



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (IJEMP)

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EXPLORING THE TRANSFORMATION OF SERVICE QUALITY, TRAINEE SATISFACTION AND CONTINUOUS INTENTION TRAINING PROVIDER SERVICES

Amira Nur Syafiah Mohammad¹, Nik Syuhailah Nik Hussin^{2*}, Nadia Hanum Amiruddin³

¹ Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

Email: amirasyafiah94@gmail.my

² Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

Email: niksyuhailah@umk.edu.my

³ Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

Email: nhanum@umk.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 03.04.2025

Revised date: 20.04.2025

Accepted date: 22.05.2025

Published date: 30.06.2025

To cite this document:

Mohammad, A. N. S., Hussin, N. S. N., & Amiruddin, N. H. (2025). Exploring The Transformation Of Service Quality, Trainee Satisfaction And Continuous Intention Training Provider Services. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices*, 8 (30), 310-322.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEMP.830023

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Abstract:

The study explores the mediating effect of trainee satisfaction on the relationship between service quality and continuous intention among training providers in the East Coast region of Malaysia. Employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with a sample of 380 respondents, this research aims to provide insights into how trainee satisfaction serves as a critical link between perceived service quality and the intention to persist with training services. The results indicate that higher service quality significantly enhances trainee satisfaction, which subsequently mediates the relationship between service quality and continuous intention. These findings emphasize the necessity for training providers to prioritize service quality improvements as a strategic marketing approach to enhance trainee satisfaction and foster long-term engagement. By aligning marketing strategies with the insights gained from this study, training providers can effectively position themselves in a competitive educational landscape, ensuring sustained client relationships and improved service delivery.

Keywords:

Training Provider, Continuous Intention, Trainee satisfaction, Services Quality Dimension, and Expectancy Confirmation Theory

Introduction

The transformation of training providers in Malaysia has undergone significant changes from the colonial era to the present day. Research indicates that understanding the characteristics of quality that influence the intention to continue training services is essential for companies to effectively leverage limited organizational resources (O'Cass & Carlson, 2012). To enhance organizational performance, significant investment in employee training programs is a necessity. According to Festus (2014), training within organizations is not merely a learning process but a planned and goal-oriented learning opportunity. This process aims to assist employees in acquiring knowledge and skills deemed important by the company to achieve their objectives. Therefore, selecting appropriate and effective training programs is critical, as not all programs can achieve the desired outcomes (Awang et al., 2010). With this approach, trainees can ensure that they are not only training employees but also developing their potential comprehensively to face future challenges (Festus, 2014).

Trainee satisfaction is a crucial element that determines the success of training providers in Malaysia. Assessing this level of satisfaction not only reflects the effectiveness of training programs but also serves as a key indicator for evaluating the sustainability of training providers in a competitive market. Understanding customer needs and meeting their expectations is a critical step towards achieving increased productivity and continuous quality improvement (Jasmani and Sunarsi, 2020; Rozi, 2020). Studies show that a satisfying experience for customers is determined by how well their expectations regarding services and products are met, which serves as a foundation for building long-term relationships (Artiningtyas et al., 2014; Saputra, 2013).

In Terengganu, employer investment in training aligns closely with its manufacturing-driven economy, where 83% of firms prioritize technical upskilling programs under the ITPR 2021 framework. Employers favor 1 to 2-day workshops on automation and quality control, often conducted in-house to minimize downtime. This approach supports the state's transition to advanced manufacturing, with 68% of companies linking training participation to improved production efficiency metrics. Similarly, Pahang's employers focus on hybrid training models, blending agriculture best practices with eco-tourism service skills, as 72% of surveyed businesses report needing cross-sector competencies. The ITPR 2021 notes a rising trend in micro-credential programs (under 10 hours) for digital marketing in rural tourism SMEs, reflecting adaptive investment strategies.

Both states mirror Kelantan's preference for short-duration training but diverge in sectoral priorities. Terengganu's employers allocate 45% of training budgets to standardized technical modules, while Pahang directs 60% toward customized nature-tourism packages and precision farming techniques. This strategic variation underscores how regional economic landscapes, Terengganu's manufacturing hubs versus Pahang's agro-eco-tourism corridors, shape employer investment patterns. All three states demonstrate that targeted, flexible training directly supports workforce readiness, with Terengganu achieving 18% faster skill application rates and Pahang reducing tourism staff training-to-performance gaps by 27% since 2021.

This study seeks to investigate how different aspects of service quality influence trainees' intentions to continue using training services, with a particular focus on the role of trainee satisfaction as a mediating factor. By gaining insights into these relationships, training providers can better tailor their offerings to improve satisfaction and encourage ongoing

engagement.

Research Questions

There are some questions about this research:

Q1 : Does service quality have a significant relationship with the continuous intention of the training provider?

Q2 : Does trainee satisfaction have a significant relationship with the continuous intention of the training provider?

Q3 : Does trainee satisfaction have a mediating role in the relationship between service quality and continuous intention of the training provider?

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the factors influencing the continuous intention of employers to engage training providers, with a particular focus on the East Coast states of Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang. Specifically, the study aims to examine the relationship between service quality and the continuous intention to use training services, as well as the relationship between trainee satisfaction and this ongoing intention. Additionally, the research seeks to explore the mediating role of trainee satisfaction in the link between service quality and the continuous intention to utilize training providers. By addressing these objectives, the study intends to provide a comprehensive understanding of how service quality and trainee satisfaction collectively impact the sustained use of training services, thereby offering valuable insights for training providers to enhance their offerings and better support regional economic development.

Literature Review

The transformation of the East Coast region has been marked by rapid industrialization and economic diversification, necessitating a skilled workforce capable of adapting to evolving industry demands (Rahman & Aziz, 2021). Training providers play a pivotal role in this context, offering programs that bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills required in the workplace. These programs, ranging from technical workshops to professional certifications, are essential for both new entrants and existing employees seeking career advancement (Herman & Karin, 2010). The effectiveness of such training initiatives is closely linked to the quality of services provided by training organizations.

Continuous intention, often referred to as continuance intention, is a key concept in understanding individuals' willingness to repeatedly engage with a service or technology over time (Bhattacharjee, 2001). In the context of training and education, this refers to trainees' commitment to participating in further learning opportunities after their initial experiences. Research consistently shows that continuous intention is shaped by multiple factors, most notably the quality of service provided, trainee satisfaction, and the perceived value and relevance of the training (Zeithaml et al., 1996). When trainees perceive that their expectations are met or exceeded, their satisfaction increases, which in turn enhances their likelihood of continuing with future training programs. This relationship is well explained by theoretical frameworks such as the Expectation-Confirmation Model, which highlights satisfaction as a mediator between initial expectations and future behavioral intentions (Bhattacharjee, 2001).

Service quality is a critical determinant of both trainee satisfaction and continuous intention in the education and training sector. High service quality, encompassing dimensions such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy as outlined in the SERVQUAL

model, directly influences how trainees perceive their training experiences (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Studies have shown that improvements in these quality dimensions not only boost satisfaction but also foster a stronger commitment to ongoing engagement with training providers (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Conversely, poor service quality can significantly reduce loyalty and participation rates, underscoring the importance for providers to consistently meet or exceed trainee expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Furthermore, the integration of technology and flexible learning solutions has become increasingly important in enhancing continuous intention, especially as learners seek more accessible and adaptable training formats (Human Resources Corporation Malaysia, 2023). Training providers who effectively leverage these innovations, while maintaining high standards of service quality, are better positioned to retain trainees and encourage lifelong learning. Ultimately, by focusing on both the tangible and intangible aspects of service delivery, training providers can create a positive cycle of satisfaction and continuous intention, leading to sustained participation and improved outcomes for both trainees and the organizations they serve (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Trainee satisfaction is a vital factor influencing the effectiveness of training programs and participants' continuous intention to engage in further learning, shaped largely by the quality of services provided. Grounded in the SERVQUAL model, key service quality dimensions, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy significantly impact trainee satisfaction, which in turn mediates the relationship between service quality and ongoing training engagement (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This dynamic is especially pertinent in Malaysia's competitive training sector, where recent data from the Human Resources Corporation highlights a sharp increase in trainee participation, reflecting growing employer investment in workforce development (Human Resources Corporation Malaysia, 2023). Understanding and enhancing trainee satisfaction through high-quality, tailored training services is therefore essential for providers aiming to retain clients and support sustained professional growth.

Providing excellent service quality is crucial for obtaining an advantage over others in the services industry, claims Maula (2016). Some studies define service quality as expectations, while others define it as the service recipients' perceptions of the service and its presenter. A common concept in marketing is "expectation," which is widely applied to assess repurchase intention. For example, one of the most well-known theories in marketing, expectation–confirmation theory (ECT) (Oliver, 1980), looks at client expectations to assess repurchase intentions. Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy are among these elements, according to Odujobi (2010).

Theoretical Foundations: Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT)

Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT), introduced by Oliver (1980, 1993), serves as a foundational framework for understanding trainee satisfaction and continuous intention in the context of training services. ECT posits that satisfaction is an effective response resulting from the comparison between initial expectations and actual performance. When service delivery meets or exceeds expectations, satisfaction is achieved, thereby increasing the likelihood of continuous engagement (Oliver, 1993). In the training sector, ECT has been widely used to assess how trainees' expectations and experiences influence their ongoing participation in professional development programs (Shen & Tang, 2018).

Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Satisfaction

Service quality is recognized as a critical determinant of satisfaction and loyalty in the education and training sector (Cuthbert, 1996; Lien et al., 2014). The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), identifies five core dimensions of service quality: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Each dimension contributes uniquely to the overall perception of service quality:

- ***Tangibility*** : The physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel. Physical facilities, procedures, and processes: location, design, scale, furnishing, dependability of the facility, flexibility and flow of the processes, capacity balancing, flow control, and range of services (Yarimoglu, 2014)
- ***Reliability*** : The ability to perform promised services dependably and accurately. Reliability denotes the ability of training providers to deliver services as promised consistently. When trainees perceive that their training meets established standards and expectations, their satisfaction levels tend to increase (Mahapatra & Khan, 2007)
- ***Responsiveness*** : The willingness to help trainees and provide prompt service. This dimension is crucial in creating a supportive learning environment that encourages ongoing participation (Silvestri et al., 2017).
- ***Assurance*** : The term assurance dimension describes a training provider's expertise, demeanor, and capacity to instill confidence and trust, encompassing competence, credibility, and security. The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
- ***Empathy*** : The provision of caring, individualized attention to trainees. Dandis and Wright (2020) believe that empathy is the primary factor that influences attitudinal loyalty. Personalized attention from trainers can lead to higher satisfaction rates.

According to Ibrahim, Ab Rahman, and Yasin (2012), training providers' management must guarantee that the services offered will leave a favorable impression on their clients. Quality of service is a crucial component of education and training. Training providers can boost their market share and the efficacy of their service environment by providing high-quality services to enhance sales volume (Becerril-Arreola et al., 2017). In essence, satisfied trainees are more likely to have behavioral intentions. According to Valaei and Baroto (2017), satisfied service users are more likely to be willing to consider repurchasing or reusing a service than dissatisfied users.

Empirical studies have established a positive relationship between these dimensions and trainee satisfaction (Ismail, 2016; Lien et al., 2014). For example, Ismail (2016) found that responsiveness and assurance were particularly influential in shaping trainees' perceptions of service quality in Malaysian training institutions.

Service Quality, Trainee Satisfaction, and Continuous Intention

High service quality not only enhances immediate satisfaction but also fosters trainees' intention to continue engaging with training providers (Shen & Tang, 2018). Research in the East Coast region has indicated that improvements in service quality dimensions lead to greater satisfaction and a stronger commitment to ongoing professional development (Rahman & Aziz,

2021). This relationship highlights the strategic importance of quality management for training providers aiming to maintain their relevance and impact in a competitive environment.

When it comes to training services, satisfaction is a personal, subjective feeling that arises from contrasting the actual experience with what was anticipated. It affects the attitudes and accomplishments of trainees. The intention to continue is determined by service satisfaction. Despite their favorable opinions of the services provided by training providers, trainee might not use them in the future if trainee is not satisfied. The mediating role of trainee satisfaction in the relationship between service quality and continuous intention is critical in this framework.

Furthermore, the integration of ECT with service quality models provides a comprehensive understanding of how expectations, perceived performance, and satisfaction collectively influence trainees' continuous intention (Oliver, 1993; Shen & Tang, 2018). Training providers that consistently deliver high-quality services are more likely to cultivate long-term relationships with trainees, thereby contributing to regional workforce transformation.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study applies Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) (Oliver, 1980, 1993) to understand how service quality influences trainee satisfaction and their continuous intention to participate in training programs in Malaysia's East Coast region. The framework integrates the five dimensions of service quality, such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988), as key factors shaping trainees' perceived performance. According to the ECT, as illustrated in Figure 1, customers' intention to repurchase a good or service is greatly influenced by their previous experience with it (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Oliver, 1980).

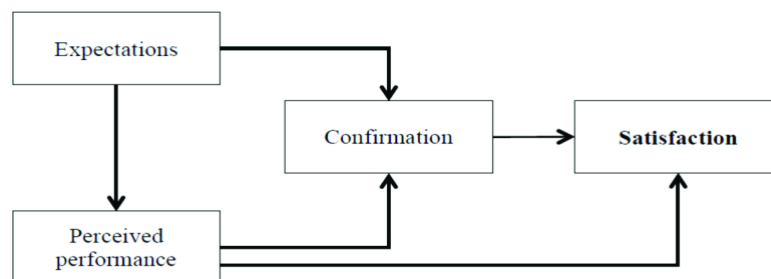


Figure 1: The Original Framework by Oliver

Sources: Adapted from Oliver (1980), which Illustrates the Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) Model Linking Expectations, Perceived Performance, Confirmation, And Satisfaction.

According to ECT, trainees form expectations prior to training, which are then compared with their experience (perceived performance). When these expectations are confirmed or exceeded, satisfaction is achieved, which in turn positively affects their intention to continue engaging with training providers (Oliver, 1993; Shen & Tang, 2018).

This study extends ECT by positioning trainee satisfaction as a mediating variable between service quality and continuous intention, highlighting the critical role of satisfaction in reinforcing ongoing training participation. Additionally, the framework acknowledges the cultural context of the East Coast region, where service quality dimensions such as empathy

and assurance are particularly significant in shaping trainees' perceptions and behaviors (Dandis et al., 2021). By applying ECT in this way, the study contributes to a deeper theoretical understanding of how service quality drives sustainable engagement in training services, supporting workforce transformation in the region.

Hypotheses

H1 : There is a significant relationship between tangible and continuous intention.

H2 : There is a significant relationship between reliability and continuous intention.

H3 : There is a significant relationship between responsiveness and continuous intention.

H4 : There is a significant relationship between assurance and continuous intention.

H5 : There is a significant relationship between empathy and continuous intention.

H6 : There is a significant relationship between trainee satisfaction and the continuous intention of the training provider.

According to Jehanzeb and Bashir's (2013) research, the correct training design and approach indicated how the training provider can effectively transmit the message to the trainees and how the learners captured the learning objectives. The degree to which trainees feel content with their training experience, influenced by their expectations and perceptions of service quality (Oliver, 1980). The overall assessment of the training services provided by training providers, including dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

This study explores the transformation of service quality and its impact on trainee satisfaction and continuous intention to use training provider services. It focuses on five key dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, and examines how each significantly influences trainees' ongoing commitment to engage with training programs. These dimensions represent essential elements of the training experience that shape trainees' perceptions of value and professionalism, ultimately affecting their willingness to continue participating in future training sessions.

Moreover, trainee satisfaction plays a central role in this transformation, acting as a critical mediator between service quality and continuous intention. When trainees are satisfied with the quality of services received, they are more likely to remain loyal, recommend the provider to others, and enrol in additional courses. Understanding these relationships allows training providers to strategically enhance their service offerings, ensuring higher satisfaction levels and fostering long-term engagement. This approach is vital for maintaining competitiveness and achieving sustainable growth in the dynamic training industry.

The proposed hypotheses aim to establish a comprehensive understanding of how service quality influences trainee satisfaction and, subsequently, their continuous intention to engage with training providers. Testing these hypotheses will contribute valuable insights into improving training services in Malaysia's East Coast region.

Methodology and Data

The methodology for this study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to investigate the mediating effect of trainee satisfaction on the relationship between service quality and continuous intention among training providers in Malaysia's East Coast region, specifically Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang. Data are collected using a structured questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL model, which measures five key dimensions of service

quality: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Respondents indicate their agreement with statements using a Likert scale, and the questionnaire is distributed online to trainees who have participated in HRD Corp-accredited training programs.

The unit of analysis is the individual trainee, allowing for a detailed exploration of how personal perceptions of service quality influence satisfaction and intentions for continued training participation (Cavana et al., 2021; Kothari, 2004). A purposive sampling technique is utilized to ensure the selection of participants with relevant experience, drawing from a population of approximately 64,096 trainees in the East Coast region, as reported by HRD Corp for 2023. The sample size is determined using GPower software to ensure adequate statistical power.

The survey was distributed to a total of 380 trainees across multiple training sessions, utilizing both online and paper-based questionnaires to maximize participation. Out of the 380 questionnaires distributed, 335 completed responses were received, resulting in an effective response rate of 88.16%. However, 33 responses were invalid, with 30 % missing values, while 10 surveys were blank; thus, only 292 were usable and valid. This high response rate is indicative of the trainees' willingness to share their experiences and insights regarding the training programs they attended. This aligns with findings from previous studies that suggest an acceptable response rate for survey-based research typically ranges from 60% to 80% (Draugalis et al., 2008; Cook et al., 2015). A higher response rate enhances the credibility of research findings and is often a focal point during peer review processes (Green et al., 2016).

Data analysis is conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess both the measurement and structural models, supplemented by descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. This approach enables a robust examination of the relationships among service quality, trainee satisfaction, and continuous intention, providing actionable insights for training providers (Faul et al., 2007; Palinkas et al., 2015; Kock & Hadaya, 2018). This method not only facilitates the examination of direct effects but also enables the assessment of indirect effects, such as those mediated by trainee satisfaction. In addition to PLS-SEM, researchers utilize SPSS for preliminary data analysis and hypothesis testing.

Data Analysis and Results

The descriptive analysis reveals that trainees perceive the service quality of training providers in the East Coast region very positively, with mean scores ranging from 4.0901 for Tangibility to 4.2332 for Assurance, indicating strong confidence in the providers' ability to deliver quality services. Low standard deviations (approximately 0.60 to 0.63) suggest consistent satisfaction levels among respondents. High mean scores for Reliability ($M = 4.2239$) and Responsiveness ($M = 4.2258$) further emphasize the value trainees place on dependable and timely service. Correspondingly, trainee satisfaction ($M = 4.2089$) and continuous intention ($M = 4.1583$) are also notably high, supporting the notion that positive perceptions of service quality significantly enhance trainees' commitment to ongoing participation in training programs. These findings corroborate prior research underscoring the critical role of service quality in fostering trainee satisfaction and sustained engagement (Kher et al., 2016; Mendoza et al., 2016), underscoring the importance for training providers to uphold high service standards to achieve favorable outcomes.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis Result

Construct	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Tangible	1.500	5.00	4.0901	0.60128
Reliability	2.00	5.00	4.2239	0.609
Responsiveness	1.00	5.00	4.2258	0.60141
Assurance	1.33	5.00	4.2332	0.60421
Empathy	1.00	5.00	4.1180	0.6335
Trainee Satisfaction	1.00	5.00	4.2089	0.60935
Continuous Intention	1.00	5.00	4.1583	0.6143

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) involves evaluating predicted relationships between variables by analyzing path coefficients within a specified model. Researchers formulate hypotheses about how constructs such as service quality, trainee satisfaction, and continuous intention are related, and then test these using SEM's estimation procedures. A significant path coefficient (typically $p < 0.05$) indicates support for the hypothesized relationship, allowing researchers to confirm direct and indirect effects, such as the mediating role of satisfaction between service quality and continuous intention.

Table 2: Result of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Value (β)	t value	P value	Decision
H1	T \rightarrow TS	0.234	2.720	0.007	Supported
H2	R \rightarrow TS	0.200	2.355	0.019	Supported
H3	RS \rightarrow TS	0.004	0.048	0.962	Not Supported
H4	A \rightarrow TS	0.347	4.102	0.001	Supported
H5	E \rightarrow TS	0.088	1.134	0.257	Not Supported
H6	TS \rightarrow CI	0.723	12.420	0.001	Supported

Table 2 shows the hypothesis testing results reveal significant relationships between several dimensions of service quality and trainee satisfaction, as well as the influence of satisfaction on continuous intention to participate in training programs in the East Coast region. Specifically, tangibility ($\beta = 0.234$, $t = 2.720$, $p = 0.007$), reliability ($\beta = 0.200$, $t = 2.355$, $p = 0.019$), and assurance ($\beta = 0.347$, $t = 4.102$, $p = 0.001$) were found to have a positive and statistically significant impact on trainee satisfaction. These findings suggest that trainees value physical facilities, dependable service, and the confidence conveyed by training providers, which collectively enhance their satisfaction.

Conversely, responsiveness ($\beta = 0.004$, $t = 0.048$, $p = 0.962$) and empathy ($\beta = 0.088$, $t = 1.134$, $p = 0.257$) did not show significant effects on satisfaction, indicating that these dimensions may be less critical in shaping trainees' evaluative judgments within this context. Importantly, trainee satisfaction strongly predicts continuous intention to engage in future training ($\beta = 0.723$, $t = 12.420$, $p = 0.001$), underscoring satisfaction's mediating role in fostering ongoing participation. These results align with prior research emphasizing the pivotal role of service quality and satisfaction in sustaining trainee commitment (Shen & Tang, 2018; Ismail, 2016). The findings provide actionable insights for training providers in the East Coast region to

prioritize enhancements in tangibility, reliability, and assurance to support workforce development and regional transformation.

Findings and Discussion

This study further demonstrates how tangibility, reliability, and assurance as service quality dimensions are not only statistically significant but also contextually relevant to the Malaysian East Coast training ecosystem. Tangibility reflects trainees' expectations for well-maintained classrooms, modern equipment, and conducive learning environments—key trust indicators that directly impact learning engagement and satisfaction. Reliability, with a beta of 0.200 ($p = 0.019$), highlights the importance of consistent delivery, adherence to schedules, and fulfilling promised outcomes—factors which build trainees' confidence in the provider's competence. Meanwhile, assurance, the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.347$, $p = 0.001$), underscores the role of trainers' knowledge and professionalism in fostering a credible learning climate where trainees feel supported and respected.

This pattern reflects the operational realities in Malaysian training institutions, where infrastructural adequacy and the perceived professionalism of staff are key trust signals influencing learner perception and satisfaction (Ismail, 2016). In particular, the emphasis on tangibility and assurance aligns with prior findings in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, where positive service encounters are critical to motivating continuous skill development. Moreover, trainee satisfaction emerged as a strong predictor of continuous intention ($\beta = 0.723$, $p = 0.001$), confirming its mediating role between service quality and ongoing participation. This supports the Expectation Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980) and reinforces the argument that positive service encounters directly shape loyalty and sustained engagement (Shen & Tang, 2018).

In the broader TVET landscape, these findings resonate strongly. The 12th Malaysia Plan (2021–2025) has specifically targeted TVET reform through upgrading programme quality, digital integration, governance realignment, and professional credentialing—aimed at improving the infrastructure, delivery, and image of TVET education. The establishment of the National TVET Council (MTVET) in late 2020 crystallized these efforts, coordinating financing, industry partnerships, branding, and data governance to enable industry-driven, quality-assured TVET delivery (Malay Mail, 2021). These policy shifts provide the institutional support underpinning the observed service quality effects.

Finally, the strong mediating role of trainee satisfaction ($\beta = 0.723$, $p = 0.001$) on continuous training intent aligns with Expectation Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980), suggesting that fulfilling or exceeding expectations leads to repeat engagement. In a region where lifelong learning is being championed, sustaining trainee participation is essential to human capital development and economic resilience. By contextualizing these findings within the East Coast Economic Region (ECER), this research contributes to the strategic dialogue on workforce readiness and lifelong learning. It emphasizes that training providers must go beyond standard service delivery to foster a culture of excellence that meets the expectations of diverse regional learners. Such efforts are essential to achieving Malaysia's human capital development goals as outlined in national blueprints such as the TVET Empowerment Plan (2021–2025) and the 12th Malaysia Plan (Malaysia Economic Planning Unit, 2021).

Conclusion

The study on the transformation of service quality, trainee satisfaction, and continuous intention in training provider services offers significant contributions to the East Coast region of Malaysia. By investigating how improvements in service quality, such as reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangible aspects, directly enhance trainee satisfaction, the study provides actionable insights for regional training providers. This focus on satisfaction is crucial, as higher satisfaction not only increases trust in providers but also motivates trainees to continue engaging with training services, thereby supporting the region's efforts to build a skilled and competitive workforce.

For the East Coast, these findings are particularly valuable in guiding training institutions to prioritize service quality improvements as a strategic approach to retain trainees and foster long-term relationships. The study highlights how tailored, high-quality training experiences can address the diverse needs of trainees, including those with prior negative educational experiences, by offering flexible and individualized support. This approach aligns with regional development goals aimed at modernizing skills and enhancing employability, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic advancement of the East Coast.

On a broader scale, the study's contributions extend to other parts of Malaysia by providing empirical evidence that can inform national policies and best practices in training and education. The research underscores the importance of service quality in shaping trainee satisfaction and continuous engagement, which are key factors for the success of workforce development initiatives nationwide. By validating these relationships, the study offers a framework that can be adopted by training providers across Malaysia to improve their service delivery and better meet the evolving needs of trainees. This is particularly relevant within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, where enhancing service quality is critical to increasing enrolment, graduate employability, and alignment with industry demands. Strengthening TVET institutions through such evidence-based insights supports the broader goal of building a future-ready, skilled Malaysian workforce.

In summary, the study not only advances theoretical understanding of the links between service quality, satisfaction, and continuous intention but also delivers practical recommendations for enhancing training outcomes. These insights are instrumental in helping both regional and national training providers design more effective, trainee-centered programs that contribute to Malaysia's broader goals of educational excellence and workforce readiness.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my deepest and heartfelt gratitude to my esteemed supervisors, Dr. Nik Syuhailah Nik Hussin and Madam Nadia Hanum Amiruddin, for their unwavering support, insightful guidance, and constant encouragement throughout every stage of this research journey. Their mentorship has not only enhanced my research skills but also enriched my academic and personal growth in profound ways. I am also sincerely thankful to Global Academy Excellence for the opportunity to share and publish my work on such a respected platform.

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