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**FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL**  
**STUDENTS OF MALAYSIAN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES ON**  
**SATISFACTION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: A BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective of the research is to identify and explore factors that influence satisfaction of international students' satisfaction in Malaysia. The study also investigates the relationship between English language usage in Malaysian universities and international students' satisfaction with the Malaysian education institutions; teaching instruction methods effectiveness in Malaysian universities on international student satisfaction; examination and assessment integrity in Malaysian higher education institutions and international student satisfaction with the institutions. The study overall finds that students have rudimentary ideas of learning experience. The questionnaire as a research instrument is conducted through 56 respondents for this research. In this case the non-parametric version of correlation (Spearman's correlation) and the factor analysis are used in the research by using SPSS 22 version software as a research tool.

**Keywords:** *International students, Education, Satisfaction, Malaysia.*

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

**Research Background**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has ranked Malaysia 11<sup>th</sup> with the highest international student's population across the globe (Taleboo and Baki, 2013; Yee and Mokhtar, 2013). This position is expected to change less than 11, given the Malaysian education objective to a major hub of education in the world by 2020 targeting 200,000 international students (Yee and Mokhtar, 2013). This huge number is also expected to mount significant pressure on the stakeholder of Malaysian education sector, especially to provide facilities that meet international standards. Meeting such expectation of the foreign students and their funders, brings about the concept of satisfaction (Kotler and Keller, 2008). Failure to meet the expectations results in dissatisfaction; otherwise the international students will be satisfied.

Currently, many international students already experience challenges in areas of language, differences in academic levels, campus environment differences, curriculum, developing relationships in diverse societies and several other aspects of life (Yee and Mokhtar, 2013). Many of the students' expectation in some of these areas are not met by players of education sector in Malaysia. This makes a number of the foreign students to perceive dissatisfaction with their studies in Malaysia (Azizah, Hamidah, and Shaar, 2011). Thus to improve the education system in Malaysia learning experience can be seen as an important contributor to international student satisfaction based on Yee and Mokhtar's (2013) conference proceeding. This study intends to replicate their work by taking their findings and generalizing the theory of SERVQUAL dimensions, by modifying this theory to make a conceptual model that will improve the satisfaction of international students here in Malaysia. This will improve the state of higher education sector of Malaysia.

**II. OBJECTIVES**

**General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to identify and explore factors that influence satisfaction of international students' satisfaction in Malaysia. This would also contribute in achieving the 2020 target of 200,000 foreign students' population in Malaysia by Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE).

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To investigate the relationship between English language usage in Malaysian universities and international students' satisfaction with the Malaysian education institutions.
2. To investigate the relationship between teaching instruction methods effectiveness in Malaysian universities on international student satisfaction.
3. To examine the effectiveness of curriculum of Malaysian higher education institutions on the satisfaction of foreign students in the mentioned institutions.
4. To establish the link between the efficacy of lecturer engagement with international students and the satisfaction of international students with Malaysian universities.
5. To examine the extent of engagement with other students by international students and the effects of this engagement on international student satisfaction with Malaysian universities.
6. To determine the relationship between examination and assessment integrity in Malaysian higher education institutions and international student satisfaction with the institutions.

### **III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study may make contribution to MoHE in achieving its education goals of 2020 especially realizing better position in ranking of foreign students' population in foreign country. It may also add on existing body of knowledge on factors that enhance foreign students' satisfaction. Lastly, economically, success in satisfying foreign students' needs attracts foreign students who may contribute to the development of Malaysian economy. The instrument in the Appendix can be used to predict the satisfaction levels of international students learning experience and diagnose which learning experience dimensions are causing the problems. Thus this instrument can be used to gauge the perceptions of international students with their universities to establish a control system for service quality control. Thus in this sense it generalizes and affirms the SERQUAL theory to the context of Malaysian higher education services to international students.

### **IV. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Globalization and market pressure in the education sector have propelled higher education institutions to constantly review on the need of economic accountability and performance improvement. Many universities aim to increase the number of students admitted as a means of increasing their income while the admitted students are considered as "customers." They will face bleak enrollment growth and financial straits if they cannot meet student (as customer) satisfaction (Schwartzman, 1995). Thus, it is now a question that are students getting their satisfaction from their learning experience while universities are being so commercialized. Malaysia has seen students are coming in different universities from outside while it's a concern that do they meet their expectations from their learning experience while they are studying. The nature and extent of difference between public and private university has long been a topic for academic debate. The debates on the role and potential benefits of privately provided higher education range from the broadly social to the narrowly financial and reflect the wider debate on the role of the public and private sectors in modern economy. The most frequent advanced economic arguments in favor of greater private provision are that it improves efficiency, giving greater accountability and increased diversity of choice and access from the increased resources flowing into education (Patrinos 1990; World Bank 1994, 1995; Sanyal 1998). Students mostly benefited public universities by financially whereas private universities costs are relatively higher. Service quality has become a requirement for all successful firms and organizations to remain competitive (Gronroos, 1988). Many researchers have emphasized the importance of quality improvement initiatives which have resulted in sustainable competitive advantage (Hadikoemoro, 2002; Rapert and Wren, 1998; Stock and Lambert, 1992).

#### **Language Usage in Malaysian Universities**

The medium of instruction is the language used by instructors to teach students. In recent decades, English came to be regarded as the world language. This international language linguistically dominated the world in many important areas. Education is not an exception, most importantly in higher Education. The adoption of this language throughout the world as a medium of instruction has long been a hot topic for leaders and Government bureaucrats in post-colonial nations (not only) in Asia, an issue that also creates a controversy about cultural colonialism and social inequality.

Malaysia is considered to be one of British ex-colonial countries, during the British colonial period. Malaysia was adopting English as an official language for 10 long years and as a medium of Instruction. UM (University Malaya) was one of the University established during British colonial in Malaysia. UM was using English as a medium of instruction in the studies of technology and science.

After independence in 1957, the Government of Malaysia developed on a programme to institute Bahasa Melayu as the official language, to be used in the entire Government bodies and as medium of education at all levels. For 40 years, the Government has maintained a major programme for the culture of the language and modernization.

The concept of globalization highly impacts the use of language and thus impacts economic aspects of higher education here in Malaysia. The concept of globalization through the use of English as a medium of instruction has been a controversial issue since there are positive and negative social impacts embracing economics, culture, identity, politics and technology (Coleman, 2006).

The growth of English is attached to globalization. Globalization reveals itself in the increasing use of English as a second language across world, and the corresponding decline in the significance of other languages (Coleman, 2006).

The outcomes of globalization comprise the incorporation of research, the use of English as “the lingua franca” of science communication, the increasing international culture of labor market for researchers and scientists, the growth of communications and multinational companies and the publication of the technology, and the usage of the (IT) information technology. This facilitates communication; allows efficiency in a selection and spreading of common knowledge; and enables providers (Universities) to offer academic programs through e-learning (Altbach and Knight, 2007).

The international academic mobility promotes the education of even well-developed systems and institutions, worsening existing inequalities. Initiatives and programs, mostly from the Northern hemisphere, focus on the South. Northern institutions and companies have more knowledge, products, knowledge and it infrastructure, but Southern hemisphere activities are increasing, especially in Asia and Africa. Internationalization in a sense is unique - students move largely from the South to the North, for example - and serve important needs in the developing world; but the North largely controls the process. We focus on the cross-border movement of students and higher education programs and institutions-large company for universities (Altbach and Knight, 2007).

### ***Teaching Instruction Methods***

An instructional method can be defined as the technique by which instruction occurs, whether that might be lecture, class discussion, small group discussion, simulation, experience, or individual project. The question arises about factoring the variability of student into different instructional methods. Students are different and yet there are commonalties among them as well. However, when it comes to learner experience and satisfaction, instructional methods can vary according to individual student and to specific program. This means that one instructional method may be suitable and efficient for a program of study but the same method maybe inefficient for another program of study. Instructional method has to be flexible and adaptive in order to be a quality teaching method.

Teaching strategies and teaching methods, depend on multiple causes such as the level of development of students, student’s objectives, intentions and objectives of the teacher, the content of studies and environment, including the time, physical environment and resources. One method may not meet all our objectives or a single method to welcome all learning styles. For example, events or projects are effective to achieve certain goals, but inefficient to meet other people’s objectives. We therefore need a variety of methods, and not only a single method (Burden and Byrd, 2003).

### **Student Engagement with Lecturers and Curriculum**

Having a lot of international students in the campus is a brilliant idea, but at the same time it gives room for more challenges and creates additional responsibilities and more expectations onto the institutions. Despite the dramatic increments on the numbers of international student, definitely there is a need to know and understand their needs and expectation from this group of students (Yee and Mokhtar, 2013). This causes differences among the students

coming together from different parts of the world to share a common goal with various expectations due to their upbringings and various family backgrounds. But with a unifying system of education, it brings all the students together to share a common view and respect one another.

Due to the different culture and system of education of these diverse students, it may pose challenges for both the students and academicians in learning and teaching. A number of articles and publications are available that talks about the nature of higher education (HE) globally are going through a period of change.

This quest for various means of change and improving the educational sectors by developing the quality and the curriculum of higher institution to enhance a better performance of the International students, In the inquiry for quality education, some countries has implemented various curriculum innovations targeting and focusing in the individual and national economic goals, national identity and unity, socio-cultural, moral, and ethical development, cognitive development and globalization goals as well as psychosocial goals (Bunyi, 2013).

### **Curriculum**

Albert and Chi (2009) argued that despite efforts made by universities on outcome-based education (OBE) - which is helpful and enhances the student core competencies such as global outlook, critical and creative thinking, social and national responsibility, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship and leadership which should give the students a better and promising future - contrarily, they were only few positive learning behaviors identified among the students, which means, that the competencies were not guaranteed. (Albert and Chi, 2009). Expansions of international students in higher education has increased the zeal for ambitious educational goals that required contemporary approaches to curriculum, teaching, and learning (Philip and Jiafang, 2013) due to the increments of students, both the lecturers and the University have to comply to the needs of the students.

The international growth into higher learning has increased the need for changes in curriculum for aspiring institutional goals which requires dynamic approaches to curriculum, teaching, and learning. Thus higher institutions in the world today, have got no option but to adopt this philosophy, which makes everyone to adhere to a structural curriculum (Hallinger and Lu, 2013)

### ***Student Engagement with Lecturers***

Despite the above facts, the nature of higher educations is gradually evolving and going through change with the help of various policies and reformations to enhance a better engagement with the lecturers. According to Carol Robinson (2012) student activities and performance shows how effective they are in any society, in which students are responsible for facilitating some issues. This shows how students are active and involved in higher education programs (Robinson, 2012).

Their active participation as a student makes them speak their minds and show their needs with personal contacts with lecturers which are inevitable in any educational environments. In order to achieve the best teaching excellence, international students should engage in dialogue with their lecturers at the same time allowing respect, understanding and commitment to lecturers or the university coordinators (Feng and Margaret, 2012). Lecturers on the other hand, give chances to the student to express their minds create confidence and excellent performance among the international students.

The quality in higher education should go beyond satisfaction and develop an impression of student happiness as one of the major attributes by which educational provision should be considered during any contact or engagement with the students in higher learning institutions (Aftab and Paul, 2015) Basically, happier students tends to be more satisfied with how they engaged with their lecturers and while students who are contemptuous, just see how things are being done in the higher learning institutions.

In conclusion, all higher leaning institution should try to incorporate a good learning environment and lecturers should encourage a good relationship or mix of locals and international students during their engagement with the international students in group work. Specifically using a detailed curriculum and try to change the perception of the International students toward learning and the importance of working with diverse group of students, these will create a benefit for them and encourages them to have a pleasant study time in international universities. This will also increase the numbers of International students who are willing to study in abroad as they prepare themselves to

be a globally competent workforce. Thus, this should be so for Malaysian universities as well so that they can attract international students.

The university may need to brief the curriculum, teaching and learning means of engagement style with the lecturers and culture in Malaysia during the orientation to international students. This includes language, curriculum, attendance, and culture. This will educate the students and they will be more aware and get prepared towards the new system that they came for. With all these facilities, it will lead to better performance, improvement and adjustment to all the international students.

### **Engagement with other Students**

According to a finding from Chong et al., (2013) international students in Malaysia tend to have different approach to the local Malaysian students that is to say, some international students interact easily with local students and others find it difficult to interact with local students. In this regards, some students pointed out that most of the Malaysian local students have their own group the international students are left alone and obliged to work with other international student. However this study has been supported by Banumathy, and Vikneswaran (2010) that international students in the first year of their study they are left isolated by the Malaysian local student. An international student stressed that most of the local students are not willing to share ideas and they like to hang around with their own Malaysian local friends. Nevertheless, some student pointed out that they prefer not to work with Malaysian local students since there is barrier language between them. This finding also supports the study of Abdul Rahman Embong (2013) and Nur Sofurah (2011) where international students discharge themselves from working with Malaysian local students.

However, some international students have good experience working with Malaysian local students. One international student confessed that the international students tend to be more proactive and if an international students are doing their jobs, the local students will trust and help them (Yee and Mokhtar, 2013).

In addition to the engagement of international Students with Malaysian local student, a finding from Hord and Hirsh (2008) proved that discussions and interactions make an intense and successful experience of universal learning, knowledge distribution, inquiring and challenges of opinions, arguing assumptions, and accomplishment of agreement.

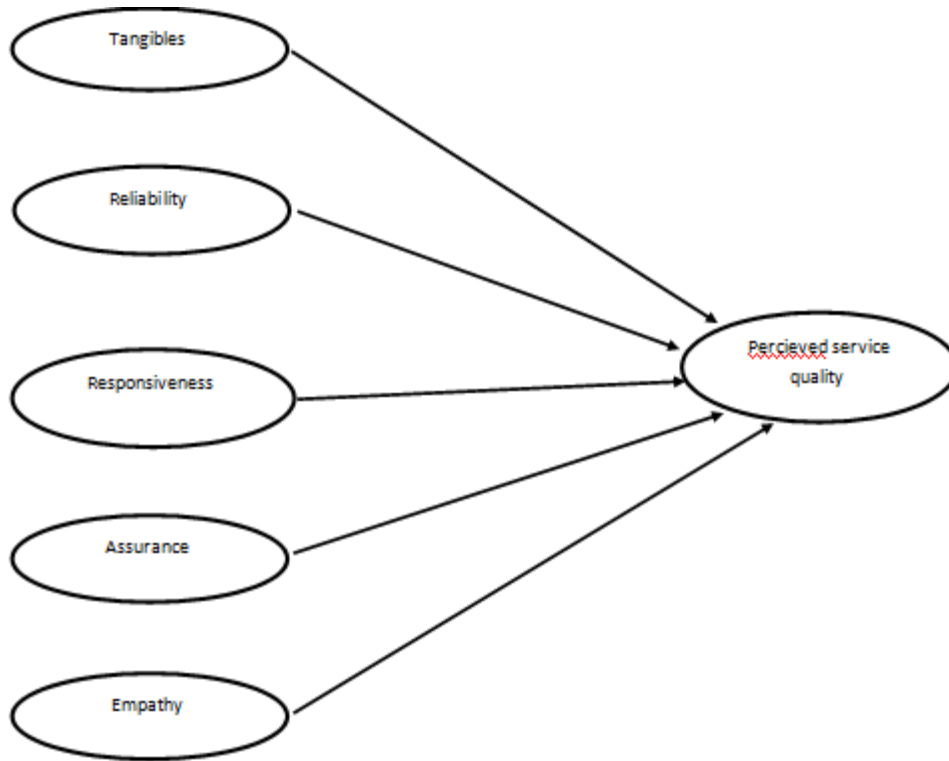
Based on the findings from the literature, it became clear that daily interaction among students of different ethnicities and cultures are useful for their personal and public lives, and they were asked to be involved in.

### **Assessments**

Yee and Mokhtar (2013) found that most of the International students agreed that there is a various type of assessments such as assignments, quizzes, presentations, project and examinations being implemented in universities of their home country. In addition, international students from various different countries share the opinion that the types of assessments that being practiced in their current host universities in Malaysia are the same with the assessments implemented by the private universities in their home country. Greenberg (2015) found that students who used the heading while their reports wrote a higher quality report than did students who did not. Students also improve the quality of their own reports after using the heading to grade a report written by one of their classmates. However these finding provide some of the first empirical evidence of the important role that headings can play in the process of formative assessment.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The SERVQUAL service quality model was developed by a group of American authors, Parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml and Len Berry, in 1988. It highlights the main components of high quality service. The SERVQUAL authors originally identified ten elements of service quality, but in later works, these were collapsed into five factors - reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness - that creates the acronym RATER.



*Figure 1: Theoretical Framework*

**Conceptual Framework**

Learning experience dimensions - language, teaching method effectiveness, curriculum, engagement with lecturers, engagement with students, integrity of examinations and assessments– has a positive influence on student satisfaction. The model is a modification of SERQUAL theory.



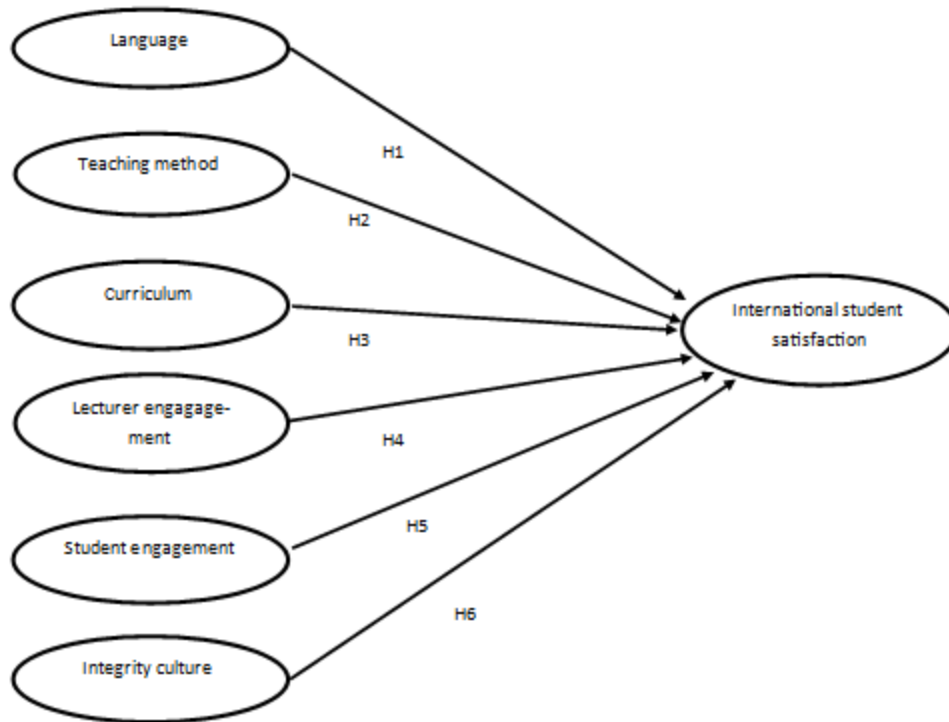


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

## V. METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This cross-sectional study is done to research the factors that influence international student satisfaction with Malaysian higher education institutions. A cross sectional study is that research conducted only once in a snapshot of one point in time. The respondent answered the questionnaires in one point in time and aims to describe the important factors that are concerned with the satisfaction of international students from various countries about Malaysian higher education institutions.

### Data Analysis

The items of some constructs are coded reverse in their measurement of emotions on the Likert scale of the items of each latent construct. This made the respondents ponder over the questions and respond accurately to the attitudes they have with the issues raised up by the items in concern. These are reverse coded in SPSS 22 by transforming the data in order to get the correct analysis for the parametric tests mentioned below. Correlation of each independent variable is done with the dependent variable.

The reason for calculating the correlation of each independent variable (learning experience dimensions) with the dependent variable (satisfaction of international students) is to establish that there is some linear pattern between the independent variable and dependent variable. Based on significance and strength of correlation, assumptions can be made that the independent variables is significantly correlated with the dependent variable.

## VI. FINDINGS

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

A questionnaire, using 36 items to represent 6 predictors and 5 items to represent the dependent variable concerning the nature of service quality of local universities and satisfaction perceptions of international students in Malaysia, was answered by 56 participants. The instrument was divided into sections construct by construct. Yet these items were explored to find out the constructs they represent as there are almost no confirmed hypothetical assertions

concerning the constructs. At best there are only qualitative research on this matter that explore each construct (in isolation from each other). By using exploratory principal components analysis, with Varimax orthogonal rotation and an eigenvalue cut-off of 1.0, we were able to produce seven factors that explained more than 72% of the data: engagement with students (five items, with 14% of explained variance), student satisfaction with university (four items, 12%), curriculum effectiveness (four items, 11%), engagement with lecturers (four items, 10%), assessment and examination integrity (three items, 10%), curriculum ineffectiveness (two items, 8%), and language (two items, 7%). The outcome is given in Table 3.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measures of sampling adequacy shows 0.644. This is sufficient as it exceeds 0.5. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity is 0.000, which indicates that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. The result is in Table 2.

All the factors extracted from the analysis along with the percent of variance attributable to each factor, and the cumulative variance of the factor are shown in table 4. The first factor accounts for 14% of the variance, the second cumulative variance is 25%, third is 36%, the fourth shows cumulative variation of 47%, fifth is 57%, seventh is 65%, and eighth is 72 %. It is obvious that, factors 1 to 7 are significant in explaining the variation in the data where the seven components account for 72% of the total variance.

**Table 2 KMO and Bartlett's Test for international student satisfaction with local universities**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.644
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	583.643
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

**Table 3 Rotated Component Matrix**

		Components						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Engagement with other students	Q4.F	.822						
	Q3.F	.794						
	Q1.F	.754						
	Q2.F	.739						
	Q6.F	.644						
Student satisfaction with university	Q1.H	.847						
	Q4.H	.788						
	Q2.H	.768						
	Q5.H	.655						
Curriculum Effectiveness	Q1.D			.862				
	Q2.D			.832				
	Q4.D			.784				
	Q3.D			.662				
Engagement with lecturers	Q2.E				.808			
	Q3.E				.794			
	Q6.E				.684			
	Q1.E				.522			
Assessments and examinations	Q4.G					.848		



	Q6.G					.848		
	Q5.G					.820		
Curriculum ineffectiveness	Q6.D					.844		
	Q5.D					.761		
Language	Q1.B							.899
	Q1.B							.851

Table 4 Total variance explained by constructs

**Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.228	21.781	21.781	5.228	21.781	21.781	3.317	13.819	13.819
2	3.088	12.866	34.648	3.088	12.866	34.648	2.795	11.648	25.467
3	2.343	9.762	44.410	2.343	9.762	44.410	2.741	11.419	36.886
4	2.195	9.145	53.555	2.195	9.145	53.555	2.498	10.409	47.295
5	1.891	7.879	61.434	1.891	7.879	61.434	2.361	9.839	57.133
6	1.471	6.129	67.563	1.471	6.129	67.563	1.857	7.739	64.872
7	1.109	4.623	72.186	1.109	4.623	72.186	1.755	7.314	72.186
8	.842	3.509	75.695						
9	.759	3.164	78.859						
10	.650	2.710	81.569						
11	.611	2.545	84.114						
12	.563	2.346	86.460						
13	.493	2.054	88.514						
14	.425	1.771	90.285						
15	.378	1.576	91.860						
16	.363	1.512	93.373						
17	.343	1.428	94.801						
18	.284	1.184	95.985						
19	.223	.929	96.914						
20	.198	.824	97.739						
21	.181	.755	98.494						
22	.156	.648	99.142						
23	.112	.468	99.610						
24	.094	.390	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Spearman’s Correlation**

The confidence level of 0.05 is determined for the tests done below. Before any of the tests were done it should be noted that the data was transformed (reverse coded) in SPSS to do away with inconsistencies in the interpretation of the output.

Table 8 Correlation between socializing with local students and satisfaction with local universities

Correlations			Students	Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Students	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.262*
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.026
		N	56	56
	Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.262*	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.026	.
		N	56	56

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 9 Correlation between curriculum effectiveness and satisfaction with local universities

Correlations			Satisfaction	CurriculumE
Spearman's rho	Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.202
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.067
		N	56	56
	CurriculumE	Correlation Coefficient	.202	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.067	.
		N	56	56

There was a non-significant correlation of .202 ( $p = n.s$ ) between “curriculum effectiveness” and “satisfaction of foreign students with local universities”.

Table 10 Correlation between student engagement with lecturers and satisfaction with local universities

Correlations			Satisfaction	Lecturers
Spearman's rho	Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.483**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
		N	56	56
	Lecturers	Correlation Coefficient	.483**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
		N	56	56

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

“Engagement with lecturers” and “student satisfaction with university” were significantly positively correlated,  $r = .483, p < .05$ .

Table 11 Correlation between examination integrity and satisfaction with local universities

			Satisfaction	Examination
Spearman's rho	Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.108
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.214
		N	56	56
	Examination	Correlation Coefficient	.108	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.214	.
		N	56	56

There was a non-significant correlation of .108 ( $p = n.s$ ) between “examination integrity” and “satisfaction of foreign students with local universities”.

Table 12 Correlation between curriculum ineffectiveness and satisfaction with local universities

			Satisfaction	Curriculuml
Spearman's rho	Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.232*
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.042
		N	56	56
	Curriculuml	Correlation Coefficient	.232*	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.042	.
		N	56	56

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

“Curriculum ineffectiveness” and “student satisfaction with university” were significantly correlated,  $r = .232$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Table 13 Correlation between language and satisfaction with local universities

			Satisfaction	Language
Spearman's rho	Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.028
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.419
		N	56	56
	Language	Correlation Coefficient	-.028	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.419	.
		N	56	56

There was a non-significant correlation of -.028 ( $p = n.s$ ) between “language” and “satisfaction of foreign students with local universities”.

## VII. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching method effectiveness items did not load onto the teaching method variable. Measuring such a construct is tenuous at best due to the substantial but insignificant results of academic efforts on this issue even though the methods of teaching are well established. Thus the overall measure of the outcomes of any teaching methods are still

being explored by researchers. The outcome should be from the students themselves because such a measure will reflect their attitudes and opinions of the teaching efforts of an institution of higher learning (which is more relevant to their satisfaction). As a result, the observation methods of the BERI scale (Lane and Harris, 2015) of finding this outcome measure are adequate but not quantitatively confirmed (as the BERI project was qualitative in nature). Even though the BERI protocol was modified and used as a self-report for students to measure their own learning experiences from the teaching method given - it's not surprising that it did not come out as a factor. The reason being that the measures were substantially modified to be used as a self-report and there is insufficient research done on measuring such a scale in the academia to come up with better results in this context

On the other hand the respondents considered curriculum effectiveness as dichotomous i.e. curriculum effectiveness measures should be separate from curriculum ineffectiveness measures. Thus the exploratory factor analysis gave the corresponding results.

The social aspects of the student learning experience have shown to be related with satisfaction of international students with the education system here in Malaysia. Thus hypothesis four and five were supported. The reasons could be that in a foreign country students need social support to get things done where being on one's own could create insecurity perceptions for them. Help from lecturers is especially important for foreign students in Malaysia as they are not familiar with the academic culture and university environment.

An anomaly in the findings above is the significant positive correlation between perception of curriculum ineffectiveness and satisfaction of international students with their higher education institution. This should not be surprising because another variable could be affecting this relationship. It should be kept in mind the restrictive sample size also could have a bearing on this issue. Surprisingly curriculum effectiveness does not correlate with satisfaction as students are more into going through the motions of the university rather than the altruistic attitude of gaining good quality education. There could be a possibility yet again of another factor interfering in the relationship. Similarly examination and assessment integrity and integrity climate of the institution also does not correlate with satisfaction. This is due to the serendipitous nature of unprincipled behavior that usually benefits the students (in their own opinion).

Students at best are ambivalent about language. There is a significant tendency to move away from the English language to favor their own mother tongue (which is not possible). Other reasons for this attitude is not only the lacking of fluency in the English language on the part of the student but the propagation and use of the English language on part of the institutions themselves.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Despite the surprising correlation results in the findings, the exploratory factor analysis indicates that students have rudimentary ideas of learning experience. As a result rather than being prescribed to the scale provided in the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) the model explaining learning experience should be investigated further to come up with more meaningful findings due to the nature of the institutions concerned. More variables or pruning of the variables are needed in the model given above and the direction of the relationships should be established. This needs to be done with an adequate sample with sampling methods used that are more representative of the population. All in all the academia supports the fact that perceptions of quality (satisfaction) in the minds of international patrons do not have the same perspective as patrons of other commercial service institutions. To get to even more meaningful results some aspects of SERVQUAL can be integrated with the model in this research but a blatant adoption of SERVQUAL to explain the numbers is not warranted

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