...SS UNIVERSITY FROM THE EVALUATION OF ...ND STUDENTS SATISFACTION LEVEL

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Sub-Theme: Managing Education and Social Problems

This paper aims to investigate the characteristics of high service quality and its relationship in determining UiTMøs Terengganu ability to provide a high studentøs satisfaction level that may represents a world class university from the studentøs perspective. More than 100 questionnaires were distributed to final year students from the Bachelors of Business Administration at UiTM Terengganu. Questionnaires were distributed to students who were attending a research methodology workshop. The questionnaires were used to measure the physical facilities, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and the learning outcome between what students expect and their actual experience. Furthermore, the studentøs satisfaction level on the quality of the lecturers, physical facilities, the learning outcome and their demographic profiles were also evaluated. Result indicated that the studentøs are satisfied with the quality of the lecturers, physical facilities and the learning outcome. However there are elements in the service delivery that need to be improved as indicated by gap between what the studentøs expected and their actual experience.

INTRODUCTION

Not many researches have been done on the relationship between the achievement of a world class status university and the service delivery delivered by the academicians or lecturers of the particular university. However, it is known that, the lecturers or academicians played crucial roles in helping a university achieve a world class status. According to Sahol Hameed (2006), one of the important criteria of a world class university is its lecturers because they are the person who will deliver the knowledge, skill and experience to the students. However, the major issue to be focused is not the lecturers, but the service delivered by them to the development of a future leader of Malaysia (Mohd. Mustafa, 2006).

ei Fang (2005), a world class university can also be ...y. A first class university should have first-class disciplines, a first-class teaching contingent, first-class student sources, first-class talent training, first-class scientific research results, first-class administrative and operating mechanisms, powerful financial strengths and material as well as technological foundations. Of course, first-class universities should also make many outstanding contributions to the country and to social development. There should be no great divergences of understanding on these standards.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A WORLD CLASS UNIVERSITY

It is very difficult to classify a university as a world class university. A research conducted by Niland (2000), summarized ten characteristics of a world-class university. He said that, it is very crucial to those universities to have these ten characteristics if they want to be declared as a world class university. The ten characteristics of a world class university as outlined by Niland (2000) are:-

1. Quality of faculty
2. Research reputation
3. Talented undergraduate
4. International presence
5. Proper usage of resources
6. Alliances and networks
7. Embrace many disciplines
8. Technologically smart
9. Practice the art of good management
10. Internationalism of all aspects of the university

On the other hand, Sahol Hamid (2006) believes that, a world class university should have twelve characteristics. These twelve characteristics covers a broad range from lecturers, students, administrative staffs and all aspects involve in the development of the university. The characteristics include among others are government accredited niches program, research and cross border research collaboration, the availability of staffs and students mobility program, the enrolments and the number of registered international students, the international awards from international institution, good governance and global recognition of graduates.

At the same time, Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid (2006) adds, if a university wanted to be a world class university, it should make sure that, it has a world class lecturers, world class students, world class administrative staffs, world class facilities and world class learning environment. If the respective university has all these world-class factors, then it is highly recommended to the university to declare itself as a world class university.

Based on the literatures and definitions above, it can be concluded that, a world-class university covers a broad range of elements such as its lecturers, students, administrative staffs and all aspects involve in the development of the university. Therefore, it is

...ead of other external and internal factors that give a ...of a world-class university, the most important factors to be considered is the human capital of the university (lecturers) and its products (students or graduate). These people need to be a world class individual mentally and physically and only then the journey to reach to the world class ödestinationö will be easier and smoother.

As mentioned above, the lecturers and students are major indicators of a world class university. Logically, good graduates only can be produced if they are equipped with the latest knowledge, skills and experiences of lecturers. The lecturer should be able to deliver all skills, experiences and knowledge to the students efficiently. Efficiency can be measured by looking at the studentsø performance during examination and at the workplace. If they are able to make their employer happy due to their high ability and skill in performing any job assigned, then, we can say that, the lecturer has delivered the appropriate knowledge to the student in a very efficient manner.

SERVICE DELIVERY IN A WORLD CLASS UNIVERSITY

A world class service is measured by a high level of customer satisfaction (Ambani, 2003). It is the services which always make the customer feel delighted and happy (Wan Jamaliah, 2004). A world class service can also be known as a first class service (Min Wei Fang, 2005). Therefore, a world class service is service that offers a very high quality products or service which simultaneously makes the customers happy and repurchase, reuse, or re-consume the same service in the future. Quality of service in education is crucial in order to develop a better human for the future. A high quality service in education contains an excellent teaching, learning and knowledge delivery from the lecturers to the students (Ibrahim Abu Shah, 2006).

In order to achieve a world class status university, the services provided by the lecturers should also be first class services (Sohaimi Zakaria, 2006). As discussed above, one of the major determinants of a world class university is its graduates. A high quality graduates should also be a first class product of a university. It is crucial to have a good and high quality education delivery in every university in the world. A high quality education delivery is the main indicator to measure the performance of a student. If the teacher is able to deliver the right, high quality and first class knowledge to the students, then the outcomes would be high performance in the examination or excellence achievement of a student in his or her study (Ibrahim Abu Shah, 2006).

According to Kudchadker (2003), students or graduates are the most important customer and asset of a university because they are the principle customers of the academia. Therefore, a university should make sure that, it has a high quality education system and should also provide a proper learning environment in order to enhance the learning process. Teachers or lecturers in a university should adopt the same attitude towards quality like what the industries has done. This was supported by Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid (2006). He argued that a good teacher would be able to train and educate students to be better citizen if the teacher or educator delivers the knowledge in a very good and high

3

...bout the service delivery in a world class university, it ... delivery in a world class university should also be world class. Ambali (2003) stated that, world class service contains quality, good performance and excellent achievement. World class service is measured by a very high level of consumer satisfaction, optimum technological efficiency, and continuous improvement of facilities. Resilient attitude and inculcating genuine courtesy in spontaneous interaction with the consumers is also key ingredients in a world class service.

Measuring Service Quality

In general, quality is an objective measurement in manufacturing and a subjective one in the service sector (Pariseau and McDaniel, 1997). Ghobadian et al. *(*1994) classify the definition of quality into five broad categories as transcendent; product led; process or supply led; customer led, and value led. Ghobadian et al. (1994) also provide a specific definition on quality on a service, which is a measure of the extent to which the service delivered meets the customerøs expectations. The perception of quality is influenced not only by the service outcome but also by the service process. The perceived quality lies along a continuum. Unacceptable quality lies at one end of this continuum while the ideal quality lies at the other end. The points in-between represent different gradations of quality. In addition, numerous researchers and scholars agreed that in todayøs world of fierce competition, focusing on quality service is a key for survival and success (Parasuraman et al 1985; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Zeithmal et al 1990). Service quality has proven to be apparently related to costs (Crosby, 1980), profitability (Rust and Zahorik, 1993), customer satisfaction (Bolton and Drew, 1991), customer retention (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990) and positive word of mouth. The later work on SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1988) sought to develop a general instrument for measuring service quality. They identified five dimensions of service quality (three original and two combined dimensions). The dimensions are defined as follows

a) Tangibles: Physical facilities, teaching equipment, ambience and appearance of the teaching staff
b) Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
c) Responsiveness: Willingness to help the students and provide prompt service in terms of solving the studentøs problem.
d) Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of the teaching staff and their ability to inspire trust and confidence
e) Empathy: Caring individualised attention the teaching staff provides to the students

The authors proposed that service quality can be measured by looking at the degree of discrepancy between customersø normative expectations for the service and their perceptions of the service performance. The SERVQUAL model is best known for its definitions of 5 gaps between customersø 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

4

gap 3), service delivery and external communications
expected service and their perception of actual service
(gap 5).

Out of the five gaps identified in the model, only Gap 5 or the satisfaction gap is the researcher's concentration since both parties; the teaching staff and the students must work hand in hand with each other in ensuring the quality of the service rendered. The management must truly understand the students' expectations before devising any strategy or policy. The 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. They further add that customers' expectations are influenced by past experience, personal needs and word of mouth communications. Hence students will form certain level of expectations based on their past knowledge of UiTM, their personal needs and promotional or publicity created by the management of UiTM.

Based on the discussions above, it can be concluded that, in order to achieve a world class status university, a university should pay serious attention on the issues of education delivery from the producer (lecturers) to the customers (students). The more effective the lecturer delivers the knowledge to students, the better the students. Better and good students are crucial and very important to Malaysia in order survive in the globalise world. A good student is hoped to be a good leader who will lead Malaysia in the future. In addition, if the students produced are excellent students, then, they will help a university to achieve a world class status because. In addition to excellent lecturers, one of the major criteria of a world class university is its outstanding students. Therefore, it is important to say here that the service delivered by lectures is crucial in helping a university achieve a world class status.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

There are several objectives of this study. They are:

a) To identify the gap between the services expected by the students of the Business Administration Faculty and the actual services experienced by them.

b) To evaluate the level of satisfaction towards the physical facilities and services offered by the teaching staff at Faculty of Business Administration at UiTM Terengganu.

c) To determine the relationship between the gaps of the items in the service quality dimensions and the student's average satisfaction level.

In this study, it is important to focus on several aspects concerning service quality that can be measured. The study is concerned with the perceptions (real experiences) of Bachelors Degree students on service quality at UiTM Terengganu and their expectations of service quality that should be provided by the Business Administration Faculty Programme at Universiti Teknologi MARA Dungun Campus. In line with the research objectives, perceptions and expectations of students towards the quality of physical facilities provided by the management of UiTM Terengganu are also determined. The theoretical framework of service quality conceptualised by Parasuraman et al. (1988) are used in this study. There are five dimensions of service quality, which include assurance, responsiveness, empathy, reliability and tangibles that can be applied in education. Likewise, the levels of studentsø satisfaction are also determined in this study.

Instruments

The theoretical framework of service quality conceptualised by Parasuraman et.al (1988) is used in this study. The five dimensions stated in the framework are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. A sample of 125 students was chosen from a total population of 200 students. Questionnaires were distributed during their class breaks. However, only 188 questionnaires were properly fill and used. Questionnaires were constructed with the objective of determining whether there are any gaps between the õexpectationsö and õperceptionsö (actual experience) of the Bachelors Degree students. The gaps are expected to be in three scenarios. They can either be positive or negative or no gaps (perceptions equal expectations). Questions were further asked regarding their overall satisfaction towards the service quality at UiTM Dungun. The data are analysed using paired sample t-Test and correlation analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Two main analyses are used to examine the gaps analysis. The Paired Sample t-Test is chosen for the first analysis. The test helps to identify whether there is any difference in the data distribution of the expectations and perceptions of students for the Mean of each elements (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) in the service quality dimensions. In addition, the difference (gap) between the studentsø perception and expectation on the learning outcome were also analysed using the same analysis.

A 5-point Likert scale is used in the questionnaires and from the score of the mean values, the overall gap (Perceptions minus Expectations) of each element were determined. Results of the Paired Sample t-test reveal that the perceptions of the students are lower than their expectations for all elements of the service quality dimensions and also for the learning outcome. Furthermore, the gaps were significant at the 95% confidence level. All results are shown in table 1.

e Mean of Service Quality Dimensions and Learning

		Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)*
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 1	P-E Mean Tangible	-0.4423	0.6184	0.05717	-7.737	116	0.000
Pair 2	P-E Mean Reliability	-0.3900	0.5121	0.04735	-8.238	116	0.000
Pair 3	P-E Mean Responsive	-0.4117	0.6652	0.06149	-6.695	116	0.000
Pair 4	P-E Mean Assurance	-0.3312	0.6087	0.05627	-5.885	116	0.000
Pair 5	P-E Mean Empathy	-0.4670	0.6424	0.05939	-7.862	116	0.000
Pair 6	P-E Mean Learning Outcome	-0.4530	0.5999	0.05546	-8.168	116	0.000

P=Perception, E= Expectation.   * Significant at the 95 % confidence level.

Satisfaction Level

The satisfaction level of the students in the business programme is also analysed based on 7 items which are Quality of Physical Facilities, Lecturer's Physical Appearance, Lecturer's Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy shown by the lecturers and finally the Learning Outcome. Again, a 5 point Likert scale was used, where a score of 1 indicates that the students are extremely dissatisfied and a score of 5 indicates extreme satisfaction. Based on the Median and Mode value, the researcher discovers that the majority of students had given a score between 3 and 4 indicating high satisfaction level. The general satisfaction level also indicates that on average the students are satisfied with the services that they received from the teaching staff of UiTM Terengganu at the business faculty. This is shown by the mean value of between 3.0345 and 3.8103 which are above the average score of 2.50. All results are shown in table 2 and 3.

Table 2: The Statistics Analysis of the Students Satisfaction Level for Physical Facilities, Physical Appearance, Reliability and Responsiveness of Lecturer

Elements of Satisfaction		Quality of Physical Facilities	Lecturer's Physical Appearance	Reliability of Lecturer	Responsiveness of Lecturer
N	Valid	116	116	116	116
	Missing	2	2	2	2
Mean		3.0345	3.8966	3.9569	3.8103
Median		3.000	4.000	4.000	4.000
Mode		3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

f the Students Satisfaction Level for Assurance,

Elements of Satisfaction		Assurance Shown by Lecturer	Empathy Shown by Lecturer	Learning Outcome
N	Valid	116	116	116
	Missing	2	2	2
Mean		3.6983	3.6552	3.9310
Median		4.0000	4.0000	4.0000
Mode		4.00	4.00	4.00

Correlations Analysis

A correlation analysis is also performed between the general satisfactions and the mean gaps (perceptions minus expectations) for all service quality items used in the questionnaire. Results of the test indicate that there is a positive and linear relationship between the gaps and the Mean satisfaction level of the Bachelors Degree students in the Business Faculty at UiTM Terengganu. This is shown by the significant value of less than 0.05. This indicates that as the gaps become more positive (Perception higher than Expectation), the satisfaction level would also increase. However, the Spearman Rho Correlation also indicates that the mean gaps (perception minus expectations) for all the service quality items listed in table 4 have a low correlation with the overall satisfaction level as shown by the correlation value between 0.185 and 0.225. These results can be observed in table 4.

Table 4: Correlations Analysis between Mean Satisfaction Level and the Mean Gap of the Service Quality Items

Gap of Service Quality Items		Mean of Satisfaction Level
P minus E Punctuality	Correlation Coefficient	0.225(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016
P minus E Speed of Answering Question	Correlation Coefficient	0.200(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.033
P minus E Commitment to Help Students	Correlation Coefficient	0.236(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.011
	N	115
P minusE Courtesy and Kindness	Correlation Coefficient	0.191(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.041
P minus E Personalised Attention Given To Students	Correlation Coefficient	0.185(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.047

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). P= perceptions. E=Expectation

ENDATIONS

It is clear from the analysis that there is significant difference between the expectations and the perceptions of students towards the actual services delivered by the teaching staff and the management of the Business Faculty at UiTM Terengganu. The Paired Sample t-Test revealed that a substantial number of students experienced negative gaps; which indicates that the management and teaching staff are unable to meet or exceed the studentsø expectations for all the components of the service quality dimensions. As such the management have much to do in improving their services to at least match the expectations of students that are unique, complex and unpredictable. No doubt, it is a daunting task but it has to be done to ensure a high satisfaction level. In this light, the authors would like to offer some recommendations that may assist the management in enhancing the services. First and foremost, a service quality audit should be conducted on an annual basis. The main purpose of conducting this audit is to assess the quality of the studentsø experiences focusing on issues such as physical facilities, care and attention given by the staff, safety and security, after-hour on-line interaction, speed of delivery, courtesy and politeness of staff. The results from the auditing process can be communicated to the management of UiTM Terengganu in order to maintain and improve the service delivery.

The correlation analysis revealed that the gap in punctuality, speed in answering question, commitment to help students, courtesy and kindness and personalised attention has a significant influence in determining the average satisfaction level of the students. Even though the correlation value is low, these are the areas of the services that need to be improved in order to ensure a higher satisfaction level among the students. An effective approach to eliminate the gaps is to provide comprehensive training to the teaching staff. Training should focus on areas such as communication, interpersonal skills, ethics, and motivation. The training should be conducted on a regular basis and reviewed from time to time. In this training, important feedback from the teaching staff can be used to improve future training. Those attending the training should also be evaluated in a consistent manner using measurable specifications.

Finally, the Perceived Quality such as images, advertising, brand names and inferences about quality are critical (OøNeill and Black, 1996). Reputation and precise communication are very important. Potential students applying to the Business Faculty at UiTM Terengganu should have accurate information on the type, volume and quality of services available. Coupled with flexibility, this will hopefully ensures that the right services are delivered at the right time and place. Thus no false expectations are created in the minds of students. While the quest for quality is obviously a continuous and difficult process, it is vital that the effort to produce outstanding students at UiTM Terengganu is not hindered by failure to deliver the highest quality services.

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