

An Evaluation of the Quality of Premier Universities' Services and Facilities in Malaysia



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ABSTRACT: Education has a critical role in realizing Malaysia's aspirations to be a developed country in the world. Empirical research was completed to evaluate and assess the fundamental aspects of the quality of services and facilities of premier universities (world-ranked) in the Klang Valley, Malaysia, particularly in terms of non-academic aspects, academic aspects, reliability/access, empathy/understanding, reputation, and program issues. This research employed Firdaus Abdullah (2006) Higher Education Performance (HedPerf) instrument because service quality has a substantial influence on student satisfaction. The survey involved 1440 respondents, consisting of university students who were approached randomly at various faculties at two world-ranked public universities and two world-ranked private universities. This research found that university students were extremely satisfied with academic concerns and a university's strong reputation. Students were pleased with the quality of academic courses and programs, as well as the academic staff's positive attitude and work habits. This is the main deciding factor for both domestic and foreign students when selecting a renowned university. Academic supporting services, career counseling services, dean of student services, testing grading system, course content, instruction, university attitudes toward students, offering a diverse range of courses, and class size were the areas of students' needs and satisfaction. Quality of services and facilities is a extremely important factor for internationalization, global competition, and the future sustainability of a university.

KEYWORDS: Higher education, Quality of services and facilities, HedPerf, Open system theory, Socio-technical theory, TQM theory

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, quality and perfection are keywords. The growth of higher education institutions (HEI) has created new concerns in the methods and means of ensuring the quality of the educational process. It became vital for HEI to focus more on the quality of services and facilities, which would reflect on the success of its graduates in the job market and influence the institution's reputation (Akleh & Wahab, 2020). Increasing the quality and effectiveness of higher education (HE) is critical to a country's success on the world stage. In Malaysia, one area that has received special attention is the emphasis on quality.

All aspects of HE places a high value on quality in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan and Action Plan, which complement the Education Ministry's National Education Blueprint. They have a system in place for accrediting and regulating educational establishments. Malaysia developed a unified Quality Assurance (QA) system referred to Malaysia Quality Assurance (MQA), which has the mission to ensure the QA of institutions. The MQA Act empowered universities that have created internal quality assurance procedures and have effectively completed an institutional audit to be granted self-accrediting status. Additionally, Malaysia QA focuses on the premise of collaborating with institutions for accountability, transparency, and continuously assessing and updating key operations to achieve continuous progress. As a result, the QA ideas modified the QA frameworks to adapt to society's increasing societal expectations (Hanh, Loan, & Viet, 2020). Of late, the Minister of HE emphasized the importance of the private part's involvement in supporting the government in developing the HE in Malaysia entrepreneurship (Times, 2010). To accomplish this, the curriculum must be relevant to the demands of the world's marketplace to guarantee the graduates' quality in finding suitable employment in Malaysia.

HE quality is directly correlated with problems of Quality for Accountability and QA (Newson & Polster, 2001). According to Goedegebuure and Hayden (2007, p. 9) Quality for Accountability means "the requirement to demonstrate responsible actions" whereas QA is the "mechanisms, procedures and processes in place to ensure that the desired quality, however, defined and measured, is delivered". The government's current initiative to assure quality control in universities are "supervisory" and

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"market coordinating" parts. In terms of their expectations, the Malaysian government promoted HEI. Internal QA was developed to enhance the quality of institutions via self-assessment, self-accreditation, academic evaluation, and educator and staff feedback. The suggested internal QA method is intended to supplement the existing internal and external QA mechanisms in HEI (Endut, Abd Majid, Ibrahim, & Ashari, 2013).

The government establishes general guidelines, although the details and efforts are entrusted to the respective institutions. Marketplace factors such as institutional rivalry and bidding for funding, as implemented in certain countries, are used to urge HEI to enhance the efficiency and relevance of delivered courses (Kenway, Bigum, & Fitzclarence, 1993; Roberts & Peters, 1999). Quality frequently links with "customer satisfaction" in the most literature available about management, however, Vroeijenstijn (2003) states that in HE, there is no well-defined statement whether the "customer" is the organization, the learner, the prospective employer, or the community. Generally, several "players" are involved, including learners, instructors, admins, the authorities, professional groups, employers, and society have their own, sometimes competing, and different interpretations of quality. As a result, QA procedures tend more sophisticated, and quality evaluation becomes more complex. The shifting description of "quality" in universities has prompted a great deal of research and writing. The most widely recognized definition, according to Harvey and Green (1993), is "fitness for purpose." Fitness for the purpose may be converted to real policies and procedures in education which will enhance the being of developing countries (Idrus, 2003). Institutions are allowed the flexibility for establishing their mission and goals, and quality is supposed to occur while both the mission and the goals are accomplished. It would be accurate from the theoretical perspective however in authenticity if it is accomplished or if the mission and goals are related is a distinct concern.

Within the context of this research, universities are described as HEI that deliver specialized or professional education and training to youth in different disciplines and areas of study which prepare them for employment in the job market, career, or vocation (Hussin & Wong, 2011). Simultaneously, universities are also corporate organizations because of the fact that they function as a business entity that employs different categories and levels of employees to perform different kinds of jobs and duties based on a certain set of goals, structure, and work process (S. Asimiran & Hussin, 2012; Ismail, 2008; Sporn, 1999). In this regard, universities are complex corporate organizations that have their own peculiar culture, priorities, roles, expectations, and rules (Tama, 2019). In this research, the conceptual model and Higher Education Performance-only (HEdPERF) survey instrument created by Abdullah (2006) was used as it is the most relevant and appropriate. It is a complete and accurate performance-based measuring scale which aims to grasp the full dimensions of service quality in the HE sectors. This model has a sound theoretical construct, and it has been used before in many empirical studies on the quality of services and facilities in HE.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The most important motivators in the realm of international competitiveness of HE is the quality of services and facilities. A university's administration is fully accountable to its students for upholding the highest quality standards, which includes quality assurance for all sorts of services accessible at the institution. It may be claimed that a university that ignores the quality of particular services puts itself in peril and jeopardizes its long-term viability and sustainability. Despite all development efforts for quality services, the primary focus should be on the quality of academic programs, which is the primary predictor of a university's quality and reputation for employers and the general public. Additionally, students are the primary stakeholders in HEI. Hence, when students accumulate the experience of provided services and facilities by university and its staff, it would gradually compound and result in service and facility excellence. This is critical for Malaysian universities to operate continually to guarantee that the delivered facilities and services meet or exceed the expectations of students. Moreover, the quality of services and facilities is highly valued by academics and students when selecting a university that will assist them in improving their careers or educating them. The quality of facilities and services does have a substantial impact on their satisfaction and motivation (Jimenez & Tan, 1987; Patrinos, 1990)

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a worldwide challenge to enhance the quality of universities in every nation in the globe owing to the essential part that universities play in the enhancement of global society's social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental elements (Ludeman, 2002). A university that ignores the quality of services and facilities places the situation at risk and jeopardizes long-term viability and sustainability. To guarantee the long-term viability and sustainability of HE, institutions must strive to meet and exceed students' demands (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994). Responsibility, autonomy, certification, globalization, popularity, and ranking of educational programs, certificates, graduates, and campus life are the major core issues of service quality. According to Gallifa and Batallé (2010), one of the most significant research topics in recent decades has been service

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quality. Consumers place a high value on the type of service, as well as the quality of received output. When the quality of services and facilities given, surpasses the consumers' expectations, a positive perception of the services and facilities are formed.

University services and facilities, according to Ghanad, Hussin, and DeWitt (2020), comprise educational services, administration and maintenance facilities, facility services, co-curricular and sporting facilities, and basic amenities (like hostels, health, security, loan, and transport). Regardless of satisfaction, the quality of such services and facilities may influence the quality of lifetime and mental health of students and staff, along with the university's general culture, and reputation. Despite all attempts to improve quality services, the primary focus must be on educational programs and degrees, which are the primary predictors of a university's quality and reputation for employers and the public. Woo (2006) viewed the quality of HE in a unique yet intriguing way. He referenced Arora (1986), who identified the primary quality factors as physical facilities, lecturers' credentials and competency, curricula, educational resources, tools, teaching methodologies, assessment, and administration. However, Woo later claimed that families may evaluate quality by the reputation of the institutes and the quantity of students enrolled. Academics, on the contrary, may believe that large research funding and strong educational admittance criteria are determining considerations. He concluded that consumer satisfaction is a reflection of 'perceived quality.' The prime concern of university administration in terms of service quality is not only the availability of necessary facilities and technology to staff and students, but also the efficient delivery of a variety of facilities and services such as classroom instruction, hostel, career and academic guidance and counseling, and co-curricular training programs. A university administration is responsible for its employees, learners, and the overall population for attaining the greatest level of quality which relates to quality assurance including a wide range of university services. Universities also must address students' fundamental personal needs, allowing and empowering them to focus more completely on their academics as well as their self-development and maturity, both emotionally and intellectually.

Another major justification for quality services and facilities is financial, since investment in learners, learner affairs, and facilities may bring a significant return to economic systems while also creating the human resources required for a country's socio-economic progress. Finances are an important component of the progress of universities, and the government is the principal provider or subsidizer of funds for public universities to support their growth, operation, and research projects. The other key fact in quality services and facilities is students' employability. HE is now widely regarded as a business, with fierce rivalry for status, fees, finances, and students. As a result, universities compete for students. In these days of global crisis, where fewer pupils will be hired in the labor market, the circumstances are getting critical. In these conditions, both society and business demand universities to be economical and affordable while simultaneously taking them accountable for generating graduate students who are turned into social capital at the societal level and intellectual capital at the industrial scale.

The demand for institutions for generating high-quality alumni is rising all the time. Furthermore, universities are determined to continue their consumers, aware that their long-term viability is dependent on the service quality they deliver to their key clients, students (Arif, Ilyas, & Hameed, 2013). The quality of services and facilities has now moved from business to academia. Service quality has inspired and impacted many HEI, both for educational and administrative support objectives. Focusing on the client is an essential tenet of service quality, and the clients for HE services fall into five categories: learners, staff, government, the general public, and also industry and the greater community (Martensen, Grønholdt, Eskildsen, & Kristensen, 2000). According to Tang and Hussin (2011), it appears that universities are competing on the base of students' employability after graduation, which is primarily decided by the substance of academic and training programs that straightforwardly include industry and business stakeholders. This technique encourages students from both local and international sectors to schools and universities that ensure graduates' employment, but at the expense of increased student costs. Herein lies the issue of accessibility against high-cost service quality and even the issue of students' scholarship and intellectualism against vocationalism.

In the private universities in the Gwalior region, Rajput, Sengar, and Gupta (2019) investigated the link between student satisfaction and service quality. This study resulted in a strong outcome of all the elements of service quality except assurance on student satisfaction. The results stated that a large number of learners were satisfied with educational institutions' services and facilities, and there were meaningful associations between the postulated aspects of service quality and student satisfaction. The degree of satisfaction with existing facilities and services provided by a Malaysian university among students was investigated by Arokiasamy and Abdullah (2012). They observed 245 students from 12 diverse disciplines. They were generally satisfied with numerous essential services and facilities at their universities, such as instruction, administration assistance, library, laboratories, dormitory, healthcare, and sports, while discontent was stated in three augmented parts, such as transportation, classroom, and prayer amenities. Surprisingly, no important variations in viewpoint were identified between men

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and women. The question at the core of these studies is: What are the theoretical implications of the outcomes? The studies on students' services and facilities did not clarify the theoretical underpinnings of their conclusions and outcomes and results have been published as basic statistical data, with no justifications on theory to describe why and how they link to specific theories or principles. The response might be the motivation of the university for sustainability within the context of open system theory, i.e., providing high-quality facilities to learners and academic staff to guarantee sustainability at universities in the face of the contest with other campuses for student and staff satisfaction with the physical and technological setting on campus, along with administrative and academic processes.

According to socio-technical system theory, a complex organization including academic institutions is both a social and a rational technological system, with human resources constituting the social side and operating on the technical system achieve the organization's goals. Sociotechnical system theory states an organization's improvement and optimum efficiency may be accomplished via the methodical and successful integration of the organization's social and technological aspects. Individual dynamics in workplace relations are as significant as organizational processes and systems. The discovery of components and aspects which impede quality and productivity is considered to be essential for remedial action to occur for organizational growth; otherwise, the organization's sustainability, effectiveness, and productivity deteriorate (Owens & Valesky, 2007). According to socio-technical system theory, managing human resources along with infrastructure and technology is critical for achieving high productivity, quality, profitability, and effectiveness, therefore managers must continually update or develop their management tactics. According to Appelbaum (1997), the management process of a socio-technical system is complicated since it deals with an organization's socio-cultural system as well as technological advances (tools, processes, concepts, and plans) and the infrastructure that people utilize to operate the company.

Open system theory states that an organization, as well as its culture, is influenced by the external environment, which is always changing in terms of international and national economical, societal, cultural, and political aspects (Khalid, Yacob, & Alhabshi, 2009). A university's organizational characteristics at the faculty and department divisions, with diverse study programs, functions, and student groups that create sub-cultures have an impact on the university's organizational culture. In order to achieve sustainability and homeostasis, the organization will attempt to make critical modifications in reaction to the change. The open system theory is supplemented by the concepts of learning organizations and system thinking.

Total quality management (TQM) theory asserts that for achieving a competitive advantage over its competitors and hence becoming sustainable, an organization must improve its quality in terms of work procedure, facilities, and production. Deming (1991) proposed TQM, which states that significant efforts at the organizational level are essential to create a constant environment in which an organization constantly upgrades its management and productivity processes for producing high-quality products and facilities that satisfy customers. Numerous studies on students' satisfaction with universities' quality of services and facilities have been conducted, but the majority of them are completed in small-scale survey research using instruments with uncertain reliability and normally intended for clients associated with commercial and industrial enterprises.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objectives of our research were to examine the outstanding domains in the quality of services and facilities of premier universities and consecutively to determine the main distinctions among premier public and private institutions in Malaysia. "Premier" here means among the top-500 in the QS Global Ranking of Universities in 2017.

The research questions of the study were as follows:

Objectives of the Research	Research Question	Methods of Data Collection	Methods of Data Analysis
1. To compare the quality of services and facilities in selected world-ranked public and private universities, as assessed by students who comprise the internal customers and consumers.	1. What are the outstanding features of services and facilities at some of Malaysia's world-ranked universities from the perspective of students?	HEDPERF service quality questionnaire	Descriptive statistics using frequency,

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2. To identify the aspects of a university services and facilities that need to be improved in selected world-ranked public and private universities.	2. What aspects of university quality of services and facilities need to be improved at some of Malaysia's worldranked universities from the perspective of students?	percentage, mean, and standard deviation
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For answering those questions, we collected quantitative data using the HedPerf survey instrument. Abdullah (2006) identified six categories of service quality in HE includes nonacademic aspects, academic aspects, reliability, empathy, reputation, and program issues. Each domain consisted of five survey items, each with an ordinal scale corresponding with responses of 1 to 5 (response 1 for “totally disagree” to response 5 for “totally agree”). For the actual study, only the top four premier or world-ranked universities in Malaysia were purposively selected from the list in the QS Global Ranking of Universities, 2017. Only the top-two public universities and top-two private universities were purposively selected for this study.

As for the sample, the required number of respondents for the study was determined by using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of a random sample, which indicated that the suitable number is in the range of 330 to 360 respondents per university. The four premier universities had different number of faculties and student populations. Subsequently, the HedPerf survey questionnaire was distributed randomly to 1520 university students, undergraduates, and graduates, from numerous faculties that were also chosen at random. Data collection was slow, but after three months a total of 1440 fully answered survey questionnaires were successfully collected. Data were then entered into and quantitatively analyzed by the computer program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (George & Mallery, 2016).

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Data from the 1440 survey questionnaires were computed and statistically analyzed. As for research question 1, regarding the outstanding aspects of facilities and services of premier universities, the outcomes of analyzing data are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparing Students' responses to the Quality of Services and Facilities at Public and Private Universities in Terms of Mean Values and Standard Deviation

No	Quality of services and facilities in Institution	Public Institution		Private Institution	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Lecturers are knowledgeable enough to address students' course-related questions.	4.19	.76	3.98	.89
2	Lecturers treat me with respect and courtesy.	4.04	.78	3.93	.90
3	Lecturers are never too occupied to reply to students' assistance requests.	3.80	.90	3.89	.90
4	When students have an issue, fellow students are genuinely willing to assist to solve it.	3.81	.96	3.72	1.16
5	Students show a positive attitude towards academic staff.	3.94	.81	3.87	.82
6	In the classroom, students discuss and communicate well.	4.19	3.89	3.78	.98
7	Students share feedback on the performance of their lecturers.	3.91	.84	3.74	1.09
8	Students schedule adequate and convenient consultation/supervision time with lecturers.	3.81	.88	3.90	.84
9	University presents a professional image.	3.92	.85	3.84	.89
10	The amenities and facilities at the hostel are sufficient and appropriate.	3.72	.97	3.42	1.19
11	Academic facilities are appropriate and sufficient.	3.78	.88	3.65	.98
12	University offers high-quality programmes.	3.92	.86	3.61	.99
13	Recreational amenities and services are sufficient and appropriate.	3.85	.87	3.63	1.01
14	The size of the classes is maintained to a minimum for providing individual attention.	3.89	.91	3.83	.91
15	University provides a variety of programs with a range of specialties.	3.93	.82	3.71	.94
16	University provides programs with a customizable syllabus and framework.	3.85	.83	3.59	.99

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17	University is at an outstanding location, with an appealing layout and design of the campus.	3.93	.81	3.82	.93
18	Reputable programs are provided by university.	3.98	.78	4.03	.83
19	Lecturers are trained professionally in their areas.	4.11	.82	4.04	.99
20	The alumni of the university are in high demand for employment.	3.73	.91	3.67	1.10
21	The lecturers are genuinely concerned with resolving students' problems and issues.	3.97	.87	4.03	1.04
22	Administrators give compassionate and personalized service.	3.51	.92	3.60	1.03
23	Faculty/Institutional management responds to requests and complaints in a timely and effective manner.	3.60	.85	3.52	.99
24	Administrators are not too occupied to reply to a demand for help.	3.55	.92	3.51	1.03
25	Administration departments maintain precise and comprehensive retrievable archives.	3.61	.80	3.71	.94
26	Once students agree to accomplish a project by a given time, they follow through.	3.67	.81	3.96	.92
27	Administrative offices provide suitable hours of operation for students.	3.66	.87	3.86	.98
28	Administrators have a pleasant and positive work attitude toward students.	3.66	.94	3.83	.98
29	Administrators and lecturers engage and communicate well with students.	3.81	.84	3.97	.92
30	Administrators are well-versed in the structures and procedures.	3.70	.86	3.88	.90
31	When students encounter university, they feel comfortable and confident.	3.77	.90	3.87	.89
32	University delivers services within a reasonable/anticipated time limit.	3.80	.87	3.78	.95
33	Students are treated equally and with respect by each other and staff.	3.72	.91	3.79	1.03
34	Students have the freedom to express their thought, beliefs, and ideas.	3.77	.90	3.76	1.06
35	When the university-provided information regarding its organization, the students maintained confidentiality.	3.77	.84	3.77	.93
36	Students guarantee that their lecturers and administrators can easily reach them via phone.	3.83	.83	3.83	.88
37	Professional counseling services are provided by the university.	3.73	.94	3.69	1.06
38	The health-care system is adequate and suitable.	3.83	.92	3.73	1.10
39	The establishment university fosters and encourages the formation of a Student Union.	3.78	.85	3.76	.97
40	University values student opinions and reviews in order to enhance service performance.	3.85	.86	3.72	.87
41	University's service delivery processes are standard, uniform, and straightforward.	3.78	.93	3.69	.91

Table 1 shows that the mean values in public institutions were higher (4.19 to 3.51) compared to those in private institutions (4.04 to 3.42). Though, it varies from moderate to a high agreement regarding the service and facility quality. Students responded that their institution's lecturers were qualified and committed. Aside from that, students strongly agreed that they involve in the university's activities and demonstrate the proper attitude as a student mentality. On the contrary, students generally believed that the facilities and services were appropriate and essential. Administrative employees were considered to be cooperative and helpful with students and academic employees. It was discovered that university management respected student comments and feedback in order to improve service quality. According to the findings, on average, students believed that their university delivered services within an acceptable/reasonable timespan. On average, students indicated that the university had standard and simple service delivery processes. According to Abdullah (2006), service quality in HE is categorized into six determinants.

1) Non-Academic Aspect

According to the results, 71.4 % of students at private universities reported that administrative staff had a great understanding and awareness of the procedures and systems, compared to 69.4 % of students at public universities. On the contrary, 72.4% of students at public universities stated that they had an outstanding location with great campus architecture and design in comparison to students at private universities (68.9%). Nevertheless, students at both universities were generally dissatisfied with aspects including the right to have freedom of thought, beliefs, and ideas, respect for confidentiality, and hostel amenities.

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The management of the universities should focus on these areas to improve the services, culture, and campus environment along with student progress and well-being.

2) Academic Aspect

Based on the findings, 86.3% of students at public universities and 77.1 % of students at private universities reported that academic staff were knowledgeable about the course content. On the other side, 71% of students at private universities students and 69.7 % of students at public universities indicated that academic staff provides adequate and appropriate consultation time. Overall, it is concluded that high levels of academic quality satisfaction among students were related to the quality of services and the expertise of the academic staff. It appears to be an accurate theoretical and practical notion, as evidenced by its presence in many prestigious and prominent universities throughout the world.

3) Reliability

According to the findings, 80.8 % of students at public universities and 68.6 % of students at private universities student stated that academic staff treats students with care and courtesy. While 70.3 % of students at private universities students and 59 % of students at public universities indicated that their university employees promised to solve a problem by a particular time, they do. According to the findings, a larger percentage of private university students were pleased with the reliability of services and facilities than public university students. Nevertheless, regarding service efficiency and the usage of standard delivery processes, public university students were more satisfied than private university students.

4) Empathy

Based on the findings of this study, 75.8 % of students at public universities and 76.1 % of students at private universities believed that whenever they had an issue, administrative staff expressed a genuine interest in addressing it. 70.6 % of students at public universities and 67.6 % of students at private universities indicated that the staff makes it easy to contact them via phone. Based on the results, it is reasonable to state that both public and private universities place equal emphasis on student welfare concerns.

5) Reputation

Based on the finding of this research, 72.2% of students at public universities and 59.3% of students at private universities reported that their universities offer high-quality programs. Remarkably, 79.2 % of students at private universities and 76.9 % of students at public universities indicated their university-provided highly reputable programs. According to the outcomes, a higher percentage of students at public universities were pleased with the reputation of their university in delivering quality programs in comparison to students at private universities. Students at private universities, on the other hand, place a higher priority on alumni employability than on quality academic programs.

6) Program Issues

According to 76.4% of public university students and 62.1% of private university students, the university provides a broad variety of programs with a diversity of specialties. Furthermore, the flexibility of the curriculum was 73.5 % at the public university and 58.3 % at the private university. The comprehensiveness and adaptability of academic programs are crucial in attracting students to educate at world-ranked universities. According to findings, a larger number of students at private colleges were pleased with the program adaptability, delivering a broad variety of programs and specializations, and program quality compared to students at public institutions.

In conclusion, the mean value for all areas of quality of services and facilities is higher than 3.50, inferring that the quality of services and facilities at Malaysia's world-ranked universities were highly satisfactory—however, additional enhancements need to be done because rationally, a mean value of 4.5 to 5.0 would represent an outstanding level of satisfaction with the quality of services and facilities.

This section's goal is to provide answers to research question 2. i.e. what are the aspects of services and facilities that need to be improved by selected public and private universities? This question requires averaging the mean values of variables in all dimensions of the quality of service and facility. Table 2 shows the rank of domains in the quality of services and facilities.

Table 2. Average Mean Value and Rank of Domains in Quality of Services and Facilities in Universities

Quality of Services and Facilities in University	Public Total mean	Rank	Private Total mean	Rank
Non-academic Aspect	3.78	4	3.74	5
Academic Aspect	4.11	1	3.88	1
Reliability of Services	3.72	6	3.77	4
Empathy	3.77	5	3.78	3
Reputation	3.89	3	3.79	2

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Program Issues	3.90	2	3.65	6
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Table 3 shows the top three areas in public and private universities.

Table 3. The 3 Areas with the Highest Quality of Services and Facilities

Public Universities	Private Universities
Academic aspect	Academic aspect
Program issues	University Reputation
University Reputation	Empathy or student welfare

This is concluded that students seemed extremely pleased with education programs and activities which ranked as the greatest significant domain at premier public and private universities, i.e. the quality of academic services to students was of the greatest priority, determining graduates' great reputation, whether for employment prospects or high accreditation. The three categories with the lowest rating are those that require improvement are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The 3 Areas with the Lowest Quality of Services and Facilities

Public Universities	Private Universities
Reliability of services	Program issues
Empathy of student welfare especially residential	Non-academic services
Non-academic services	Reliability of services

DISCUSSION

Malaysia has become a popular location for international students wanting to pursue their education, and more prominent and reputable universities from across the world are establishing branch campuses in collaboration with Malaysian universities. Human capital development is emphasized as an economic necessity in the 10th Malaysian Plan (2011-2015) as a basis for transitioning Malaysia from an intermediate to a high-income nation. This transformation necessitates significant endeavors to improve the university's overall efficacy. One approach to accomplish this is to develop the quality of HE services from the perspective of students. Furthermore, in the 10th Malaysian Plan, the concept of establishing a rating system for Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (SETARA) was raised. This assessment method is meant to establish a standard and objective evaluation in order to provide more clarity and transparency and increased performance weight to improve the whole educational system's quality. Since 2010, all Malaysian HEI has been required to participate in this ranking system (Latif, Bahroom, & Khalil, 2016). In Malaysia, public universities are regarded as both social and political institutions (S. B. Asimiran, 2009). As a result, as a social organization, public universities engaged in Malaysia's social development, notably through research and development missions, and as political organizations, the academics may serve as a vital resource of information for the Malaysian government in formation and concentrated efforts. The government of Malaysia is dedicated to providing its students with the highest level and quality of HE.

Based on the findings of this research, students as consumers were highly pleased with academic topics, the university's high reputation, the quality of academic courses and programs, as well as the academic staff's positive attitude and work ethic. This should be the scenario since the major aim of a reputable university is to offer high-quality academic and training courses in diverse departments in order to generate graduates who can meet the human resource requirements of government agencies and corporate enterprises. This is the primary motivator for both international and local students when considering a reputed university.

According to Uka (2014), students' needs and satisfaction rate is classified in the key areas: educational advising assistance, career counseling facilities, dean of students services, assessing grading scale, study course material, study instruction, faculty perception toward students, a wide range of programs offer, size of the class, and accessibility of the academic advisor. Relating to Uka (2014), this study discovered that some students' associated demands included nonacademic requirements including economic support services, canteen services, sociocultural activities, university orientation program, access to financial support before registration, reliability of information systems before registration, consideration for students as individuals, the approach of university non-teaching employees to students, racial rhythms at university, and the possibilities of student employment, student participation in campus and religious events, campus media, student journal and the university in particular.

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Several studies have been carried out and published about students' satisfaction with the quality of university services. However, the majority of the research was on a microscale. The outcomes were similar to Uka (2014), as a case in point, Yeo (2008) RM Hanaysha, Hilman Abdullah, and Warokka (2011) discovered that students were mostly pleased with several fundamental services and facilities in the university, such as instruction, administrative support, library, laboratories, hostels, healthcare, and sports, whereas discontent has been only observed within three major categories, that are transportation, classes, and prayer facilities. Service quality at university is a critical indicator of educational success and a key strategic factor in establishing a powerful perception in the minds of consumers (Ahmed et al., 2010). Mohamad Tahar (2008) observed that students identify quality based on the university's capacity to reputation, advanced employment prospects, capabilities in resolving concerns of study programs, cost/time, physical components, location, and other aspects. Likewise, Hasan, Ilias, Rahman, and Razak (2008) discovered that the primary characteristics that might influence students' satisfaction were: students' perceptions of the teaching and learning process, educational support facilities including libraries, computer and lab services, the education system (academic rooms, labs, social setting, and academic campuses), students' facilities (medical centers, canteens, hostels), and the external factors (finance, and transport). This is the point of view of socio-technical theory and TQM theory. Furthermore, Cameron and Kirkman (2010) believe that institutions should be committed to offering assistance and supervision to students to allow them to gain the required academic, social, and cultural competencies that are required to deal with the problem of culture shock. In this respect, the socio-technical system theory, and TQM theory are important in bringing the required innovations and changes to universities to maximize customer and stakeholder satisfaction.

IMPLICATIONS

The outcomes of this research have few implications.

Firstly, regarding the quality of university services and facilities, this research discovered that students as consumers put a high value on academic quality and institutional reputation. The cause might be related to status and employability; for example, alumni from a reputable university have a greater possibility of landing a job than those from a less-reputable university. Another aspect with a high degree of satisfaction between students was the quality of services and facilities related to their well-being and satisfaction on campus. Among the quality factors, the reliability of services and program issues received the lowest ranking, implying that universities, particularly public universities, should enhance the efficiency of administrative staff and work process in order to raise student satisfaction. Staff and students would be frustrated by bureaucratic procedures and inaccurate information. Approximately 65-75 % of students believed that the quality of services and facilities were highly satisfactory. The outcomes were consistent with the socio-technical system theory and TQM theory in terms of theoretical implications. Based on the socio-technical system theory, the human and social dimensions of the technical system in a university must function properly to reach the intended outcomes, benchmarks, and goals of TQM in facilities and services. In reality, the human and social dimensions have to be prioritized above the technical aspects as the latter requires developing skills and upgrading the knowledge, capabilities, and mindsets through training workshops. TQM audits concentrated on standard processes and accurate record filing of diverse positions at various levels and divisions.

Secondly, the findings highlight the significance of socio-technical system theory and TQM theory in the university context. According to the results, the human and social factors were more significant than the technological factors in obtaining high quality and satisfying consumer satisfaction. As a case in point, strategies of initiating change and then managing and integrating the various processes of change and innovation among faculties and departments in universities appear to be significant parts of quality culture and procedure.

CONCLUSION

The satisfaction of university students is critical in assessing service quality. Evaluating and measuring satisfaction with students' academic experiences is challenging, although it may be highly beneficial for universities in developing strong relationships with both present and future students (Hanaysha, Abdullah, & Warokka, 2011). According to Ghanad et al. (2020) in Malaysia, students at public universities were more satisfied with the culture of the campus in compare to private university students. Patrinos (1990); and Balán (1990) in their discussions rationale that the main benefit of private HEIs has been their ability to respond to market needs more quickly and effectively. They are able to offer the most in-demand form of education, thereby meeting the current economy's and society's demands. Public HEIs, on the flip side, are significantly slower to respond to market demands since such demands would likely necessitate a significant rearrangement of national resources (Wilkinson & Yussof, 2005). According to two papers, it is particularly accurate at public universities, which have historically been regarded as a bureaucracy with an insufficient attitude to adhocracy and industry philosophies and values because they function in

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complicated political structures with varying stakeholder interests in continuous evolution (Zammuto & Krakower, 1991). It is also argued that graduate students at private universities have lower unemployment percentages and obtain higher-paying jobs (Patrinos, 1990). However, issues of quality and value of programs provided by different universities, particularly private universities, have been a major responsibility for the country (Muhamad, Chan, Suhaimi, & Suzyrman, 2006). This is accompanied by a drop in ranking at several of Malaysia's top universities (Ranking, 2010). Both challenges raise concerns about the reputation of Malaysian universities for quality education. According to Yaumiddin (2011), private universities must continually assess the level of service quality to preserve competitiveness in the face of emerging challenges in the HE market. It is recommended that similar studies involving more universities and a bigger sample should be conducted to affirm or repudiate the findings of this study and the theories used.

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