

Like, Share, Improve: Student Feedback on Northwestern University's Student Services

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of service quality dimensions on student satisfaction and institutional reputation at Northwestern University in the Philippines, using the SERVQUAL framework. A mixed-methods research design was employed to provide a comprehensive assessment of student service experiences. Quantitative data were gathered through a structured Likert-scale survey administered to students across different colleges, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression to determine group differences and predictive relationships between service quality and institutional reputation. To complement the survey findings, qualitative data were obtained through document analysis of student feedback submitted via the university's suggestion box system and compiled by the Quality Assurance Office. These qualitative inputs were thematically analyzed to identify recurring service concerns, commendations, and areas requiring improvement. Results indicate that tangibility, assurance, and empathy significantly predict institutional reputation, while reliability and responsiveness show limited influence. Qualitative findings further reveal persistent issues related to infrastructure maintenance, staff professionalism, service accessibility, and digital connectivity, providing contextual depth to the quantitative results. The study underscores the importance of integrating student feedback into institutional decision-making and highlights the need for strategic investments in facilities, human interaction, and student-centered services. These findings offer empirical and practical insights for higher education policy formulation, service enhancement, and institutional branding within the Philippine context and similar settings.

Keywords: *Service Quality, Student Satisfaction, Institutional Reputation, SERVQUAL, Higher Education Policy, Educational Infrastructure*

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions contribute significantly to students' academic, professional, and personal development. In addition to classroom instruction, student services provide critical support for university life through academic assistance, mental health resources, career counseling, and extracurricular opportunities. With students increasingly using digital platforms to rate their satisfaction with these services, institutions are expected to adjust and improve their operations in response to real-time feedback. Kanwar and Sanjeeva (2022) assert that student feedback mechanisms are an important avenue for enhancing the quality of higher education, as they provide universities with the opportunity to celebrate their strengths and rectify shortcomings in service delivery. Student satisfaction is the primary attribute guiding loyalty and retention in universities. Student satisfaction plays a critical role in shaping student loyalty and retention in higher education.

Empirical studies affirm that satisfied students are more likely to remain enrolled, complete their programs, and recommend their institution (Alves & Raposo, 2007; Elliott & Healy, 2001). The student attrition model (Tinto, 1993) also highlights that academic and social satisfaction are central to persistence. Further, Douglas et al. (2006) found that satisfaction with university services and learning environments significantly reduces dropout rates. Hence, satisfaction is not merely a



reflection of experience but a strategic factor in institutional success and student retention outcomes.

According to research by [Borishade et al. \(2021\)](#), service quality directly impacts student satisfaction, followed by student loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion of the institution. This suggests that institutions providing high-quality services would not only equip students with a more fulfilling experience but also enhance their reputation among other institutions through positive peer feedback and recommendations. The rise of online platforms and social media has amplified students' voices, making their opinions increasingly visible and more influential in molding institutional policies and service improvements.

The very fact that digital platforms have changed the scenario for students in sharing their university experiences. Actually, the advent of digital platforms has altered the higher education student experience, sharing fashion by providing speed, reach, and authenticity to communicators. Social media, student forums, and review platforms enable the real-time sharing of academic, social, and institutional feedback, thereby significantly shaping peer perceptions and university branding ([Alves et al., 2020](#)). Unlike traditional word-of-mouth, digital means of sharing amplify student voices and global reach instantaneously. Also, when unfiltered student narratives are perceived as genuine, there is a certain degree of truth in enrollment decisions and institutional accountability ([Langan et al., 2019](#)).

These thus position students as co-creators of institutional reputation and educational discourse on digital platforms. The typical online learning and student satisfaction studies, such as those by [Thanh et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Zeng and Wang \(2021\)](#), underscore that feedback from students collected through social networks and digital surveys is a significant tool for identifying students' needs. Social media has allowed students to provide instant feedback on their experiences with university services, influencing prospective students and university administrators. Hence, the importance of schools adopting an active response to student feedback and making the necessary adjustments to maintain high satisfaction levels.

While student feedback promises to serve many purposes for the efficiency and quality of higher education, universities face challenges in properly interpreting and responding to it. While student feedback is crucial for enhancing academic quality and for providing an administrative setting in which feedback is shared with staff, interpreting the data presents universities with subtle challenges. One of the key impasses might arise from the labeling and classification of qualitative responses, or from reducing such responses to simplistic codes due to insufficient analytical frameworks or inadequate staff training ([Matosas-López et al., 2021](#)).

Furthermore, feedback is considered evaluative; therefore, its potential to inform pedagogical changes is marginalized or ignored ([Nair et al., 2020](#)). Other reasons that limit universities' ability to respond to feedback in a timely way include limited resources, data overload, and fragmented feedback systems ([Canning & Szablewska, 2021](#)). This creates a cycle of breakage that hinders the nourishment of meaningful institutional change.

[Ho et al. \(2021\)](#) applied machine learning techniques to student satisfaction data, underscoring that although feedback is available everywhere, institutions have difficulty systematically identifying and addressing common issues. This points to the need for proper methods of collecting, analyzing, and implementing student feedback to improve service quality. Moreover, a study by [Rasheed and Rashid \(2023\)](#) corroborated that information quality, teaching quality, and service effectiveness are the principal variables affecting student satisfaction in higher education.

This study is about student feedback to inform university services in general and at Northwestern University, Philippines, in particular. By studying the mechanisms through which digital feedback can evaluate university responsiveness towards student expectations, this

research would ultimately strengthen student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness. This will play an important role in developing a more supportive and engaging learning environment as institutions of higher learning continue navigating a changing student service landscape.

Despite considerable research on student satisfaction in higher education, a major gap remains in understanding how student feedback, particularly via digital platforms, leads to service improvements in universities. Existing studies mostly consider the generic relationship between service quality and student satisfaction (Borishade et al., 2021) and merely skim the surface about how institutions respond to and engage with student feedback procured through modern digital sources such as social media, online reviews, and student forums.

Traditional survey assessment methods still constitute the bulk of measurements of university services; however, these methods may not effectively capture the ever-changing ways students express their concerns and expectations. In addition, many studies examine only one aspect of university services (academic support, online learning, or student affairs), thereby failing to provide a comprehensive assessment of multiple service categories and how these categories interact to shape students' experiences (Thanh et al., 2024). Another important research gap is that few such studies have focused on Southeast Asian universities, especially in the Philippines, where culture and institutions may play unique roles in student satisfaction.

Most studies examining student satisfaction are Western; such differences may arise in service expectations, technology infrastructure, and administrative responses in developing areas, respectively (Keržič et al., 2021). It is also like Northwestern would not know how to effectively benchmark its performance and improve its services by integrating its own global best practices without local studies. Local studies are required for benchmarking at Northwestern because they offer context-specific insights that global models cannot provide.

Local studies capture the peculiar cultural, administrative, and institutional challenges that affect Northwestern, thereby serving as better bases for realistic comparisons of performance and service improvements. Without them, global best practices may be misapplied or ineffective in meeting student needs. Also, while some studies have established that service quality influences student satisfaction, fewer studies have looked at how that satisfaction translates into loyalty, advocacy, and engagement by students with institutional services (Rasheed & Rashid, 2023). This makes it pertinent in an age when students increasingly rely on peers' recommendations and digital reviews to select educational institutions.

In the case of Northwestern University, this research is particularly relevant because it sheds light on the specific requirements and expectations of Filipino students. While global studies would provide some generalizations, local studies would be much better at making improvements that are institutionally relevant to the realities of the culture and the logistics of the student body. Furthermore, higher education institutions must learn to appreciate the new relevance of transparency and accountability in service delivery. This activity, when universities analyze and act on student feedback, may lead to more effective relationships with student communities and strengthen the supportive academic ambiance (Basuony et al., 2021).

The connection between student satisfaction and institutional reputation is also important, as it affects retention rates, public reputation, and the capacity to attract future students. This study seeks to address the research gaps identified, contributing to the broader body of research on higher education service evaluation and offering practical implications for improving university services at Northwestern University. For example, it will investigate student feedback, both generally and specifically from digital platforms, and its impact on institutional decisions and service quality improvements. To what extent does student satisfaction engender loyalty and advocacy towards their institution? The ideas gleaned will inform how university administrators can develop a more responsive and student-focused learning environment. In general, the research

will go far in improving student experiences, thus safeguarding Northwestern's standing as it competes and thrives within the high ranks of what we will call sector-high education.

Research Problems

This study aims to measure students' satisfaction at Northwestern University in the Philippines with the various student services provided by the institution. Specifically, it answers the following questions:

1. How satisfied are students with the physical facilities (classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and student lounges) provided by Northwestern University?
2. How do students perceive the adequacy and accessibility of technological resources such as the Learning Management System (LMS), online portals, and Wi-Fi services?
3. How reliable are the academic support services (e.g., registrar's office, enrollment system, and academic advising) in providing accurate and timely assistance to students?
4. To what extent do students feel that university services are consistently available and efficient in addressing their academic and administrative needs?
5. How do students assess the responsiveness of university staff in handling inquiries, concerns, and requests in student support offices (e.g., guidance and counseling, financial aid, and registrar's office)?
6. What are the common issues encountered by students regarding delayed responses or inefficiencies in university services, and how can these be addressed?
7. How satisfied are students with the professionalism, competence, and courtesy of university personnel in key student services (e.g., academic advising, library assistance, and career services)?
8. How confident do students feel in the support and guidance provided by university staff in terms of academic, financial, and personal concerns?
9. To what extent do students feel that university support services (e.g., guidance and counseling, student affairs, disability services) cater to their individual needs and concerns?
10. How can Northwestern University improve student-centered services to enhance inclusivity, emotional support, and academic success?

Research Paradigm

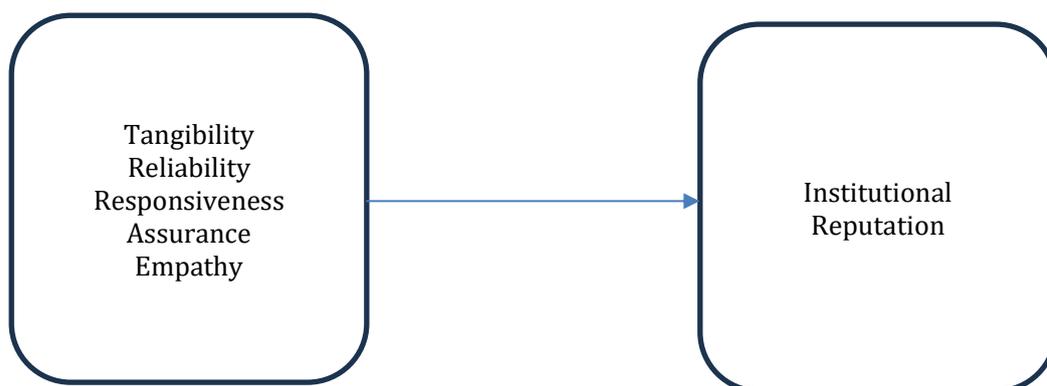


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the most relevant theories in this work is the SERVQUAL Model, conceived by Parasuraman et.al. (1988). The SERVQUAL model is a widely acknowledged paradigm for evaluating service quality, centered on the perceived gap between customers' expectations and

perceptions. It identifies five primary dimensions determining service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

The five dimensions of service quality—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—are critical factors in student satisfaction in higher education. Tangibles encompass the physical and digital infrastructure that supports student services, namely classrooms, laboratories, campus facilities, and online platforms. Reliability refers to the university's ability to consistently provide services that meet agreed-upon standards, such as timely enrollment, sound academic advice, and administrative control. Responsiveness relates to the institution's capacity to respond promptly and willingly to students' needs and queries, which affects their perception of whether the institution supports them.

Assurance is the level of trust that students develop in university staff, based on their competence and professionalism, and on safeguarding academic records. Empathy refers to the institution's ability to identify and address the specific needs of individual students, demonstrating person-to-person care and fostering inclusion in service delivery. Through these dimensions, institutions can grasp the full service experience from students' perspectives and subsequently create a framework to enhance service quality, reputation, and student-centered learning environments. Hence, a strategic approach in developing the institution, addressing all aspects, will be key in cultivating loyalty and strengthening credibility.

The objectives of this study are to evaluate student satisfaction with university services within Northwestern University in the Philippines and to determine the extent to which student feedback proffers improvements in services. Because it directly offers a structured approach to evaluating service quality against students' stark expectations and real-world experiences, the SERVQUAL Model is highly relevant. If students perceive an intolerable gap between the expected and actual university service delivery, their satisfaction would decline sharply, resulting in negative feedback, reduced engagement, and many students dropping out along the way.

Additionally, the development of new digital feedback channels, including social media, online reviews, and student forums, enables different methods for measuring and analyzing service quality. The five SERVQUAL dimensions may inform a study of how digital feedback embodies these dimensions and, in turn, whether universities respond to that feedback by improving their service offerings. Suppose students frequently complain about the slow response time of administrative services. In that case, the responsiveness dimension is likely weak and worthy of improvement.

Including SERVQUAL in this study means that service gaps can be measured, key areas for improvement can be pinpointed, and appropriate recommendations for enhancing services offered to students at Northwestern University can be made. This transition will eventually allow the university to move from a traditional, reactive service model to a proactive, student-centered model in which student feedback is valued and used to create new services.

Related Studies

Student Satisfaction and Higher Education Services

The success of higher education institutions (HEIs) is greatly affected by student satisfaction, which influences student retention, institutional reputation, and other dimensions of academic performance. [Kanwar and Sanjeeva \(2022\)](#) point out that student satisfaction is a salient measure of the institution's advancement and the efficacy of its services, emphasizing the availability of feedback to support ongoing service improvement. [Borishade et al. \(2021\)](#) further contend that the service quality in universities, in turn, affects student loyalty; that is, satisfied students are more likely to serve as advocates for the institution via word-of-mouth communication. Therefore, these findings present a compelling case for universities to assess and improve the quality of services they provide to meet the ever-changing expectations of students.

Service Quality and Student Feedback Mechanisms

Primarily used to evaluate service quality in educational institutions, the SERVQUAL construct developed by [Parasuraman et al. \(1988\)](#) includes characteristics such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Teaching quality and information accessibility were found to significantly influence student satisfaction and the intention to recommend an institutional choice in a study by [Rasheed and Rashid \(2023\)](#). Moreover, [Thanh et al. \(2024\)](#) illustrate that institutions that seek and act based on student feedback will manifest noticeably higher levels of student satisfaction - such improvement activities act as mechanisms for creating more student-centered learning environments.

The Role of Technology in Student Satisfaction

Every day, as technology-based solutions become an integral part of students' lives, student satisfaction is increasingly dependent on the quality of digital services offered by universities. [Kim and Kim \(2021\)](#) examined the effects of online learning tools on student engagement, finding that well-organized digital platforms effectively promote student satisfaction. Building on the work of [Prifti \(2022\)](#), which identifies self-efficacy in LMS use as another determinant of student satisfaction, students who are confident in their ability to use online resources tend to report better learning experiences. This suggests that universities must strive to provide easy-to-use and responsive digital platforms to keep students satisfied.

The Impact of Online Learning on Student Satisfaction

There has been a substantial body of research on student satisfaction in online education during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to [Zeng and Wang \(2021\)](#), students' satisfaction levels varied with course design, interaction, and instructor responsiveness in several studies they reviewed on online learning. Also, it was found that students favor synchronous learning methods (real-time classes using technology) over the more common forms of asynchronous class interaction, citing a lack of engagement and motivation. This has underscored the need for universities to embrace flexible and interactive online learning options to boost student satisfaction.

Research has been conducted and published extensively concerning online education and its impact on student satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to [Zeng and Wang \(2021\)](#), the various studies reviewed on online learning concluded that students' satisfaction levels vary depending on course design, interaction, and instructor responsiveness. In another study, [Basuony et al. \(2021\)](#) noted that students favor synchronous learning methods, such as real-time virtual classes, over asynchronous methods, which are often less engaging and motivating. All these cases called for universities to implement flexible and participatory online learning strategies to boost student satisfaction.

The above installation conducted exhaustive research that has been incorporated into the field of online education regarding student satisfaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic. According to several studies by [Zeng and Wang \(2021\)](#) on online learning, student satisfaction depends on course design, interaction levels, and instructor responsiveness. Similarly, [Basuony et al. \(2021\)](#) reported that students preferred synchronous learning approaches, including real-time virtual classes, rather than predominantly passive asynchronous methods, which were concerning for engagement and motivation. All this led to an urgent demand for universities to develop flexible, accessible, and participatory online learning strategies to enhance student satisfaction.

Student satisfaction surveys on online education have received extensive coverage in research on the incidence and effects of COVID-19 on student satisfaction. [Zeng and Wang \(2021\)](#) cited several studies on online learning and concluded that students' satisfaction varies with course

design, interaction levels, and instructor responsiveness. These results indicated that students prefer synchronous learning methods, such as real-time virtual classes, over asynchronous ones, which they find ultimately lack engagement and motivation. All of these studies argued in favor of greater flexibility and interactive learning modes in universities' adoption to enhance student satisfaction.

Student Satisfaction and Institutional Reputation

Student satisfaction not only leaves an imprint on individual minds but also enhances an institution's reputation as a whole. Keržič et al. (2021), through their analysis of several countries, indicated a direct link between satisfaction and perceived academic performance, whereby increased satisfaction would increase institutional credibility. Ho et al. (2021) also posited that student satisfaction would lead to positive word-of-mouth advertising for the university, thereby increasing enrollment and improving the institution's position.

The literature stresses the importance of student satisfaction in higher education and links it to service quality, technology integration, online learning experiences, and institutional reputation. Universities must collect and act on student feedback, improve service quality, and enhance digital learning environments to maintain high levels of student satisfaction. As institutions like Northwestern University, Philippines, look to improve student services, findings from these studies can serve as a basis for a structured approach to optimizing the entire student experience.

RESEARCH METHOD

Participants

The study participants are students from Northwestern University in the Philippines, representing various colleges and degree programs. A proportional stratified random sampling technique was employed in this study to ensure the sample appropriately represents the student population. The total number of students for the second academic semester is 5299; Raosoft's Sample Size Calculator indicates a sample size of 365 to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. Any anticipated non-responses may require a target sample of approximately 400-450 students.

The proportional distribution of the sample size across the different colleges is presented in the table below:

Table 1. Sample Size

College	Population (2nd Sem)	Sample Size	Actual Respondents
Graduate School (GS)	121	6	7
College of Allied Health Sciences (CAHS)	1619	139	466
College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE)	1278	123	136
College of Business Education (COBE)	213	10	60
College of International Hospitality and Tourism Management (CIHTM)	882	64	524
College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology (CEAT)	817	40	184
College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)	285	14	78
College of Teacher Education (CTE)	84	4	27
Total	5299	400	1,482

The sample came from actual users of university services so that their responses reflect firsthand experiences with the university's academic, administrative, and support services.

Although the researchers initially planned a sample size of 400 respondents using appropriate sampling techniques, the actual number of responses collected and analyzed reached 1,482 via Google Forms. This substantial increase in participant responses not only surpassed expectations but also provided a more comprehensive and representative dataset.

The accessibility and shareability of online platforms contributed to broader participation across various colleges, enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the findings. This larger-than-expected sample size enabled deeper insights into students' perceptions of service quality and institutional reputation, thereby strengthening the study's validity and statistical robustness. The sample selection method was randomized within each college to ensure fairness for all. Participation in the study was voluntary; students were informed that their participation would be anonymous.

Table 2. Demographic Profile

Profile	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	692	54.4
Female	790	45.6
Year Level		
First Year	340	22.94
Second Year	329	22.20
Third Year	629	42.44
Fourth Year	156	10.53
Fifth Year	28	1.89

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents were male (54.4%), while females made up 45.6%, suggesting a relatively balanced gender distribution. Most students were in their third year (42.44%), followed by first-year (22.94%) and second-year (22.20%) students. Fourth-year and fifth-year students accounted for only 10.53% and 1.89%, respectively. This indicates that younger students comprised a significant portion of the sample, reflecting active enrollment in earlier academic levels and possibly greater accessibility or responsiveness to surveys in those groups.

Research Instrument

This study used a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to comprehensively assess student satisfaction with university services at Northwestern University in the Philippines.

The more structured survey questionnaire for this study is primarily designed to assess student satisfaction with the various student support services at Northwestern University, Philippines, using the SERVQUAL model. The questionnaire has three major sections to evaluate various facets of student satisfaction and institutional reputation comprehensively. The first section captured the demographic profile of respondents: college, year level, and academic program so that that answers can be analyzed according to different student groups.

The second section encompassed student satisfaction with university services through 25 Likert-scale questions aligned with the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Each statement will use a 4-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree), enabling students to indicate their level of agreement with the quality and effectiveness of university services. The third section measures institutional reputation and contains 5 additional Likert-scale questions exploring students' views on Northwestern University's academic standing, credibility, and overall

reputation among employers and the community.

The researcher-developed questionnaire underwent expert validation to achieve content validity and reliability. Three professionals in the fields of education, institutional research, and student affairs validated the instrument using criteria such as content relevance (whether it aligns with research objectives), clarity of language (whether it is understood by the students who are the respondents), and construct validity (whether it measures what is supposed to measure, i.e., the dimension of service quality).

The instrument was then revised for accuracy and appropriateness based on their feedback. It was then tested empirically with a small group of students, and a Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis was conducted to assess internal consistency ($\alpha \geq 0.70$). Surveys and questionnaires were disseminated in print and digital formats to reach a wider student audience.

In the qualitative part of this study, the material consisted of documents of the student feedback obtained through the suggestions deposited in the suggestion box system operated by Northwestern University's Quality Assurance Office. The Quality Assurance Office collated and analyzed student suggestions and recommendations monthly, enabling continuous exploration of recurring concerns, service difficulties, and areas for improvement. If some consistency was found in these documents, it was then used to identify common themes and patterns in women's expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction across responses from the university's different services.

The document analysis focused on frequently reported issues across specific services, including enrollment processes, academic support, library resources, and student portals. The report also examined supportive and commendatory comments that acknowledged the areas where students expressed happiness. Furthermore, notes were taken on suggested service improvements to identify which cases were most frequently raised for institutional attention. By studying the frequencies of specific challenges, these broad discussions would help isolate major service gaps that require immediate intervention.

The study's dual approach of document analysis and surveys has provided a comprehensive basis for developing a good understanding of student satisfaction at Northwestern. The study thus vetted these data through triangulation and has made all recommendations complementary to hard empirical data, in hopes that they could be employed accurately to enhance student service activities.

Data Analysis

Data gathered from the survey were analyzed using quantitative methods to ensure an accurate assessment of student satisfaction and institutional reputation at Northwestern University in the Philippines. Initially, descriptive statistics would be utilized to summarize the data, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, in assessing the general levels of student satisfaction across different university service areas. In this way, one would have an idea of how students perceive the quality of support service upon the SERVQUAL dimensions: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy.

To determine the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of responses on a Likert-type scale. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 would indicate high reliability, suggesting that the survey items accurately reflect students' satisfaction levels. Inferential statistical analyses were utilized to explore deeper relationships regarding the data. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare satisfaction levels across student demographics, specifically college affiliation. These tests helped determine whether there is any real difference in perceptions of university services across student groups.

In addition, correlation and regression analyses were employed to establish the relationship

between student satisfaction and institutional reputation. Higher satisfaction with specific services leads to a better perception of Northwestern University as a whole in terms of reputation, as revealed by correlation analysis. On the other hand, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which student satisfaction predicted institutional reputation, based on SERVQUAL dimensions that have a greater effect on the university's image and student loyalty.

Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles to protect the privacy and rights of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection, during which the purpose of the study, its procedures, potential benefits, and the respondent's right to withdraw from participation at any time without negative consequences were clearly explained. Confidentiality and anonymity would be strictly maintained by ensuring that no individually identifiable information is collected and that responses are used only for research purposes. The data was securely stored in password-protected files, accessible only to authorized researchers, with appropriate disposal after the study. The study seeks ethical review and approval from Northwestern University's Research Ethics Committee to ensure compliance with the institutional and national research standards. These ethical guidelines sought to maintain integrity and fairness for all student participants and to facilitate meaningful input to enhance university services.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3a. Service Quality of Northwestern University

Construct	\bar{x}								
	COBE	CEAT	CIHTM	CAS	CAHS	GS	CTE	CCJE	Total
Tangibility	3.16	3.07	3.30	3.01	3.14	3.60	3.14	3.22	3.21
Reliability	3.12	2.98	3.22	2.84	2.97	3.45	3.12	3.08	3.10
Responsiveness	3.10	3.02	3.24	2.87	2.99	3.60	3.22	3.06	3.14
Assurance	3.19	3.09	3.27	3.04	3.12	3.70	3.26	3.16	3.23
Empathy	3.23	3.10	3.28	3.06	3.12	3.55	3.30	3.15	3.22
Composite Mean	3.16	3.05	3.26	2.96	3.07	3.58	3.21	3.13	

Legend 1.00 – 1.74 Strongly Disagree
 1.75 – 2.49 Disagree
 2.50 – 3.24 Agree
 3.25 – 4.00 Strongly Agree

Table 3b. Service Quality of Northwestern University

Construct	VI								
	COBE	CEAT	CIHTM	CAS	CAHS	GS	CTE	CCJE	Total
Tangibility	A	A	SA	A	A	SA	A	A	A
Reliability	A	A	A	A	A	SA	A	A	A
Responsiveness	A	A	A	A	A	SA	A	A	A
Assurance	A	A	SA	A	A	SA	SA	A	A
Empathy	A	A	SA	A	A	SA	SA	A	A
Composite Mean	A	A	SA	A	A	SA	A	A	

The examination of services rendered in each college of Northwestern University has shown

not only worth-recognized strengths but also some significant differences that naturally correlate with student satisfaction and the institution's reputation. Of the five service quality dimensions—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—tangibility came out as the most consistently appreciated through students from the Graduate School (GS) who rated it highest of all categories ($\bar{x} = 3.60$, SA). This supports previous findings identifying physical infrastructure, modern learning facilities, and technological resources as the meaning-determining constructs in students' perceptions (Thanh et al., 2024).

In contrast, the mean tangibility rating at the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) was the lowest ($\bar{x} = 3.01$, A), in line with previously reported thematic findings that lamented the state of learning environments, including outdated classrooms, inadequate laboratory spaces, and poorly maintained facilities. It also applied to CEAT, which had poor ratings for reliability ($\bar{x} = 2.98$) and access to technology, particularly internet connectivity (2.94), contradicting the premise that engineering students typically report higher satisfaction when infrastructure is strong (Prifti, 2022).

Once again, GS performed best on the dimensions of reliability and responsiveness, with mean ratings of 3.45 and 3.60, respectively, confirming that consistent service and timely support are highly appreciated when delivered well. However, those other colleges generally failed on most of these dimensions. For example, CAS and CAHS posted low responsiveness scores (2.87 and 2.99, respectively), implying that students would wait longer before their needs would be addressed. These two dimensions, however, were found to be statistically insignificant in predicting institutional reputation ($\beta = -0.01521$ for reliability and $\beta = -0.03144$ for responsiveness). However, the day-to-day involvement of these variables in service delivery is decisive (Ho et al., 2021).

On the contrary, assurance and empathy exerted a stronger influence statistically ($\beta = 0.26414$ and $\beta = 0.36875$, respectively) and perceptually, with GS again scoring highly ($\bar{x} = 3.70$ and 3.55). This complements the trend in which students place high value on faculty competence, personalized support, and respectful interaction (Thanh et al., 2024). Colleges CIHTM and CTE also performed well in it, indicating that their advising and mentorship systems are efficient.

Basically, GS and CIHTM were the top-ranking colleges for satisfaction across all dimensions, while the service quality gaps were the largest at CAS and CEAT. Addressing these disparities at the university will require a significant investment in infrastructure, improved access to technology, and student engagement programs with faculty. Then, standardizing service delivery and improving student advisory systems can further minimize the satisfaction gap while cultivating a more inclusive and reputable environment.

Table 4a. Institutional Reputation

Statement	\bar{x}							
	COBE	CEAT	CIHTM	CAS	CAHS	GS	CTE	CCJE
Northwestern University is widely recognized for its academic excellence and quality education.	3.32	3.13	3.35	3.12	3.30	3.25	3.15	3.27
NWU maintains a positive reputation among students, alumni, and the community.	3.31	3.10	3.32	3.13	3.26	3.25	3.19	3.27
The university's graduates are well regarded by employers and excel in their	3.37	3.15	3.33	3.14	3.28	3.50	3.15	3.23

respective fields.									
I am proud to be a student of Northwestern University and would recommend it to prospective students.	3.39	3.17	3.38	3.21	3.33	4.00	3.30	3.28	
NWU actively engages in initiatives that enhance its reputation, such as research, community service, and industry partnerships.	3.43	3.22	3.36	3.26	3.35	4.00	3.26	3.26	
Composite Mean	3.35	3.15	3.35	3.17	3.30	3.60	3.21	3.27	
Legend	1.00 – 1.74 Strongly Disagree								
	1.75 – 2.49 Disagree								
	2.50 – 3.24 Agree								
	3.25 – 4.00 Strongly Agree								

Table 4b. Institutional Reputation

Statement	VI							
	COBE	CEAT	CIHTM	CAS	CAHS	GS	CTE	CCJE
Northwestern University is widely recognized for its academic excellence and quality education.	SA	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA
NWU maintains a positive reputation among students, alumni, and the community.	SA	A	SA	A	SA	SA	A	A
The university's graduates are well regarded by employers and excel in their respective fields.	SA	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A
I am proud to be a student of Northwestern University and would recommend it to prospective students.	SA	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA
NWU actively engages in initiatives that enhance its reputation, such as research, community service, and industry partnerships.	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
Composite Mean	A	A	SA	A	A	SA	SA	A

Institutional reputation is reflected in students' perceptions of Northwestern University's academic excellence, alumni success, and external partnerships. Scores ranged from 3.15 (CEAT) to 3.60 (Graduate School), indicating a generally positive opinion among students towards NWU, though with variations across colleges. GS students have assigned NWU a high rating for research, community outreach, and industry linkages (4.00), consistent with [Keržič et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Rasheed & Rashid \(2023\)](#), affirming the direct contribution of postgraduate programs to institutional reputation through research engagement and professional networking.

On the other hand, CEAT, with a mean score of 3.15, and CAS, with 3.17, had lower satisfaction with NWU's reputation, reflecting concerns about a lack of visibility among employers and industry partners. This reflects students' concern about job placements, as they see less connection between their programs and the labor market. Similar dissatisfaction in STEM and general education programs, bereft of adequate career support services, has been found by [Basuony et al. \(2021\)](#).

Notwithstanding the noted gaps, students from each college felt great pride in their association with NWU and acknowledged its engagement in academic and community matters (Composite Mean: 3.22–4.00). Nevertheless, the disparity in ratings among the colleges contrasts with [Ho et al.'s \(2021\)](#) assertion that even reputation scores become uniform with effective university marketing and career services.

NWU needs to strengthen partnerships with employers to improve career services and promote alumni success stories, particularly in the underperforming colleges, CEAT, and CAS. Improved connections with industry partners and career advancement programs would elevate the university's reputation and better meet the expectations of diverse students.

Table 5. Documentary Analysis per Theme

Theme	Discussion
Service Quality and Professionalism of University Staff	<p>One recurring issue across departments was inconsistent professionalism and responsiveness among staff, particularly in the security, finance, student services, and administrative offices. Many students expressed dissatisfaction with the security, finance, and registrar staff due to perceived rudeness, favoritism, and a lack of friendliness. There were multiple complaints regarding security guards: one was being too harsh with some students while lax with others, and they also asked irrelevant questions. In like manner, some finance and registrar staff were said to be unapproachable, unfriendly, and slow in processing documents or payments.</p> <p>This is where a training program for staff in customer service, fair policy enforcement, and communication skills is highly recommended to ensure all students receive proper and polite treatment. These findings demonstrated the need for a more student-centered service approach, in which university staff would treat students as clients worthy of the highest value.</p>
Infrastructure and Facility Maintenance	<p>A myriad of student queries underscored the degraded physical infrastructure and maintenance of university buildings, including malfunctioning air-conditioning equipment, classrooms, and restrooms. They brought out the message that, for almost every department, the air-conditioning units in the lecture rooms were not working, which dulled concentration in lessons, especially during hot months, while complaints on the sorry state of restrooms were also heard, with students naming, among others, foul odors, water scarcity, or uncleanness in toilets. Poorly furnished classrooms, poor ventilation, and limited space in the lecture rooms were also identified as barriers to a calm atmosphere conducive to optimal learning.</p>

	<p>One strong recommendation that arose from students' interrogation questions is the need for additional or improved allocation for the repair and upgrading of facilities. These changes should include installing immediately functioning air-conditioning systems; chemicals should be used to improve classroom ventilation and to clean toilets. Furthermore, the construction of study spaces is suggested. The students found this environment perfect for a higher-quality education.</p>
<p>Affordability and Fair Pricing of Campus Services</p>	<p>Many students complained strongly about the high food prices at the university cafeteria, noting that many meals were priced too high for their portion sizes and quality. Several felt the canteen had student-unfriendly pricing; students on a budget found on-campus meals out of their price range. Some did not appreciate sweets, which made the regular change-making life harder for students.</p> <p>Consequently, many students raised concerns about tuition fees and other university charges, calling for greater transparency in fee breakdowns and increased financial support. There were repeated appeals to either lower tuition fees, increase scholarship opportunities, or fairly price academic documents such as clearance forms and transcript requests.</p> <p>This highlights issues for NWU to review the affordability of its services, specifically the food price regime and tuition fees, and perhaps to expand philanthropic programs or create reduced-price meal options or meal subsidies for genuinely needy students.</p>
<p>Internet Connectivity and Technological Support</p>	<p>One of the major issues raised by students was the low-quality internet connectivity across campus, especially in areas such as the COME, CEAT, and library wings. Wi-Fi, for instance, at a tortoise's pace, is driving some students mad because it can best be used to access online resources and facilitate fast digital transactions. Some obsolete systems were observed in the computer center and needed a technological upgrade.</p> <p>Higher speed, faster internet, computers with the latest technology, and faster internet support services should be invested in (IT support services) for the students' advantage, especially in the case of the way the two interact; the students purely depend on such digital learning tools to earn the credit for their learning.</p>
<p>Accessibility and Efficiency of Student Services</p>	<p>Data further showed that delays and inefficiencies were widespread across student-related departments, especially in finance, medical, registrar, and administrative offices. Students had to address a variety of complaints, such as slow payment processing in the finance office, which often led to long waiting times that flustered students, especially during exam time. The process of certificate issuance from the Medical Office was seen as quite an ordeal, and, following one patient's suggestion, the service</p>

should someday be offered free as part of the school's health services.

Applicants expressed several very crucial concerns about the university's scholarship process. They have cited unclear or vague requirements, high processing times, and very little money awarded to scholarships. Some also covered how slow and cumbersome the clearance process was, with others implying some level of favoritism.

Some suggestions for improving service accessibility contributed to the opinion of their online appointment and queueing system for financial transactions and document requests. Recognition of proposals could greatly help reduce time and allow for smoother processing. On the side, the students suggested hiring more personnel in most departments than was generally necessary under normal student enrollment.

Table 6. Correlation Matrix

	Tangibility		Reliability		Responsiveness		Assurance		Empathy	
	r	p-value	r	p-value	r	p-value	r	p-value	r	p-value
Tangibility										
Reliability	0.783	<0.001								
Responsiveness	0.737	<0.001	0.848	<0.001						
Assurance	0.762	<0.001	0.814	<0.001	0.847	<0.001				
Empathy	0.742	<0.001	0.800	<0.001	0.814	<0.001	0.872	<0.001		
Reputation	0.718	<0.001	0.672	<0.001	0.676	<0.001	0.755	<0.001	0.761	<0.001

Analysis results found positive and significant relationships ($p < 0.001$) for all five SERVQUAL dimensions-tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy-with institutional reputation in Northwestern University. The strongest correlation between assurance and empathy was reported to exist ($r = 0.872$), suggesting that students perceive institutions as more caring when staff and workers are competent and reliable, in accordance with the findings of [Thanh et al. \(2024\)](#) regarding personalized-assisted professionalism.

The high correlation between reliability and responsiveness ($r = 0.848$) strengthens this argument; efficient and reliable services would improve perceptions of responsiveness, as [Ho et al \(2021\)](#) emphasized that dependable administrative support is key to student satisfaction.

Among these predictors, empathy ($r = 0.761$) was the strongest predictor of institutional reputation, and assurance ($r = 0.755$) was the second most effective in demonstrating that "human touch and care go beyond crappy buildings." Tangibility ($r = 0.718$) showed a lower but still meaningful correlation, indicating that their physical resources are important but secondary to interpersonal service quality.

The results imply that institutional reputation for NWU is shaped by students' experience of contact with their faculty, 'support' from staff, and personal attention. That is why, in addition to investments in physical infrastructure, such funds may also be directed toward staff training, student engagement, and service reliability to enhance public image and student trust.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA

	F	Df1	Df2	p
Tangibility	8.07	8	55.9	<0.001

Reliability	10.55	8	55.9	<0.001
Responsiveness	10.05	8	55.7	<0.001
Assurance	6.17	8	55.7	<0.001
Empathy	5.78	8	55.5	<0.001
Reputation	4.30	8	55.4	<0.001

One-way analysis of variance provides insight into whether there are statistically significant differences in student satisfaction across the factors of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and resources between colleges. A p-value < 0.001 is observed for all five service quality dimensions. That is, there are significant differences among colleges in how students perceive different factors of service quality.

Based on the F-statistics, the results were significant in all cases considered, with p-values < .01. This was in contrast to the respondents' satisfaction with the consistency of the university's services and the responsiveness of university personnel across various colleges. The findings are consistent with those of [Ho et al. \(2021\)](#) in that the reliability of services on both the administrative and academic fronts is seen as important for enhancing students' educational experiences. It was also observed that clients from colleges differed in responsiveness (F = 10.05, p < 0.001), receiving assistance from university staff at the correct time and without delay.

Additionally, Assurance (F = 6.17, p < 0.001) and empathy (F = 5.78, p < 0.001) show statistically significant differences across the colleges, indicating that students at these colleges differed in the perception of faculty competence and student support services. These results support the conclusions of [Thanh et al. \(2024\)](#) that the level of personal attention and faculty engagement considerably affects student satisfaction. Institutional reputation (F = 4.30, p < 0.001) also differs significantly among programs, as students from various areas hold varying opinions regarding NWU's generic reputation for excellence in education, industry partnerships, and graduate employability.

Table 8. Linear Regression

Model Coefficients - Reputation				
Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept ^a	0.57483	0.0704	8.1596	< .001
Tangibility (2)	0.28595	0.0278	10.2695	< .001
Reliability	-0.01521	0.0326	-0.4661	0.641
Responsiveness	-0.03144	0.0333	-0.9445	0.345
Assurance	0.26414	0.0396	6.6691	< .001
Empathy	0.36875	0.0346	10.6558	< .001
Course:				
CEAT – COBE	-0.11232	0.0491	-2.2865	0.022
CIHTM – COBE	-0.08901	0.0451	-1.9745	0.049
CAS – COBE	-0.06561	0.0567	-1.1581	0.247
CAHS – COBE	0.00132	0.0453	0.0290	0.977
Graduate School – COBE	-0.12499	0.1652	-0.7567	0.449
CTE – COBE	-0.17535	0.0767	-2.2868	0.022
COME – COBE	-0.10091	0.0963	-1.0474	0.295
CCJE – COBE	-0.08730	0.0513	-1.7025	0.089

Indeed, the linear regression analysis provides valuable information on how service quality

variables predict Northwestern University's institutional reputation. Tangibility, assurance, and empathy were identified as the strongest and most statistically significant predictors of institutional reputation among all the service dimensions analyzed. Tangibility ($\beta = 0.28595$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that modern facilities and well-maintained infrastructure, along with access to technological resources, will largely determine how students perceive their university's credibility and prestige. This is in line with [Basuony et al. \(2021\)](#), who show that institutions with improved learning environments are most often associated with higher stakeholder status and confidence.

Of course, assurance ($\beta = 0.26414$, $p < 0.001$) and empathy ($\beta = 0.36875$, $p < 0.001$) were also vital predictors, underscoring the importance of competent faculty, professional support services, and individual attention for students. Such findings are similar to those of [Thanh et al. \(2024\)](#), who highlighted that academic environments centered on the students directly affect the institution's reputation as well as the students' pride and trust. Students who are genuinely supported by faculty and the administration are more likely to regard their university highly.

Surprisingly, reliability ($\beta = -0.01521$, $p = 0.641$) and responsiveness ($\beta = -0.03144$, $p = 0.345$) were not statistically significant, suggesting that while students appreciate the efficient and effective services provided, they do not appear to place a heavy weight on broader perceptions of NWU's reputation. Thus, this finding counters the claim by [Ho et al. \(2021\)](#) that operational excellence is at the heart of institutional loyalty. However, interpersonal engagement and quality resource engagement appear to carry more weight at NWU.

Also, the analysis indicated that students from CEAT, CIHTM, and CTE view NWU's reputation less positively than their colleagues in COBE, thereby calling for enhanced career services, industry linkages, and branding in technical and professional programs. Addressing these gaps would be vital to enhancing the university's institutional image and achieving more equitable reputation outcomes across colleges.

Discussions

The study findings provide a general assessment of service quality and its effect on institutional reputation at Northwestern University, corroborating the salient insight that tangible criteria assume the greatest importance in students' eyes, with modern infrastructure, well-maintained facilities, and access to learning technologies becoming paramount. These factors not only enhance the learning experience but also lend credibility to the institution, a finding supported by [Basuony et al. \(2021\)](#).

Assurance and empathy emerged as statistically significant predictors of institutional reputation. Their findings provide evidence to show that faculty competence, student-centered support, and personalized experience directly affect students' views of the university. This is consistent with the work of [Thanh et al. \(2024\)](#), emphasizing that students' trust in knowledgeable staff and sense of being valued enhance satisfaction and loyalty. The strong correlation between assurance and empathy ($r = 0.872$) suggests an interdependence between these two dimensions in fostering a trustworthy and caring environment.

On the other hand, reliability and responsiveness were not significant predictors of reputation, implying that efficiency alone cannot capture students' perceptions of the institution's excellence. Rapid service is appreciated, but it must be meaningful to enhance the institution's reputation. This subverts [Ho et al.'s \(2021\)](#) prior assumptions that service efficiency is the most potent determinant of loyalty.

In addition, the regression analysis revealed significant differences in college participants. Students in the CTE, CEAT, and CIHTM programs reported a significantly lower level of satisfaction with respect to institutional reputation than COBE students. The lower ratings could pinpoint career services, employer outreach, or industry relevance as possible weak areas. These findings

corroborate [Rasheed & Rashid \(2023\)](#), who proposed strengthening internship programs and partnerships to increase employability.

Finally, the ANOVA results reaffirmed that service satisfaction levels differ markedly between colleges, underscoring the need for service parity. The rehabilitation of these gaps would augment equity and cultivate a similarly good image of the university among all student cohorts.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion integrates research findings and emphasizes the tangible, interpersonal, and systemic aspects that chiefly influence students' satisfaction and the institutional reputation at Northwestern University. In tangible terms—infrastructure, technology, and facilities—the first and most significant influencer of students' positive perceptions of NWU was identified. Investments in modern classrooms, reliable internet, and digital learning tools must, therefore, be considered not just operational improvements but paramount to boosting the university's image and competitiveness.

Furthermore, the regression results highlighted the importance of assurance and empathy, suggesting that the key role of competent faculty and personalized student support should be to build trust and loyalty among students. Students want to feel understood, supported, and guided throughout their academic journey. Therefore, NWU should work to develop these relational dimensions of service through investing more in faculty development, student advising, and mentoring programs.

The thematic analysis also unearthed college-level disparities, particularly at CEAT, CTE, and CIHTM, where interviewed students expressed low satisfaction with the institutions' reputations. This finding points to the need to improve industry partnerships, career placement services, and alumni engagement to bridge the gap in perceived prestige across colleges and to ensure equitable opportunities for career readiness.

On the other hand, the students' feedback revealed alarming concerns in professional service: facility maintenance, affordability, digital access, and administrative efficiency. Complaints about unhelpful bureaucratic staff, obsolete equipment, expensive canteen prices, and unreasonable waiting times for administrative decisions reflect systemic challenges that are eroding the student experience. Addressing these in targeted ways—such as training in customer care, upgrading physical and IT infrastructure, regulating prices, and streamlining administrative processes—will be key to enhancing student satisfaction.

Ultimately, this study calls for a multifaceted approach to balance infrastructural improvements, human engagement, and operational efficiency to enhance the student experience and maintain NWU's position in the academic sector.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

It is important to note, however, that this study has its limitations. First, this study was conducted among Northwestern University students, which may limit generalization to other schools, including those in the Philippines or in very different cultural and educational contexts. Perceptions and experiences explored in this study reflect a particular institutional context and student demographic; therefore, the findings might not fully generalize to higher education populations more broadly. Second, since this study employed a cross-sectional design, it captured responses at a single point in time, limiting the RoM and the ability to observe trends in student satisfaction over time, and might miss some seasonal or evolving institutional changes.

Third, quantitative methods only enabled extensive statistical assessment of the data, while the lack of qualitative data limited insight into the subtle yet critical nuances of students' experiences and perspectives. Future work should quantify qualitative methods such as interviews

and focus groups to yield richer insights; longitudinal designs would also be ideal for exploring how students' perceptions of institutional service quality may change over the academic journey. A multi-institutional study may also provide more expansive insights into service quality and institutional reputation, especially if considered in contrast with findings from private universities.

Furthermore, future studies may take into account student characteristics such as socioeconomic background, academic standing, or enrolment status (e.g., part-time or full-time) as factors affecting service expectations and satisfaction. Finally, researchers should investigate how digital transformation and hybrid learning environments in the post-pandemic world have affected students' satisfaction with the delivery of administrative and academic services, given the sharp increase in reliance on technology and online systems during this period. Such future directions can provide deep, broad perspectives to inform efforts to address inequities and support student-centered approaches in educational policies and institutional strategies.

Recommendations

The five areas for strategic change must be prioritized because they will boost student satisfaction and, in turn, help build the university's reputation. First and foremost, NWU must inject substantial funds into its infrastructure for teaching and learning—physical and digital: classrooms, laboratories, library resources have to be up to date. Meanwhile, IT facilities should be expanded and strengthened, including internet access, to support digital learning and administrative transactions. This is to ensure students have the globally competitive learning tools and technologies. Secondly, faculty development should be sustained by conducting training programs, mentorship opportunities, and student-focused improvements in teaching methods.

Due to strong faculty-student relationships, there is greater academic engagement, thereby deepening a student's trust in the institution's support mechanisms. The third priority to be enhanced by NWU would be the creation of robust career development initiatives through industry partnerships, job fairs, and the development and expansion of internship programs. These measures would link academic training to practical professional exposure and further enhance employers' awareness of NWU graduates. Fourthly, NWU should establish a system of procedures for service quality across all colleges. This should streamline administrative processes and provide equitable access to essential services such as enrollment, academic advising, and support systems, thereby enhancing consistency and reducing delays in students' experiences.

With such a policy, regular feedback and service audits should be part and parcel of it. Lastly, the policies should include wellness and inclusiveness. A more holistic approach requires the expansion of mental health services, peer support systems, and inclusive measures for students with special educational needs. The university needs to create a warm and friendly atmosphere for all students. These main programs must be backed by customer service training for staff, especially those in frontline offices, to build professionalism and response timeliness. Improvements in cleaning, air conditioning, and study areas will complete the infrastructure fix. Price transparency for food, clarity on the processes and timelines for accessing financial aid, and improved automation of administrative processes will go a long way toward reducing student anxiety and enhancing institutional functioning. Taken together, these reforms will go a long way toward providing NWU with a foundation for academic integrity and student-centered well-being.

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