

**SERVICE QUALITY IN HIGHER  
LEARNING INSTITUTION:  
THE CASE OF UUM**

**A thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Science (Management)  
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**by  
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## ABSTRAK

Kualiti ialah satu fungsi yang utama di dalam sesebuah organisasi perkhidmatan. Perdebatan tentang isu 'kualiti' di institusi pengajian tinggi sering kedengaran, tetapi hanya sebahagian kecil sahaja yang bersetuju dengan pengukuran yang dilakukan. Pandangan pelajar selalunya tidak diambil kira dalam perbincangan di peringkat nasional. Justeru, kajian ini bertujuan untuk melihat pandangan pelajar sebagai seorang 'pengguna' di institusi pengajian tinggi berkaitan dengan penentu kualiti dan juga perkhidmatan yang diberi yang berdasarkan kepada pengalaman yang dialami. Kajian ini adalah aplikasi dan pengubahsuaian daripada model SERVQUAL yang bertujuan untuk memeriksa dapatan terdahulu daripada Kwan dan Ng (1991) dan juga Parasuraman et al. (1988) dengan merujuk kepada pelajar di dalam konteks sosial dan budaya yang berlainan. Kajian ini menfokuskan kepada populasi pelajar yang terdapat di kampus utama Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok. Sebanyak 380 orang pelajar yang masih lagi belajar di UUM dipilih sebagai sampel berdasarkan kepada persampelan rawak mudah. Data yang diperolehi dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis deskriptif, analisis korelasi Pearson dan juga analisis pelbagai regresi. Terdapat dua penemuan utama kajian ini. Pertama, berbanding dengan dapatan Kwan dan Ng (1991) didapati bahawa pelajar-pelajar di Hong Kong dan China adalah sangat praktikal dan hanya menfokuskan kepada perkara yang berkaitan dengan pembelajaran berbanding dengan pelajar UUM yang lebih berminat dalam kehidupan sosial di kampus: Kepentingan Penglibatan Pensyarah ke atas Pelajar adalah tidak dititikberatkan. Pelajar UUM berpuashati dengan penentu Komunikasi dengan Universiti dan juga penentu Ketara (Tangible). Kedua, dapatan daripada penilaian Model SERVQUAL, dimensi kualiti perkhidmatan di dalam kajian ini adalah berbeza dari dapatan Parasuraman et al. (1988) di dalam industri yang lain, di mana dimensi Kebolehpercayaan adalah yang selalu didapati terpenting. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa dimensi terpenting secara keseluruhannya dalam konteks institusi pengajian tinggi adalah Empati, Sambutan, Jaminan, Ketara dan Kebolehpercayaan. Cadangan untuk kajian akan datang juga dibincangkan di dalam laporan ini.

## **ABSTRACT**

Quality is a core function of a service organization. There is an ongoing debate in higher education about the issue of "quality", but there is little agreement about how it is measured. The views of students do not seem to feature in the national debate. The purpose of this survey is to examine the students' views, as a "user" of higher education, about the attributes of quality in higher education and services, which the student are experiencing. This study is designed to apply the modified SERVQUAL found in Kwan's and Ng's (1991) and also in Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) findings with reference to the students in a different social and cultural context. The study focused on population of students currently available in Universiti Utara Malaysia's main campus in Sintok, Malaysia. 380 students who still study in UUM are selected as samples based upon a simple random sampling. Descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis are used to analyze the data. There are two main findings in this study. First, comparing to the findings by Kwan and Ng (1999) that both Hong Kong and Chinese students are very practical and only focus on study-related matters rather than social life in campus. Students in UUM are found to be most interested in campus life and the importance of Lecturers' Concern for Students has not been emphasized. UUM students are found quite satisfied with the Communication with University and the Tangible. Secondly, the results from the SERVQUAL Model evaluation suggest that determinants of service quality are different from those in other industries sampled by Parasuraman et al. (1988) where reliability is always deemed most important. The study found that the most important determinants of overall quality for students are empathy, responsiveness, assurance, tangibles and reliability in the higher learning institution context. Recommendations for further study are discussed at the end of this study.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The dimensions of service quality (SERVQUAL) originally formulated by a research team of Parasuraman, A., Valerie A. Zeithaml and Leonard L. Berry in 1995 in the area of service quality. SERVQUAL was founded on the view of the customer's assessment. This assessment was conceptualized as a gap between what the customer expects by way of SERVQUAL from a class of service providers, and their evaluations of the performance of a particular service provider.

SERVQUAL was presented as a multidimensional construct and in their original formulation, Parasuraman et al. (1985) indicated ten components of SERVQUAL namely reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer and tangibles. In 1988, (see Parasuraman et al.,1988), these components were collapsed into five dimensions; reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. They were developed 22-item instrument with which to measure customers, expectations and perceptions (E and P) of the five dimensions of SERVQUAL. Four or five numbered of items are used to measure each

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