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## A Comparative Study on Quality of Education Received by Students of Private Universities versus Public Universities

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### Abstract

This study is conducted to compare public universities and private universities in Malaysia and also to investigate quality of a university. This study focuses on the context where education and the satisfaction of students are the primary topic. Hence, the study focuses on undergraduate students in their second year of study. The findings highlights the dimension or variable which affect private and public universities; quality of these university. It is found from the study that there are indeed certain elements or factors that differ between public university and private. The paper attempts to develop insights into comparative evaluations of both public and private universities from a student's perspective in areas of satisfaction and quality.

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### 1. Introduction

The goal of Malaysian government is to develop Malaysia in a way where it reaches year 2020 fruitfully. These objectives has paved the way for various exchanges in terms of culture, transfer of knowledge, export/import of goods internationally, and even the transfer of people across the border illegally or legally. On that note, a rather significant cause it has endowed upon us is the opportunity to receive education. Quraeshi and Luqmani (2008) states that 'The Malaysian case is interesting in part because it demonstrates how the country has taken an international approach to secure needed educational skills in business'. Lim, Yap and Lee (2010) further explains that there has been an increasing globalization in the sector of higher education for the past couple of decades. The demand in higher

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education can be seen from the large flow of students studying abroad and the increasing number of colleges and universities providing educational services across borders. This trend has existed long before and studies have shown this. In Malaysia, the number of students going abroad for their business education continued to rise. By the mid-1980s the economy was also growing at an accelerated pace and the demand for professionally trained business executives in both public and private sector organizations grew. With only six public universities in the country then, and quotas favouring Malaysian Bumiputras in admissions, many students interested in business education were going overseas (Schmotter, 1999 in Quraeshi and Luqmani ,2008). This proposal focuses on both private colleges and public universities in Malaysia. For this study, two different cases will be taken; one public university from the area of Bangi, Malaysia and another from a private college that is also from the same location. The overall purpose of the research is to investigate, analyse and discuss the differences associated with tertiary level education received by students from both these colleges/ universities. Since there are many new and upcoming colleges/universities being introduced in the education industry these days, perhaps then this paper may be useful to provide new insights into the industry.

Student's satisfaction is sometimes analysed based on the quality of education that they receive from these education institutions. Quality or service quality as some would say is an essential criteria which assists students in determining the colleges or universities of their choice. According to Shekarchizadeh, Rasli and Tat (2011) service organizations such as institutions of higher education most definitely are under constant pressure to outperform their competitors in the name of upholding service quality. This might very well be the factor that sets a favourable university apart from the unfavourable ones. Now service quality may consist of a number of things. Some other researches would conclude that the choices and preferences made by a student on a specific college are dependent also on the performance and teaching capabilities of the lecturer. Ollin (1996) states that the extent to which the lecturers become professionally trained and qualified may bring changes for the long term growth of the further education sector. Academic staffs have a place to play in the development of an organizations growth. So, does that mean quality is measured only by the service provided by the academic staffs?

The Malaysian government should be given credit for formalising various attempts at improving the standards and quality of the higher education institutions (HEI) in Malaysia. One example of their success can be clearly shown by the Pahang State College of Professional Development. The Pahang State College of Professional Development is a private college in the business of providing higher education and training. In order to meet its purpose of providing high quality education and training; total customer satisfaction; continuous improvement in all aspects of services, among others, the HEI embarked on a quality implementation exercise in 1997 (Sohail, Rajadurai and Rahman, 2003) There are many more examples of how Malaysia has strived to help bring up its quality of education.

### *1.1. Research Objectives & Research Questions*

Based on the above introduction and topic, the main objectives of this research proposal is to emphasize quality of learning at a higher level of education. The guiding question for this research study is: What are the benefits received by students and are we really satisfying their needs of education. Based upon the literature set within the years of education systems in Malaysia and abroad, I will answer the following questions:

- 1) What are some of the comparisons between public universities and private ones?
- 2) How satisfied are students with the quality of education they receive in private colleges and public universities here in Malaysia?

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Differences between private universities and public universities*

There is indeed a difference between private colleges and public universities that have sometimes similar characteristics but also different attributes. Yahya Ibrahim in Tang (2012) states that 'The private higher education has evolved more rapidly than the public system and it may be considered as supplementing and complementing the

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