

**MEASURING STUDENT SATISFACTION
AT
OPEN UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA (OUM)**

BY

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Abstract:

Measurement of student satisfaction is a core element of any comprehensive institutional assessment plan. Satisfaction assessment enables institutions to strategically and tactically target areas most in need of immediate improvement. Measuring student satisfaction is very helpful in meeting the needs of the students and also for the benefit of the university. Currently, most student satisfaction surveys are conducted in the form of exit or alumni surveys that are normally for their internal consumptions. This study seeks to examine students' expectation of and satisfaction with academic experiences provided by Open University Malaysia (OUM). Trends in student expectation and satisfaction levels at OUM were identified using the questionnaires adopted from Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). Factor and gap analysis have been used to analyze the data on student satisfaction and their importance towards the various aspects of student experience. Mean and standard deviation were calculated to determine both students' ranks of importance and satisfaction with the academic experiential categories.

Based on this study, the availability of channels for expressing student complaints, the communication facilities of e-learning and the delivery method of e-learning were perceived as most important to OUM students. While, the opportunity to develop student's communication skills, e-learning skills and the reasonable assessment and course placement procedures were perceived as most satisfying. However, the effective use of computer-based presentation materials in lecture, and the availability of channels for expressing students' complaints were perceived as least satisfying to the students. The availability of channels for expressing students' complaints showed the greatest gap scores, indicating that the students were least satisfied with this aspect of their experience at OUM. Results of the Factor Analysis found that course organization and e-learning were the most important factors to the students while learning outcome was ranked as the most satisfying to the students.

Based on the findings, the study develops a matrix to prioritize actions that the university should consider undertaking to improve the satisfaction level of the students. The matrix comprises four distinct areas of classification; namely, important, less important, satisfied and less satisfied. The availability of channels for expressing student complaints resulted in a High Importance/Low Satisfaction rating which indicates the area that should be given immediate attention by the university. It is recommended that further expectation and satisfaction level research be conducted and could take up items such as the analysis of potential behaviors that students may show in favor of an institution of higher education, the increase of the university's reputation through personal communication, loyalty, etc. It could also be interesting to analyze these aspects in accordance with the characteristics of the students, such as age, employment situation, objectives sought and others.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the background, problem statement and objectives of the study. Generally, it will also cover the definition of terms used in this study, significance and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

OUM is the seventh private university in Malaysia. Although incorporated as a private university under the Private Higher Education Institutions Act 1996, the University leverages on the quality, prestige and capabilities of its strategic partners - a consortium of the 11 public universities. OUM adopts the motto "University for All" which is consistent with its philosophy on democratization of education. This philosophy underlies the belief that education should be made available to all, regardless of time, place, age and social economic background.

The open and distance learning (ODL) mode is specifically targeted to working adults who need to take care of their families as well as manage their careers while pursuing higher education. OUM has positioned itself as an alternative avenue for the public to gain quality tertiary and lifelong education.