



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND SATISFACTION
OF SERVICE QUALITY AMONG BUSINESS STUDENTS IN
POLYTECHNICS IN MALAYSIA**

NOOR SAADAH ZAINAL ABIDIN

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SERVICE QUALITY AMONG BUSINESS STUDENTS IN POLYTECHNICS IN
MALAYSIA**

By

NOOR SAADAH ZAINAL ABIDIN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
In Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

February 2008



DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to:

My beloved husband, mother and children,

My brothers and sister-in-laws



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of University Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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February 2008

Chairman : Foo Say Fooi,PhD

Faculty : Educational Studies

This study determines business students' levels of perceptions of six service quality factors and their relationships to their satisfaction in polytechnics. The factors identified from literature were quality of program, facilities, academic staff, support services, accessibility and location, as well as campus climate. Differences among students' years, levels of studies, types of sponsorship and zones were determined as well as predictors of students' satisfaction. The primary data were collected using student survey questionnaires through proportionate cluster sampling. A total of 469 business students were involved in the study sample. Findings indicated 'moderate' to 'good' levels of satisfaction among students. Significant differences were observed between certificate and diploma students on quality facilities, support services and campus climate. Significance



differences were found among students of different years on quality facilities. Significant differences also existed among polytechnics in North, East, Central and South zones. All six service quality factors were linearly correlated and significant with levels of students' satisfaction, the strongest was for campus climate ($r = .774$, $p = .0001$). Five out of six service quality factors accounted for 66.2% of the variance in students' satisfaction. This study had implications on both quality facilities and support services in polytechnics. Both tangible (quality of program, facilities, academic staff, support services, accessibility and location) and intangibles aspects (campus climate) were important in polytechnics. Administrators need to improve strategies aimed at achieving better students' satisfaction emphasizing both tangible and intangible aspects and responding to the demand for skilled workers in a competitive economy.



Abstrak tesis dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**HUBUNGAN PERSEPSI DAN KEPUASAN KUALITI PERKHIDMATAN DALAM
KALANGAN PELAJAR PERDAGANGAN DI POLITEKNIK
DI MALAYSIA**

Oleh

NOOR SAADAH ZAINAL ABIDIN

Februari 2008

Pengerusi : Foo Say Fooi, PhD

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Kajian ini mengenal pasti aras persepsi pelajar perdagangan mengenai enam faktor kualiti perkhidmatan serta hubungannya dengan kepuasan mereka di politeknik. Faktor-faktor tersebut dikenal pasti melalui kajian literature (kualiti program, kemudahan, staf akademik, perkhidmatan sokongan, akses dan lokasi serta iklim kampus). Kajian ini cuba menyingkap faktor-faktor kualiti perkhidmatan yang meramal kepuasan pelajar politeknik di Semenanjung Malaysia. Data primer dikumpul melalui tinjauan soal selidik menggunakan persampelan bersekadaran berkelompok (*proportionate cluster sampling*). Sejumlah 469 pelajar perdagangan terlibat dalam sampel kajian ini. Dapatan menunjukkan pelajar tersebut melalui kualiti perkhidmatan tahap 'sederhana' ke 'baik' bagi kepuasan mereka. Terdapat perbezaan signifikan antara pelajar sijil dan diploma ke atas kualiti kemudahan, perkhidmatan sokongan dan iklim kampus. Perbezaan yang signifikan juga terdapat dalam kalangan para pelajar yang berbeza tahun pengajian terhadap kualiti kemudahan. Keenam-enam faktor



tersebut menunjukkan perbezaan signifikan di kesemua politeknik yang mewakili zon di Utara, Timur, Tengah dan Selatan semenanjung Malaysia. Semua enam pembolehubah peramal mempunyai kolerasi *linear* serta aras yang signifikan bagi kepuasan pelajar. Hubungan yang kuat wujud antara iklim kampus dengan kepuasan pelajar ($r=.774, p=.0001$). Regresi berganda (*multiple linear regression*) menunjukkan lima daripada enam pembolehubah peramal didapati signifikan serta menyumbang 66.2% varian dalam kepuasan pelajar. Kajian ini mempunyai implikasi ke atas kualiti kemudahan dan perkhidmatan sokongan di politeknik. Kedua-dua aspek 'ketara' (*tangibles*) iaitu kualiti program, kemudahan, staf akademik, perkhidmatan sokongan, akses dan lokasi. Aspek 'tidak ketara' (*soft aspects*) amat penting bagi politeknik. Oleh itu pentadbir perlu membaiki strategi-strategi bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kepuasan pelajar sekaligus membantu dan memenuhi permintaan pekerja mahir dalam ekonomi yang kompetitif.

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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 18th February 2008 to conduct the final examination of Noor Saadah binti Zainal Abidin on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “The relationship between perception and satisfaction of service quality among business students in polytechnics in Malaysia” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at UPM or at any other institution.

NOOR SAADAH ZAINAL ABIDIN

Date: 15th May 2008



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AL	= Accessibility and Location
BAHEIS	= Islamic Affairs Division of the Prime Ministers Department
HE	= Higher Education
HEI	= Higher Education Institutions
ICT	= Information and Communications Technology
IEMS	= Information Educational Management Systems
IKIM	= Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding
INTAN	= National Institute of Public Administration
MITI	= Ministry of International Trade and Industry
NPC	= National Productivity Center
PCA	= Principle Component Analysis
PD	= Polytechnics Department
PI	= Performance Indicators
PMQA	= Prime Minister Quality Award
QAS	= Quality Academic Staff
QF	= Quality Facilities
QP	= Quality Program
QSS	= Quality Support Service
SIRIM	= Standard and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia
SPM	= Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
SPSS	= Statistical Package for Social Science



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SQ	= Service Quality
SS	= Students' Satisfaction
TSP	= Time Sector Privatization
TQM	= Total Quality Management
WASC	= Western Association for Schools and Colleges



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The economic development and prosperity of any country depend on its resources (Ngalingam & Sivanand, 2004). Among all the resources, manpower plays a vital role in driving the economy. Highly skilled, knowledgeable and competent manpower is nurtured and developed through education and training. According to Ngalingam and Sivanand (2004), the right education for the people of a nation is the responsibility of its government. It is therefore important that the government has as its priority the development of world class education system because according to Abdullah (2005), the quality of our education system will determine the quality of the country's future.

However, in meeting the growing demand of middle-level technically skilled manpower in Malaysia, polytechnics were established to ensure continuous success of industrial projects that are needed for the economic development of the country. Polytechnics are under the Polytechnics Management Division in the Department of Polytechnics Studies and Community Colleges in the Ministry of Higher Education. Polytechnics offer two-year certificate and three-year diploma programs for post SPM students. Courses offered include engineering, business and those of the service industry. Currently, there are 20 polytechnics operating in the country where 19 of them have permanent campuses. Under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010),

