

Evaluating the Quality of Teaching and Learning at Lincoln University from the Student Viewpoint

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the quality of teaching at Lincoln University based on student perception. This research is a replica study of Abdul Hamid and Pihie (2004). The primary data collected from a questionnaire with 45 statements were organized into two categories: lecturer characteristics and lecturer competence. The result of the Cronbach's alpha reliability test was 0.97, and both descriptive and inferential statistics showed heartening findings. Respondents generally agreed and were satisfied with the quality of teaching, with no significant difference as a whole based on gender ($F= 0.69$, $p < 0.26$). The author offers the following solutions: lecturers should take more responsibility in improving the quality of teaching; the school's management should put lecturers under continuous development programs; and greater emphasis should be placed on student perception by examining their expectations about the quality of education. This research focuses on one private school, Lincoln University, which limits its generalizability. For future research, the author suggests utilizing text-based responses to gather rich data and narrative from the students' point of view, as well as assessing lecturers' academic degrees and contributions to the academic world, such as professorships and research.

Keywords: Quality of teaching, teaching methodology, lecturer characteristics, lecturer competence, student perception.

1. Introduction

According to *San Francisco Business Times*, Lincoln University was ranked the fourth largest program in the Bay Area for MBA enrollment in Fall Semester 2012, and was listed as the most affordable MBA program in the Bay Area in *4 International Colleges & Universities*. This mandated Lincoln University to achieve its message to increasingly active participation in regional development processes, and to offer a high-quality education appropriate for today's workplace. Throughout most of its history, which began in 1919, Lincoln University has contributed significantly to the human development process around the world, and its students have amassed considerable experience with teachers and teaching. One of the unique qualities of Lincoln University is its diverse student body, as well as faculty. In Spring Semester 2014, Lincoln University enrolled students from more than 52 countries. With its international orientation, Lincoln University aims to prepare students for a variety of professional careers in leadership and service in today's global workplace. Executing the institution's educational paradigms, and synthesizing innovative and traditional educational techniques, have led to outstanding professional opportunities for American and international students. Even though administrators in American universities, in general, and Lincoln University, in particular, use end-of-semester Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) questionnaires to determine faculty promotions, the interest of this study is instead to provide students with feedback about this school. Offering an objective perception of students' (as stakeholders) feedback will also help the university identify its strengths and weaknesses related to service quality. The results of this research are not meant to suggest an alternative to the end-of-semester evaluation, but rather to offer a complementary study with comparative information as its main goal.

2. Research Questions

- Q1. What is the students' perception of the quality of teaching at Lincoln University?
Q2. Is there any significant difference in the students' perception of the quality of teaching based on gender?

3. Research Objectives

The study aims to evaluate students' perception of the quality of teaching at Lincoln University. The following dimensions of a lecturer's quality of service will be discussed: appearance, fairness, helpfulness, friendliness, communication skills, and competence.

4. Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted to address various aspects of service quality in tertiary education. The early contribution to the literature about the quality of service was in 1971 when the special issue on student learning was published in *Higher Education* (Entwistle, 1991, p. 1). The main goal at that time was to understand the student's experience with learning. In (1985), Parasuramanet, Zeithaml, and Berry listed ten dimensions of service quality which can be applied to any kind of service. These dimensions, known as the SERVQUAL, are: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security and understanding. Carman (1990) used SERVQUAL to

measure service quality in business schools, and suggested that the dimensions of Parasuraman et al. were not generic. He recommended that those ten dimensions should be retained until factor analysis could illustrate them to be normal. So, Carman categorized the five dimensions of SERVQUAL by using an attitude model to test the effects of personal attributes on perception of quality (1990, p. 51). In (1993), Parasuraman et al. regrouped their ten dimensions into five service quality dimensions, which consisted of: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (p. 147).

To measure service quality in higher education, Cuthbert (1996) evaluated the influence of a set of dimensions—tangibility, assurance, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy—on student satisfaction of the quality of teaching. The findings revealed the average score of perception was higher than expectation on every dimension except tangibility. Although the score for tangibility was the highest of the five, Cuthbert did not confirm that tangibility was a major contributor toward the satisfaction of the students. Pariseau and McDaniel (1997) also used SERVQUAL to assess the quality of teaching. Their research indicated that in evaluating a teacher's knowledge, students placed significant weight on assurance and reliability, with courtesy and ability to inspire trust and confidence included as parts of the assurance dimension.

Hill Laurie and MacGregor (2003) found that both lecturer effectiveness and a solid student support system have a strong positive impact on the provision of quality education. They reported that lecturers could have linked theory with the real world by including more relevant assignments, and also found that open discussion helped students improve their critical thinking skills. The authors observed three teaching strategies: (1) delivery strategy and techniques in the classroom; (2) feedback to students via assignments; and (3) relationship with students in the classroom.

By utilizing the same idea from Cuthbert's research, O'Neill and Palmer (2004) showed that tangibility was the dimension with the highest overall performance score, but it was the lowest one according to student perspective as compared with process and empathy. Similarly, with a different approach, Abdul Hamid & Pihie (2004) examined students' perceptions of effective teaching and learning in business universities. To measure students' perceptions, they employed the following constructs: lecturers' characteristic, teaching methodology, and course relevance. They pointed out that the majority of respondents agreed that their lecturers possessed and exhibited qualities described in all three constructs. Likewise, Mahiah, Suhaimi, and Ibrahimal (2006) who used Parasuraman et al. dimensions to measure the SERVQUAL, assumed that enhancing a sophisticated understanding of reliability, empathy, tangibility, responsiveness and assurance would have a positive impact on customer satisfaction (Keelson, 2011, pp. 78-79).

This result has been supported by Nadiria, Kandampully, and Hussainal (2009), who examined student satisfaction in higher education and their perceptions on service quality. He showed that measurement of quality higher educational services has two dimensions: tangible and intangible. By studying the influence of different quality services on student satisfaction in the education sector, Malik, Danish, and Usman (2010) found that students were

completely satisfied with services of tangibility, assurance, reliability and empathy, but not very satisfied with parking facilities, computer labs, cafeteria services, and complaint handling systems. By replicating Abdul Hamid & Pihie (2004), Keelson (2011) evaluated the effectiveness of teaching and learning in business schools through the student perspective. He employed lecturers' characteristics and teaching methodology to measure service quality, and found that respondents had good perceptions of the quality of their lecturers, and their teaching methodologies. In addition, Muzenda (2013) diagnosed the impact of lecturer competence on student performance in higher education and training students. He pointed out that a solid knowledge set, teaching skills, good lecturer attendance, and teacher attitude have a positive correlation with student academic performance.

Like previous research, which evaluated the student perspective and measured their satisfaction regarding teaching quality based on the academic side more than the administrative side, this study focuses on service quality in the classroom where a teacher has control as a service provider. The two main dimensions used to determine quality are: (a) lecturer characteristics, which consist of appearance, fairness, helpfulness, friendliness, and communication skills; and (b) lecturer competence. To achieve this goal, this study adopts students as the evaluators because they are the recipients of the services.

5. Research Method

The research method adopted for this study was a survey design. The target population was all students who enrolled in Lincoln University in Spring Semester 2014. Of the 535 total students enrolled, 115 were excluded from the search because they were new students. Therefore, the total (target population) was 420 students who had completed at least one course in the school. A random sample of 160 students received the questionnaire. Of these, 47 were returned, 5 of which were invalid for analysis because of respondent error, i.e. they were unwilling to participate in the research project. Of the 42 valid responses, 13 (31%) respondents were females and 23 (55%) were males. Two (5%) were completed by undergraduates, while 34 (81%) were by graduate students. Descriptive statistics show that 6 (14%) respondents determined neither their gender nor their program.

Table 1. Respondents' demographic profile

Age	Male		Female		Total		Total
	Under-graduate	Graduate	Under-graduate	Graduate	Under-graduate	Graduate	
23-25	-	3(50%)	1(16%)	2(33%)	1(16%)	5(83%)	6(100%)
26-29	-	9(64%)	-	5(36%)	-	14(100%)	14(100%)
30-35	1(8%)	8(61%)	-	4(31%)	1(8%)	12(92%)	13(100%)
UP 35	-	2 (67%)	-	1(33%)	-	3(100%)	3(100%)
Total	1(3%)	22(61%)	1(3%)	12(33%)	2(6%)	34(94%)	36(100%)
unsure							6
Total							42

This study is a replica of Abdul Hamid & Pihie (2004); it examines two major factors associated with the quality of teaching from the student perspective at Lincoln University. The measuring instrument included 45 statements divided into two main groups. The first group focused on lecturers' characteristics, consisting of appearance, fairness, helpfulness, friendliness, and communication skills. The second group addressed teaching methodology, including lecturer competence. Survey participants responded using five-point scales, with items ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). After the questionnaire was completed and tested, it was distributed by hand to a survey sample group of students. Then, the students returned their completed forms in the allocated box in Lincoln University's Library. The primary data were collected over a period of two months, starting on February 1, 2014. The collected data were analyzed by utilizing spreadsheet software for both descriptive and inferential statistics.

6. Results

6.1 The Reliability Test

To measure the internal consistency of the construct's indicators, the author used Cronbach's coefficient alpha test for each instrument in a variable. The results of the reliability test for the six subgroups in this study are revealed in Table 2. All alpha coefficients were above 0.71. Comparing this result with previous research done by Abdul Hamid & Pihie (2004), it was confirmed that these instruments were reliable.

Table 2. Reliability of total and individual items

Factor	Constructs	Current study (2014)			Abdul Hamid and Pihie (2004)
		Number of Items	Construct Reliability	Cronbach's alpha	
Lecturer factors	Lecturer appearance	6	0.87		0.76
	Lecturer fairness	4	0.71		0.86
	Lecturer helpfulness	4	0.95		0.86
	Lecturer friendliness	8	0.91		0.91
	Lecturer communication skills	8	0.91		0.81
Teaching methodology	Lecturer competence	15	0.94		0.94
Lecturer's factors and Teaching Methodology		45		0.976	
Cronbach's alpha is: $\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum x_i^2}{n^2} \right)$ If $\alpha > 0.6$, the data are reliable.					

Cronbach's alpha coefficient in this research met the criteria of reliability because it is higher than 0.60. It can be concluded, therefore, that the respondents' answers to each of the constructs were reliable.

6.2 Lecturers' Characteristics

6.2.1 Lecturer Appearance

Lecturer appearance contains six items with mean scores ranging from 3.76 to 4.05. The overall mean of lecturer appearance was higher than neutral, which suggests that students were satisfied that Lincoln University faculty demonstrated a professional appearance.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of lecturer appearance (N = 42)

No	Item	Mean	SD
1	Lecturers show a positive attitude when teaching	3.98	0.81
2	Lecturers are well groomed	3.79	0.92
3	Lecturers are courteous when interacting with students	4.05	0.88
4	Lecturers come across as a person as well as a teacher	3.76	0.93
5	Lecturers respect students as individuals	3.86	1.00
6	Lecturers' voice level, rate of speaking and behavior are conducive to learning	4.02	0.75
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree			

The highest mean score was 4.05 (SD 0.88) for the item "Lecturers are courteous when interacting with students," while the lowest mean score was 3.76 (SD 0.93) for the item "Lecturers come across as a person as well as a teacher."

6.2.2 Lecturer Fairness

Lecturer fairness contains four items with mean scores ranging from 3.64 to 4.17. The descriptive statistics showed that the highest mean score was 4.17 (SD 0.96) for the item "Lecturers give freedom to students to choose their own group members," while the lowest mean score was 3.64 (SD 1.05) for the item "Lecturers are fair in grading students."

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of lecturer fairness (N = 42)

No	Item	Mean	SD
7	Lecturers' examination questions are clear and fair	3.88	0.80
8	Lecturers are fair in grading students	3.64	1.05
9	Lecturers give freedom to students to choose their own group members	4.17	0.96
10	Lecturers prepare examination questions that cover the important parts of the course	4.02	0.84
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree			

Since the average perception was above neutral, these results suggest that respondents believe that lecturers at Lincoln University were fair. One may conjecture from these results that, on a whole, students have good relationships with their professors. This may indicate minimal jealousy among students about grades, and minimal feelings of intimidation when interacting with teachers.

6.2.3 Lecturer Helpfulness

Lecturer Helpfulness contains four items with mean scores ranging from 3.32 to 3.95. The results demonstrated that the general perception was that teachers offered valuable help. Based on the analysis, the highest mean score was 3.95 (SD 0.79) for the item “Lecturers are willing to help students.” while the lowest mean score was 3.32 (SD 1.12) for the item “Lecturers use various teaching methods that help students to understand the subject.”

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of lecturer helpfulness (N = 42)

No	Item	Mean	SD
11	Lecturers provide feedback that encourage students' progress	3.36	1.22
12	Lecturers ask follow-up questions, and allow more time for response	3.52	1.06
13	Lecturers are willing to help students	3.95	0.79
14	Lecturers use various teaching methods that help students to understand the subject	3.32	1.12
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree			

The two items are of homogeneous polarities: the first item measured the professors’ readiness to help; the second item tested their teaching methods in making the subject easily understandable.

6.2.4 Lecturer Friendliness

Eight variables were used to measure the student’s perception regarding a teacher’s friendliness. The findings showed that students were pleased that their teachers were so friendly with them. The highest mean score was 4 (SD 0.99) for the item “Lecturers respect all students regardless of who they are,” while the lowest mean score was 3.07 (SD 1.11 and 1.12) for the items “Lecturers try to understand students' personal problems” and “Lecturers are concerned with the problem of students' absence.”

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of lecturer friendliness (N = 42)

No	Item	Mean	SD
15	Lecturers try to understand students' personal problems	3.07	1.11
16	Lecturers are concerned with the problem of students' absence	3.07	1.12
17	Lecturers are friendly with students	3.86	0.87
18	Lecturers encourage informal conversations with students	3.33	1.12
19	Lecturers are willing to meet students without appointments	3.57	0.99
20	Lecturers make students feel comfortable	3.88	0.86
21	Lecturers and students have mutual respect for one another	3.88	0.77
22	Lecturers respect all students regardless of who they are	4	0.99
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree			

6.2.5 Lecturer Communication Skills

Lecturer communication skills contain eight items with mean scores ranging from 3.40 to

3.98. Students, therefore, were satisfied with their teacher's communication skills in delivering lectures. The highest mean score was 3.98 (SD 0.84) for the item "Lecturers use simple language," while the lowest mean score was 3.40 (SD 1.13) for the item "Lecturers allow students to interrupt during lectures."

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of lecturer communication skills (N = 42)

No	Item	Mean	SD
23	Lecturers interact effectively with students	3.74	0.83
24	Lecturers are approachable for dialogues	3.74	0.80
25	Lecturers communicate proficiently	3.86	0.78
26	Lecturers use simple language	3.98	0.84
27	Lecturers are willing to accept students' views and comments	3.88	0.80
28	Lecturers allow students to interrupt during lectures	3.40	1.13
29	Lecturers have a sense of humor	3.62	0.93
30	Lecturers have good listening skills	3.95	0.74
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree			

The mean scores illustrated in Table 7 suggest that respondents perceived lectures according to their proficiency in English. The faculty tried to avoid using complex language, since Lincoln University enrolls students from countries where English is not the official/native language. The logical explanation for the lower mean score regarding the allowance of student interruptions during class (mean = 3.40) is their lack of proficiency in English. This hindered them from being more interactive with lecturers.

6.3 Teaching Methodology

6.3.1 Lecturer Competence

To uncover the student perception of lecturer competence, respondents were asked to evaluate fifteen variables to measure teaching methodology. The mean scores in Table 8 showed that students were largely in agreement on the competence level of their teachers.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of lecturer competence (N = 42)

No	Item	Mean	SD
31	Lecturers begin lessons with a review of previous lessons	3.59	0.99
32	Lecturers specify the learning objectives for every lesson	3.52	0.97
33	Lecturers provide suitable examples, demonstrations and illustrations of concepts and skills	3.83	0.91
34	Lecturers assign tasks which students can complete with a high rate of success	3.60	0.86
35	Lecturers ask questions that are appropriate to the students' level of ability	3.80	0.78
36	Lecturers vary the pace of instructional activities	3.80	0.84
37	Lecturers make transitions between lessons and instructional activities	3.55	0.83
38	Lecturers make sure that instructions for assignments are clear	3.90	0.96
39	Lecturers summarize the main points at the end of each lesson	3.52	0.99
40	Lecturers are knowledgeable on the subject matter	3.80	0.95
41	Lecturers are skillful in presenting their lessons	3.71	0.99
42	Lecturers stimulate students' thinking through problem-solving techniques and asking challenging questions	3.55	1.09
43	Lecturers are competent in handling students' questions	3.69	0.87
44	Lecturers are prepared to teach	3.76	1.10
45	Lectures give assignments of good quality to students	3.86	0.84
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree			

It is apparent that the highest mean score was 3.90 (SD 0.96) for the item “Lecturers make sure that instructions for assignments are clear,” while the lowest mean score was 3.52 (SD 0.97 and 0.99) for the item “Lecturers specify the learning objectives for every lesson,” and “Lecturers summarize the main points at the end of each lesson.” By comparing the highest mean score with the lowest, it can be concluded that the findings suggest that lecturers tried to make everything quite clear.

6.4 F-Test

In examining students' perceptions of quality factors regarding their program, no significant differences were found between male and female respondents as a whole ($F = 0.6917$, $p < 0.26$). This lack of difference based on gender was the same result as for the variables with both lecturer's factors and teaching methodology. For lecturer's factors, the test showed ($F = 0.60$, $p < 0.15$), while it presented ($F = 1.00$, $p < 0.50$) for teaching methodology. Based on these outcomes, it can be concluded that both males and females were in agreement about the quality of teaching and learning.

Unlike the overall results, the findings of individual variables indicated some significant differences based on gender in the respondents' perceptions of the quality of lecturer's factors only. For instance, the responses to the item “Lecturers come across as a person as well as a teacher” was significantly different ($F = 0.33$, $p < 0.025$). The mean score showed that males

agreed more that “Lecturers come across as a person as well as a teacher” than females (mean score: $F = 3.77$; $M = 3.80$). For the item “Lecturers provide feedback that encourages students' progress,” the significant difference was ($F = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$). The mean score, however, indicated that females were more satisfied than males in getting feedback from lecturers to encourage them (mean score: $F = 3.54$; $M = 3.04$).

As for examining friendliness, the F test showed some significant differences in students' perception of friendliness in three individual items: “Lecturers and students have mutual respect for one another,” “Lecturers respect all students regardless of who they are,” and “Lecturers encourage informal conversations with students” [$F = 0.34$, $p < 0.03$], ($F = 0.32$, $p < 0.02$) and ($F = 0.34$, $p < 0.03$) respectively]. The mean score illustrated that females were more satisfied than males regarding the quality of lecturer friendliness [(mean: $F = 3.92$, $M = 3.78$), (mean: $F = 4$, $M = 3.95$), and (mean: $F = 3.31$, $M = 3.22$) respectively].

7. Discussion

The quality of education largely depends, among other factors, on the quality of teaching and learning. This study aims to evaluate students' perception of the service quality at Lincoln University. Both descriptive and inferential statistics showed heartening findings. Respondents agreed and were satisfied with the quality of teaching with no significant difference based on gender. The results agreed with findings of some previous research, such as Abdul Hamid & Pihie (2004) who reported that the majority of their sample in Malaysia was satisfied with the overall service quality of teaching with low perception about some individual variables. Their inferential analysis, however, showed a significant difference based on gender and ethnic background. By replicating the study of Abdul Hamid & Pihie, Keelson (2011) pointed out that respondents had a positive perception of the quality and methodology of teaching in a business school in Ghana. The current Lincoln University study and the findings of the Keelson (2011) study agreed that there was no significant difference as a whole based on gender, but there were significant differences on some individual variables.

7.1 Lecturer Factors

7.1.1 Narrative of Lecturer Appearance

The study indicated that respondents were in major agreement on lecturer appearance. This result helps teachers create conducive environments for teaching. With a supportive environment, students can develop their sense of belonging and feel more comfortable making contributions. So, lecturers should make more effort to encourage students to be more effective in the interactive environment. It follows that if students possess a positive attitude about the quality of their teachers' appearance, the tendency to exchange their ideas and reveal their lack of understanding will be higher. Not only this, but also they will share their suggestions without feeling embarrassed or humiliated because they know that the reaction from lecturers when asking a question is as important as the answer they obtain.

7.1.2 Narrative of Lecturer Fairness

We know that the trust between student and teacher plays a big role in effective learning; heartening findings confirmed that various dimensions in perceived fairness have a positive influence on student satisfaction. Students responded in resounding agreement on lecturer fairness, showing satisfaction with their instructors and grades. This can make students more courteous, since they feel that their teachers are fair in evaluating their performance. However, if they felt deprived from their deserved grades, they may try to cheat to get what they think is their just due. To apply these results, therefore, to daily instructional settings, the author suggests adopting an honesty and fairness policy as a core of educational philosophy in the classroom; the management of Lincoln University should require faculty to adopt this paradigm as a main goal.

7.1.3 Narrative of Lecturer Helpfulness

The results of the research have demonstrated considerable satisfaction with the overall service quality of lecturer helpfulness. Instructors in this study were described as cooperative with their students. This feature is very important for both teachers and students. By creating a cooperative environment in the classroom, students will be encouraged to interact more with their lecturers. This contributes to modifying the traditional educational style of indoctrination, where a teacher explains and a student listens, to a more critical thinking model, which is associated with discussion and debating. In fact, the success of the educational process depends on the lecturers' readiness to help. In this endeavor, the author suggests that lecturers at Lincoln University should be more sensitive to ways they can constructively help students to learn better. This suggestion is consistent with those who stated that students are greatly influenced by teachers who coordinate with them more often (Malik, Danish, & Usman, 2010).

7.1.4 Narrative of Lecturer Friendliness

Research concluded that lecturers were friendly with their students. Respondents emphasized by the highest mean score that teachers respect them regardless of who they are. The significance of lecturer friendliness is that teachers' performance can be extended outside of the classrooms so that students will be more motivated, loyal and better performers in their institution (Malik et al., (2010, p. 2). As mentioned, Lincoln University enrolled students from more than 52 countries, which presents some added challenges. International students often struggle with issues such as missing family, difficult financial situations, stress of learning new skills and languages, all in addition to the academic demands. So, it is a very positive finding that lecturers try to understand student's personal problems, and help them to solve them. Despite the fact that this result has a sentimental dimension, the students' academic performance is enhanced based on the valued relationship between students and teachers. As one of the motivational requirements, lecturers should be compassionate and kind with their students. According to Malik et al. (2010), the majority of students get de-motivated if they find that the staff is not compassionate and kind.

7.1.5 Narrative of Lecturer Communication Skills

The research findings indicated that respondents were highly satisfied with their teachers' communication skills, particularly in that they use simple language and have good listening skills. Delivering lectures in simple English allows students to absorb the academic material, and obtain a more sophisticated understanding. It was indicated that language is the biggest obstacle to adjusting to life at a U.S. University. Unlike American students, international students have more stress from being immersed in the challenges of communication and new language (Tas, 2013, p. 1). Thus, it was logical that the highest mean score was 3.98 (SD 0.48) for the item "Lecturers use simple language." In addition, the descriptive analysis showed that the instructors supported the educational process through the use of interacting effectively, approachable dialogues, accepting student's viewpoints, and good listening skills.

Although Parr Bradley and Bing. (1992) who studied international students' adjustment patterns, indicated that international students were well-adjusted overall, with more positive than negative feelings, Lincoln University should recognize more that the body of knowledge associated with courses must be delivered more effectively because international students are more engaged in educationally purposeful activities than domestic students. This assumption is confirmed by Zhao, Kuh, and Carini (2005) who showed that international students were more active in the education process than domestic students.

7.2 Teaching Methodology

7.2.1 Narrative of Lecturer Competence

Like the lecturer factors, respondents were also in agreement about the methodology of teaching without significant difference based on gender. Results showed that lecturers prepared the essential teaching materials, including: reviewing previous lessons; providing suitable examples and homework; making clear assignments; and giving appropriate exams. This means that those teachers used a multidimensional construct, teaching toward transformation of their knowledge to learners. Also, teachers stimulated their students to use critical thinking through problem-solving techniques and by asking challenging questions. Thus, it is presumed that the lecturers' abilities to handle classes in an interactive environment, instead of a more traditional lecturing style, were very high. This indicates that lecturers have good communication skills, and that they are trying to motivate students to engage in critical thinking, which helps to improve the educational style from indoctrination philosophy to interaction model.

To apply these results, Lincoln University should recognize that students know very well how faculty manage their classes, and evaluate teacher competence in handling and delivering materials in class. In conjunction with this student feedback, lecturers should be evaluated also on their academic degrees and their contribution to the academic world, such as professorships and research.

8. Research Limitations

It is important to recognize the limitations inherent within this research. First, because this

study was conducted in only one private university, these results may not necessarily be extended to other universities. Second, because participants were not obligated to answer and return the questionnaire, the number of valid responses (42 questionnaires) was quite small and therefore too limited to make generalizations about the entire student body. Third, although the author has experience as graduate student and teaching assistant at this university, his experience was not used to analyze and discuss the research findings.

9. Implications of this Research

Having the opportunity to voice students' perception on the quality of teaching and learning in Lincoln University offered compelling findings. Their opinions contribute significantly to existing literature by providing background information about an international business school, which might be useful for international researchers.

Among other factors, this paper focuses on one aspect of service quality, that of teaching and methodology. Although measuring what takes place in a classroom is still a controversial issue, the most important implication for Lincoln University and its instructors are that they should target the components listed below:

First, this study contributes to and supports the results that were obtained from the Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) questionnaires for faculty promotion. So, Lincoln University should have a clear vision regarding students' perceptions of effective teaching methods and instructor characteristics.

Second, lecturers should take more responsibility in improving the quality of teaching, since they are the service providers, while the management of the school should put them under continuous development programs.

Third, to implement the former, it is strongly recommended that Lincoln educators may need additional industrial experience to update their theoretical business knowledge. This will allow them be able to link theory with the real word.

11. Application for Future Research

The data used in this paper were collected using the Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This cannot possibly be so equidistant to measure the true attitudes. Therefore, further study is suggested to utilize text-based responses to gather rich data and narrative from the students' viewpoints.

Student feedback about the service quality of teaching may help this school to evaluate lecturers' ability in handling and delivering materials in class, but it limits its ability to assess their academic degrees and their contribution to the academic world, such as professorships and research. Thus, future studies should address this important issue.

As noted previously, the main goal was to grasp the student's perception about the service quality in the education sector. This study indicated that the service quality provided by faculty matched the respondent's perception. The positive student perception should be explored further by examining their expectations. Studying what students expect about the

quality will provide a clear vision to enhance the service quality of education in this school.

12. Conclusion

This study was undertaken to scrutinize the quality of teaching and learning in a private, non-profit business school. The main result indicated that both male and female students have a positive perception of lecturers' characteristics and their methodology of teaching. This finding was broadly similar to those of Abdul Hamid & Pihie (2004) and Keelson (2011). It can be deduced that to improve the service quality of teaching, the school's management should put its faculty under continuous development programs. These results may not be generalized to other business schools. It might be instructive to conduct the same, or similar, study in other business schools so that a universal set of suggestions can be established to improve service quality in higher education.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Questionnaire Construct

Gender { } Male { } Female
 Age { } 20-22 { } 23-25 { } 26-29 { } 30-35 { } Above 35
 Concentration:
 { } International Business
 { } Finance Management and Investment Banking { } General Business
 { } Human Resources Management; { } Management Information Systems

Please circle the appropriate response in an honest and frank manner

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Lecturer appearance

1. Lecturers show a positive attitude when teaching 1 2 3 4 5
 2. Lecturers are well groomed 1 2 3 4 5
 3. Lecturers are courteous when interacting with students 1 2 3 4 5

4.	Lecturers come across as a person as well as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Lecturers respect students as individuals	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Lecturers' voice level, rate of speaking and behavior are conducive to learning	1	2	3	4	5
Lecturer fairness						
7.	Lecturers' examination questions are clear and fair	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Lecturers are fair in grading students	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Lecturers give freedom to students to choose their own group members	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Lecturers prepare examination questions that cover the important parts of the course	1	2	3	4	5
Lecturer helpfulness						
11.	Lecturers provide feedback that encourages students' progress	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Lecturers ask follow-up questions, and allow more time for response	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Lecturers are willing to help students	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Lecturers use various teaching methods that help students to understand the subject	1	2	3	4	5
Lecturer friendliness						
15.	Lecturers try to understand students' personal problems	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Lecturers are concerned with the problem of students' absence	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Lecturers are friendly with students	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Lecturers encourage informal conversations with students	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Lecturers are willing to meet students without appointments	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Lecturers make students feel comfortable	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Lecturers and students have mutual respect for one another	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Lecturers respect all students regardless of who they are	1	2	3	4	5
Lecturer communication skills						
23.	Lecturers interact effectively with students	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Lecturers are approachable for dialogues	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Lecturers communicate proficiently	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Lecturers use simple language	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Lecturers are willing to accept students' views and comments	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Lecturers allow students to interrupt during lectures	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Lecturers have a sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Lecturers have good listening skills	1	2	3	4	5
Lecturer competence						
31.	Lecturers begin lessons with a review of previous lessons	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Lecturers specify the learning objectives for every lesson	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Lecturers provide suitable examples, demonstrations and illustrations of concepts and skills	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Lecturers assign tasks which students can complete with a high rate of success	1	2	3	4	5

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35. Lecturers ask questions that are appropriate to the students' level of ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. Lecturers vary the pace of instructional activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. Lecturers make transitions between lessons and instructional activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. Lecturers make sure that instructions for assignments are clear | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. Lecturers summarize the main points at the end of each lesson | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. Lecturers are knowledgeable on the subject matter | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. Lecturers are skillful in presenting their lessons | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. Lecturers stimulate students' thinking through problem-solving techniques and asking challenging questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. Lecturers are competent in handling students' questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. Lecturers are prepared to teach | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. Lectures give assignments of good quality to students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Appendix

Appendix 1. Questionnaire Construct

Gender { } Male { } Female

Age { } 20-22 { } 23-25 { } 26-29 { } 30-35 { } Above 35

Concentration:

{ } International Business

{ } Finance Management and Investment Banking { } General Business

{ } Human Resources Management; { } Management Information Systems

Please circle the appropriate response in an honest and frank manner

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Lecturer appearance

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 46. Lecturers show a positive attitude when teaching | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. Lecturers are well groomed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. Lecturers are courteous when interacting with students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. Lecturers come across as a person as well as a teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. Lecturers respect students as individuals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. Lecturers' voice level, rate of speaking and behavior are conducive to learning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Lecturer fairness

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 52. Lecturers' examination questions are clear and fair | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. Lecturers are fair in grading students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. Lecturers give freedom to students to choose their own group members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55. Lecturers prepare examination questions that cover the important parts of the course | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Lecturer helpfulness

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56. Lecturers provide feedback that encourages students' progress | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. Lecturers ask follow-up questions, and allow more time for | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

response					
58. Lecturers are willing to help students	1	2	3	4	5
59. Lecturers use various teaching methods that help students to understand the subject	1	2	3	4	5
Lecturer friendliness					
60. Lecturers try to understand students' personal problems	1	2	3	4	5
61. Lecturers are concerned with the problem of students' absence	1	2	3	4	5
62. Lecturers are friendly with students	1	2	3	4	5
63. Lecturers encourage informal conversations with students	1	2	3	4	5
64. Lecturers are willing to meet students without appointments	1	2	3	4	5
65. Lecturers make students feel comfortable	1	2	3	4	5
66. Lecturers and students have mutual respect for one another	1	2	3	4	5
67. Lecturers respect all students regardless of who they are	1	2	3	4	5
Lecturer communication skills					
68. Lecturers interact effectively with students	1	2	3	4	5
69. Lecturers are approachable for dialogues	1	2	3	4	5
70. Lecturers communicate proficiently	1	2	3	4	5
71. Lecturers use simple language	1	2	3	4	5
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73. Lecturers allow students to interrupt during lectures	1	2	3	4	5
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75. Lecturers have good listening skills	1	2	3	4	5
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76. Lecturers begin lessons with a review of previous lessons	1	2	3	4	5
77. Lecturers specify the learning objectives for every lesson	1	2	3	4	5
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79. Lecturers assign tasks which students can complete with a high rate of success	1	2	3	4	5
80. Lecturers ask questions that are appropriate to the students' level of ability	1	2	3	4	5
81. Lecturers vary the pace of instructional activities	1	2	3	4	5
82. Lecturers make transitions between lessons and instructional activities	1	2	3	4	5
83. Lecturers make sure that instructions for assignments are clear	1	2	3	4	5
84. Lecturers summarize the main points at the end of each lesson	1	2	3	4	5
85. Lecturers are knowledgeable on the subject matter	1	2	3	4	5
86. Lecturers are skillful in presenting their lessons	1	2	3	4	5
87. Lecturers stimulate students' thinking through problem-solving techniques and asking challenging questions	1	2	3	4	5
88. Lecturers are competent in handling students' questions	1	2	3	4	5
89. Lecturers are prepared to teach	1	2	3	4	5
90. Lectures give assignments of good quality to students	1	2	3	4	5

