

# Perceived Service Quality and Higher Education Satisfaction of College Students in Panabo City, Philippines

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**Abstract:** The link of satisfaction of students on the quality of services of higher education have been studied for decades, with different degree of relationship established in different contexts. This study aims to contribute to this body of knowledge by determining which attribute of perceived service quality best influence higher education among college students in Panabo City, Philippines. A sample of N=420 students from higher education institutions in Panabo City, Philippines were the main respondents of a structured survey using two instruments on perceived service quality and higher education satisfaction. The respondents demonstrated a high level of perceived service quality and displayed a high level or higher education satisfaction. Furthermore, it revealed a significant correlation between perceived service quality and higher education satisfaction. Moreover, of the five indicators on perceived service quality, service attitude significantly influences higher education satisfaction.

**Keywords:** marketing, perceived service quality, higher education satisfaction, college students, descriptive-correlation research design, Philippines

## I. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions (HEI) are depending more on student satisfaction because of increased competition pressure in the education services sector (Farahmandian, Minavand & Afshardost, 2013). Student satisfaction is the amount of one's feelings relative to his expectations after assessing the performance or results he feels (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Whereas, academic service marketing focuses on how HEIs develop an effective service quality to the students for them to be satisfied, where HEIs is considered a pure service (Belay, 2019). Due to the growing competitiveness of higher education institutions (HEIs) and with the advent of technologies that make learning borderless, it is necessary for universities and colleges to remain up-to-date with components of student satisfaction that could have a real impact on the institution in an ever-growing competitive market (Francis, 2016).

Universities are also service providers – thus, they are faced with constant challenge (and criticisms) on their ability to make their service of satisfactory quality to satisfy their students. HEIs are aiming for giving their very best, wherein every effort is made to increase perceived service quality and satisfy students (Mang'unyi & Govender, 2018). With these in

mind, HEIs' service quality is commonly recognized as a crucial precondition for establishing a successful relationship with students (Daniel, Liben & Adugna, 2017). Thus, service quality remains one of the crucial components of enhancing the university's contributions to worldwide standards (Pring, 2012), but also to address stakeholders' expectations.

On the other hand, in the field of academic service marketing, HEIs in particular, the quality of service is not only necessary and important, but also a core constraint of excellence in education. In addition, positive expectations of service quality have been shown to have a significant influence on student satisfaction, so students who are satisfied enough would draw more students through the HEIs service provider (Alves & Raposo, 2010).

Unfortunately, researches focused on the student satisfaction to know the capacity of HEIs in terms of services quality, thus, the relation between these two variables remains unclear (Chandra, Hafni, Chandra, Purawati, & Chandra, 2019). HEIs, particularly in Panabo City in Davao del Norte, Philippines are still unable to attract their students and convince them not to transfer or change to any other school or university. Where, the main reason for this is the student's experience that they feel unsatisfied with the service provided by the HEIs in the said City. This is the main motivation therefore why this research has been done passionately. The important thing about this study is to help determine which service quality satisfies the students in their HEIs and how institution administers their employees to create an effective academic service marketing for the staff and faculty that make to both the student and society.

### *Research Objective*

This study determined which domain of perceived service quality best influences higher education satisfaction of college student in Panabo City, Philippines.

Specifically, it sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the level of perceived service quality in terms of:
  - 1.1 instructors;
  - 1.2 program director;

- 1.3 secretaries;
- 1.4 service attitude; and
- 1.5 competence development.
2. To assess the level of higher education satisfaction in terms of:
  - 2.1 academic quality;
  - 2.1 administrative service quality;
  - 2.3 library perceived service quality;
  - 2.4 supportive perceived service quality; and
  - 2.5 quality of providing career opportunities.
3. To determine the level of significant relationship between perceived service quality and higher education satisfaction.
4. To find out which domain of perceived service quality that best influences the higher education satisfaction.

### Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between perceived service quality and higher education satisfaction.
2. None of the domain of perceived service quality that best influences the higher education satisfaction.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study anchored the dimensions used in the ServQual theory of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) and it has served as a framework for research in services marketing for over two decades. In the study of Hanaysha et. al., (2011) service quality dimensions and plays significant role in customer (student satisfaction) while providing them the superior quality in service. There rare studies specifically measuring the effect of service quality on student satisfaction by instructor, program director, secretaries, service attitude, and competence development. It was argued that until or unless the educational sectors empathize with the student's intrinsic situation, they would never completely satisfy the students (Beaumont, 2012).

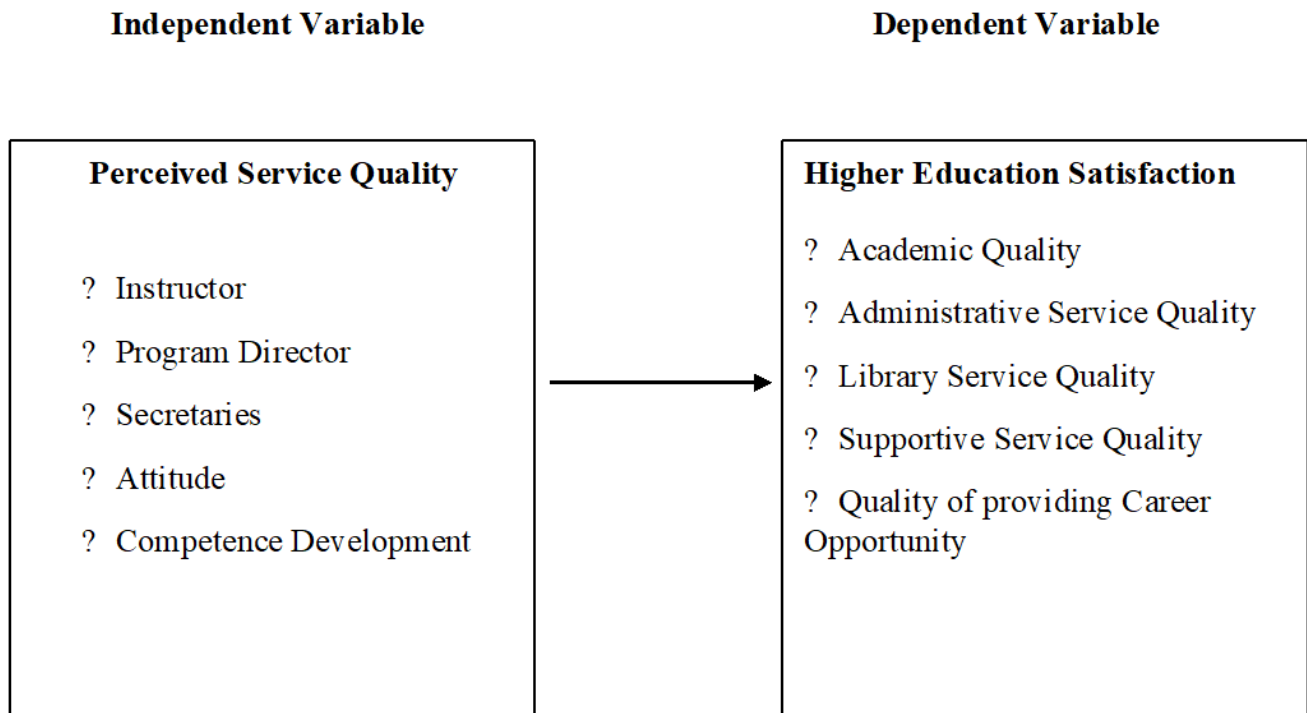
In higher education, the student's motivation is highly debated subject because it depends on student performance over all the prestige and development of that institution. Comprehension

of all the factors allows educational institutions to keep students in the premises of educational institutions and this immediately contributes to the growth of the professional academic environment (Malik, Danish, & Usman, 2010). All five dimensions of quality of service have their significance in the education sector and play a vital role in student satisfaction; whenever there is any deficiency in the quality-of-service aspect, it will eventually negatively affect student satisfaction (Hanaysha et al., 2011).

### Conceptual Framework

Presented in Figure 1 is the conceptual framework of the study. The independent variable of this study is the perceived service quality with the following indicators: *Instructors* are individuals who are engaged at a higher education institution to teach college-level classes. *Program directors* are the individual charged with overall leadership and administration of the paramedic educational program. *Secretaries* are people who are expected to be excellent communicator, organized, efficient, friendly, responsible and open to change and has to take charge when the boss is not available therefore she needs to know as much or more than her employer likewise in the academe. *Service attitude* is one important building block of a person particularly the students to achieve their aspirations successfully or sometimes experience hopelessness and dejection. *Competence development* is a combination of connected personality qualities: knowledge, abilities, skills, ways of acting, objects and processes defined with regard to the professional circle and needed for the high-quality professional activity.

The dependent variable of the *higher educational satisfaction* is the following indicators: *Academic quality* is how well an institution supports students in their learning that has great impacts on the acceptance of the students to academic institutions. *Administrative service quality* is the one who can provide students with thorough information, needs to be employed and determined that the initial desire of the students is to be guided properly by the administrative staff and their advice. *Library perceived service quality* is a collection of sources of information and similar resources, made accessible to a defined community for reference. *Supportive perceived service quality* is helping the students feel the sense of belongingness and resolve alienation. And lastly, *quality of providing career opportunity* is to assess the future of the students to guide and give some advices for their future in their different career.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm Showing the Variables of the Study**

### III. METHOD

#### *Research Design*

The study employed the quantitative research used descriptive correlation causal design as the study intends to determine the relationship between an independent variable which perceived service quality and a dependent variable which higher education satisfaction or outcome variable in a population (Satici & Uysal, 2015) and tend to test hypotheses about cause-and-effect relationships among the variables (Gonzales, 2016).

#### *Population and Sample*

The respondents of the study are fourth year college students from HEIs in Panabo City, where the focus of this study are three private schools. Stratified random sampling method was used in determining the sample representation of each HEI, with consideration of their population.

The primary criterion that taken into this account in administering the said technique was the respondents' willingness to answer the survey questionnaires. When the distribution of checklist had been done, appropriate instructions was explained to the respondents on how to answer the questionnaires. The respondents, however, were given the freedom not to participate for whatever reasons to leave the research at any time without any penalty.

#### *Research Instrument*

The research instrument used in this study were two contextualized questionnaires developed by Mendez, Parraga, Kara and Urrutia (2009) and Icli and Anil (2014). To provide items for response that are accurate and appropriate for a questionnaire, the panel members were requested to validate the instrument. The comments and suggestions of the research adviser and validators were followed to have the final draft of the research tool would be incorporated to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument. The reliability of the factors in the sampling was tested using Cronbach's alpha.

### IV. RESULTS

#### *Perceived Service Quality of HEIs in Panabo City, Philippines*

Illustrated in Table 1 is the descriptive statistics results on assessing the perceived service quality of HEI which has an overall mean of 3.67 with a descriptive rating of *high* indicating that all enumerated indicators were often manifested. Knowing that perceiving the service with quality is an important product of comparison among customer expectations before and after their involvement of the service (Ismail & Yunan, 2016). As shown in the table, *instructors* obtained the *highest mean* of 3.97 among all of the indicators which suggests that the measure is often manifested by the respondents. In which instructor is an individual who is engaged at a higher education institution to teach college-level classes (Francis, 2016). Following the instructors with the

highest mean is *program directors* obtaining an overall mean score of 3.75 among all indicators which suggests that the measure is often manifested by the respondents. Likewise, *secretary*, with a mean score of 3.63, was descriptively ascertained as *high*. Further, *service attitude* with a mean score of 3.49 also were descriptively ascertained as *high*. Lastly, *competence development* with a mean rating of 3.37 was identified moderate. It is an indication that the students have always manifested the statements in their HEIs.

Table 1. Perceived Service Quality of HEIs in Panabo City, Philippines

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Instructors	3.97	0.71	High
Program Director	3.75	0.76	High
Secretary	3.63	0.85	High
Service Attitude	3.49	0.90	Very
Competence Development	3.37	1.06	Moderate
Overall	3.67	0.691	High

*Higher Education Satisfaction of College Students*

Illustrated in Table 2 is the descriptive statistics results on assessing the higher education satisfaction of college students which has an overall mean of 3.53 with a descriptive rating of *high* indicating that all enumerated indicators were often manifested. With this result, higher education satisfaction can be described as a short-term attitude by assessing and evaluating the educational experience, resources and facilities of the students (Weerasinghe, Lalitha, & Fernando, 2017). The overall mean was the result obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which is appended in this study. As shown in the table, *academic quality* obtained the *highest mean* of 3.70 among all of the indicators which suggests that the measure is often manifested by the respondents. Quality is a sensitive part of all academe, that's why academic quality has great impacts on the acceptance of the students to academic institutions (Sokoli, Koren & Gutierrez, 2018). Academic quality also emphasizes the learning effect, that is to say, the development of knowledge and skills in subject areas (Saleem, Moosa, Imam, and Ahmed Khan, 2017). Following the academic quality with the *highest mean* is *quality of providing career opportunity* obtaining an overall mean score of 3.68 among all indicators which suggests that the measure is often manifested by the respondents. Likewise, *administrative service quality*, with a mean score of 3.59 and *supportive service quality* with a mean score of 3.58, was descriptively- ascertained same as high. Lastly, library service quality with a mean rating of 3.12 was identified moderate. This rate signifies that students have encountered a high sensible identification toward the HEIs.

Table 2. Higher Education Satisfaction of College Students

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Academic Quality	3.70	0.87	High
Administrative Service Quality	3.59	0.79	High
Library Services Quality	3.12	0.94	Moderate
Supportive Services Quality	3.58	0.87	High
Quality of Providing Career Opportunity	3.68	0.91	High
Overall	3.53	0.69	High

*Relationship between Perceived Service Quality and Higher Education Satisfaction of College Students*

Shown in Table 3 is the results of the pairwise correlation analysis via Pearson product moment correlation test. Based on the analyses, overall perceived service quality of higher education institution (HEI) significantly and positively relate with higher education satisfaction for academic quality ( $r=0.663, p<0.05$ ), administrative service quality ( $r=0.737, p<0.05$ ), library service quality ( $r=0.506, p<0.05$ ), supportive service quality ( $r=0.370, p<0.05$ ), and quality of providing career opportunity ( $r=0.654, p<0.05$ ) all indicators posted strong correlation. It was also found to be positively and significantly related to overall higher education satisfaction ( $r=0.765, p<0.05$ ), which rejects the first null- hypothesis of no significant relationship between the two. Individual pairwise correlations revealed that when each of the indicators of perceived service quality was estimated with the indicators (and the entirety) of higher education satisfaction R-values ranging from 0.183 to 0.671 have p-values less than 0.05. This means that perceived service quality indicators are positively and significantly associated with the measures of higher education satisfaction. Furthermore, the positive coefficients indicate a possible increment of the overall dependent variable when independent variables increase, which will be confirmed in a subsequent regression analysis.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis of Perceived Service Quality and Higher Education Satisfaction of College Students

Perceived Service Quality	Higher Education Satisfaction					
	Acad	Admin	Libr	Support	Career	Overall
Instructors	.479**	.536**	.376**	.354**	.505**	.578**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Program Director	.550**	.566**	.355**	.253**	.537**	.591**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Secretaries	.499**	.638**	.447**	.338**	.490**	.633**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)

Service Attitude	.514**	.671**	.460**	.408**	.603**	.691**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Competence Development	.671**	.612**	.439**	.183**	.561**	.651**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)
Overall	.663**	.737**	.506**	.370**	.654**	.765**
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)

\*\* p<0.01

*Influence of Perceived Service Quality Indicators on Overall Higher Education Satisfaction of College Student*

Exhibited in table 4 the result of the multiple linear regression analysis showing the predictive ability of the perceived service quality on overall higher education satisfaction of college students. The computed R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.600 and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.595 means that 60 to 59.5% of the variance of higher education satisfaction of students can be attributed to the entry of the five indicators of perceived service quality. This means further that 40 to 40.5% of the remaining variance can be further attributed to other variables not covered in the study. In addition, the F-measure of the regression analysis is 124.088, p<0.01. The result is significant that resulted to the rejection of the null hypothesis of no linear association between perceived service quality and higher education satisfaction of college students.

Among the five indicators of perceived service quality, four were found to be noteworthy predictors of overall higher education satisfaction of college students: instructors (β=0.169, t=4.180, p<0.05), secretary (β=0.223, t=4.682, p<0.05), service attitude (β=0.279, t=5.768, p<0.05), and competence development (β=0.229, t=5.118, p<0.05). This means that holding the one remaining non-significant predictors, a one-point increase of instructors, secretary, and service attitude and competence development may likely provide respective increase on Higher Education satisfaction of college students by 0.169, 0.223, 0.279 and 0.229. On the other hand, instructors posed beta statistics, which were found to pose non-significant influence on higher education satisfaction of college students, having p-values greater 0.05. Hence, all five dimensions of quality of service have their significance in the education sector and play a vital role in student satisfaction; whenever there is any deficiency in the quality-of-service aspect, it will eventually negatively affect student satisfaction (Hanaysha et al., 2011). Simply put, despite non-significance, the effect on higher education satisfaction is too negligible to be significant.

Table 4. Significance of the Influence of Perceived Service Quality Indicators on Overall Higher Education Satisfaction of College Students

Independent Variable (Indicators)	Dependent Variable			
	B	B	t	p-value
Instructors	.166	.169	4.180	.000**
Program Director	.030	.032	.668	.505
Secretary	.183	.223	4.682	.000**
Service Attitude	.214	.279	5.768	.000**
Competence Development	.149	.229	5.118	.000**
R <sup>2</sup>	0.600			** p<0.01 *p<0.05
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.595			
F	124.088			
p-value	< 0.01			

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the result on the study, perceived service quality of HEIs in Panabo City is often manifested. Out of the five indicator of perceived service quality, instructor has the highest level of perceived service quality. The level of higher education satisfaction is often manifested. Out of the five indicators, academic quality has the highest level of higher education satisfaction.

The study also established the significant relationship of perceived service quality indicators and higher education satisfaction. Of the five domains of perceived service quality that the best influence of higher education satisfaction is instructor, secretaries, service attitude and competence development, with service attitude as the best predictor of higher education satisfaction.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall level of perceived service quality which derived from high level of its five domains means that college student satisfaction seems to be related to the services of the HEIs they rendered to the students. The study can help other HEIs to develop services to give satisfaction to the students in the future that can help them to market their HEIs. With this, the administration of HEIs of Panabo City, with the coordination of instructors and staff, are urged to keep up a decent relationship to one another and to the students. It is important also to implement policy for the student to be aware of the environment of the institutions.

The study recommends developing the competencies of HEIs' instructors and staff. This can be done by giving seminars to the staff that help them to apply service quality to the student and can help develop their competence.

The study also recommends enhancing library services of the HEIs. It is important to improve the enough sources of

textbook, magazines, journal and online journals, and providing student-friendly environment.

Further studies are encouraged to establish the relationship of other factors that might relate or influence higher education satisfaction that are not accounted for in this study.

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