

SATISFACTION ON ADMISSION SERVICES IN THE MIDST OF PANDEMIC: BASIS FOR IMPROVED ADMISSION OPERATIONAL PLAN

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Abstract

Admission Services being under the Student Affairs and Services has the responsibility to communicate with newly enrolling students from a variety of venues, answer questions about the university, and evaluate potential applicants. It also maintains the integrity of the admissions process, thus ensuring efficient and systematic evaluation of credentials (Galvez, 2018). Admission criteria and student applicant satisfaction with admission services used by academic institutions have been the subject of various research in the past years, however, the results were highly varied.

The study focuses on the assessment of satisfaction with admission services. Student applicants' from one private HEI were the respondents of the study. The study employed a Convergent parallel mixed method. The respondents of the study were student applicants from basic education, college and graduate studies from one higher educational Institution from Malolos City enrolled in SY 2021-2022. The study adopted validated instruments by Galvez (2018). It is a 12-item instrument with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85.

The study revealed that the overall satisfaction on admission services was 4.60 with a descriptive interpretation of Excellent. The excellent weighted mean was manifested by the 3 subcategories namely: (1) Personnel - 4.60 (excellent), (2) Facilities - 4.61 (excellent), and (3) Services - 4.61 (excellent). Moreover, on the qualitative phase analysis, two themes emerged namely: (1) Accessibility and convenience, and (2) Quality education and accreditation status. The HEIs cater not only basic education and regular college students but also graduate studies and alternative education students whose also working which may looks for educational provider that are accessible and gives convenience to them, Likewise, student-applicants' also gives particular attention on the level of accreditation of the program they are applying.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Admission Services, Student Affairs, University.

Introduction

Admission services are the office in charge within an educational institution that is responsible for recruiting and communicating with new and transfer students. Admission Services being under the Student Affairs and Services has the responsibility to communicate with newly enrolling students from a variety of venues, answer questions about the university, and evaluate potential applicants. It also maintains the integrity of the admissions process, thus ensuring efficient and systematic evaluation of credentials (Galvez, 2018).

Through multiple recruitment strategies, the Admission Services works to ensure that deserving learners, regardless of gender, origin, race, and creed have access to education. Being part of the service-providing unit of the university, admission should provide a quality service to maintain holistic customer/student satisfaction. Measuring the service quality is important to find out the achievement of customer satisfaction specifically in the procedure

of admission services. If there is a difference between the real quality of the service and the expected, which will indicate customer satisfaction. The high cost of education in leading academic institutions of the country underscores the importance of ensuring the academic success of students admitted to avoid the waste of limited public resources and to guarantee a steady supply of the needed labor force (Laus, 2021). Admission criteria and student applicant satisfaction with admission services used by academic institutions have been the subject of various research in the past years, however, the results were highly varied. Available evidence suggests that a better-formulated admission criteria including a mix of academic and non-academic factors can predict better academic performance and satisfaction of student applicants' to the services rendered by the admission services of an educational institution (Yousafzai and Jamil, 2019).

Student applicants' satisfaction is an important

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component of quality assurance in the increasingly competitive market. University students' satisfaction is important to institutional success and is seen as effective if satisfaction supports the enrolment of additional students or 'customers'.

According to Swanson and Hsu (2019), Customer satisfaction is essential for firms in the service sector in the present consumer market and it will receive a great deal of attention from scholars over the coming years. This is because customers are considered a real asset to service firms, the majority of which are facing consumer base losses to a considerable degree. In Service marketing in both profitable and non-profitable organizations, customer satisfaction with an organization's products or services is often seen as the key to an organization's success. Thus, this study pays particular attention to one of the main services that students use as a standard on which to assess a variety of education institutions.

This study investigates the student applicants' satisfaction with one of the services provided by an educational institution - admission services. The result of the study may contribute to the improvement of the admission services given to the student applicant clientele.

Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework (SEC Approach)

The study is based on the theoretical underpinnings of the disconfirmation of expectations paradigm conceptualized by Oliver (as cited by Huang, 2015). It originated from a topic of study for antecedents of satisfaction (Anderson & Sullivan, as cited by Huang, 2015). The typical method to study the satisfaction involves assessment of prior expectations with observed performance. Thus, in this theory, the customer's perception of overall satisfaction results from an evaluation between expectation and outcome performance.

The abovementioned theory is deemed relevant to the present study, since the general objective of this research was to assess the student applicant's satisfaction with admission services provided by the school. Similarly, it is expected that students' perception of overall satisfaction was the result of the evaluation of what students expect from the admission services and what the student actually received from the admission services provided by the HEI.

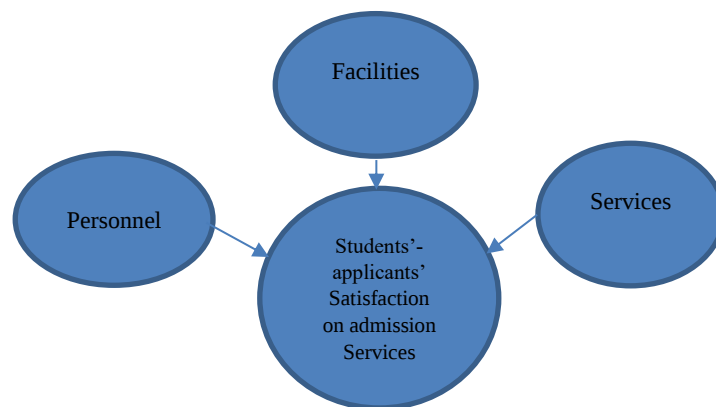


Figure 1: Conceptual Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1, presents the conceptual paradigm of the study, student - applicant satisfaction with admission services is believed to be affected by the following parameters: (1) Personnel factors, (2) Facilities factors, and (3) Services factors. these three significant factors were evaluated by the student-applicants to determine their overall satisfaction with admission services which could yield better and improved admission services.

Scope and Delimitation

The study focuses on the assessment of satisfaction with admission services. Student applicants' from one private HEI were the respondents of the study. The study employed a concurrent parallel mixed method

Ethical Consideration/s

The following ethical considerations were considered during the conduct of the study:

1. The dignity and well-being of learners were protected. The researcher ensured that there was no harmed in any form or placed in an uncomfortable position.
2. The researcher obtained from the respondents informed consent that includes essential information, i.e., who the researcher is, the intent of the study, the data to be collected, level of commitment, etc. Respondents were also informed that participating in the study is voluntary, ensuring no coercion or deception in participation.
3. The research data remained confidential throughout the study. The researcher obtained

the respondents' permission to write their real names on the survey to navigate their performance more conveniently. Respondents were also informed that their names will not appear in the final paper.

4. In the Conduct of the Study, "No Conflict of Interest" was declared by the researcher.

Methodology

Methods and Techniques

The study employed a Convergent parallel mixed method. Convergent parallel mixed methods, according to Creswell (2013) is a kind of mixed methods design that makes the researcher converge or merge the qualitative data and quantitative information to come up with a substantial presentation of findings and results of the research problem. In this method, the researcher typically collects the two forms of data at roughly the same time and then integrates the data analysis results and findings in the interpretation of the overall results. Contradictions or incongruences that may arise in the end are explained or further probed in this design. The convergent mixed methods approach is probably the most familiar of the basic and advanced mixed methods strategies. In this approach, a researcher gathers both qualitative and quantitative data, separately analyzes them, and then converges the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other.

Data Collection and Analysis

Convergent parallel mixed method was utilized in the study, upon approval from LCUP - RPL department and LCUP - REC, permission was

sought and data collection commenced. A survey questionnaire with a consent form was distributed electronically via google forms. Means and frequency counts were used in tabulating the results.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were student applicants from basic education, college and graduate studies from one higher educational Institution from Malolos City enrolled in SY 2021-2022.

Instruments of the Study

The study adopted validated instruments by Galvez (2018). The 12-item instrument has 3 subcategories namely: (1) Personnel, (2) Online Facilities, and (3) Online Services with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85.

Result and Discussions

Students' Satisfaction on Online Admission Services

Customer satisfaction is essential for firms in the service sector in the present consumer market and it will receive a great deal of attention from scholars over the coming years. Customer satisfaction is the favorable affective response of customers who find cumulative service interactions worthwhile, pleasing, and motivating. The measurement of student satisfaction can be useful for identifying areas in need of improvement. Students' satisfaction does not always come from the level of education they receive; sometimes, providing a variety of supplementary services will add more value and contribute essentially to students' satisfaction (Sanchez-Franco et al., 2009).

Table 1: Student- Applicants' Satisfaction on Admission Services in Terms of Personnel

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. being reflective in ways that express generosity, compassion and religiosity in dealing with their individual customer/client	4.70	Excellent
2. being firm and dependable in securing relevant information needed by their individual customer/client	4.55	Excellent
3. being simple and patient in attending to the individual unique needs of their respective clients and customers	4.65	Excellent
4. being friendly, helpful, understanding, accommodating to everybody	4.60	Excellent
5. shows loving and caring personality who ensures satisfaction of individual customer/client and willingness to volunteer one's self if needed to ensure the safety of others	4.68	Excellent
6. capable of securing extended time/service if needed	4.40	Very Satisfactory
Weighted mean	4.60	Excellent

Table 1 depicts the overall student- applicants' satisfaction on admission services in terms of personnel with a weighted mean of 4.60 (Excellent). The excellent mean was manifested by the following indicators: the highest among the rating was (1) being reflective in ways that express generosity,

compassion and religiosity in dealing with their individual customer/client - with a rating of 4.70 (Excellent), while the lowest among the indicators was (6) capable of securing extended time/service if needed - with a rating of 4.40 (Very Satisfactory).

Table 2: Student- Applicants' Satisfaction on Admission Services in Terms of Facilities

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. The unit utilizes online platform to render suitable services	4.60	Excellent
2. The unit is readily accessible when needed by the students	4.62	Excellent
Weighted mean	4.61	Excellent

As seen on table 2, the weighted mean for online facilities was 4.61 (Excellent). Among the two indicators, the highest was (2) the unit is readily accessible when needed by the students - garnering

a rating of 4.62 (Excellent) and the lowest was (1) the unit utilizes online platform to render suitable services - with a rating of 4.60 (Excellent).

Table 3: Student-Applicants' Satisfaction on Admission Services in Terms of Services

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Proper attention is provided at all times	4.60	Excellent
2. There is an efficient / working system of transaction procedures.	4.50	Very Satisfactory
3. Customers' concerns get appropriate / accurate results.	4.68	Excellent
4. Relevant activities to the students' needs are conducted by the unit staff.	4.64	Excellent
Weighted mean	4.61	Excellent

It can be gleaned on table 3, that the weighted mean of online services was 4.61 (Excellent). The Excellent mean was manifested by the following indicators: the highest among the indicators was (3) Customers' concerns get appropriate / accurate results - with a rating of 4.68 (Excellent), while the lowest among the indicators was (2) There is an efficient / working system of transaction procedures; - with a rating of 4.50 (Very Satisfactory).

units the mother department of admission services, need to be informed about what types of information and services students need, to what extent the information and services are available or insufficient, as well as what types of students need particular types of services. It is important to gauge the students' and student-applicants' satisfaction to understand the needs of the students and design appropriate programs and services for the students.

According to Galvez (2018), In order to allocate university resources more effectively, student affairs

What are the reasons why the student applicant choose LCUP as their educational provider

Table 4: Reasons why the Student Applicant Choose LCUP as their Educational Provider.

Meaning unit	Condensed Unit	Meaning	Sub-Themes	Themes
"Accessibility, I think they are the only graduate school which offer a non-thesis program".	The school is accessible to the applicant		Accessibility	Accessibility and convenience
"Being close to the town where I live".	The proximity of the school location		Accessibility	
"Convenient online classes especially in the situation we are facing today."	Convenience in the part of the applicant		Convenience	
"I heard a lot of good reviews in this school".	Quality of education provided by the school		Quality education	Quality education and accreditation status
"Good Quality Education & Facilities, Affordable Tuition".	Quality of education, facilities and affordable tuition fees the school provided.		Quality education	
"Accreditation status"	The level of the accreditation of programs of the schools		Accreditation levels	

Table 4 presents the summary of analysis made on the interview with the key informants with regards

to their reasons why the student applicant choose LCUP as their educational provider. It can be

gleaned from table 4 the two (2) emerging themes namely: (1) *Accessibility and convenience*, and (2) *Quality education and accreditation status*.

The HEIs cater not only regular college students but also graduate studies and alternative education students whose also working which may looks for educational provider that are accessible and gives convenience to them, moreover, student-applicants' also gives particular attention on the level of accreditation of the program they are applying.

Implications

The study reveals that the lowest among the indicators for student-applicants' satisfaction on admission services was the following: (1) being reflective in ways that express generosity, compassion and religiosity in dealing with their individual customer/client, (2) the unit utilizes online platform to render suitable services, and (3) There is an efficient / working system of transaction procedures. Whilst, the development of admission services personnel personal development and religiosity, further training for utilization of suitable online facilities, and inclusion of efficient and working system for transaction be given emphasis on admission services operational plan to further improve the result of student-applicants' satisfaction.

On the other hand, the study also revealed that student-applicant consider accessibility, convenience, quality of education and accreditation status as the deciding factors for them to enrol in the institution. Whilst, further improvement of the above mention factors, may also look into by the school administrators, to further attract student-applicants.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions and recommendations are put forth.

Student-applicants' satisfaction on admission services revealed the areas for improvement on admission services unit for personnel, facilities, and services. HEIs may allocate university resources for more effective admission services.

Moreover, accessibility, convenience, quality of education and accreditation status should also be given emphasis in the admission planning to further attract qualified student-applicants.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare there are no significant competing financial, professional, or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript. The study involves only human participants who volunteered for this study and informed consent was obtained from them.

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