

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA
FAKULTI OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES AND POLICY
STUDIES



SERVICE DELIVERY AND STUDENTS' SATISFACTION IN
POLITEKNIK KUCHING SARAWAK

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MARCH 2014

ABSTRACT

The educational industry is undergoing rapid change and competition has increased with an increasing influx of local and foreign colleges in the country. Higher educational institutions have begun to recognize the importance of attracting students and retaining them once they are in the institution. An important reason for the interest in service quality results from the belief that it has a beneficial effect on the performance of the institution. Students' satisfaction assessment is vital in determining service quality in institutions. Hence, the objective of this study is to evaluate the service quality provided; the objectives the level of students' satisfaction on service quality provided; to identify the relationship between service quality (tangible, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy) and students' satisfaction base on SERVQUAL measures (Parasuraman et al., 1998). Instrument used in this research is adapted from Parasuraman et al. (1990) with some of the items used extracted from LeBlanc and Nguyen (1997) using the five dimensions in service quality (tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy) using Likert scale. The respondents were students from Department of Commerce in Politeknik Kuching Sarawak (PKS). Total of 271 questionnaires distributed, 155 of questionnaires were returned, this representing 57.2% return rate.

This research provides institutions service management with guidance of the current provision of service quality at Politeknik Kuching Sarawak. The findings generally indicate that majority of students are significantly satisfied with the services provided by institutions. Due to nature of service quality, it is essential to conduct further research to build on this study, in order to ensure that the institution remains competitive in what is an increasingly turbulent environment.

Keywords: student satisfaction, service quality, SERVQUAL, service, customer satisfaction, Politeknik Kuching Sarawak.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Service quality's become the focus and a strategic option for many institutions of higher learning around the globe. The role of service quality has also become critical to the success of an organization (Landrum, et al 2007). Services are deeds, processes, and performances (Parasuraman et al, 1985) Gronroos (1983) define service as: "An activity or series of activities of more or less intangible nature that normally, but not necessarily, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and I or systems of service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems". Service experiences are the outcomes of fundamental interaction between organizations, related systems/processes, service employees and customers. Considerable researching in marketing and management has examined customer satisfaction with service experiences (e.g. Arnold and Price,1993; Bitner, Booms and Mohr,1994) Nowadays products sell heavily rely on its services to acquire competitive advantage, and to satisfy customers' needs.

Higher education tends to care about student satisfaction because of its potential impact on student motivation, retention recruitment efforts, and fundraising. Student satisfaction is of persuasive interest to colleges and universities as they seek to continually improve the learning environment for students, meet the expectations of their constituent groups and legislative bodies, and demonstrate their institutional effectiveness.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to review the work of previous researchers on service quality and student satisfaction. Based on the literature reviewed, hypotheses will be formulated and a theoretical model developed. In the service economy especially, satisfaction, quality and performance proved to be key factors reciprocally interrelated in a causal, cyclical relationship, even though they are often used as synonymous due to the similarity in their meaning (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Bitner & Hubert, 1994).

2.1 Students' Satisfaction

Kotler and Clarke (1987) define satisfaction as a state felt by a person who has experience performance or an outcome that fulfill his or her expectation. Satisfaction is a purpose of relative level of expectations and perceives performances. The expectation may go as far as before the students even enter the higher education, suggesting that it is important to the researchers to determine first what the students expect before entering the university (Palacio, Meneses and Perez, 2002). In obstinate, Carey, Cambiano and De Vore (2002), believe that satisfaction actually covers issues of students' perception and experiences during the college years. It is risky to view students as customer, but given the current atmosphere of higher education marketplace, there is a new moral prerogative that student have become "customer"