

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC SERVICES IN INCREASING STUDENT SATISFACTION OF THE FACULTY OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITAS PEMBINAAN MASYARAKAT INDONESIA MEDAN

Cut Sah Kha Mei Zsazsa* & Boby Indra Prayoga
Universitas Pembinaan Masyarakat Indonesia Medan, Indonesia
Email: cutsasa22@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study aims to determine how the implementation of academic services in increasing student satisfaction at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Universitas Pembinaan Masyarakat Indonesia Medan. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Research informants consist of several informants, namely the Academic Bureau and special students of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences. The data collection techniques use literature studies, direct observation and in-depth interviews. Based on the results of the study, it shows that the implementation of academic services in increasing student satisfaction at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at Universitas Pembinaan Masyarakat Indonesia Medan is optimal. Based on the results of the study seen from the research indicators, namely showing indicators of service quality, namely direct evidence (tangibles), reliability (reliability), responsiveness (responsiveness), assurance (assurance) and (empathy) have been implemented well. And indicators for measuring student satisfaction, namely service procedures, service requirements, ability/competence, fairness in getting service, certainty of service schedules, environmental comfort, and service security have also been implemented well.

Keywords: Academic Services, Quality of Service, Student Satisfaction.

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is crucial today, and therefore, it is crucial to provide academic services that satisfy students. The quality of academic services will impact students' learning on campus. Education for development, advancement, and sustainable development is a crucial part of the educational paradigm, which positions educational development as a long-term investment, meaning education serves not only current needs but also the needs of preserving the lives of future generations (Susilawati et al., 2024).

The need for higher education quality improvement management is defined as a professional public service implemented and directed to the maximum extent possible to deliver services that meet or exceed standards. This means that services provided by universities must be of high quality to earn public trust. This means, at a minimum, universities must have service criteria and standards or conduct service measurements for customers in order to improve the quality of their education. The quality control management system for higher education services is divided into two categories: internal and external. The internal scope includes oversight of higher education implementation by universities to

realize their vision and mission and meet the needs of stakeholders (customers) through the implementation of the Tridharma of Higher Education. External assessments are currently commonly conducted through quality standard assessments by BAN PT (National Accreditation Board for Higher Education) and ISO (International Organization for Standardization).

Customer satisfaction encompasses the difference between expectations and perceived performance or outcomes. One method used to measure customer satisfaction is the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) (Elliott and Heally, 2001) is a unique instrument that measures service quality based on student satisfaction and the importance of each dimension of service quality.

Elliot & Healy (2001) introduced the concept of student satisfaction, a short-term behavior resulting from the evaluation of educational services based on their experiences. Student satisfaction is considered a highly potent factor in generating long-term benefits (Fornell, 1992; Oliver, 1999; Rust & Zahorik, 1993; Gronroos, 1989). Failure to retain students or student dissatisfaction can lead to a decline in student numbers or dropout, reduced income, threatened employment of lecturers/staff, and the very survival of the institution or university (Marzo-Navarro et al., 2005). Educational institutions will continue to experience increasing pressure and demands, both from their customers and stakeholders, to close the ever-widening gap between institutional performance expectations and actual performance. Higher education requires special emphasis on assessing issues related to service quality and its measurement (Alam & Santika, 2021; Siagian, 2019; Suroyo, Kurniatun, & Herningsih, 2022).

Service quality is realized through fulfilling students' needs and desires and accurately meeting their expectations (Masyita, 2020; Risnawati, Suharso, & Hartanto, 2022; Teisnajaya, 2021). Good academic service is a must for students to feel satisfied with what they receive. Good service forms a positive perception in each individual student. This perception will be followed by various actions of appreciation and recommendations for the university, which will impact the sustainability and competitiveness of the university now and in the future (Qonitha Meiriva & Indri Rachmawati, 2022; Sari, 2021; Shantika Martha, 2019).

According to (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2016), service quality is the level of expected excellence and control over that level of excellence to meet customer desires. Thus, there are two main factors that influence service quality: expected service and perceived service. If the service received or felt (perceived) If the service meets expectations, the service quality is perceived as good and satisfactory. If the service received exceeds customer expectations, the service quality is perceived as ideal. Conversely, if the service received is lower than expected, the service quality is perceived as poor. The quality of service depends on the service provider's ability to consistently meet customer expectations (Assyahri, Lanin, & Saputra, 2021; Bila & Assyahri, 2023).

Berry and Parasuraman (2004) state that there are five main dimensions for determining service quality: first, tangibles, second, reliability, third, responsiveness, fourth, assurance, and fifth, empathy. Furthermore, Kotler (in Ruslan, 2014) explains that there are five main dimensions that determine service quality that can be used as indicators, namely: 1) Tangibles are facts related to the physical appearance of the building, representative office lobby space, adequate parking, cleanliness, tidiness, safety, and comfort in the building. The institution's environment is well maintained; 2) Reliability, namely the ability to provide services in accordance with the promises offered; 3) Responsiveness, namely the response or alertness in helping customers by providing fast, accurate and responsive services and being able to

handle customer complaints well; 4) Assurance, namely the ability of employees regarding knowledge and information about a product offered well, friendliness, attention and politeness in providing the best service guarantee; 5) Empathy, namely individual attention given to customers and striving to understand their desires and needs and being able to handle customer complaints well and appropriately.

Student satisfaction describes the level of expectations with the reality received in relation to the academic process at a university (Mokodompit & Luneto, 2019; N & Listihana, 2020; Rohani & Rianto, 2017).

Student satisfaction is a form of someone who gets a performance experience (or results) that have met their expectations, which include; 1) Time spent waiting to be served, 2) Speed and accuracy in serving students, 3) Accuracy in carrying out promises, 4) Friendliness and politeness of leaders, lecturers and employees in attitude and speech, 5) Knowledge of lecturers and employees in service, 6) Procedures in service and service adjustments, 7) Ease of leaders, lecturers and employees in contact, 8) Comfortable, clean service places for students, 9) Creating smoothness in service, 10) Friendliness of service influences student satisfaction (Marthalina, 2018). Meanwhile, according to Supranto (in (Nurmazizah, 2018) states that indicators in measuring satisfaction are: 1) Service procedures, 2) Service requirements, 3) Ability / competence, 4) Fairness in getting service, 5) Certainty of service schedule, 6) Environmental comfort, 7) Service security. Sukanto in Amat Jaedun (2011:4) states that the paradigm of client-oriented educational quality is defined as a measure of the extent to which the program and its outputs have met the needs and expectations of clients. There are three things that educational institutions need to understand to meet the needs and expectations of clients, namely: what the client's needs are, how to know the client's needs, and what makes them satisfied. Student satisfaction is determined by the quality desired by students, so that quality assurance is a top priority for every university, which is currently used as a benchmark for the competitive advantage of universities (Siti Maisaroh, 2005).

According to Priharto (2020) student satisfaction (consumers/customers) after comparing the services or products received according to and appropriate with what is expected and not only that, customer satisfaction is a customer's assessment of the use of goods or services then compared with other goods or services previously obtained. Efforts to achieve total customer satisfaction are not easy, because Mudie and Cottom (in Tjiptono, 2007), total customer satisfaction is impossible to achieve, even if only temporarily. According to Ekinici et al (2008), there are at least two general formulations of Satisfaction, namely, the first is Satisfaction felt only in certain transactions, and the second is satisfaction felt overall or cumulatively, while satisfaction is the result of evaluating events and behaviors that occur during a relationship. Kotler (2000), states that consumer satisfaction is a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment after comparing the performance or results felt compared to their expectations. Based on several descriptions, it can be seen that consumer satisfaction results from the comparison process between perceived performance and expectations which results in a disconfirmation paradigm. Therefore, it is very important to implement quality academic services to meet student satisfaction in higher education.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality

Service quality is understood as the level of service excellence perceived by service users after comparing the expected service with the perceived service. In the context of higher education, students act as primary customers who evaluate the quality of academic services through direct experience during the administrative and academic processes. The

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SERVQUAL model emphasizes that service quality is multidimensional and is determined not only by service outcomes but also by the interaction between service providers and users. If the academic service received meets or exceeds student expectations, the service will be perceived as high quality and satisfactory. Conversely, a mismatch between expectations and the reality of service will reduce perceived quality and negatively impact student satisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Wilson et al., 2016). Key indicators (SERVQUAL):

- Tangibles
- Reliability
- Responsiveness
- Assurance
- Empathy

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is an affective state that emerges as a result of students' evaluation of the academic service experience they receive compared to their initial expectations. This theory is rooted in the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, which explains that satisfaction is formed when service performance meets or exceeds user expectations. In the context of higher education, student satisfaction is not only related to academic outcomes, but also to the quality of administrative services, interactions with staff, and the comfort of the campus environment. Student satisfaction is strategic because it influences loyalty, student retention, and the image of the educational institution. Therefore, improving the quality of academic services is seen as a key instrument in building sustainable student satisfaction (Elliott & Healy, 2001; Oliver, 1999). Student satisfaction indicators:

- Service procedures
- Service requirements
- Officer skills/competence
- Fairness in receiving services
- Certainty of service schedules
- Environmental comfort
- Service security

Higher Education Service Quality Management

Higher education service quality management views universities as public service organizations obligated to meet internal and external quality standards. This theory emphasizes that academic service quality must be managed systematically through planning, implementation, control, and continuous evaluation. The primary focus of higher education service quality is meeting the needs and expectations of key stakeholders, particularly students as the direct users of academic services. Quality academic services are a crucial instrument in building public trust, increasing institutional competitiveness, and ensuring the sustainability of higher education. Therefore, academic service quality and student satisfaction are two interrelated constructs within the higher education quality management framework (Sukamto in Jaedun, 2011; Sallis, 2014). Indicators of academic service quality management:

- Standardization of academic service procedures
- Consistency of SOP implementation
- Evaluation and control of service quality
- Orientation to student needs
- Continuous improvement

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Silalahi (2012), this type of research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach and a qualitative perspective using data collection techniques, namely interviews and observations. Interactive data analysis, according to Miles & Huberman (in Sugiono, 2018), data collection techniques with observation, interviews, and documentation analysis consist of three simultaneous activity flows, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. According to Moleong (2017), the focus of this research is intended to limit qualitative studies as well as limit research in order to choose which data is relevant and which is not relevant (Moleong, 2010). The limitations in this qualitative research are based on the level of importance or urgency of the problem faced in this research. The focus of the research contains details about the topics or scope that will be revealed or explored in the research. The focus of the research is an outline of the research observations, so that the observation and analysis of the research results are more focused. Therefore, indicators are used to avoid discussions that are too broad and ultimately not in accordance with what is the title of the research. This research was conducted at the Indonesian Community Development University, Medan. The reason for selecting the research location was to determine whether the implementation of academic services has been optimal in increasing student satisfaction at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at the Indonesian Community Development University (UPM), Medan. The subjects of this research were informants, namely the academic bureau of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences and several students.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Academic Services

Based on interview results using theoretical indicators according to Kotler (in Ruslan, 2014), there are five dimensions that determine service quality that can be used as indicators:

Tangible Evidence

Tangible evidence is the physical appearance of the building, representative office lobby space, adequate parking, cleanliness, tidiness, safety, and comfort in the institution's environment, which is well maintained.

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau and students stated that they experienced the complete facilities at the Indonesian Community Development University (UPM), Medan, such as ample parking, air-conditioned classrooms and learning using infocus. The Academic Bureau also stated that supporting facilities for academic services have been provided adequately, such as well-organized service rooms, the use of a digital-based academic information system, and the availability of computers and internet connections to support student administrative services.

Reliability

Reliability is the ability to provide services that meet promises.

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that it always provides academic services according to the stated schedule and based on SOPs, so that students easily obtain accurate information, such as academic data processing, completing the Student Study Program (KRS), and issuing academic letters. All academic information can also be accessed through the Siakad application, which has comprehensive academic features. Students stated that the service provided is reliable and rarely experiences errors. However, some students reported that during certain periods when using the Siakad application, information delays sometimes occur, requiring them to go directly to campus to obtain the latest information.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness is the response or alertness in assisting customers by providing fast, accurate, and responsive service, as well as being able to handle customer complaints effectively.

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that it always strives to respond quickly to student needs and questions, both through face-to-face services and through communication channels. The bureau also stated that it is open to student input and complaints and is always responsive in resolving student academic issues. Students also stated that academic staff are quite responsive in providing assistance, especially when students encounter administrative issues, both face-to-face and through online communication. Each academic bureau officer always stays in the office according to service hours.

Assurance

Assurance is the ability of employees to provide good knowledge and information about the products offered, along with friendliness, attention, and politeness, in ensuring the best possible service.

Interview results: The Academic Bureau stated that service officers are equipped with adequate knowledge and understanding of academic regulations, enabling them to provide clear and reliable information. A polite and professional attitude is also a priority in providing a sense of security to students. Students stated that they generally feel confident in the information provided by the Academic Bureau. Officers are considered quite competent and able to explain academic procedures well.

Empathy

Empathy is the individual attention given to customers, striving to understand their desires and needs, and being able to handle customer complaints effectively and appropriately.

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that they strive to understand students' individual needs, including providing convenience or specific solutions tailored to the student's circumstances. As long as they do not violate applicable regulations, they always help. Meanwhile, students stated that most academic staff demonstrate a friendly and caring attitude toward the problems they face. Students feel they receive sufficient attention, although they hope that the personal approach to service can be improved.

Student Satisfaction

Based on interview results, Supranto (in Nurmazizah, 2018) stated that the indicators for measuring satisfaction are:

Service Procedures

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that service procedures have been clearly and systematically developed in accordance with campus SOPs and have been socialized to students through the Siakad application and student group communications. These procedures aim to facilitate students' orderly and efficient access to academic services. Students stated that the service procedures were generally quite clear and easy to follow.

Service Requirements

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that service requirements are established in accordance with applicable academic regulations and tailored to the type of service students require. These requirements are intended to ensure complete data and orderly administration. Any student who does not comply with the requirements will be strictly refused service by the bureau. Students stated that service requirements are relatively easy to

fulfill, although some students felt the number of documents required was sometimes quite extensive. Students hope for a simplification of requirements for certain types of services.

Staff Competencies/Abilities

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that the service staff have adequate competencies and understand their respective duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, staff receive regular guidance and coaching to ensure optimal service delivery. Students stated that staff are competent and able to provide clear explanations regarding academic services. Students feel supported by the staff's ability to resolve administrative issues.

Fairness in Service Receipts

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that services are provided fairly and equitably to all students, regardless of background or academic year. Every student has the same rights to services in accordance with applicable regulations. Students stated that they feel the service provided is quite fair. They assessed that staff serve based on order and administrative needs, although some students wished the queuing system could be more organized during peak service times.

Certainty of Service Schedule

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that the service schedule has been officially established and announced to students. Efforts are made to adhere to this schedule so that students can schedule their visits or request services without delays that could be detrimental to them. Students stated that the service schedule is clear and accessible. However, some students sometimes experience schedule changes or delays in services, especially during certain periods such as the beginning or end of the semester.

Environmental Comfort

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that efforts have been made to ensure a comfortable and conducive service environment, both in terms of cleanliness, tidiness, and supporting facilities. This aims to ensure students feel comfortable during the service process. Students stated that the overall comfort of the service environment is optimal, with complete facilities and plenty of chairs in the waiting room.

Service Security

Interview Results: The Academic Bureau stated that service security is a primary concern, particularly in maintaining the confidentiality of student academic data and order during the service process. Efforts are also made to ensure the service system is secure and in accordance with applicable procedures. For example, the results of mid-term and final exams, as well as student GPA, are only accessible and viewed by the respective parties. Students stated that they feel safe receiving academic services, both in terms of data security and the service environment. They assessed that the management of academic data and documents has been carried out effectively.

E. CONCLUSION

The results of this study, which focused on the implementation of academic services to improve student satisfaction at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at the Indonesian Community Development University (UPI), Medan, have been optimal. The researchers used limitations in this qualitative study based on the level of importance of the problem addressed in this study, with indicators, so that observations and analysis of the research results were more focused and did not result in overly broad discussions. Based on the results, as seen from the research indicators, service quality indicators tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy have been implemented well. Furthermore, indicators for measuring

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student satisfaction service procedures, service requirements, ability/competence, fairness in receiving service, certainty of service schedule, environmental comfort, and service security have also been implemented well.

Based on the above conclusions, recommendations are proposed as material for further research and for the Indonesian Community Development University (UPI) in the future to maintain and improve academic services that are more satisfying to students.

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