

UMS aims to be a global centre in research fields

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is hoping to conduct research in the field of psychology with international scholars, particularly with Japan, to realise Malaysia's hope to be among the best education providers in the region.

Its Vice Chancellor, Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, said this after launching a three-day Southeast Asia Psychology (SEAP) 2012 Conference at UMS, here, Wednesday.

He said UMS aims to become a global centre in various academic and research fields in line with the national development and the current market demand.

"Thus, we hope this conference with its theme 'Unity through Diversity' could act as a platform to exchange ideas and strengthen the relations among psychologists not only in the Southeast Asian region but around the globe as well.

"We have psychologists from multi-disciplinary backgrounds such as Germany, the United States, the Philippines and Japan who are here to share knowledge on how to improve the quality of academics," he said.

He said they have discussed possibilities of working together with universities in Japan, particularly in the field of psychology.

"Being the only School of Psychology in Malaysia, it is my challenge for the school to engage more in community development because I believe with the expertise in understanding human behaviour, it is important to focus on the practical and not merely theoretical aspect of human lives," he said.

Meanwhile, Dean of the School of Psychology and Social Work, Dr Murnizam Halik, who is also SEAP 2012 Chairman, said this was the second SEAP conference organised by the school.



Mohd Harun (left) presenting the award to a recipient while Murnizam (centre) looks on.

"The first was in 2009 where over 260 papers were presented comprising papers from various-countries," he said, adding that out of this number, 30 per cent of the papers were presented by international participants.

This year's conference, he said, saw an increase in the number of papers to 356, which is almost a 40 per cent more from the previous conference.

"What makes this conference more exciting is the increase in the number of international papers from 30 per cent previously to 45 per cent this year and this year we have more student presenters compared to lecturers," he said.

"Psychology in Southeast Asia might not be ready to establish its own division similar to American Psychological Association's 54 divisions, but by sharing our thoughts and ideas through this conference, we might come up with our own division that reflects psychology in Southeast Asia," he added.

During the conference's launching ceremony, the Dean's Award, SEAP 2012 Award and the School of Psychology and Social Work Award, were given to 14 papers that are of outstanding quality, became a benchmark for students and fulfilled the standard required in an academic research respectively.