

CRITERIA OF INSTITUTIONAL SELECTION, SERVICE QUALITY,
ADJUSTMENT AND SATISFACTION AMONG INTERNATIONAL
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

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To my beloved mother and father for their unflagging love and relentless support throughout my life

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ABSTRACT

Increasing trends of students going abroad for further studies in the last two decades has motivated higher education institutions to find the criteria of institutional selection of international students, improve the service quality of education and reduce the adjustment problems of these students to keep them satisfied. Malaysia is one of the countries which always try to achieve high academic standards in the education system to reach the global market. For this purpose, this study used two sets of quantitative questionnaire and distributed them among two groups of international postgraduate students in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). The first questionnaire is SERVQUAL, Adjustment and Satisfaction (SAS) questionnaire which was distributed among 353 respondents in UTM. Four dimensions of service quality namely tangible, consistency, assurance and compassion were obtained. Furthermore, high level of adjustment and low level of service quality and satisfaction from the respondents' perspective were observed. In addition, the study represented the relationship and differences in these based on demography. The second instrument is Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) Questionnaire which was distributed to 30 international postgraduate students in UTM. AHP findings indicated that "Academic Qualification" is the most satisfactory criterion of institutional selection while "Study Abroad" is the lowest. Additionally, this study was able to show that international postgraduate students in UTM have negative perceptions of education service quality in this university. In the case of UTM, international postgraduate students tend to compare UTM with the education in academic universities of US, UK, Australia and Europe as the standard and general class for higher education and they may also compare the fees with service quality in UTM.

ABSTRAK

Peningkatan trend pelajar yang pergi ke luar negara untuk melanjutkan pelajaran dalam dua dekad lepas telah mendorong institusi pengajian tinggi untuk mencari kriteria pemilihan institusi bagi pelajar antarabangsa, meningkatkan kualiti perkhidmatan pendidikan dan mengurangkan masalah penyesuaian pelajar-pelajar ini dari segi kepuasan. Malaysia adalah salah satu negara yang sentiasa cuba untuk mencapai taraf akademik yang tinggi dalam sistem pendidikan untuk mencapai pasaran global. Bagi tujuan ini, kajian ini menggunakan dua set soal selidik kuantitatif dan mengagihkannya kepada dua kumpulan pelajar pascasiswazah antarabangsa di Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). Soal selidik yang pertama adalah berbentuk *SERVQUAL*, *Adjustment and Satisfaction* (SAS) yang diedarkan kepada 353 responden di UTM. Empat dimensi kualiti perkhidmatan yang dikenali sebagai ketara, konsisten, jaminan dan ikhsan telah didedahkan. Tambahan pula, kajian ini menunjukkan hubungan di antara dimensi-dimensi berdasarkan demografi. Instrumen kedua adalah soal selidik Proses Analisis Hierarki atau AHP yang telah diedarkan kepada 30 orang pelajar pascasiswazah antarabangsa di UTM. Penemuan AHP menunjukkan bahawa "Taraf Pendidikan" adalah kriteria yang paling memuaskan dalam pemilihan institusi manakala "Belajar Luar Negara" adalah kriteria terendah. Selain itu, kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa pelajar pascasiswazah antarabangsa di UTM mempunyai persepsi negatif terhadap kualiti perkhidmatan pendidikan di universiti ini. Dalam kes UTM, pelajar pascasiswazah antarabangsa cenderung untuk membandingkan pendidikan UTM dengan pendidikan di universiti akademik di USA, UK, Australia dan Eropah sebagai kelas bertaraf tinggi dan umum untuk pengajian tinggi dan mereka turut membandingkan yuran universiti dengan tahap kualiti perkhidmatan yang diberikan oleh UTM.