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The Impact of Global Geopolitical Conflict on the Academic Sustainability of Lecturers in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the impact of global geopolitical conflict, specifically the tension between the United States and Iran in 2026, on the academic sustainability of lecturers in Malaysia. Although Malaysia is not directly involved in the conflict zone, spillover effects on the economy as well as emotional and social well-being across borders may significantly influence lecturers' academic roles and responsibilities. This study examines three main aspects, namely lecturers' involvement in new and unconventional learning activities in response to global uncertainty, their participation in professional and academic activities beyond teaching and learning, and the impact on teaching as well as logistical challenges, including socio-economic factors and emotional and social well-being. A quantitative approach is adopted through a structured questionnaire distributed online to lecturers teaching halal-related subjects at UiTM, with all items measured using a five-point Likert scale. The findings are expected to show that global geopolitical tensions not only influence changes in academic activities, but also affect financial stability and lecturers' emotional and social well-being, thereby impacting their academic sustainability.

KEYWORDS: US-Iran Conflict, Academic Sustainability, Professionalism, Socio-Economic Challenges, Emotional and Social Well-being.

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly challenging era of globalization, the stability of a country is no longer solely dependent on domestic factors but is also highly vulnerable to international geopolitical dynamics. For Malaysia, the conflicts between the world's great powers, such as the strategic competition between the United States (US) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) as well as the ongoing tensions between Iran and the United States since February 2026, have created a complex chain of socio-economic effects. The Iran-US conflict is not just a regional issue in West Asia but is a decisive factor for the stability of the global commodity market, as Iran and the US are-Malaysia trading partners in the region (Idris & Yusoff, 2015).

One of the most significant impacts of Iran-US tensions is the threat to global energy security. Any military provocation in a strategic area such as the Strait of Hormuz has great potential to trigger a disruption of the world's crude oil supply. Consequently, sharply rising oil prices have become a pressing reality for energy-importing and consuming countries like Malaysia (Zulkifli, 2026). This increase leads to a domino effect of increased logistics costs, inflation of essential goods and volatility in the local stock market (Hoque et al., 2021).

Behind these macroeconomic figures, there is one sector that is often overlooked but deeply impacted, namely the higher education sector. The academic sustainability of lecturers in Malaysia is now facing unprecedented challenges. When a country's economy is squeezed by uncertainty due to global conflicts, public sector budgets often shrink, which in turn shrinks the allocation of research grants and university development funds. Inflationary pressures from rising oil prices are increasing the cost of living for lecturers, while economic instability is slowing down the process of institutional transformation towards Industrial Revolution 4.0 technology (Yeo & Oh, 2023).

In addition, the social protection system that is still not robust in the face of the global crisis (Roslan & Mustafa, 2020) adds to the psychological and professional burden on academics. Lecturers not only need to take on the responsibility of educating in a resource-poor

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environment, but they also need to remain relevant and productive internationally in the midst of a global crisis. Therefore, this article aims to delve deeper into the extent to which the impact of the Iran-US geopolitical conflict, as well as the increase in world oil prices, has affected the career sustainability and well-being of lecturers in a public university in Malaysia. Efforts to strengthen institutional resilience and economic diplomacy strategies through platforms such as ASEAN are considered crucial steps to ensure that the country's academic excellence is not hampered by global geopolitical storms (Zulkifli, 2026).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews previous studies related to lecturers' academic sustainability, focusing on adaptation, professional engagement, and socio-economic challenges due to their relevance to global geopolitical uncertainty.

1. Lecturers' Adaptation in New Learning Activities

The transformation of higher education recently has forced lecturers to adapt to various new learning activities, particularly online learning, blended learning, adaptive learning, and technology-assisted teaching approaches. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation, which continues to evolve due to rapid technological advancement and global uncertainties. In the context of global geopolitical conflicts, these educational challenges become more significant because economic instability, technological disruption, and institutional pressures may affect lecturers' academic sustainability. Therefore, lecturers' adaptation is important in ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of higher education institutions.

Previous studies consistently show that technological adaptation is one of the most important elements in lecturers' new learning practices. Zulkifli et al. (2022) found that Malaysian lecturers adapted to online teaching by utilizing digital platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Kahoot, and Quizizz to maintain teaching and learning activities. Similarly, Anthony Jr et al. (2023) highlighted that lecturers' willingness to adopt blended learning is influenced by performance expectancy, facilitating conditions, and technological knowledge. These studies indicate that lecturers' technological readiness and institutional support strongly influences their ability to sustain academic activities during educational transformation.

In addition to technological adaptation, previous researchers emphasized the importance of pedagogical adaptation in maintaining student engagement. Heilporn et al. (2021) explained that lecturers in blended learning environments redesigned teaching strategies through structured course planning, synchronous and asynchronous learning methods, and improved communication with students. Likewise, Fernandez-Raga et al. (2023) stated that lecturers adopted innovative approaches such as game-based learning to improve students' motivation, concentration, and participation in learning activities. Both studies demonstrate that lecturers are required to modify instructional methods continuously to suit students' learning needs in modern educational settings.

Furthermore, institutional support and professional readiness are repeatedly identified as important factors influencing lecturers' adaptation. Mirata et al. (2020) found that lecturers often experience challenges such as limited training, increased workload, insufficient technological infrastructure, and lack of organizational support when implementing adaptive learning systems. Similarly, Radyi and Usman (2022) revealed that lecturers' readiness and positive beliefs toward technology-assisted student-centred learning significantly influence the successful implementation of digital learning approaches. These findings suggest that adaptation does not depend solely on lecturers' individual efforts but also on institutional commitment in providing continuous professional development, technological facilities, and supportive academic environments.

Thus, the literature demonstrates that lecturers' adaptation in new learning activities involves interconnected dimensions, including technological competency, pedagogical innovation, emotional resilience, and institutional support. The studies collectively suggest that lecturers who receive adequate technological resources, training opportunities, and organizational assistance are more capable of sustaining effective teaching practices in challenging educational environments. In relation to global geopolitical conflicts, lecturers may face additional pressures such as economic uncertainty, psychological stress, and disruptions to educational systems, which may further affect their academic sustainability.

Therefore, lecturers' adaptation should be understood as a critical component of academic sustainability in higher education institutions. Continuous support from universities, effective educational policies, and professional development initiatives are essential to help Malaysian lecturers remain resilient and adaptable amidst global challenges and educational transformation.

2. Professional Engagement and Academic Activities

Professional engagement and academic activities among Malaysian lecturers have expanded beyond traditional teaching roles. Lecturers increasingly contribute to research, curriculum development, institutional management, community engagement, industry collaboration, and sustainability initiatives. These responsibilities are influenced by institutional expectations, ESG agendas, and global uncertainties, making professional engagement an important element of lecturers' academic sustainability.

Studies consistently show that lecturers' professional responsibilities are becoming broader and more demanding. Yeo (2024) explained that lecturers are actively involved in curriculum innovation. accreditation processes, and university governance. Similarly, Yeo et.al. (2025) and Nazam and Andasari (2024) found that sustainability initiatives, such as ESG and SDG programmes, are increasingly integrated into lecturers' academic activities through curriculum redesign, sustainability projects, and community engagement. This indicates that lecturers are no longer viewed only as educators but also as institutional contributors and sustainability advocates.

At the same time, lecturers play significant roles in supporting students' holistic development. Muhammad Noor et.al. (2024) highlighted that lecturers who supervise sustainability programmes and SDG-related activities help students develop leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. These findings show that lecturers' responsibilities now extend beyond classroom teaching into mentoring, facilitation, and project coordination. However, effective professional engagement depends greatly on institutional support, professional training, and lecturers' ability to adapt to changing academic demands.

Several studies also emphasized that increasing academic responsibilities and institutional expectations may affect lecturers' academic

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sustainability. Ramachandaran et.al. (2025) found that lecturers often struggle to balance teaching, research, administrative duties, and publication demands, which may contribute to stress and burnout. Similarly, Wiyono et.al. (2025) explained that universities increasingly evaluate lecturers based on sustainability-related contributions and professional performance. However, Manokaran et.al. (2026) found that institutional support, resources, and professional development opportunities remain uneven across universities, causing some lecturers to experience greater pressure without sufficient assistance.

In addition, lecturers' professional engagement differs according to academic disciplines and institutional contexts. Studies conducted by Mohd Ali et.al. (2025) revealed that lecturers in applied and professional fields must maintain strong industry collaboration and practice-based teaching. Leadership support, funding opportunities, and stakeholder expectations also influence lecturers' involvement in sustainability-related activities and academic responsibilities.

Collectively, the literature shows that lecturers' professional engagement is increasingly multidimensional and shaped by institutional, professional, and global factors. Lecturers are expected to balance multiple responsibilities as educators, researchers, administrators, mentors, and sustainability advocates while adapting to growing academic and institutional pressures. At the same time, workload demands, institutional expectations, and limited support systems may affect lecturers' ability to sustain meaningful academic engagement and long-term professional well-being.

3. Socio-Economic Challenges and Their Impact on Lecturers

Socio-economic challenges among Malaysian lecturers are increasingly associated with workload pressure, work-life imbalance, mental health issues, and institutional expectations. Recent studies show that these challenges are not only personal issues but are also influenced by organizational culture, financial pressures, and the changing environment of higher education institutions. These conditions may become more critical during periods of global uncertainty and economic instability, as lecturers are required to maintain academic performance while adapting to external pressures.

Several studies identified excessive workload as one of the main socio-economic challenges faced by lecturers. Mohamad et.al. (2025) found that lecturers in private higher education institutions experience heavy teaching responsibilities, administrative duties, and research expectations that negatively affect their work-life balance and job satisfaction. Similarly, Yusoff et.al. (2024) reported that lecturers struggle to balance teaching, research, committee work, and service obligations, leading to stress and reduced academic productivity. These findings indicate that increasing workload can weaken lecturers' ability to sustain long-term academic engagement and personal well-being.

Work-life imbalance also emerged as a significant issue affecting lecturers' socio-economic stability. Ramachandaran et.al. (2025) explained that lecturers often experience blurred boundaries between work and personal life due to continuous academic demands and institutional pressure for publications, grants, and performance outcomes. Likewise, Ramachandaran et.al. (2024) found that prolonged academic pressure contributes to exhaustion, emotional stress, and strained personal relationships. These conditions may reduce lecturers' resilience and ability to cope with financial uncertainty or external disruptions affecting higher education institutions.

Mental health challenges also closely connect to lecturers' socio-economic well-being. Munusamy et.al. (2024) identified workload, work-family conflict, and unsupportive work environments as major contributors to stress, burnout, and psychological distress among educators in Malaysia. Similarly, Chan and Halim (2025) reported that low psychological well-being may reduce lecturers' resilience, professional motivation, and involvement in academic development activities. These findings suggest that socio-economic pressures can directly affect lecturers' academic sustainability and professional performance.

At the same time, social and institutional support was identified as an important protective factor. Mohamad et.al. (2025) found that support from colleagues, supervisors, and institutions can help reduce stress and improve lecturers' work-life balance. Similarly, Ramachandaran et.al. (2024) highlighted that flexible working arrangements, supportive leadership, and healthy workplace environments may help lecturers manage academic pressures more effectively. This demonstrates that institutional support plays a significant role in strengthening lecturers' resilience and long-term academic sustainability.

In general, the literature shows that socio-economic challenges among lecturers are multidimensional and closely linked to workload, mental health, institutional pressure, and work-life balance. Increasing academic demands, financial uncertainty, and limited institutional support may weaken lecturers' well-being, productivity, and professional sustainability. Therefore, effective institutional policies, supportive work environments, and balanced workload management are essential to help lecturers maintain their academic roles and socio-economic stability in higher education institutions.

Although previous studies have discussed lecturers' adaptation to new learning activities, professional engagement, workload, mental health, and socio-economic challenges, most studies focus primarily on educational transformation, technological readiness, and institutional factors within normal academic settings. Limited studies specifically examine how global geopolitical conflicts and international economic instability influence lecturers' academic sustainability in the Malaysian higher education context. In particular, there is still a lack of research exploring how geopolitical tensions may affect lecturers' professional engagement, teaching adaptation, socio-economic well-being, and emotional resilience simultaneously. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the impact of global geopolitical conflicts on lecturers' academic sustainability across multiple interconnected dimensions.

METHODS

A pilot study was carried out using a quantitative approach through the design of a survey by using convenience sampling consisting of 20 academics at UiTM Shah Alam, UiTM Negeri Sembilan Branch, and UiTM Sarawak Branch. These locations were specifically chosen, as the campuses are the main hubs that provide study programmes related to halal management under the UiTM system.

The survey focused exclusively on lecturers who teach students enrolled in Halal Diploma and Halal Bachelor's Degree programs. Through convenience sampling, this specialization allowed for a deeper and more precise understanding of how global geopolitical shifts influence

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various dimensions of their teaching practice. Given that the halal industry is particularly susceptible to disruptions in supply chains and fluctuations in the global economy, the insights of these lecturers prove invaluable in gauging the degree to which broader macro-level issues such as surging oil prices impact their long-term academic sustainability.

The study employed a digitally distributed questionnaire as its primary instrument. The questionnaire comprised three main dimensions: Part A, which examines unconventional learning activities adopted in response to geopolitical disruptions; Part B, which evaluates professionalism and academic engagement among lecturers amid the Iran-US conflict and rising oil prices; and Part C, which measures the impact on teaching effectiveness as well as the logistical challenges affecting the career sustainability and well-being of lecturers at a public university in Malaysia. The collected data were analyzed descriptively using the built-in data analysis function within the Google Forms platform, through which the frequency and percentage of each response were systematically computed. This approach allowed emerging trends in the challenges faced by respondents to be clearly identified, particularly in relation to the broader geopolitical and socio-economic pressures that threaten academic excellence and institutional resilience in the Malaysian higher education landscape.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings obtained from the questionnaire distributed to lecturers teaching halal-related subjects at UiTM. The discussion is organized according to the three main dimensions of the study, namely: (i) Demography (ii) New Learning Activities Beyond Conventional Practices, (iii) Professional Engagement and Academic Activities, and (iv) Teaching Impact and Logistical Challenges. The findings are analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages generated from Google Forms, followed by discussions supported by previous literature.

1. Demography Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in this study. The respondents were lecturers from UiTM who teach halal-related subjects, and the table summarises their age, academic position, years of teaching experience, and UiTM branch.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	20–29 years old	0	0.0
	30–39 years old	12	60.0
	40–49 years old	8	40.0
	50–59 years old	0	0.0
	60 years old and above	0	0.0
Academic Position	Professor (VK7)	0	0.0
	Associate Professor (DS14)	0	0.0
	Senior Lecturer (DS13)	8	40.0
	Lecturer (DS11)	9	45.0
	Part-Time Full-Time Lecturer (PTFT)	3	15.0
Years of Teaching Experience	Less than 1 year	0	0.0
	1–5 years	7	35.0
	6–10 years	9	45.0
	11–15 years	3	15.0
	16–20 years	1	5.0
	More than 20 years	0	0.0
UiTM Branch	UiTM Negeri Sembilan	16	80.0
	UiTM Sarawak	3	15.0
	UiTM Shah Alam	1	5.0

In terms of age, most respondents were between 30 and 39 years old, with 12 respondents or 60.0%. This was followed by the 40 to 49 age group, with 8 respondents or 40.0%. There were no respondents in the 20 to 29, 50 to 59, and 60-years-old and above categories.

For academic positions, the largest group was lecturers, with 9 respondents or 45.0%. Senior lecturers followed with 8 respondents, or 40.0%, while part-time full-time lecturers accounted for 3 respondents, or 15.0%. No respondents were professors or associate professors. The data shows that the sample mainly consisted of lecturers at the early and middle stages of their academic careers.

Regarding teaching experience, most respondents had 6 to 10 years of teaching experience, with 9 respondents, or 45.0%, falling within this range. This category was followed by 1 to 5 years of experience, with 7 respondents or 35.0%. Another 3 respondents, or 15.0%, had 11 to 15 years of experience, and 1 respondent, or 5.0%, had 16 to 20 years of experience. No respondents had less than 1 year or more than 20 years of teaching experience.

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Based on the UiTM branch, most respondents were from UiTM Negeri Sembilan, with 16 respondents or 80.0%. UiTM Sarawak contributed 3 respondents or 15.0%, while UiTM Shah Alam had only 1 respondent or 5.0%. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were drawn from UiTM Negeri Sembilan.

Thus, the demographic data show that the respondents were mostly lecturers in their 30s and 40s, with moderate teaching experience and mainly from UiTM Negeri Sembilan. This profile provides a suitable basis for understanding their views on academic sustainability, especially in relation to geopolitical conflict, professional engagement, and socio-economic challenges.

2. New Learning Activities Beyond Conventional Practices

Table 2 shows the respondents' views on new learning activities beyond conventional practices. Overall, the findings indicate a high level of agreement that lecturers adapted their teaching practices in response to the US-Iran conflict and wider global uncertainty.

Table 2: Responses on New Learning Activities Beyond Conventional Practices (n = 20)

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly agree n (%)
1.	I integrate the US-Iran conflict issue into classroom discussions as a current case study.	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	7 (35%)
2.	I shifted to hybrid/fully online learning to reduce students' mobility needs to campus.	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	6 (30%)	7 (35%)
3.	I introduced problem-solving-based assignments relevant to current global crises.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	5 (25%)	4 (20%)	10 (50%)
4.	I allocated special time during online classes to discuss current issues in helping reduce students' anxiety towards war-related issues.	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	6 (30%)	8 (40%)
5.	I used new digital platforms to ensure teaching continuity if global communication disruptions occur.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	7 (35%)	10 (50%)

The results show that most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all five items. The highest agreement was recorded for using new digital platforms to ensure teaching continuity, where 35% agreed and 50% strongly agreed. This suggests that lecturers were highly aware of the need to remain flexible and prepared for possible disruptions in communication and teaching delivery.

A similar pattern can be seen in the use of problem-solving-based assignments relevant to current global crises, where 20% agreed and 50% strongly agreed. This indicates that lecturers aimed to connect classroom learning with real-world issues. Such an approach can help students better understand current global events while also improving critical thinking skills.

For the item on integrating the US-Iran conflict into classroom discussions, 45% agreed and 35% strongly agreed. This shows that many lecturers used the conflict as a learning example in class. Only a small number disagreed, which means most respondents accepted the value of using current geopolitical issues in teaching.

The findings also show that lecturers made efforts to support students' emotional well-being. In particular, 30% agreed and 40% strongly agreed that they allocated special time during online classes to discuss current issues and reduce students' anxiety about war-related matters. This reflects the role of lecturers not only as subject instructors but also as supporters of students' emotional needs during uncertain times.

In addition, 30% agreed and 35% strongly agreed that they had shifted to hybrid or fully online learning to reduce students' mobility needs on campus. Although this item had slightly more neutral and disagreeing responses compared to the others, the overall pattern still shows a positive response toward flexible teaching methods. This suggests that lecturers were willing to adjust their teaching approach to maintain continuity and convenience.

Therefore, the findings indicate that lecturers adopted a more adaptive and responsive teaching style in facing global uncertainty. Their willingness to use digital platforms, address current issues, and engage in problem-based learning shows that academic sustainability depends not only on delivering content but also on adjusting teaching practices to changing circumstances.

3. Professional Engagement and Academic Activities

Table 3 presents the respondents' views on professional engagement and academic activities. The overall pattern shows that many lecturers continued to engage actively in professional and academic work, although some activities were affected by safety, cost, and international tensions.

Table 3: Responses on Professional Engagement and Academic Activities (n = 20)

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly agree n (%)
1.	I am more likely to participate in online conferences rather than physical conferences due to safety/cost factors.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	7 (35%)	10 (50%)
2.	My research focus has shifted towards the impact of global conflicts within my field of expertise.	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	6 (30%)	4 (20%)	6 (30%)

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3.	I am involved in moral support activities or humanitarian assistance through academic platforms.	1 (5%)	5 (25%)	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	6 (30%)
4.	My international research collaborations were disrupted due to diplomatic tensions between conflicting blocs of countries.	2 (10%)	6 (30%)	9 (45%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)
5.	I actively write opinion articles or analyses in mass media related to the impact of conflicts on Malaysia.	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	7 (35%)	1 (5%)	4 (20%)

The findings show that the highest agreement was for the item on participating in online conferences rather than physical conferences due to safety and cost factors. A total of 35% of respondents agreed and 50% strongly agreed with this statement. This suggests that online academic engagement has become a more practical choice for many lecturers, especially when financial and safety concerns are taken into account.

Responses to the item on shifting the research focus towards the impact of global conflicts were more mixed. While 20% agreed and 30% strongly agreed, 30% remained neutral, and 20% disagreed. This indicates that although some lecturers are beginning to align their research with global conflict issues, others have not changed their research direction significantly.

For involvement in moral support activities or humanitarian assistance through academic platforms, the responses were also varied. Only 10% agreed and 30% strongly agreed, while 25% disagreed and 30% were neutral. The data shows that although some lecturers contribute to social and humanitarian efforts, this behavior is not yet a common practice among all respondents.

The item on disrupted international research collaborations recorded a lower level of agreement. Most respondents selected neutral, with 45%, while 10% strongly disagreed and 30% disagreed. Only 15% strongly agreed, and no respondents selected 'agree'. This suggests that geopolitical tensions did not widely disrupt international collaboration, although some lecturers may still have experienced limitations.

For writing opinion articles or analyses in mass media, the responses showed moderate engagement. A total of 35% disagreed and 35% were neutral, while only 5% agreed and 20% strongly agreed. This indicates that public commentary on conflict-related issues is not a regular academic activity for most respondents.

To conclude, the results suggest that lecturers remain professionally active, but their engagement is shaped by changing global conditions. Online participation, research interest in conflict-related issues, and public academic discourse reflect an adaptive academic culture. At the same time, the relatively mixed responses on collaboration and media writing show that not all lecturers are equally involved in broader professional engagement beyond teaching and research.

4. Teaching Impact and Logistical Challenges

Table 4 presents the respondents' views on teaching impact and logistical challenges. The results indicate that financial pressure, emotional stress, and concern about the broader economy have affected lecturers' daily work experience.

Table 4: Responses on Teaching Impact and Logistical Challenges (n = 20)

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly agree n (%)
1.	Rationalisation of domestic petrol subsidies directly increases my daily financial burden in commuting to campus.	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)	11 (55%)
2.	I feel stressed thinking about the increase in prices of goods due to global oil price instability caused by conflicts.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	10 (50%)
3.	My level of focus during teaching is disrupted when frequently following news related to wars and conflicts.	2 (10%)	5 (25%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	6 (30%)
4.	I am forced to restructure my monthly budget due to increased transportation costs to campus.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	12 (60%)
5.	I worry about the country's economic security, which indirectly affects my work motivation.	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)	8 (40%)

The findings show that the strongest concern was related to monthly budget restructuring due to increased transportation costs to campus. A total of 35% of respondents agreed and 60% strongly agreed with this statement. The result indicates that commuting expenses had a clear effect on lecturers' personal financial planning.

A similarly high level of agreement was found for the item on the rationalisation of domestic petrol subsidies, which increases the daily financial burden. Here, 25% agreed and 55% strongly agreed. This suggests that fuel-related policy changes and rising transport costs are important pressures for lecturers who need to travel regularly to campus.

Stress caused by rising prices of goods due to global oil price instability was also highly reported. In this item, 40% agreed and 50% strongly agreed, while only 10% were neutral. This shows that respondents were generally aware of how global conflict can affect local living costs and household expenses.

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The item on worrying about the country's economic security also received a strong response. A total of 25% agreed and 40% strongly agreed, although 15% strongly disagreed and 10% disagreed. This indicates that many lecturers were concerned about the wider economic situation, and this concern may influence their work motivation and sense of stability.

For the item on teaching focus, frequent news about wars and conflicts disrupted the responses, which were more mixed. While 15% agreed and 30% strongly agreed, 25% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. This suggests that not all lecturers equally affected their teaching concentration, but a considerable number still experienced distraction from conflict-related news.

Thus, the results show that geopolitical conflict affects lecturers not only through professional responsibilities, but also through financial pressure and emotional strain. Rising living costs, commuting expenses, and concern about economic stability appear to shape the daily teaching experience and may reduce academic comfort and sustainability.

This discussion is based on the findings shown in Tables 4.1 to 4.4. The results suggest that geopolitical conflict does not only affect lecturers at the level of teaching practice but also influences their professional engagement, financial stability, and emotional well-being.

1. The demographic profile shows that most respondents were lecturers in their 30s and 40s with moderate teaching experience. This means the findings mainly reflect the views of lecturers who are still actively managing teaching, research, and institutional responsibilities. Their profile is relevant because this group is likely to be affected by both career demands and rising living costs.
2. The results on new learning activities beyond conventional practices show that many respondents adapted their teaching methods in response to global uncertainty. They used digital platforms, problem-solving tasks, and current conflict issues in class. This indicates that lecturers are not passive in facing change but instead try to make their teaching more flexible and relevant.
3. The findings on professional engagement show that lecturers are still active in academic work, especially through online conferences and conflict-related research interests. However, the responses were less strong for humanitarian involvement, international collaboration disruption, and public opinion writing. This suggests that professional engagement still exists, but its form has changed according to current global conditions.
4. The teaching impact and logistical challenges section shows that respondents were strongly affected by financial pressure. Increased transport costs, petrol subsidy rationalisation, and rising prices of goods stressed them and affected their daily routines. These issues show that academic sustainability is closely linked to socio-economic stability.
5. Emotional factors were also important in this study. Many respondents reported stress, concern about economic security, and some disruption in teaching focus due to conflict-related news. This means that geopolitical tension can affect not only external logistics but also the mental readiness of lecturers to carry out their work effectively.
6. The findings support the idea that academic sustainability is multidimensional. It depends on teaching adaptation, professional participation, financial capacity, and emotional resilience. When global conflict disrupts these elements, lecturers may struggle to maintain their roles fully and consistently.

To sum up, the discussion shows that the US-Iran conflict and related global instability have indirect but meaningful effects on Malaysian lecturers. Even though they are not in the conflict zone, teaching adjustments, professional shifts, and socio-economic pressure create spillover effects.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that global geopolitical conflict can indirectly influence the academic sustainability of lecturers in Malaysia through teaching adaptation, professional engagement, financial pressure, and emotional strain. Although the lecturers are not directly involved in the conflict zone, the spillover effects of the US-Iran tension are still felt in their academic and personal lives.

The findings suggest that lecturers respond to uncertainty by adopting more flexible teaching methods, using digital platforms, and connecting classroom learning with current global issues. At the same time, they continue to engage in academic activities, especially through online conferences and research, although not all forms of professional engagement are equally active.

The study also highlights that socio-economic challenges are a major concern. Rising transportation costs, higher prices of goods, and concern about economic security create stress and affect lecturers' motivation and daily work. This shows that academic sustainability is not only about teaching performance but also about stable living conditions and emotional well-being.

Thus, the study shows that both academic demands and external global pressures shape lecturers' roles. Strengthening institutional support, improving flexibility in work practices, and protecting lecturers' well-being are important steps to maintain academic sustainability in times of uncertainty.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

1. Nurul Atikah Poniran – Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – original draft.
2. Mohamad Hasif Jaafar – Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review & editing, Validation.
3. Nuruul Hidayah Mansor – Validation.
4. Athira Ayuni Asmadi – Writing – review & editing.

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5. Siti Nurhidayah Md Tahir – Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Writing – original draft.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Declaration on the Use of Generative AI

The authors declare that Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were used solely for language enhancement, grammar checking, and improving the clarity of writing during the preparation of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the content presented in this study.

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