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Undergraduate Students Satisfaction in the Context of Teaching and Non Teaching, Universiti Teknologi MARA

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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines an empirical study, which seeks to identify the determinants of academic experience, faculty and teaching quality, campus life, facilities, placement and internship support, and competencies towards undergraduate students satisfaction at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). The purpose of this study is to investigate undergraduate students satisfaction in the context of higher education. This study investigates the relationship between academic experience, faculty and teaching quality, campus life, facilities, placement and internship support, and competencies. The total of 340 respondents were involved in this study. The survey result from the undergraduate students showed four independent variables which have a positive impact on the undergraduate students satisfaction: facilities, placement and internship support, competencies and academic experiences. In addition, faculty and teaching quality and campus life did not contribute much to undergraduate students satisfaction.

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1. Introduction

Students satisfaction is well researched topic based on a study teaching and non-teaching elements and constructs that enable higher education institutions to predict retention and to inform marketing planning in a highly competitive higher education environment. According to Carter and Yeo (2016) stated that the competitiveness and sustainability are now representations amongst education organizations in Malaysia's education sector. The higher education (HE) sector in Malaysia is getting more competitive with 414 private colleges, 37 private universities, 18 public universities, 20 university colleges and eight foreign branch campuses competing for the same group of the local eligible students population and regional students, along with Singapore, Philippines, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

Students' satisfaction studies are essential in determining whether colleges and universities are fulfilling their mission. It is well known that the most vital product of educational institutions is competent graduates. In order to best arrange students, they are required upon graduation, an actual programme is desirable. Therefore, sustainability is crucial to all the higher educational institutions at present and in the future direction. This statement is also supported by Carter and Yeo (2016) given

the heavy competition similarly a sure sign that the education market is progressively development in Malaysia for one of the ways to enable the organisation to sustain itself is to maintain or increase its level of income from its “core market” (domestic) and/or increase its level of income from overseas students via increased numbers or tuition fees.

Students are known to choose higher education institutions and programmes to enrol on the basis of factors such as the study environment, delivery method, time availability, on/off campus requirements and place to access learning materials by (Cohen et al., 2001; Gruber et al., 2010; Elliot and Healy, 2002; Lagrosen et al., 2004). Students are also found to place great importance for academic quality, degree acceptance and the higher education institution’s reputation in the selection of a higher education institution (Chun, 2005; Alves and Raposo, 2010; Brown and Mazzarol, 2009; Gruber et al., 2010).

In this study, the factors that contributes to positive impacts on the undergraduate students provide more awareness and acceptance to study at the university. Besides that, this research also helps the service quality for the student satisfaction in the organization of the educational institutions should focus on a study teaching and non-teaching elements to increase the satisfaction and retention of the students. Thus, the researchers believe that the independent variables in this research would best describe the factors that determines the students’ satisfaction in higher education institutions.

2. Research Problem and Objectives

Facing a growing competitive environment, the higher education institutions (HEIs) have dramatically increased the competition for enrolling and retaining students by providing a high quality service. Due to this competitive forces for marketing education in Malaysia, higher education institutions need to be more aware of the underlying factors considered by students when selecting higher education institutions (Hassan and Sherif, 2006) if they want to survive in this competitive environment (Vaira, 2004). Therefore, it plays an important role for the higher education institutions to know the elements that influence the student satisfaction and to understand the nature of relationship among them.

Previous researchers have identified many attributes that influenced students satisfaction in choosing the higher education institutions. Chien (2007) draws attention on the impact of the location and the learning facilities, as well as the respect that the teacher shows to his students have on the learning satisfaction. Likewise, Wei (2013) identifies four sets of factors when explaining learning satisfaction of teachers and teaching, course content, learning environment and administrative services. According to Chang and Chang (2012), teacher’s teaching, class materials, learning results, student-teacher interaction, peer relationship and support are the major factors in students’ learning satisfaction. From another point of view, Urdan and Weggen (2000) suggest six factors that can help measure student’s satisfaction towards the educational process, namely teacher, course content, teacher’s teaching, class materials and the quality and setting of the course. Hill and Epps (2010) argued that along with employees’ skills and their appearance, physical facilities, equipment and materials surrounding them have a great impact on students’ satisfaction. According to O’ Driscoll (2012) stated that the students satisfaction in higher education institution also found that issues such as quality of student life and other non-institutional factors need to be accounted for in offering a more comprehensive explanation of students’ satisfaction.

This paper focuses on the relationship between undergraduate students’ satisfaction and the academic

experience, faculty and teaching quality, campus life, facilities, placement and internship support and competencies in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM).

3. Literature Review

3.1 Students Satisfaction

According to Elliot and Shin (2002), students satisfaction refers to the favourability of a student's subjective evaluation of the various outcomes and experiences associated with education. The student is viewed as the fundamental customer among various customers and partners in the preparation and instructive organizations (Abdullah, 2006). Harvey, Locke and Morey (2002) describe students satisfaction as the pleasure resulted from student's implication in the specific activities suggested by the curricular designs, activities that lead to fulfilling the learning needs initially felt by the student. There are crucial things to consider when measuring student reaction to administration quality. Student reaction is important for execution upgrade, including the showing perspective and educational modules outline. Mahapatra and Khan (2007) determines that the fundamental customers of learning establishments are students and they assume different parts in the organization. Other than that, satisfaction is an all-around looked into point in both academic and non-academic (working environment) settings. In academic settings, students' satisfaction information helps universities and colleges make their educational modules more receptive to the necessities of an evolving commercial centre (Eyck, Tews and Ballester, 2009; Witowski, 2008).

According to Maimunah, S., Kaka, A., & Finch, E (2009) observe that students' satisfaction is predicted by three factors, namely performance of trainer, service delivery, and support facilities. In line with that, Hill, Y., Lomas, L., & MacGregor, J (2003) stated in research on student's quality experience in higher education that the lecturer and the support system are the most significant indicators. Jalali, Islam, and Ariffin (2011) distinguish factors that influenced students satisfaction in a university in Malaysia. The researcher observed that academic factors are more critical than bolster work elements. Academic functions are not confined to the showing procedure, but rather incorporate viewpoints that can create students from multiple points of view.

In conclusion, as primary customers, students' satisfaction is crucial to the survival of any learning organisation. Factors that determine students' satisfaction comprise both academic and non-academic. Therefore, this research will focus on both aspects.

3.2 Academic Experience

Academic experience shows that the competitive academic environment where students have many options available to them, factors that enable educational institutions to attract and retain students should be seriously studied. Higher education institutions, which want to gain competitive edge in the future, may need to begin searching for effective and creative ways to attract, retain and foster stronger relationships with students (Hishamuddin, Azleen, Rahida & Mohd Zulheflee, 2008).

According to Kadar (2001) suggested that academic advising involved repeated interactions with students about their course offerings and schedules. In line with this, Peter & Wagner et al. (2001) in their study stated that positive perception of students about their institution is connected to effective academic advising and students are more satisfied when they received meaningful and

effective academic counselling. A research finding by Sumaedi, Bakti et al. (2012) depict that in higher education institutions the advisory services have an affirmative influence on perceived service quality. Therefore, the hypothesis posit,

H1: Academic experience has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.

3.3 Faculty and Teaching Quality

Thomas and Galambos (2004) argue that faculty and student interactions in the classroom were significantly related to higher levels of satisfaction amongst undergraduates. Meanwhile, Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2012) in their research noted that quality of lecturers and effective uses of technology were strong determinants of students' satisfaction. In a research conducted by Arambewela and Hall (2009) added that the elements of feedback from lecturers, good access to lecturers and quality of teaching were perceived to be the most important variables influencing students' satisfaction.

According to Meacham (2002), faculty who are skilled teachers because of their profession tend to enrich student learning in foundation and general education courses. With contingent faculty being used to teach foundation courses and are who temporary at best, we question the commitment institutions have toward the social and intellectual development of students (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005), as well as the process of adequately preparing them for upper division course work, work in their major, and graduate studies. Therefore, the hypothesis posit,

H2: Faculty and teaching quality has a positive with students satisfaction in UiTM.

3.4 Campus life

Campus life showed that due to increased pressure of the competition in the education administration industry, the higher education institutions are concentrating more on the students' satisfaction. Concocting procedures to attract in student and making proficient and powerful learning situations is a piece of the arrangement actualized by the executives in these establishments with a specific end goal to connection academic accomplishment to ideas, for example, maintenance and enrolment (Helgesen and Nettet, 2007). The organizations can pick up student satisfaction through conveyance of brilliant administration qualities and this is an essential part in securing an economical upper hand in today's global instructive market. In addition, Tessema, et al., (2011) stated that the campus life given the importance of student satisfaction levels at higher educational institutions, there has been a growing interest in examining factors affecting students' satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis posit,

H3: Campus life has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.

3.5 Facilities

Organizations and institutions often fail to recognize the importance of facility management to their business performance and success (Sarel Lavy, 2008). Based on the research of Sohail et al. (2003), the physical facilities of the higher education institutions contain the lighting of the lecture halls, campus building appearance, design of lecture halls, and cleanliness of the campus as well the easement of the classrooms and study rooms. Similarly, research conducted by Carter & Yeo (2014) on the

non-teaching support elements as a source of student satisfaction and retention, for example the quality of the fabric of buildings and parking facilities.

According to a study by Carter and Yeo (2016) found that the Institution's facilities in terms of IT and relevant facilities support, library and information services and multipurpose retail shops were also increasingly becoming more important and this aspect was one of the contributing determinants to pre- and post- student recruitment, satisfaction and retention. Therefore, the hypothesis posit,

H4: Facilities has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.

3.6 Placement and internship support

Kolb & Kolb, (2005) stated that the experiential learning methods in higher education are well-documented. However, to date, it remains unclear how work placements may influence students' learning motivations. The outdoor work placements may foster pro-environmental behavior, allowing the student to become the active enquirer (Nicol, 2013). Considering educational performance, the inclusion of a placement year has been seen to benefit academic grades regardless of course subject, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status (Reddy & Moores, 2012).

Placements provide the individual with distance and time away from their course. Yet for many, reflection ends upon completion of the placement. Other research by Leberman and Martin (2004) reported on this, advocating the need for post-course reflection to ensure transfer of learning. Therefore, the hypothesis posit,

H5: Placement and internship support has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.

3.7 Competencies

Since the early 2000s, sustainability education aims to structure activities that foster the step-by-step development of key competencies in sustainability over the course of an educational program by Brundiers et al. (2010). Richards (2006) highlighted in that this factor can attract customer to satisfy with any definition of lecturer competence depends on teaching in a particular setting, the culture and values held in the community which aims to make students learn effectively and efficiently.

Rychen & Tiana (2004) noted that universities are now demanding greater research into the definition and selection of key competences which can help to assess the degree of preparation achieved by graduates to meet the challenges of sustainability and the promotion of sustainable development. In addition, changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours regarding sustainability and related issues are possible as students' progress on competencies. Therefore, the hypothesis posit,

H6: Competencies has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.

4. Theoretical framework

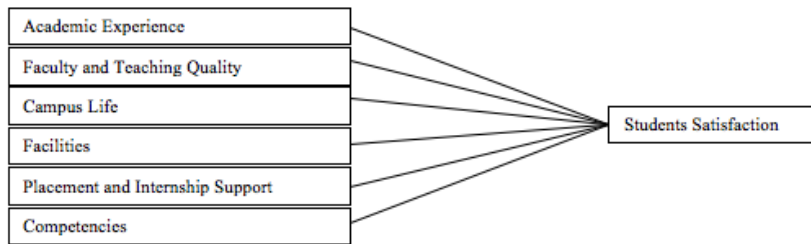


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

Hypothesis:

- H1: Academic experience has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.
- H2: Faculty and teaching quality has a positive with students satisfaction in UiTM.
- H3: Campus life has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.
- H4: Facilities has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.
- H5: Placement and internship support has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.
- H6: Competencies has a positive relationship with students satisfaction in UiTM.

5. Methodology

A large sample size is needed to overcome the responsibility of non-response problem. The sample was among undergraduate students to answer questionnaire. The researchers decided to distribute 340 sets of questionnaires to respondents. In this study, researchers had chosen undergraduate students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Perlis Branch as respondents. The population of this study were undergraduate students amounted of 7282. The respondents were undergraduate students in UiTM Perlis Branch with the total of 340 respondents. The researchers used stratified random sampling. Stratification provides more information with a given sample and ensures homogeneity within each stratum. With stratified sampling, there would an equal chance that each level of undergraduate students as respondents could be selected for inclusion in each stratum of sample. The researchers used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) window version 22.0. to analyse the information and data gained.

6. Findings and Analysis

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Analysis

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| Student satisfaction | - | | | | | | |
| Academic experience | .51** | - | | | | | |
| Faculty and quality | .48** | .66** | - | | | | |
| Campus life | .42** | .40** | .60** | - | | | |
| Facilities | .60** | .40** | .51** | .62** | - | | |
| Placement and internship support | .60** | .40** | .40** | .50** | .60** | - | |
| Competencies | .60** | .50** | .60** | .52** | .52** | .62** | - |

Note: **p<0.01, *p<0.05

In Table 1, the correlations among students satisfaction and academic experience, faculty and quality, campus life, facilities, placement and internship support and competencies were statistically significant, ranging from ($r=0.42$, $p<0.01$) to ($r=0.60$, $p<0.01$). This indicated that all variables were significantly correlated.

Table 2: Regression Analysis

| Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Independent Variable: | Std β | Sig. Value |
| Academic Experience | .32** | .000 |
| Faculty And Teaching Quality | .04 | .524 |
| Campus Life | -0.09 | .115 |
| Facilities | 0.30** | .000 |
| Placement And Internship Support | 0.30** | .000 |
| Competencies | 0.15* | .007 |
| R^2 | .72 | |
| Adjusted R^2 | .52 | |
| F-Change | 55.74 | |

Note: ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$

Result of regression analysis is presented in Table 2. It shown that academic experience ($\beta=.32$, $p<0.01$), facilities ($\beta=.30$, $p<0.01$), placement and internship support ($\beta=.30$, $p<0.01$) and competencies ($\beta=.15$, $p<0.01$) were significantly predicted students satisfaction while faculty and teaching quality ($\beta=.04$, n.s.) and campus life ($\beta=-0.09$, n.s.) insignificant predicted students satisfaction.

7. Suggestions

7.1 Students Satisfaction

The quality of management of the higher education institutions in managing services to students is also an important predictor of students' satisfaction. Efficiency and quality of management include the capabilities to deliver services as promised, good record-keeping of student's information, suitable working time, and effective management of input system. The suggestion of management aspects such as strategic planning, setting rules and procedures, creating a system of assessment, accountability, quality management and human resource management determine the extent of the service quality offered by the institution.

7.2 Academic Experience

The academic experience appear to be important in students satisfaction. This statement was supported by Carter and Yeo (2016) showed that the faculty and teaching quality, where the higher education institutions engages not only high-quality teaching staff but ensuring that they are completely drawn in with/approachable to students during the student stay by repeated informal interactions with students, esteeming their considerations and classroom connection and the quality of feedback on coursework. In addition, staff availability, formally and informally, as well as academic advice on what to study next to enrich their academic experience was also valued by students.

7.3 Faculty and Teaching Quality

The results are insignificant due to lack of focus on industrial training supervision by higher education institutions. This is an area where most studies do not cover as more focus are geared towards classroom learning and not off-campus training. The researchers in the past may have excluded this as industrial training is not common back then; in fact to some extent even formal institutions are relatively not accessible at certain areas. Thus, this could be a wonderful opportunity for future researchers to do some studies on it, particularly in the domain of lecturers' competencies and its link to students' outcomes.

7.4 Campus Life

The results are insignificant due to less opportunities given to students such as gain access to scholarships, loans and work study programmes. In addition, this statement was supported by Carter and Yeo (2016) whereby the campus life needs to be secure with good social opportunities and activities, especially for those students who are domiciled a long way from the campus. Therefore, the campus life should support services by the higher education institutions such as counselling services, orientation programmes, student involvement and representation, appropriate regulations, safety and well-being, and career assistance.

7.5 Facilities

The availability and quality of physical facilities offer some clue of efficiency and quality of educational. The higher education institutions should be responsible for enhancing the quality of physical facilities including classrooms and workshops, training equipment, sports and recreational, cafeteria, and accommodations. According to Carter and Yeo (2016), the higher education institutions appears to need to provide excellent facilities like library, shops, cafeterias and IT facilities.

7.6 Placement and Internship Support

The higher educational institutions should provide more opportunities for work placements and support in both obtaining them and staff support (Carter and Yeo, 2016). Therefore it seems rational to suggest in educational institution.

7.7 Competencies

The higher education institutions should establish such a learning culture enlarges the learning space and facilitates better learning opportunities for emerging future-oriented competencies across different contexts. Therefore, it aims at a personal improvement that allows individuals to manage with difficult situations, to be able to act and to decide reflectively, to take responsibility, to consider ethical criteria while acting and to be able to predict consequences in students satisfaction.

8. Conclusion

The higher education institutions services have been increasingly recognized and accepted by students at the university. Therefore, this research was conducted to investigate what has made students' satisfaction towards services provided by the universities. In this research the variables used were academic

experience, faculty and teaching quality, campus life, facilities, placement and internship support and competencies have been found to be major influence to students satisfaction. For academic experience was positive relationship with students satisfaction. It occurs when academic was high, the student satisfaction will increased and vice versa. For second variable is faculty and teaching quality was positive relationship with student satisfaction. It occurs when faculty and teaching quality were increased, the students satisfaction quality will increased and vice versa. The third variable is campus life also negative relationship with student satisfaction. It occurs when the comforts of campus life was degrades, the students' satisfaction will decreased and vice versa. The forth variable is facilities were positive relationship with student satisfaction. It occurs when facilities were high, the student satisfaction will increased and vice versa. Next, the placement and internship support was positive relationship with student satisfaction. It occurs when placement and internship support are high, the student satisfaction will increase and vice versa. Finally, the competencies supported with students satisfaction. It occurs when the competencies were high, the students satisfaction will increased and vice versa. Therefore, in this study it can be concluded that academic experience, facilities and placement and internship support, competencies were significant and positive to the dependent variables. Finally, faculty and teaching quality, and campus life obtained insignificant result.

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