

Student Satisfaction in Higher Education: A Comparative Study of RMUTK and JINA University

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Abstract

Student satisfaction is among the crucial parameters in the process of assessing the quality of the service and effectiveness of the institution in Higher Education. In an international educational context, where universities are searching to draw and hold students, it is vital to know students' perceptions of academic and support services for institutional development. The main purpose of this research was to compare the satisfaction levels of students at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep (RMUTK), Thailand and University of JINA. The research also explored the key factors that relate to overall student satisfaction. A quantitative comparative research design was used. Illustratively, 240 students were simulated, with each university having 120 students. The student satisfaction was evaluated on five criteria: academic quality, lecturer effectiveness, administration services, learning facilities and technology, and student support and campus experience. Descriptive statistics, Independent-samples t-test, correlation analysis and Multiple regression analysis were used. The illustration results showed that the students of both universities were relatively satisfied. The overall mean satisfaction score obtained by RMUTK was 4.12 (SD = 0.51) and the score obtained by University of JINA was 3.96 (SD = 0.56). This difference was statistically significant ($t = 2.32$, $p = .021$). University of JINA had the highest score for effectiveness of lecturers and the highest score for academic quality while RMUTK had the highest score for academic quality and the highest score for effectiveness of lecturers. The multiple regression results showed that academic quality, lecturer effectiveness, administrative services, learning facilities and technology, and student support significantly explained the variance of overall student satisfaction with 63% of the explained variance. The study illustrates the importance of student satisfaction assessment by comparing the satisfaction of students from two universities to enhance the service quality in the universities and student-centered management. The study shows the values of comparative student satisfaction assessment with respect to the enhancement in the service quality of the university and the management of students in the university.

Keywords: student satisfaction, higher education, service quality, comparative study, university students, educational management

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Higher education institutions are facing more and more competition and internationalization. The universities are expected to offer academic knowledge along with high quality educational services, learning environment, facilities, technology, administrative efficiency and good experiences to the students (Gruber et al., 2010; Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017). As a result,

student satisfaction has emerged as an important means of assessing institutional performance and quality, especially in relation to students' experiences in learning, stay and loyalty to the institution, as well as the reputation of the institution (Elliott & Healy, 2001; Helgesen & Nasset, 2007).

Generally, student satisfaction can be defined by students' overall assessment of their educational experiences compared to what they expected and perceived the institutional performance to be (Elliott & Shin, 2002). Satisfaction can be from the curriculum, effectiveness of the teaching, academic support, administrative services, physical facilities, technology, communication and campus experiences (Gruber et al., 2010; Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017).

Students are important stakeholders and recipients of education services from a service management perspective. Therefore, their perceptions can be useful to the university administrators in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the university. From the service quality point of view, service customers or service recipients judge quality based on the various aspects of their service experiences with service providers (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In the higher education context, this means while the quality of the academic program is fundamental to the role of the university, other aspects, such as the quality of the non-academic services, administrative support, facilities, and interactions with others within the university, can have a substantial impact on students' overall educational experience and satisfaction (Gruber et al., 2010).

The interest of students' satisfaction is further enhanced by the process of internationalization, in which higher education institutions work in increasingly varied educational, cultural and institutional settings. Students' expectations and perceptions of their university experiences might be influenced by differences in educational systems and institutional contexts. Comparative assessment can thus be used to gain insight into the differences in student satisfaction and to find opportunities for improvement of the institution (Elliott & Shin, 2002; Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017).

This research compares the satisfaction of students at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep (RMUTK) and University of JINA. The research compares and contrasts the two institutions along five key areas: academic quality, effectiveness of lecturers, administrative services, learning facilities and technology, and student support and campus experience, to find out which are the most significant areas that contribute to overall student satisfaction. The multidimensional approach is in line with previous higher education studies that have noted that the overall satisfaction of students is the result of the interaction of academic and non-academic educational experiences (Elliott & Healy, 2001; Gruber et al., 2010; Helgesen & Nasset, 2007).

1.2 Research Problem

Universities continuously invest resources in improving academic programs, teaching quality, facilities, technology, and student services. However, institutional improvement cannot be effectively implemented without understanding how students evaluate these services. Differences in educational environments between universities may produce different levels of satisfaction. Nevertheless, overall satisfaction alone does not provide sufficient information for

university management. Administrators also need to identify which dimensions of university services contribute most strongly to students' overall satisfaction.

Accordingly, this research addresses two central issues: whether students from the two universities demonstrate different levels of satisfaction and which institutional factors significantly influence overall student satisfaction.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. To examine the level of students' satisfaction at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep and University of JINA.
2. To compare students' satisfaction between the two universities.
3. To examine the relationships between university service dimensions and overall student satisfaction.

1.4 Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

- 1:** What are the levels of student satisfaction at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep and University of JINA?
- 2:** Is there a significant difference in student satisfaction between students at the two universities?
- 3:** Which dimensions of university services significantly influence overall student satisfaction?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

- 1:** There is a statistically significant difference in overall student satisfaction between RMUTK and University of JINA.
- 2:** Academic quality has a significant positive influence on overall student satisfaction.
- 3:** Lecturer effectiveness has a significant positive influence on overall student satisfaction.
- 4:** Administrative services have a significant positive influence on overall student satisfaction.
- 5:** Learning facilities and technology have a significant positive influence on overall student satisfaction.
- 6:** Student support and campus experience have a significant positive influence on overall student satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Student Satisfaction in Higher Education

Student satisfaction is the students' perception of the experiences in their education and how well the university services and learning experiences fulfil their expectations (Elliott & Shin, 2002; Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017). It is a reflection of students' experiences of the overall value and quality of their university experience. Student satisfaction is multi-dimensional because during the students' academic experience they engage with many aspects of their university life, both academic and non-academic (Gruber et al., 2010).

Based on previous literature in higher education, it can be seen that there are several institutional factors that are related to student satisfaction, which are the academic experience, the quality of teaching, the curriculum, the reputation of the institution, learning resources, how efficient the administration, physical facilities, social environment, and student support services (Elliott & Healy, 2001; Gruber et al., 2010). Of these factors, teaching and academic experiences are of

special significance as students' relationships with lecturers constitute a key part of the educational process. Yet students also assess their universities based on their experiences with the administration, facilities, technology, academic support, and other services provided within the university (Gruber et al., 2010).

Students' satisfaction can also have significant implications for universities. Students' satisfaction could affect student retention, positive word of mouth, institutional loyalty and willingness to recommend the institution to other prospective students (Elliott & Healy, 2001; Helgesen & Nettet, 2007). Helgesen & Nettet (2007) for instance highlighted the link between satisfaction levels and loyalty to the university, indicating that satisfying experiences can deepen students' loyalty to their universities.

The satisfaction of students should not be taken as just an emotional reaction to the university life. Instead, it serves as a valuable measure of the performance of institutions, quality of education, and the effectiveness of university services (Elliott & Shin, 2002; Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017). Periodic surveys of student satisfaction can then be used as a tool for the university leadership to gauge strengths, weaknesses and plan for more effective student experiences.

2.2 Students' satisfaction with the quality of the service they receive in schools and academies.

This study is based on a theoretical foundation of part of the service quality theory, especially Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) SERVQUAL model. Perceived service quality is measured by five big dimensions according to SERVQUAL: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles. The model suggests that the quality of the service is judged by the user based on their expectations and perceptions of the service they receive (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Higher education is not a typical business service, however, the service quality principles are applicable to university management since students have many service providers and institutional systems during their studies. These interactions involve lecturers, administrative staff, academic advisors, etc., the library, classrooms, technological facilities, digital learning platforms, and other institutional resources (Gruber et al., 2010). The combined experiences of the academic and non-academic aspects of institutions are expected to shape their judgments of service quality and overall student satisfaction.

Therefore, applying service quality concepts to higher education is not limited to classroom teaching; it needs a more comprehensive view. Students can assess the effectiveness of administrative procedures, the attitude of the University staff to students' needs, the competence and confidence of lecturers, the attitude of lecturers to student support, and the physical conditions of the University, such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and technology tools. The dimensions are similar to the basic conceptualization of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Previous research has shown that the expectations of students towards the educational and institutional services are closely related to their overall satisfaction (Elliott & Shin, 2002; Gruber et al., 2010; Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017). Students who feel that academic programs, professors, administrative support, facilities and support services are comparable or superior to their expectations tend to rate their satisfaction as higher. Satisfaction can, in turn, lead to positive behavioral responses such as institutional loyalty and good recommendations (Helgesen & Nettet, 2007).

Hence, the service quality approach is extended to the higher education context, focusing on five dimensions namely: Academic Quality (AQ), Lecturer Effectiveness (LE), Administrative

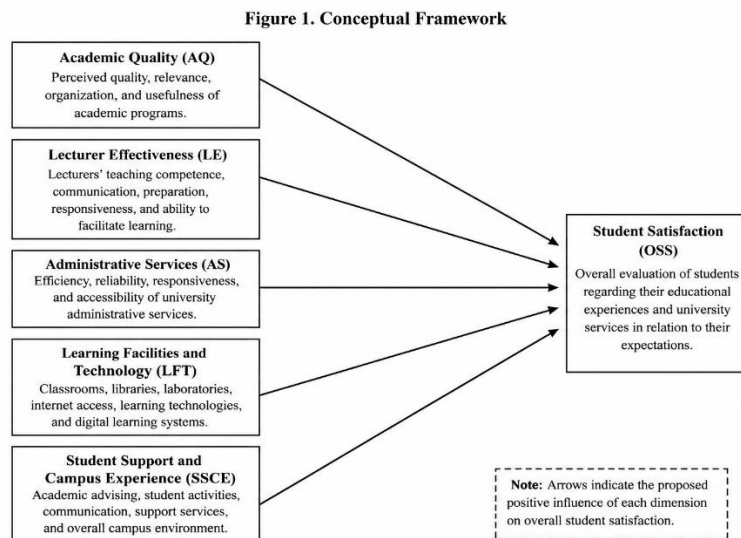
Services (AS), Learning Facilities and Technology (LFT) and Student Support and Campus Experience (SSCE). These dimensions are suggested to have a positive effect on Overall Student Satisfaction (OSS), and will be used as a platform for comparing the student experience at the two universities.

For this study, student satisfaction is conceptualized through five dimensions:

1. Academic Quality (AQ) – perceived quality, relevance, organization, and usefulness of academic programs and curricula.
2. Lecturer Effectiveness (LE) – lecturers’ teaching competence, communication, preparation, responsiveness, and ability to facilitate learning.
3. Administrative Services (AS) – efficiency, reliability, responsiveness, and accessibility of university administrative services.
4. Learning Facilities and Technology (LFT) – classrooms, libraries, laboratories, internet access, learning technologies, and digital learning systems.
5. Student Support and Campus Experience (SSCE) – academic advising, student activities, communication, support services, and overall campus environment.

These dimensions are expected to contribute positively to Overall Student Satisfaction (OSS).

2.3 Conceptual Framework



The university attended by the respondent is additionally used as a grouping variable to compare satisfaction levels between the two institutions.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a **quantitative comparative research design** using a cross-sectional questionnaire survey. The design was appropriate because the study sought to measure students’ perceptions numerically and compare satisfaction between two groups.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population consisted of students enrolled at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep and University of JINA.

For demonstration of the research analysis, an illustrative sample of 240 respondents was constructed:

Table 1

University	Sample	Percentage
MUTK	120	50.0%
University of JINA	120	50.0%
Total	240	100.0%

The data reported in this paper are simulated example data for academic demonstration purposes and should be replaced by actual survey data before the research is submitted or published.

3.3 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed to measure student satisfaction. The instrument consisted of two sections.

Section 1: Demographic Information

This section collected information concerning gender, age, year of study, university, and other relevant characteristics.

Section 2: Student Satisfaction

Items were measured using a five-point Likert scale:

1 = Very Dissatisfied

2 = Dissatisfied

3 = Neutral

4 = Satisfied

5 = Very Satisfied

The questionnaire measured five independent dimensions and overall student satisfaction.

Table 2

Variable	Code	Example Indicators
Academic Quality	AQ	Curriculum relevance, course quality, academic standards
Lecturer Effectiveness	LE	Teaching quality, knowledge, communication, responsiveness
Administrative Services	AS	Efficiency, accessibility, communication, responsiveness
Learning Facilities and Technology	LFT	Classrooms, library, internet, technology
Student Support and Campus Experience	SSCE	Advising, activities, support, campus environment
Overall Student Satisfaction	OSS	Overall satisfaction, expectations, recommendation

3.4 Reliability of the Instrument

Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate internal consistency. For the illustrative dataset, all constructs exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of .70.

Table 3

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Academic Quality	5	.86
Lecturer Effectiveness	5	.89
Administrative Services	5	.84
Learning Facilities and Technology	5	.87
Student Support and Campus Experience	5	.88
Overall Student Satisfaction	4	.90
Overall Instrument	29	.93

The results indicate satisfactory to excellent internal consistency.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage were used to summarize respondent characteristics. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine satisfaction levels. An independent-samples t-test was employed to compare satisfaction between the two universities. Pearson correlation analysis was used to investigate relationships among variables, while multiple regression analysis was used to determine the influence of the five service dimensions on overall student satisfaction.

Statistical significance was established at $p < .05$.

4. Results

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

The illustrative dataset consisted of 240 respondents. Of these, 120 students (50%) represented RMUTK and 120 students (50%) represented University of JINA. The balanced sample facilitated direct comparison between the two institutions.

The respondents represented different academic years and demographic backgrounds, thereby providing a broad illustration of student perceptions across the two institutions.

4.2 Students' Satisfaction at RMUTK

Table 4 presents the illustrative satisfaction results for RMUTK.

Table 4

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Academic Quality	4.18	0.55	High
Lecturer Effectiveness	4.25	0.50	Very High
Administrative Services	3.96	0.63	High
Learning Facilities and Technology	4.10	0.58	High
Student Support and Campus Experience	4.11	0.57	High
Overall Student Satisfaction	4.12	0.51	High

The findings indicate that RMUTK students demonstrated a high overall level of satisfaction ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.51$). Lecturer effectiveness received the highest mean score ($M = 4.25$), followed by academic quality ($M = 4.18$). Administrative services obtained the lowest score ($M = 3.96$), although the result remained within the high satisfaction category.

4.3 Students' Satisfaction at University of JINA

Table 5

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Academic Quality	4.08	0.57	High
Lecturer Effectiveness	4.03	0.60	High
Administrative Services	3.82	0.66	High
Learning Facilities and Technology	4.01	0.61	High
Student Support and Campus Experience	3.87	0.64	High
Overall Student Satisfaction	3.96	0.56	High

Students at University of JINA also demonstrated a high level of overall satisfaction ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.56$). Academic quality received the highest evaluation ($M = 4.08$), followed by lecturer effectiveness ($M = 4.03$) and learning facilities and technology ($M = 4.01$).

4.4 Comparison Between the Two Universities

An independent-samples t-test was used to determine whether differences between the universities were statistically significant.

Table 6

Variable	RMUTK Mean	JINA Mean	Mean Difference	t	p
Academic Quality	4.18	4.08	0.10	1.38	.169
Lecturer Effectiveness	4.25	4.03	0.22	3.09	.002**
Administrative Services	3.96	3.82	0.14	1.68	.094
Learning Facilities & Technology	4.10	4.01	0.09	1.17	.243
Student Support & Campus Experience	4.11	3.87	0.24	3.08	.002**
Overall Satisfaction	4.12	3.96	0.16	2.32	.021*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

The illustrative analysis indicates that RMUTK obtained a higher overall satisfaction score than University of JINA. The difference in overall satisfaction was statistically significant ($t = 2.32$, $p = .021$).

Significant differences were particularly evident for lecturer effectiveness and student support and campus experience. However, no statistically significant differences were identified for academic quality, administrative services, or learning facilities and technology.

Therefore, **H1 was supported.**

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis indicated positive relationships between all five service dimensions and overall student satisfaction.

Table 7

Variable	Correlation with OSS (r) p	
Academic Quality	.68	<.001
Lecturer Effectiveness	.72	<.001
Administrative Services	.55	<.001
Learning Facilities and Technology	.61	<.001
Student Support and Campus Experience	.69	<.001

Lecturer effectiveness demonstrated the strongest bivariate relationship with overall student satisfaction ($r = .72$), followed by student support and campus experience ($r = .69$) and academic quality ($r = .68$).

These findings suggest that improvements in each dimension are associated with higher levels of overall student satisfaction.

4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive effects of the five service dimensions on overall student satisfaction.

Dependent Variable: Overall Student Satisfaction

Table 8

Predictor	β	t	p	Result
Academic Quality	.24	4.16	<.001	Supported
Lecturer Effectiveness	.29	4.88	<.001	Supported
Administrative Services	.11	2.05	.041	Supported
Learning Facilities & Technology	.14	2.53	.012	Supported
Student Support & Campus Experience	.25	4.31	<.001	Supported

$R^2 = .63$; Adjusted $R^2 = .62$; $F = 79.54$, $p < .001$

The regression model explained approximately **63% of the variance in overall student satisfaction.**

Lecturer effectiveness was the strongest predictor ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$), followed by student support and campus experience ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$) and academic quality ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$).

Administrative services demonstrated the smallest effect ($\beta = .11$, $p = .041$), although its influence remained statistically significant.

Accordingly, **H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6 were supported** in the illustrative analysis.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to compare students' satisfaction between RMUTK and University of JINA and to check for important factors that affect the satisfaction students had with their universities.

The findings indicate that overall, students at both schools are satisfied. Based on this finding, it is fair to conclude that both universities are seen positively on academic and educational services. However, the overall satisfaction score of RMUTK was moderately higher.

One significant discovery related to lecturer effectiveness is of interest. This had the highest satisfaction score of RMUTK respondents and was the most significant predictor of overall satisfaction score. This indicates that although digital technologies and institutional services become increasingly important to the student experience, lecturers are still vital.

Lecturing effectively requires more than the knowledge of the subject. Students can rate lecturers on clarity of teaching, communication, availability, responsiveness, feedback, learning activities and the ability to provide meaningful learning experiences.

Other factors that showed significant effects on satisfaction were student support and campus experience. The finding underlines the need to take an integrated approach to the whole student learning process, rather than just the classroom learning process. Academic advising, student activities, communication, institutional support, and campus environment can contribute significantly to students' perceptions of their university.

Another strong predictor was academic quality. Students believe that universities must offer them programs that are relevant to their lives, standards that are appropriate, programs that are organized, and learning experiences that can help them with their futures.

The learning facilities and technology also predicted satisfaction significantly. Current students are increasingly using digital learning platforms, digital services, online academic resources, technology-enhanced classrooms and electronic administrative systems. Investment in technology infrastructure can thus be a factor in positive student experience.

The effect of administrative services was the smallest, but still significant regression coefficient. Poor administration, lack of communication, registration problems, or cumbersome procedures may negatively affect students' perceptions even if the quality of teaching is good.

The results thus support a multi-faceted approach to student satisfaction. The management of academic quality, teaching, administration, infrastructure, technology and student support should take place simultaneously in universities, instead of taking student satisfaction as the result of one service.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This comparative study examined student satisfaction at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep and University of JINA. Based on the illustrative sample of 240 students, both universities demonstrated high levels of student satisfaction.

RMUTK achieved an overall satisfaction mean of **4.12**, compared with **3.96** for University of JINA. The difference was statistically significant at the .05 level.

The regression analysis demonstrated that all five proposed dimensions significantly influenced overall student satisfaction. Lecturer effectiveness emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by student support and campus experience and academic quality.

The study therefore concludes that student satisfaction is a multidimensional outcome influenced by both academic and non-academic university services.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthen teaching effectiveness.** Universities should provide continuous professional development focusing on innovative teaching methods, digital pedagogy, student-centered learning, assessment, and effective feedback.
2. **Enhance student support services.** Academic advising, career services, international student support, extracurricular activities, and student communication systems should be continuously improved.
3. **Improve administrative responsiveness.** Universities should simplify administrative procedures and expand digital service systems to reduce waiting times and improve accessibility.
4. **Maintain academic quality.** Curriculum content should be regularly reviewed to ensure relevance to contemporary professional and labor-market requirements.
5. **Invest in technology and learning facilities.** Universities should continue improving digital learning platforms, internet infrastructure, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and online learning resources.
6. **Conduct regular satisfaction assessment.** Student satisfaction surveys should be conducted periodically and incorporated into institutional quality assurance and strategic planning.
7. **Promote benchmarking between universities.** The two universities may exchange successful practices in teaching, student services, technology, and academic management.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations. First, the data presented in this paper are illustrative simulated data designed to demonstrate an appropriate research structure and statistical analysis. Actual empirical data should be collected before using the findings for institutional decision-making or publication.

Second, the study focuses on two universities, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could include multiple universities from Thailand, China, or other countries.

Third, future research could apply Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine direct and indirect relationships among service quality, perceived value, student satisfaction, student engagement, and student loyalty.

Qualitative interviews or focus groups could also be integrated with quantitative surveys to provide deeper explanations of why students are satisfied or dissatisfied with specific university services.

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