

Students' Perception towards Educational Facilities in UiTM Pahang

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ABSTRACT

University should provide a range of educational facilities that enable excellent teaching and support student learning. Educational facilities including academic learning space, support space and exterior environment have impact on students' achievement (Mc Gowen, 2007). As main customers to UiTM Pahang, students' perception towards the educational facilities should be taken into account. The institution of higher learning should fulfill their customer needs and wants. Therefore the aim of this study is to investigate the students' perception towards educational facilities since it will give an impact on their achievement, attendance, behavior and completion rate. Generally, the result found that most students agreed that the academic learning space, support space and exterior environment in UiTM Pahang fulfilled their educational needs. However this study also found that students made perception that parking space, cafeteria and maintenance of facility and vandalism are unsatisfactory. The finding from this study provides useful information to UiTM Pahang in making improvement on the facilities provided.

Keywords: educational facilities, learning space, support space and exterior environment.

Introduction

The main purpose of teaching and learning process is to bring about the learner a desirable change in behavior through critical thinking. This process will take place in an environment structured to facilitate learning. According to Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert (1996) an environment of an organization can be described as all elements relevant to its operation and they include direct and indirect action elements. School or university facilities constitute the major components of both direct and indirect action elements in the environment of learning. Nwagwu (1978) and Ogunsaju (1980) found that the quality of education that children receive bears direct relevance to the availability or lack thereof of physical facilities and overall atmosphere in which learning takes place.

The educational facilities play very important role in the actualization of the educational goals and objectives by satisfying the physical and emotional needs of students and staff of the university. In one study the significant improvements in learning environment were attributed to the better attitudes to teaching and learning the improvements in the physical environment created amongst all users (Higgins et al, 2005). According to Mc Gowen (2007), the educational facilities have an impact on students' achievement, attendance, behavior and completion rate. The rapid changes of information technology together with the shift to more students centred and flexible learning approach have changed the way teaching and learning is experienced within universities. These changes increase students' responsibility for their own learning, alter the ways students interact and communicate and shape the demands and expectations of what the on-campus experience should be.

Literature Review

The educational facilities consist of all types of buildings for academic and non-academic activities, equipment for academic and non-academic activities, areas for sports and games, landscape, farms and gardens including trees, roads and paths. Others include furniture and toilet facilities, lighting, acoustics, storage facilities and parking lot, security, transportation, ICT, cleaning materials, food services, and special facilities for the physically challenged persons (Ihuoma, 2008). Learning space is the basic facilities for academic activities such as classroom or lecture hall, laboratories including the equipments and furniture. The support space is the non academic facilities provided by the university such as parking space, cafeteria, clinic and library. The exterior or external environment is consisted of the external part of the academic and non academic buildings in the university.

Cash (1993) examined the relationship between building condition and student achievement in small rural Virginia high schools. Student scores on achievement tests and adjusted for socioeconomic status, was found to be up to 5 percentile points lower in buildings with lower quality ratings. Achievement also appeared to be more directly related to cosmetic factors than to structural ones. Poorer achievement was associated with specific building condition factors such as substandard science facilities, air conditioning, locker conditions, classroom furniture, more graffiti, and noisy external environments.

McGuffey (1982) concluded that heating and air conditioning systems appeared to be very important, along with special instructional facilities (such as science laboratories or equipment) and color and interior painting, in contributing to student achievement. Proper building maintenance was also found to be related to better attitudes and fewer disciplinary problems in one cited study.

Earthman & Lemasters (1996) report three key findings: that higher student achievement is associated with schools that have less external noise, that outside noise causes increased student dissatisfaction with their classrooms, and that excessive noise causes stress in students (1997). Black (2002) reports that when larger schools do not promptly replace or repair facilities damaged by vandalism, they send a message to students that vandalism is allowed. "Learning is a complex activity that puts students' motivation and physical condition to the test" (Lyons, 2002). It has been a long-held assumption that curriculum and teaching have an impact on learning. However, it is becoming more apparent that the physical condition of our schools can influence student achievement.

Methodology

The population of this study consists of the Diploma students from Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pahang. The students were randomly chosen and from a total of 200 questionnaires distributed, 150 were returned. A quantitative descriptive survey was conducted using a structured self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections which are Sections A and B. Section A is about the demographic profile of the respondents. Section B is related to the students' perception towards the educational facilities in UiTM Pahang. In this section, a four-point Likert Scale item which required the students to rate each statement as 1- 'Strongly Disagree' to 4- 'Strongly Agree' was used. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 was used to conduct the data analysis. Procedures used include reliability test and descriptive statistics which are mean, frequency and percentage.

Findings and Discussions

The reliability test carried out shows that the internal consistency of the questionnaire is acceptable since the Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.6 which is 0.86.

Table 1.0 : The Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Programme	Business Management	90	60.0
	Applied Science	6	4.0
	Plantation & Agrotechnology	24	16.0
	Sport Science & Recreation	15	10.0
	Accountancy	15	10.0
Gender	Male	51	34
	Female	99	66

The demographic profile of the respondents can be referred in Table 1. Most of the respondents are from the Faculty of Business Management (60%), followed by 16% who are students from the Faculty of Plantation & Agro-technology. In Table 1 also shows that 66% of the respondents are female and 34% are male

Table 2.0: The Students' Perception towards Learning Space

Items	Mean	Percentage			
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Location of academic learning areas is away from disruptive noises.	2.89	10.0	10.0	61.3	18.7
2. Storage for students and lecturers materials is adequate.	2.73	10.0	10.7	76.0	3.3
3. Computer in classrooms/computer labs have functional furniture design for their use.	2.89	5.3	15.3	64.0	15.3
4. The UiTM facilities accommodate a variety of learning styles of students	2.49	5.3	46.7	41.3	6.7
5. Classrooms have computers that are networked for both intranet and internet.	2.74	4.7	29.3	53.3	12.7
6. Classrooms have logical, well designed and integrated technology systems.	2.74	5.3	18.0	74.0	2.7

Table 2 shows the students perception towards learning space. The result shows that more than 60% students agree and strongly agree on items no1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. 52% of students strongly disagree and disagree that the UiTM facilities accommodate a variety of learning styles of students. The results also supported by the mean value. The values that are higher than 2.5 will indicate students' agreement on the items. The mean value of item No.4 is 2.49 which is less than 2.5.

Table 3.0: The Students' Perception towards Support Space

Items	Mean	Percentage			
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Parking space is convenient and sufficient to accommodate building staff and campus visitors	2.21	15.3	49.3	34.0	1.3
2. Lecturers have their own office spaces with access to telephone and computers	3.05	0.0	15.3	64.0	20.7
3. Administrative personnel are provided with sufficient work space and privacy	3.03	.7	12.7	69.3	17.3
4. Cafeteria is attractive with sufficient space for sitting/dining, delivery, storage and food preparation	2.18	22.7	37.3	39.3	0.7
5. Clinic is near and well equipped to meet requirements	2.77	16.0	7.3	60.0	16.7
6. Library is well equipped and provide comfortable place to study	3.09	8.0	0.0	66.7	25.3

The students' perceptions towards support space is shown in Table 3. The result shows that more than 70% of the students agree and strongly agree on item No 2,3,5 and 6. Most of the students (92%) agree that the library is well equipped and provide comfortable place to study. This is due to the completion of the new library that provides comfortable place for students to study. Students do not agree about the statements regarding parking space and cafeteria. This result is also supported by the mean value which is less than 2.5

Table 4.0: The Students' Perception towards Exterior Environment

Items	Mean	Percentage			
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Exterior noise and surrounding environment do not disrupt learning	2.61	5.3	34.7	54.0	6.0
2. Site and buildings are well equipped	2.59	7.3	27.3	64	1.3
3. Building materials provide attractive color and texture	2.67	14.0	20.7	50.0	15.3
4. Overall design is aesthetically pleasing and appropriate for students	2.69	7.3	18	73.3	1.3
5. Entrances and walkways are sheltered from sun and inclement weather	2.59	7.3	30	59.3	3.3
6. Proper maintenance of the facility is priority and vandalism is removed quickly	2.25	19.3	36.0	44.7	0.0

Table 4 shows the finding about students' perception towards the exterior environment in UiTM Pahang. More than 60% students agree on item No.1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. 55.3% students do not agree and strongly disagree that proper maintenance of the facility is priority and vandalism is removed quickly. The mean value for this item is 2.25, which is less than 2.5. This finding shows that the students made the perception that facility has no proper maintenance and vandalism is not removed quickly.

Table 5.0 : The Mean Value Of Learning Space, Support Space And Exterior Environment

Categories	Mean
1. academic learning space	2.75
2. support space	2.72
3. exterior environment	2.57

The descriptive statistics for the three categories of facilities analyzed in this study are presented in Table 5. The mean value for the three categories are more than 2.5 which shows that in overall, the facilities provided by UiTM Pahang is satisfying educational needs.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that improvement should be made on parking space, cafeteria and maintenance of the facility including vandalism. The students may complain because they have to walk to the classes especially if the class is located at the IST blocks which will physically affect them. The same thing goes with the cafeteria whereby many students have to go to the cafeteria or restaurants outside of the campus for their food. The maintenance of educational facilities should be done periodically, the facilities are always in good condition and can be used by students. Improving the educational facilities can be costly. This is supported by Mc Gowen (2007) mentioned

that the construction, renovation and maintenance of school buildings represent a large percentage of annual school budgets. However, the benefit from the improvement has greater impact on universities objectives.

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