SATISFACTION TOWARDS SERVICE FACILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

E*ducation in Malaysia is gaining more attention due to the growing number of public and private higher learning institutions. The success of these institutions simultaneously determines the progress towards a quality and reputable education center. Thus, an exceptionally outstanding institution is assumed to produce quality students who are able to participate and compete at any level. It is also predicted that high-quality and well-maintained service facilities on campus can stimulate learning and be capable of attracting new students. Therefore, this study focuses on the perception of international students' towards the service facilities provided by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), a public university in Malaysia. A total of 355 international students responded to a set of questionnaire. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science, and overall results show that the perception of the international students' towards service facilities in UTM is at a moderate level. This paper not only discusses the findings but implications and recommendations of the study are also provided.*

Keywords: *Service Facilities, Satisfaction, Higher Education, International Students.*

1. Introduction

Education has become one of the largest service industries in the 21st century. In fact, service facilities have become the key success in drawing new students as educational services provide a range of high quality learning opportunities for all. However, it is observed that service facilities have not been viewed with the importance that they deserve in higher learning institutions. In reality it is the least measured service compared to other academic activities which receive constant monitoring including monitoring of its education performance or research activities. It is also believed that most institutions neglect the fact that service facilities on campus can be a determining factor in driving new enrolment.   Having reliable measures which specifically target service facilities is essential in determining whether the 'customer' is satisfied with the facilities offered in these institutions. The growing number of international students in Malaysia is a wakeup call for service facilities to receive a higher budget allocation. If the infrastructure or groundwork is not maintained and improved in order to accommodate the overflowing number of foreign students, it can become an academic hindrance because service facilities are highly regarded as a key indicator affecting students' attitude toward education (Rajab et al., 2012). Lack of advanced service facilities can create severe problems in educational institutions. This can be seen through the number of failures or withdrawals and the most obvious sign will be declining admission and declining international students' enrolment in an institution. It is always assumed that the more advanced the service facilities on campus, the more motivated students will become, simultaneously leading to an improved academic performance. This is not unexpected as the service facilities on campus are the venues where international students spend most of their time. These are places where they develop and nurture their minds, hidden talents and abilities. Therefore the quality of these service facilities must be equally matched.

UTM as one of the higher learning institutions in Malaysia with twenty faculties and more than 228 programs has played an important role in education since its establishment as a technical school in 1904. UTM provides various amenities to its students who enjoy and utilize these facilities in a conducive and comfortable environment. This includes hostel facilities, transportation services, a computerized library, smart classrooms and laboratories comprising all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching materials plus support facilities consisting of services such as health care, cafes, bank, bookstore, recreational center and other necessities offered to cater to the needs and expectations of its students. By March 2013, the number of international students has increased tremendously to more than 4500 (www.utm.my, 2013). These international students are pursuing their study in different courses at different faculties in UTM. They also come from different cultures and backgrounds which form the critical factor that will influence their satisfaction level towards the service facilities available on -campus. It is presumed that there is a relationship between the services provided and students' academic performance. For instance, if an institution meets and fulfils the needs of international students, it is assumed that these students will be able to perform better. Students who have high satisfaction level are hypothetically expected to contribute to the overall performance of the institution. With this in mind and with the annual increase in the number of international students, it is the aim of this study to examine international students' perception and satisfaction level towards the service facilities provided by UTM.

A previous study has pointed to the basis of customer satisfaction which is to identify not only customer needs but also their expectations and then to try to satisfy these needs (John, 1991). Previously, customers were not so demanding. They accepted and forgave simple mistakes. However, in this technological era, fulfilling this task is not so easy. Any error can result in major consequences and affect the reputation of an institution. Once an institution loses its customers, the effect will last longer and the institution will find it difficult to overcome the issue of gaining students' trust. As competition in education is becoming difficult and challenging, satisfying customers in service quality is a fundamental requirement of continued professional progression. Ali and Rahmat (2001) emphasized that all customer oriented organizations always hope that each individual customer is satisfied with the services provided because with each delivery, service will be the measurement by which the entire organization is judged. In the context of this study, which is education, customers do not actually purchase a product but they expect the value of satisfaction in return. Since customer expectations and satisfaction are always changing, an institution which is attentive and responsive to customers' needs will be at an advantage compared to other institutions. Similarly, an organization that offers service needs to understand customer expectations and the importance of service quality (Aldridge and Rowley, 1998). In fact, according to Zeithaml et al. (1990), there are certain factors that can influence customer expectations which are relevant in higher education including personal customer needs, past experience towards service quality and likewise external service from the service provider. It is therefore anticipated that international student's expectations toward service quality provided in UTM are literally inspired and guided by their previous experiences. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perception and satisfaction level of the international students' towards service facilities that are available in UTM. The results will provide important information which can be applied to develop the current services in the institution.

2. Literature

2.1 Customer Satisfaction Model

This study is based on the RATER Model (Zeithaml et al., 1990) which identifies five key areas that together form the quality of services from a customers' perspective. The RATER model helps service providers to focus on the dimensions of customer expectations. By identifying customer expectations, a service provider is able to improve and serve customers' better. The five dimensions in the model which is shown in Figure 1 include responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, empathy and reliability.

Figure 1: RATER Model rated by relative importance (Zeithaml et al., 1990)

Dimensions	Relative Importance
Reliability	32%
Assurance	19%
Tangibility	11%
Empathy	16%
Responsiveness	22%

Responsiveness refers to the response international students receive from the UTM management regarding their problems and predicament. While, assurance is the trust and confidence that the institution is able to make international students' feel more relaxed and happy. On the other hand, tangibility is the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials. This study emphasizes these important elements which are important as they reflect the service quality provided by UTM. As shown in Figure 1, based on relative importance, tangibility is rated at 11 per cent compared to other dimensions. Even though this rating is only 11 per cent, it remains a key area that should be considered in service quality and customer satisfaction. In addition, empathy is the caring, individual attention that the institution gives to international students when they face problems. Finally, reliability is the ability of the institution to deliver the service that has been promised. The services offered by the institution should be able to satisfy international students' needs and expectations based on these five dimensions.

2.2 Perception

Perception is a process where one selects, organizes and deduces information into a clear, comprehensible and meaningful image. In fact, every individual will have his own perception of certain information depending on how he or she interprets it. Therefore, different individuals will have differing views on what can be considered as "quality" (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). In addition, one may argue that service quality is merely one's needs and expectations of the services and how the service meets with his expectations (Evangelos and Graham, 2007). In addition, past research shows a positive relationship between customer perception and satisfaction towards service quality. The findings indicate services that do not fulfill customer expectations will negatively affect their overall perception.

For most international students, entering UTM can be an overwhelming experience and their perception towards service facilities can affect their sense of belonging and their loyalty towards the institution. Factors which influence their perception in service performance have a lot of implications for the institution.

Generally, international students will have different perceptions towards services offered based on either internal or external factors. Accordingly, higher learning institutions have a demanding and difficult responsibility and a challenging task ahead in providing services that can satisfy international students who are regarded as customers.

With the increased number of international students in Malaysia, almost all higher learning institutions are competing against each other by offering various courses, programs and advanced services as students are important assets. Subsequently, the services offered have to meet with their expectations. Therefore, if their perceptions are not considered, the services offered may not match their expectations. As customers', their opinions and needs are the direct measurement of service quality, hence, it should be taken very seriously. Therefore, the services provided must be catered for them and not just geared towards the institutional needs. This is to ensure that the satisfaction level of international students' is maintained at a high level while pursuing their studies. This is important as satisfied customers will publicize their satisfaction not only towards the program and service but also to others and their sponsors (Edvarrdsson et al. 1994).

2.3 Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a structure or response of human emotion and is vital to an individual's well-being and consumers' receptivity (Oliver, 1989).   Alternatively, Andersen (1973) would argue that customer satisfaction is inconsistent between the pre and post choice services. Andersen asserts that everything falls on their expectations before and after the services have been served. If the expectation is met, customers will be satisfied. In contrast, if the service provided has declined or dropped below their expectation, it will then lead to customer displeasure with the services. He also put forward the idea that when an organization provides service to customers, the service quality provided will lead to different levels of satisfactions. These levels of satisfaction will primarily lead to different outcome for the organization. For instance, when customers are totally satisfied, the possibility of them coming back for the same service is high. On the other hand, if the customers are only satisfied, the organization may lose them as customers since they do not have a strong sense of loyalty to the organization. Then again, a customer who is not satisfied will more likely choose other organizations or services rather than return to the previous organization. In order to survive in an ever growing competitive market, it is recommended that an organization provide good services to keep loyal customers in their hands. This will ensure that loyal customers will return.

In Malaysia today there are many educational institutions either private colleges or government linked institutions which are set up to offer various programs for international students to further their study. Most institutions including UTM emphasize finding effective techniques and a system that appeals to the targeted students.   There are many factors that will affect the international student's choice (Aldridge and Rowley, 2001). The most obvious would be to focus on academic programmes such as the variety of courses offered, and the students' on-campus experience with the service facilities. International students are always influenced by these services and the learning experience provided by the institution. If the institution neglects the importance of service quality, international students will display their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the institution and this may be reflected in an increase or decrease in international student enrolment or withdrawal from academic programmes.

According to (Kotler et al., 2009 p. 1200), satisfaction can be described as "a person's feeling of desire that results from equaling a product's perceived performance to their anticipation". As such, if performance equals anticipation, the user will be delighted. For this reason, in education, the satisfaction of the international students is their expectation that the educational institution will not only help them be successful and productive in the future but will provide them with a worthwhile experience. In relation to this view, satisfaction is a measure of how services given by an institution meet or exceed student's expectations. If the services fail to meet their expectations while they are in the process of gaining knowledge in the institution, it will automatically lead to dissatisfaction. Pike and Barnes (1994) proposed that student satisfaction is used as a respectable instrument to estimate the effects of an educational institution on student satisfaction. Research has also shown that student satisfaction is significant and is, in many different ways, a source of research (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). It is therefore not surprising that the factors essential in the service market include quality, satisfaction and performance which are normally interrelated (Britner and Hubert, 1994; Cronin et al., 2000).

Quality of facilities is considered a very important condition for sustaining and establishing a satisfying relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality (Cronin and Taylor, 2000). This notion is supported by Spreng and Mckoy (1996) who mentioned that the quality of facility predicts satisfaction. In agreement with this argument, Lassar et al. (2000) pointed out that in a competitive environment, a considerable understanding of the experiences and impact on customer satisfaction through service

organization will help the organization to move forward and comprehend customer needs and expectations. Some studies on student satisfaction show the relationship between the two. Bean and Bradley (1986), for example, suggest the level of satisfaction is related to the cause of satisfaction. In agreement with this several literatures have been conducted to provide evidence that student satisfaction and expectation have significant relationship. As an example, Carey et al. (2002) points to the idea that satisfaction covers problems of student experiences and perceptions during their study. In addition, Kara and Deshields (2004) supports this testimony by giving evidence that student's perceptions and experiences are positively related to their intentions and desire to stay at university. Keaveney and Clifford (1997) conducted a research on the students' retention and satisfaction model. Their results show that faculty and class room facilities contribute to students' higher learning experience. Alternatively, there are also various studies on the relationship between student grades and satisfaction. However, results are inconsistent. Some findings show moderate relationship (Liu and Jung, 1980), others show no relationship at all (Kara and Deshields, 2004) whereas some show a significant relationship between them [Lavin, 1965; Centra and Rock, 1983). There are also a few studies on students' satisfaction and service quality in higher education setting with significant results (Elliott and Shin, 2002; Ham and Hayduk, 2003; Bigne et al. 2003; Fitri et al.2008). In summary, higher educational institutions should always consider student satisfaction as part of its service evaluation especially in trying to assist management or policy makers to achieve the institution's mission and vision. An evaluation of student satisfaction is necessary in determining the effectiveness of the service facilities provided by the institution. It is recommended by Baccani (2003) that in order to identify student satisfaction, quality assessments should be conducted especially to improve the progress of the institution.

2.4 Service Quality

Service quality is a term which indicates a comparison of "expectations with performance" (Zeithaml, 1988: 1). In view of this, improved service quality in an institution may increase the institutions competitiveness. It is suggested that in order to maintain quality service, there are many ways to improve it including identifying the problems, then offering consistent service and later on improving methods and also assessing customer satisfaction. Almost everyone has a different understanding and their own meaning of quality. For example, Deming (1986) says that customers assume quality is focused mainly on the satisfaction of their requirements or expectations. Unfortunately, what they do not understand is, perceived quality is what the customer feels about the service quality which on one hand is used to determine the extent of customer satisfaction. Most customers consider quality based on their perceptions of what they should and expect to receive (Ghobadian et al. 1994; Meister, 1990). It is the responsibility of educational administrators to understand and satisfy the needs of international students as customers in order to gain a viable service market. An important factor which will influence the evaluation of service quality is physical aspects which include facilities and resources in the institution. An outstanding institution not only provides international students with an environment that is conducive to learning but also make available recreation facilities and other necessary resources that are required for the betterment of their education. Nearly all international students will take services and facilities into consideration when choosing a higher learning institution to pursue their studies (Joseph and Joseph, 1998).

Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) divide service quality, as perceived by customers, into three dimensions which include process, outcome and image. This is supported by (Grönroos, 2001) who conclude that customer perception of services received is referred to as the outcome quality resulting from the entire process. Process dimension specifies how the service is delivered to the customers. Sometimes, service quality is rather difficult to assess since customers mostly depend on attributes such as reliability which refers to the ability of the institution to deliver the service which according to Zeithaml et al. (19907) contributes 32 percent of the relative importance. Image also contributes to the importance of service quality as customers normally, in addition to their experiences and perception, regard an organization based on this concept (Kang and James, 2004). It has been indicated that there is a difference between a product and service. The difference between the two is that service is a process, a process that will lead to a result during the intake process (Grönroos, 2001). As stated by Parasuraman et al. (1988), features associated with service include not only intangibility but perishability, inseparability of production and consumption, and heterogeneity. In the context of this study, even though each international student will have different requirements and expectations, as a whole their expectations can determine the service quality provided by the institution. Since service does not last as long as products, it is enjoyed or utilized while the international students are there in the institution. It does not imply ownership except that in the process, the international students act as a customer of this service. Nevertheless, the only difficult part for the institution is satisfying the different requirements and expectations of each international student.

It is undeniable that most higher education institutions have foreseen the importance of international students' assessment of service quality. In the current scenario, the overall experience of international students depends not only on the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning process but also the facilities provided. Perhaps, the transportation service in campus should always be well maintained and punctuality is an issue that plays a critical factor in service quality. At the same time, the majority of the international students spend their time in the library. Thus, the library service should be resourceful and efficient to sustain the international students' satisfaction level towards facilities (Aldridge and Rowley, 1998). In connection with this, over the past two decades, the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has been studied by many researchers. One such study is by Ghobadian et al. (1993) who maintained that if an organization is perceived by customers as having high quality product, then the service provided will be rated higher. Consequently, this will affect the organization's performance. The relationship between quality products and customer satisfaction has driven organizations to elevate their quality one step higher in fulfilling customers' satisfaction as it is understood that poor service will definitely reduce customer satisfaction. They also found that an organization's reputation is measured based on new customers once its quality is perceived. Nonetheless, the opposite situation will happen when customers are not satisfied which will tarnish the organization's reputation. Hence, attaining satisfaction provides a bigger opportunity and competitive advantage for higher education institutions (Ghobadian et al., 1994). In summary, by and large, service quality is hypothetically capable of giving a positive impact to any institution in sustaining a competitive market position among other institutions. Unquestionably, the international students' expectations and needs have to be fulfilled since their evaluation and perception may affect their satisfaction level towards higher education institutions.

Therefore, it is important for institute of higher learning, in its effort for continuous quality improvement, to gather information regarding their customer's level of satisfaction of the facilities and programmes offered. Hence, the aim of this study is to examine the international students' perception of the service facilities that are made available for them in UTM. The findings of this study will be important in providing feedback and evaluation to the institute of higher learning in its effort to improve

3. Methodology

This paper is actually a part of a research by a team of academicians in a Malaysian public university,

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). The rationale for carrying out the research is mainly based on the fact that there has been a steady increase in the number of international students enrolling in UTM in the past few years. Hence, it was important to investigate how UTM as a centre of education is perceived by the international students who now form an important and large part of the student community in UTM. This study utilized a questionnaire which was adapted and translated to English as a way to gather data on the students' perception.

3.1 Respondent/Instrument/Analysis

The main purpose of the study is to determine the perception of the international students towards the service facilities provided by UTM. A total of 355 international students from various faculties and countries are the respondents of the study. As proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), 350 international students should be taken as sample since the total population size of international students in UTM is 4500 for the year 2010/2011 intake. The instrument of this study was a set of questionnaire with 45 items which was adapted and translated from Abdul Rahman et al. (2004). The questionnaire used the five scale Likert format; 1- strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – agree and 5 – strongly agree. SPSS version 16.0 was used to analyse the data to determine the frequency, percentages and also the mean in order to answer the research question of this study. A pilot study was conducted to observe or reliability and validity with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.976. The range of mean value was divided into three levels which were high, moderate and low represented by the range of 3.68 – 5.00, 2.34 – 3.67 and 1.00 – 2.33 respectively.

4. Results

It was important to examine the overall satisfaction level of international students towards the service facilities available in UTM. The respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction on a five point Likert scale. The breakdown of the analysis is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: International Students Satisfaction Level towards

 Service Facilities

No	Level	Mean	N	%
1	Low	1.00-2.33	10	2.81
2	Moderate	2.34-3.67	241	67.89
3	High	3.68-5.00	104	29.30
Total			355	100

The results in Table 1 demonstrate that the majority of the respondents (Moderate Level Satisfaction=67.89 percent) are satisfied with the service facilities provided in UTM. More than half of the respondents (f=241, %=67.89) indicate a moderate satisfaction level with the service facilities offered by UTM.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their satisfaction level of the facilities based on different dimensions which included facilities available at the faculties, facilities that can be found in the student dormitories or residential colleges, facilities at main facilities such as the library and clinic; and support facilities such as café', bookstore and sports centre. Respondent were also asked about the transportation system provided by the university. The analysis of the findings is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: International Students Satisfaction Level towards Service Facilities Based on Dimension

Type	Dimensions	Mean	Level
Facility	Facilities in the faculty	3.42	Moderate
	Facilities in the Dormitory/ Residential College	3.35	Moderate
	Transportation System	3.24	Moderate
	Main Facilities (Library/Clinic/Counseling Center	3.55	Moderate
	Support Facilities (Café/Bank/Bookstore/Recreation/Sport Center/Others)	3.25	Moderate
	Total Mean	3.36	Moderate

Based on the results in Table 2, mean scores for all dimensions are at moderate level (Facilities in the faculty: M=3.42, Facilities in the Dormitory/College: M=3.35, Transportation system: M=3.24, Main Facilities: M=3.55, Support Facilities: M=3.25) with the highest mean recorded for the Main Facilities that is 3.55. While the lowest mean score was reported for Transportation System which is 3.24.

5. Discussion, Implication and Recommendation

Results from Table 2 show that facilities provided by UTM are at a moderate level. Most international students are satisfied not only with the main facilities on campus such as the library, clinic and counseling centre but also other support facilities. These results indicate that the majority of the international students have a satisfactory perception towards the service facilities in this institution. In fact, UTM has provided adequate facilities with the main facilities showing the highest mean (m=3.55, Table 2). This is understandable since students including international students rely heavily on the library specifically for the use of online resources for their research work. In addition, students depend heavily on many services provided by the library such as the library's computing services for surfing, searching for information, borrowing and returning books. Results of this study also reveal that most international students are pleased with the services in the library which can be attributed to the efficient and time saving operation system adopted by the UTM library. In fact, the vital role played by the library in an academic institution can never be undermined as it is one of the tools which enable the university to carry out its role (Tomescu, 2008). For example, the electronic resources which include easy access to internet databases provided by the library will allow international students to access information for reference or research purposes. The library is the key element for improving students' academic performance (Shivalingaiah and Gowda, 2009). This finding is also consistent with the findings of a study by Joseph and Joseph (1998), which showed that facilities and necessary resources provided on campus would build an environment that is conducive for students' learning. In addition, the findings of the current study seem to be parallel to a research by Aldridge and Rowley (1998) which found that good library services could also increase international students' perception and satisfaction level towards other facilities.

Similarly, the results also demonstrated that the international students in UTM are equally satisfied with the facilities provided in the faculty (m=3.42). There are several reasons behind this satisfactory perception. It could be due to the acceptable service given by the support staff in the faculty. In fact, most of them have managed to provide services which meet the international students' needs and expectations. At the same time, facilities in the faculty such as rooms or work space made available at their disposal, office facilities such as internet, photocopying or fax machine provided for international students, specifically the postgraduates, may contribute significantly to these satisfactory results. This finding supports the findings of a previous study by Ghobadian et al. (1994) that showed the existence of a relationship between service qualities offered and customer satisfaction. In other words, poor service given by an institution would reduce customer satisfaction levels.

The important links between international students and UTM may go a long way. With regard to quality improvement as it may be worthwhile to introduce certain standards to various aspects of service facilities in the institution based on the results of this study. Athiyaman (1997) suggested that every service should be managed correctly to improve their quality and customer satisfaction. One implication that emerged from this study involves the need for UTM to enhance its transportation system. This study concludes that the most profound issue for international students on campus is the transportation system with results that indicated the lowest mean (m=3.24) as compared to other types of facilities. Even though it yielded a moderate result, the punctuality of the buses on campus has always been an issue. UTM has a fully residential policy which applies to all undergraduate students which means all undergraduates must stay in the accommodation provided on campus during their study. Some newly registered international postgraduates will also choose to stay in the residential colleges within the campus since this will reduce their daily movement and activities. Nonetheless, the distance between the residential colleges and faculties require students to depend on the campus buses as a means of transportation. However, delays in the arrival and departure of the buses affect international students' as most of them are totally dependent on these buses to travel to lectures and other on campus activities. This has brought undesirable perception as delays have a tremendous effect on their movement and activities in the campus area. Therefore, it is suggested that the number of buses be increased especially during peak hours when students are all rushing to their classes. A well-organized operating time schedule should be implemented to avoid inconvenience to all. It is also proposed that information pertaining to the bus schedule be posted outside each accommodation or residential college so that students can prepare for and be aware of the schedule before waiting for the arrival and departure of each bus.

The present study shows that the international students are moderately satisfied with the support facilities such as cafeteria and sport facilities around the campus. Under these circumstances, it is important that UTM takes the initiative to give better support facilities or improve these facilities. For example, there are several factors that may affect the international students' satisfaction towards cafeterias. Because students are not allowed to cook in their room as no proper cooking facilities is provided for them, these students become very much depended on the cafeteria for food. Even though there are several cafeterias which serve international cuisine, the variety of food may not meet their needs and expectations. In addition, the cleanliness level of these cafeterias may be a factor which discourages international students from dining on campus. This finding supports previous findings by Ghobadian et al. (1994) who found a relationship between quality of services offered and customer satisfaction. They predict that an education institution will become less competitive compared to others when its reputation is affected by the low evaluation of student satisfaction towards service facilities. This is especially true of cafeteria or any place of dining which provides food which is an individual's basic need.   Hence, the need to maintain this facility well is becomes

increasingly imperative. For instance, cafeteria's condition including the environment, food delivery service, noise level, design and food quality might influence and provide an indicator of the students' satisfaction level. The result of this study is similar to the findings of the study conducted by Andaleeb and Conway (2006) that discovered that customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry is related to the service quality which includes the price and food quality in enhancing consumer satisfaction. In relation to this, it is therefore recommended that the university have a guideline to ensure food hygiene and cleanliness in all cafeterias operating on campus. Regular but random inspections of the cafeterias on campus should be carried out to ensure that the level of hygiene and cleanliness is always observed. This will ensure that students feel comfortable avoid any hygiene issues. Such measures are important in order to provide and maintain good service to international students. This will indirectly help build a positive image of the institution.

It is also crucial that the sport facilities in UTM be constantly maintained as the significance of sport activities cannot be underestimated in any higher learning institution. It is essential that besides its health benefits, sport activities ultimately establish networking and foster integration between students. Therefore, UTM should strive to provide international students with world class sport facilities in order to meet the customer satisfaction as a sports centre is where students can exercise and enjoy recreational activities, which is a great way to deal with stress and academic problems. UTM must be consistent in reaching out to its international students through these activities. It is highly recommended that a range of competitions be organized to achieve this goal such as sports games held between students and academic or support staff. It is believed that sports facilities that introduce local games may encourage international students to develop necessary skills and general knowledge in order to promote and highlight the institutions local routines and customs. This opportunity would provide knowledge sharing ideas among international students rather than focusing and concentrating only on academic matters.

6. Conclusions

This study is conducted to determine the perception of the international students towards the service facilities provided by UTM. The results of this study indicate that the vast majority of the international students are generally satisfied with the service facilities offered to them. While the findings of this study are not necessarily definitive due to its focus on a single location, it is nevertheless hoped that UTM authorities will take notice of the results and strive to meet the international students' needs. This is extremely beneficial as all higher learning institutions not only in Malaysia but other part of the world are now competing for student admission.   In order to preserve and attract new enrolment, UTM should aim to enhance its facilities to make it more advanced and attractive. Lastly, further investigation in this area is clearly crucial especially in comparing international students' perspective in other institutions to further investigate the relationship and continuity of this study as suggested by Kontic (2012).

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