

Current Issues and Themes in Education

A Handbook for Practitioners

Edited By:
Suhailah Hussien



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THE EXPERIENCE OF ACADEMIC FAILURES IN A FOREIGN LAND: A CASE STUDY OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN AL AZHAR UNIVERSITY

Afareez Abd Razak

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1950's, Al-Azhar has been one of the most popular universities for Malaysian Muslim scholars to study a variety of subjects pertaining to religious studies. Hitherto, most of the *muftis*, and officers holding religious posts in Malaysia are graduates from Al-Azhar. In 1958, there were only 40 Malaysian students studying at Al-Azhar, but by 1974, this number had increased to 199 (Eccel, 1984). Remarkably, by the year 2000 there were 5,724 students studying at Al-Azhar. However, what is alarming is that half of the students failed in their examination and could not be promoted. (This means if the student is in Year 1 for example, he/she will repeat that particular Year and will not proceed to the following Year). (New Straits Times, September 18, 2000).

The question is, why are so many Malaysian students failing? The problem does not end here.