FACTORS AFFECTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SATISFACTION (ISS)

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Abstract

This research aimed to determine the Factors Affecting International Student Satisfaction. The populations of this research were international students who enrolled at the Undergraduate Program (S1) of XYZ University. A total of 91 samples were taken by using purposive non-probability sampling technique. Based on the results of previous studies, the researcher took eight (8) independent variables which were assumed to have influences on the dependent variable, International Student Satisfaction. The independent variables being discussed in this research were Education, Social Orientation, Economic Considerations, Safety, Image and Prestige, Technology, Accommodation, and International Student Services. The results showed that eight (8) independent variables simultaneously affect International Student Satisfaction indicated by the F test (simultaneous) with a very high level of significance (0.00a). The research model of this study suggested the level of the coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0768, which means that the research model could explain 76.8% factors affecting International Student Satisfaction at XYZ University. Meanwhile, the remaining 23.2% were explained by factors that were not included in this research. Based on the partial test (t-Test), XYZ University should focus on improving the following factors: Economic Consideration, Safety, Technology, Accommodation, and International Student Services.

Keywords: international student satisfaction, education, social orientation, economic considerations, safety, image and prestige, technology, accommodation, and international student services.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Kepuasan Mahasiswa Asing. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa asing yang tengah berkuliah di Universitas XYZ pada program S1. Sebanyak 91 sampel diambil dengan menggunakan metode non-probability purposive sampling. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian sebelumnya, peneliti mengambil 8 (delapan) variabel independen yang diasumsikan memiliki pengaruh terhadap variable dependen Kepuasan Mahasiswa Asing (International Student Satisfaction), yakni variabel Pendidikan (Education), Orientasi Sosial (Social Orientation), Pertimbangan Ekonomi (Economic Consideration), Keamanan (Safety), Citra dan Prestis (Image and Prestige), Teknologi (Technology), Akomodasi (Accommodation), dan Pelayanan Mahasiswa Asing (International Student Services). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 8 (delapan) variabel independen secara bersama-sama mempengaruhi kepuasan mahasiswa asing melalui uji F (simultan) dengan tingkat signifikansi sangat tinggi (0.00^a). Model penelitian yang terdapat dapat penelitian ini menunjukkan tingkat koefisien determinasi (R Square) sebesar 0.768 yang berarti bahwa model penelitian tersebut dapat menjelaskan 76.8% faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kepuasan mahasiswa asing. Sedangkan, 23.2% lainnya dijelaskan oleh faktor-faktor yang tidak disertakan dalam penelitian ini. Berdasarkan

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uji parsial, Universitas XYZ harus menitikberatkan perbaikan pada faktor Pertimbangan Ekonomi, Keamanan, Teknologi, Akomodasi, dan Pelayanan Mahasiswa Asing.

Kata Kunci: *kepuasan mahasiswa asing, pendidikan, orientasi sosial, pertimbangan ekonomi, keamanan, citra dan prestis, teknologi, akomodasi, dan pelayanan mahasiswa asing.*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Arambewela & Hall (2006), transformations within local Higher Educations all over the world have been undertaken to meet the advancement of technology and communication and the globalization era. Cubillo et al., (2005) in their research argues that the globalization of higher education sector has brought new competitors. Therefore, according to Sohail & Saeed (2003), marketing of higher education have become more important to universities across the globe where they engage in an intense competition to attract international students from overseas.

Indonesia, without exception, is undergoing the internationalization of tertiary education. Sawir (2010) stated that there was an increase of student mobility out of Indonesia at postgraduate stage. The growing outbound mobility is made possible by an increased provision of scholarships from Indonesia and also from overseas.

However, a data from United Nations shows a decreasing outbound student mobility ratio since 2002 as should in Figure 1:
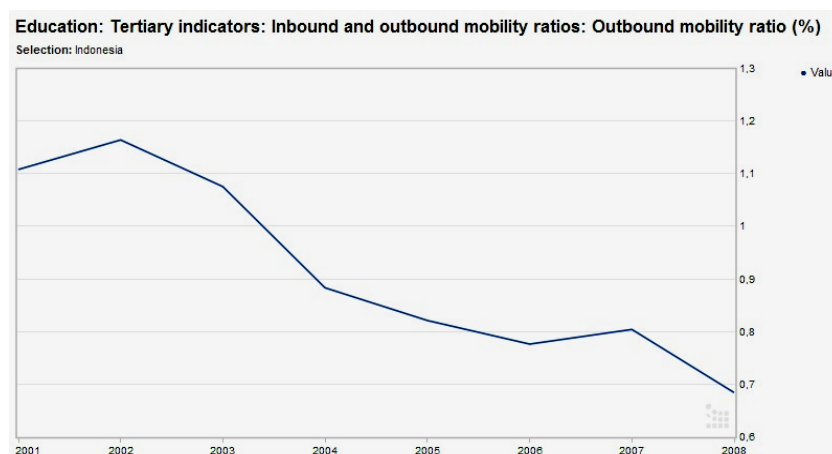

Figure 1. Outbound Mobility Ratio of Indonesia

Source: United Nations (citing: UNESCO Institute for Statistics)

XYZ University is one of a few universities in Indonesia which cater international students from several foreign countries. During the University's

marketing campaign, the marketers always claim that the University caters approximately 30% international students every year. However, recent independent research conducted by the University had shown different figure which was less than the above-mentioned percentage.

The management of XYZ University is forced to figure out as to why the percentage of international students is decreasing every year. They are afraid that, at this rate, the XYZ University will lose its international image in the public and in the international community.

According to a research conducted by Arambewela and Hall (2009), there are seven factors which influence international student satisfaction: education, social orientation, technology, economic consideration, accommodation, safety, and prestige and image.

Through this research, the researcher wishes to examine factors affecting international students' satisfaction. The researcher will use all factors that have been examined by previous researcher, Arambewela and Hall (2009): education, social orientation, technology, economic consideration, accommodation, safety, and prestige and image. And one additional factor "International Student Services" or ISS that the researcher gets from previous

research materials to name some, such as the survey conducted by Texas A&M University entitled "International Student Satisfaction Survey – 2008" and a research conducted by Volz (2009) entitled "International Promotion of Higher Education – Experiences and Challenges".

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Student Satisfaction
Satisfaction is the customer's evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether the product or service has met the customer's needs and expectations. (Mohamed, M. & Awang, Z., 2009; Zeithaml et. al. 2008, p. 104). Elliott and Shin (2002, p. 198) argues that student satisfaction as "the favorability of a student's subjective evaluation of the various outcomes and experiences associated with education. Student satisfaction is being shaped continually by repeated experiences in campus life". Furthermore, Munteanu, Ceobanu, Bobaˆlcaˇ and Anton (2010) in their research defined student satisfaction as an evaluative summary of direct educational experience, based on the discrepancy between prior expectation and the performance perceived after passing through the educational cycle.

2.2 Education

Ikponmwosa and Gaya (2010) argues that education is a process by which a people develop the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he/she lives. Education helps them exploit their physical, mental and emotional capabilities which are useful for them and their society. In the views of Fafunwa (1983), education is a positive effort made by a given society to accomplish certain objectives that are considered desirable in terms of the individual's needs as well as the needs of the society where the programme is based. Therefore, education is a powerful instrument for the development of man and the society (Oghuvbu; 2007).

2.3 Social Orientation

According to Yang (2007), Social orientation is defined as one's attempt to establish and maintain a harmonious relationship with and to cooperate with his or her surroundings so that collective and social rational goals and purposes can be achieved effectively.

Arambewela and Hall (2009) argues that many international students consider interaction with university lecturers, students of other nationalities, university staffs and the local community as part of their learning experience.

2.4 Economic Consideration

According to Byon (2008), Economic Consideration is defined as an individual's perceptions towards economic variables within the economic considerations construct. Further, Arambewela and Hall (2009) states that migration opportunities, casual jobs and cost of living are considered the most important variables.

Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) states that the cost of international education must be measured through the direct cost of fees, the cost of living and other indirect factors, such as the opportunity cost of studying at home or not studying at all.

2.5 Safety

According to Butler (2002), (*student*) *Safety is defined as* the process of structuring the learning environment that limits the possibility for physical and emotional harm. Arambewela and Hall (2009) argues that Safety is a major concern to international students and their families. The closer the student culture is to that of the host community, the easier the interaction and adjustment will be (Yang, Li, & Sligo, 2008; Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005).

2.6. Image and Prestige

According to Kotler and Fox (1995), the institution image is the sum of opinions, ideas, and impressions that prospective

students have of the institution. Arambewela and Hall (2009) argues that the prestige of a university is closely related with its high international image and students expect that such image and prestige would create better career opportunities for them. Furthermore, Mazzarol&Soutar (2002) states that the important factors to international students are the quality and reputation of the institution, the recognition of the institution's qualifications in their country, the international strategic alliances the institution had, the quality of the institution's staff, its alumni base and its existing international student population.

2.7. Technology

According to Kalanda (2005), Technology is defined as the application of knowledge, tools, and skills to solve problems and extend human capacity. International students expect modern computer equipment (Arambewela and Hall; 2009) and access to computer laboratories (Harvey, 2001).

2.8. Accommodation

In regard to accommodation, international students expect student accommodation to be made available by universities comply with minimum standards of comfort and at reasonable cost (Arambewela and Hall; 2009).

In Kayas' and Erkip's research (2001) on student housing setting at Bilkent University, Ankara, reveals that students' perception of their privacy led to an increase in the level of students' satisfaction with their living condition. Khozaei *et al.* (2010) posits that room size can indeed influence students' level of satisfaction.

2.9. International Student Services

In his research, Volz (2009) defined International Student Services (ISS) as services aimed at international students which mainly concerned with pre departure information and counseling, application and enrollment procedures, assistance with visa formalities, assistance in finding accommodation and going through arrival formalities, orientation and integration activities, assistance with language learning, academic assistance and tutoring, career guidance, and alumni network.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher employs quantitative research because it is much easier to explain and argue about the satisfaction of international students using solid and quantifiable data taken from the respondents by means of questionnaire. The sampling method used in this research is non-probability purposive sampling.

Multiple Regression analysis is used for the hypothesis testing. There are 8 hypothesis being tested, which are Education affects Student Satisfaction significantly (Ha1), Social Orientation affects Student Satisfaction significantly (Ha2), Economic Consideration affects Student Satisfaction significantly (Ha3), Safety affects Student Satisfaction significantly (Ha4), Image and Prestige affects Student Satisfaction significantly (Ha5), Technology affects Student Satisfaction significantly (Ha6), Accommodation affects Student Satisfaction significantly (Ha7), International Student Services affects Student Satisfaction significantly (Ha8) and lastly, all independent variables simultaneously affects Student Satisfaction (Ha9).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this research, the researcher tries to classify the respondents into several categories. This was initially done to get a better overview of the respondents of the research and less perhaps to derive something from the data. However, due to some limitations encountered by the researcher, an in-depth study of the implication of these categories cannot be

done in this research hence the profile provided here are served as an additional info to the outsiders only.

The respondents of this research based on their gender comprises of 47 male students and 44 female students (a total of 91 respondents). There are 23 respondents from Batch 2008, 36 respondents from Batch 2009, and 32 respondents from Batch 2010. The respondents of this research based on country origin as follows: 45 respondents were from China, 40 Respondents from Vietnam, 2 Respondents from South Korea, 1 Respondent from Malaysia, 1 Respondent from Singapore, 1 Respondent Mozambique, and 1 Respondent from Palestine. International students from Faculty of Economics has the highest proportion (43 students) in this reseach whereas international students from Faculty of Engineering are the second largest respondents (23 students).

Simultaneous Effect Test is used to see whether independent variables altogether or simultaneously affect dependent variable. This test can be seen from F test value of 33.971 and significance value of 0.000 as shown in table 1 below. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, all variables altogether affect Satisfaction

Table 1

Simultaneous Effect Test (F-Test)

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.031	8	4.129	33.971	.000[a]
	Residual	9.966	82	.122		
	Total	42.997	90			

a. Predictors: (Constant), ISS, ACC, SAF, TEC, ECO, SOC, IMA, EDU

b. Dependent Variable: SAT

The partial test (t test) as shown in Table 2 is to see the effect of each independent variable towards dependent variable in a regression model. In this research, this test is done to see whether the following independent variables: Education, Social Orientation, Economic Consideration, Safety, Image and Prestige, Technology, Accommodation, and International Student Services affect the dependent variable, Satisfaction, individually. The hypotheses of this t test are as follows:

Ho : $\beta1 = 0$, if sig. t > 0.05, accept Ho

Ha : $\beta1 \neq 0$, if sig. t > 0.05, reject Ho

Table 2

Partial Test (t Test)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.384	.268		1.434	.156
	EDU	.082	.063	.101	1.308	.195
	SOC	.098	.057	.127	1.708	.091
	ECO	.144	.059	.172	2.452	.016
	SAF	.165	.068	.177	2.429	.017
	IMA	.082	.061	.102	1.335	.186
	TEC	.134	.056	.158	2.372	.020
	ACC	.151	.061	.165	2.478	.015
	ISS	.250	.062	.288	4.044	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SAT

The explanations of each test are stated below:

1. Education (EDU)

   The t test result shows that the value of significance of Education (EDU) variable is 0.195 which is higher than 0.05. Based on the hypothesis test, there is no sufficient evidence to reject Ho1 or not to reject Ha1 at the significance level 0.195. It means that Education (EDU) does not affect Satisfaction (SAT) significantly. Since Education (EDU) variable does not affect Satifsaction (SAT) hence the management of XYZ University should direct its resources to other affecting factors based on the result of this research.

2. Social Orientation (SAT)

   The t test result shows that the value of significance of Social Orientation (SOC) variable is 0.091 which is higher than 0.05. Based on the hypothesis test, there is no sufficient evidence to reject Ho2 or not to reject Ha2 at the significance level 0.091. It means that Social Orientation (SOC) does not affect Satisfaction (SAT) significantly. Since Social Orientation (SOC) variable does not affect Satisfaction (SAT) hence the management of XYZ University should direct its resources to other affecting factors based on the result of this research.

3. Economic Consideration (ECO)

   The t test result shows that the value of significance of Economic Consideration (ECO) variable is 0.016 which is lower than 0.05. Based on the hypothesis test, there is sufficient evidence to reject Ho3 or not to reject Ha3 at the significance level 0.016. It means that Economic Consideration (ECO) does affect Satisfaction (SAT) significantly. Since Economic Consideration (ECO) variable affects Satisfaction (SAT) hence the management of XYZ University should focus its resources in improving this variable.

4. Safety (SAF)

   The t test result shows that the value of significance of Safety (SAF) variable is 0.017 which is lower than 0.05. Based on the hypothesis test, there is sufficient evidence to reject Ho4 or not to reject Ha4 at the significance level 0.017. It means that Safety (SAF) does affect Satisfaction (SAT) significantly. Since Safety (SAF) variable affects Satisfaction (SAT) hence the management of XYZ University should focus its resources in improving this variable.

5. Image and Prestige (IMA)

   The t test result shows that the value of significance of Social Orientation (SOC) variable is 0.186 which is higher than 0.05. Based on the hypothesis test,

there is no sufficient evidence to reject Ho5 or not to reject Ha5 at the significance level 0.186. It means that Image and Prestige (IMA) does not affect Satisfaction (SAT) significantly. Since Image and Prestige (IMA) variable does not affect Satisfaction (SAT) hence the management of XYZ University should direct its resources to other affecting factors based on the result of this research.

6. Technology (TEC)

   The t test result shows that the value of significance of Technology (TEC) variable is 0.020 which is lower than 0.05. Based on the hypothesis test, there is sufficient evidence to reject Ho6 or not to reject Ha6 at the significance level 0.020. It means that Technology (TEC) does affect Satisfaction (SAT) significantly. Since Technology (TEC) variable affects Satisfaction (SAT) hence the management of XYZ University should focus its resources in improving this variable.

7. Accommodation (ACC)

   The t test result shows that the value of significance of Accommodation (ACC) variable is 0.015 which is lower than 0.05. Based on the hypothesis test, there is sufficient evidence to reject Ho7 or not to reject Ha7 at the significance level 0.015. It means that Accommodation (ACC) does affect

Satisfaction (SAT) significantly. Since Accommodation (ACC) variable affects Satisfaction (SAT) hence the management of XYZ University should focus its resources in improving this variable.

8. International Student Services (ISS)

   The t test result shows that the value of significance of International Student Services (ISS) variable is 0.000 which is lower than 0.05. Based on the hypothesis test, there is sufficient evidence to reject Ho8 or not to reject Ha8 at the significance level 0.000. It means that International Student Services (ISS) does affect Satisfaction (SAT) significantly. Since International Student Services (ISS) variable affects Satisfaction (SAT) hence the management of XYZ University should focus its resources in improving this variable.

9. Test of Education (EDU), Social Orientation (SOC), Economic Consideration (ECO), Safety (SAF), Image and Prestige (IMA), Technology (TEC), Accommodation (ACC), and International Student Services (ICC) altogether

   Simultaneous effect test (F test) is done in a research to see if independent variables altogether affect dependent variable. In this research, the test is done to see if Education (EDU), Social

Orientation (SOC), Economic Consideration (ECO), Safety (SAF), Image and Prestige (IMA), Technology (TEC), Accommodation (ACC), and International Student Services (ICC) simultaneously affect Satisfaction (SAT).

Table 10 shows that the value of significance is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Based on the F test result, there is sufficient evidence to reject Ho9 or not to reject Ha9 at the significance level 0.000. It means that Education (EDU), Social Orientation (SOC), Economic Consideration (ECO), Safety (SAF), Image and Prestige (IMA), Technology (TEC), Accommodation (ACC), and International Student Services (ICC) simultaneously affect Satisfaction.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The performance level of each variable presented in this research is still below satisfaction (below 4 out of 7 Likert-Scales). Nevertheless, the overall satisfaction of international students at XYZ University is considered indifferent/neutral (4.55 out of 7 Likert-Scales) due to other factors not included in this research.

All independent variables presented in this research significantly and highly affect dependent variable (international student satisfaction) as shown in Table 10 (sig .000[a]).

Independent variables like Economic Consideration (ECO), Safety (SAF), Accommodation (ACC), Technology (TEC), and International Student Services (ISS) independently affects International Students' Satisfaction (SAT). On the other hand, independent variables like Education (EDU), Social Consideration (SOC), and Image and Prestige (IMA) do not affect the dependent variable, Satisfaction (SAT), significantly since their values are greater than 0.05.

The regression model presented in this research has value of coefficient determination (RSquare) equals to 0.768. It means that the variability of dependent variable that can be explained by the variability of independent variables is 76.8% whereas the rest of variability 23.2% is explained by other variables which are not included in the model.

The result of this research is largely affected by the two dominant respondents in this research which are Chinese students (45) and Vietnamese Students (40) hence its applicability and relevancy on international students from other countries

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(such as from South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia) is subject for future study.

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