

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**EDUCATIONAL SERVICE QUALITY
AND STUDENT SATISFACTION AT PUBLIC
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN
MALAYSIA: AN EXPECTATION-PERCEPTION-
IMPORTANCE ANALYSIS**

ABDUL RAHEEM BIN MOHAMAD YUSOF

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Business Management

July 2008

Candidate's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of University Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

In the event that my thesis be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree to be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of University Teknologi MARA.

Name of Candidate: ABDUL RAHEEM BIN MOHAMAD YUSOF
Candidate's ID No.: 2003357742
Programme: Management
Faculty: Faculty of Business Management
Thesis Title: Educational Service Quality and Student Satisfaction at Public Higher Educational Institutions in Malaysia: An Expectation – Perception – Importance Analysis

Signature of Candidate: 

Date: 30 July 2008

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines Educational Service Quality and Student Satisfaction at Public Higher Educational Institutions (PHEIs) in Malaysia. In the quest to be a centre of academic excellence, the government of Malaysia is very concern about the quality of higher educational institutions in Malaysia. This study attempts to investigate: the determinants of educational service quality and the importance of the various dimensions of quality; the differences between expected service and perceived service; the level of customer satisfaction; the relationship between educational service quality and customer satisfaction; the implications of the moderating variables; and the Educational Service Quality and Student Satisfaction Index (ESQSSi) for the Malaysian PHEIs. A research framework was developed and thirteen hypotheses were formulated. The study employed a self-administered questionnaire based on a synthesized instrument and was cross-sectional in nature. A total of 517 post-graduate students from four PHEIs participated in this study. Data was collected using a 166-item structured questionnaire and a simple random sampling was employed. ANOVA, regression analysis, the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) calculation method, and the differencing technique were used to analyze the data.

The result of the study showed that: there is no significant difference in importance of the educational service quality sub-dimensions between research universities and non-research universities; there is no significant difference in expected service (ES) between research universities and non-research universities; there is no difference in perceived service (PS) between research universities and non-research universities, there is no significant difference in PS-ES between research universities and non-research universities; there is a significant difference in expected service with regard to demographics; there is a significant correlation between word-of-mouth communication and expected service, there is a significant correlation between personal needs and expected service; there is a significant correlation between previous experience and expected service; there is a significant correlation between external communication to customers and expected service; there is a significant correlation between ethos in higher education and perceived service; there is no significant difference in customer satisfaction with regard to the educational service quality sub-dimensions between research universities and non-research universities; there is a significant correlation between educational service quality and customer satisfaction; and the educational service quality sub-dimensions are significantly related to educational service quality. The calculated Educational Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction Index in this study is 51.4871. The findings of this study contributed by filling in the gaps in the current empirical knowledge in service quality and customer satisfaction to a certain extent, especially in higher education such as the ESQSSi for Malaysian PHEIs; the use of a synthesized instrument; an added dimension (self-development); and ethos in higher education. Future research should attempt to empirically validate the use of the synthesized ESQSSi instrument for use in education and other services and to introduce an overall trend dimension in the multi-item measures.

Dedication

All praise is due to Allah, the *Rabb* of all mankind, jinn and all that exists. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet, the Seal of all Messengers, Muhammad, his family, Companions and all those who follow him till the Day of Judgement – Ameen.

To my lovely wife Hajah Sufyana bt. Haji Maruf, it is impossible to adequately express my appreciation for her absolute faithfulness, constant love and encouragement, countless sacrifices, confidence in me, and willingness to take the monumental tasks without which this journey would never become a reality.

Our three adorable children Raifana Atiqah, Abdul Azeem and Abdul Muezz have given me reasons to feel proud of them and happy to be their dad. Without even knowing it, they have been reason enough for hanging on until this thesis could be completed; and my loving parents Haji Mohamad Yusof bin Haji Abdul Hamid and Hajah Wan Bee bt. Kadir Warshay whose love and encouragement make all my work as well as life productive and joyful. With deepest love and gratitude, I dedicate this thesis to my family.

Acknowledgements

All praises be to Allah, the Creator and Guardian of the universe. Praise and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad s.a.w., the Messenger of Allah, his family and his companions, from whom we gain the enlightenment.

My sincere appreciation is extended to those whose help, encouragement, and understanding, this project could not have been possible. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude, heartfelt, and deepest appreciation to my supervisors Associate Professor Dr. Za'faran Hassan and Associate Professor Dr. Sofiah Abdul Rahman for their dedication, encouragement, enthusiasm, and guidance accorded to me throughout the programme.

A special thank you and appreciation goes to my employer, the Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (Sultan Idris University of Education) for its generous financial support, especially the Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and Internationalization) and the Dean of the Business and Economic Faculty for giving me the opportunity to pursue this doctoral programme.

Many others have contributed in various ways to my completion of this doctoral programme, culminating in completion of this thesis. My special gratitude to Professor Datin Dr.Norhanom Abdul Wahab, Dean, Postgraduate Institute, University of Malaya; Profesor Dato' Dr.Laily bin Din, Dean, Centre for Graduate Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia; Professor Datin Dr. Zubaida Alsree, Dean, Institute of Postgraduate Studies, Univeristi Teknologi MARA; and Professor Dr.Omar Abdull Kareem, Dean, Institute of Postgraduate Studies, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris for their invaluable support and for allowing me to collect data for my research at their respective institutions.