

Quality of Academic Administration Services

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Abstract: This study aims to identify and assess the quality of academic administration services at the Bureau of General Administration, Academic, and Student Affairs (BAUAK) of the State Islamic Institute of Palu (IAIN Palu). It used a qualitative approach and the data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Then, the obtained data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that the quality of academic administration services at the BAUAK of IAIN Palu have not been considered satisfied by students. Out of the five aspects proposed by Parasuraman, assurance, tangible, and reliability aspects have not been considered satisfied by students.

Keywords: quality, service, administration, academic, university

Introduction

The current globalization era considers service quality as one of the tools to achieve competitive advantage and becomes one of the factors that determine the students' satisfaction. Student will be satisfied if the quality of services provided can meet their needs. Service quality is an expected level of excellence that affects students' satisfaction. Increasing competition and society's demands for quality-oriented service ultimately pressures organizations to respond quickly. In respond to this condition, universities have to prioritize the quality of service. Student decisions are determined by the quality desired by students, so that the assurance of service quality which currently becomes as a measure of competitive excellence is a priority for each university.

To achieve the expectation, universities have to set criteria and standards of service or measure their service to improve service quality. The higher education service quality control management system is divided into two, namely internal and external. The internal scope includes supervision of the implementation of higher education to realize the vision and mission as well as to meet the needs of stakeholders (customers) through the administration of the *Tridarma* of Higher Education. The external scope is commonly carried out through the assessment of quality standards by the National Accreditation Body for Higher Education and the International Organization for Standardization or widely known as ISO.

One of the principles of ISO mentions that measurement of customer satisfaction should be carried out as feedback from the customer to the system applied. It means that the success of an institution is highly influenced by the quality of services provided. Service quality can be identified through customer decisions. As an educational institution, the academic process is a core process. Thus, the measurements of service quality in this process have to be carried out periodically.

In accordance with the concept of higher education quality management, the implementation of education has to carry out monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, it is necessary to find out about the quality of services provided by a university as it is believed that the quality of service will affect students' satisfaction as customers or consumers. IAIN Palu, one of the higher education institutions in Central Sulawesi is expected to show competitive advantages among other universities. To meet this expectation, one of the prerequisites is the quality of academic administration services.

Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 92 of 2013 concerning the Organization and Work Procedure of IAIN Palu, as amended by Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 49 of 2017, it can be identified that academic administration services are under the authority of the BAUAK. This work unit provides academic administration services to students, including registration of new and oldstudents, management of Study Plan Cards (KRS) and Study Results Cards (KHS), legalization of documents, transcripts, management of decision letters (SK), management of transfer students, registration for graduation, processing of diplomas and others.

Current education is not just an effort to produce graduates that are measured academically, but tends to overall quality of education that is oriented towards customer satisfaction (Fatmawati, 2003). Tertiary institution as educational service providers have to improve their services to be able to compete and gain public recognition. Educational services, especially in higher institutions, can be identified into six main types of services including academic administration, learning, co-curricular, research, community service, and educational information services. To gain public recognition and compete well, the provision of educational services has to pay attention to the quality of education and institutions. Further, it needs achievement, assessment, quality certification, and alumni success in getting relevant jobs.

An educational institution such as a tertiary institution can be said to be successful in carrying out its functions if it can produce educational output in accordance with the demands of society. Sukanto explained that the client-oriented paradigm of educational quality is a measure of the extent to which the program and its outputs meet the needs and expectations of clients (Jaidum & Ishartiwi, 2011). Education providers need to understand three key aspects to meet the needs and expectations of clients. They are what the client needs are, how to know the client's needs, and what makes them satisfied.

Based on the elaboration above, the implementation of higher education requires the application of customer-oriented concepts in which the organization focuses on the quality of service and the needs of the community. Customers or consumers are people who use products from the organization or institution. The product of higher education as an organization or institution is in the form of knowledge used by students as customers. Science is invisible so that universities can be seen as a service industry. Higher educations as a service industry have to focus on the needs and satisfaction of its customers, namely students. The emergence of complaints from several students regarding academic administration services indicates that the quality of academic administration services at BAUAK of IAIN Palu has not met customers or students satisfaction.

Method

This study used qualitative approach. Qualitative research can be designed to contribute to theory, practice, policy, social problems and actions (Satori & Komariah, 2011). Meanwhile Bogdan and Taylor define qualitative methods as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words of observed people and behavior (Moleong, 2010). It explains that qualitative research is an approach that reveals certain social situations by describing reality using relevant data collection and analysis from natural situations. Thus, qualitative research is not only an attempt to describe data but the description of valid data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, document study, and triangulation. In short, the observed phenomenon can be understood well to get a high level of truth through various points of view.

The population this study consisted of three groups, namely staff of academic administration services, students who get the service, and lecturers as parties related to academic administration service policies. The qualitative research has no standard rules regarding determining sample size. The qualitative sample size is determined based on time allocation, available resources, and objectives of study (Patton, 1990). This study involved 9 informants in which 3 people represent each group. The informants in employee and lecturer groups were selected using purposive sampling with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2010). The considerations were people who have knowledge, experience and understand the studied problems.

The determination of informants was based on scientific processes. First, looking for the first informant who knows best or can provide information about academic administration services and then asked them to provide information to meet the research data or it is called "snowball" (Daswati, 2012).

The third informant group is students. The determinations was based on the consideration of students experience academic administration services so that they can provide information whether the academic administration services are as expected or lower than their expectation. The determination of informants in student groups used incidental sampling technique. Incidental sampling is sampling techniques in which anyone who meet the researcher is sampled if he/she is a suitable source of data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2003).

The data collection techniques covered interviews, observation and documentation. Then, the obtained data were technique analyzed through two models, namely the flow analysis model and flow analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1992). This study focuses on an interactive model of analysis through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

Results and Discussion

Responsiveness

Academic Administration services provided by the Bureau of General Administration, Academic and Student Affairs (BAUAK) covers new student registration, student re-registration (herregistrasi), issuing student cards, processing transfer students both between study programs and between tertiary institutions, clearing scores, calculating the grade point average (GPA) and length of study, registration and graduation process, issuance of diplomas and transcripts, preparation of academic calendars, processing leave, and others. All academic administration services refer to the applied SOPs.

These institutes expect to realize an Islamic campus atmosphere is. One of the prerequisites to realize it is the practice of Islamic principles in every activity of the academic community. One of the Islamic principles for every employee and lecturer is considering the implementation of all work activities not only as the administrative obligations, but also as worship. The concept of work in Islam is considered a type of worship (Sauri, 2017). A Muslim has to ensure anything he/she does should not cause harm to others but it should provide satisfaction (Juniawan, 2014). This concept is being pursued to be implemented at IAIN Palu to create an Islamic campus atmosphere.

The results showed that BAUAK staffs always provide explanations to students regarding the services provided anytime. Even, the head in this work unit directly involved in providing explanations to students regarding the requirements and service procedures. It shows that the leadership element provides a good example to his staff. Besides, the leadership element motivates the staff to simplify student affairs by instilling Islamic principles. BAUAK staffs have implemented one of the aspects of responsiveness. Employees as service providers always provide explanations to students with the intention of smoothen the service process besides practicing Islamic principles which interpret it as righteous deeds. It is important to provide explanation to students about the required process. The process will only run smoothly if students understand the steps. Therefore, it is important for them to get an explanation in which informants said that BAUAK staffs are quite active in doing providing such explanation.

Besides providing explanations, employees also provide guidance to students if they have not met the procedures. Guidance is a process by which people achieve certain abilities to help organizational goals (Mathis& Jackson, 2002). Guidance also refers to a systematic process to change the work behavior of a person or group of people in to improve organizational performance (Ivancevich, 2008). The results showed that guidance on the academic administration service process was carried out at the beginning of the academic year, especially for new students. Therefore, students can they understand the requirements and procedures of academic administration services. The guidance is intended to assist students in overcoming their difficulties.

Moreover, staffs persuade students to comply with the applicable service procedures. The results showed if students do not comply with the rules or procedures, the staffs try to persuade them to obey the procedures or rules that have been set. BAUAK staffs never get emotional in this case, but they persuasively try to provide understanding to the student to comply with applicable requirements or procedures.

As the aspect of responsiveness is implemented by BAUAK staff in the academic administration service process, it can be said that the quality of academic administration services based on the responsiveness aspect has met the expectation. It is because they always direct or provide wise explanations to students for the services provided. Furthermore, BAUAK staffs also provide guidance to students if they have not met the procedures and always try to persuade them to comply with procedures.

Assurance

Each service recipient needs assurance for the services provided. The assurance of a service is highly determined by the quality of the staff who provide the service. Staff provides service fast and on time as promised. The result showed that employees have tried to work fast indicated by the high productivity of their work, however, sometimes the completion of service is late. It is due to imbalance between the number of employees and the volume of services to be completed within a certain period. The provision of academic administration services for is sometimes fast, but when the number of students who need services is quite large, the completion of the service becomes slow, and sometimes delayed for few days. It does not mean that employees are slow in working, but it is due to the limited number of BAUAK staff. This indicates that the number of BAUAK staff is not proportional to the volume of services to be completed.

Then, concerning the appearance of employees in providing services, the results showed that the employees wear neat uniform. IAIN Palu staff in general and especially BAUAK staff are not allowed to dress freely violating the stipulated dress code. In addition, their attitude and communication to students who need academic administration services are friendly or gentle. The results of the observations during the field research showed that BAUAK staffs wear uniform every working day. Their appearance looks quite Islamic with long sleeves for women.

Moreover, in providing services to students, BAUAK staff showed a high work ethic. They work hard by adhering to the working hours. They consider working hard as a form of worship, so they do it sincerely with full of enthusiasm. They are quite disciplined in adhering to working hours by following the discipline of work unit leaders. Indeed, sometimes there are late or even delay the completion, due to the imbalance between the number of employees and the volume of work. The number of staff is very small, while the volume of work is quite large.

Considering the descriptions of the three elements of service quality in the assurance aspect, it can be confirmed that only two elements are properly implemented by BAUAK staff. First, staff are neat and friendly in providing services. Second, staff shows a high work ethic in providing academic administration services to students. However, one element is not fulfilled in which staffs sometimes do not provide fast and timely service. Thus, it can be said that the quality of academic administration services based on the aspect of assurance is not as expected.

Tangible

The quality of academic administration services based on the aspect of tangible is a physical actualization that can be seen or used by staff and can support services, so that service recipients feel comfortable, safe and satisfied with the perceived services. In this study, the tangible aspect is seen from the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure to support academic administration services. The results showed that the academic administration service process has not been supported by the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure. The lack of working space makes it difficult to organize archive neatly. This reduces the aesthetic aspect of the room. Besides, the insufficient seats in the waiting room causes students to disorderly queue in which some stand up and others took the floor. Thus, it makes students feel uncomfortable. The process of providing academic administration services at BAUAK has not met the expected quality. Lack of electronic devices such as computers affects the speed of service completion. Furthermore, the waiting room is not equipped with air conditioning and sufficient seats undoubtedly make students who feel stifled and bored.

Moreover, with service parking infrastructure is insufficient to accommodate the student's vehicles. Thus, lecturers, staff, and students feel less comfort and secure. The limited parking space is inseparable from the limited campus area due to the addition of new buildings.

Then, concerning the available number of staff, the results showed that the provision of academic administration services is not supported by a sufficient number of staff. It is not surprising that completion of services at BAUAK is sometimes slow or even delay. Therefore, it is necessary to add more staff through appointment of honorarium or non-permanent staff. Without the appointment of any new staff, a fast and on-time academic administration service cannot be realized.

Meanwhile, in terms of the ability to use technology, the number of BAUAK staff is limited, but they have the ability to master information and communication technology. Therefore, their skills help accelerate the process of completing their work. The use of appropriate information technology and supported by the ability of the staff can improve both organizational and individual performance (Darmini& Putra, 2009). Although none of the BAUAK employees have a background in information and communication technology, they demonstrate mastery of technology in accessing data or information. The ability to master technology supports the increase in work productivity. Technological development helps completing works fast and make it easier to access and duplicate printed materials.

Based on the description of the elements of the tangible aspect, it can be said that only the technology mastery meet the expectation. Meanwhile, the two availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure and proportional number of staff have not met the expectation. Therefore, it can be concluded that the quality of academic administration services based on the aspect of tangible have not met the expectation.

Empathy

Empathy means able to understand with full attention, seriousness, sympathy, and involvement in various problems faced by the person being served. The results showed that if students experience difficulties in the academic

administration service process, BAUAK staffs quickly want to help them as a form of empathy. The attitude and behavior of BAUAK staff who are quick to help students who are experiencing difficulties can be seen as practicing the meaning of Allah seen everything. Therefore, their attitudes and behavior can be seen as Islamic attitudes and behaviors that are in line with efforts to create an Islamic campus atmosphere.

Considering the descriptions above, the quality of academic administration services based on the aspect of empathy has met the expectation. It means that BAUAK staff in providing academic administration services show sensitivity, concern, attention and seriousness to student including the difficulties experienced by students.

Reliability

Reliability is the ability to provide reliable and accurate service in which the performance is in accordance with the students' expectations. The results showed that BAUAK staffs have the ability to carry out their tasks by using technology. Based on the productivity of each staff, it appears that they are quite fast at work. However, it cannot be denied that some are late or delay the completion because the number of staff and the volume of work is not proportional. It means that the delay is not due to the lack of reliability of employees in providing services.

Individually, BAUAK staff can demonstrate reliability in providing services indicated by their speed of work with high productivity. However, based on institutional perspective, sometimes they seem slow in completing work indicated by the delay in completing certain services. It is because the number of students who need services and the staff are not proportional. As stated earlier, the staff is only three people while the number of active students is 6,413. It means one staff have to serve two thousand one hundred and thirty-eight students (1:2138). If the structural positions related to academic administration services such as the Head of the Academic Administration Subdivision, the Head of Academic and Student Affairs, and the Head of BAUAK are counted, the number of staff is 6 people. It shows disproportional number of employees compared to the number of students.

The results of this study indicate that students feel unsatisfactory service of BAUAK. As stated earlier, the factors that cause such delays in service is the limited number of staff. Only few students who need information on student transfer or diplomas, but the staff have other types of services that require completion within the same time frame.

Overall, the results of this study show novelty in which if the theory of Parasuraman (2001) only explains the quality of service from five aspects or dimensions, then this study shows that service quality can also be examined from the sixth dimension, namely the dimension of worship. In IAIN Palu, service is perceived or interpreted as worship so that if it is done sincerely, it will receive rewards and several other benefits.

IAIN Palu aims to create an Islamic atmosphere and to realize it, both the communication, appearance, attitudes and behavior of all campus residents including staff are expected to reflect Islamic values. To fulfill this expectation, all activities on campus should always based on the intention of worship. Fiqh scholars state that worship is all forms of work that aim to obtain the glory of God, and yearn for rewards in the hereafter (Raya& Mulia, 2003). Worship is a term that includes what God loves and approves in the form of words or deeds.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the studies, it can be concluded that:

1. Based on the aspect of responsiveness, the quality of academic administration services has not met the expectation with three parameters in which staff provides wise and detailed explanations of services provided, staff provides guidance to students if they have not met service procedures, and staff persuades students not to violate the applicable service procedures
2. Based on the aspect of assurance, the quality of academic administration services has not met the expectation with three parameters. It only meets two parameters in which employees wear uniform neatly and show a high work ethic in providing services. The parameter that is not implemented properly is completion of quick and timely services.
3. Based on the aspect of tangible, the quality of academic administration services has not met the expectation with three parameters. It does not meet the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure and proportional number of staff. It only meet parameter of demonstrating mastery of technology in accessing data and information.
4. Based on the aspect of empathy, the quality of academic administration services has met the expectation in which staff are quite sensitive to student needs and attentive to student difficulties, even often involve in solving student complaints.

5. Based on the aspect of reliability, the quality of academic administration services has not met the expectation. Indeed, individual staff meets the three parameters of mastering their tasks and has ability to use technology in providing services. Students consider BAUAK slow in even sometimes delay the service completion.
6. The quality of academic administration services can also be examined from the dimension of worship by perceiving that the provision of services is a form of worship.

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