



Investigating the Relationship Between Service Quality and Student Intention Behavior in Higher Education Service Experience

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the relationship between service quality and student intention behaviour in Higher Education Institutions. This research used a correlational method with a quantitative approach. The online questionnaire was distributed to 110 State University of Surabaya students following the cluster random sampling. In this research, data gathered was analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis. The results showed a significant positive correlation between higher education service quality and student intention behavior. The better service quality provided linier withlinearnt intention behavior fobehaviourending and their intention to loyal in the institutton. This study's findings remind us to improve the quality dimension as a key factor in attracting and retaining students to student education Institutions.

Article History

Received: 23-06-2023
Revised: 10-09-2023
Accepted: 11-12-2023
Published: 10-01-2024

Key Words:

Service; Quality;
Intention; Behavior;
Higher Education.

How to Cite: Windasari, W., Rifqi, A., Setiawan, A., Andari, S., Zawawi, A., & Saari, N. (2023). Investigating the Relationship Between Service Quality and Student Intention Behavior in Higher Education Service Experience. *Jurnal Paedagogy*, 11(1), 113-119. doi:<https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v11i1.8285>



<https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v11i1.8285>

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Introduction

Current technological developments and globalization have an impact on all aspects of life. This rapid change needed full effort, especially in higher education. Higher education institutions (HEI) are currently more competitive, pushing the institution to survive and grow. HEI need to implement a marketing strategy for a sustainable organization. All higher education institutions apply marketing strategies to gain a competitive advantage (Temple & Shattock, 2007). The tight competition between HEI focuses on attracting new students by optimising the quality aspect. HEI prepare a quality academic system for the student to create a good service. Recently, many researchers have been interested in researching service quality in HEIs (Koni et al., 2013). In the activities at HEI, the involvement of students and staff will play a big role in the service quality experience. Students' perceptions of their experiences in higher education are important because higher education will continue to strive to provide attention and service to students (Khodayari & Khodayari, 2011).

Universitas Negeri Surabaya is in position 21 of the 100 best universities in Indonesia in 2023. UNESA's position has increased from ranking 23 in the previous year. By increasing the university ranking, UNESA can improve the quality of education. The quality of education is also related to the quality-of-service universities provide to their students. On the other hand, the total number of new students showed contradictory results. Overall, 2019, 2,787 new students were accepted through the joint selection for state higher education (SBMPTN). With the same selection path, in 2020, the number of students accepted at



UNESA has decreased to 1,335. The decrease in total number of students accepted occurred due to several factors.

Several factors that affecting applicants 'interest and perceptions are university image and negative student behavior intentions. There is strong causal relationship between service quality, satisfaction and itention behavior (Tan et al., 2022). Furthermore, service quality and student intention behaviour are key elements in higher education strategy to attract and retain students in a competitive marketplace. Service quality and student satisfaction has an indirect effect on student loyalty (Subrahmanyam, 2017).

Universitas Negeri Surabaya as a public educational institution provides good service quality to students. Unesa strives to provide excellent service and create a satisfactory atmosphere for students. Student satisfaction will lead to the student's behavioural intention (Ali et al., 2010). To improve the quality and relevance of the services provided, Unesa has made continuous and meaningful efforts, starting from infrastructure development regarding educational facilities and infrastructure, curriculum updating, optimization of information and communication technology in learning, improving the quality of educators and educational resource, and conducting networking with other educational institutions or the industrial world. Unesa was ranked 19th in the higher education clustering of universities in Indonesia by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud, 2020).

In previous studies, there have been many analyzes of service quality in higher education (Jiewanto et al., 2012). This study explicitly measures the services provided to the sports science faculty as a research sample. Sports are one of the programs that Unesa promotes. Therefore, in conducting this research, the sample used was the sports science faculty. This study differs from previous research, where the instruments used more specifically measure the quality of service available in the sports science faculty. Service delivery in sports science faculties has certain characteristics, with many academic facilities being provided to create an excellent academic quality environment. Although the academic facilities provided by HEI are already in the good category and the university ranks in the second cluster, the interest of prospective new students is still quite low. In general, in 2020, there was a decrease in the number of applicants in Unesa from 2787 to 1335. This decrease in applicants can occur because of the lack of student intention to behave positively. This influence statement needs to be tested empirically through this study.

Service quality is an abstract concept and is commonly explained by the service marketing study from the customers' perspective. Since service quality is considered an important aspect of competitiveness, it has become an essential point of interest for researchers in higher education. One of the most famous concepts of service quality is the comparison between the expectation and overall service by a customer as they pass judgment that the service does not meet expectations (Eshghi et al., 2008). It entails that universities operating in a competitive environment have to consider how to deliver high-quality service to meet stakeholder needs (DeShields Jr et al., 2005).

Using focus group studies, identified five dimensions of service quality. Service quality consists of tangible, responsibility, responsiveness, empathy and assurance (Parasuraman et al., 1996). his dimension measured for the service industry. Many researchers are certain that the service quality for the HEI positively impacted student (consumer) satisfaction (Sureshchandar et al., 2002). It concluded that when the customers positively perceived its service, the tendency to satisfy will increase. Furthermore, service quality will also impact behavioural intention. In other words, when students have a positive perception of the service, it will positively impact WOM intention behavior.



The term service quality in HEI can be identified as an overall student evaluation of performance service quality provided by universities comparing to their expectation. In HEI service quality identified into several dimensions as an academic aspect, empathy and access (Yildiz & Kara, 2009a). The academic aspect includes facilities, equipment, academic programs and opportunities, course materials, and information technology. The second aspect is empathy, which is related to keeping promises, offering solutions, quality and fairness, good communication, and dealing with student problems effectively. The last aspect concerns access related to accessibility and availability of equipment, materials, and student facilities..

An important focus for HEI should be the behavioral attention of their students. Service quality and student satisfaction are correlated to student loyalty. Loyalty was defined as a deep commitment to buy or repeat the product consistently in the future (Oliver, 1999). Previous research with strong concepts and arguments identified a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioural attention in many service industries (Cronin et al., 2000). This concepts also valid for customer satisfaction and positive word of mouth behavior.

Intention to behave refers to a person's interest in behaving when receiving certain treatment. Behavioural intention is a connecting variable caused by service quality, affecting whether a consumer will remain loyal to the company or move to a competitor. There are two levels of consumer expectations of desired service quality and adequate service level (Parasuraman et al., 1996).

- Intention to behave favorably (positive)

Student assessment of high (superior) service quality, customers strengthen relationships with the HEI, such as stating positive things about the universities, remaining loyal to the universities, recommending the universities to others, and being willing to pay a premium price in seminars or training held by universities.

- Unfavorable (negative) intention to behave

The effect is with the HEI, possibly weak, students who perceive poor (inferior) service quality may show certain behaviours, such as cutting ties with the universities, reducing spending with the universities, and complaining. The conceptual framework in this study is investigating the quality of academic services, empathy, and access related to student behaviour intentions, described in the figure below.

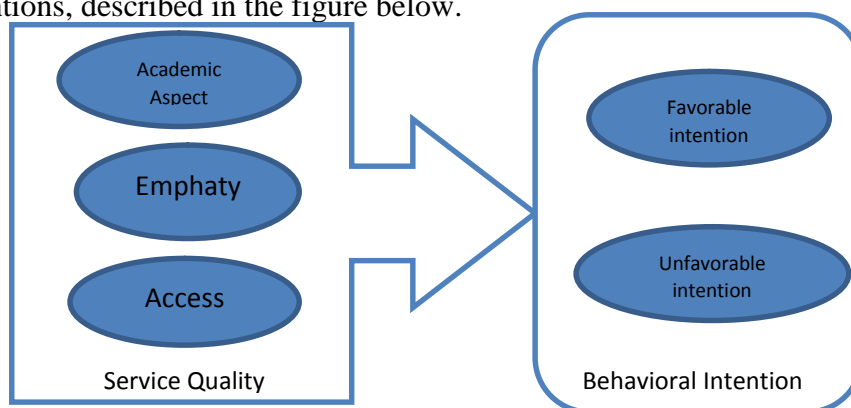


Figure 1. Model of conceptual framework

The service quality provided to students is based on 3 main indicators of academic aspects, empathy, and access (Yildiz & Kara, 2009a). Academic aspects are academic activities, both extracurricular and extracurricular, provided by universities to facilitate the development of students' soft skills and hard skills. Access is the convenience students get in



utilizing all the facilities provided for academic activities. Empathy refers to the staff's readiness to respond to student needs. This study aims to investigate the relationship between service quality and student intention behavior in Higher education institutions. Moreover, this study evaluated the service quality, considered their existing situation, considered improving or increasing their quality of services, and determined the future strategies according to their students.

Research Method

This research used a correlational method with a quantitative approach. Based on the research concept and model, instrument design divided into three sections. This instrument was measured using a five-point Likert scale from (1) strongly disagrees to (5) strongly agree. Section I contains several general questions to gather information on respondents' profiles such as gender and student grade. Section II, instrument items adapted from the PESPERF scale, divided into three dimensions: academic aspects, empathy and access (Yildiz & Kara, 2009b). Students' perceptions of academic quality related to standards and views on all aspects of their higher education experiences are essential in delivering quality offerings.

Section III consists of 6 statements to assess the student willingness to saying positive about their current higher education, recommend the service to others, intention to attend future conference and remain loyal to the institutions adopted from (Sheu, 2014).

Data in this study was gathered from an online survey of undergraduate students from the first semester until the seventh semester. These respondents were selected from the Faculty of Sports Sciences from the beginning through the last semesters. Experience in higher education is a fundamental requirement to measure service quality. The questionnaire was adopted from previous research and then distributed to all the undergraduate students. A cluster random sampling technique was used to run the online survey. A total of 120 questionnaires were submitted by respondents, of which 110 were valid as useful samples.

In this research, data collected was analyzed using the simple linear correlation. In a simple correlation analysis looking for a correlation coefficient, that is a number that states the degree of the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y) or to determine the strength or weakness of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. This step determines the correlation coefficient using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis (Sugiyono, 2012). As an interpretation of the large or small correlation coefficient, it can be guided by the following provisions.

Table 1. Relationship Level Correlation Interval

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 0.00 - 0.199 | Very low |
| 0.20 - 0.399 | Low |
| 0.40 - 0.599 | Moderate |
| 0.60 - 0.799 | Strong |
| 0.80 - 1,000 | Very strong |

Source: (Sugiyono 2014)

Results and Discussion

The analysis of a database of the gender background showed that many of the respondents (64.4%) were male, and 33,6% of respondents were female. There were various percentages of respondents based on their grades; students from the second semester were



dominant (39.8%). Students from the fifth semester were around 16,8% and those from the sixth semester at 13,3%. The analysis using simple correlation is shown as the table below:

Table 2. Correlation Results

| R result | R Standard | Conclusion |
|----------|------------|------------|
| 0.721 | 0.60-0.799 | Strong |

From the simple correlation analysis (r) results, the correlation coefficient between service quality and intention to behave (r) is 0.721. It shows a strong relationship between service quality and behavioral intention. Meanwhile, the direction of the relationship is positive because the value of r is positive, meaning that the higher the quality of service, the more the behavior intention.

Table 3. Significant Results

| Sig | sig | Conclusion |
|-------|------|-------------|
| 0.000 | 0.05 | significant |

Because of the significance value ($0.004 < 0.05$), there is a significant relationship between service quality and behavioral intention. Because the correlation coefficient is positive, service quality is positively and significantly related to the behavior intention of students in higher education positively. Satisfaction is influenced by service quality and directly related to behavioural intentions (Dadoa et al., 2012). From the results of the output above, it is known that the r value (correlation coefficient) is 0.721; this means that the dependent variable (behavioural intention) can be explained by the independent variable (service quality) of 72.1% and other variables outside of research explain the rest.

This study has results that show that service quality has a positive and significant correlation on behavioral intentions, which is in line with the opinion that service quality has a positive effect on behavioral intentions (Ladhari & Morales, 2011). By providing good quality service, students will automatically tend to provide recommendations, be loyal and are willing to pay a higher education fee. As in higher education, if the service quality is good, students will willingly recommend it to their closest friends/relatives. However, several dimensions of service quality have not been carried out by higher education, thus making the dimensions of behavioral intention low, such as the desire to provide recommendations and encourage friends or relatives to study.

The results of the study are in accordance with exploratory research found that for first, second and third year students the quality and methods of teaching are very important factors (Hill, 1995). Students wanted the teaching staff to be reliable with them, able to explain so that it was easy to teach pleasantly (Sultan & Wong, 2012). This finding also supports and is in line with previous research results proving that academic aspects are important in increasing student satisfaction, which will impact behavioural intentions. In terms of empathy, there needs to be direction or advice, especially to college staff, on how to provide service and attention to students in activities on campus so that students can feel more comfortable when dealing with staff and employees at the college. Service quality positively correlates with students' behaviour intentions; improving service quality will increase students' positive behaviour intentions. In order to attract prospective students, HEI is required to improve service quality. Several factors, such as university rankings and recommendations from people around them, influence prospective students in choosing HEI. The role of HEI students is very significant in creating the university image and providing positive recommendations (Word of mouth). Service quality directly impacts student satisfaction, and their satisfaction builds a WOM intention (Yunus, 2010).



Behavioral Intention or Intention to behave is reflected in the emergence of a student's desire to have a positive attitude by doing this to re-education at the HEI in the future. In addition, students are willing to recommend the HEI as a good higher education institution to their colleagues or family (word of mouth). The level of service quality provided determines the number of new students who join higher education institutions (Chen, 2016). Finally, students' willingness to pay and participate in seminars pursuing master/doctoral degrees or training held by the HEI. Service quality is very important in encouraging students to have positive behavior intentions in higher education institutions (Binnawas et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The results show a significant and positive correlation between higher education service quality and student intention behavior. The better service quality provided linear with student intention behaviour for recommending and their intention to be loyal to the institution. HEI needs to strengthen the quality of service by improving services from various angles, such as directing and training staff to provide excellent service to students. In addition, it is also crucial to increase student access to facilities for academic and non-academic activities related to creating student satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions. Behavioral intention is the willingness of students to recommend the HEI as a good higher education institution to their colleagues or family (word of mouth). HEI must provide excellent service quality because these aspects strongly correlate with student behavioral intention. Positive behavioural intention also can raise HEI's image and also contribute to helping HEI to compete with other universities.

Recommendation

Recommendation for the future Besides improving service quality, one aspect that needs to be given attention by HEI is creating a university image. To increase the number of applicants, besides improving the quality of service and the student's intention to behave positively, it is necessary to focus on the university's image. For further research, the university image variable about the student's behavioural intention can be examined.

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