

Academia

Academic Series of Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah

ISSN: 2680-7840

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Voice of Academia Vol.21 Issue (2) 2025

Voice of Academia

e-ISSN: 2682-7840

ENHANCING STUDENT SATISFACTION: EVALUATING ON-CAMPUS HAIRCUT AND GROOMING SERVICES WITH A FOCUS ON INCLUSIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY AT UITM

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ARTICI F INFO

Article history:

Received Aug 2024 Accepted May 2025 Published June 2025

Keywords:

University grooming services, Student satisfaction, Ecofriendly practices, Service accessibility

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates student satisfaction and preferences regarding on-campus haircut and grooming services at a northern Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) campus. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research surveyed 155 students to explore their usage patterns, satisfaction levels, and interest in additional services and eco-friendly practices. The findings indicate that while most students appreciate the convenience of on-campus services, concerns about pricing, service quality, and inclusivity remain prevalent. Many students expressed a desire for more affordable pricing structures, improved barber skills through ongoing training, and a broader range of services that cater to diverse needs, including options specifically for female students. Additionally, there is significant interest in incorporating sustainable practices into grooming services, such as using organic and cruelty-free products. The study concludes with recommendations for enhancing the quality and accessibility of on-campus grooming services to better meet student needs and align with their values, ultimately contributing to higher satisfaction and a more supportive campus environment.

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1. Introduction

On-campus services are integral to the student experience, contributing to overall satisfaction and well-being. A study examining the satisfaction of students with various university services found that these services significantly impact student happiness and retention. The study highlighted that quality on-campus services lead to higher student satisfaction, which in turn enhances their university experience (El-Said & Fathy, 2015). These services offer convenience, save time, and are essential among university students. Convenience is a critical factor for students, especially in managing their time between academics and personal care. Research has shown that the availability of on-campus services not only saves time but also plays a crucial role in maintaining students' hygiene and overall well-being, reducing the stress associated with balancina their busy schedules (Dandis et al., 2021). As student populations grow increasingly diverse, so do their needs and expectations from such services. In a study on the impact of diversity on student satisfaction, it was highlighted that diverse student groups have different expectations, and universities need to adapt their services to meet these varied needs to maintain high levels of satisfaction and inclusivity (Shaheed & Kiana, 2021). Understanding the diverse needs of the student body is essential for universities to provide services that meet these expectations. Research on service quality in higher education shows that student satisfaction is significantly influenced by how well the university understands and addresses the specific needs of its diverse student population (Chaudhary & Dey, 2020). Evaluating on-campus services like grooming is critical for universities aiming to enhance student satisfaction and incorporate sustainable practices. Insights from studies on student satisfaction with university services provide valuable information on how to improve these services. For example, a study on student satisfaction in campus cafeterias found that regular reviews and improvements in service quality, including adding more personalized and eco-friendly options, can significantly enhance student satisfaction (Afroza et al., 2022). In another study on green practices in universities, Ali and Anufriev (2020) found that integrating eco-friendly practices into campus services not only meets student expectations but also contributes to the university's environmental goals. This study focuses on evaluating the on-campus haircut and grooming services at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), examining student satisfaction, preferences, and the potential for incorporating ecofriendly practices into these services. The findings aim to provide insights into how these services can be improved to better meet the needs of the student body.

2. Literature Review

Personal grooming and hygiene are fundamental aspects of student life that contribute to self-esteem, confidence, and social interactions. Maintaining good personal hygiene is not only crucial for health but also for developing a positive self-image, which is essential for social integration and participation in campus life (Khatoon et al., 2017). Accessible and affordable grooming services on university campuses are vital for supporting students' well-being and academic performance. Research has shown that students who have access to on-campus grooming services are more likely to maintain regular hygiene practices, which positively affects their mental and physical health, leading to better academic outcomes (Cronk et al., 2020). Moreover, studies on service quality in higher education have found that the availability of essential services, including grooming, contributes to higher levels of student satisfaction and academic success (Mulyono et al., 2020). Furthermore, the availability of such services on campus has been linked to increased student satisfaction and convenience, reducing the need for students to seek off-campus alternatives. When essential services like grooming are easily accessible, students experience greater convenience, which translates into higher satisfaction levels (Chaudhary & Dey, 2020). Additionally, Gao (2020) confirmed that the convenience of on-

campus services minimizes the time and effort students need to invest in accessing these services, allowing them to focus more on their academic and social activities.

The concept of eco-friendly arooming services has gained attention in recent years, reflecting a broader trend towards sustainability in consumer behavior. Studies indicate that consumers, particularly younger ones, are becoming more environmentally conscious and prefer services that align with sustainable practices. Research on sustainable service quality in higher education shows that students are highly receptive to eco-friendly initiatives, including those related to personal care and grooming (Ozdemir et al., 2020). Another study highlighted that universities implementing sustainable practices, such as using organic and cruelty-free products in grooming services, tend to have higher student satisfaction rates (Yoon et al., 2023). The demand for grooming services that prioritize organic, cruelty-free, and sustainable products is on the rise, particularly among younger consumers. Research on sustainability in campus services indicates that the incorporation of eco-friendly practices in grooming services not only meets the expectations of environmentally conscious students but also enhances their loyalty to the institution (Doan, 2021). Younger consumers, including university students, are increasingly environmentally conscious and seek out services that reflect their values, such as those that prioritize sustainability. Meyer (2016) who did a study on pro-environmental behavior among college students found that environmental awareness significantly influences their choices, including in the domain of personal grooming services. Additionally, another study by Boca and Saraçli, (2019) demonstrated that students who are engaged in sustainability education are more likely to support and demand eco-friendly services on campus.

However, the effectiveness of on-campus services largely depends on their quality, variety, and affordability. Research on service quality in universities has shown that students prioritize these factors when evaluating campus services, and any shortcomings in these areas can lead to dissatisfaction and reduced usage (Chaudhary & Dey, 2020). Another study found that affordability is particularly crucial in a university setting, where many students have limited financial resources and therefore seek services that provide good value for money (Putri & Anggraini, 2018). Price sensitivity is a significant factor for university students when selecting grooming services, as demonstrated by various studies. Research on student satisfaction with campus services has revealed that cost is often a decisive factor, with students favoring services that are affordable yet still meet their quality expectations (Mulyono et al., 2020). Additionally, a study on the sustainability of campus services emphasized that affordability, combined with quality and variety, is essential for ensuring that these services are widely used and valued by students (Ozdemir et al., 2020). Inclusivity in campus services, including grooming, is vital for ensuring that all students feel valued and catered to. Students from diverse backgrounds, including those with different hair types and gender-specific needs, are more satisfied with services that recognize and accommodate their unique requirements (Kibrit et al., 2022). Furthermore, research on student satisfaction in university settings highlighted that offering gender-specific options and catering to diverse needs are essential components of inclusive service provision, which in turn boosts overall student satisfaction (Slavinski et al., 2021).

To sum up, the provision of accessible, affordable, and high-quality grooming services on university campuses is integral to enhancing student well-being, academic performance, and overall satisfaction. As highlighted, personal grooming and hygiene are not merely about physical appearance but play a crucial role in building self-esteem, confidence, and fostering social interactions, all of which are essential for a positive campus life experience. The growing demand for eco-friendly grooming options among environmentally conscious students further underscores the need for universities to incorporate sustainable practices into their service offerings. Ensuring that these services are inclusive, catering to the diverse needs of the student

population, and maintaining affordability are key to maximizing their effectiveness and usage. Ultimately, by addressing these factors, universities can create a supportive environment that not only meets the practical needs of students but also aligns with their values, contributing to their success and loyalty to the institution.

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to evaluate the on-campus haircut and grooming services at a northern Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) campus. The survey was designed to capture a wide range of information, including demographics, usage patterns, satisfaction levels, and preferences related to grooming services. The survey was distributed electronically to students at the UiTM campus, and responses were collected over a two-week period. A total of 155 responses were received, providing a robust sample for analysis. The demographic profile of the respondents provides important context for understanding the survey results. The survey included 155 students, with a significant majority (77.4%) being male and 22.6% being female. The age distribution shows that 58.7% of the respondents were aged 18 to 20, 38.1% were aged 21 to 23, and 3.2% were 24 years or older. This demographic spread indicates that the survey captured a wide range of student experiences, primarily from younger undergraduates.

The quantitative component of the survey included questions about the frequency of use of the grooming services, satisfaction levels with different aspects of the service (e.g., price, quality, and availability), and the importance of various factors (e.g., convenience, hygiene, and customer service) in choosing a grooming service. The qualitative component consisted of open-ended questions where students could provide feedback on their experiences with the services, suggest additional services they would like to see, and comment on the pricing structure. The responses were analyzed to identify common themes and areas for improvement.

4. Results

Quantitative data findings

Perceptions and preferences of hair cutting and grooming services

The frequency of using hair cutting and grooming services among the respondents varied widely. Only 3.9% used these services weekly, while a larger group (37.4%) visited monthly. Additionally, 18.1% reported using these services once a semester, 9% annually, and a significant 31.6% never used them at all. This distribution indicates diverse grooming habits among the students, with a notable portion not engaging in regular grooming services.

In terms of satisfaction with the current services available near or on campus, most respondents were neutral (59.4%), with only 5.2% being very satisfied and 27.7% satisfied. A smaller group expressed dissatisfaction, with 4.5% dissatisfied and 3.2% very dissatisfied. These results suggest that while most students are not dissatisfied, there is room for improvement in the quality or variety of services provided.

When it comes to preferred locations, 51% of respondents favored on-campus services, while 27.7% preferred off-campus, and 21.3% had no preference. This preference for on-campus services highlights the importance of accessibility and convenience for students. Price also played a crucial role in decision-making, with 56.1% considering it very important and 38.1% important. Similarly, convenience and location were deemed very important by 47.7% of respondents and important by 41.3%.

The quality of service was paramount for the majority, with 67.1% rating it as very important and 28.4% as important. The preference for walk-in services over appointment-based ones was also clear, with 61.3% favoring walk-ins, indicating a desire for flexibility in service access. Most respondents considered an acceptable waiting time to be between 10 to 20 minutes (51.6%), with 23.2% willing to wait less than 10 minutes.

Regarding payment methods, 38.7% of respondents preferred using mobile apps, while 32.9% had no preference, and 19.4% preferred cash. This suggests a trend towards digital payments, though traditional methods still hold relevance. Hygiene and cleanliness were of utmost importance, with 71.6% considering them very important and 23.2% important, reflecting the high standards students expect from grooming services. The skill level of the barber or hairdresser was also crucial, with 76.1% rating it as very important.

An interesting finding was the level of interest in eco-friendly or green grooming services, with 28.4% being very interested and 38.1% interested. This indicates a growing awareness and preference for sustainable practices among students. Preferences for gender-specific or unisex services showed that 66.8% preferred gender-specific services, while 18.7% preferred unisex services, and 15.5% had no preference.

Experience and satisfaction levels

The survey also explored students' experiences with dissatisfaction in grooming services. A combined 19.4% reported being completely or frequently dissatisfied, while 41.3% occasionally experienced dissatisfaction. In contrast, 37.4% rarely felt dissatisfied, and a small 1.9% never experienced dissatisfaction. These figures suggest that while most students occasionally encounter issues, they generally find the services acceptable.

When asked about their willingness to try new grooming services on campus, 18.7% were very willing, and 34.8% were willing, indicating an openness to exploring new options. Peer reviews and recommendations were also important, with 43.9% considering them very important and 40.6% important. This highlights the influence of social networks and word-of-mouth in students' decision-making processes.

Interest in learning hair cutting and grooming skills

The survey revealed a moderate level of interest in acquiring hair cutting and grooming skills, with 21.9% of respondents being very interested and 30.3% interested. The primary reasons for this interest included the potential for a part-time job (61.9%), personal use (56.1%), helping friends or family (40.6%), and creative expression (39.4%).

Workshops were the preferred method of learning these skills, favored by 67.1% of respondents, followed by informal peer-to-peer sessions (57.4%) and online tutorials (33.5%). Despite this interest, a significant proportion of students were neutral (45.8%) about paying to learn these skills, with only 11% very willing to pay. Perceptions of hair cutting and grooming as a potential career were mixed, with 16.1% considering it very likely and 30.3% likely, while 37.4% remained neutral.

Interest in on-campus workshops or courses for grooming skills was shown by 15.5% of respondents who were very interested and 41.3% who were interested. Additionally, 21.3% were very interested in obtaining certification for these skills, while 39.4% were interested. These findings suggest a solid foundation for potential educational initiatives in grooming on campus.

Engagement and participation

The survey also assessed students' willingness to engage in grooming-related activities on campus. A significant portion (40%) were neutral about participating in peer-to-peer grooming sessions, though 36.1% were willing, and 15.5% were very willing. Interest in grooming competitions or events was less pronounced, with only 12.3% being very interested and 23.2% interested.

Challenges in learning these skills were primarily related to a lack of time (68.4%) and skill (64.5%), followed by a lack of resources (49.7%) and interest (32.9%). This indicates potential barriers that would need to be addressed in any skill development programs.

Interest in volunteer grooming services for community engagement was neutral for 49% of respondents, with 14.8% being very interested and 23.9% interested. Awareness of health and safety aspects in grooming was moderate, with 23.9% being very aware and 42.6% aware.

Lastly, the survey gauged interest in digital engagement with grooming services. While only 14.2% were very willing to contribute to a grooming services blog or forum, 24.5% were willing, and 49% were neutral. Interest in a campus-based grooming app or website was also moderate, with 13.5% very interested and 29% interested.

Qualitative data findings

Suggestions for improving existing hair cutting/grooming services

A recurring theme among respondents was the need for improved skills and ongoing training for barbers. Many students suggested that barbers should receive regular training to stay updated on the latest trends and techniques. They emphasized the importance of skill enhancement to deliver better-quality haircuts and grooming services. Several respondents mentioned that the prices for haircuts and grooming services should be more student friendly. There were calls for lower prices, or at least a tiered pricing structure that reflects the varying financial capacities of students. Respondents also highlighted the need for better facilities, such as adding air conditioning, more comfortable waiting areas, and a more spacious environment. These improvements would not only enhance the customer experience but also make the service more appealing to potential clients. Another common suggestion was to increase the availability of services, including opening the barbershop during student free time and offering more diverse grooming options, such as haircuts for women, hair dyeing, and hair treatments. Respondents also suggested adding more barbers to reduce waiting times.

Open feedback on current hair cutting/grooming services

Many respondents expressed satisfaction with the current services, citing good service and acceptable pricing. However, there were also critiques, particularly regarding the skill level of barbers, with some students suggesting that the services could be better if the barbers were more skilled and attentive to customer needs. Some students mentioned that they were unaware of the on-campus grooming services, indicating a need for better promotion and visibility. Others commented on the convenience of having such services on campus but noted that improvements could be made to make them more accessible and appealing. While some respondents found the pricing reasonable, others felt that the services were somewhat expensive, especially for students. There were suggestions that the pricing structure should be more closely aligned with student budgets. A few respondents raised concerns about hygiene,

suggesting that the cleanliness of the facilities could be improved. This feedback indicates that maintaining a clean and hygienic environment is crucial for customer satisfaction.

Desired additional services or features in campus grooming services

Respondents expressed a desire for additional services such as hair washing, hair dyeing, and hair treatments. There was also interest in services specifically for female students, highlighting a gap in the current offerings. Some students suggested introducing massage and spa services, which would complement the existing grooming services and provide a more comprehensive self-care experience on campus. There was a call for more gender-specific services, such as separate sections for men and women or services tailored to the needs of female students. This reflects a desire for a more inclusive approach to grooming on campus. Respondents also suggested adding entertainment options, such as music or TVs, in the waiting area to enhance the overall customer experience. This would make the waiting time more enjoyable and improve customer satisfaction.

Suggestions for promoting grooming services among students

A dominant theme was the use of social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp for promotion. Respondents suggested that regular updates, engaging content, and promotions on these platforms would increase awareness and attract more students to use the services. Many respondents recommended offering discounts, loyalty programs, or membership deals to incentivize students to try the services. These promotions could make the services more appealing and encourage repeat business. Some students highlighted the importance of peer recommendations and suggested that satisfied customers should be encouraged to spread the word among their friends. This could be supported by referral discounts or other incentives. Hosting demonstrations, workshops, or pop-up events on campus was another suggestion for raising awareness. These events could showcase the barbers' skills and offer students a firsthand experience of the services, potentially leading to increased patronage.

Feedback on the pricing structure of current services

The feedback on pricing was mixed, with some students finding the prices reasonable, while others felt that they were too high for a student budget. Many suggested that prices should be kept within a range that is affordable for most students, with some suggesting a maximum price of RM15 to RM20. Respondents frequently mentioned the need for student discounts or pricing structures that are more aligned with student financial realities. This could involve offering lower prices during certain times or providing a discount after a certain number of visits. Some respondents compared the on-campus prices to those of off-campus barbers, noting that while the prices were sometimes higher on campus, the convenience factor often justified the cost. However, there was a clear preference for more competitive pricing.

Suggestions for eco-friendly practices in campus grooming services

A significant theme was the suggestion to use eco-friendly or organic products in the grooming services. Students expressed interest in services that use cruelty-free, plant-based, or recyclable materials, reflecting a broader trend towards sustainability. Some respondents suggested that the grooming services could adopt more energy-efficient practices, such as using solar-powered equipment or reducing plastic waste. This indicates a growing awareness and demand for environmentally responsible practices among students. A unique suggestion was to initiate programs where hair clippings could be donated for making wigs for cancer patients. This

not only aligns with eco-friendly practices but also adds a social responsibility dimension to the grooming services.

Additional comments or suggestions

A significant number of comments called for the inclusion of services tailored to female students, such as women-only grooming services or the availability of haircuts for women. This suggests that the current services are perceived as catering predominantly to male students. Many respondents appreciated the survey topic and found it relevant, particularly in addressing the needs of students who regularly use grooming services. There were also suggestions to reduce the number of repetitive questions to maintain respondent engagement. Overall, students expressed a willingness to see continuous improvement in the grooming services provided on campus. This included calls for better training, more diverse services, and improved facilities to better meet the needs of the student body.

5. Discussion

The findings from the survey conducted at UiTM provide valuable insights into the current state of on-campus haircut and grooming services and highlight several key areas for improvement. The demographic profile of the respondents suggests that most users are male students, which may influence the types of services currently available. Demographic profiles are instrumental in shaping the types of services offered on campus. A study on diversity enaggement in higher education revealed that understanding the demographic composition of the student body is vital for tailoring services to meet the specific needs of different student groups (Tamam & Krauss, 2017). Additionally, research on service satisfaction in universities indicated that demographic factors, such as gender, significantly influence service preferences and usage patterns, underscoring the need to consider these factors when designing and offering campus services (Weiss et al., 2016). However, the responses indicate a clear demand for more diverse and inclusive service offerings that cater to female students as well. The demand for more diverse and inclusive services is a recurring theme in studies on university service quality. For example, a study found that inclusivity in service offerings is critical for ensuring that all students feel valued and catered to, particularly in diverse student populations (Kibrit et al., 2022). Another study on student satisfaction in higher education emphasized the importance of expanding service offerings to meet the varied needs of students, which can significantly enhance their overall satisfaction and campus experience (Slavinski et al., 2021). Chaudhary and Dey (2020) emphasized the importance of continuous assessment to ensure that student needs are met, and services remain relevant and satisfactory. In an analysis of service facility quality at another university, Napitupulu et al. (2018) highlighted that identifying key areas for improvement is crucial for maintaining high levels of student satisfaction and service usage.

One of the most significant findings is the emphasis on pricing. Many students expressed concerns about the affordability of grooming services on campus, suggesting that current prices may be too high for the average student budget. This aligns with previous research that highlights price sensitivity as a major factor influencing student choices. Research consistently shows that price sensitivity is particularly prominent among university students, who often operate on limited budgets. A study on consumer behavior towards eco-friendly products among university students found that affordability was a major determinant of purchasing decisions, like how pricing impacts the usage of on-campus services (Shahrukh et al., 2023). Additionally, studies on service quality in universities have highlighted that cost-effectiveness is a key consideration for students when choosing which services to utilize (Mulyono et al., 2020). A study on the sustainability of campus services confirmed that students often prioritize affordability when choosing between different service options, reinforcing the need for universities to consider this when setting prices

(Ozdemir et al., 2020). Similarly, research on student satisfaction revealed that pricing directly impacts the perceived value and utilization of campus services, making it essential for services to be priced within the reach of the average student (Putri & Anggraini, 2018). Chaudhary and Dey (2020) suggested that implementing tiered pricing and offering discounts can make services more accessible to a broader range of students, thereby enhancing overall satisfaction and usage rates. Hence, there is a strong call for more student-friendly pricing models, including discounts and tiered pricing, to make these services more accessible to all students.

The quality of services, particularly the skill level of barbers, was another area of concern. Service quality, particularly in skill-based services like grooming, is a significant factor influencing student satisfaction. Studies have shown that the perceived competence of service providers directly affects the overall quality assessment and satisfaction levels among students. For instance, research on professional development in higher education emphasized the importance of ongoing training for service providers to maintain high standards and meet student expectations (Toms et al., 2019). Furthermore, studies on campus service quality highlighted that ensuring service providers are well-trained and skilled is crucial for maintaining student trust and service usage (Cheana et al., 2021). While some students reported satisfaction with the current services, others felt that the quality could be improved through better training and skill development for the barbers. Haverila et al. (2021) stated that continuous professional development is essential for maintaining high service standards and meeting the evolving needs of students This is also echoed in Napituplu et al. (2018) that investments in skill development and training for service providers are necessary to enhance service quality and ensure that students receive the best possible care. Tamam and Krauss (2017) also emphasized that regular training and professional development are key to ensuring that service providers can meet the changing needs and expectations of students, thereby maintaining high levels of satisfaction. This suggests a need for ongoing professional development to ensure that the services provided meet the expectations of the student body.

Another significant theme that emerged from the survey was the desire for a broader range of services, including options specifically tailored to female students and more comprehensive grooming services such as hair treatments, hair dyeing, and spa services. This is consistent with findings from other studies on campus service needs. Research on service inclusivity and diversity in higher education suggests that expanding service offerings to cater to specific demographics, such as female students, is essential for ensuring that all students feel valued and catered to (Kibrit et al., 2022). Additionally, studies on student satisfaction with campus services have highlighted the importance of offering a comprehensive range of services to meet the diverse needs of the student population, including specialized grooming and personal care options (Slavinski et al., 2021). This indicates that the current offerings may not be fully meeting the diverse needs of the student population and that there is potential for expanding the range of services provided. The need to expand service offerings to meet the diverse needs of the student population is supported by research that highlights gaps in current campus services. Ozdemir et al. (2020) found that student satisfaction is closely linked to the breadth and inclusivity of services offered, indicating that universities must continuously assess and expand their service offerings to meet evolving student needs. Hence, expanding services to include more diverse and specialized options is critical for maintaining student satisfaction and ensuring that all students feel catered to (Napitupulu et al., 2018).

Lastly, the growing interest in eco-friendly practices among students reflects a broader trend towards sustainability in consumer behavior. Suggestions such as using organic products, adopting energy-efficient practices, and donating hair for charitable causes indicate that students are looking for services that align with their values and contribute positively to society.

Research on environmental behavior in higher education highlights that students are increasingly supportive of sustainable practices, including those related to personal grooming and other campus services (Kyriakopoulos et al., 2020). Moreover, studies on sustainable campus initiatives indicate that the implementation of eco-friendly practices in university services can significantly enhance student satisfaction and engagement, as students are more likely to support services that align with their environmental values (Ribeiro et al., 2021).

6. Conclusion

The evaluation of on-campus haircut and grooming services at UiTM reveals several key areas for improvement, including pricing, service quality, variety, and inclusivity. Students have expressed a clear demand for more affordable, diverse, and high-quality services that cater to the needs of the entire student population. Additionally, there is significant interest in incorporating eco-friendly practices into these services, reflecting a broader shift towards sustainability in consumer behavior.

To enhance student satisfaction and engagement with on-campus grooming services, universities should consider implementing the following recommendations: introducing more competitive and student-friendly pricing models, providing ongoing training for barbers to improve service quality, expanding the range of services to include more options for female students and comprehensive grooming treatments, and adopting eco-friendly practices that resonate with the values of the student body.

By addressing these areas, universities can create a more inclusive and supportive campus environment that meets the diverse needs of their students, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being and success.

Acknowledgments

The authors are very thankful to all the associated personnel in any reference that contributed in/for the purpose of this research. The researchers are also thankful to Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinana for providing the opportunity ito conduct this research.

Funding Details

This research was made possible by a project grant to Universiti Teknologi MARA, under the project titled "Clippers for A Cause: The Power of Giving Back through Charity Barbering" with the research code 100-TNCPI/PRI 16/6/2 (052/2023).

Authors Contributions

All authors have contributed in this publication through information and data findings, writing and editing.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest associated with this publication.

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