

Higher Education Quality: Perception Differences among Internal and External Stakeholders

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Abstract

Conceptually, education quality of higher education can be determined by evaluation of their stakeholders's satisfaction level. The Purpose of this study is to describe how students as external stakeholder and lecturers as internal stakeholder, perceived their satisfaction of learning experience in the university. This study was conducted in quantitative research method to collect, analyze and interpret data. The findings indicated that students and lecturers had different perceptions on the quality of education. Lecturer perceived all dimensions of quality with a higher satisfaction level than students. This finding shows that there is a gap between perception of lecturers and students on higher education quality.

Keywords: education quality, student, lecturer, satisfaction, higher education, stakeholder

1. Introduction

One of the important determinants of national competitiveness in this global era is the quality of its higher education. This quality comes from the combination of excellent learning process and public satisfaction in the service delivered (Hanasya, Abdullah, & Warokka, 2011). The service quality in the field of education, especially higher education, particularly is not only essential, but it is also an important factor of educational excellence.

Concept of services Quality parallel with customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction came as a result of service quality (Zeithaml & Parasuraman, 1996; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). Most literatures about service quality and satisfaction often used these terms interchangeably manner (Gwynne, Devlin, & Ennew, 2000), with the basic theory, performance measure approach (Cronin & Taylor, 1994), that level of service quality can be defined as level satisfaction of its customer.

Customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal of all organizations (Razavi, Safari, & Shafie, 2012), including higher education sector. Defining quality of education as stakeholder satisfaction, will help higher education development, because there are many views that quality (Reichheld, 1996) and the perception of quality is multilateral (Gerson, 1993). By defining quality as stakeholder satisfaction, institution having good challenges to provide excellent service that satisfies its stakeholders. The educational organizations need to focus on the perspective of its stakeholders to provide the successful learning process.

In fact, quality in higher education is a relative concept involving number of various stakeholders (Tam, 2001). There are internal and external stakeholders, in which student as primary external stakeholder and teacher as an internal stakeholder (Sallis, 2002). A higher education institution which strives to provide excellent quality of education should strive to fully understand the needs of its stakeholders. One of the best ways to do so is through direct feedback from its internal and external stakeholder proportionally, i.e between student and lecturer.

UIN Maliki is one of the wishful institution to provide excellent experiential learning to students as a primary stakeholder to improve their knowledge and skills for career promotion or shift to a better job in order to attain an improved quality of life. Therefore, it is important to assess the institution's success in achieving these goals. By evaluating the satisfaction of its internal and external stakeholder, it's hoped can give a comprehensive evaluation of quality education in this university.

2. The Objective of Study

The objective study is finding comprehensive views of quality of education services, from students and lecturer's perspective. The objective of this study also to find whether there are different perspective between student and lecturer. Based on the analysis, it is well found relevant recommendations to university for further improvement.

3. Literatur Review

3.1 *Quality of Education Service and Stakeholder Satisfaction*

Quality services, especially in industries, is an abstract and elusive construct (LeBlanch & Nguyen, 1997), that emerge many characteristic defined to call something is good quality. As in most other industries, services, in the education sector, services have services have specific features, i.e. intangible, heterogen, simultaneous production and consumption (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000), that led to the importance of consumer views as a tool for determining good quality of service. In the absence of tangible evidence on which to evaluate quality, many authors trying to use consumers perceive services as a tool for judge quality of services (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). The authors use a comparison between customer expectations and perception of service performance to evaluate quality of services, that led to the concept of customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction parallels with service quality (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000) and came as a result of service quality (Zeithaml & Parasuraman, 1996). Many authors view satisfaction as a process or a result (Alves & Raposo, 2007). As a process, satisfaction is analyzed in light of its nature: cognitive or emotional. Satisfaction evaluated using comparison between perceptions and expectation (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985; Kotler, 1994). As a result, satisfaction analyzed as the main causes of that satisfaction (see Oliver, 1980). Satisfaction evaluated using customer feelings about service performance only, without comparison with their expectation (Cronin & Taylor, 1994). This concept is used in this study.

In educational setting customer called stakeholder and in the context of higher education, stakeholders are those groups that have various interests in one university (Moraru, 2012). Sallis (2002) states that stakeholders in education consist of various internal and external groups. The primary external stakeholder is learner/student - who directly receive services, and the internal stakeholder are teachers/support staff - who are the employees of the institution. Therefore, in this context, customer satisfaction can be called as stakeholder satisfaction, and can be defined as stakeholders feelings about education services.

3.2 *Dimension Quality of Education Service in Higher Education*

In measuring the quality of Higher Education, mostly using dimensionality suggested many researchers. The most popular dimensionality used in many sectors is SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985), with five- dimensional construct consisting of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Some researchers use this dimensionality in the educational sector (see Tuan, 2012; Al-Alak & Alnaser, 2012). Another researcher uses service characteristic and features in a higher education context to develop dimensionality of educational services. Athiyaman (1997) used eight characteristics to examine university education services, namely; teaching students well, availability of staff for student consultation, library services, computing facilities, recreational facilities, class sizes, level and difficulty of subject content and student workload. LeBlanc and Nguyen (1997) identifies seven factors of service quality, namely; reputation, administrative personnel, faculty, curriculum, responsiveness, physical evidence and access to facilities. Abdullah (2006) has developed a new measuring instrument of service quality in higher education sector HEdPERF (Higher Education PERFormance-only), with six dimensionality, namely; non-academic aspects, academic aspects, reputation, access, program issues and understanding. Also, Annamdevula and Bellamkonda (2012) has developed HiEdQual, consist of five dimensions of service quality in higher education sector, namely; teaching and course content, administrative services, academic facilities, campus infrastructure and support services of service quality within the higher education sector.

The differences in service quality dimensions developed by researchers explain above, shows that service quality varies depending on the research objective and customer group. In an Islamic Higher education sector in Indonesia, Abidin (2015), has found six dimensionality of service quality, namely: lecturer, curriculum, administration, facilities, libraries and Islamic environment. Combined with Latief and Bahroom (2010) studies, this research used for dimension of education services, namely: curriculum, lecturer (teaching and learning), administration services, facilities and library. These dimensions were chosen for two reasons. First, these dimensions are consistent with the universalistic view in education context. Second, these dimensions could be valuable in achieving quality of education services in Indonesian higher education context.

4. Methodology

This research is a descriptive analysis to determine and analyze perception of the quality of The UIN Maliki institution among students and lecturers. In the research, quantitative method was used to collect, analyze and interpret data. Technically, the data was collected via questionnaire. The dimension of services quality and item questionnaire was adapted from Latief and Bahroom (2010) and Abidin (2015) studies, and modified according to the context of studies.

There are three approaches to measure service quality (Palmer, 2011): (a) Performance measures (Cronin & Taylor, 1992); (2) Disconfirmation models (Parasuraman, 1985); and Importance performance approaches (Martilla & James, 1977). This study will apply performance measures. It is based on asking students and lecturers the level satisfaction of services provided to them by the university. It is hoped that this simple survey will make student and lecturer easy to answer.

The questionnaires consist of three sections; section A elicited demographic data of the respondents, section B required to respondents to respond to items regarding their satisfaction level of the service quality dimensions, in this section, respondents were requested to rate their responses to several statements based on the Likert-type scale of 1 to 5; with 1 (very dissatisfied), 2 (not satisfied), 3 (moderately satisfied), 4 (satisfied) and 5 (very satisfied). Section C, consist of open questions about stakeholder recommendations on the quality of education.

This study employed purposive random sampling technique to collect data. The participants were graduate and postgraduate students and lecturers from UIN Maliki. The students are whose in the third academic year, while lecturer whose has been teaching for at least a year. The researchers distributed 500 questionnaires to students and 100 questionnaires to lecturers. A total of 361 students and 78 lecturers responded to the survey.

5. Result

5.1 Analysis of Demographic Data

A total 433 students and lecturers responded to this survey. The respondent comprised male 250 (57%) and female 189 (43%). Table 1 signifies the details.

Table 1. Number of respondents based on gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	250	57%
Female	189	43%
Total	433	100%

Based on Table 2, 78 (18%) respondents are lecturers, and 361 (75%) respondents are students.

Table 2. Number of respondents based on status

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Teacher	78	18%
Student	361	82%
Total	433	100%

5.2 Overall Satisfaction

Based on Table 3, the overall mean satisfaction score of all dimensions were 3.47 (satisfied rate) for student and 4.67 (very satisfied rate) for lecturers. Students rated curriculum; and administration as 'satisfied' with the mean scores 3.76 and 3.50, while lecturer (teaching & learning), and facilities and library as 'moderately satisfied' with the mean scores 3.32 and 3.30. Compared to lecturer perceptions, the overall mean satisfaction was higher than students satisfaction. Lecturer rated all dimensions as 'very satisfied' with the mean scores 5.67. This finding indicates gap of the level satisfaction between students and lecturers. The overall gap between students and lecturers is -1.20. Teaching & learning, facilities and library are the biggest gap, where lecturers perceived 'very satisfied' while students perceived 'moderately satisfied'.

Table 3. Satisfaction mean scores by dimension of services quality

Dimensions	Students	Lecturers	Gap
Curriculum	3.76	4.78	-1.02
Lecturer (Teaching and Learning)	3.32	4.69	-1.37
Administration	3.50	4.67	-1.17
Facilities and Library	3.30	4.56	-1.26
Overall Mean and Gap	3,47	4,67	-1,20

5.3 Curriculum

In the curriculum dimension (Table 4), lecturers rates all the four items were 'very satisfied', with the overall mean was 4.78. While students rate all the four items were 'satisfied', with the overall mean were 3.76. This finding indicates the gap of the level satisfaction between students and lecturers, with the overall gap were -1.03.

Table 4. Satisfaction mean scores for curriculum items

No item	Curriculum	Students	Lecturers	Gap
1	Suitability of the Study Programme	4.00	4.78	-0,78
2	Integration of Science and Religion on learning activities	3.63	4.67	-1,02
3	Availability of sistematical curriculum sillabus	3.57	4.89	-1,32
4	Preparing student for educational working world	3.83	4.78	-0,94
	Overall Mean and Gap	3.76	4.78	-1,03

5.4 Lecturer (Teaching Learning)

Table 5. Satisfaction mean scores of lecturer (teaching and learning) items

No item	Lecturer (Teaching and Learning)	Students	Lecturers	Gap
5	Balance in both theoretical and implementation knowledge	3.67	4.56	-0.89
6	Value added on learning activities	3.97	4.67	-0.70
7	Ability to update students on current knowledge	3.47	4.78	-1.31
8	Ability to promote student's skill	2.73	4.78	-2.04
9	ICT literacy in teaching learning process	3.03	4.78	-1.74
10	Communication skills in English or Arabic Language	2.97	4.78	-1.81
11	Qualifications	3.90	4.67	-0.77
12	Quality of academic counseling system	2.77	4.67	-1.90
13	Academic staff easily contacted outside tutorial hours	3.40	4.56	-1.16
	Overall Mean and Gap	3.32	4.69	-1.37

Based on Table 5, lecturers rates all the four items of teaching and learning were 'very satisfied', with the overall mean score were 4.78. While students rate all the four items were 'moderately satisfied', with the overall mean score were 3.76. This finding indicates the gap of the level satisfaction between students and lecturers, with the overall gap were -1.03. The five biggest gap is items 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13. All of these four items rated 'moderately satisfied' by students, while the lecturers rate 'very satisfied'.

5.5 Administration Services

Based on Table 6, the overall mean satisfaction score of three items of administrative services is 3.50 (satisfied rate) for students and 4.67 (very satisfied rate) for lecturers. The overall gap is -1.17. Lecturers rates all the four items of administration services were 'very satisfied'. On the other side students rate items 14 and 15 were 'satisfied', while item 16 was 'very satisfied'. The biggest gap is item 14, which score is -1.86.

Table 6. Satisfaction mean scores for administration services

No item	Assesment System	Students	Lecturers	Gap
14	Efficient dealing with complaint	2.70	4.56	-1.86
15	Service delivery procedures	3.80	4.56	-0.76
16	Caring and good communication	4.00	4.89	-0.89
	Overall Mean and Gap	3.50	4.67	-1.17

5.6 Facilities and Library

In the facilities and library dimension (Table 7), the overall mean satisfaction score is 3.30 (moderately satisfied rate) for students and 4.56 (very satisfied rate) for lecturers. The overall gap is -1.26. Lecturers rates all the eight items of facilities and library dimension are 'very satisfied'. In the other side students rate item 17 are 'not satisfied'; while items 18, 20, 21, and 23 are 'moderately satisfied'. The two biggest gaps are items 17 and 18, which score is -1.80 and -1.93. It could conclude that for several facilities such as library, online resources, class facilities and equipment, wifi facilities are less satisfying for students but high satisfying for lecturers.

Table 7. Satisfaction mean scores of facilities and library items

No	Facilities	Students	Lecturers	Gap
17	Library	2.53	4.33	-1.80
18	Online resources	2.73	4.67	-1.93
19	Minimal class size	4.27	4.78	-0.51
20	Class facilities and equipments	3.33	4.78	-1.44
21	Recreational facilities	3.13	4.44	-1.31
22	Campus security	3.80	4.67	-0.87
23	Wifi facilities	2.70	4.22	-1.52
24	Conducive learning space	3.87	4.56	-0.69
	Overall Mean and Gap	3.30	4.56	-1.26

6. Discussions

The findings above indicate that there are different perception between students and lecturers in the quality of education offered by the university. Students as a primary stakeholder of university tend to have lower satisfaction than lecturers as internal stakeholder. This finding could be comprehended to see that lecturers as the part of services component perceived themselves quite higher than students' perception. Several studies had shown similar finding in perception differences between one and other stakeholder. Kitchroen (2004) has examined students as primary stakeholders and university staff members as internal stakeholders, to see service quality in administrative services, found that students had lower mean data of all service attributes. Another study held by Buntat, Jabor, Saud, Mansor, and Mustaffa (2013) found the difference perception between teaching staff and graduate worker about the element of employability.

The curriculum consist of subjects studied to enhance students skill and knowledge, with a number of competencies. Based on the finding, students perceived the curriculum dimension was satisfied, while lecturers perceived very satisfied. From four items of curriculum dimension, availability of the systematical curriculum syllabus is the biggest gap. Although this item perceived 'satisfied' by students, it's still the open-ended question:

“sometimes, the lesson material unsuitable with the syllabus” (Male, Master degree). As part of service quality in determining course content (Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2012), lectures need to follow curriculum syllabus strictly, and the syllabus should be relevant to program study.

On the lecturer (teaching and learning) dimension, lecturers perceived this dimension very high level satisfaction, while students perceived just moderate. It is not surprising, considering that this dimension consists of a statement concerning to the ability of lecturers in their duty as tutor. Therefore, lecturers tend to perceive them self very high. From the result, students had less satisfaction on items: ability to promote student’s skill, ICT literacy in teaching learning process; communication skills in English or Arabic language, quality of the academic counseling system; and academic staff easily contacted outside tutorial hours. This gap should be a material evaluated by university for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, because the student-teacher relation is one of the important factors that effects on university students’ achievement (Nami, Marsooli, & Ashouri, 2014).

On the facilities and library dimension, the library is only, the item that perceived not satisfied by students, even though lecturers perceive very satisfied. In the open questionnaire, student suggests: “library need to improve its service by adding sources of learning and improve staff skill” (female, doctoral degree). The other biggest gap items are: online resources, class facilities and equipments, wifi facilities, and recreational facilities. Facilities play a very important role in satisfying students (Tuan, 2012). The university should provide modern classrooms with updated equipment to support the delivery of curriculum and teaching learning process. Textbooks and reference materials must be sufficient and updated. Also, there is adequate access to digital repositories. Today, libraries in UIN Maliki are open in the daytime and closed in the evening. Longer working hours in libraries should be of concern in order to increase student satisfaction.

7. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

The education quality of university can be measured by assessing satisfaction levels of its stakeholders. By comparing perception between internal and external stakeholders, university will find a comprehensive view to understand the gap between one another. This research confirms that there is a different perception between lecturers as internal stakeholder and students as external stakeholder. Students tend to have lower satisfaction than lecturers. This finding could be comprehended to see that lecturers as the part of the quality education component perceived themselves quite higher than students’ perception. For university, this big satisfaction gap, should be evaluation material to enhance the quality of educational services. Some dimensions that had the biggest gap such as; teaching and learning, facilities and library, should be the most concern to increase student satisfaction.

For further research, using the same methodology can be carried out in examining the specific target, such as programs and faculties in the university. Evaluation can be made on all programs and faculties of the university, by comparing one another. Comparative study will be useful in this domain. A comprehensive study would help the university to review the overall quality of its curriculum, lecturer, administration and facilities to improve service quality of the university.

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