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Students' Perception of the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Business Studies Programs

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ABSTRAK

Satu kajian telah dijalankan untuk meneliti persepsi pelajar tentang keberkesanan pengajaran dan pembelajaran dalam program pengajian perniagaan di Universiti mereka. Seramai 1552 pelajar mendaftar secara sepenuh masa di tiga universiti awam tempatan di Malaysia terlibat dalam kajian ini. Tiga faktor digunakan untuk mengukur persepsi pelajar tentang pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang efektif. Faktor tersebut ialah Faktor Pensyarah, Metodologi Pengajaran dan Kerelevanan Kursus. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan sejumlah besar responden sederhana setuju bahawa pensyarah mereka memiliki dan mempamerkan kualiti seperti yang dijelaskan dalam konstruk. Penjelasan item terpilih yang menggambarkan trend berkaitan telah dibincangkan dalam kertas ini. Ujian t dan ANOVA menunjukkan wujud perbezaan yang signifikan tentang persepsi pelajar dalam ketiga–tiga faktor megikut jantina, latar belakang etnik, kelayakan akademik tertinggi dan skor CGPA terkini. Juga terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam persepsi pelajar tentang faktor pensyarah keseluruhan berdasarkan pengalaman bekerja lepas belajar, dan persepsi tentang metodologi pengajaran dan kerelevanan kursus berdasarkan tahap penguasaan bahasa Inggeris.

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine students' perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching and learning in business studies programs in their universities. About 1552 students enrolled as full time students in three public universities in Malaysia participated in the study. Three factors were employed to measure students' perceptions of effective teaching and learning. The factors were Lecturers' Factor, Teaching Methodology, and Course Relevance. Findings showed that a majority of respondents moderately agreed that their lecturers possessed and exhibited qualities described in all three constructs. Individual item description highlighted some interesting trends discussed in this paper. T tests and ANOVA showed significant differences in students' perceptions of all three factors based on their gender, ethnic background, highest academic qualification, and current CGPA scores. There were significant differences in the perceptions of Overall Lecturer Factor based on students' previous work experience, and in the perceptions of Teaching Methodology and Relevance of Courses based on their level of English Language proficiency.

INTRODUCTION

This research aimed to examine the quality of teaching and learning factors in business programs in public universities in Malaysia. As the Malaysian Education Act for Higher Institutions of Learning of 1996 devolved authority for the control of institutional development, performance standards, and financial accountability to the institutions, it is therefore incumbent upon universities to evaluate their own effectiveness in delivering educational services, in particular, teaching and learning to their clients. This report however, was part of a wider study on the level of service quality offered in business programs in public universities in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual framework of quality teaching is drawn from the larger discipline of Service Quality. Service quality is defined as the gap between expectations and perceptions of a service (Boulding *et al.* 1993), in this case, the teaching service in higher education. Service quality research often encompasses overall organizational factors. Parasumaran, Zeitmal, and Berry (1985) identified 10 determinants of service quality which are Reliability, Responsiveness, Competence, Access, Courtesy, Communication, Credibility, Security, Understanding and knowing the customer, and Tangibles such as facilities and equipment. Wright's (1996) research identified 8 major service quality factors for higher education: diversity of educational experience (diversity of coursework and student body), access and use of facilities (location, atmosphere and hours of university facilities), personalized interaction (interaction between student and faculty), student quality (quality of students at the university), educational process (requirements and ability to fulfil requirements), faculty quality (academic and professional background of faculty), and professor's years of teaching experience.

However, the measure of quality teaching and learning needs to focus on the dimensional factors that directly influence the process delivery of instructional design and the course outcomes. Quality teaching in university can be defined as one that engages the student in an in-depth and comprehensive approach to the subject matter, that is, in an active, durable, and critical construction of knowledge integrated with his or her previous knowledge and put to action (Entwistle and Ramsden 1983). Pennington and O'Neil (1994) proposed eight principles that underscore effective teaching. These are: (1) enhancing students' general capabilities and work-related skills (2) using student experience as a learning resource (3) encouraging active and co-operative learning (4) promoting responsibility in learning (5) engaging with feelings, values and motives (the affective domain) as well as with intellectual development (6) fostering open, flexible, reflexive and outcome - based assessment (7)evaluating teaching and learning to encourage reflective teaching, and (8) developing organization-wide strategies to establish congruence of policies to enhance physical and material learning environment. Hill, Lomas, and MacGregor (2003) reported in their study that students' perceptions of quality learning included experiences that helped them to link theory with the real world, assignments relevant to real work place, discussions leading to new perspectives of thinking, and curriculum that took account of the students' group experiences and imparted added value to students. Hill also reported the emergence of three major teaching strategies which were highly rated by students in higher education: delivery strategy and techniques in the classroom; feedback to students in the classroom and in assignments; and relationship with students in the classroom.

In higher education, customer satisfaction begins with the expectations created upon the service by various parties to be delivered to or experienced by the customer. One of the expectations is the quality of the teaching staff. Lammers and Murphy (2002) in their research of quality teaching in US universities concluded from their study that lecturers' enthusiasm, knowledge ability in the subject, and effective classroom management are highly valued skills which interact with other physical factors such as course design to produce effective teaching and learning. Morton-Cooper (1993) in a research on lecturer traits valued by students cited responsiveness and trustworthiness as the major traits. Trustworthiness included the element of reliability and consistency. Lecturer enthusiasm was also a vital trait that encouraged learning (Hill *et al.* 2003; O'Neil 1995, Ramsden 1988).

On curriculum content, qualitative research by Hill *et al.* (2003) on students' perceptions of quality in higher education showed that students valued a curriculum that was flexible, took account of the student group experiences, made links between theory and the real world, and was up to date. The effectiveness in the teaching curriculum needs to be understood in the context of their contribution to the development of the students' character and competence within the respective disciplines. Indeed, customer satisfaction in higher education involves how closely the delivered service has added value to the skills and competence of customers to gain better job market or career advantage (Rowley 1997). Thus, course outcomes drive the policies and motivation in university teaching. They rightfully ought to form the basis of the

evaluation of the construct, content, and teaching-learning experience students undergo during their enrolment in the courses.

Rowley (1997) however, reminds us that ever too often the measurement of service quality has been taken from the customers' view point, not the service providers. Nor have service quality measures made concerted attempts to acknowledge the impact of external expectations from other stakeholders such as employers, governmental policy making agencies, parents, and subsequent training and learning institutions on the standards of service delivery and service outcomes even when it is generally known that these agents exert considerable influence in forming the expectations of the direct clients, i.e. the students. While this present research acknowledges Rowley's comments, it is however beyond the scope of this project to cover the areas of external influence on the expectations of the customer. In this research report, the focus has deliberately been on factors that are immediately within the control of the lecturers (the service providers). These factors are the Lecturer Factor, Teaching Methodology employed, and Course Relevance and Design. The evaluators are the students who are the main service recipients.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify students' overall perceptions of the quality teaching and learning factors in the business studies program;
2. To identify students' perceptions of Lecturer Factors, Teaching Methodology, and the Relevance of their Course;
3. To examine if there are significant differences in the students' overall perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning factors in the business studies program based on their demographic variables; and
4. To examine if there are significant differences in students' perceptions of Lecturer Factor, Teaching Methodology, and the Relevance of their Course based on their demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive correlational method. This study was part of a wider nationwide study on students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning in business programs in public universities. The independent variables were service quality factors in teaching and learning which comprised five measures: Lecturer factor, Teaching methodology, Course Relevance, Facilities, and Support services and the dependent variable was the overall student satisfaction with the teaching and learning experience. In this report, analysis was done only on the quality of teaching and learning using the measures for Lecturer factor, Teaching methodology, and Course Relevance since these factors were assumed to be directly under the control or influence of the Faculty and lecturers. Any recommendations made in the discussion session would therefore contribute in more immediate and specific ways to the faculty.

The Lecturer factor consisted of 8 constructs that were Appearance, Fairness, Helpfulness, Care, Friendliness, Communication, Reliability and Credibility. Teaching Methodology factor consisted of two constructs, which were the Individual Lecturer's Teaching Competence, and the Overall Course Delivery. The third service quality factor for teaching and learning was Course Relevance whose constructs were Content Relevance and Course Design.

Due to the small number of students enrolled in business studies programs, and the project requirement that only students who had undergone industrial training were selected, it was decided that respondents were taken from all final year students in the business programs. At the stage of this report, a total of 1552 students from three public universities participated in the study although the project aims to cover all public universities in Malaysia that offer business studies programs. Data were collected by the researcher using survey questionnaires that were administered for durations of twenty to thirty minutes at pre-arranged meetings with the students. The data was collected between January and May 2003, following a pilot test in November 2002 in one public university involving 70 students.

The measurement of items in the survey questionnaires was based on 5 Likert scale, with 1 denoting "Strongly disagree"; and 5 denoting "Strongly agree". Five experts in the area of university teaching and learning validated the instrument. In the analysis however, the five point Likert Scale was then re-coded to three scales with 1 denoting "Low Agreement", 2

"Moderate Agreement" and 3 "High Agreement" to give more distinct focus for the interpretation of students' perceptions of the factors affecting the quality of teaching and learning in business studies programs in public universities. Data was analyzed using SPSS PC-10 package, for descriptive and inferential statistics.

FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the student respondents. Table 2 shows the reliability coefficients of each construct for the factors, and Table 3 shows the overall mean for each factor.

Lecturers' Appearance

The overall mean for the Appearance construct was 2.84, SD 0.29, which suggests that the student highly agreed to the level of Lecturers' Appearance. Table 4 illustrates the distribution of percentages for Lecturers' Appearance.

The table shows that all students highly agreed to the quality of lecturers' Appearance. In comparison to the mean scores of other constructs in the Lecturer Factor, this Lecturer Appearance construct shows the highest mean score. This suggests that the students held positive satisfaction that lecturers teaching in the business studies programs possessed and exhibited good qualities.

Lecturers' Fairness

Table 5 illustrates the percentage and mean distribution of students' perceptions on Lecturers' Fairness. In this construct, the highest mean was 2.88 for the item "Lecturers prepare

TABLE 1
Students' demographic profile

		N	%
Race	Malay	1054	67.9
	Non-Malay	494	31.8
Gender	Female	1119	72.1
	Male	429	27.6
Working Experience	Yes	577	37.2
	No	962	62.8
Highest academic qualification	Diploma	323	21.1
	Matriculation	566	37.0
	STPM (equivalent to A level)	614	40.2
	Others	26	1.7
English Grade at MCE	Credit / Distinction	1129	72.7
	Others	396	25.5
Grade Point Average	> 3.00	640	41.2
	< 3.00	910	58.6

TABLE 2
Reliability coefficients for service quality factors

Factor	Constructs	Construct reliability	Factor reliability
Lecturer Factor	Appearance	.76	.94
	Fairness	.86	
	Helpfulness	.86	
	Care	.88	
	Friendliness	.91	
	Communication	.81	
	Reliability	.72	
	Credibility	.78	
Teaching Methodology	Competence	.94	.85
	Course Delivery	.60	
Course Relevance			.84

TABLE 3
Mean and standard deviation for service quality factors in teaching

	Construct	'Mean	S.D.	Overall
Lecturer factor	Appearance	2.84	.29	Mean =2.67
				S.D. = .28
	Fairness	2.74	.33	
	Helpfulness	2.76	.37	
	Caring	2.63	.40	
	Friendliness	2.57	.41	
	Communication	2.73	.33	
	Reliability	2.48	.31	
	Credibility	2.64	.34	
Teaching Methodology	Competence	2.77	.30	Mean = 2.68
	Course Delivery	2.59	.31	S.D. = .26
Course Relevance		2.81	.29	

TABLE 4
Lecturer appearance

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
1.	Lecturers show a positive attitude when teaching	2.87	.36
2.	Lecturers are well groomed	2.94	.26
3.	Lecturers are courteous when interacting with students	2.84	.40
4.	Lecturers come across as a person as well as a teacher	2.81	.44
5.	Lecturers respect students as individuals	2.84	.42
6.	Lecturers' voice level, rate of speaking and behavior are conducive to learning	2.75	.49

TABLE 5
Lecturer fairness

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
7.	Lecturers set standards and due dates for assignments that are clear, fair and reasonable	2.82	.43
8.	Lecturers use oral, written and other forms of assignments to assess students' progress	2.77	.48
9.	Lecturers treat all students fairly and in an equitable manner	2.64	.60
10.	Lecturers' evaluation method and examination questions are clear and fair	2.81	.44
11.	Lecturers are fair in grading students	2.67	.57
12.	Lecturers' method of giving grades is consistent and clearly understood	2.70	.55
13.	Lecturers prepare examination questions that cover the important aspects of the course	2.88	.37
14.	Lecturers give freedom to students to choose their own group members	2.66	.58

examination questions that cover the important aspects of the course", while the lowest mean score was 2.64 for the item "Lecturers treat students fairly and in an equitable manner". The two items are of opposite polarities: the first item measured students' perception of the 'structural' aspect of fairness as opposed to the 'soft' perception of fairness in the latter item. Although students highly agreed that the lecturers were fair, there were obvious variations in response to specific dimensional characteristics of fairness. This finding suggests that fairness was perceived on two levels: technical (structural) and discretionary and the results showed that lecturers were perceived to exhibit more

technical fairness but comparatively lesser discretionary fairness.

Lecturers' Helpfulness

The highest mean score of 2.89 was for the item "Lecturers are willing to help students" while the lowest mean score was 2.64 for the item, "Lecturers provide sustained feedback by asking probing questions, giving clues and allowing for more response time." This finding suggests that while lecturers in the business studies programs were perceived to be helpful, they need to be more sensitive as to how they can constructively help students to learn better. The overall mean of this construct was 2.76 (SD .37) suggesting that students in the sample highly agreed that their lecturers were helpful. Table 6 shows the distribution of percentages.

Lecturers' Caring Disposition

The results in this construct echoed somewhat the results from the previous construct on Lecturers' Helpfulness. Students' mean score of agreement was relatively lower to items that described the level of their lecturers' helpful and caring disposition towards specific problems and difficulties students faced in their studies and in learning. Table 7 illustrates the percentage distribution.

TABLE 6
Lecturer helpfulness

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
15.	Lecturers provide feedback that encourage students' progress	2.77	.48
16.	Lecturers provide sustained feedback by asking probing questions, giving clues and allowing more time for response	2.64	.57
17.	Lecturers are willing to help students	2.89	.36
18.	Lecturers use various teaching methods that are appropriate	2.74	.49

TABLE 7
Lecturer caring disposition

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
19.	Lecturers are concerned for students' well being	2.57	.58
20.	Lectures recognize when students fail to comprehend lectures	2.39	.64
21.	Lecturers encourage students to ask questions	2.88	.38
22.	Lecturers are concerned about students' study problems	2.53	.60
23.	Lecturers are concerned about the progress of students in the courses they are studying	2.65	.56
24.	Lecturers assist students to be successful regardless of their background	2.72	.56
25.	Lecturers assist students to learn as much as they can	2.64	.56

TABLE 8
Lecturer friendliness

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
26.	Lecturers try to understand students' personal problems	2.10	.68
27.	Lecturers are concerned with the problem of students' absence	2.68	.57
28.	Lecturers are friendly with students	2.62	.57
29.	Lecturers encourage informal conversations with students	2.47	.65
30.	Lecturers are willing to meet students without appointments	2.39	1.28
31.	Lecturers make students feel comfortable	2.61	.58
32.	Lecturers and students have mutual respect for one another	2.86	.40
33.	Lecturers respect all students regardless of who they are	2.77	.50

Lecturers' Friendliness

Table 8 illustrates the percentage distribution of students' perception of Lecturers' Friendliness. The highest mean score was 2.86 for the item "Lecturers and students have mutual respect for one another", while the lowest mean score was 2.10 for the item "Lecturers try to understand students' personal problems'. The lower mean scores tended to cluster around items that described lecturers' readiness to engage in more personalized relationship with the students, such as items "Lecturers try to understand students' personal problems" (mean =2.10); "Lecturers are willing to meet students without appointments" (mean =2.39)", and "Lecturers encourage informal conversations with students" (mean =2.47).The cluster of lower mean scores around these items suggest that from the students' perceptions, lecturers tended to be distant, even while being friendly.

Lecturers' Communication Skills

The findings in Table 9 show that the students in the business programs in the universities highly agreed to their Lecturers' Communication Skills. The highest mean score was 2.86 for the item "Lecturers use simple language". The two lowest mean scores were 2.54 for the item, "Lecturers allow students to interrupt during lectures" and 2.59 for the item "Lecturers have a sense of humour". This suggests that, while on the whole, students perceived their lecturers as being effective in communicating and interacting with students, they nevertheless agreed also that their lecturers generally tolerated lower opportunities for students to interrupt during lectures and had lesser sense of humor.

Lecturers' Reliability

Table 10 shows the results of students' perceptions of Lecturers' Reliability. The highest mean score was 2.88 for the item "Lecturers adhere to the policies and regulations prescribed for teaching". On the other hand, there were also clusters of lower mean scores around items that described professional or personal reliability. These items were item 49 (mean=2.06); item 56 (mean =2.13); and item 52 (mean =2.16).

These findings indicate that lecturers are mostly perceived as being more reliable in terms of compliance to "structured" or rule governed aspect of teaching. The mean scores were lower when more items of professional and personal reliability are introduced. The trend of the findings was similar to those in Lecturers' Fairness construct, where the mean scores were relatively lower when items of discretionary fairness were introduced.

Lecturers' Credibility

The mean scores of Lecturers' Credibility are shown in Table 11. The mean scores indicate that the students agreed that their lecturers were reliable with respect to the descriptions given in the items. It was interesting to note that the mean scores for items 59 and 60 were relatively lower. Items 59 and 60 signify that lecturers perhaps do not necessarily regard behavioral control as a professional duty at the university level. Item 61 perhaps indicates the relatively lower priority given by lecturers to record keeping, and suggests the lack of time for administrative tasks.

TABLE 9
Lecturer communication skills

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
34.	Lecturers interact effectively with students	2.73	.49
35.	Lecturers are approachable for dialogues	2.67	.54
36.	Lecturers communicate proficiently	2.80	.45
37.	Lecturers use simple language	2.86	.38
38.	Lecturers encourage two way communication with students	2.85	.40
39.	Lecturers are willing to accept students' views and comments	2.75	.52
40.	Lecturers allow students to interrupt during lectures	2.54	.63
41.	Lecturers have a sense of humor	2.59	.60
42.	Lecturers have good listening skills	2.80	.47

TABLE 10
Lecturer reliability

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
43.	Lecturers have teaching materials and equipment ready at the start of the lesson	2.80	.46
44.	Lecturers start and finish class on time	2.65	.55
45.	Lecturers are firm on the duration of time given to students to complete a task	2.87	.36
46.	Lecturers adhere to the policies and regulations prescribed for teaching	2.88	.35
47.	Lecturers follow planned lesson progression	2.78	.48
49.	Lecturers often make up classes earlier to the date of their absence	2.06	.77
50.	Lecturers make arrangements to replace classes missed on public holidays	2.41	.92
51.	Lecturers ask students to do individual work when classes are cancelled	2.16	.80
52.	Lecturers are in the office regularly and not only on lecture days	2.16	.76
53.	Lecturers always walk around the class to monitor students' performance	2.27	.70
54.	Lecturers are prepared to discuss academic matters with students	2.74	1.19
55.	Lecturers are prepared to carry out non-instructional duties	2.30	.69
56.	Lecturers often cancel classes without informing students earlier	2.13	.78

TABLE 11
Lecturer credibility

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
57.	Lecturers have a set of rules and procedures to handle classroom routine administrative matters in the lecture room	2.73	.51
58.	Lecturers have a set of rules and procedures to monitor students' level of verbal participation in the class	2.71	.51
59.	Lecturers stop inappropriate students' behavior promptly and consistently	2.65	.58
60.	Lecturers frequently monitor the behavior of students during class	2.66	.54
61.	Lecturers update records on students' performance accurately	2.65	.57
62.	Lecturers use sufficient materials to support instruction	2.74	.49
63.	Lecturers acknowledge students' response during lectures	2.75	1.17
64.	Lecturers often condense several missed lessons into one lesson	2.17	.74
65.	Lecturers improve on their teaching material	2.73	.51

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The overall mean for Teaching Methodology was 2.68 (SD .26). This shows that the students in the business program expressed moderate agreement that they experienced quality Teaching Methodology. The findings in this quality factor will be reported according to two constructs: Individual Lecturers' Teaching Competence and Overall Course Delivery.

Lecturers' Teaching Competence

Table 12 illustrates the mean scores. Again, the table shows that the students agreed on the competence of the lecturers in the business studies program in their universities.

Overall Course Delivery

In Table 13, the highest mean score was 2.75 on the items "The degree of inter-relatedness of the material covered in this program is consistently high" (mean =2.75) and "The courses on this program encourage students to do research to prove certain facts" (mean = 2.75). The lowest mean score of 2.36 was for the item "The program incorporates experiential learning e.g. field trip, simulations, etc". This suggests that although the business program in public universities strongly emphasized research work, it gave lower emphasis however, on hands-on fieldwork research.

Course Relevance

The mean scores for items showed that the majority of the students were highly satisfied

TABLE 12
Lecturer competence

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
66.	Lecturers begin lessons with a review of previous lessons	2.61	.62
67.	Lecturers specify the learning objectives for every lesson	2.75	.52
68.	Lecturers provide suitable examples, demonstration and illustrations of concepts and skills	2.82	.44
69	Lecturers assign task which students can complete with a high rate of success	2.73	.53
70.	Lecturers ask questions that are appropriate to the students' level of ability	2.77	.49
71.	Lecturers vary the pace of instructional activities	2.66	.55
72.	Lecturers make transitions between lessons and instructional activities	2.71	.51
73.	Lecturers make sure that instructions for assignments are clear	2.85	.90
74.	Lecturers summarize the main points at the end of each lesson	2.70	.53
75.	Lecturers are knowledgeable on the subject matter	2.85	.41
76.	Lecturers are skillful in presenting their lessons	2.79	.45
77.	Lecturers stimulate students' thinking through problem solving techniques and asking challenging questions	2.78	.47
78.	Lecturers are competent in handling students' questions	2.80	.46
79.	Lecturers are prepared to teach	2.89	.34
80.	Lectures give assignments of good quality to students	2.85	.41

TABLE 13
Overall course delivery

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
17.	Most of the examination questions in the courses test on what I had memorized rather than what I had understood	2.58	.60
19.	The degree of inter relatedness of the material covered in this program is consistently high	2.75	.48
20.	This program incorporates experiential learning e.g. field trip, simulations etc.	2.36	.71
21.	The content of the courses in this program is too heavy	2.57	.59
22.	The difficulty level of the content of the courses in this program is suitable to my level of ability	2.70	.52
29.	The courses in this program often require students to solve problems in text books rather than do research	2.43	.64
30.	The courses in this program encourage students to do research to prove certain facts	2.75	.50

that the course content and design were relevant to their needs in the business program. The lowest mean score was for the item "The industrial training in the program was well planned and beneficial" (mean = 2.76). This suggests that although the students believed that the quality of the practical content in their courses was good, they nevertheless perceived that their industrial training experience was in comparison, insufficiently organized. This raises the issue as to whether the practical content in business courses ought to be instituted as a more formal requirement in universities so that better coordination for industry training can be done. Table 14 shows the results for Course Relevance.

T-TESTS AND ANOVA

The t-test showed a significant difference in the perception on Lecturers' Factors, Teaching Methodology, and Course Relevance between male and female students ($t = 5.41$ $p < .05$); ($t = 2.94$ $p < .05$); and ($t = -2.72$ $p < .05$) respectively. The mean scores indicated that more female students expressed more agreement for the quality of Lecturer Factors, Teaching Methodology, and Relevance of the Course. The t-test results are in Tables 15-17.

One-way ANOVA test shown in Tables 18-20 revealed there were significant differences in students' perceptions of the quality of Lecturer Factors, Teaching Methodology, and Course

TABLE 14
Course relevance

Item No	Item	Mean	SD
18.	The industrial training in this program is well planned and beneficial	2.76	.50
23.	The content of the courses in this program is relevant to my future employment	2.79	.48
24.	The actual content of the courses correspond to their descriptions in the synopsis	2.85	.39
25.	The content of the courses in this program is current	2.80	.46
26.	The quality of practical content in the program is good	2.81	.45
27.	The core courses in this program are important to me	2.81	.46
28.	I like my chosen field of specialization	2.88	.37

TABLE 15
t-test between gender and lecturers' factor

	Item	Lecturers' Factor			
		N	'Mean	t value	Sig.
Gender	Male	429	2.61	t =-5.41	.000
	Female	1119	2.70		

TABLE 16
t-test between gender and teaching methodology

	Item	Teaching Methodology			
		N	'Mean	t value	Sig.
Gender	Male	428	2.65	t =-2.94	.003
	Female	1116	2.69		

TABLE 17
t-test between gender and relevance of the courses

	Item	Relevance of the Courses			
		N	'Mean	t value	Sig.
Gender	Male	427	2.78	t =-2.72	.007
	Female	1110	2.83		

TABLE 18
ANOVA between ethnic group and lecturers' factor

	Item	Lecturers' Factor			
		N	'Mean	F value	Sig.
Race	Malays	1058	2.73	58.31	.0001
	Chinese	369	2.50		
	Indians	59	2.66		
	Bumiputera Sabah & Sarawak	11	2.75		
	Others	11	2.59		

TABLE 19
ANOVA between ethnic group and teaching methodology

Item		Teaching Methodology			
	N	'Mean	F value	Sig.	
Race	Malays	1055	2.73	53.51	0.001
	Chinese	369	2.52		
	Indian	58	2.71		
	Bumiputera Sabah & Sarawak	50	2.76		
	Others	11	2.59		

TABLE 20
ANOVA between ethnic group and course relevance

ITEM		Course Relevance			
		N	'Mean	F value	Sig.
Race	Malays	1049	2.86	39.31	.0001
	Chinese	368	2.65		
	Indian	58	2.88		
	Bumiputera Sabah & Sarawak	50	2.86		
	Others	11	2.86		

Relevance amongst students of different ethnic groups.

Post hoc Tukey test revealed that the Malay, Indian, and Bumiputera Sabah and Sarawak students tended to have a higher agreement of the quality of Lecturer Factor, Teaching Methodology, and Course Relevance than the Chinese students. The positive orientation amongst the Malays, Indians and the Bumiputera Sabah and Sarawak students towards Lecturer, Teaching Methodology, and Course Relevance factors in the business program could be due to the awareness campaign driven by government policies to develop more numbers of entrepreneurs and businessmen amongst the these ethnic groups by 2020. Table 21 shows the Tukey test results.

Tables 22-24 display the ANOVA results for significant differences in the perception of quality factors amongst students with different academic qualifications.

Posthoc Tukey tests showed that the Diploma and the Matriculation groups of students tended to express more agreement on the quality of Lecturers, Teaching Methodology and Course Relevance than the STPM students and students with other types of qualifications. These differences could perhaps be attributed to the fact that the Matriculation and Diploma students have undergone pre-university programs in other institutions, and their experience could have

TABLE 21
Posthoc Tukey test of ethnic and quality factors

Ethnic	Chinese					
	Lecturer Factor		Teaching Methodology		Course Relevance	
Ethnic	Mean difference	Sig	Mean difference	Sig	Mean difference	Sig
Malay	.23	.00	.21	.00	.21	.00
Indian	.16	.00	.19	.03	.22	.00
Bumiputera Sabah & Sarawak	.25	.00	.23	.00	.20	.00

TABLE 22
ANOVA between academic qualification and lecturers' factor

Item		Lecturers' Factor			
		N	'Mean	F value	Sig.
Academic Qualification	Diploma	327	2.71	22.57	.000
	Matriculation	570	2.73		
	STPM (equivalent to A Level)	616	2.61		
	Others	26	2.71		

TABLE 23
ANOVA between academic qualification and teaching methodology

Item		Teaching Methodology			
		N	'Mean	F value	Sig.
Academic Qualification	Diploma	325	2.71	18.68	.000
	Matriculation	570	2.72		
	STPM (equivalent to A level)	615	2.62		
	Others	26	2.75		

TABLE 24
ANOVA between academic qualification and course relevance

Item		Course Relevance			
		N	'Mean	F value	Sig.
Academic Qualification	Diploma	323	2.84	11.61	.000
	Matriculation	566	2.86		
	STPM (equivalent to A level)	614	2.76		
	Others	26	2.87		

TABLE 25
Tukey test on students academic qualifications and quality factors

	STPM/HSC					
	Lecturer Factor		Teaching Methodology		Course Relevance	
	Mean difference	Sig	Mean difference	Sig	Mean difference	Sig
Diploma	.10	.00	.09	.00	. 08	.00
Matriculation	.12	.00	.10	.03	.09	.00

influenced their orientation towards Lecturer Factors, Teaching Methodology and Course Relevance. Table 25 shows the results.

In Tables 26-28, t-tests showed a significant difference in the perceptions of students who scored CGPA of >3.0 and those who scored <3.0 in Lecturer Factors (t= 7.79 p<.05), Teaching Methodology (t=8.25 p<.05)and Course Relevance (t=5.01 p<.05). This means that students who scored less than CGPA 3.0 tended to agree with the quality of their Lecturers, Teaching Methodology and Course Relevance in their business courses.

The results indicate that the lesser the CGPA scores, the more dependent the students are on the conditions prevailing in their courses. On

TABLE 26
t-test between CGPA scores and lecturer factor

Item		Lecturers' Factor			
		N	'Mean	T value	Sig.
CGPA Scores	>3.0	640	2.61	t =-7.79	.000
	<3.0	720	2.72		

TABLE 27
t-test between CGPA scores and teaching methodology

Item		Teaching Methodology			
		N	'Mean	t value	Sig.
CGPA	>3.0	637	2.61	t =-8.25	.000
	<3.0	719	2.73		

TABLE 28
t-test between CGPA scores and course relevance

Item		Course Relevance			
		N	'x	t value	Sig.
CGPA	>3.0	636	2.77	t =-5.01	.000
	<3.0	713	2.85		

the other hand, students with higher CGPA scores may be less dependent on Lecturer Factors and Teaching Methodology employed in the classroom as they have a higher capacity to explore more independent learning means.

The t-test in Table 29 showed a significant difference in the perceptions of the quality of Lecturer Factors ($t=2.998$ $p<.05$) between students with working experience and without working experience. Those students with no previous work experience showed more agreement to the quality of Lecturer Factors. Perhaps those who already have working experience had already attained more experience and maturity in terms of occupational relationships and this could have influenced their judgment of their Lecturers.

The t test in Tables 30-31 showed there were significant differences between perceptions of students with high and low English Language proficiency on Teaching Methodology and Course Relevance. Students with low language proficiency tended to give more favorable response to the quality of their Lecturers and Teaching Methodology employed. This relatively positive perception from the lower proficiency students could have been influenced by the general practice of bilingual instruction employed by many university lecturers in Malaysia to enable as many students as possible to understand their lectures. The lower proficiency group also expressed high moderate agreement to Course Relevance, although this could possibly be attributed to their limited language proficiency which made them highly dependent on the breadth of topics covered by the lecturers during class.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the analysis from the study were heartening. The survey suggests that the majority of the student sample in the business studies programs in the three public universities in Malaysia were highly satisfied with the overall service quality for teaching and learning based

TABLE 29
t-test between working experience and lecturer factor

Item		Lecturers' Factor			
		N	'Mean	t value	Sig.
Working Experience	Yes	577	2.65	t =-2.99	.003
	No	962	2.69		

TABLE 30
t-test between English language proficiency and teaching methodology

Item		Teaching Methodology			
		N	'Mean	t value	Sig.
English Language Proficiency	High	1125	2.67	t =-2.47	.014
	Low	396	2.71		

TABLE 31
t-test between English language proficiency and course relevance

Item		Course Relevance			
		N	'Mean	t value	Sig.
English Language Proficiency	High	1120	2.80	t =-2.05	.040
	Low	394	2.84		

on Lecturer Factor, Teaching Methodology, and Course Relevance.

From the descriptive statistics, however, it was shown that the students' satisfaction was relatively lower with the level of practical experiential learning experience offered in the business courses. Business faculties therefore need to have more proactive management of relevant field experiences for their students.

Students also reported a lower agreement on the item of whether they were informed much earlier when classes were postponed or cancelled. Since this perception affects the reliability of lecturers, it is recommended that faculties develop a more efficient system of communication to enable students to be informed of class cancellations.

Students' response generally highly agreed on the fairness and caring attitudes of their lecturers, but the response became relatively more reserved for items which described "actual personal contact to help with personal problems", and "actually taking the initiative to help students with their study problems". It would be beneficial if faculties were to take counsel as to whether "taking care of the consumers" ought to be re-defined in terms of providing better support networks to assist students in more concrete and specific ways to overcome their personal and study- related problems.

Significant differences in the perceptions of Lecturers, Teaching Methodology and Relevance factors were attributed to students' gender, race, academic qualification, and CGPA scores. The female students appeared to have more positive perceptions of all three quality factors in the business studies program. It is recommended that a review of course design and course delivery needs to be undertaken so as to boost the course appeal to both male and female students. While the academic environment may appeal more to females, it is possible that a more field-based course design will increase active learning on the part of male students. Students from the Malay and the Bumiputera Sabah and Sarawak ethnic groups were also shown to be more

positive in their perceptions of these quality factors. More in-depth studies, preferably qualitative studies need to be carried out to probe the reasons for the positive affiliation of these gender and ethnic groups towards quality factors in the business studies program in public universities. Students who scored a CGPA of <3.0, students with work experience, and students with either Diploma or Matriculation academic qualifications also showed more positive perceptions towards the quality of Lecturer Factor, Teaching Methodology, and Course Relevance. More dialogues with these groups of students need to be carried out by faculties so that a sharper evaluation of teaching and learning factors, course design, and course relevance can be constructed relevant to the needs of the students.

CONCLUSION

This study was carried out to examine the quality of teaching and learning in business programs in three public universities in Malaysia. The findings indicate that students in the public university had high perceptions of the quality of their Lecturers, the Teaching Methodology employed in the program, and the Relevance of their Courses. However, more in-depth, and qualitative studies need to be carried out to examine the details pertaining to the differences of perceptions on all three quality factors based on gender, ethnic background, academic qualification, and academic achievement.

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