minimally supported by the extent of evidence available across the two Malaysian cases.

8.1.5 Analysis and Answer to General Proposition P1

General proposition P1 assumes that the government policy frameworks affect the elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia. In the context of this research, the answer to general proposition P1 is primarily related and attached to the two similar sets of questions that were framed to examine the two sub-propositions outlined and discussed earlier (sub-sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.2). In other words, the assumption of general proposition P1 has been directly addressed by the same set of questions used to address sub-propositions P1.1 and P1.2.
On the basis of the available evidence from the four cases utilised to examine sub-propositions P1.1 and P1.2 (see sub-sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.2), the prior assumption made under General Proposition P1 can be fully corroborated. On this subject, government policy frameworks have been very influential in shaping the direction of the two Australian elite universities’ social inclusion practices in the three specified areas (outreach, access, participation and completion). In Malaysia, however, the social inclusion objective has only been implicitly addressed by the government policy frameworks and, as a result, social inclusion practices of the two elite universities have not been fully realised to a greater extent. Within-case, cross-case and cross-country comparisons and analysis have also provided convincing evidence that government policy frameworks in higher education have been highly regarded by almost all participants from the Australian cases as an effective mechanism to propel social inclusion practices (Chapters 5, 6, 7).

From the perspective of institutional logics, the centrality and compatibility of external values from the government logics in both countries are very high in all four cases. In Australia, for example, the values of social justice, human capital development and diversity from the TAHES policy framework have been appropriately accommodated within the internal value of academic elitism as a result of the frequent involvement of the university’s policy makers in the public policy debate. Also, the external values infused from the policy frameworks have also been regarded as essential in the context of an organisation like a university. Similarly, the centrality and compatibility of external values from the Malaysian policy frameworks, such as the lifelong learning and human capital development, are also very high in the two Malaysian universities, because of high dependency on the government for financial resources. The compatibility and
centrality of academic elitism as a value with the other external values from the policy frameworks are high because of the mission and objective of the government itself on its strategic planning for the two Malaysian universities. However, the centrality and compatibility of external values within the social inclusion objectives of the two Malaysian elite universities have not actually propelled a pattern of active adaptation for social inclusion across the three areas. Evidence for high compatibility and centrality of government logics within the social inclusion aims of the two Malaysian elite universities is not supported by a comprehensive practice of social inclusion. Thus a gap is identified between the perceived compatibility and centrality of government logics and extent of social inclusion practices across the two Malaysian elite universities. This gap is attributed to the lack of understanding of the ideal elements of social inclusion interventions across the three areas among bureaucrats at the macro level and policy makers at the micro level.

Overall, it is clear from sub-propositions P1.1 and P1.2 that government policy frameworks are affecting the social inclusion practices of the two Australian elite universities to a considerable extent, whereas the effect is not greatly in evidence in the two Malaysian elite universities. On the basis of evidence adduced to verify sub-propositions P1.1 and P1.2, it is apparent that general proposition P1 can only be partially supported. Therefore government policy frameworks do affect the social inclusion practices of the two elite universities in Australia but only moderately affect the two elite universities in Malaysia.
8.1.6 Analysis and Answer to General Proposition P2

General proposition P2 presents an assumption that higher education market features affect the elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia. In a similar manner to general proposition P1, the evidence needed to support general proposition P2 has also been framed to validate the assumptions put forward by sub-propositions P2.1 and P2.2 (sub-sections 8.1.3 and 8.1.4). A similar set of questions used to examine sub-propositions P2.1 and P2.2 is also applicable to address the assumption of general proposition P2.

In regard to sub-propositions P2.1 and P2.2, the available evidence via within-case, cross-case and cross-countries analysis has confirmed that the effect of higher education market features on the practices of social inclusion has been mixed across the four elite universities. The evidence of a mixed effect of higher education market features is built on the premise that only the practices of quality management across the four elite universities have been reasonably aligned with the three areas of social inclusion across the two countries. The direct effect of competition and reputation via innovative market-driven activities and the indirect effect via innovative student involvement across the three areas of social inclusion have been limited, and therefore a passive type of adaptation to the two values of competition and reputation is recognisable across the four elite universities.

From the two Australian cases, the centrality and compatibility of quality as a value from the market logics are reasonably high, because this fits perfectly with the internal value of academic elitism. Furthermore, the high compatibility and centrality of quality as a value have driven the
two Australian universities to undertake innovative approaches across the three areas of social inclusion.

However, the centrality and compatibility of quality as a value across the two Malaysian cases have only resulted in a minimal innovative approach for social inclusion in the area of teaching and learning. In this case, the centrality and compatibility of quality are not reflected in the other two areas of social inclusion. On the other hand, the centrality and compatibility of competition and reputation as external values are not well-blended within the objective of social inclusion across the four universities.

On this basis, the capacity of the four elite universities to adapt for social inclusion is only apparent and consistent via the practices of quality management. Therefore, sub-propositions P2.1 and P2.2 can only be partially supported by the available evidence across the two countries. Based on the conclusion on sub-propositions P2.1 and P2.2, general proposition P2 can also be partially corroborated. Thus the higher education market features have only moderately affected the social inclusion practices of the four elite universities across Australia and Malaysia.
8.1.7 Answer to Global Proposition P

Figure 8.7: The Overall Flow of the Research Propositions
The global proposition outlines the primary assumption that government policy frameworks and higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of the four elite universities in Australia and Malaysia. The approach taken to examine the global proposition is based on two interrelated stages (Figure 8.7). First, the preliminary group of sub-propositions P1.1, P1.2, P2.1 and P2.2 is defined with an assumption attached to each of them. The second stage examines the group of general propositions (P1 and P2) and assumptions attached to these two general propositions are related to the same assumptions used by the preliminary set of sub-propositions. In other words, the primary global proposition is actually the outcome of the combination of the two groups of four sub-propositions and two general propositions. In that case, the set of questions used to examine the assumptions attached to the first group of sub-propositions and the second group of general propositions is also related to the primary global proposition of the research.

The global proposition has two sets of assumptions. Firstly, the government policy frameworks will have an effect on the social inclusion practices of the four elite universities. Secondly, the higher education market features will affect the social inclusion practices of the four elite universities. The evidence needed to address the two sets of assumptions under the global proposition has been similarly presented to verify or disapprove the earlier groups of sub-propositions P1.1, P1.2, P2.1, P2.2 and general propositions P1 and P2. Accordingly, the substance of the evidence used to examine the earlier sets of propositions must be put into perspective to verify the primary global proposition.
Figure 8.7 shows the overall flow of the three sets of propositions used in this research. Firstly, of the four sub-propositions, only P1.1 is fully supported by evidence across the four cases. Secondly, the two general propositions P1 and P2 are only partially supported as a result of the outcomes from sub-propositions P1.1, P1.2, P2.1 and P2.2. On the basis of the evidence used to examine the two main groups of sub-propositions and general propositions, it is clear that the assumption of the primary global proposition can also be partially supported. The following are the key points that can be extracted from the answers to the global proposition:

i. Based on: 1. Evidence of perceived compatibility and centrality between the external values from government policy frameworks and the internal academic values of the four elite universities, and 2. Evidence of social inclusion practices across the three areas of social inclusion, it can be confirmed that government policy frameworks affect the social inclusion practices of the two Australian elite universities but are affect less the social inclusion practices of the two Malaysian elite universities.

ii. Based on: 1. Evidence of perceived compatibility and centrality between the external values from the higher education market features and internal academic values of the four elite universities, and 2. Evidence of social inclusion practices across the three areas of social inclusion, it can be confirmed that higher education market features do not fully affect the social inclusion practices of all four elite universities in Australia and Malaysia.

The overall findings related to all the research propositions are shown in Table 8.1.
Table 8.1: Summary of Findings Related to Research Propositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Propositions Under Investigations</th>
<th>Extent of Support Found</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1.1 Government policy frameworks affect the elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia.</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1.2 Government policy frameworks affect the elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Malaysia.</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2.1 Higher education market features affect the elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia.</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2.2 Higher education market features affect the elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Malaysia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 Government policy frameworks affect the elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2 Higher education market features affect the elite universities’ social inclusion practices in Australia and Malaysia</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Government policy frameworks and higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of the four elite universities in Australia and Malaysia.</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.2 CONCLUSION

This chapter analysed the overall findings of the research. The answer to the global proposition P affirms that the influence of government policy frameworks that address matters of social inclusion in higher education is much more prevalent and recognisable, whereas the influence of higher education market features is only substantial via the element of quality. From the perspective of institutional logics as a basis to analyse external institutional influence on social inclusion practices, the logic of government has been greatly maintained at the macro level by policy makers in the governments in Australia and Malaysia. The consistent preservation of social justice as an embedded value within the logic of government at the macro level has
substantially influenced the understanding of decision makers in the elite universities on the imperative of social inclusion in higher education. Accordingly, the logic of the market has also been properly rationalised at the macro level by the government via the related quality regulatory framework in higher education. As a result, recognition of quality management practice on the practices of social inclusion has been reasonably evident across all four elite universities.

The perspective of strategic institutional theory, on the other hand, explains that the strategic behaviour of the elite universities is apparently common across the two Australian elite universities. In contrast, the two Malaysian elite universities are passive and their strategic behaviours are confined to their aim to align with the government agenda for the purpose of legitimacy.

Chapter 9 will conclude the thesis with answers to the research questions, an overview of the core findings of the research, and contributions, limitations and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

9.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the overall conclusion of the thesis. Section 9.1 overviews the essential features that made up the chapters of the thesis. Section 9.2 provides the answers to the research questions. Section 9.3 sheds light on the core findings for the two countries of Australia and Malaysia. Section 9.4 elaborates on the contribution to the body of knowledge based on the key findings of the research. Sections 9.5 and 9.6 highlight possible limitations and suggest opportunities for future research. Section 9.7 concludes the thesis by reflecting on its primary findings and contributions.

9.1 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

This research investigates the adaptation capacities of the elite group of universities for social inclusion against the background of evolving external institutional logics that underpin government policy frameworks and higher education market features. It utilises a multiple comparative case study comprising two elite universities from each of Australia and Malaysia.

Chapter 1 elaborated the statement of the problem that underpins the research. The problem statement was outlined in regard to the increased interplay between different external institutional logics at the macro level and how the seemingly conflicting external logics are embedded within the various expectations on public universities that come from external stakeholders. The context of the research was also established in Chapter 1 with a brief historical narrative of the Australian and Malaysian approaches to widening participation in higher
education. The trajectory of this widening participation in the two countries contrasts in terms of underpinning policy frameworks and political ideologies of the respective governments. The variation in historical evolution of the widening participation agenda in both countries presents an interesting basis for multiple case comparison. Chapter 1 also outlined the objectives and the research questions in order to better understand the adaptive capacity of the elite universities on the proposed change agenda for social inclusion.

On the basis of the extant literature, the definition of social inclusion utilised was established in Chapter 2. Social inclusion for the purpose of this research follows the critical interventions model of social inclusion proposed by Naylor et al. (2013). The critical interventions model features all the necessary components needed to intervene for an integrated social inclusion practice. Chapter 2 also elaborated in detail the necessary components of social inclusion in accordance with the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion.

Chapter 3 expounded the theoretical underpinnings and the two constructs of government policy frameworks and higher education market features that make up the conceptual framework. Perspectives of institutional logics and strategic neo-institutionalism within the open system approach were depicted and integrated into the research theoretical framework. The literature on the two major theories of institutional logics and strategic neo-institutionalism was reviewed and accordingly the two constructs of government social inclusion policies and higher education market features were defined and elaborated within the framework of the two theories. Chapter 3 also outlines the criteria used in this research to classify the variation of adaptation for social inclusion on the basis of the theoretical underpinning and the concept of social inclusion. The
criteria were utilised as a template to report, analyse and compare the qualitative data from the four selected cases across the two countries. The conceptual framework, research questions and propositions were then articulated on the basis of the statement of the problem in Chapter 1, the concept of social inclusion in Chapter 2, and the theoretical framework in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 outlined the selected research design and methodology that form the basis of the methodological framework utilised to address the objectives of this research. Chapter 4 also clarified the theoretical selection of elite universities as sample cases and the group of participants that made up the unit of analysis within each of the four cases. Details pertaining to the variety of research activities undertaken during this research, the data collection process and the method of analysis were also presented in this chapter. The issues of validity, reliability and integrity of the research were highlighted.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 reported the case results and analysis of the two Australian cases and two Malaysian cases, respectively. On the basis of the case results and analysis on each of the four cases, a cross-case analysis within each country and a cross-case analysis between the two countries were then presented in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 analysed the findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 on the basis of the research propositions and the selected theories. The present chapter underlines the core findings, contributions and limitations of the research.

9.2 ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

On the basis of the answer and analysis to each of the research propositions in Chapter 8, the following section presents the answers to the research questions.
9.2.1 Research Question 1.1 (RQ1.1)

Research question 1.1 is framed to complement the broader primary research question of this research. Assumptions made by general proposition P1, sub-propositions 1.1 and 1.2 are utilised to address sub-research question 1.1. RQ1.1 enquires ‘How do government policy frameworks affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia?’. The answer is primarily based on two primary factors. Firstly, it is based on evidence of internalisation of social inclusion activities across the three areas of social inclusion. Secondly, it is based on the centrality and compatibility of external values on the objective of social inclusion. On the basis of the empirical findings and answers to the assumption made under general proposition P1, the social inclusion practices of the elite universities in Australia are affected by government policy frameworks through the active capacity of the two universities to adapt to the socially constructed external values of the government logic.

The active capacity of the two is justified via the intensive implementation of social inclusion activities identified in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and completion. The social inclusion practices of the two universities are primarily affected by the utilisation of explicit government policy targets and incentives to increase participation of identified disadvantaged students in higher education. Australian government policy frameworks such as the TAHES policy statement affect the social inclusion practices of the two Australian universities, as reflected in the pattern of active adaptation across both. In contrast, the social inclusion practices of the two Malaysian elite universities have only been moderately affected as a result of the implicit objective of social inclusion embedded within the government policy frameworks. In other words, policy frameworks such as the MNHESP and NEM do affect the
social inclusion practices of the two Malaysian universities in a specific area of community outreach and access programs for adult learners. The policy frameworks, nevertheless, do not actually drive the two Malaysian universities to implement a comprehensive plan of social inclusion in the other areas for identified disadvantaged students.

9.2.2 Research Question 1.2 (RQ1.2)

Research question 1.2 is: ‘How do higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia?’. The answer to RQ1.2 is primarily based on two primary factors. Firstly, it is based on the evidence of market-driven activities across the three areas of social inclusion. Secondly, it is based on the centrality and compatibility of external values from the market logics to the objective of social inclusion. On the basis of the empirical findings and answers to the assumption made under general proposition P2, the social inclusion practices of the elite universities across Australia and Malaysia are not fully affected by higher education market feature activities. Case results of the four elite universities indicate that higher education market features do affect the social inclusion practices via the seemingly mixed adaptation of quality management practices. However, the value of quality has not been comprehensively aligned as an organising principle in all areas of social inclusion. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that quality has been aligned with a particular area of social inclusion as a result of the broader government higher education quality frameworks in both countries. Higher education market features do not affect the social inclusion practices of the four elite universities via innovative market-driven activities and innovative student engagement as a result of economic market competition.
9.2.3 Research Question 1 (RQ1)

The primary research question asks ‘How do government policy frameworks and higher education market features affect the social inclusion practices of elite universities in Australia and Malaysia?’ The answer to RQ1 is built on the basis of answers to the other two sub-research questions, SRQ1.1 and SRQ1.2. Accordingly, the answer to the primary research question is linked to the assumptions put forward by global proposition P and other general and sub-propositions. The empirical findings do not fully support the assumption of global proposition P. Based on the answers to the two sub-research questions 1.1 and 1.2, it can be affirmed that the government policy frameworks do affect the social inclusion practices of the two elite universities in Australia but do not fully affect the social inclusion practices of the two Malaysian elite universities. The second element of the primary research question raises the influence of higher education market features on the social inclusion practices of the four elite universities. On this subject, the elements of the higher market features have been rationalised by government policy frameworks across the two countries and economic market-driven activities have not been fully realised for the purpose of social inclusion initiatives. As a result, innovative approaches for social inclusion in the three areas are driven more by policy frameworks rather by innovative approaches triggered for the purpose of market competition.
On the basis of answers to the two sub-research questions 1.1 and 1.2, this research is able to infer that higher education market features do not fully affect the social inclusion practices of the four elite universities across Australia and Malaysia. Overall, the answers to the research questions are summarised in Figure 9.1.
9.3 CORE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The following section highlights the core findings of the research in accordance with the evidence presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

9.3.1 Social Inclusion Practices of the Australian Elite Universities

The research has demonstrated that the capacity of the two Australian elite universities to adapt for social inclusion has been reasonably active as a result of the government’s policy incentives and the consistency of the federal government’s focus on the issue of equity since the first policy framework on equity was introduced in 1990. The active adaptation of the two Australian cases seems to suggest that the two elite universities have a penchant to change for equity purposes. However, as demonstrated clearly from the case results, the adaptation of the two Australian elite universities has been heavily moderated by the principle of meritocracy that underpins the process of student selection at the undergraduate level.

This clearly indicates that, even though the elite higher education providers have been framed within an increased regulated and legislated environment, their scope of autonomy to fulfill their own mission and aspiration for academic prestige has been well-preserved and maintained. Based on involvement in social inclusion policy responses and development, the collective political will of decision makers from the two elite universities and the association representing them has been very bold and persuasive. The presumably greater political will of the leaders within the two Australian cases has managed to moderate the extent of policy pressure for a social inclusion agenda. The open and soft regulatory approach of the federal government on participation and attainment targets via yearly discussion with each of the public universities has
also contributed to the landscape of active policy debates in the area of equity and social inclusion.

Even though the two Australian elite universities exhibit a pattern of active adaptation to government policy frameworks for social inclusion, the characteristics of their social inclusion practices have not been market-driven and innovatively pursued for market competition. This assumption is derived from the evidence of passive adaptation to the market elements of competition and reputation for social inclusion. It is prominently shown from the two Australian elite universities that innovative practices through outreach marketing activities to address the higher education aspirations of disadvantaged community members have been pursued in a limited way. In most cases, outreach activities to promote such aspirations have been conducted simultaneously during the university’s open day and other promotional activities. Outreach marketing activities to promote the awareness of and aspirations for higher education have been methodologically generic for all groups of prospective applicants.

On the other hand, quality as a guiding principle has been reasonably attached to the practices of social inclusion across the two Australian elite universities. The pattern of mixed adaptation to the value of quality, as qualitatively gauged by the reasonable level of awareness and reasonable scope of quality management practices, implies an interesting relationship with the internal value of academic elitism. Quality is perceived as a tool to frame the objective of academic elitism within the overall aim of equity and social inclusion. Even though such perception between quality and academic elitism can be logically derived, the overall integration of quality
framework across the three areas of social inclusion cannot be convincingly identified across the
two Australian elite universities.

Strategic adaptation for social inclusion is primarily initiated as a consequence of three primary
factors. Firstly, it is underpinned by the strong policy incentives from the Higher Education
Participation Programme (HEPP) of the federal government. The extent of funding made
available by the policy incentives has been consistent and has really driven the two elite
universities to formalise their social inclusion initiatives. Secondly, strategic adaptation is
reinforced by concern for moral legitimacy. In this respect, the extent of adaptation to policy
frameworks is propelled equally by the conscious efforts of the two elite universities to acquire
moral legitimacy from both the government and other stakeholders. Thirdly, strategic adaptation
is reflected through active involvement of organisational actors to preserve the organisational
identity of the elite universities. As a result, academic principles such as meritocracy have been
brought to the fore to uphold the culture of academic elitism that has been one of the key
attributes of elite universities.

9.3.2 Social Inclusion Practices of the Malaysian Elite Universities

The research has indicated that the capacity of the two Malaysian elite universities to adapt for
social inclusion has been recognisably passive as a result of related government policy
frameworks. The seemingly passive adaptation for social inclusion across the two Malaysian
universities is underpinned by a number of factors. Firstly, social inclusion as a concept in higher
education has not been fairly understood and elaborated at the macro level in Malaysia.
Government conceptualisation of social inclusion in higher education seems to have been
primarily focused on the activities of community outreach and accessibility to higher education institutions.

Addressing the accessibility of young Malaysians to higher education has been strongly realised through liberalisation of the sector via greater private sector participation as higher education providers. The liberalisation of the higher education sector is thought necessary by the government as a means to cope with increased demand for admission of non-Malay students, who have been implicitly regarded as a non-disadvantaged socioeconomic group within the social fabric of Malaysian society.

Another prominent focus of the government for accessibility to higher education is through distance education and pathway programs for adult learners. Participation of adult learners in higher education and liberalisation of private higher education providers have been realised as initiatives to provide democratic access to high-quality qualifications that will contribute to national economic effectiveness. Community outreach projects with an aim to promote societal welfare via mutual knowledge sharing between universities and the community have also been fully acknowledged by bureaucrats at ministerial level. The framing of the social inclusion scope of practices by the government through policy statements has apparently shaped the nature of social inclusion practices of the two Malaysian cases. Therefore, the seemingly generic and implicit social inclusion objectives of government policy frameworks have evidently constrained the social inclusion practices of the two elite universities in almost all areas.
Secondly, the capacities of the two Malaysian universities to actively adapt for social inclusion in the three areas of outreach, access, and participation and engagement are limited by the structure of the public higher education sector itself. Malaysian public universities are formally differentiated in accordance with grouping of research, focused and comprehensive universities. The differentiation implies government expectations about the specificity of contribution of each public university according to their concentration of academic resources and area of expertise. Further differentiation is between higher education providers and technical- and vocation-based colleges. The responsibility for widening participation seems to have been assumed by the comprehensive group of public universities, private higher education providers, vocational and technical based providers and community colleges. This set of providers offers sub-bachelor degree qualifications that meet the needs of the service industry and correspondingly suit the needs of students from academically and financially deprived backgrounds. Also, the access initiatives of the private universities are even bolder, with provision of good foundational courses and, presumably, better bridging programs. As a result of the explicit nature of stratification of the sector, the two Malaysian elite universities have not been pressured to undertake the major roles of widening their access to groups from marginal communities and students with disadvantaged academic backgrounds.

Thirdly, as opposed to the two Australian cases, the two Malaysian cases have not been actively involved in the policy development process for the purposes of social inclusion and widening participation. The evidence from the case studies shows that the leadership teams of the two Malaysian elite universities do not have a strong political will to intervene through a concrete set of policy responses for social inclusion. This assumption is also underpinned by the lack of
interest among decision makers of the two elite universities for sectoral differentiation in the three areas of access, participation and completion. The pattern of mixed adaptation of the two Malaysian elite universities for social inclusion underscores a characteristic of active compliance with government policy frameworks. In the area of social inclusion, the lack of interest and motivation to shape policy outcomes have been underpinned by seemingly weak political will of leaders in the two Malaysian elite universities. The lack of political will of Malaysian academics can also be partly explained by the nature of a large portion of the Malaysian society that is unquestioning of the state and its apparatus.

On the other hand, the marketisation of Malaysian higher education has been minimal in its scope among public universities. In contrast to the two Australian elite universities, the two Malaysian elite universities have not become too ‘cost-conscious’. Even though public funding for research elite universities has been gradually reduced, a large proportion of it has been consistently sourced from the federal government. For example, evidence from the two Malaysian cases indicates that the intake of international students has not been related to a significant cash value, because it is still very much constrained by regulatory frameworks. For that reason, innovative and entrepreneurial behaviors of the two Malaysian elite universities are not apparent.

As a logic consequence of the non-innovative behaviours to compete for students, the overall characteristics of the two Malaysian elite universities’ social inclusion practices have also been non-innovative. However, quality as a guiding principle has been minimally aligned across the three areas of social inclusion in the two Malaysian elite universities. Awareness of the element
of quality and its relationship with social inclusion is nevertheless propelled by the elaborative role of the government higher education regulatory requirements on quality.

9.4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has policy implications for both the Australian and Malaysian governments for the purpose of social inclusion in higher education. This research proposes an adaptation model of social inclusion for the elite group of universities.

9.4.1 Adaptation Model for the Elite Universities

The findings from the four cases across the two countries suggest that specific and realistic practices of social inclusion can be applicable in the context of a research-intensive elite university. This adaptation model incorporates the basic components of social inclusion based on areas that have been identified as aligned with the traditions of ‘academic elitism’ and research excellence’ that underpin the mission and vision of a typical elite university. The adaptation model features two primary and secondary roles that can be undertaken for social inclusion. The primary role suggests the ideal responsibility that can be efficiently assumed by an elite university. The primary role is made up of four broad components: 1. Innovative community outreach projects, 2. Research and recommendations on social inclusion practices, 3. Innovative engagement with the industry for students’ internship, and 4. Innovative access initiatives for post-graduate level. Innovative elements suggested across the four components are proposed on the basis of a greater extent of market-driven activities that focuses on the value of market competition.
Component 1 places responsibility on elite universities to undertake an innovative approach to coordinate community outreach projects for the purpose of social change and community empowerment. This social inclusion role fits perfectly with the service mission of elite universities and can be conducted by utilising the research expertise of academics within the universities. Component 1 of this adaptation model addresses the social inclusion initiative for non-academic external stakeholders. Evidence from the case studies indicates that this type of social inclusion initiative is very much preferable, as it involves the elements of collaboration, learning and engagement with disadvantaged communities.

Component 2 of the adaptation model of social inclusion focuses on the primary role of elite universities to undertake a leading role in conducting research in the area of social inclusion. This role requires elite universities to establish a dedicated research centre for social inclusion and undertake a consistent amount of research to inform policy and practitioners. Component 2 links perfectly with elite universities’ research expertise and can be regularly funded by the government on a fixed and continuous basis.

Component 3 is related to the utilisation of networking that a particular elite university has with industry. It requires a consistent rapport to be established for mutual benefits. This approach requires an established division of engagement and industry network within each elite university to allocate consistent internship placements for identified disadvantaged students as a preparation for permanent job attachment after graduation. Component 3 addresses the inclusion of internal disadvantaged students and it utilises the already established division to undertake the task.
Component 4 is related to the participation of identified disadvantaged students at postgraduate level. Component 4 addresses the inclusion of internal disadvantaged students by facilitating the pathway from undergraduate to postgraduate level. This approach to social inclusion has been preferred by the two Australian elite universities and has been highlighted accordingly in their respective policy responses to the government.

The adaptation model proposed also features a secondary role that can be voluntarily adopted by elite universities to assist the government’s objective of social inclusion in both countries. The secondary role is made up by three main components: 1. Innovative outreach activities with disadvantaged schools, 2. Innovative access initiatives, and 3. Innovative teaching and learning practices. The three components are meant to be implemented at undergraduate level. They are considered secondary, after taking into consideration the practicality of these components in terms of potential effectiveness within the context of an elite research-intensive university. The government will then be able to allocate the necessary resources to other public universities to undertake tasks related to the three components. Optimal allocation of funding to public universities can be achievable in accordance with the practicality of a particular social inclusion component and its fitness for purpose.

Nevertheless, the proposed model of adaptation for social inclusion does not imply that the secondary role should not be assumed at all by the elite universities. Since the intake of undergraduate students is still considered one of the major academic activities across all elite universities, these three components must still be considered. However, the adaptation model of social inclusion emphasises the practicality of a particular social inclusion practice within the
parameters and capability of an elite research-intensive university and this model will then be able to assist the government on future allocation of funding to support the objectives of equity and social inclusion. A proper and realistic scheme of funding, policy targets and better policy directives for social inclusion can be established by the government on the basis of the proposed adaptation model. Based on evidence from the four case studies, the element of quality management practice must be closely integrated within all the components attached to the two groups of primary and secondary roles.

9.4.2 Benchmark for Social inclusion

Table 9.1: Proposed Ranking and Classification of Public Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking of Public Universities based on the Performance of Equity and Social Inclusion</th>
<th>% Of Accessibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1 Public Universities: University C</td>
<td>Example: 27% of low socioeconomic status students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2 Public Universities: University G</td>
<td>Example: 15% of low socioeconomic students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3 Public Universities: University B</td>
<td>Example: 9% of low socioeconomic students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposed adaptation model for social inclusion should be ideally considered within a framework of segmented public universities for the specific aims of equity and social inclusion. This research proposes a classification of public universities based on the available data of student intake from identified disadvantaged or equity groups (Table 9.1). The classification can then be reflected through a system of ranking as a benchmark for social inclusion practices.

The proposed ranking should be made available to the public every year and can be a source of benchmarking for other public universities. For example, a Tier 1 public university indicates the highest performer that displays an example of good practices in the area of access. Since a
mechanism to gauge the effectiveness of social inclusion in the other two areas of outreach and participation and engagement is not available practically, a system to rank public universities based on the percentage of accessibility of targeted equity or disadvantaged groups can be initiated as a start. Explicit recognition of social inclusion practices can be acknowledged and formalised by the government and this will trigger an element of competition between public universities in the area of social inclusion.

9.5 KEY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LITERATURE

The inadequacy in the literature in regard to the adaptation behaviour of the elite universities for social inclusion has been addressed by this research. This research can be considered as the first major study that addresses the three elements of social inclusion in higher education (outreach, access, and participation and completion). It is also the first of its kind that utilises a cross-country perspective with a specific focus on the approaches of the elite group of universities.

This research contributes to the strategic neo-institutionalism literature by combining the perspective of institutional logics as a basis for its empirical evaluation. It recognises the variation of strategic adaptation based on the recognition of values within a broader context of a particular carrier of institutional logics. In other words, this research incorporates the perspective of strategic responsiveness theory (Oliver, 1991) into the framework of multiple logics analysis (Besharov & Smith, 2014). As elaborated in Chapter 3, this research utilises the three indicators of active, mixed and passive within the typologies of strategic responsiveness to institutional processes (Oliver, 1991). The variation of adaptation behaviour of the elite universities is framed within the typologies of strategic responsiveness to institutional pressures by taking into
consideration participants’ recognition of the values within the logics of institution. Recognition of the external values is a proxy for the centrality and compatibility of these values within the social inclusion objectives of the elite universities.

This research also contributes to the literature of social inclusion and widening participation in higher education in a number of ways. Firstly, it has comprehensively identified the extent of changes in the practices of social inclusion of the elite universities from the perspective of strategic adaptation. Secondly, it has managed to reveal the capacity of elite universities to adapt to the plurality of external institutional logics and the extent of their social inclusion practices as a result. Finally, this study has also established the two streams of internal and external social inclusion that can be conceptually developed in future research for policy and practical purposes. Internal social inclusion is defined here as a practice of inclusivity for direct participants within the university and external social inclusion is related to the practice of inclusivity for non-participants (i.e., non-students) outside the university. Figure 9.2 summarises the overall contributions of the research.
9.6 LIMITATIONS

Social inclusion in higher education is a complex phenomenon which is to be understood within the context of higher education. Comparative research between countries on this subject has been very scarce to date. Even though this study has made a meaningful contribution to the body of knowledge, policy and practice, it is also inevitably subject to several limitations. Firstly, the sample cases are purposely confined to elite universities. In this respect, the selection of a group of elite universities is methodologically justified by the concentration of academic expertise, research quality and revenue diversity. A different classification of elite universities might be otherwise available to accurately reflect the true classification of an elite university. Furthermore, the findings of this research are not generalisable to the overall population of public universities across Australia and Malaysia.
Secondly, the objective of this research is primarily framed to explore the impact of external institutional logics at the macro level based on the interpretation of practices at the micro level. It aims to compare the adaptation of four different cases across two countries through the combination of perspectives from internal participants and the extent of practices via available documents and triangulation from other data sources. In that case, there is a limitation, because interpretation of logics can be different if perspectives of other groups at the macro level are taken into account to explore the impact of external logics on the practices of social inclusion as a case by itself. However, this limitation is justified as a result of the impossibility of covering a wider scope of participants across the two countries as a result of resource and time constraints.

Thirdly, this research has a limitation in terms of its unit of analysis. Each of the cases comprises between four and five key informants entrusted with undertaking initiatives for social inclusion. However, additional insights can be very useful if more participants at the faculty level were interviewed, such as deans or faculty leaders. This limitation is very obvious across the two Australian cases, as most of the academic deans did not respond or declined to participate for some unknown reasons. However, this study has tried to ensure credibility in terms of the quality and reliability of data gathered by selecting key informants from the upper management levels of the respective elite universities.

The last limitation is the data collection methods. This research relied on semi-structured interviews as the primary method of data collection. Understanding social inclusion practices of a particular elite university can be better understood by the other method of participant
observation. However, this limitation is overcome by the use of multiple data sources as a method of triangulation to maximise the depth and richness of information.

9.7 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In light of the findings of this research, the following section outlines areas for further consideration. Firstly, this study reveals that the concept of social inclusion in higher education has not been comprehensively understood by participants in the two Malaysian elite universities, government officers and other academic experts. In this respect, there is a small gap that can be identified in the understanding of social inclusion as a practice between participants across the two countries. The literature also indicates that previous research in the area of social inclusion in higher education has been primarily conducted in the context of developed countries such as the UK, the US and Australia. Therefore, further research on this area may be further developed in the context of Malaysian higher education to inform policy development.

Secondly, the two streams of social inclusion practices, namely, internal and external practices, have been identified from the case analysis of the four selected elite universities. A future study on the effect of internal academic cultures of the elite group of universities on the practices of an external stream of social inclusion would be worthy of investigation in order to extend our understanding of the connection between academic culture and social inclusion.

Thirdly, a study looking at the social inclusion practices of the non-elite public universities and the impact of external factors on their practices might also be useful to inform policy development at the macro level. Lastly, this research identified common features affecting social
inclusion practices across the two countries, such as quality and meritocracy. The employment of a quantitative approach in future research will complement the current study though the approach of measuring the relative weight of importance of such features to the overall effectiveness of social inclusion practices.

9.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Research on social inclusion practices of public universities, utilising the components of outreach, access, and participation and completion as a basis of empirical evaluation, is still in its infancy. For that reason, there are ample avenues for further research that can be conducted using a different set of sampling units across the higher education sector. This thesis is a milestone for other researchers to further explore this area of research, especially in the context of Malaysian higher education sector, which is timely, considering the lack of published academic work on this area. The proposed recommendations may also be able to inform future research on social inclusion of the elite group of universities and the formulation of government policy frameworks and market mechanisms on matters related to social inclusion.

The crux of the thesis acknowledges that the elite group of universities is able to adapt and change for social inclusion, subject to a clear and consistent policy approach at the macro level. A clear formulation of social inclusion policies and frameworks by the government must thus take into serious consideration the segmented nature of the public higher education sector. A meaningful contribution by the elite group of universities can be realised and different roles to help achieve government societal welfare objectives in higher education can be emphasised through relevant policy incentives. The findings of the study also reveal that the specific culture
of academic elitism that has been strongly institutionalised, historically articulated and embedded as a core value must be acknowledged, together with a wider scope in autonomy, to ensure a realistic and effective approach to social inclusion across the elite group of universities. Overall, the core findings of the study have contributed to the academic literature on social inclusion in higher education.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT FOR FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Project Title: Social inclusion practices of the elite universities: A comparative study between Australia and Malaysia

Investigators: PhD Candidate - Mr. Rosmi Yuhasni Mohamed Yusuf. Senior Supervisor - Associate Professor Sharif As Saber. Second Supervisor – Dr Warren Staples.

Dear ____________,

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by RMIT University. This information sheet describes the project using straightforward language, or ‘plain English’. If you have any questions about the project, please contact one of the investigators.

Who is involved in this research project? Why it is being conducted?

This is a RMIT research project being undertaken by Rosmi Yuhasni Mohamed Yusuf as part of his PhD research studies in the School of Management supervised by Associate Professor Sharif As Saber and Dr Warren Staples. In this project we are contacting public universities and their stakeholders to explore how social inclusion practices are reflected through the initiatives of recruitment, support and retention. By doing so, this research will then be able to explore and evaluate the pattern of adaptation to the two factors of government policies and higher education market features. Furthermore, it aims to evaluate the ideological underpinning these practices as a result of the evolving interaction between the public universities and their external institutional factors. The research has been funded by RMIT and the research plan for this project has been approved by the Business Portfolio Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee (Project reference number: 1000432).

Why have you been approached?

We have selected your organisation as it fits with the criteria of an elite public university in Australia/Malaysia. Main topic to be discussed during the interview is primarily on the initiatives of social inclusion in higher education.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?

This project aims to explore the ongoing social inclusion practices of public universities and how these practices are being affected by, factors such as government policies and higher education market features. It also aims to evaluate the changing ideological focus underpinning their social inclusion practices. In doing so, the research will utilise a case study research design in the context of public universities in Australia and Malaysia through gathering qualitative data from the officers of the participating universities, officers from the ministry of higher education and social inclusion unit, students’ body or students council and other groups of external stakeholders. Relevant documents such as the university’s equity and social inclusion plan are also used for content analysis.

It is expected that a total of five participants from the participating universities will participate in this research project and discuss a range of issues including how recruitment, support and retention practices of the university are being conducted to address the needs of students coming from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. In doing so, questions being addressed are related to the impact of government policies and higher education market features upon these practices. The other groups of participant are made up of officers from the ministry of higher education across Malaysia and Australia.
If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

We would like you to talk to us about your perspectives on the elite public universities’ social inclusion practices for disadvantaged groups in the three areas of outreach, access and participation, so that we can gain valuable insight from your experience. The interview will take about one-two hours of your valuable time.

What are the risks or disadvantages associated with participation?

There are no risks in participating in this research project. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and confidential. Please also note that information provided by you will be specifically coded to ensure confidentiality (e.g. university A) and no information would be provided in publicly available reports, articles and thesis so that none can identify you and your organisation either directly or indirectly. Please be assured that any data collected can only be accessed by the principal investigator of this research. An abbreviated report will be available upon request, including information about the data collected and its use in the project. All information will be stored in RMIT University for a minimum of five years. The research does not foresee any risks that may cause any form of distress and discomfort to the participant. However, if in any stage that you feel any discomfort or distress or have any further enquiries; please do not hesitate to contact the principal investigator or any of the supervisors. Should you have any complain concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the RMIT Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network at the following address:

Chair, RMIT Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne 3001. Telephone +61 3 9925 5596. Email: bchean@rmit.edu.au

What are the benefits associated with participation?

This study explores an important area on how social inclusion/widening participation practices in higher education are being conducted to address the needs of students from disadvantaged background. This study utilises a cross-country comparative approach between Australia and Malaysia. It is hoped that the study will contribute positively to public universities in both countries. Further, it is also hoped that the government, in particular the Ministry of Higher Education in both countries will benefit from the knowledge and insights gained from this study as its focus on the approaches of the universities in their pursuing social risk management objectives through their inclusive activities of recruitment, support and retention for low socio-economic status group of students. It also helps the participating universities to evaluate the cohesiveness of the different processes of inclusion activities and indirectly will contribute to their understanding of how universities can perform their social responsibility/social risk management from the perspective of facilitating social mobility of students from the socioeconomically disadvantaged groups.

What are my rights as a participant?

As a participant, you have the right to:

☐ The right to withdraw their participation at any time, without prejudice.
☐ The right to have the tape recorder turned off at any time
☐ The right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.
☐ The right to have any questions answered at any time.

We hope based on the above mentioned facts, you would be kind enough to participate as an interviewee or to nominate a concerned officer from your organisation to participate in the research project.
Yours sincerely,

(Rosmi Yuhasni Mohamed Yusuf)
PhtD Candidate
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(Dr Warren Staples)
Lecturer
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If you have any complaints about your participation in this project please see the Complaints with respect to participation in research at RMIT page
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

Social Inclusion Practices of the Elite Universities. A Comparative Study Between Australia and Malaysia.

RMIT HUMAN RESEARCH COMMITTEE
Prescribed Consent form for participants in research project involving semi-structured questions

PORTFOLIO OF : Business
SCHOOL/CENTRE OF : Management
Project Title : Social Inclusion Practices of Elite Universities. A Comparative Study Between Australia and Malaysia.
Name(s) of Investigators : (1) Rosmi Yuhasni Mohamed Yusuf
                          (2) Associate Professor Shanti As-Saber
                          (3) Dr Warren Staples

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet

2. I agree to participate in the research project as described

3. I agree to be audio recorded

4. I acknowledge that:
   (a) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied (unless follow-up is needed for safety).
   (b) The project is for the purpose of research. It may not be of direct benefit to me.
   (c) The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law.
   (d) The security of the research data will be protected during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to me via email should I want to receive it. Any information which will identify me will not be used.

Participant’s Consent
Participant: Date:
(Signature)

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer,
RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V,
Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia. Details of the complaints procedure are available at:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/rd/hrec_complaints

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APPENDIX C: ETHICS APPROVAL FROM RMIT UNIVERSITY

Notice of Approval

Date: 13 December 2012
Project number: 1000432
Project title: Social Inclusion Practices in Public Universities: A Comparative Study Between Australia and Malaysia
Risk classification: Low Risk
Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Sharif As Saber
Student Investigator: Mr Rosni Yuhasni Mohamed Yusuf
Other investigator: Dr Warren Stephens


Terms of approval:

1. Responsibilities of the principal investigator
   It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that all other investigators and staff on a project are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure that the project is conducted as approved by BCHEAN. Approval is only valid while the investigator holds a position at RMIT University.

2. Amendments
   Approval must be sought from BCHEAN to amend any aspect of a project including approved documents. To apply for an amendment submit a request for amendment form to the BCHEAN secretary. This form is available on the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) website. Amendments must not be implemented without first gaining approval from BCHEAN.

3. Adverse events
   You should notify BCHEAN immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

4. Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF)
   The PICF must be distributed to all research participants, where relevant, and the consent form is to be retained and stored by the investigator. The PICF must contain the RMIT University logo and a complaints clause including the above project number.

5. Annual reports
   Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an annual report.

6. Final report
   A final report must be provided at the conclusion of the project. BCHEAN must be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

7. Monitoring
   Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by BCHEAN at any time.

8. Retention and storage of data
   The investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.
APPENDIX D: THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS

P1.1/1.2: How is the concept of ‘social inclusion’ defined in the context of your university?

P1.1/1.2: What are the values and principles that guided social inclusion practices in your university?

P1.1/1.2: How inclusive is your university to the disadvantaged groups?

P1.1/1.2: Do you think that the university aspiration for ‘social inclusion’ is aligned with the Government’s aspiration?

P1.1/1.2: How effective is the elite universities’ current policy in addressing the issue of greater participation for under-privilege students?

P1.1/1.2: To what extent do government policies on social inclusion in higher education are based on distinctive strategic plan of each university/association representing universities in Malaysia?

P1.1/1.2: How do government policy frameworks in general influence the social inclusion practices?

P1.1/1.2: How difficult it is to deliver what the university wants in relation to social inclusion practices, in the type of environment higher education institutions have to operate in? (uncertainty, government funding, autonomy, control over policy, politically sensitive etc).

P1.1/1.2: Does the university have a specific group/equity group to address in relation to its social inclusion practices?

P1.1/1.2: Can you briefly highlight some of the social inclusion initiatives in the three areas of outreach, access and participation?

P1.1/1.2: Does the university’s meritocratic admission system constrain its access initiatives?

P1.1/1.2: What, according to you, best describe the possible approaches of the elite university to achieve the balance between government’s aspiration and the elite universities’ realistic objective of social inclusion?
INFLUENCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION MARKET FEATURES

P2.1/2.2: To what extent, do you think, intensifying competition for status among elite universities has prompted the university to design a unique social inclusion policy for under privilege students?

P2.1/2.2: Do you think that extensive focus on international students intakes has constrained the implementation of inclusion focus on domestic under privilege students?

P2.1/2.2: To what extent has the segmentation of higher education institutions based on institutional hierarchy and reputation constrained the implementation of social inclusion practices?

P2.1/2.2: To what extent has the focus on maintaining academic quality has constrained the implementation of social inclusion practices?

P2.1/2.2: Can you briefly highlight some of the innovative market-driven activities that have been conducted in the three areas of outreach, access and participation?

P2.1/2.2: Do you think that other non-elite universities are having similar approaches with the elite universities’ approaches in social inclusion?
### APPENDIX E: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT AND CODING (MALAYSIA)

#### WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS (MALAYSIA) M2 (ELITE UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA 2)

Sub-Proposition P1.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Coding/Data Reduction/Analysis</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| EO1-M2           | Q: How inclusive is your university to the disadvantaged groups? Access is open to all, for those who are disadvantaged, we do have many avenues to obtain scholarship and many of them are funded by our internal funds including our bright spark program and all these scholarships from various companies and I think there are quite a number of it that they work though with UM. We are particularly known for offering to less able. We make sure that some lecture halls are accessible with wheel chairs to the less able for example. We make special provision for them in residential colleges and the one who are blinded or with eye sighted issues and all that. So we have for a long time makes provision for this kind of people. | SUB-THEME: ACCESS PASSIVE STRATEGIC ADAPTATION (COMPLIANCE) ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT  
Focus more on the disable groups rather than social status/races. Conform to societal norms and common practices in higher education. Life long learning is common across all public HEis. |
| EO1-M2           | Q: Does the university have a formal policy in place to support social inclusion in the area of access? We don’t really have a special policy but I believe we should. No such things here like having a certain percentage target for the enrolment of disadvantaged students. | SUB-THEME: ACCESS PASSIVE ADAPTATION (not actively pursued) (IMITATION) ADMISSION/NEGATIVE IMPACT ON INTERNAL SOCIAL INCLUSIVENESS  
No specific policy guide. Ad hoc basis and no target is fixed for enrolment Socia inclusion is NOT about mass higher education. |
| EO1-M2           | Q: How do government policy frameworks in general influence the social inclusion practices? If you look at the way Research | THEME: PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION (not actively pursued) (-) TO INTERNAL INCLUSIVENESS THAT |
Universities are structured, they are meant to be elitist. We were told to increase the postgraduate programs and the postgraduate students that we have and limit the amount of undergraduate students. Primarily because there are other universities that can take up undergraduate programs but they are not in a position to offer as many programs to postgraduate students as the five research universities. So somebody needs to take up the slabs. You cannot do both at the same time since you’ll constraint by your resources if you are trying to do both like taking into large numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students. Nobody will give you the money. So the cake is only so much and you start dividing it among so many public universities. So you have to let go the larger portion of undergraduate students to other public universities.

ADDRESSES INCLUSION OF DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: ADMISSION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

The structuring of the sector itself has constraint the university inclusiveness initiatives at the undergraduate level. Focus on posgraduates is also aligned with the university’s value of academic elitism.
APPENDIX F: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT AND CODING (AUSTRALIA)

WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS (AUSTRALIA) A1 (ELITE UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA 1)
Sub-Proposition P.1.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Coding/Data Reduction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EO2-A1</td>
<td>Q: What are the values and principles that guided social inclusion practices in your university? These are the values that can be initiated by any research intensive university. So we believe in the importance of education. That’s the first value. Two, transmission of knowledge. Three, we respect various views on values of the roles of the university as a critical site. In the context, it is there to be debate as to prove or disprove. This is what I polish about individual or highly communal activity. This is setting out where we are. Then this really comes to the issue of what we are talking about today. We were living on elitism that is based totally on talent and accomplishment rather than wealth or social status. And every corollary to that, we believe that in a democratic society like Australia, our institution of higher education must be based on excellence and accessible and emphasizing that for the sake of individual and for the sake of the society. And that means today would require more than just a simple mastery for the student and body of knowledge. That we fully appreciate that our role is also driven out from our understanding as well as knowledge and skill. We think that the moral and ethical framework, we believe that every Australian citizen is important. We believe that our institution shall be accessible and that we play a significant role in making sure that all Australians have access to our university.</td>
<td>SUB-THEME: POLICY OBJECTIVES In general, the primary value that guides social inclusion practices is academic elitism and social justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EO2-A1</td>
<td>Q: How effective is the elite universities’ current policy in addressing the issue of greater participation for under-privilege students? I think it’s quite difficult to get a university like A1 to deliver on the broad aspiration and capacity building work that is necessary for</td>
<td>SUB-THEME: ACCESS/THEME: PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION The university engages in activities related to social inclusion but is not sure on the future frameworks. Problem of uncertainty in regard to</td>
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the social transformation in community that would over time build at least for people from low-SES backgrounds to participate in the universities. There are a number of reasons to this, the first being that the problem with government funding in these areas is relatively short term and it is based on government electoral cycles. We have no guarantee that there is going to be ongoing support in terms of funding to enable the university to maintain strategies that are by nature should be in long term. resources needed to maintain the strategy and associated initiatives.