



## Level of Functioning of Service Quality of a Private Higher Education Institution in the Philippines: Personnel and Student Perspectives

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### Abstract

Competitive educational institutions emphasize how service quality influences customer satisfaction. This study investigated the level of service quality functioning of a private higher education institution (HEI) in the Philippines, as assessed by its personnel and students. Employing a mixed research method, data were gathered from 22 full-time personnel and 140 students of the subject HEI by using a survey questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms. Statistical tests, such as weighted mean, standard deviation, and independent t-tests, were employed in the data analysis. The study found that service quality engagement of the institution is at an acceptable level of functioning. However, there is still room for improvements in all service quality dimensions. Moreover, the study disclosed that there were no statistically significant differences between the assessments of personnel and students in terms of service quality. In-person interviews revealed that most issues and challenges in service quality relate to the tangibility, responsiveness, and assurance aspects, where the need for efficient resource allocation, improved communication, and infrastructure enhancements are essential. These findings have given light to propose a comprehensive action plan that will support the institution in improving the current functioning of its service quality. Furthermore, this study can serve as a model for other private HEIs to develop service quality enhancement strategies to better serve their stakeholders.

**Keywords** higher education institution; Philippines; SERVQUAL Model; service quality

### INTRODUCTION

In the context of higher education, where service is a primary output, quality assessment is critical, especially in the increasing number of higher education institutions (HEIs). High service quality has been proven to positively influence student satisfaction and commitment to loyalty to the institution. When students receive high-quality service, it is more likely that they will remain enrolled and recommend the institution to others. This not only enhances the reputation of the institution and contributes to its sustainability.

However, in today's educational landscape, where students have numerous options, maintaining high-quality service becomes a distinguishing factor for attracting and retaining students. [Gadian et al. \(2020\)](#) revealed that one of the factors that influences an educational institution is the satisfaction of its students. Thus, understanding the underlying factors in this regard is crucial, and the need for effective and relevant service enhancement strategies is crucial to improve retention rates.

Additionally, the increasing demand for education services in the Philippines has created opportunities for more private HEIs to flourish compared with state universities, offering an alternative for students who cannot secure admission because these government-owned institutions can only accommodate a limited number of students. The surge in private universities intensifies competition in the education sector. Therefore, ensuring high service quality is crucial for private universities to retain students, thus impacting their financing, reputation, and brand

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identity. Although students are the primary beneficiaries, the quality of service indirectly influences various stakeholders (Leonnard, 2021).

The subject private HEI has been offering technical, secondary, and tertiary education for the past 2 decades. However, it has struggled with low retention rates, with many students dropping out or transferring before completing their programs, even before the COVID-19 pandemic. This issue impacts the institution's ability to fulfill its educational mission and harms its reputation. Previous studies, such as Darawong and Widayati (2022) and Borishade et al. (2021), only examined learning outcomes and how service quality affects student loyalty. However, Alshamsi et al. (2021) explored how service quality impacts customer retention. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, the local study pursued by Gadian et al. (2020) may not reflect the current situation in a private educational institution because the study was conducted in a government-owned college. All the existing research reviewed by the researchers has mainly focused on assessing service quality from the viewpoint of students, leaving a gap in understanding the perspective of service providers. This study addressed this gap.

Specifically, this study assessed the service quality of private HEIs using two distinct groups of respondents, focusing on four out of the five SERVQUAL dimensions, namely, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. While both the reliability and assurance dimensions contribute to the overall perception of trust and confidence in an institution, the researchers believe that focusing on assurance alone would sufficiently capture the essence of reliability. The study also hypothesized that there is no significant difference between the perspectives of personnel and students on service quality. As explored in a study by Hama et al. (2020), they stated that staff and students have the same perception regarding service quality. These findings imply that both staff and students prioritize similar aspects of service quality, potentially leading to a common service experience. Understanding these shared perceptions can inform strategic service improvements to better meet the needs of all stakeholders. The study also delved into the issues and challenges in terms of service quality experienced by HEIs. Ultimately, based on the findings of the study, the researchers proposed an action plan to further improve the service quality engagement of the institution.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a comprehensive review of the related literature obtained from different sources to provide a clear understanding of the current topic. This section focuses on the SERVQUAL Model and service quality in educational institutions.

### SERVQUAL Model

At the current speed of global change, emerging economies are recognizing the importance of service quality (Alzaydi et al., 2018). Service quality is a fundamental concept in customer satisfaction, centered on customers' perceptions of received services relative to their expectations and experiences.

Apart from the manufacturing sector, acknowledging the challenges inherent to the service industry is also vital. Services with intangible characteristics are consumed simultaneously with their production, introducing a dynamic process of service quality assessment (Karmacharya, 2022). Service quality issues are often noted only after the user has experienced the service. This occurs because both service providers and consumers can influence each other's actions, making service quality assessment complex (Leonnard, 2018).

Among the several models used to evaluate service quality, SERVQUAL is widely used, having been adapted for assessing student satisfaction in HEIs over the years (Firmansyah et al., 2022). SERVQUAL originated from the need to measure the dimensions of tangibility, assurance, reliability,

responsiveness, and empathy. Using interviews with service providers and customers, this study understood factors influencing satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Šima et al., 2020). Despite criticisms, SERVQUAL remains influential in measuring service quality, has been adapted and enhanced over time, and has been widely adopted across different service sectors (Daskalaki et al., 2020). The dimensions of the SERVQUAL model are tangibility, assurance, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy. Tangibility relates to physical facilities and technology, assurance of trust and expertise, reliability of prompt and accurate service delivery, responsiveness to quick and willing response to inquiries, and empathy for tailoring student needs (Ismail et al., 2021). Its strength lies in its adaptable dimensions, which enable the assessment of how customers' expectation influence perceived service delivery (La Rotta et al., 2020).

### **Service Quality in HEIs**

The competitiveness and efficacy of the HEI sector plays an important role in the economic development of the country. To maintain the quality of this sector, the government mandates and regulates accreditation policies. However, existing evaluations often focus on tangible elements like curriculum, overlooking the direct assessment of service quality. Directly measuring service quality can sustain overall quality assurance efforts in education-oriented institutions (Saliba & Gorenc Zoran, 2018).

As the HEI sector witnesses escalating competition and evolving demands from both its students and staff, institutions are compelled to improve their service quality to maintain competitiveness. Private universities have experienced a surge in demand for educational services, heightening the significance of addressing student concerns (Yousapronpaiboon, 2014). Ensuring high-quality services has become a strategic necessity for institutions striving to attract and retain qualified students. Campos and Campos (2023) highlighted that HEIs are expected to constantly respond to changes in the HE environment to address their students' diverse learning and support needs.

Furthermore, student satisfaction, as the primary objective of HEIs, is intrinsically linked to service quality. Students anticipate timely program completion and the achievement of their academic goals, underscoring the pivotal role of service quality in HEIs (Sugilar, 2019). Quality in educational institutions is a complicated concept because it is influenced by various factors, including organizational performance, mission statements, leadership quality, personnel quantity and quality, internal motivation, communication, and collaboration (Vesce et al., 2021).

Additionally, Murtiningsih and Wahyudi (2021) found that service quality in HEIs influences creating connections with students. This relationship will result in an understanding of students' expectations and needs, thus enabling them to maintain the factors that satisfy their students. However, it is not just academic services that influence satisfaction. They also revealed that tuition paid to avail themselves of academic services is a factor that students consider when measuring their satisfaction.

Bosu et al. (2018) disclosed that assessing how student satisfaction affects loyalty is a significant concern among HEIs. It is also crucial to analyze which dimensions of service quality are relevant in attracting and retaining students, particularly now that students have many choices. Additionally, in higher education settings, perceived quality is rooted in various services provided to students, including administrative staff, lecturers, librarians, and security personnel. They further emphasized that consistently exceeding students' expectation results in high-quality service evaluations, whereas failing to meet expectations leads to poor quality judgments.

Finally, Toquero (2021) noted that HEIs should exploit the opportunities presented by changing service quality trends. These opportunities revolve around enhancing data monitoring, documentation and the implementation of evidence-based practices in service delivery. These

strategic initiatives have the potential to cause a transformative shift in how stakeholders perceive institutions. In this regard, innovative actions may emerge to create strategies that promote effective learning, teaching and service delivery. Although these initiatives do not provide a solution for all the challenges faced by HEIs, they offer educators a platform through which to innovate service quality.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The study employed a mixed research method in which the quantitative approach was followed by a qualitative method to further explain the quantitative data, thus providing a more in-depth finding (Pham et al., 2019). The sample consisted of 140 students out of a total of 330 students, excluding grade 11 (senior high school) and first-year college students to ensure unbiased findings. Additionally, 22 out of 28 personnel were included, excluding the 6 who participated in the pilot testing. Both the students and personnel groups were chosen as the best respondents for this study because of their first-hand experience in the institution over a period of more than 1 year, making their assessment the most reliable.

The researchers gained insight into the institution's profile by reviewing documents after obtaining permission from the officials of the subject private HEIs. Information on enrollment was obtained from the registrar's office. Program offerings, permits, and recognition were assessed with the help of the Data Privacy officer. Personnel information was collected from the Human Resources Department. These documents provided a comprehensive understanding of the institution's profile. The researchers designed a straightforward questionnaire to prevent confusion. The draft was reviewed by four experts and revised based on their suggestions. A pilot test involving 10 students and 6 personnel revealed issues with the dimensions of assurance and empathy. After editing these sections, another pilot test was conducted, which resulted in acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.712 to 0.880.

When the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed, the questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms. The questionnaire comprises 10 questions for each of the four dimensions to ensure a comprehensive assessment of service quality functioning in the institution. To measure the responses, the researchers used a four-point Likert scale: 1.00-1.49 = Very Low Level (VL); 1.50-2.49 = Low Level (L); 2.50-3.49 = High Level (H); and 3.50-4.00 = Very High Level (VH). Moreover, in reference to the qualitative aspect of the study, the researchers examined the issues and challenges in service quality as revealed in the in-person interviews with selected students.

Furthermore, to ensure that the respondents' provided information will only be used for the attainment of the research objectives, a confidentiality note was provided on the first part of the questionnaire. Data from the retrieved questionnaires were analyzed using various statistical tests, such as the weighted mean, standard deviation, and independent T-test.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The data collected using the survey questionnaire were presented, analyzed, and interpreted to support the objectives of the study.

### **Institution Profile**

Table 1 presents the institutional profile. The results revealed that the institution's offering includes 5 college programs, 3 senior high school strand and 3 Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) qualifications. Moreover, as per the enrollment size for the last 5 years, the highest number of enrollments occurred in 2019. Additionally, the number of teaching personnel was dominated by college instructors, whereas non-teaching personnel were equally distributed across departments. This institutional profile complies with the policies and regulations

of the Commission of Higher Education, Department of Education and TESDA, highlighting the minimum requirements for operating the programs. This finding supports the contention of [Adeyemo \(2015\)](#) that compliance to the requirements of the Philippine education sector regulatory agencies is important for HEIs to successfully produce graduates with the skills and competencies needed for the economic development of the country.

**Table 1.** Profile of private HEIs

	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>A. Program Offering</b>	
College Programs	5
Senior High School Programs	3
TESDA Qualifications	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>B. Enrollment Size</b>	
2019	404
2020	355
2021	295
2022	294
2023	330
<b>Total</b>	<b>1274</b>
<b>C. Number of Teaching Personnel</b>	
College Instructors	15
Senior High School Teachers	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>D. Number of Non-Teaching Personnel</b>	
Accounting Staff	1
School Nurse	1
Liaison Officer	1
Human Resource Officer	1
Data Privacy Officer	1
Information and Security Officer	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>

### **Level of Service Quality Functioning**

The service quality level was assessed by the personnel and student respondents on the basis of the researchers' structured questionnaire.

### **Tangibility**

Table 2 shows that the personnel are confident that the institution offers enough modern courses and resources. However, students believe there is room for improvement in this area and in other tangible aspects. The overall score of 3.09, indicating a high level, suggests that the institution is fairly doing well with regard to the physical facilities and technology provided to the students. However, this could still be improved to further support the institution's commitment to a welcoming learning environment and improve students' experiences. Possible improvements include enhancing academic programs, faculty development, the campus environment, and technology. By doing so, the institution will be true to its mission of supporting academic excellence and student success.

Similar results were reported by Kanori et al. (2020), who indicated a positive direct relationship between the quality of tangibility in educational facilities and student satisfaction. This supports the idea that enhancing the tangibility aspect of educational services can result in student satisfaction. They also emphasized that facilities related to teaching and learning have a stronger impact on satisfaction than staff appearance. Overall, the study suggested that improving these tangible aspects can lead to increased student satisfaction, aligning with the institution's commitment to providing academic offerings and maintaining an esthetically pleasing campus environment.

**Table 2.** Level of Service Quality Functioning in terms of Tangibility

Item	Personnel			Student			Overall		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Provides academic offerings with courses dedicated to contemporary subjects, complemented by a range of academic resources	3.50	0.51	VH	3.20	0.68	H	3.24	0.67	H
2. Encourages personnel and faculty members to consistently present themselves in a manner that aligns with the workplace standards	3.36	0.66	H	3.18	0.73	H	3.20	0.72	H
3. Commits itself to maintaining a clean and aesthetically pleasing campus environment that are evident in their ancillary facilities	3.18	0.73	H	3.17	0.67	H	3.17	0.67	H
4. Ensures that the physical environment of the institution contributes positively to the overall academic atmosphere	3.09	0.68	H	3.09	0.71	H	3.09	0.71	H
5. Invests in updating and upgrading its technological infrastructure to meet current educational standards.	2.86	0.71	H	3.12	0.77	H	3.09	0.77	H
6. Ensures that learning resources are readily available, accessible and up to date	2.91	0.75	H	3.11	0.78	H	3.08	0.78	H
7. Equips classrooms with technology and modern equipment that enhances	3.05	0.79	H	3.06	0.80	H	3.06	0.79	H

Item	Personnel			Student			Overall			
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI	
the overall learning experience of the students										
8. Ensures the proper maintenance of the infrastructures within the institution	3.05	0.65	H	3.03	0.76	H	3.03	0.74	H	
9. Guarantees that it is equipped with modern facilities that will help students in realizing their full academic potential. Example: equipment, labs, new technology, etc.	2.82	0.73	H	2.99	0.83	H	2.96	0.82	H	
10. Offers modern and well-equipped laboratories to support practical learning experiences.	2.82	0.59	H	2.94	0.85	H	2.93	0.82	H	
<b>Composite Mean</b>	3.06		H	3.09		H	3.09		H	
<b>Cumulative Standard Deviation</b>		0.51			0.60			0.58		

### Assurance

Table 3 presents the assessment of both personnel and students in terms of assurance. The composite mean score for overall service quality functioning was 3.26, which was interpreted as a high level. This means that the stakeholders have trust and confidence in the institution. However, improvements could still be made for them to ensure their loyalty and commitment. In this regard, the institution should make further improvements in terms of respect and efficient communication. The institution should use effective communication techniques to address students' needs promptly. The institution should also place high priority on accountability and transparency. Providing technical support and ensuring timely resolution of administrative and academic issues are also crucial. To improve overall effectiveness, the institution must also promptly handle complaints, uphold supportive staff to meet service standards, and maintain a positive learning environment.

This study supports [Verma \(2016\)](#), who highlighted challenges in assurance, including competency, security, courtesy, and credibility. [Hassan and Jafri \(2017\)](#) also noted issues in aligning promised services with actual delivery, emphasizing the need for better service assurance. Addressing these challenges, according to [Briones et al. \(2023\)](#), requires staff training, obedience to procedures, and effective communication to build confidence in delivering excellent service quality. In the same vein, [Karacaoğlu \(2024\)](#) asserted that continuous professional development is vital for enhancing both human-oriented qualities and technical competencies of employees. Moreover, [Khan et al. \(2021\)](#) also emphasized the importance of qualified staff for delivering services, noting that courteous service is crucial. Improving assurance in educational institutions requires strategies that promote accountability and transparency.

**Table 3.** Level of Service Quality Functioning in terms of Assurance

Item	Personnel			Student			Overall		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Encourages a culture of respect and courtesy among all members of the academic community	3.36	0.66	H	3.36	0.63	H	3.36	0.63	H
2. Maintains transparency regarding the expected timeliness of service delivery	3.36	0.58	H	3.29	0.61	H	3.30	0.60	H
3. Ensures overall satisfaction by addressing concerns and maintaining a positive learning environment	3.27	0.55	H	3.28	0.66	H	3.28	0.64	H
4. Utilizes practical communication strategies to assist students and faculty effectively	3.27	0.63	H	3.27	0.66	H	3.27	0.65	H
5. Demonstrates competence in resolving academic and administrative issues	3.32	0.65	H	3.25	0.67	H	3.26	0.66	H
6. Engages with students to understand and address any challenges they may face in their academic journey actively	3.23	0.43	H	3.24	0.69	H	3.24	0.66	H
7. Provides technical knowledge support for student's academic and administrative needs	3.18	0.50	H	3.23	0.71	H	3.22	0.69	H
8. Listens and actively addresses the challenges and concerns of students	3.14	0.77	H	3.23	0.72	H	3.22	0.73	H
9. Provides adequate resources and support to personnel	3.09	0.68	H	3.24	0.64	H	3.22	0.65	H



Item	Personnel			Student			Overall		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
to meet service delivery expectations									
10. Shows preparedness in addressing challenges and issues faced by its academic community	3.23	0.53	H	3.19	0.76	H	3.20	0.73	H
<b>Composite Mean</b>	3.25		H	3.26		H	3.26		H
<b>Cumulative Standard Deviation</b>		0.46			0.53			0.52	

### Responsiveness

Table 4 shows that the staff members believe that the institution is highly responsive, with competent staff informing students about task timelines and providing timely updates. However, the students also perceive that there is a culture of mutual respect present within the institution, with consistent communication serving as a strength. With a composite mean of 3.30, regarded as a high level of functioning, the institution clearly provides a responsive environment toward its stakeholders. However, the institution should still assess specific aspects of responsiveness to identify areas for improvement, such as effective communication, which is a key aspect of responsiveness, must involve timely, clear, empathetic, and specific interactions. Enhancing communication can include using digital platforms and improving in-person interactions. Analyzing communication feedback can provide insights into the effectiveness of current strategies.

As [Anim and Mensah \(2015\)](#) noted, institutions' commitment to administrative quality ensures efficient and responsive services for students through streamlined processes, enhanced support, and optimized resources. [Aguenza \(2024\)](#) and [Laco et al. \(2024\)](#) also emphasized the importance of effective communication between service personnel and customers to enhance service quality. By tailoring services to different customer needs, the institution improves communication and service quality. This approach encourages valuable feedback from students and staff, enabling the institution to focus on improving service management. Prioritizing feedback allows higher education institutions to continually refine their services, ensuring ongoing student, faculty, and staff satisfaction.

**Table 4.** Level of Service Quality Functioning in terms of Responsiveness

Item	Personnel			Student			Overall		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Informs the students about the timeline for completing tasks and requests	3.55	0.60	VH	3.44	0.61	H	3.46	0.61	H
2. Ensures that the students receive timely updates and follow-ups on their requests and inquiries	3.50	0.51	VH	3.31	0.67	H	3.34	0.65	H
3. Ensures that the personnel and faculty members are	3.68	0.48	VH	3.28	0.64	H	3.33	0.63	H

Item	Personnel			Student			Overall		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
competent in answering the students' inquiries									
4. Looks for opportunities to support students in their personal and professional development	3.27	0.55	H	3.34	0.70	H	3.33	0.68	H
5. Guarantees that the personnel and faculty members respond immediately and appropriately to requests and inquiries	3.45	0.60	H	3.30	0.62	H	3.32	0.62	H
6. Ensures that the personnel and faculty members provide undivided attention to students when dealing with issues	3.45	0.51	H	3.24	0.67	H	3.27	0.65	H
7. Encourages feedback from students and personnel to continuously improve responsiveness	3.32	0.57	H	3.24	0.69	H	3.25	0.67	H
8. Strives to maintain a high level of satisfaction among students, faculty, and staff by delivering responsive services and support	3.45	0.67	H	3.21	0.71	H	3.25	0.71	H
9. Ensures that there are effective communication channels for students to express their opinions and receive timely feedback	3.32	0.65	H	3.19	0.66	H	3.21	0.65	H
10. Allots sufficient time and resources to address the needs and concerns of students and/or personnel	3.14	0.64	H	3.20	0.70	H	3.19	0.69	H
<b>Composite Mean</b>	3.41		H	3.28		H	3.30		H
<b>Cumulative Standard Deviation</b>		0.37			0.49			0.48	

### Empathy

Table 5 shows that personnel believe the institution excels at providing students with clear updates on important matters, while students believe that all empathy measures are present but can still be improved to provide the highest level of empathetic services. The overall composite mean of 3.28, rated high, suggests that students' needs are generally met. However, for students to be highly satisfied with the services, the institution can still improve on this aspect by consistently providing clear and timely updates through effective communication channels. Additionally, the

institution should enhance its systems to encourage students to voice concerns and seek advice, addressing their needs promptly and confidentially. Finally, the institution should establish protocols to accommodate specific needs and promote an environment in which all students experience being cared for and valued.

This result supports [Amegbe et al. \(2019\)](#), who highlighted the importance of fostering empathy and trust through confidential and attentive interactions. They found that clear communication channels and dedicated personnel provided personalized support and guidance, making students feel valued and understood. Prioritizing empathy and confidentiality helps cultivate student loyalty, thus enhancing their overall experience and satisfaction ([Vö, 2021](#)). Similarly, [Bangug et al. \(2023\)](#) stated that high system quality improves user satisfaction. They further indicated that promptly addressing student concerns demonstrates empathy and commitment to continuous improvement, thereby ensuring the institution's services can meet students' evolving needs. This approach fosters satisfaction, encourages frequent engagement, and contributes to positive user experiences.

**Table 5.** Level of service quality functioning in terms of Empathy

Item	Personnel			Student			Overall		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Ensuring that all students receive clear information regarding updates on important matters within the institution	3.68	0.57	VH	3.36	0.63	H	3.41	0.63	H
2. Prioritizes confidentiality, particularly when addressing sensitive matters	3.41	0.59	H	3.36	0.64	H	3.36	0.63	H
3. Ensures that there exist personnel that deals with the student needs privately and confidentially	3.45	0.60	H	3.31	0.69	H	3.33	0.68	H
4. Demonstrates a proactive approach in understanding and accommodating the unique needs of individual students	3.09	0.75	H	3.33	0.65	H	3.30	0.67	H
5. Demonstrates commitment by consistently delivering exceptional services to its students	3.36	0.49	H	3.26	0.61	H	3.28	0.59	H
6. Establishes a clear and accessible system for students to voice concerns, seek advice, and address any issues related	3.23	0.75	H	3.28	0.69	H	3.27	0.70	H

Item	Personnel			Student			Overall		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
to their academic or personal well-being.									
7. Establishes effective communication channels that promptly respond to the needs of all students and fosters an inclusive environment	3.23	0.61	H	3.24	0.71	H	3.23	0.69	H
8. Maintains a supportive and responsive environment in which students feel assured of addressing their concerns and inquiries promptly.	3.27	0.77	H	3.22	0.70	H	3.23	0.71	H
9. Commits to continuous improvement by regularly seeking feedback from students to enhance the quality of services	3.18	0.73	H	3.21	0.69	H	3.21	0.69	H
10. Recognizes and accommodates students' specific and/or special needs	3.23	0.69	H	3.18	0.73	H	3.19	0.72	H
<b>Composite Mean</b>	3.31		H	3.28		H	3.28		H
<b>Cumulative Standard Deviation</b>		0.51			0.52			0.51	

### Differences in Personnel and Students' Service Quality Functioning Assessments

The independent t-test measures the significant differences between the assessment of personnel and student respondents with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin (Table 6). The test is appropriate considering the homogeneity of variances and data from two independent samples that are approximately normally distributed. Results of the test showed that all dimensions obtained a p-value greater than 0.050, confirming that there were no significant differences between the assessments of the personnel and students in any of the dimensions measured. Therefore, the test failed to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that the assessment made by the personnel was the same as that made by the students and their perception is not significantly different. This result may have stemmed from the fact that the personnel also assess the level of functioning of service quality based on how students assess the same quality except from the measures that the personnel have direct control over. This result contrasted the study of [Naidoo \(2015\)](#) in certain dimensions, stating that responsiveness and empathy have significant differences, indicating that students expect institutions to be more responsive and empathetic than their personnel. This variation may be possible because of the difference in the research locale, as the researchers conducted their research in five different campuses; thus, the differences in the students and staff assessment can be more statistically evident than when it is conducted at only one specific institution.

**Table 6.** Differences in the Service Quality Assessment between Personnel and Students

Service Quality Dimension	t-test	p-value	Interpretation
Tangibility	1.940	0.066	Not Significant
Assurance	0.991	0.333	Not Significant
Responsiveness	0.107	0.916	Not Significant
Empathy	-0.128	0.899	Not Significant

*Decision Rule: Reject  $H_0$  if  $p$ -value <  $\alpha$  (0.050)*

### Issues and Challenges in Service Quality

The interviews with the students highlighted the significant issues and challenges that the institute (Table 7). Among the major issues in terms of the tangibility dimension, the interviewees emphasized outdated learning resources, lack of resource management, and inadequate facilities that affect academic progress and student comfort. In reference to the responsiveness dimension, the students noted some operational inefficiencies, such as delayed response to queries sent online, difficulty in obtaining updates regarding requested academic documents, long queues in the accounting department during examinations, and delayed uniform distribution. On the other hand, absenteeism and inconsistencies in instructor availability were noted to affect the assurance dimension of service quality, which contributed to student frustration. It can be noted that there are no single issues raised regarding the empathy dimension of service quality.

To address these issues, efficient resource allocation, improved communication, and infrastructure enhancements are essential. These improvements foster a supportive learning environment and enhance the overall educational experience.

This supports the findings of Hai (2022) emphasizing that the major factors that affect student satisfaction are the adequacy of the facilities to support effective teaching and learning experiences, the ability and competency of staff to serve students, and the availability of student support programs. By addressing these issues, institutions can proactively enhance service quality, thereby fostering an environment conducive to academic success and increasing student satisfaction.

**Table 7.** Issues and Challenges in Service Quality

Dimensions	Issues and Challenges
Tangibility	Lack of allocated parking space Unavailability of practical rooms for practical activities Limitation of technological infrastructure Outdated learning resources, such as books, Inefficient ventilation systems
Responsiveness	Delayed response to online queries Difficulty in obtaining updated academic documents During examinations, long queues in accounting departments due to slow payment processing Delayed uniform distribution
Assurance	Absenteeism of instructors Inconsistencies in instructors' availability

### Proposed Action Plan

This action plan outlines strategic initiatives to further improve service quality engagement within the institution. The study proposed activities that target all key areas that require improvement. The plan also identifies the office responsible for the execution of the said strategies. For monitoring and evaluation, the success indicator and the time frame in which the plan should be executed are also included. These strategies, if properly implemented, can create a responsive and supportive learning environment that positively influences student satisfaction and engagement. The proposed action plan relates to the concept of [Rivera et al. \(2023\)](#) that for an organization to sustain its commitment to providing quality services to its stakeholders, continuous training, performance monitoring, and exploring opportunities for improvement are necessary.

**Table 7.** Action plan

Key Area	Activity	Office Responsible	Success Indicator	Time frame
Tangibility	Apply for new technology-focused college programs; Enhance faculty teaching methods through workshops; Schedule routine inspections and repairs, and upgrade technological facilities for improved educational facilities; Allocate necessary resources to support the teaching and learning experience of the staff and students.	Administrative Office, Human Resource Department, Facility Management, IT Department	Government permit for new program; 100% faculty training attendance; documented maintenance reports; Completion of technological upgrades; proper allocation of resources	March 2025
Assurance	Conduct regular training sessions for staff; implement clear communication channels for administrative and academic matters; improve academic counseling, technical support, and other student support services; and provide and strictly implement clear scheduling of teaching staff.	Academic Affairs Office, Human Resource Department, Administrative Department, Student Services Office, Accounting Department	100% faculty training attendance; Establishment of communication channels; increased availability and use of support resources	Annual training starting from March 2025
Responsiveness	Establish an automated system for timely updates on student requests; Hire additional staff.	IT Department, Student Services, Human Resource	Implementation of automated systems;	January 2025

Key Area	Activity	Office Responsible	Success Indicator	Time frame
			Deployment of additional staff	
Empathy	Designate trained personnel to handle student concerns confidentially; Provide training sessions to enhance empathy and communication skills among student-facing personnel; and ensure the availability of discreet channels for student support.	Human Resource Department	Establishment of confidential support channels; 100% attendance and completion of training sessions	March 2025

## CONCLUSIONS

The institution's program offerings can meet the established educational standards in the country. Although the institution is providing acceptable quality of service to students, there are still room for improvement to further enhance students' satisfaction, thereby sustaining their level of loyalty and commitment to the institution. The study also highlighted areas for growth in all dimensions of service quality, emphasizing the need for strategic initiatives to enhance academic offerings, faculty standards, the campus environment, and technological infrastructure. Improvements in communication, transparency, and staff competency are essential to build trust and confidence among students, while streamlined responsiveness is necessary to address their queries effectively. Refining communication channels is crucial for providing students with confidential avenues to voice their concerns and seek assistance. Despite differing viewpoints, statistical analysis revealed no significant differences between student and personnel assessments, indicating a shared understanding of service quality. Interviews on issues and challenges related to the dimensions of service quality further confirmed the results of the survey. The need to improve in these areas in terms of efficient resource allocation, improved communication, and infrastructure enhancements can foster a supportive learning environment and enhance students' overall educational experience.

Furthermore, the proposed action plan includes initiatives such as infrastructure upgrades, efficient resource allocation, and enhanced communication channels. It also suggests improving staff allocation and development. Through these measures, the institution can create a more conducive learning environment and ensure continuous improvement of service quality, which aligns with student expectations and maintains a supportive atmosphere.

## LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Future research could expand the scope by including multiple HEIs with similar challenges to provide a more comprehensive understanding of service quality in educational settings. In addition, exploring various aspects of service quality using different models and theories can provide deeper insights into this area. To mitigate potential assessment biases, future studies could employ diverse data collection methods such as focus group discussions and observations.

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