

# The Relationship Between Service Quality and Student Satisfaction in the Process of Submitting Letters to the Directorate of Academic Affairs at Padang State University

Yosalina Yanda Putri<sup>1\*</sup>, Novriyanti Achyar<sup>2</sup>, Syahril<sup>3</sup>, Hendri Budi Utama<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1234</sup> Department of Educational Administration, Padang State University, Padang, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between service quality and student satisfaction at the Directorate of Academic Affairs of Universitas Negeri Padang, as well as to assess the extent of that relationship. This research is a correlational study, with a population of 4,244 students who submitted letters to the Directorate of Academic Affairs of Universitas Negeri Padang. The sample size in this study is 100 students, selected using the Proportional Random Sampling technique. The research instrument used is a Likert scale questionnaire that has been tested for validity and reliability. Descriptive analysis was first conducted by calculating the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation. Subsequently, normality tests, linearity tests, hypothesis testing, and significance testing of the relationship between variables were conducted using the t-test formula. The results of the data analysis show that there is a relationship between service quality and student satisfaction in the process of submitting letters to the Directorate of Academic Affairs of Universitas Negeri Padang, with a correlation coefficient of 0.821. Thus, the t-test confirms that there is a significant relationship between service quality and student satisfaction.

## Corresponding Author:

Yosalina Yanda Putri

Novriyanti Achyar

Email: [yosalinayandaputri72@gmail.com](mailto:yosalinayandaputri72@gmail.com)

[yanti.achyar15@fip.unp.ac.id](mailto:yanti.achyar15@fip.unp.ac.id)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Satisfaction is one of the key indicators in assessing the quality of services provided by an institution. According to Park in Lathifa & Silvianita, (2023), satisfaction is the feeling experienced by customers in response to the services they have used. Bahrudin and Zuhro in Satryawati, (2018) add that satisfaction is the assessment given by customers when using a service, which reflects whether their expectations have been met. Furthermore, Tjiptono in Finistyan & Bessie (2020) explains that satisfaction arises as a result of evaluating the experience of using a service, while Kotler and Keller in Ruslim & Rahardjo (2016) state that satisfaction is a person's evaluation of performance based on their expectations. When service performance meets or even exceeds expectations, customers will feel satisfied; however, if it falls short, they will feel disappointed. Thus, satisfaction can be understood as an emotional response that emerges after comparing expectations with the reality of the service experience.

Students, as the primary users of academic services at universities, also have high expectations regarding the quality of services provided. According to Yulianto (2018), student satisfaction plays an important role in the advancement of the academic directorate. When students feel satisfied with the services they receive, they tend to give positive appreciation and recommend the services to other students, which ultimately strengthens the institution's positive image in the eyes of the public. This underscores the importance of maintaining the quality of services provided to students, considering its broad impact on the institution's reputation.

In addition, good service quality has a direct impact on student loyalty. Susetyo et al (2022) states that students expect services that can meet or even exceed their expectations. When this happens, students tend to have the desire to continue using the service in the future. Thus, good service quality not only increases student satisfaction but also fosters a positive long-term relationship between students and the institution.

At Universitas Negeri Padang, the quality of academic services is greatly influenced by various factors, such as a quick response to complaints, the presence of staff at the service desk, and the competence of staff in delivering services. According to Sirhan et al (2016), optimal service delivery has a direct impact on the level of student satisfaction. Marthalina (2018) adds that a quick and friendly response from staff is essential to creating high levels of satisfaction. Competent staff who are present on time can leave a positive impression that strengthens students' trust in the services provided.

Based on the author's observations during the Educational Management Field Practice at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang, there are still several obstacles in service quality. For example, some staff have not demonstrated a friendly attitude and are often not present at the service desk during working hours, which hinders the process of submitting academic letters. This phenomenon indicates the need for improvements in service management to ensure that student satisfaction can be properly achieved. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the relationship between service quality and student satisfaction in the process of submitting letters at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang.

## 2. METHOD, DATA, ANALYSIS

This research is classified as a quantitative study with a correlational approach. According to Sugiyono (2017), correlational research is a type of study characterized by problems related to the relationship between two or more variables. This research aims to determine whether there is a correlation between the studied variables or to make predictions based on the relationships among those variables. This study consists of two variables: service quality as the independent variable (X) and satisfaction as the dependent variable (Y). The instrument used is a questionnaire, utilizing a Likert scale with five answer options, namely Very Satisfied (VS), Satisfied (S), Fairly Satisfied (FS), Less Satisfied (LS), Very Dissatisfied (VDS), and Very Good (VG), Good (G), Fair (F), Poor (P), Very Poor (VP). The answer choices are weighted with scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Afterward, prerequisite tests are conducted, including normality test, linearity test, hypothesis testing, and correlation significance testing using the t-test.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### Description of Research Data on Satisfaction

Satisfaction data was obtained from distributing questionnaires to 100 students at the Academic Directorate of Padang State University. The distributed satisfaction questionnaire consisted of 32 items with the highest score of 5 and the lowest score of 1. From the results of the questionnaires collected, the highest score was 156 and the lowest score was 70. From the results of data processing using SPSS, the average score was 128.3, median = 128.5, mode = 121 and standard deviation = 15.257.

**Table 1** Average Score of Student Satisfaction Indicators

| No      | Indicator                | Total   |     |                |
|---------|--------------------------|---------|-----|----------------|
|         |                          | Average | TCR | Classification |
| 1       | Expectation Fulfillment  | 4,00    | 80% | Satisfied      |
| 2       | Interest in Returning    | 4,05    | 81% | Satisfied      |
| 3       | Willingness to Recommend | 4,02    | 80% | Satisfied      |
| Results |                          | 4,02    | 80% | Satisfied      |

Table 1 shows that the highest average score is found in the indicator of interest in returning, which is 4.05 with a percentage of 81%, while the lowest average score is found in the indicator of expectation fulfillment, which is 4.00 with a percentage of 80%. In general, the average student satisfaction score at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang is 4.02 with a percentage of 80%, meaning that student satisfaction at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang is already in the satisfied category.

### Description of Research Data on Service Quality

The data on service quality was obtained from the distribution of questionnaires to 100 students at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang. The service quality questionnaire consisted of 35 items with the highest score of 5 and the lowest score of 1. Based on the collected questionnaires, the highest score obtained was 171 and the lowest score was 85. From the data processing using SPSS, the results showed a mean score of 140.9, a median of 142, a mode of 125, and a standard deviation of 15.890.

**Table 2** Average Score of Service Quality Indicators

| No      | Indicator      | Total   |     |                |
|---------|----------------|---------|-----|----------------|
|         |                | Average | TCR | Classification |
| 1       | Reliability    | 4,02    | 80% | Good           |
| 2       | Responsiveness | 3,98    | 80% | Good           |
| 3       | Assurance      | 4,04    | 81% | Good           |
| 4       | Empathy        | 3,98    | 80% | Good           |
| 5       | Tangibles      | 4,14    | 83% | Good           |
| Results |                | 4,03    | 81% | Good           |

Table 2 shows that the highest average score is found in the *tangible evidence* indicator, with a score of 4.14 and a percentage of 83%, while the lowest average score is in the *responsiveness and empathy* indicator, with a score of 3.98 and a percentage of 80%. Overall, the average score for service quality at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang is 4.03, with a percentage of 81%, which indicates that the service quality at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang falls into the "good" category.

### Discussion

Based on the research data, student satisfaction with the services at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) falls into the "Satisfied" category, with an achievement percentage of 80%. Among the various satisfaction indicators, the highest average score is seen in the "interest in returning" indicator, with a score of 4.05 or 81%. This suggests that students had positive experiences and are likely to use academic services again in the future. One major factor influencing this interest is the ease of the academic letter submission process. According to (Dr. Teddy Chandra, SE., MM Stefani Chandra, B.Bus.Com, MIB Layla Hafni, S, SE (2020), student satisfaction is achieved when the service process is simple, convenient, and efficient.

Although the overall satisfaction level is high, the "expectation match" indicator received the lowest average score, 4.00 or 80%, although it is still within the "Satisfied" category. According to Kotler and Keller (as cited in Ruslim & Rahardjo (2016)), satisfaction is achieved when services meet or exceed expectations. Thus, while expectations have been met, improvements are still needed to achieve the "Very Satisfied" level.

Furthermore, the "willingness to recommend" indicator also scored 80%, indicating that satisfied students are likely to recommend academic services to others. This reflects that students' perceptions strongly influence their intention to promote the services they received.

In terms of service quality, the overall assessment is in the "Good" category with an achievement percentage of 81%. The highest service quality score was for the "physical evidence" indicator, with a score of 4.14 or 83%. This implies that physical aspects such as cleanliness, facilities, and staff appearance have met student expectations.

In addition to physical facilities, good communication is also a crucial factor in improving the quality of academic services. Clear and easy-to-understand information enables students to understand procedures and available services, allowing them to access support as needed. Effective communication not only facilitates service processes but also strengthens relationships between students and academic staff. This is supported by Achyar et al., (2019) who state that communication is at the heart of social relationships. As social beings, humans are constantly engaged in interaction, and communication is the main tool to convey messages, understand oneself, and connect with others.

Meanwhile, the indicator with the lowest service quality score is "responsiveness and empathy," with a score of 3.98 or 80%. While still categorized as "Good," improvements in responsiveness and empathy are necessary to enhance student satisfaction. Zeithaml et al. (2020) emphasize that prompt service and sincere concern are essential to boosting satisfaction.

Other indicators, such as “assurance” (score of 4.04 or 81%) and “reliability” (score of 4.02 or 80%), also fall into the “Good” category. Students trust academic staff because of their knowledge, professionalism, and ability to provide services consistently and accurately. Reliability is especially crucial in maintaining smooth academic administrative processes as it builds student trust and confidence.

According to Angraini et al (2021), service is an activity carried out by staff in providing assistance to users to meet their needs. Based on this definition, service is an activity conducted by staff or administrative personnel to fulfill the needs of others, either directly or indirectly, by offering assistance and services to ensure user satisfaction, whether within or outside the organization.

Ultimately, the results of the correlation and significance tests indicate a positive relationship between service quality and student satisfaction, particularly in the context of academic letter submission. Therefore, continuous efforts such as staff training, system upgrades, and regular evaluations are essential to elevate student satisfaction to a higher level.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion presented in the previous chapter, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Student satisfaction at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang falls into the “satisfied” category, with a score of 4.02 and an achievement percentage of 80%. The highest average score was found in the indicator of willingness to return, which scored 4.05 with an achievement percentage of 81%, while the lowest average score was on the expectation suitability indicator, with a score of 4.00 and a percentage of 80%.
2. Service quality at the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang is categorized as “good,” with a score of 4.03 and an achievement percentage of 81%. The highest average score was on the physical evidence indicator, which scored 4.14 with an achievement percentage of 83%, while the lowest average score was on the empathy and responsiveness indicator, which scored 3.98 with a percentage of 80%.
3. There is a relationship between service quality and student satisfaction in the process of submitting letters to the Academic Directorate of Universitas Negeri Padang. The correlation coefficient obtained is 0.821 (indicating a strong correlation), and the correlation significance test resulted in a value of 14.218. Based on the results of the significance test, the calculated t-value (t count) is greater than the critical t-value (t table) at a 0.05 significance level, namely  $14.218 > 1.660$ . According to the criteria of the correlation significance test, if the t count is greater than the t table, then the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ), which states that there is a relationship between service quality and student satisfaction, is accepted.

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