Chapter 4
Personal Characteristics, Career Trajectory and Job Satisfaction of Academics in Malaysia

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4.1 Introduction

The Malaysian higher education system although relatively young with only a 50 year history has undergone major transformations especially since 2006. The transformation has resulted in changes in governance structures and new funding formulae, legislation, action plans, academic tasks as well as key performance indicators. Inevitably, in an increasingly demanding global and local environment, the nature of work of academics has expanded to meet growing expectations and demands. The demands of institutional competition, accountability and quality assurance processes have impacted on academics (Azman et al. 2011). The demands on the major tasks of teaching and research have increased significantly with emphasis on key performance indicators. These changes have impacted the career trajectory, motivations and morale of academics in universities.

Despite the changing scenarios, research on the identity of the academic profession and the changing context of academic work in Malaysia has been rather limited.

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Little is known about who the academics are, what their work entails and their lived experience in HEIs. This chapter provides glimpses into the portraits, lives and experiences of Malaysian academics in terms of a rapidly changing Malaysian higher education system. The chapter opens with an overview of the profiles and composition of academic staff in the Malaysian higher education institution (HEI). In a Malaysian context, HEI means universities and colleges, while academic staff includes all categories of faculty members at universities and colleges. The chapter then proceeds with descriptive and inferential statistics on the profiles and job satisfaction of academic staff based on the Changing Academic Profession CAP study undertaken in 2007. These statistics form a framework for discussing the characteristics and identity of the academic profession in Malaysia.

4.2 The Background of the Academic Profession in Malaysia

The higher education system in Malaysia is centralized consisting of 569 institutions, of which 69 are universities (MOHE 2011a). About 21 are private university colleges, 473 are colleges and 27 are polytechnics. There are currently 20 public universities and 49 private universities. There are 59,275 academics employed in universities, of which 30,252 are in public universities. Most academics are hired on a full time basis (98.8 %) at public HEIs whereas 98.2 % of them are full time staff at private HEIs.

As in many other developing countries, the number of academics has risen in recent years from 48,240 in 2007 to 59,275 in 2010 due largely to the massification of the Malaysian higher education system. At the same time, in line with the needs of the future 'knowledge society' the Malaysian government has increased the number of graduates in the workforce. This number is expected to increase as the Malaysian higher education system looks for new ways to meet the rising educational needs of the nation as well as to be the centre of educational excellence in the region. At the same time, the increase in student numbers will lead to a rise in numbers of universities in the public and private sectors.

Malaysian public universities and colleges are a typical case of the Napoleonic model whereby they are part of the state machinery and they therefore belong to a national system. As such, Malaysian academics employed by the public universities and colleges are public civil servants. Hence, the terms and conditions of academic work including salary scales, patterns of appointment and promotion are determined by the government. Access to a permanent position occurs quite early after 1–3 years of probation. As public civil servants, academics are entitled to pension schemes, social security, housing and medical benefits. They are also guaranteed annual salary increments as are other employees in the public sector. In terms of working conditions, they are given a lengthy annual leave, with 25 days for junior academics and up to a maximum of 35 days for the higher ranks. Universities establish their own personnel policies with regard to recruitment and promotion criteria, workload and others. In general, academia is still a relatively secure profession. It is

indeed rare for an academic is to be dismissed in his/her career within the public civil system. He/she is kept in the same position even when not performing. The academic profession enjoy relatively high prestige and provide an acceptable standard of living and a stable career (Azman et al. 2014).

The Malaysian structure of the university academic staff consists of four ranks: professor, associate professor, senior lecturer and lecturer. The ranks stand in hierarchical relation to each other and represent the academic career ladder. In addition to the main ranks, some other categories of 'other academic staff' include research officers who are employed at universities or at affiliated research institutes. The other category consists of tutors or assistant lecturers who have temporary appointments of a maximum of 4 years. They normally work for their doctoral degrees before being appointed to the post of a lecturer. To be appointed as lecturers in research universities, a doctoral degree is required. Although the retirement age for public servant is 60 years, retired professors can be hired on a contractual basis until the age of 65. With a special application by the vice chancellor, a contract professor may prolong his/her term to the age of 70.

While there are some variations in the career trajectory of academics in public and private universities, a typical path for the academics in the public universities involves the completion of a doctoral program, a probationary lecturership of 1–3 years, the achievement of tenure; and promotion to the rank of senior lecturer, associate professor and professor.

For those who join the academic profession as tutors or fellows in the public universities, obtaining a doctorate is their main objective. The degree enables them to be eligible for the highest ranks of the academia and is a key for reaching a stable and prestigious position. In recent years, there are rising numbers of faculty members with doctoral qualifications and this could be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, the rise in the numbers of postgraduate programs at the local private and public HEIs. At the same time, the rising numbers of postgraduate student numbers in postgraduate education have encouraged faculty members to pursue doctoral degrees so as to enable them to teach on the postgraduate programs. The second factor concerns promotion opportunities. Academics need a doctoral degree in order to be considered for promotion especially at the professorial level.

Polytechnic and college teachers are normally required to teach more and to do less research They are also normally not expected to have doctoral level academic qualification. However, they form part of a recognizable spectrum that makes up a common profession with essentially similar values. Nonetheless, there are significant differences between those who teach and research in public universities and those who mainly teach in the polytechnics and other public non-university colleges. Perhaps the most important difference is that the salary and career structures of the two halves of the sector are different. University faculty is paid on salary scales and conditions of service that are unique. Polytechnic and college teachers are paid on salary scales that are closely related to those for primary and secondary school teachers. It is often argued that a public university lecturer finds it easy to gain promotion. The reason for this disparity is that the career structure of university staff reflects a general concern for academic merit, while that for polytechnic and college staff reflects a concern for administrative hierarchy and vacancy.

In the polytechnics and other non-university colleges, the academic hierarchy has retained greater vigor. Heads of department have remained permanent posts that do not rotate, partly because they represent established points on a salary scale that cannot be abandoned without loss, and partly because they fulfill a strong academic-administrative role that in universities would more normally be filled by professional administrators. There is also a significant difference of ethos between the universities and the rest of higher education. In the latter, the principal or director can take advantage of a more authoritarian tradition. In the universities, there is still emphasis on academic collegiality, autonomy and freedom.

4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The data used in this chapter is based on the Malaysian data of the international Changing Academic Profession CAP study undertaken in 2007. The CAP International questionnaire was used to collect the data. Prior to the administration of the data collection to the respondents, the administrators of institutional data were given a briefing by the research team from the National Higher Education Research Institute based in Penang, Malaysia. The administrators were appointed by the respective vice chancellors or presidents of the public and private higher education institutions.

At the institutional level, the samples were chosen according to strata based on gender and academic rank. All data collected from the HEIs aggregated to 1226 cases which constituted 2.6 % of the total population of academics at that time. These samples formed 4.7 % of the total CAP international data. This data forms a framework for discussing how recent and current changes affect the academics' career trajectory and are likely to affect the Malaysian academic profession in the future.

Some data transformation was performed to derive useful statistics such as age and institution type. Descriptive analysis of data involved frequency with percentages, and means with standard deviations. Cross-tabulation and comparison of means were also done to explore relationships among some variables. Inferential statistics was also engaged to test some independent variables for job satisfaction.

4.4 Profiles of Malaysian Academics

The demographic characteristics of Malaysian academics who took part as survey respondents are tabulated in Table 4.1 below**.** They provide a snapshot of the academic workforce although we do not have reliable population-level data against which to benchmark the findings.

The table shows that slightly over half of the sample population were male (51.7 %), 98.6 % hired as permanent staff and 36.3 % hold a doctoral degree. For those

Table 4.1 Profile of academics in Malaysia

Characteristics	Profile
Gender	Male = 621 (51.7 %); Female = 581 (48.3 %)
Age	Mean = 39.5; SD = 9.12; Min = 24; Max = 72
Tenure	Full time = 1171 (98.6 %); Part time = 17 (1.4 %)
Doctoral degree	Yes = 436 (36.3 %), No = 766 (63.7 %)
Mother tongue	Malay = 1018 (91.5 %); English = 34 (3.1 %); Chinese = 37 (3.3 %); Others = 23 (2.1 %)
Mother tongue used in teaching	Yes = 269 (22.3 %); No = 939 (77.7 %)
Mother tongue used in research	Yes = 186 (15.4 %); No = 1024 (84.6 %)
Age when doctorate was earned	Mean = 35.7; SD = 6.26
Contract duration	Mean = 1.37; SD = 0.955

Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008

Table 4.2 Age and country in which degrees were earned by Malaysian academics

		In Malaysia		Outside Malaysia	
Variable	Age	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
First degree	24.4	774	64.9	419	35.1
Second degree	29.57	549	55.6	439	44.4
Doctoral degree	35.74	171	36.7	295	63.3

Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008

employed on contract, the mean duration of contract is 1.37 years. The age of the academics are between 24 and 72 years, with the mean of 39.5 years indicating that Malaysia has a much younger academic population compared to that of Japan with a mean of 51.7. The majority of the academics are of Malay ethnicity forming 91.5 % of the academic population and Malay is their mother tongue. This profile shows that the academic population in Malaysia is overrepresented by Malays and under represented by other ethnic groups.

As can be seen in Table 4.2, on average, academics in Malaysia earn their first degree at the age of 24, their second degree at 30, and doctoral degree at 36; with equal gaps of 6 years in between. As the qualification goes up, the percentage of academics obtaining degrees outside Malaysia increases progressively and vice versa for those obtaining degrees in Malaysian universities. The higher percentage of first degree earned in Malaysia by academics may be related to the fact that most pre-service first degree studies are self-funded, and pursuing these degrees is considerably cheaper in Malaysia. In many instances, further degree programs which are much more expensive to fund, are pursued whilst the academic are in-service and they are funded by the employers under human capital development programs of the country.

Of those with doctoral degrees, 63.3 % of the academics received their doctorates abroad, and predominantly in English speaking countries such as UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. However, there is a higher proportion of academics

Table 4.3 Teaching discipline and mean age of Malaysian academics

Discipline	Frequency	%	Mean age
Teacher training and education science	74	7.2	39.3
Humanities and arts	62	6.0	41.6
Social and behavioural sciences	55	5.4	42.6
Business and administration, economics	101	9.9	38.9
Law	22	2.1	43.1
Life sciences	66	6.4	42.1
Physical sciences, mathematics, computer sciences	148	14.4	38.9
Engineering, manufacturing and construction, architecture	275	26.8	36.9
Agriculture	15	1.5	43.3
Medical sciences, health related sciences, social services	106	10.3	43.1
Others	101	9.9	38.8
Total	1025	100.0	39.5

Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008

who received their first and second degrees from local universities (64.9 % and 55.6 % respectively). Despite the high proportion of doctorates earned outside the country, the figures are expected to decrease in the near future as many academics are encouraged to further their studies in local universities especially in research universities.

With reference to Table 4.1, it is to be noted that 91.5 % of academics use Malay as the mother tongue and only 22.3 % in fact use Malay as the language of instruction while 15.4 % use their mother tongue as the language for research. It is therefore assumed that the English language is used as the language of instruction by 77.7 % of the academic population whilst 84.6 % of the population use the English language as the language of research. It would seem reasonable to assume that academics may prefer to do their postgraduate degrees overseas where English is the language of instruction and research as preparation for an academic career.

Table 4.3 shows the breakdown of the respondents according to the disciplines in which they are teaching. As a consequence of Malaysia's emphasis on science, technology and engineering in higher education, a large proportion of the respondents come from the fields of engineering, manufacturing, construction (26.8 %); physical sciences, mathematics, computer sciences (14.4 %) and medical and health related sciences (10.3 %).

The comparison of the mean age of the academics according to the discipline of teaching shows that the mean age differs according to discipline. For example academics who teach in the disciplines of the medical sciences, health related sciences, and social services (43.1) are the oldest groups, whereas academics who teach in the disciplines of engineering, manufacturing and construction, architecture (36.9) are the youngest of the academic population. The duration of medical programmes is usually 1–2 years longer than those of other programmes. In the medical service in Malaysia, there is a compulsory service of 2 years for medical professionals in government hospitals before they can be admitted to the professional body.

Table 4.4 Malaysian academics' gender and mean age by academic rank

Rank	Male		Female		Total	
	n, %	Mean age	n	Mean age	n	Mean age
Professor	58	52.9	24	50.8	82	52.3
(% within rank)	70.7		29.3		100	
(% within gender)	9.8		4.5		7.3	
Associate professor	115	48.8	73	47.1	188	48.2
(% within rank)	61.2		38.8		100.0	
(% within gender)	19.4		13.6		16.6	
Senior lecturer	106	41.6	93	42.5	199	42.1
(% within rank)	53.3		46.7		100.0	
(% within gender)	17.9		17.3		17.6	
Lecturer	314	35.7	347	33.8	661	34.7
(% within rank)	47.5		52.5		100.0	
(% within gender)	53.0		64.6		58.5	
Total	593	41.0	537	37.8	1130	39.5
(% within rank)	52.5		47.5		100	
(% within gender)	100		100		100	
(% of total)	52.5		47.5		100	

Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008

This requirement may account for the higher mean age for the academics in the discipline concerned. In the case of the predominance of younger academics in the disciplines of engineering, manufacturing, construction and architecture likely reasons may be due to the over-supply of graduates in these fields and the attractiveness of the academic profession.

The profile of academic ranks (Table 4.4) indicates a relatively bottom-heavy structure. The largest numbers of academics are lecturers. The majority of respondents (79.4 %) are at the lower ranks with lecturers forming 58.8 % and senior lecturers forming 17.6 % of the profession. Professors only comprise 7.2 % of the academic population.

The mean age for professors is high 52.3 years, followed by 48.2 years for associate professors, 42.1 years for senior lecturers and 34.7 years for lecturers. These imply that on average, it takes a lecturer 7.4 years to be promoted to a senior lecturer, another 6.1 years for promotion to associate professorship, followed by another 4.1 years to professorship.

With what seems to be an almost balanced distribution according to the total number of academics (male = 52.2 %, female = 47.8 %), gender distribution does not appear as an issue in the profession. However, deeper analysis shows otherwise. There are many more men professors (70.7 %) than women professors (29.3 %) indicating that the higher academic position, the more men are found. Women constitute only about 38.8 % of the total population of associate professors. 52.5 % of females are concentrated in the lowest rank (lecturer) whereas less than 47.5 % of men are in these ranks. This may possibly indicate that women advance more

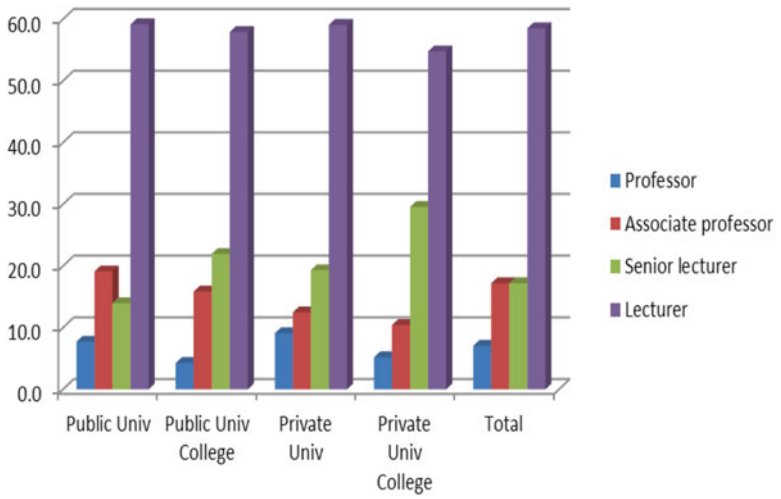

Fig. 4.1 Percentage of Malaysian academics based on rank (Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008)

slowly than men indicating that they may face the glass ceiling among other likely factors such as expectations to commit much more to family responsibilities and caregiving.

Figure 4.1 presents the breakdown of respondents according to type of institution and academic rank. It shows that professors and associate professors constitute about a quarter of the samples, and the other three-quarters are senior lecturers and lecturers. Indicative of the status of the institutions, the percentages of professors and associate professors in universities outnumber those of university colleges which are relatively newer institutions with more junior academic staff. The percentage of academics who are professors in private HEIs (9.1 %) is slightly higher than that of public HEIs (7.7 %). The percentage of associate professors is much higher in public HEIs (19.1 %). The percentage of junior academics is higher in private HEIs. This trend is not surprising as public HEIs have a longer history than private ones. Private higher education began to develop only after the enactment of the Private Higher Educational Institutional Act (Act 555) in 1996 (Malaysia 2006).

Further analyses show that the gender distribution in public HEIs is almost balanced, with slightly more females (51.0 %) than males (49.0 %). However, the scenario is different in private HEI with males (61.3 %) outnumbering females (38.7 %). This may be associated with favourable employment terms for women in the public sector in Malaysia. For example, a public sector female employee is entitled for 90 days of paid leave compared to only 30 days in the private sector. Another possible reason is the commercial nature of private HEIs which may discourage women to be part of it as well as the general tendency for women to bear a greater brunt of family responsibilities.

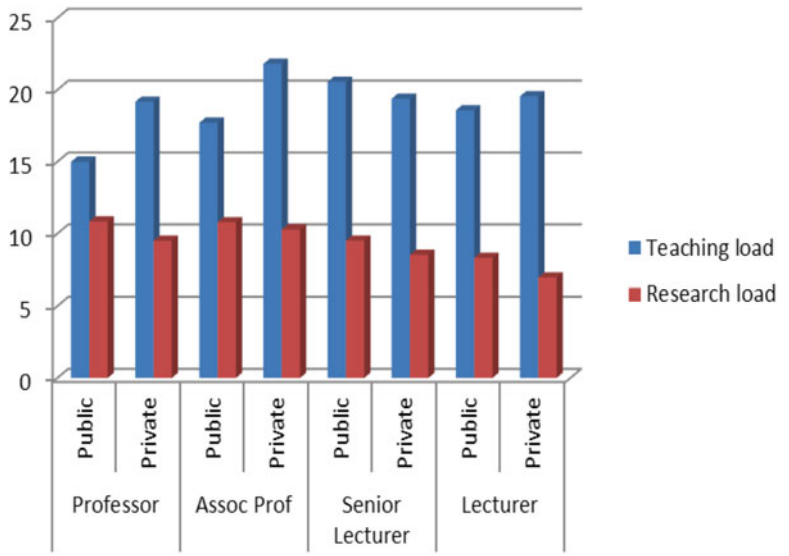

Fig. 4.2 Teaching and research load of Malaysian academics (Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008)

4.5 Teaching and Research

Two major traditional functions of an academic are teaching and research. Figure 4.2 shows the mean hours spent by academics according to rank and type of institution. The table shows that the teaching workload is higher for senior lecturers (20.56 h for public HEIs, 19.39 h for private HEIs) and lecturers (18.58 h for public HEIs, 19.55 for private HEIs) comparatively. However, the research workload is higher among the professors (10.84 h for public HEIs, 9.50 for private HEIs) and associate professors (10.79 h for public HEIs, 10.29 h for private HEIs). When the load is compared between public and private HEIs, it is found that, with the exception of senior lecturers, the teaching workload is higher in private HEIs.

The academics were asked to state as to whether they prefer teaching, research, or both but leaning towards teaching, and in both but leaning towards research. Table 4.5 indicates that in general, the largest proportion of Malaysia academics prefer to do both but leaning towards teaching (45.7 %) and to do both but leaning towards research (42.6 %). Very small numbers of them prefer teaching *per se* (8.1 %) or research *per se* (3.5 %).

The type of institution plays an important part in the development of academic identity (Becher and Trowler 2001; Henkel 2000; Neumann 2001). The analysis of preference for either teaching or research in Table 4.5 shows the perceptions of academics surveyed based on types of institutions. There are differences in the perceptions of academics on their preference on teaching or research according to the type of institution. The proportion of academics who prefer teaching per se increases in the order of public university (6.5 %), private university (9.3 %),

Table 4.5 Type of institution and teaching or research preference of Malaysian academics

Preference	Public university	Private university	Public university college	Private university college	All	%
Primarily in teaching	49	15	10	16	90	8.1 %
	6.5 %	9.3 %	11.7 %	13.9 %		
Both, but leaning towards teaching	359	64	33	49	505	45.7 %
	48.2 %	39.7 %	38.8 %	42.6 %		
Both, but leaning towards research	313	73	39	46	471	42.6 %
	42.0 %	45.3 %	45.8 %	40.0 %		
Primarily in research	23	9	3	4	39	3.5 %
	3.0 %	5.5 %	3.5 %	3.4 %		
Total	744	161	85	115	1105	100 %
	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %		

Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008

university college (11.7 %), and private university college (13.91). The proportion of respondents who prefer research per se is rather low across institution types at less than 6 %. An interesting observation is that although it was mentioned earlier in the chapter that private HEIs tend to focus on profit and place less emphasis on research, the percentages of academics who prefer research per se from private HEIs (5.5 %) and private university college (3.4 %) are higher than those of public HEIs.

Academic discipline is regarded as the central organizing vehicle within higher education. Belonging to a disciplinary community involves a sense of identity and personal commitment (Becher and Trowler 2001). The relationship between teaching and research within the discipline undoubtedly impacts on the nature of academic work. In some disciplines (for example, education), teaching is viewed as a generic activity or 'real' academic work (Neumann 2001) while research on the other hand, is seen as an engagement with an academic community. Thus, it is interesting to see the preferences and career trajectory of academics based on disciplines.

Table 4.6 shows the cross-tabulation of the discipline of current teaching against teaching or research preference of the academics. The results show that preference in both but leaning towards research are prevalent in the life sciences (65.6 %) and agriculture (66.7 %); whereas preference in both but leaning towards teaching is prevalent in teacher training and education sciences (47.3 %), humanities and arts (50.8 %), law (67.1 %), physical sciences, mathematics, and computer sciences (50.3 %), medical sciences, health related sciences, and social services (46.5 %). The preference towards research among academics from the life sciences and agriculture is to be expected given the nature of the fields which are researched-based. Conversely fields such as teacher training and education sciences, humanities and arts, law, mathematics and computer science provide comparatively less research opportunities and funding. In the case of medical sciences, the academics

Table 4.6 Teaching or research preference and discipline of teaching of Malaysian academics

Discipline	Primarily in teaching	Both, but leaning towards teaching	Both, but leaning towards research	Primarily in research
Teacher training and education science	10	35	27	2
	13.5 %	47.3 %	36.5 %	2.7 %
Humanities and arts	5	31	25	0
	8.2 %	50.8 %	41.0 %	.0 %
Social and behavioural sciences	1	26	25	2
	1.9 %	48.1 %	46.3 %	3.7 %
Business, administration and economics	18	44	33	4
	18.2 %	44.4 %	33.3 %	4.0
Law	3	12	5	1
	14.3 %	57.1 %	23.8 %	4.8 %
Life sciences	4	17	42	1
	6.3 %	26.6 %	65.6 %	1.6 %
Physical sciences, mathematics, computer sciences	9	73	60	3
	6.2 %	50.3 %	41.4 %	2.1 %
Engineering, manufacturing and construction, architecture	16	122	125	8
	5.9 %	45.0 %	46.1 %	3.0 %
Agriculture	0	3	10	2
	.0 %	20.0 %	66.7 %	13.3 %
Medical sciences, health related sciences, and social services	8	47	40	6
	7.9 %	46.5 %	39.6 %	5.9 %

Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008

have considerably heavy clinical duties and this responsibility may affect their motivation in conducting research.

The responses on work preference for teaching and research were also analyzed by academic rank and gender. Table 4.7 cross-tabulates the academic rank and the gender of the respondents with the preference of four groups of academics according to whether they prefer teaching or research, or combination of both. The table shows that generally a very large proportion of academics prefer to teach and research and only a very small minority of them prefer to be primarily doing teaching or research.

The comparison based on academic rank shows that the proportion of academics who prefer primarily teaching increases in the order of professor, associate professor, senior lecturer and lecturer. A similar trend is observed for those who prefer both teaching and research, but leaning towards teaching. On the other hand, the numbers of academics who prefer both but leaning towards research decreases with academic rank. These show the trajectory that as one grows in the profession, the interest shifts gradually from teaching to research.

Table 4.7 Malaysian academics' teaching and/or research preference by academic rank and gender

	Professor		Associate professor		Senior lecturer		Lecturer	
Preference	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Primarily in teaching	1	0	5	5	6	8	26	39
	2.0 %	0.0 %	4.8 %	7.7 %	5.9 %	9.0 %	8.4 %	11.5 %
Both, but leaning towards teaching	17	6	49	26	43	46	135	180
	34.7 %	31.6 %	46.7 %	40.0 %	42.6 %	51.7 %	43.8 %	52.9 %
Both, but leaning towards research	31	12	48	32	49	32	141	112
	63.3 %	63.2 %	45.7 %	49.2 %	48.5 %	36.0 %	45.8 %	32.9 %
Primarily in research	0	1	3	2	3	3	6	9
	0.0 %	5.3 %	2.9 %	3.1 %	3.0 %	3.4 %	1.9 %	2.6 %
Total %	49	19	105	65	101	89	308	340
	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008

When compared according to gender, Table 4.7 shows that the percentages of female associate professors (7.7 %), senior lecturers (9.0 %) and lecturers (11.5 %) who prefer teaching primarily are higher than those of the males (associate professor = 4.8 %, senior lecturer = 5.9 %, lecturer = 8.4 %). The proportion of female senior lecturers (9.0 %) and lecturers (11.5 %) who prefer both but leaning towards teaching is higher than those of their male counterparts. Conversely, the proportions of female senior lecturers (36.0 %) and lecturers (32.9 %) who prefer both but leaning towards research are lower. These trends show that at the higher ranks, there are more males who are more inclined towards research, and conversely at the lower ranks, there are more females who are inclined towards teaching.

4.6 Job Satisfaction

Figure 4.3 shows the dependence of job satisfaction on three personal factors: gender, familial status and language use in teaching. It shows that male academics are more satisfied (69.6 %, mean = 2.20) in their jobs compared to their female counterparts (59.7 %, 2.38). It also shows that married members of the professions (66.8 %, 2.24) are more satisfied than those in single (57.1 %, 2.45). However, those who are in 'other' category show high variability of satisfaction, with a big proportion in the high (71.4 %) as well as in the low satisfaction group (14.3 %). Academics who teach in a language which is different from their mother tongue (65.8 %, 2.28) tend to be more satisfied in the job than those who teach in their mother tongue (61.8 %, 2.29). It is possible that those who teach the disciplines in the English language may have more opportunities to be globally networked in turn providing more opportunities for publication and hence, promotion. With the recent emphasis on

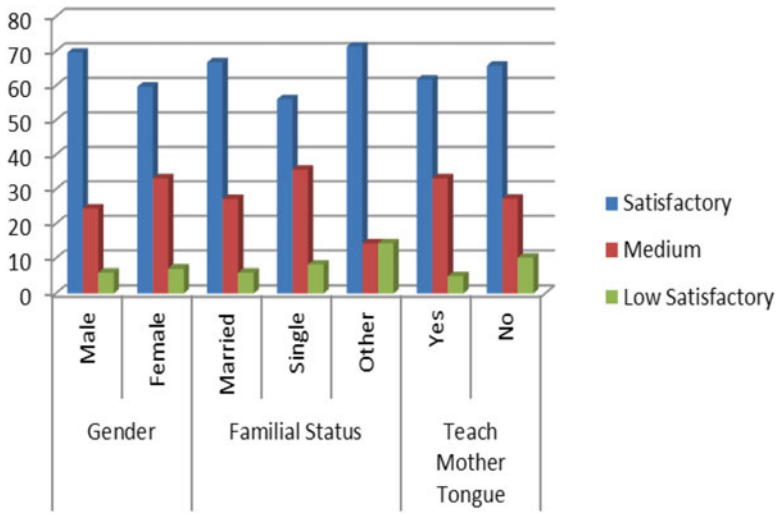

Fig. 4.3 Malaysian academics' job satisfaction based on personal factors (Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008)

key performance indicators in HEIs with regards to publication especially in cited journals it would be reasonable to assume that those who have cultural capital through teaching in English may likely enjoy more access to global circuits of publication and research opportunities which would assure better prospects of promotion (Koo and Pang 2011).

In order to compare the job satisfaction according to the field of teaching, the respondents were clustered into arts or sciences; and professional or non-professional fields. Figure 4.4 shows that academics in the sciences (68.5 %, mean = 2.24) are more satisfied than those from the arts (64.6 %, 2.28); and academics in non-professional fields are more satisfied (68.1 %, 2.23) than their colleagues in professional fields (65.8 %, 2.28). Academics who work at public HEI (65.6 %, 2.26) are more satisfied than their peers in private HEIs (64.1 %, 2.33).

Like most workers in comparable profession, academic perspectives on work roles change over their career trajectories (McInnis 2000; Winter and Sarros 2002). The work of the academic is predominantly framed and shaped by preference, commitments and performance in the three domains of teaching, research and service with primary emphasis placed on teaching and research. Figure 4.5 compares the job satisfaction of four groups of academics according to whether they prefer teaching or research, or combination of both in different degrees. It shows that job satisfaction is highest among those who prefer both teaching and research but leaning towards teaching (66.9 %, mean = 2.26) and those who prefer both but leaning towards research (64.7 %, 2.25). Those who prefer to primarily research have the lowest level of satisfaction (53.0 %, 2.85).

Table 4.8 shows the results of non-parametric tests of four international dimensions on job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The four independent variables

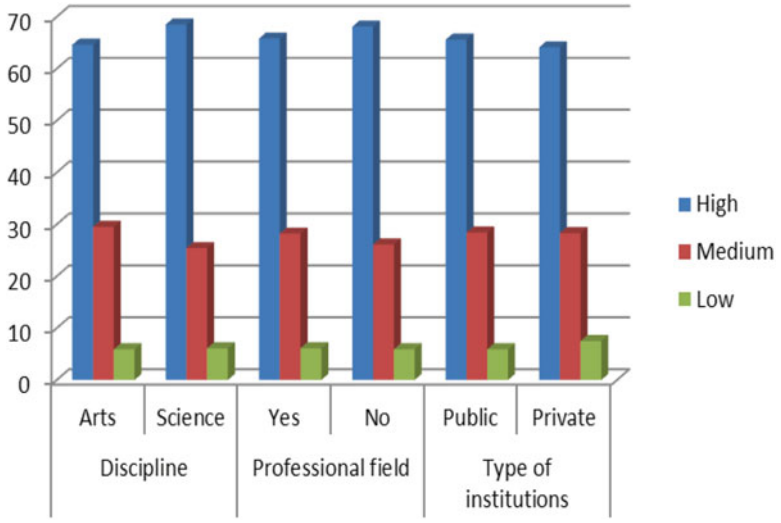

Fig. 4.4 Malaysian academics' job satisfaction based on work situation (Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008)

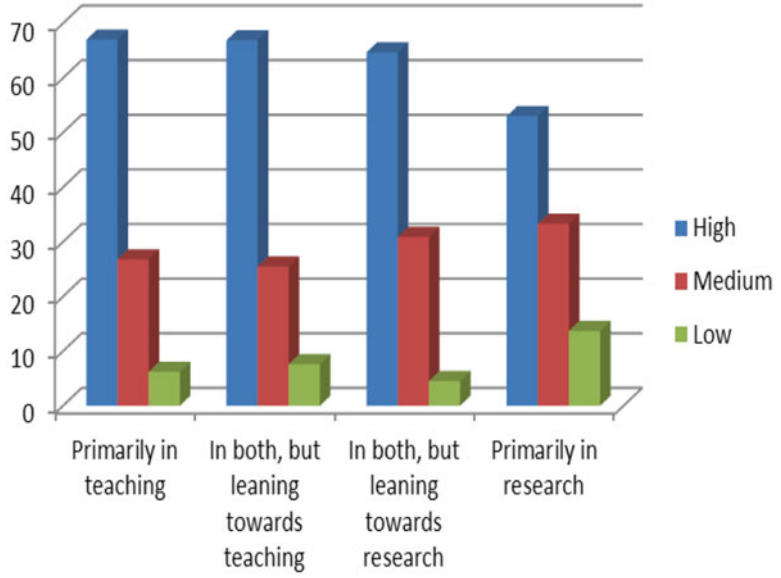

Fig. 4.5 Malaysian academics' teaching/research preference and job satisfaction (Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008)

Table 4.8 Malaysian academics' differences in job satisfaction by aspects of internationalisation

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Test	Sig.
Research collaboration with international colleagues	Overall satisfaction with current job	Independent-samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.629
Research which is international in scope or orientation	Overall satisfaction with current job	Related-samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	0.001
Publication co-authored with colleagues located in foreign countries	Overall satisfaction with current job	Related-samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	0.001
Publications published in a foreign country	Overall satisfaction with current job	Related-samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	0.001

Source: CAP Survey 2007/2008

are research collaboration with international colleagues, research which is international in scope or orientation, publication co-authored with colleagues located in foreign countries, and publications published in a foreign country. The test results show that there is no difference in job satisfaction between those whose research are international and their colleagues whose research are not international ($p=0.629$). However, job satisfaction is found to be higher among those whose research is international in scope or orientation than those whose research is local based ($p=0.001$). Academics who co-author with colleagues located in foreign countries have higher levels of satisfaction compared to those who only work with their local colleagues ($p=0.001$). Similarly those who publish in a foreign country are more satisfied than those who publish locally ($p=0.001$).

4.7 Discussion

The results of the demographic section provide a profile of the academic in Malaysian HEIs. Generally, Malaysian academics are permanently employed with almost an equal distribution of males and females. They are mostly early career academics as less than one tenth of them is at the professor rank. As with the actual profile of academic staff in Malaysia, the Malaysian CAP sample indicate a relatively bottom heavy structure in terms of academic rank. The results are similar to those in Germany, Finland, Netherlands, and Spain where the professoriate status is limited to 10 % or less of the total academic population and accordingly, where the professoriate can be expected to be more selective (Pedro 2009).

We found that the in total sample of the academics who participated in the CAP survey, a clear majority were fulltime academic staff of Malay ethnicity. The academic sample can be largely characterized as early career faculty members. The average age of the Malaysian academics is 40 years a relatively young group as compared to those from countries such as Japan, Russia and Israel. Only one third of the academics have a doctoral degree. Many of them earn their first degrees in

Malaysia but the majority of those with doctoral degree earned it from overseas institutions. Majority of the sampled academics use English as the language of instruction and language of research. It is estimated that in 5–10 years, given the bottom heavy structure of the profession and that the difference in the average age of professor and lecturer is 17 years, the Malaysian higher education system will begin to suffer the consequences of the academic generation gap.

Academics in public HEIs have a comparatively higher workload for research across all ranks as compared to private HEIs. This trend is not surprising in view of the major differences in the general roles of HEIs according to institutional type: public HEIs to serve the people and to contribute to national development and private HEIs to generate income for the main stakeholders (Wan 2007). However, it is interesting to note that more academics in private HEIs prefer to embark on research work on top of their teaching duties. Since 'preference' is in the state of mind and is not actual, it probably shows something positive, that reflects the mindset among the private HEI academics that they should have done more research but the circumstances do not allow them to do so. Further, employers in private HEIs would expect their staff to teach more in line with the demand from their students whereas their academic staff may for self-actualization purposes prefer to undertake research so as to keep actively engaged with the academic community in their disciplines of study.

Job satisfaction is found to be higher among academics who serve in public HEIs. This is may be related to job security and the perceived prestige accorded to those in the public service. Academics who are globally networked tend to be more satisfied due perhaps to intrinsic rewards such as social connections and extrinsic rewards such as promotion, visibility, and publication in line with the increasing emphasis on internationalisation. The dominant discourse of recognition including promotion systems in Malaysia as in other developed nations are moving rapidly towards the privileging of publications in high impact journals a pursuit which is closely linked to global centres of research and publications especially those located in developed HE systems which are principally Anglo-US centric. One may call into question the values of the HE systems including notions of what service to the local community means. Such contestations seems to be losing ground in the face of the chase 'to the top' in terms of the ranking game.

Data on the gender structure of the professoriate indicate that a small minority of women advanced to the highest rank. The rank distribution of women's position in Malaysian academia is remarkably similar to those in advanced HE systems where women are less likely to climb up the academic career ladder and hold a professorial position. Female academic staff here account for a much higher proportion than female staff in Germany, Netherlands, United Kingdom (Pedro 2009). Glass ceilings and male dominated cultures has indeed influenced and shaped women's careers in academia. The existence of a glass ceiling is reflected in the fact that only a small number of women reach the top of the academic hierarchy.

Why do women advance less than men? There are many possible explanations for the decreasing percentage of women at the higher ranks. The first and probably the most influential is age since the massive entrance of women into ranks of

academic staff has been a relatively recent phenomenon – in the last 10 years. Consequently, the average age of female academic staff is considered lower than that of the men. Secondly, women tend to publish less than men although research has found that the probability of attaining rank is influenced more strongly by gender than by publications (Toren and Moore 1998; De Weert 2000; Winslow 2010). In other words, even if women would publish as much as men, their probability of advancement would have been lower than men's. Thirdly, the self-selection of women avoiding the most competitive world at the top of the academic career is also a likely reason. Whatever the reasons are, it is quite clear that greater efforts must be made to encourage the recruitment and retention of women in higher ranks so as not to waste talents and more importantly, to ensure representation and diversity of Malaysia's communities.

Nevertheless, although women are underrepresented in the higher ranks, the situation is changing fast as their share is steadily increasing following the pattern in post-secondary education where they are now the majority (Zalizan et al. 2013). The overall gender distribution is getting closer to that of the student population. Since there are presently more females than male students in Malaysian universities, the fairer representation of women among the academic staff is likely in the near future. This is certainly a consequence of the dramatic increase in the participation of women in the Malaysian labor force as young women find it possible to combine a career and motherhood. The provision of more favourable employment terms and conditions for women by the government, including the increase in the length of maternity leave from 42 to 90 days, will further accelerate this positive trend.

The national CAP study found that the faculty members throughout the Malaysian public HEIs are still largely Malays. The lack of ethnic diversity and representation among faculty in Malaysia should be a serious cause of concern. Diverse ethnic representations is as important as the representation of gender, age, disability, belief, nationality, and so on. Indeed, an equitable HE system would ensure that academics assume significant roles in representing cultural diversity of the country. This issue may be resolved if the government walks the talk to effect the national reconciliation exercise formulated as an aftermath of the thirteenth general elections in 2013. In fact, ascertaining cultural diversity will help enhance social cohesion which is increasingly seen to be a major challenge for Malaysia. Social cohesion is often viewed 'an attribute of societies' which implies equality of opportunity so that people can exercise their fundamental rights and ensure their welfare, without discrimination of any kind and in response to diversity (FIIAPP 2011, p. 8).

Another fundamental challenge facing Malaysian universities relates to the recruitment, promotion and retention of talented individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds as faculty members. Rapidly changing academic and labor force scenarios make it difficult to attract the best and the brightest to academic careers. In addition, identifying factors that matter most in the selection and promotion of faculty has also become more challenging (Azman 2012). The problem of recruiting talented staff is more acute in the new universities located in the sub regions, provinces or states that are not within the big cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Baru.

4.8 Concluding Remarks

The development and success of higher education in Malaysia depends on the effective implementation of the Higher Education Strategic Plan 2020 and Beyond (MOHE 2007) and the shorter term action plans (MOHE 2011b, c). More recently, the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 *(Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia)* (PPPM) (MOE 2012) has been launched by the minister of the newly merged Ministry of Education (MOE) (which covers higher education and school sectors) who is also the Deputy Prime Minister. To ensure the success of these important plans, the academics who are one of the main actors of the HE system need to be empowered. Issues raised and challenges discussed in the previous section need to be confronted.

The Malaysian CAP 2007 team has been expanded to include a bigger and more representative team and has conducted the Malaysian Academic Profession Study in 2011 (MAP 2011) to capture the nature and extend of change during the 2007–2011 period. The MAP 2011 study involves a wider scope of study and a larger number of samples. Findings and recommendations have been formulated and presented to the policy makers. It is hoped that the discussions in this chapter, together with the recommendations of MAP 2011 will translate into firm actions to enhance the attractiveness of the academic profession which doubtless will strengthen Malaysia's HE system.

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