WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY: STUDENTS PERCEPTION ON SERVICE QUALITY AND SATISFACTION LEVEL

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MAY 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

5. Report

5.1 Proposed Executive Summary

This study is conducted to investigate the service quality process in the higher learning institution. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to identify the elements of service quality process and the learning outcome, to investigate the student's satisfaction level at a public university in Malaysia and to make recommendations and help the university to improve the service quality based on the student's satisfaction level. The study is concerned with the perceptions (actual experiences) of Bachelor's Degree students on service quality. In the present study, the data were obtained from an established university located in the east coast of Malaysia. The questionnaires were distributed to Bachelor Degree students from all faculties in Universiti Teknologi MARA Terengganu (Dungun campus). In line with the research objectives, perceptions and expectations of students towards the quality of physical facilities provided by the management of university are also determined

5.2 Enhanced Executive Summary

In this paper, the authors aim to investigate the elements of service quality process and the learning outcome and its relationship to student's satisfaction level at a public university in Malaysia. A total of 280 questionnaires were completed and returned by final year students of various courses. Items in the questionnaire were design to measure the student's perceptions on the quality of physical facilities and the service quality of the academic and non-academic staff of UiTM Dungun campus, Terengganu. The service quality dimensions include reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy delivered by the staff of UiTM Dungun Campus. Furthermore, the student's satisfaction levels were also evaluated based on the service delivery and the quality of the physical facilities. Result indicated that there is significant and positive correlation between the quality of physical facilities and all service quality elements with the satisfaction level of the students. Further analysis using the Multiple Regression analysis revealed that the assurance, empathy and reliability were positively significant in influencing the student's perception on their satisfaction level. These results also revealed the three most important service quality dimensions that the management and staff of UiTM Dungun campus take serious consideration in increasing student's satisfaction level The research findings may benefit both the university and students. It will help the university to determine the level of student satisfaction and to serve students more effectively in order to ensure that the university remains competitive. Such findings should help higher learning institutions to improve their service quality delivery and plan for better strategic plan to achieve a world class status.

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5.3   Introduction

Every student has expectation of the service they want to receive when they go to a university. For a higher educational institution, students' satisfaction plays an important part in the measurement of customer satisfaction in assessing service quality. Student satisfaction measures how well the expectations of a student relating to a service provided by the university. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the elements of service quality process and the learning outcome and its relationship to students' satisfaction level. The researcher conducted the research based on the SERVQUAL model to measure the gap between students' expectation for the service and their perception of actual service delivered.

The subsequent work on SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1988) sought to develop a broad instrument for measuring service quality. The five dimensions of service quality defined include:

- Tangibility: Physical facilities, teaching equipment, ambience and appearance of the teaching staff
- Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- Responsiveness: Willingness to help the students and provide prompt service in terms of solving the student's problem.
- Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of the teaching staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence
- Empathy: Caring individualized attention the teaching staff provides to the students.

The SERVQUAL model proposed is best known for its definitions of 5 gaps between customers' expectations and perceptions. It includes the gap between expected services and management perceptions of the expectations (gap 1), service quality specifications and management perceptions (gap 2), service quality specifications and service delivery (gap 3), service delivery and external communications to consumer (gap 4) and customer expected service and their perception of actual service (gap 5).

Only Gap 5 or the satisfaction gap is the researcher's concentration since both parties out of the five gaps pinpointed in the model; the teaching staff and the students must work hand in hand with each other in ensuring the quality of the service rendered. This satisfaction gap, as defined by Parasuraman et al., (1988) is the discrepancy between customers' expected service and perceived service delivered. In this study, the students are the customers to the teaching staff and management. Parasuraman et al., (1988) further append that customers' expectations are influenced by experience, personal needs and word of mouth communications. Hence students will develop certain level of expectations based on their past knowledge of the university, their personal needs and promotional or publicity created by the management of the university. In addition to the SERVQUAL dimensions proposed as the measuring instrument, the researchers included an 'outcome' measurement scale which consists four items proposed by Devinder and Biplab (2003). The items used are 'knowledge and skills gained during the lecture, availability of class notes and reading materials, teacher's feedback on assessed work and depth of the lecture' (Devinder and Biplab 2003, p 242).

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