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Lecturer Competence and Student Satisfaction: A Roadmap for Quality Education

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Abstract

The level of student satisfaction is a critical indicator in determining the success of educational institutions in providing services to the market. The objective of this study is to examine the influence of lecturer competence on student satisfaction at a public institution of higher learning in Malaysia. A quantitative research method was used to collect data from community college students. A total of 132 students participated as respondents in this study. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis. The study's findings show a significant and positive relationship between lecturer competence and student satisfaction. All the variables studied, including lecturer knowledge, course objectives, lecture notes, attendance, clear presentation, classroom activities, assignments, exams, lecturer interpersonal skills, and feedback, all have a significant positive correlation with student satisfaction. In the multiple regression analysis, the model indicates that lecturer competence significantly contributes to predicting student satisfaction, with an R-squared value of 0.898. This means that 89.8% of the variation in student satisfaction can be explained by lecturer competence. These results indicate that the higher the lecturer's competence, the higher the student satisfaction. This study enables community colleges to focus on developing a positive lecturer-student relationship. Knowing these factors allows community colleges to concentrate on improving these aspects and subsequently enhancing student satisfaction.

Keywords: Lecturer Competence, Student Satisfaction, Interpersonal Skills, Subject Knowledge

Introduction

In Malaysia, there are 20 Public Higher Education Institutions (IPTAs), 404 Private Higher Education Institutions (IPTSs), 36 Polytechnics, and 105 Community Colleges. All of these institutions compete fiercely to produce highly employable graduates, in line with the 12th Malaysia Plan (RMK 12), in which the higher education sector in Malaysia continues to be a focus, with a focus on strengthening and empowering TVET education. Strengthening

TVET means that education is not to bound by "technicalness," "systemness," and "technologicalness" alone (Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2022). Instead, it encompasses all aspects of governance, graduate employability, skilled labor, and industry engagement.

Therefore, the competence of instructors and teaching methods in educational institutions is crucial in providing student satisfaction and enhancing student achievement (Abd Aziz, 2020). This is because 21st-century learning focuses on students, and teaching and learning are centered around elements of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and the application of moral values and ethics. Furthermore, instructors need to have digital learning skills to ensure that the learning process is more effective and engaging. The implications of the Covid-19 pandemic have made the teaching and learning process more challenging and require creativity and effort from all parties, especially the lecturers (Subri, Yaakub, & Boheran Nudin, 2021).

Community colleges and polytechnics act as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and implement Outcome-Based Education (OBE) learning, focusing on student satisfaction and student excellence to prepare them to compete in the job market for better employment opportunities. It is the responsibility of every lecturer to ensure that these efforts yield results and that the teaching and learning processes are conducted dynamically. Teaching and Learning (T&L) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), especially Polytechnics and Community Colleges, require a joint effort between lecturers and students, where student satisfaction is an essential factor in determining the success of an institution (Othman & Abdul Rahman, K2017). Student satisfaction encompasses satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning (T&L), which is related to lecturer competence, teaching techniques, and teaching methods (Muhammad, Talip, & Taat, 2019).

According to Said, Monzaid, and Hasan (2015) lecturer competence development is essential among Polytechnic lecturers in Malaysia. Competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to perform tasks and responsibilities as effectively as possible (Mohamad Hamim, 2017). Many researchers discuss the need for students to assess lecturer competence and teaching quality. However, according to Mohamed Azim and Muhammad Fahimi Sofian (2017), the effectiveness of teaching is the primary approach to measuring teaching quality and student satisfaction in the teaching and learning process. According to a study conducted by Radin Eksan and Abu Bakar (2017), the evaluation process of teaching is often assessed by students using an evaluation questionnaire at the end of a teaching session, but this process is not effective in helping lecturers identify the effectiveness of teaching and student satisfaction. Furthermore, it does not help lecturers make effective improvements.

Therefore, as stated by the Ministry of Education Malaysian (2015), the quality of instructors needs to be improved to ensure the quality of services in higher education institutions is maintained and further enhanced. This is because the quality of service plays a significant role for students and stakeholders (Ariyanto, Aima, & Sari, 2020). Hence, the objective of this study is to:

- i) Identify the relationship between lecturer competence and student satisfaction at Kuantan Community College.
- ii) Examine the influence of lecturer competence on student satisfaction at Kuantan Community College.

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses are as follows:

- H1: There is no significant relationship between lecturer competence and student satisfaction at Kuantan Community College.
- H2: There is no significant influence of lecturer competence on student satisfaction at Kuantan Community College.

This study focuses on several essential factors influencing student satisfaction. To examine the extent of the relationship between lecturer competence and student satisfaction, the researcher selected ten elements related to lecturer competence that influence student satisfaction. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework for this study.

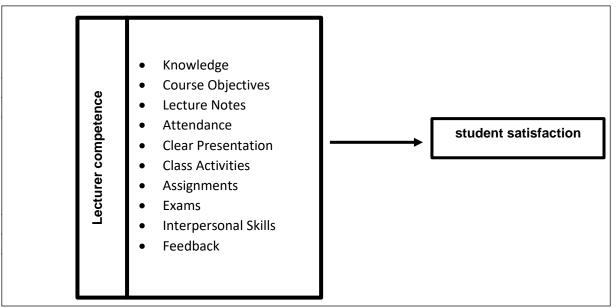


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework

Methodology

In this study, the researcher used a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between lecturer competence and student satisfaction. A questionnaire was adapted from Ng (2018) and used as the research instrument. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part A collected demographic information about the respondents, Part B included 30 questions related to lecturer competence, and Part C comprised 10 questions related to student satisfaction. A 5-point Likert scale was used for both parts. Descriptive analysis and inferential analysis were used in this study. Pearson Correlation Analysis was used to explain the relationship between lecturer competence and student satisfaction. Multiple Regression Analysis was also used to predict the relationship between dependent and independent variables. In this study, the dependent variable was student satisfaction, and the independent variable was lecturer competence. The researcher conducted a pilot study involving 30 students to obtain Cronbach's Alpha values to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to students at Kuantan Community College, and the data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms to all students for a period of 3 weeks, from June 29, 2023, to July 13, 2023. Out of the 190 questionnaires distributed, the researcher received 132 completed questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 68%.

Findings and Discussion

A pilot study was conducted on 30 students to obtain the Cronbach Alpha value for reliability testing. The questionnaire was distributed to Kuantan Community College students, and the data were analyzed using SPSS. Cronbach Alpha for all ten items exceeded 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire did not need to be modified and could be used for the actual study. The table below shows the Cronbach Alpha values for the reliability testing of the pilot study.

Table 1.

Cronbach Alpha Values for Pilot Study

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Lecturer Competence		
Knowledge	.958	3
Course Objectives	.964	3
Lecture Notes	.962	3
Attendance	.931	3
Clear Presentation	.971	3
Class Activities	.956	3
Assignments	.946	3
Exams	.948	3
Interpersonal Skills	.926	3
Feedback	.942	3
Student Satisfaction	.978	10

Descriptive Analysis

Out of a total of 132 respondents who participated in the survey, 72 were male, and 60 were female. The majority of respondents in this study were students enrolled in the Culinary Certificate program, with 34 individuals (25.8%), followed by the Electrical Technology Certificate program with 33 students (25%). There were 27 respondents (20.5%) from the Hotel Operations Certificate program, and 26 respondents (19.7%) from the Architecture Technology Certificate program. Finally, the Manufacturing Technology Certificate program had only 12 respondents (9.1%) who participated in the survey.

Table 2.

Respondent Demographics

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	72	54.5
Female	60	45.5
Field of Study		
Hotel Operations Certificate Program	27	20.5
Architecture Technology Certificate program	12	9.1
Electrical Technology Certificate Program	33	25.0
Architecture Technology Certificate	26	19.7
Program		
Culinary Certificate Program	34	25.8

Correlation Analysis

Table 3 shows the Pearson Correlation results between lecturer competency and student satisfaction. The results indicate that all variables are positively correlated, meaning lecturer competency is significantly associated with student satisfaction at Kuantan Community College (r = .943, p < 0.01). Therefore, H1 is supported. In the studies by Herdiyana and Istiana (2020) and Suwarni, Moerdiono, Prihatining, and Sangadji (2020), it is also shown that lecturer competency has a significant positive correlation with student satisfaction. Additionally, the findings of the study by Herdiyana and Istiana (2020) indicate that lecturer competency has an impact on student satisfaction. Hence, student satisfaction in their learning process is influenced by the competency of their lecturers. In Table 3, it is evident that the variable with the highest correlation is the feedback provided by lecturers (r = .924, p < 0.01), which has a significant positive impact on student satisfaction. The research conducted by Zamri, Omar, Anwar, and Fatzel (2021) shows a significant, moderate positive relationship between student satisfaction and feedback. Meanwhile, the study by Mad Sehat, Asnil Aimi, Damanhuri, Baharudin, and Abd. Raof (2021) states that guidance factors contribute to the level of student satisfaction. This means that positive feedback, emotional support, encouragement, advice, and motivation from lecturers are highly needed by students. Lecturer feedback can help students understand how they are progressing in their courses and how to enhance their knowledge or skills in learning.

The lecturer's interpersonal skills are also one of the variables that achieve a high correlation (r = .915, p < 0.01) with student satisfaction. A study conducted by Ng (2018) reveals that the factor with the highest correlation is the lecturer's interpersonal skills. A good relationship between lecturers and students can help prevent negative feelings among students regarding their campus learning, thus retaining students in college. This is crucial because most of the time, students need to interact with lecturers in their learning process. Meanwhile, Bhuiyan's findings (2022) indicate that students are satisfied with the lecturer's interpersonal skills. The majority of lecturers have shown good interpersonal skills. Therefore, the relationship between lecturers and students needs to be improved in the learning process. This is because students prefer to interact with lecturers who are approachable, easy to communicate with, friendly, and understanding of their needs.

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The course objectives variable also has a positive correlation (r = .914, p < 0.01) with student satisfaction. A study by Ng (2018) shows that course objectives are a factor with a positive correlation with student satisfaction. Clearly stated course objectives are crucial and should be communicated by the lecturer at the beginning of the semester. Students will be motivated to know when this content can be applied after the class and it will foster their interest in the subject.

Moreover, class activities are another factor that has a positive effect (r = .914, p < 0.01) on student satisfaction. A study conducted by Choi, Ibrahim, and Tan (2014) also indicates that one of the variables positively correlated with student satisfaction is class activities. Lecturers should encourage students to participate in class activities such as problem-solving case studies, group discussions, role-playing games, and others to stimulate students' interest in learning.

Examination items also have a positive correlation (r = .912, p < 0.01) with student satisfaction. In Ng's study (2018), it is also shown that examination items have a positive correlation with satisfaction. Students are satisfied when lecturers have the ability to provide examinations to test students' understanding of the subject matter.

Additionally, lecture notes are among the variables that have a significant positive relationship (r = .903, p < 0.01) with student satisfaction. The findings from Choi et al. (2014) and Ng (2019) each indicate that lecture notes are among the variables that correlate positively with student satisfaction. Furthermore, in Guo's study (2016), it is also stated that the selection of teaching materials has a positive influence on student satisfaction. This is because teaching materials or lecture notes provided can guide students throughout the learning process. Student satisfaction in learning highly depends on teaching strategies such as providing initial notes and updating information clearly (Hassan, Abdul Hamid, & Ustati, 2013), so that the material can provide students with a clear and better understanding of the topics taught.

Assignments are also one of the variables that achieve a high correlation (r = .900, p < 0.01) with student satisfaction. Findings from Ng's study (2018) indicate that assignments are also one of the variables that achieve a high correlation with student satisfaction. Lecturers provide assignments related to the course content. Lecturers expect students to be self-directed in their learning and gain more knowledge outside the classroom. Assignments are provided to train students' critical thinking skills, including problem-solving, integrating material, and how to use knowledge, as emphasized by Hiew and Cheah (2022).

The knowledge of the lecturer about the subject has a positive correlation (r = .896, p < 0.01) with student satisfaction. The findings from Ng's study (2018) indicate that the lecturer's knowledge about the subject has a positive correlation with student satisfaction, but it has the lowest correlation. Meanwhile, Sari (2023) states that lecturers with better knowledge can increase students' confidence in the quality of the services provided. Students are satisfied when lecturers have teaching qualifications and the ability to master the knowledge of the subject they teach. In addition, students prefer it when lecturers can share personal experiences related to the subject so that students can learn not only through theory but also through experiences shared by the lecturer.

Furthermore, clear presentation by lecturers also has a positive correlation (r = .896, p < 0.01) with student satisfaction. The findings from Choi et al. (2014) and Ng (2018) respectively indicate that clear presentation by lecturers has a significant positive relationship with student satisfaction. Students are satisfied when the lecturer's voice is clear and can

capture their attention in the classroom. According to Jarahi and Najafi (2013), students state that clearer explanations are needed in lectures to make the learning process easier.

The presence of lecturers is seen to have a positive correlation (r = .877, p < 0.01) with student satisfaction, but it is the lowest correlation compared to other variables. Students are satisfied when lecturers change the class schedule less frequently. This is because frequent changes in the class schedule can affect student learning. Table 3 shows the relationship between lecturer competency and student satisfaction.

Table 3.

Relationship between Lecturer Competence and Student Satisfaction

No.	Independent Variable	Pearson Correlation
1	Knowledge	.896**
2	Course Objectives	.914**
3	Lecture Notes	.903**
4	Attendance	.877**
5	Clear Presentation	.896**
6	Class Activities	.914**
7	Assignments	.900**
8	Exams	.912**
9	Interpersonal Skills	.915**
10	Feedback	.924**

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

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is used to predict the outcome of dependent variables based on independent variables. Table 4 summarizes the relationship model between lecturer competence and student satisfaction. It shows that the R-squared value is 0.898, or 89.8%. This means that 89.8% of the variation in student satisfaction is accounted for by lecturer competence. Thus, higher lecturer competence leads to higher student satisfaction, and lower competence leads to lower student satisfaction. The F-Test result is 106.911, and thus, it is highly significant with p < 0.001. The model is a good fit for the data. There is a clear linear relationship between lecturer competence and student satisfaction.

Table 4.
Summary of the Model Relationship between Lecturer Competence and Student Satisfaction

Model			Adjusted	R	Std. Error of		
	R	R Square	Square		the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.948ª	.898	.890		.32528	106.911	.000 ^b

a. Predictor: (Constant), Lecturer Competence

b. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

Table 5 shows the influence of lecturer competence on student satisfaction. Beta coefficients are used to determine the direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. From the data, the beta coefficient is positive for all independent variables. This indicates a direct relationship between lecturer competence and student satisfaction. The highest beta coefficient is for lecturer interpersonal skills, which is 0.272,

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while the lowest beta coefficient is for assignments. Hence, interpersonal skills have the highest impact on student satisfaction, while assignments have the lowest impact.

Table 5 also shows the significance level for each independent variable. There are two independent variables with significant values less than 0.05. These variables are lecturer knowledge about the subject and lecturer interpersonal skills. These two factors have a strong relationship with student satisfaction. From Table 5, the regression equation is created as follows:

Y = 0.052 + 0.227 K + 0.268 IP

Where: Y = Student Satisfaction (dependent variable)

K = Knowledge

CO = Course Objectives

LN = Lecture Notes

A = Attendance

CP = Clear Presentation

CA = Class Activities

AS = Assignments

E = Exams

IP = Interpersonal Skills

F = Feedback

Table 5.
Influence of Lecturer Competence on Student Satisfaction

Co	efficients ^a					
		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		Coefficie	Coefficients			
Μ	odel	В	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.052	.123		.420	.675
	Knowledge	.227	.084	.233	2.692	.008
	Course Objectives	.096	.107	.097	.894	.373
	Lecture Notes	.137	.096	.136	1.433	.155
	Attendance	069	.095	071	727	.468
	Clear Presentation	.112	.093	.114	1.194	.235
	Class Activities	.106	.145	.110	.728	.468
	Assignments	108	.111	110	976	.331
	Exams	.180	.102	.179	1.762	.081
	Interpersonal Skills	.268	.106	.272	2.539	.012
	Feedback	.027	.139	.027	.196	.845

a. Independent variable: Lecturer Competence

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that all ten lecturer competency characteristics are positively correlated with student satisfaction, and this relationship is at a high level. The study indicates that students are satisfied when lecturers can build a good relationship with them, provide assignments relevant to their courses, offer high-quality

b. Dependent variable: Student Satisfaction Conclusion

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lecture notes, emphasize course objectives, organize various types of classroom activities, ensure fairness in exam grading, provide useful feedback, adhere to schedules, deliver lectures clearly and with knowledge. This insight into the strong connection between these lecturer competency characteristics and student satisfaction is a significant contribution of this research.

Student feedback on their satisfaction is essential for the college's input in quality improvement. Student satisfaction studies will demonstrate the level of satisfaction with subjects, lectures, and the learning environment. This satisfaction survey should not be a routine procedure left without any further improvements. In a business context, students are the college's customers. Therefore, customer satisfaction is crucial because it will delight customers into loyal customers and enhance their retention rates.

Study Implications

The study findings have important implications for both academic institutions and educators. Enhancing lecturer competency in areas such as feedback provision, interpersonal skills, clear presentation, and subject knowledge can significantly improve student satisfaction. These implications emphasize the need for colleges and universities to invest in professional development programs and support for their teaching staff, focusing on these competency areas.

It is crucial for lecturers to establish good relationships with students to create a positive learning environment and enhance student retention. The study's contribution to this field lies in highlighting the importance of the lecturer-student relationship, and it underscores that fostering this connection can have a profound impact on student satisfaction and, ultimately, their academic success. Clear communication regarding course objectives and well-designed classroom activities can boost student motivation and engagement, ultimately fostering a more productive learning environment.

Study Limitations

This study has provided valuable insights into the correlation between lecturer competency and student satisfaction. However, it's essential to acknowledge its limitations. The research may be limited to a specific context or sample size, as it only centered on one college. Therefore, while the findings are robust within this context, their generalizability to other institutions and settings may vary. Future research should consider expanding the scope to include more diverse samples and contexts for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Future Research Recommendations

Building on the contributions of this study, future research can explore additional dimensions related to quality education and lecturer competency. Researchers may examine the role of other factors, such as industry experience and motivation, in shaping the quality of education. Furthermore, longitudinal studies can assess the long-term impact of lecturer competency on student achievement, providing insights into the sustainability of these effects.

This research paper only studied data collected from one community college, and future studies may consider collecting data from several community colleges. Doing so would provide an opportunity to examine the relationship between lecturer competency and

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student satisfaction for each institution, while simultaneously allowing researchers to compare data across colleges, thus broadening our understanding of this critical area.

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