PERCEPTION OF QUALITY IN A PHILIPPINE PRIVATE ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT

This work is aimed at obtaining information and assessing the quality of service experience in a Philippine Private Academic Institution. This study used quantitative descriptive research method utilizing individual level data through adapted research instrument from Pamatmat et. al. (2018) utilizing the Service Quality Dimension. Percentage, Mean Score, Frequency Distribution, T-test and ANOVA were used for data analysis. The study sought the participation of 290 parents from a private academic institution in North Metro Manila. Using sampling process on snowball, 290 parents' respondents were derived using the Slovin's formula based form the total student population of 1,061 admitted during school year 2018-2019 from the private institution. The Service Quality Experience Instrument was found to be highly reliable (38 items; α = .873). The result highlights the five dimensions of service quality experience where Place of resident and civil status was significant with the five dimension of service quality. Sex was significant to responsiveness. Educational Attainment was significant to assurance. Monthly Income was significant to assurance, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness. Sex was significant to assurance, reliability and responsiveness. Tangible scored lowest possibly due to the concern on available parking spaces which might have impact the totality of the raw score for the tangible service quality dimension. Assurance scored the highest wherein the item that got the highest score was pertaining to the community involvement of the private academic institution.

Keywords: Service Quality, Education, Academic Institution, Private School, Quality Perception

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Service Quality to remains to be constant and imperative in all aspect of business. Companies contribute great significance to living up to clients' desires and expectations. Notwithstanding the effort of these companies to be mindful to its client's desire, still there are personnel in the organization that lacks customer service orientation (Kanji, Abdul Malek and Wallace, 1999). Eshghi (2008) defined quality of service as a general assessment to meet customers' expectations. Improving service quality would provide survival and growth of businesses to become competitive by satisfying their customers.

In the educational services industry, service quality made Private Academic Institution to be keen and conscious of their customers' perception on the value and the kind of service received. These private academic institutions continuously explore in making their services more appealing to students and parents as well (Mohamad Yusof, Hassan, Abdul Rahman, & Ghouri, 2012). It is innate that customers have their own perception of the kind of service. Thus, this should define the standards of the company of which it must adhere to the perceived quality of service of its customers, in order to obtain high satisfaction from and retain its customers.

Private Academic Institution, those who want to achieve competitive edge will start looking for innovative and imaginative ways to attract, maintain and promote greater strength relationships with its clients, both for students and parents. Teo (2001) suggests that the firms have to be dependent on Business Interaction and Mechanism.

The position of quality of service is very important in a private academic institution as they are expected to be more courteous, service orientated and provides a good environment for their learners. Proper decorum of personnel in the

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offices as well as faculty members should make an ideal representation as this will set the impression of the institution that they belong to.

This work aimed at exploring the understanding of parents regarding the quality of service observed in a private academic institution and the critical factors in the quality of service which contribute significantly to the satisfaction of the SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman et al (1988).

A. *Parent's Perception of School Services*

Parents' involvement in a child's education was consistently linked to the academic performance of a child. In order to learn, the learning environment should be safe amongst the learners, but little research has been done into the mechanisms that explain this association (Gobiga, 2017).

Oliver (1997) defined loyalty as a commitment of parents to subscribe their youngster in an institution that will induce behavioral change that can be used for their advancement. Skallerud (2011) stated that decision making and the evaluative processes allows underwriting parents to the institution, thus instilling loyalty towards the institution. Parents who are loyal to an institution continuously send their children to that institution. Having a strong connection with institution parents serve as advocates building a good school reputation. This in turn, provides opportunity for the institution to grow attracting new students as mentioned in the study of Li and Hung (2009). Good reputation correlates to quality and reduces the risk of loosing parents' loyalty. The study of Helgesen and Nesset (2007) provides a positive link between reputation and loyalty. Managing reputation is an important factor for attracting and retaining students whose influence might have significant because of their parents (Bush et al., 1998).

B. *Service Quality*

Businesses utilizes Service Quality as a unique selling proposition by understanding the underlying service quality dimensions perceived by its immediate clientele. Tam (2004) recognizes the consensus that service quality has always been in a form of customers' perspective. Lovelock and Wirtz (2011) quality of service characterized as reliably surpassing clients' desire. Perceived service quality subsequently interpreted as a degree to which clients see that services meet expectations.

According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2011) quality of service is composed of five dimensions, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Tangibility pertains for physical structures and general appearance of the work force in an organization. Reliability conveys an accurate and guaranteed delivery of service to clients in which its content is highly dependable. Responsiveness prompts the readiness of an organization to help clients in a swift manner. Assurance depicts the politeness and knowledge ability of staff can affect customers of a confident decision or outcome out of the service received. Empathy refers to the organization's capacity to provide personalized care to customer.

Service-oriented firms highly depends on the improvements of service quality as this serves as a metric for measuring success. Business organizations involved in the service industry must met at least the minimum requirements of their customer while being able to sustain competitiveness in the field. According to Aghdaie and Faghani (2012) service quality provision is a factor needed in planning marketing programs. Coetzee (2013) recognizes that superior service quality provides bearing in creating a more valuable business that essentially, ensures customer satisfaction, repetitive purchases and get customer loyalty. A firm's superior service quality provides competitive advantage that would highly be recognizable in the globalized and industrialized competitive market while the reverse of quality service place one's business to a more disadvantage position that can drive away customers.

C. *Service Quality in Private Academic Institution*

The applicability of SERVQUAL is very universal. This means that in the setup of the academic institution there is a suitability of applying the service quality model. Several studies were conducted by different researchers, who measured

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the quality of service at the academic institution. Several studies give different opinions regarding the importance of tangibility on service quality. Smith and Ennew (2001) the selection of experience of fulfillment between affective indignation and technological functionality was emphasized. A specific service used by a person could be measured by how effective they are based on age, appearance, courtesy and empathy-based technological functionality. A facility that is not up-to-date but still able to perform tasks can be considered negative if the individual expects an institution to provide updated facilities. A private academic institution's studies on service quality highlight academics more than administration considering the effectiveness of course delivery and mechanism in relation to teaching quality. Earlier research on service quality at private academic institutions often stressed academics more than resources, focusing mechanisms for the successful delivery of courses and the standard of training and courses.

The quality of service explains nearly 43 percent of the change in satisfaction of customers. Other hand, service quality is directly related to loyalty, and changes in level of service: can explain nearly 45 percent of changes in loyalty. Another such point is that the resultant indices of determination will be higher than other instances if the level of satisfaction factor enters the model. This test means that almost 80 percent of improvements in loyalty the satisfaction and the quality of service can be explained, though satisfaction plays a more essential role in this regard (Mosahab et al., 2010)

The contribution of this research enables the private academic institution to determine their strengths as well as those areas that needs further improvement. This also provides the institution a concrete evaluations of the kind of service quality that they have been providing to their customers for one year. Furthermore, the research output can be capitalized by the institution to address areas that needs to be improved.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used quantitative descriptive research method utilizing individual level data through adapted research instrument from Pamatmat et. al. (2018). The researchers made minor modification in the research instrument wherein in the Reliability service quality dimension, the question "Instructors, professors & lecturers do not cancel classes" was removed since class cancelation is not an option in the institution otherwise, substitution should be made while the problem "The overall cleanliness of the university is evident" was omitted in the Tangible Service Quality Dimension since it is similar and encompasses to the questions "The university buildings and grounds are well-maintained" and "the university atmosphere and decorations have visual appeal." The research instrument comprised of two parts – first is the respondents' profile and the second part deals with the observed Service Quality containing 38 statements with regards to the observed level of perception on reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness dimension of service quality. The Tangible subscale consisted of 9 items (α = .875), the subscale response consisted of seven things (α = .892), the subscale response consisted of seven things (α = .965), the insurance subscale was composed of 6 products (α = .901), and the Empathy subscale consisted of 7 items (α = .924). The Research Instrument It was found to be very accurate (38 items; α = .873).

The study sought the participation of 290 parents from a private academic institution in North Metro Manila. Using sampling method for snowball, 290 parents replied were derived using the Slovin's formula based form the total student population of 1,061 admitted during school year 2018-2019 from the private institution.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents mostly are from 41 to 50 years old. The majority of those who replied were women (69%) and resided mostly in Malabon (29%) and Caloocan City (28%).

The measures revealed that the respondents have high inclination towards Assurance among the Service Quality dimension. The result showed that amongst the dimensions of service quality, tangible

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scored the lowest expectation score (M=3.96, SD=0.73) which may be attributed to the "Parking spaces are available" item, which got the lowest score amongst the questions under tangible.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Measures	Mean	SD
Tangible	3.96	0.73
Reliability	4.12	0.62
Responsiveness	4.03	0.69
Assurance	4.23	0.63
Empathy	4.08	2.66

Table 2 shows the significant difference of Service Quality Experience which highlights, civil status was significant at five levels of service quality tangible, assurance, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness. Age was significant to responsiveness. Educational Attainment was significant to assurance. Monthly Income was significant to assurance, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness. Sex was significant to assurance, reliability and responsiveness.

Table 2
Significant Difference of Service Quality Experience

Variable	Variable	t	p	
Sex	Tangible	2.487	0.116	
	Reliability	8.037	0.005	*
	Responsiveness	5.714	0.018	*
	Assurance	5.942	0.015	*
	Empathy	3.288	0.071	
Age	Tangible	1.656	0.160	
	Reliability	0.991	0.413	
	Responsiveness	5.67	0.000	*
	Assurance	0.639	0.635	
	Empathy	1.721	0.145	
Civil Status	Tangible	5.671	0.003	*
	Reliability	4.556	0.011	*
	Responsiveness	9.365	0.000	*
	Assurance	10.74	0.000	*
	Empathy	7.693	0.001	*
Educational Attainment	Tangible	0.346	0.792	
	Reliability	1.577	0.195	
	Responsiveness	1.647	0.179	
	Assurance	3.632	0.013	*
	Empathy	0.646	0.586	
Monthly Income	Tangible	1.337	0.210	
	Reliability	2.814	0.002	*
	Responsiveness	2.637	0.004	*
	Assurance	2.652	0.004	*
	Empathy	2.106	0.024	*

A. Age was Significant to Responsiveness

The role of parents who are professional investors for an institution considering that they are whoever subscribes their children to the institution (Apostoleris, 2010). The behaviors which includes ensuring children to have breakfast, volunteering in school works, and holding local office roles determines the involvement of parents. Parents who participated in educating their children with the goal of supporting their academic and social success is functions being carried out depending on the maturity of parents as professional adults having a high degree of understanding.

B. Sex was Significant to Assurance, Reliability and Responsiveness

Blake (2010) highlighted that parenthood is an important contributor in a child's education and overall development. It is significant that parents interact with their children on school related concerns. Involvement at home of parents which is highly attributed to a mother in particular, is vital for parents who are quite a lot of people on of their children. This involvement helps children plan that positively strikes the overall academic achievement of a child.

C. Civil Status was Significant with the Five Dimension of Service Quality

Civil Status of the parent was found to be significant. Effective communication between home and school and vice-versa was a key factor for increasing students' performance. The participation of family really is a must to achieve the institution goal. Wedding couple that supports their children's performance can be tagged that it creates impact to the result and decision of the proponents.

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D. Educational Attainment was Significant to assurance

Parent's educational level is a good indicator to achieve good student. Parents who volunteer in school are sending a strong message that school is important for their children. Parents who are involved in school should probably be attributed to a better school performance for students, better attendance, and increase motivation towards schools and good behavior. This in return, parents who have high level of educational attainment may have a better understanding of what is happening in school and may be more compassionate for the short comings of the institution.

E. Monthly Income was Significant to Assurance, Empathy, Reliability, and Responsiveness

Families enroll their children in different nursery schools. Nonetheless, demand for private education in the Philippines is growing, due to increased parental frustration with public education. In a study, it was mentioned that parents chose private institution to enroll their children indicated a number of differences in service delivery in terms of management, teacher qualifications and conduct between public and private schools, indicating a higher quality of education in private institutions.

IV. CONCLUSION

The goal of this study is to use the service quality model to investigate the impact of the Perception of Quality in a Philippine Private Academic Institution. The following suggestions are given, based on the findings that would further improve the quality of academic institution following the service quality model:

1. Reliability

Subscribe to Parent their children to an educational institution because of the quality of education. In order to sustain parent's loyalty, it is important that the institution has a reliable reputation in terms of quality instruction. Teacher factor is also important for the institution as they are the communicator that provides positive and helpful environment for the parents and students.

2. Assurance

It is important that qualified employees (teaching and non-teaching) have the acquired knowledge to that will adhere to make sure that the institution provides courteous and friendly services. In addition, parents who entrust their children to the institution would like to feel assured that these school personnel would properly take care of their children. The school has an influence on the strength and quality of their involvement.

3. Tangible

Institution must work on improving school facilities to increase the appeal of the physical facilities and availability of access either online or through flexible office hours and dialogue with the teachers. Education environments also reflects the perception of parents towards safety. A well-maintained institution with adequate facility would likely be conducive to teaching and learning.

4. Responsiveness

Being responsive to all parents regardless of their status and concern is very significant that translate how an institution value time and quality with their clients. An institution with delay response would likely make the client or parent detached from the institution, feeling isolated. Thus being responsive addresses this ensuring that parents can rely on the institution should need arises expecting return of inquiry they made for whatever reason.

5. Empathy

The school should provide polite and positive responses to the parents and other individuals who visited the school. It is important that understanding the customer's needs and providing them with empathetic responses would be beneficial in maintaining a good relationship with the university in order to show that the university provides what is for the best interests for these students prior to getting them in the university.

Overall, the Private Academic Institution concerned in this study may further improve their services in the light of discussed dimensions of SERVQUAL according to the experience of the Parents and to be able to do a yearly service quality survey that will continuously improve the services of the institution, considering this process as one of the important monitoring and review to

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continuously improve the quality of service. Further study may be conducted that will involve school personnel, students and possible non institution member using the same instrument and to create a comparative analysis of the three respondents to determine as to what perceived quality each group of respondents is looking for in a private academic institution.

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