

The Impact of Lecturers' Competencies on Students' Satisfaction

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Abstract

The students' satisfaction level is an important indication to determine how successful of the education institution to provide services to the market. This research article investigated the impact of lecturers' competencies on students' satisfaction at one of the private tertiary institution in Malaysia. A quantitative research method was used to collect the data from the tertiary students. Data collected from the different academic programmes were analysed by using Pearson Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis. The author have identified ten lecturers' competencies to be tested with the students' satisfaction. The results revealed that there is a positive correlation between these two variables.

Key words: competencies, student satisfaction, quantitative, regression analysis, education

Introduction

In Malaysia, there are 20 public higher institutions, 402 private colleges, 111 private universities or university colleges, 34 polytechnics and 94 community colleges (Tapsir, 2016). Colleges, community colleges, university colleges and universities are competing with each other in producing talented students to the labor market. Higher education institutions used to promote experience and knowledgeable lecturers in order to increase the student recruitment. In the 21st Century, lecturers have become facilitators to create an effective learning environment for the students. In addition, lecturers should well handle those electronic devices to interact with the students. The tasks given to lecturers are more competitive which requires a certain level of competencies to complete it. This was due to the changes of education system in Malaysia. Ministry of Higher Education has implemented Outcome based Education (OBE) at all levels of education to prepare graduates before entering into their work life. Hence, lecturers must possess certain competencies to produce the desired outcome of this new educational system (Mohayidin et al, 2008).

Teaching and learning highly depend on both lecturers and students. Students' satisfaction has seldom been taken into consideration as an important factor to determine the success of an organization. Secondary students will seek advice from their peers before selecting their favorable tertiary institutions. Hence, students' satisfaction at higher education institutions is vital, especially for private institutions in this competitive environment. To increase students' satisfaction, one of the important criteria is the lecturers. The teaching quality and the effectiveness of lecturers in interaction with the students will contribute to the students' satisfaction. Satisfied students tend to achieve good academic performance as the result of the quality lecturers. Therefore, a high performing lecturer will produce a high quality student when they deliver an effective teaching (Dey et al. 2015).

This study focuses on lecturers' competencies and the influence of each variable to the students' satisfaction. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that contribute to the students' satisfaction. This paper will benefit to the higher institutions as it provides a guideline on which variable will give the highest contribution to the students' satisfaction level in the tertiary education. Thus, from the findings, the colleges or universities are able to serve the students more effectively in the future.

Literature Review

Definition of Lecturers' Competencies

According to Staron (2008), competencies are the skills required in the job that can be measured. Lecturers' competencies are powerful when they are used as it will affect the students' performance. McClelland (1973) argued that the traditional test is not enough to predict the job performance, but the best indicators were competencies. According to McClelland, competencies are one's knowledge and skills which are visible on the iceberg while other personal characteristics such as self-concepts, traits and motives are hidden below the waterline. The competencies model shows that the competent lecturers need to have knowledge of the subject content and skills to perform the task given. Both determinants can be trained. Self concepts and values is the self confidence of one can be successful to teach, guide and motivate students. Traits are the physical characteristics such as the voice of lecturers are able to manage the classroom condition. The motives of the lecturers need are important as they have a responsibility to develop quality graduates.

The competencies model by McClelland further developed by Spencer and Spencer (1993). The knowledge and skills are the surface personality that is most easily to be developed, whereas the traits and motives is the core personality which is the most difficult to be developed. Hence, lecturers' competencies are not only to earn an advanced Masters' Degree in the discipline, but also possess strong ability, values, attitudes and motive. Thus, with these competencies, lecturers will be more likely to produce successful students.

Tao and He (2009) studied the recruitment of new lecturers and the growth of in-service lecturers as the key determines the quality education which will influence the development of the university. In the findings, the authors suggested that the personal quality such as logical thinking, professional dress and languages are internal characteristics. Besides, educative competency, research and development competency and collaborative competency are external characteristics that are required by the lecturers.

According to Wan Kamaruddin and Ibrahim (2010), the competencies required by technical lecturers in Malaysian Polytechnic. Lecturers are not only to improve their professional knowledge and skills, instructional planning, execution and evaluation, but also to improve English language proficiency regard to listening, speaking and writing. Lucky and Mohd Yusoff (2013) suggested that lecturers' qualifications, characteristics and competence will affect lecturers' performance. Lecturers who perform these three activities are more excellent than lecturers without these.

Bargava and Pathy (2011) suggested that the role of a teacher can serves as a guide to boost the confidence level of the students and cultivate independent study among students. Besides, teaching experiences and decision making capability are preferred competency of teachers. The authors also suggested that teachers with technology savvy are able to bring benefits to the learners

Many researchers argued whether students are the legitimate to judge the lecturers' competencies in delivering their lesson. Theall (2009) discussed students are qualified to evaluate the quality of lectures, the value of the teaching materials and the lecturers' explanations. Students are able to express their opinions and suggestions to the lecturers for improvement in the future development. The research by Robert *et al.* (2014) stated to measure the activities in the real time deliver by the lecturers, it can be observed by the lecturer colleagues, senior management, external moderator and students. Therefore, students are important sources to provide feedback and comments on the lecturers' competencies.

Definition of Students' Satisfaction

Kotler *et al.* (2009) defined satisfaction is an individual's feeling as the result of the differences between the perceived performance and the expectation. In the higher education, especially as the private organization, the measurement of students' satisfaction is an indicator that determines the outcome of the learning process in meeting with the students' expectations. Tough (1982) defined students' satisfaction as the perceptions or attitude on their learning activities. Students will be satisfied when they are happy or use aggressive learning attitude, but students will be dissatisfied when they are unhappy or use passive learning attitude.

In addition, student satisfaction refers to the positive feeling that is associated with the institution they are attending (Hatcher *et al.* 1992). The primary factors to improve the quality of the educational program is to examine the students' satisfaction. This is because the students' evaluation will determine the type of academic program and professional needs for them. Hence, the gathering and disseminating the information on students' satisfaction will make appropriate adjustments to the courses offered in the universities and the lecturers' competencies.

The objective of the education is not only to provide knowledge, but also to enhance the total development of the students. In order to achieve the objective, higher education institutions need to continuously collect information on the students' satisfaction (Betz *et al.* 1971). Students' satisfaction is an important feedback in assisting universities in the areas to be improved in the learning environment. In higher education, students are the main customers and it will influence the success of the institution. However, according to Astin (1977) that "it is difficult to argue student satisfaction can be legitimately subordinated to any educational outcome".

Students' satisfaction always linked with the student retention rate in the institution. Study from Chen, Hsiao and Lee (2007) revealed that there is a positive relationship between students' satisfaction and student loyalty. Besides, Astin (1977) mentioned in his studies that the retention rates are closely related to the connection of students to the university. Hence, for student to connect to the institution, students must feel a sense of enjoyment and happiness with the universities. Therefore, students' satisfaction explain the motivating of students whether to remain in the universities, to apply for further studies or excel in their academic.

Relationship between Lecturers' Competencies and Students' Satisfaction

Suarman (2015) studies the intermediary role of lecturers-students' relationship towards students' satisfaction. Data have seen collected from the 450 students of the Riau University to examine the four elements in determining students' satisfaction. These four elements are motivation, courses, planning and lecturer competency. In addition, the relationship between lecturers and students also contributed to the students' satisfaction. Lecturers need to be competent, friendly, helpful and efficient in performing their duties as motivators, guiders, facilitators and educators. The researcher suggested that students perceived their lecturer quality based on the amount of knowledge, learning experience and satisfaction regardless of gender issue. Students' perception on the teaching quality will influence their satisfaction.

A study did by Teerawut (2011) on the impact of teacher competencies on the student satisfaction. The elements used for investigation were knowledge, skill, curriculum, and tuition fee. Data was collected from 400 bachelor students from four different universities in Bangkok, Thailand. The results showed that knowledge and curriculum have direct influence on the students' satisfaction. The knowledge and curriculum had no direct impact on word of mouth. However, when the teacher knowledge and curriculum increases, it will increase the students' satisfaction; thus, the word of mouth will also be increased.

Greenland (2005) investigates the factors determine the students' satisfaction. The respondents were business students taking four marketing modules in which the modules taught by different instructors. 13 dimensions of classroom teaching have been identified to indicate the students' satisfaction. All the dimensions had some significant impact on the overall students' satisfaction. The dimensions include lecturer's knowledge, responsive lecturer, audio visual aids, presentation standard, learning resources, course text, class participations, student workload, learning outcome, teaching facilities, enjoyable, clarity, effective assignment and module satisfaction.

According to Ali and Ahmad (2011), instructors' performance, course evaluation, and student-instructor interaction had significant impact on students' satisfaction. The study collected data from students of Allama Iqbal Open University of Pakistan. The findings suggested that the interaction between students and instructor is the strongest variable contributes to the students' satisfaction. Students were asked on course discussion, lecturers' feedback and interaction, the ability of lecturer to treat each student individually and inform their periodical progress. 68 percent of the respondents support lecturers to encourage them involve in course discussions. Students liked to involve in discussion and receive feedback from their instructors. Volery *et al* (2000) suggested that

to increase students' interactions in the class, the lecturers may give the participation mark in order to encourage students' involvement. In addition, the study found that the support of lecturers such as effective feedback, communication and timely assistance are important elements to increase students' satisfaction.

Besides, students preferred for innovative course delivery such as real life examples, facts and cases together with useful course materials. The students would like to have interaction with the course content, discussion, group, interpersonal skills and the need for support from the lecturers. These elements will bring positive impact on students' satisfaction and thus, impact on students' retention in the program (Northrup, 2002). The research further argued by Yang and Cornelius (2004) that the poorly designed courses, instructors did not participate in the discussions or not respond to the questions will lead students to become frustrated. There is a probability that frustration will lead to poor performing students (Zeng and Perris, 2004).

Lecturers' absenteeism will demotivate the students in their learning process. The commitment of students will decrease when their teacher absenteeism was very frequent (Stoica and Wamsiedel, 2012). According to Sezgin *et al* (2014), when teacher absenteeism has been too often, students will start to miss the lecture by taking their teachers as the role model. The research of Ehrenberg *et al* (1989) proved that there was a positive relationship between teacher absenteeism and student absenteeism. Teacher absenteeism will create a negative learning environment in the school and affect the interaction with the students.

Conceptual Framework

Previous studies examined one or few elements of lecturers' competencies. In order to investigate the relationship between lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction, the authors decided to study the impact of ten variables of lecturers' competencies on students' satisfaction. Figure 2.1 shows the conceptual framework of this study.

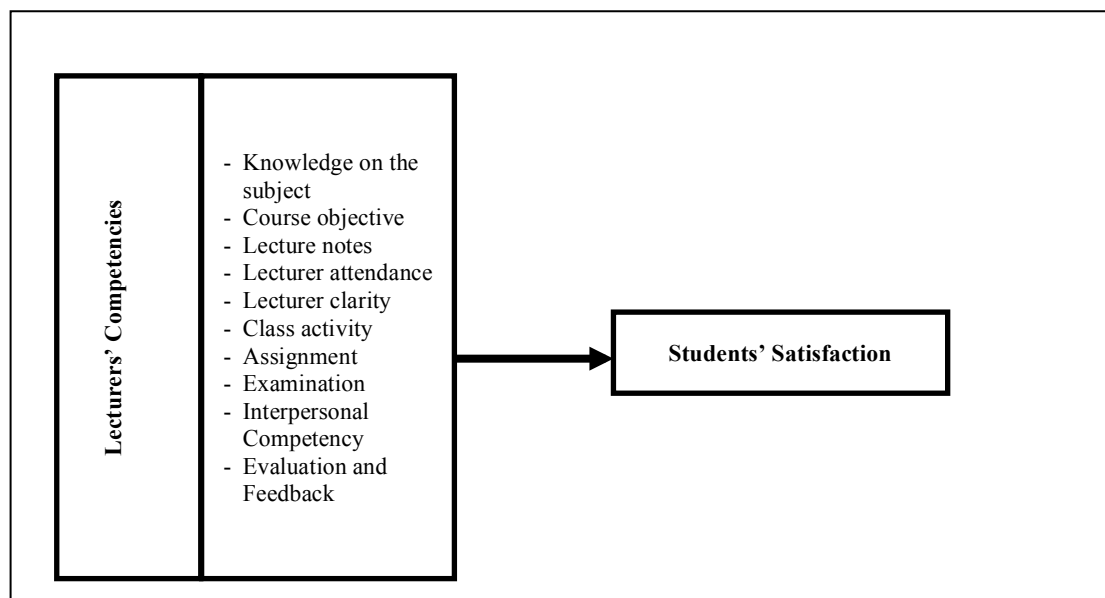


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Research Design

In this research paper, authors are using quantitative research method to explain the relationship between lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction. The purpose of using quantitative research is to quantify the data collected in order to generalize the results from the sample to the population. This paper is a descriptive research to describe the characteristics of lecturers' competencies, and explore correlations between lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction.

In this designed questionnaire, there are three sections. Section A consists of demographic information of respondents such as gender, age, programmes, field of study and others. Section B consists of thirty statements that related to the lecturers' competencies. Section C consists of ten statements related to the students' satisfaction. Respondents are required to state their level of agreement to each statement in the Section B and C. 5-points Likert Scale are used in these two sections (refer Appendix A). To analyse the data, this study uses Pearson Correlation Analysis and Regression Analysis. Pearson Correlation Analysis is the technique to examine the relationship between variables. It is also known as correlation coefficient. Besides, this study also uses Multiple Regression Analysis to predict and forecast the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. Both techniques are to indicate how and to what extent variables are associated with each other.

Research Sample and Data Collection

The authors conducted a cross-sectional survey to a group of students from the age of 17 years old to 22 years old at one of the private higher institutional in Johor. For the purpose of confidentiality, the college was named as XYZ College. As the quantitative research method required a large sample size, the authors collected 327 data from the total population of 2226. Out of 327 data, 80 data collected from Degree programmes, 214 data collected from Diploma programmes, 10 data collected from Certificate programmes, 23 data collected from Foundation programmes.

In this research study, authors collected data from primary sources and secondary sources. For primary sources, authors conducted a field research to collect the data through self-completion method. Respondents are given sufficient time to complete personal particulars and forty statements. By using this method, respondents are able to complete in an ease condition and most likely will reveal their truth answer to us. Authors also use secondary sources such as journal, magazines and books that has been studied by other researchers. This secondary sources are important to provide comparative data and build up credibility to this research paper.

Results of the Study

Research Hypothesis 1

Pearson Correlation analysis is used to identify the relationship between lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction. All the independent variables are combined and to test the possible relationship with the student satisfaction. Table 4.1 shows the result of Pearson Correlation between these lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction. The result indicates that all the independent variables are positively correlated with the students' satisfaction. Hence, students' satisfactions in their learning process are influenced by their lecturers' competencies.

In the table 4.1, it shows that the factor with highest correlation is interpersonal skill of lecturers ($r=.672$, $p<0.01$) that has significant influence on students' satisfaction. Lecturer- student relationship assists to avert student negative feelings toward the learning campus and hence student will retain in the university college. This is very important as most of the time students are interact with the lecturer in their learning environment. This result is in line with Goldman (2005) that a good relationship is a good credence of study that fills in mutual needs. The findings of Chepchieng *et al.*, (2006) indicate the interactions with lecturers have significant impact on students' values, attitudes, and action. Thus, the relationship between lecturer and student should be enhanced in the learning environment. Students prefer to interact with lecturers who are available for consultation, approachable, friendly and understand students' needs.

Assignment is also one of the variables that achieved high correlation ($r=.670$, $p<0.01$) with student satisfaction. Lecturers prepare the assignment that is relevant to the course content. Lecturers expect student to be independent in their learning and gain more knowledge outside the classroom. According to Scarboro (2004), assignment provided to train students' critical thinking skills which include problem solving, integrate of materials and ways to apply the knowledge. Thus, students' satisfactions are reflected in the students' participation on the assignment. Lecture note has positive influence ($r=.645$, $p<0.01$) on students' satisfaction. Lecture note is able to guide students throughout the learning process. Students satisfaction in learning highly depends on the teaching strategies such as prepare notes early and update information clearly in the learning management system (Syed Hassan *et al.* 2013). The next variable is course objective which has positive correlation ($r=.644$, $p<0.1$) with students' satisfaction. A clear course objective is important to be delivered at the beginning of the semester. Students will be motivated to learn when the content is applicable to them after the ends of the class and able to cultivate their interests on the subject. Ricar (2010) stated students perceived course objectives as highly important in their satisfaction.

Lecturers' feedback also has positive correlation ($r=.616$, $p<0.01$) to the students' satisfaction. The result is similar with the finding of Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Shute (2008) that timely feedback is essential to increase student satisfaction. Lecturers' feedback is helpful feedback to students on how they perform in the course and ways to enhance their knowledge or skills in the learning environment. Besides, class activity is also another factor that has positive impact ($r=.635$, $p<0.01$) on the student satisfaction. Lecturers need to encourage students to join class activity such as problem solving case studies, group discussion, role play and others to stimulate students' interest in the learning. The research by Ronchetti (2010) indicated the time in the classroom should spend in discussion, clarification, exercises and other class activities to assist students in applying the knowledge.

Examination has positive correlation ($r=.610$, $p<0.01$) to the students' satisfaction. Students are satisfied when lecturers have the ability to prepare the examination in order to test students' understanding according to the subjects. Lecturers' attendance is perceived as positive correlation ($r=.536$, $p<0.01$) to students' satisfaction. Students are satisfied when lecturer less frequent changing the class schedule. This is because the frequent change of the class schedule will affect student learning environment.

In addition, lecturers' clarity of presentation has positive correlation ($r=.457$, $p<0.01$) to students' satisfaction. Students are satisfied when the voice of lecturers is clear and able to capture their attention in the class. According to Jarahi and Najafi (2013), students expressed greater clarity is needed in the lecture in order to make the learning process easier. Lecturers' knowledge on the subject has positive correlation ($r=.330$, $p<0.01$) to the students' satisfaction, but it has the lowest correlation among other variables. Students are satisfied when lecturers have the teaching qualification and able to master the knowledge on the taught subject. Besides, students prefer when the lecturer are able to share with them the personal experience that is related to the subjects.

Table 4.1: Relationship between Lecturers' Competencies and Students' Satisfaction

No	Independent Variable	Pearson Correlation
1	Knowledge	.330**
2	Course Objective	.644**
3	Lecture Note	.645**
4	Attendance	.536**
5	Clarity of Presentation	.457**
6	Class Activity	.635**
7	Assignment	.670**
8	Examination	.610**
9	Interpersonal Skills	.672**
10	Feedback	.616**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is to predict the outcome of dependent variable based on the independent variables. Table 4.2 shows the model summary of relationship between lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction. It shows that the R-squared value is 0.630 or 63%. This value means that 63% of the variation in students' satisfaction is accounted by lecturers' competencies. Therefore, the higher lecturers' competencies will lead to higher students' satisfaction and the lower lecturers' competencies will lead to lower students' satisfaction.

The F-Test outcome is 53.721 and thus, it is highly significant when the $p < 0.001$. The model does fit to the data. There is a clear evidence of linear relationship between lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction.

Table 4.2: Model Summary of Relationship between Lecturers' Competencies and Students' Satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.793 ^a	.630	.618	.37522	53.721	.000a
a. Predictors: (Constant), Lecturers' Competencies						
b. Dependent Variables: Students' Satisfaction						

The following Table 4.3 shows the impact of lecturers' competencies on students' satisfaction. Beta coefficient is used to determine the direction of the relationship between independent variables and variables. From the data, the beta coefficient is positive for all the independent variables. It shows that there is a direct relationship between lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction. The highest beta coefficient is interpersonal skill which is 0.199 and the lowest beta coefficient is examination. Hence, interpersonal skills give the high impact on students' satisfaction whereas examination gives the lowest impact on the students' satisfaction.

Table 4.3 also shows that the significance level of each independent variable. There are four variables that have significant value less than 0.05. These variables are course objective, lecture note, assignment and interpersonal skills. These four factors have the strong relationship with students' satisfaction. From the table 4.3, the regression equation is created as per below: -

$$Y = 0.345 + 0.016K + 0.104CO + 0.156LN + 0.069AT + 0.047CP + 0.090CA + 0.161AS + 0.012EM + 0.177IS + 0.069FB$$

in which:

Y= Students' Satisfaction (Dependent Variable)
K= Knowledge
CO= Course Objective
LN= Lecture Note
AT= Attendance
CP= Clarity of Presentation
CA= Class Activities
AS= Assignment
EM= Examination
IS= Interpersonal Skills
FB= Feedback

Table 4.3: The Impact of the Lecturers' Competencies on Students' Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.345	.150		2.303	.022
Knowledge	.016	.018	.033	.893	.372
Course Objective	.104	.052	.109	1.999	.046
Lecture Note	.156	.045	.178	3.456	.001
Attendance	.069	.042	.074	1.638	.102
Clarity of Presentation	.047	.025	.075	1.854	.065
Class Activity	.090	.050	.098	1.778	.076
Assignment	.161	.055	.166	2.931	.004
Examination	.012	.048	.014	.255	.799
Interpersonal Skills	.177	.049	.199	3.630	.000
Feedback	.069	.051	.072	1.348	.178

a. Independent Variable: Lecturers' Competencies

b. Dependent Variable: Students' Satisfaction

Conclusion & Recommendations

From the findings, we can conclude that all the ten characteristics of lecturers' competencies were positive correlation with students' satisfaction. The relationship is at the moderate degree relationship. The study shows that students are satisfied when lecturers are able to build a good relationship with students, provide assignment that related to their course, quality lecture note, emphasis on course objective, organizes on different types of class activities, ensure the fairness in marking examination, give useful feedback, punctuality, deliver lecture in clear and knowledgeable. Multiple regression analysis shows that there are only four variables are significant to students' satisfaction. These variables include course objective, lecture note, assignment and interpersonal skills.

Students' feedback on their satisfaction is important for the college input in quality improvement. The student satisfaction survey will indicate the level of satisfaction of the subjects, lectures, and learning environment. This satisfaction survey should not be a regular procedure and leave it without any further improvement. In the business context, students are the customer of the college. Thus, customer satisfaction is vital as it will turn satisfy customer to the loyal customers and increase their retention rate. For example, if the foundation students were satisfying with the lecturers' competencies, they were most likely to pursue Degree programmes and Master programmes at the same higher institution.

Besides, authors would like to recommend that in future, researchers may use qualitative research to study the relationship between lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction. By using this approach, researchers are likely to collect detailed data and able to understand the underlying reasons and motivations. Lecturers' competencies are not the only reason that influences students' satisfaction. The administrative staff who provides services to the students does matter. According to Berry (1995), in order to enhance value, service is one of the most important factors that will determine the success of a company. So, researchers can study the relationship between administrative staff and students' satisfaction. This research paper only study the data collected from one private higher institution. Future studies may consider to collect data from few higher institutions either public sector or private sector. This will provide an opportunity to study the relationship of lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction for each institution and at the same time, researchers are able to make data comparisons among the higher institutions.

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APPENDIX A
LECTURERS' COMPETENCIES AND STUDENTS' SATISFACTION
SURVEY QUESTIONS

LECTURER COMPETENCIES

NO	QUESTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Lecturers with academic qualifications have ability mastery the knowledge on the subject contents.					
2	Lecturers have the ability to provide student with the relevant information to explain the points of the subjects.					
3	Lecturers share their personal experience with you.					
4	Lecturers provide the clear objectives and syllabus of the course.					
5	Lecturers cover all the topics in the syllabus.					
6	Lecturers emphasised on the course objective and it is valuable for me.					
7	Lecturers provide quality lecture notes on the subject taught.					
8	Lecture notes provided are useful to learn and sit for examination.					
9	Lecturers prepare the course materials that are relevant to the subjects.					
10	Lecturers come and leave the class on time.					
11	Lecturers seldom change the class schedule due to some circumstances.					
12	Lecturers are punctual for class with no lateness or early dismissal.					
13	Lecturers use their voice effectively and able to capture your attention.					
14	Lecturers' pronunciation is clear and easy to understand.					
15	The presentation skills of my lecturers are excellent and enhance my understanding level.					
16	Lecturers encourage students to involve in question and answers					

	discussion.					
17	Lecturers provide problem based case studies to foster student involvements and participation.					
18	Lecturers provide variety of class activity in order to cultivate my interest.					
19	Lecturers give detailed explanation on the course assignments.					
20	Lecturers provide assignment that is relevant to the subject content.					
21	Lecturers set standards and due dates for assignments that are clear, fair and reasonable.					
22	Lecturers award marks in the test or examination fairly to the students.					
23	Lecturers have the ability to provide examination question to test students' academic performance.					
24	Lecturers prepare examination questions that cover the important aspects of the course.					
25	Lecturers treat each student without discrimination.					
26	Lecturers are friendly and student able to build up trust relationship with the lecturer.					
27	Lecturers will spend extra time with students to explain any difficult points.					
28	Lecturers provide useful feedback to the students.					
29	Lecturers give attention to each student and suggest something for improvement in character building and acquiring for good manners.					
30	Lecturers provide timely feedback about student progress of the course.					

STUDENT SATISFACTION

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
NO	QUESTIONS	5	4	3	2	1
1	I am satisfied with the quality of the lecturers as they are knowledgeable about the requirements of the course					
2	I am satisfied because the course content are related to my interest.					
3	I am satisfied as my lecturers provide quality teaching materials.					
4	I am satisfied because my lecturers are punctual to the class.					
5	I am satisfied as my lecturers have a clear voice in deliver the lecture.					
6	I am satisfied because the task we do in class is a good preparation for my test.					
7	I am satisfied because the assignment given by the lecturers help me learn the course material					
8	I am satisfied as my lecturers are fair and unbiased in marking examination.					
9	I am satisfied with my lecturers who are friendly, approachable and supportive to me.					
10	I am satisfied as my lecturers provide feedback to me as and when needed.					