



## A Preliminary Study on Cost of Lost in Answer Booklet: A Case Study in Uitm Cawangan Perlis

Azlan Abdul Aziz<sup>1</sup>, Nurul Izzati Mazni<sup>2</sup>, Nor Azriani Mohamad Nor<sup>3</sup>, Diana Sirmayunie Mohd Nasir<sup>4</sup>, Rohaini Ramli<sup>5</sup>, Robiatun Adawiyah Khairul Anuar<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>Department of Mathematic and Statistics, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Perlis, Arau,02600, Malaysia

<sup>6</sup>Kolej UNITI, Kompleks UNITI, Port Dickson, 71250, Malaysia

Corresponding email: azlan172@perlis.uitm.edu.my

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### Article Information

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### Abstract

A cut off budget up to 27 percent for the year 2016, have significant impact to the public institutions of higher learning. Universities need to generate their own income and minimize unnecessary expenditures to ensure all activities that have been planned working smoothly. A study on 90 Answer Booklets for examination session October 2015 reveals a total of 419 unused pages and this cost a RM8.38 lost. As a basis of comparison, in year 2014 the estimated cost of lost for unused pages for both UiTM Perlis and all other UiTM campuses are RM7,222.45 and RM131,145.79 respectively. The university needs to redesign the Answer Booklet so that students can fully utilise pages provided and minimize the cost of preparing the Answer Booklet.

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### INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian federal budget for the year 2016 that was presented on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 by Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Dato' Sri Najib Razak to the Dewan Rakyat, revealed that the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) will suffer a reduced budget of RM13.37 billion, which is 15.24 percent lesser compared to 2015 (Ministry of Finance, 2015). This significant cut will affect public institutions of higher learning, where most of universities budgetary decreased up to 27 percent compared to the year 2015. Ministry of MOHE, Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh and former Vice Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Tan Sri Dato' Sri Prof. Ir. Dr. Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar urge public universities to generate their own income through research activity, consultancy and inter-industry partnership (BERNAMA, 2015). For example, UiTM is now able to line up a panel of experts to generate income to the university through seminars, workshops, courses, briefings and resources provided by the ministry (BERNAMA, 2015). Besides, universities can also reduce their operational cost via

resource optimization and one of the approaches that can be done is by reducing the cost of preparing examination answer scripts (Answer Booklet) as suggested by (Smyth, Fredeen, & Booth, 2010).

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) has 2 different academic sessions; the Diploma and Bachelor Degree programme. For Diploma programmes, the examination will be held in March and September, while June and December are for Bachelor Degree programmes. Students will be evaluated based on their assessments in class and during final examination. Students need to answer all questions in the Answer Booklet supplied.

#### *Problem Statement*

The examination answer script (Answer Booklet) is a booklet of 20 pages provided by The Academic Affairs Division (BHEA) of UiTM Perlis for students to write their answers during an examination. Meanwhile, the Additional Answer Booklet with 12 pages will be given to students if necessary. The problem arises when students did not use all the pages provided in the Answer Booklet. After an examiner is done with the marking and grading processes, the BHEA will collect all Answer Booklets together with the unused pages from the examiner, and it will be disposed after a certain period of time. Disposal of unused pages in Answer Booklets is a waste that needs to be avoided, so that the university can minimize the cost of preparing Answer Booklets.

#### *Objectives*

Ergo, this study was conducted to identify the number of unused pages in Answer Booklets and to determine the cost of lost in preparing the Answer Booklet.

### **METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS**

A sample of 90 Answer Booklets collected from an examination session October 2015 for Diploma programme was studied. Based on the study, 419 pages of the Answer Booklet given are unused. It means that for every Answer Booklet given, on average 5 pages are wasted. According to Bursary UiTM Perlis, the cost of preparing an Answer Booklet is RM0.40 or equivalent to 2 cents per page. This means, the cost of lost incurred for 419 unused pages is RM8.38. In short, for every 1 Answer booklet, there are 5 pages were wasted, and RM0.10 lost.

According to the information given by BHEA, for the year 2014, the estimated numbers of Answer Booklet that has been used during examination for both UiTM Perlis and the all UiTM campuses are shown in Table I.

TABLE I  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ANSWER BOOKLET USED DURING EXAMINATION

Campus	Programme	Examination	Answer Booklet (unit)
UiTM Perlis	Diploma	March 2014	24,306
		September 2014	28,172
	Bachelor Degree	June 2014	12,545
All UiTM campuses	Diploma	March 2014	414,584
		September 2014	440,943
	Bachelor Degree	June 2014	276,480

Let us assume that the number of Answer Booklet used for examination session December 2014 is similar to June 2014, and use the findings stated earlier as a basis of comparison, the expected number of unused pages and cost of lost incurred as Table II.

TABLE III  
EXPECTED NUMBER OF UNUSED PAGES AND COST OF LOST

Campus	Programme	Examination	Unused Pages	Cost of Lost (RM)
UiTM Perlis	Diploma	March 2014	113,158	2,263.16
		September 2014	131,156	2,623.13
	Bachelor Degree	June 2014	58,404	1,168.08
		December 2014	58,404	1,168.08
All UiTM campuses	Diploma	March 2014	1,930,119	38,602.38
		September 2014	2,052,835	41,056.69
	Bachelor Degree	June 2014	1,287,168	25,743.36
		December 2014	1,287,168	25,743.36

In Table III, this study unearths the estimated total cost of lost for unused pages in Answer Booklet for both UiTM Perlis and all UiTM campuses in year 2014 are RM7,222.45 and RM131,145.79 respectively. These are the amount that needs to be conserved for other activities conducted by the university.

TABLE IIIII  
ESTIMATED COST OF LOST

Campus	Programme	Examination	Cost of Lost (RM)
UiTM Perlis	Diploma	March 2014	2,263.16
		September 2014	2,623.13
	Bachelor Degree	June 2014	1,168.08
		December 2014	1,168.08
		Total	7,222.45
All UiTM campuses	Diploma	March 2014	38,602.38
		September 2014	41,056.69
	Bachelor Degree	June 2014	25,743.36
		December 2014	25,743.36
		Total	131,145.79

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the university needs to redesign the Answer Booklet, so that students can fully utilise all the pages provided and minimize the cost of preparing the Answer Booklet as well. A comprehensive study needs to be conducted, to ascertain the exact number of unused pages and cost of lost caused from it.

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