

# **Service Quality of a Private Higher Education Institute: What have International Students Got to Say?**

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The emphasis to increase the quality of education to draw more students, especially international students to study in Malaysia has been a constant drive for the local higher education institutions. Given the escalating competitive trend of the private higher education industry, this research aspires to access the expectations and perceptions of service quality in a private higher education institute in Malaysia from the perspective of their international students, using an adapted instrument of SERVQUAL for tertiary education. It also examined the relationship between students' recommendation and the six service quality dimensions including physical aspects, academic issues, program issues, cost/time, staff reliability, and staff responsiveness in the education industry. 125 usable samples based on students from 3 continents and subcontinents namely ASEAN, Asia and Non-Asia were collected using stratified sampling method. The findings suggested that generally, the international students' perceptions of service quality were lower than expectations, and physical aspects as well as staff responsiveness are important criteria affecting international students' intention to recommend the institution to their friends.

Keywords: Service Quality, Private Higher Education, International Students