

Students' Satisfaction on the Student Services of a Maritime Higher Education Institution

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ABSTRACT

Universities have to concentrate their efforts on the improvement of quality teaching and non-teaching services, in order to promptly respond to the target, and foster a stronger relationship with surrounding economic and productive systems. The study determined the level of satisfaction of 134 maritime students on the services provided by the library, mess, guidance and counseling, medical and dormitory units of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy. Survey and key informant interviews were conducted to gather data on the problem at hand. The researcher used frequency, percentile and weighted mean to analyze data. The study revealed that the respondents are extremely satisfied with the library, medical and guidance and counseling services. Moreover, they are very satisfied with the services of the mess and dormitory services. Among the five services, ranked 1 is library services and ranked 5 is mess services. Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that the academy offers quality services to its students. It is recommended that the PMMA leadership should consider the suggestions of the students to achieve better quality of student services.

KEYWORDS

Maritime education, student services, satisfaction, descriptive-quantitative, Philippines, Asia

INTRODUCTION

Service quality and customer satisfaction for service organizations is important. Consideration of students as customers in developing and delivering quality services has been proven to increase student learning, motivation and persistence to graduation. Student satisfaction research, especially in the area of student services, has the potential to inform institutions about how to best address the needs and expectations of an increasingly diverse student population.

Satisfaction of employees and clients is an important element of success for any organization and any sector of the economy (Bay, An, & Laguador, 2014). Employees' service to customer has the strongest influence on relationship quality (Bencito, 2014). Educational institutions have to provide the best quality services to their students. Higher education needs to care about students' satisfaction because of its potential impact on student motivation, retention, recruitment. Satisfaction characterizes the quality of products and services that the organization delivers to its customers that serves as the basis for continuous improvement (Buted et al., 2014). Akbariyeh (2012) writes that customer satisfaction and service quality are crucial factors in the analysis of competitors. If students are seen as customers, then other colleges and universities are the competition. It seems important then that attention is paid service quality. Obtaining customer satisfaction should be a critical factor in an organization's goals. Similarly, Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) suggest that students' satisfaction with their educational experience should be a desired outcome in addition to learning.

In higher education, student satisfaction occurs when perceived performance meets or exceeds the students' expectations (Mark, 2013). Although higher education institutions are hesitant to use customer-driven language when considering the satisfaction and attitudes towards student services, consideration of students as customers in developing and delivering quality services has been proven over and over again to increase student learning, persistence to graduation, and increased alumni giving (Lee, 2007).

During their academic stay in the academy, different student services are developed and programmed for the students to foster a conducive, comfortable and encouraging environment as they are "in-housed" for three years inside the academy.

This study strives to determine the experience of students with Student Services at Philippine Merchant Marine Academy. The ultimate purpose of this study is to identify the level of students' satisfaction towards the service quality of the school's library, dormitory, guidance and counselling, mess/food and medical services; which among the student services are the students most satisfied with; and are the areas for improvement to improve quality of service.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized the quantitative-descriptive research design. Babbie (2010) describes that quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data using computational techniques. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon. It suggests that descriptive studies can answer questions such as "what is" or "what was. Since this study was focused on the description and level of satisfaction of students on the library, dormitory mess, guidance and counseling and medical services offered by the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy, the described method was the most appropriate method to use.

Respondents

This study utilized convenience sampling. Respondents were selected based on having at least three visit and received any of the services of the library, medical, guidance and counselling, mess and dormitory units in the second semester of SY 2017-2018. Respondents were 134 currently enrolled BSMT and BSMarE students.

Instrument

Hampton and Viela (2014) suggest that a survey is used for collecting information that should be representative of the views of the whole community or group whom you are interested in. The student satisfaction survey-questionnaires were provided by the different service providers- the Librarian, Academy Physician, Guidance Coordinator, Mess officer and the Dormitory Manager. Further adjustments were made after a pilot application was conducted. The final version of the instrument was resolved after the approval of the PMMA Assistant Superintendent for Academics, Research and Extension.

The survey-questionnaire consists of Part I the profile of the respondents which includes name(optional), sex, course, year level and age; Part II describes the perception of the services: (a). Library-the students described their satisfaction on the library collection, physical facilities and service support; (b) dormitory- the students described their satisfaction on the office/personnel and the services offered like accomplishment of job orders and issuance of berthing gears ; (c) medical- the students described their satisfaction on the facility, staff and supplies; (d) guidance and counselling-the students described if the counsellor responded to the student request for guidance services in a timely manner, easy to relate to, knowledgeable about dealing with the request, handled the situation effectively and made the student fell positive about school and consultation services; (e) mess unit- the students described their satisfaction on the food's taste and appearance, personnel's' cleanliness, hygiene, and courtesy, and the facility, equipment and utensils' cleanliness, sanitation and appearance.

Procedures

After the approval of the questionnaire, it was distributed to one hundred thirty- four (134) respondents. The content of the questionnaire was explained first to the respondents before answering. Accomplished questionnaires were collected; answers to the questionnaire were tallied and interpreted. To verify the result of the survey, a focus group discussion was conducted to 10 student leaders with a semi-structured interview with the interview guide.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were presented in tabular form to interpret the results and descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and weighted mean will be used. Frequency distribution and weighted mean were utilized to evaluate the Level of Satisfaction on the student services. The ranking was used to determine the order of the items. The given scale was used to interpret the result of the data gathered: 4.20-5.00 extremely satisfied; 3.40-4.19 very satisfied; 2.60-3.38 satisfied; 1.80-2.59 dissatisfied and 1.00-1.79 very dissatisfied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student satisfaction on the services provided by the Dormitory Unit

The Dormitory Services is primarily responsible for the effective management of the academy dormitory (cadet quarters) to provide

residents a “home away from home” that is safe and conducive to learning. There are 4 dormitories (quarters) in the academy- cadettes’ quarters, first battalion, second battalion and the Crossworld quarters.

The Office of the Dormitory Services provide activities that foster unity and harmony among residents/cadets so as to enable them to build a meaningful community life together. There are assigned quarter commanders in each battalion arranged in a regimental system. The Dormitory Manager is responsible for ensuring the maintenance and sanitation, and the observance of rules and regulations in the dormitory. She is also responsible for providing various administrative and housekeeping services to residents and visitors of the school.

Table 1. Students’ satisfaction on the Dormitory Services

CRITERIA	MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENT	RANK
How did you find the office in terms of:			
a. Courtesy and Attentiveness	3.64	Very Satisfied	1
b. Knowledge of Service and Policy	3.57	Very Satisfied	3
c. Responsiveness	3.52	Very Satisfied	5
d. Friendliness	3.56	Very Satisfied	4
Were the accomplished job order suit your satisfaction?	3.46	Very Satisfied	6
How did the issued berthing gears affect your needs?	3.62	Very Satisfied	2
Over-all Mean	3.56	Very Satisfied	

Table 1 shows that the respondents were very satisfied with the services of the dormitory unit with an over-all mean of 3.56. The items registered an adjacent range of 3.46 to 3.64 and interpreted as very satisfied. The table showed that the students were very satisfied with the courtesy and attentiveness, knowledge of service and policy, responsiveness and friendliness of the personnel, accomplishment of job orders and the berthing gears issued by the dormitory manager. In effect, the students ranked courtesy and attentiveness as #1 and accomplishment of job orders as #6. This implies that intangible aspects of service such as attentiveness and courtesy showed the greatest power to classify satisfaction of students on the dormitory services.

Student satisfaction on the services provided by the Guidance and Counseling Unit

The PMMA Guidance and Counseling Unit, as an integral part of the educational system, opens its avenues through services for individuals, families or groups who are referred and/ or voluntarily seeking for Guidance and Counseling and all other programs it is catering. The office provides: Guidance service by using an integrated approach to the development of well-functioning individuals primarily by helping them to utilize their potentials to the fullest; Counseling through individual and/or group intervention designated to facilitate positive change in student behavior, feelings, and attitudes. Appraisal by gathering information about students through the use of psychological tests and non-psychometric devices; Follow-up through systematic monitoring to determine the effectiveness of guidance activities; and Referral with multi-disciplinary team of specialists to ensure that special needs of students are met. The Guidance Unit is composed of a Guidance Coordinator/Head and a Guidance Counselor who are also in-charge of all religious activities of the academy. The area of focus of the evaluation in this study is only the consultation service.

Table 2. Students' satisfaction on the Guidance Services

CRITERIA	MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENT	Rank
The guidance counselor Responded to my request for guidance services in a timely manner	4.19	Very Satisfied	5
Was easy to relate to	4.24	Extremely Satisfied	3
Was knowledgeable about dealing with my request	4.22	Extremely Satisfied	4
Handled my situation effectively	4.25	Extremely Satisfied	2
Made me feel positive about school consultation services	4.30	Extremely Satisfied	1
Over-all Mean	4.24	Extremely Satisfied	

Table 2 above shows that the students are extremely satisfied with the services of the Guidance and Counseling Unit, with an over-all mean of 4.24. The items range from 4.19 very satisfied to 4.30 extremely satisfied. This shows that the students are very satisfied with how the guidance counselor responded to their request for guidance services in a timely manner. Moreover, the respondents are extremely satisfied with

the guidance counselor's way of relating, knowledge about the request, effectively handling of situations and making respondents feel positive about school consultation service. Ranked #1 among the items is how the counselors made the students feel positive about the school's consultation services while how the counselors responded to the request of the students for guidance services in a timely manner ranked #5. This implies that the students are aware of the school's guidance services and students who have visited the guidance unit for specific service are extremely satisfied.

Student satisfaction on the services provided by the Mess Unit

The PMMA Mess Unit is responsible for providing sumptuous and healthy meals for all 600 cadets/students and tactical officers. They also cater food requirements during special occasions in PMMA. There are two (2) nutritionist who plans the breakfast (morning chow), lunch (noon chow) and dinner (evening chow) of the students. The food is served in a silver tray with spoon and fork, water glass and water pitcher for each table consisting of more or less 10 students.

Table 3. Students' satisfaction on the Mess Services

CRITERIA	MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENT	RANK
A. FOOD			
1. Taste	3.47	Very Satisfied	2
2. Appearance	3.37	Satisfied	4
Mean	3.42	Very Satisfied	
B. PERSONNEL			
1. Cleanliness and Hygiene	3.36	Satisfied	5
2. Courtesy	3.57	Very Satisfied	1
Mean	3.46	Very Satisfied	
C. DINING AREA, EQUIPMENT AND UTENSILS			
1. Cleanliness and Sanitation	3.25	Satisfied	6
2. Appearance	3.38	Satisfied	3
Mean	3.31	Satisfied	
Over-all Mean	3.40	Very Satisfied	

Table 3 shows that the respondents are very satisfied with Mess services with an over-all mean of 3.40. The items range from 3.25 satisfied to 3.57 very satisfied. This shows that the students are satisfied with the taste

and appearance of food, and cleanliness, hygiene and courtesy of mess personnel but only satisfied with the cleanliness, sanitation and appearance of the dining area, equipment and utensils. This implies that the attitude of the mess personnel could bring about higher levels of customer satisfaction, while cleanliness, hygiene, sanitation and appearance are the most valued components of the student's experience and needs to be improved.

Student satisfaction on the services provided by the Library Unit

The library unit provides user assistance where they help and guide students find specific books, circulations of library materials. Librarian's function answers to their questions and include check-outs and check-ins of materials including renewal and collection of fines and other charges, re-shelving of library materials, and maintaining order in shelving areas. The Library is equipped with computer units with internet access. Students may use the facilities for free.

Table 4 shows that the respondents are extremely satisfied with the library services. The items range from 4.51 to 4.86 extremely satisfied. This shows that the students are extremely satisfied with the library collection, physical facilities, and service support of the Academy library. This implies that both tangible and non-tangible components of the library are well provided to the students.

Table 4. Students' Satisfaction on the Library Services

CRITERIA	MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENT	Rank
LIBRARY COLLECTION			
Adequacy of Books	4.59	Extremely Satisfied	15
Quality of Books	4.55	Extremely Satisfied	17
Availability of recently published books	4.51	Extremely Satisfied	18
Availability of books in all subject areas	4.57	Extremely Satisfied	16
Relevant periodicals, journals, and magazines	4.61	Extremely Satisfied	14
Mean	4.57	Extremely Satisfied	
PHYSICAL FACILITIES			
Cleanliness and orderliness	4.83	Extremely Satisfied	4
Ventilation	4.86	Extremely Satisfied	1
Lighting	4.85	Extremely Satisfied	2
Furniture	4.84	Extremely Satisfied	3

Computer	4.77	Extremely Satisfied	11
Wi-Fi Connection	4.67	Extremely Satisfied	13
Mean	4.80	Extremely Satisfied	
SERVICE AND SUPPORT			
Appropriateness of library schedules	4.75	Extremely Satisfied	12
Assistance and support of the staff	4.78	Extremely Satisfied	9.5
Functionality of rules and regulations	4.78	Extremely Satisfied	9.5
Guidance of competent librarian and staff	4.81	Extremely Satisfied	6.5
Attitude of staff towards their work	4.79	Extremely Satisfied	8
Attitude of staff towards their clients	4.82	Extremely Satisfied	5
Mean	4.79	Extremely Satisfied	
OVERALL IMPRESSION			
General impression and appearance of library set-up	4.81	Extremely Satisfied	6.5
Mean	4.74	Extremely Satisfied	

Student satisfaction on the services provided by the Medical Unit

The Medical Unit offers both medical and Dental takes care of protecting, promoting and maintaining the health and well-being of the students and school personnel. Presently, the school clinic service (known in PMMA as sickbay) has two (2) academy physicians and a dentist. There are four (4) nurses operating in shift 0600H-1400H, 1400H- 2200H and 2200H-0600H. On weekends, only 1 nurse is on duty the from 0800H-0800H the following day.

The Medical Services provided by the medical unit are: Physical Examination (PE) Annual Physical Examination which is regularly conducted to all students especially varsity players and athletes who will join the games during the Intramurals as well as those who will join inter school competitions; medical consultation/counseling; first aid treatment (primary care); health awareness programs through lectures/seminars; referral system; symptomatic and supportive treatment; issuance of medical certificate; and pre-employment medical check-up and recommendations.

On the other hand, the Dental Services offered are: oral examination; simple single tooth extraction; temporary/permanent filling; oral prophylaxis in cases of gingivitis or periodontitis; dental check-up/consultation; referrals and recommendation; issuance of dental certificates; emergency treatment; and dental health awareness program.

Table 5. Respondents' Satisfaction on the Medical Services

CRITERIA	MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENT	RANK
MEDICAL FACILITY			
1. Cleanliness	4.41	Extremely Satisfied	9
2. Illumination	4.34	Extremely Satisfied	12
3. Ventilation	4.32	Extremely Satisfied	13
Mean	4.36	Extremely Satisfied	
STAFF			
1. Attends to the needs of the patient.	4.59	Extremely Satisfied	1
2. Able to communicate with the patient & the family.	4.49	Extremely Satisfied	7
2.1 Explains instructions carefully.	4.57	Extremely Satisfied	3.5
2.2 Comforts the patient & the family	4.52	Extremely Satisfied	5
2.3 Entertains inquiries regarding the illness.	4.58	Extremely Satisfied	2
3. Encourages follow-up check-up.	4.57	Extremely Satisfied	3.5
Mean	4.56	Extremely Satisfied	
SUPPLIES			
1. Able to give initial dose of prescribed medicines.	4.51	Extremely Satisfied	6
2. Beddings & linen	4.36	Extremely Satisfied	11
3. Drinking water	4.43	Extremely Satisfied	8
4. Food & utensils	4.40	Extremely Satisfied	10
Mean	4.42	Extremely Satisfied	
Over-all Mean	4.45	Extremely Satisfied	

Table 5 shows that the respondents are extremely satisfied on all criteria of evaluation with an over-all WM of 4.45. The items ranged from WM of 4.32 to 4.59. This means that the medical facility and staff are all provided with quality to the students.

Summary of Satisfaction on the Student's Services

Among the student services provided by the Academy, according to the weighted mean computed, there are three services that respondents are extremely satisfied namely: library rank 1, medical rank 2 and guidance and counselling rank 3. On the other hand, respondents are very satisfied with dormitory rank 4 and mess ranked 5.

Table 6. Summary of Satisfaction on the Student's Services

SERVICE	OVER-ALL WEIGHTED MEAN	INTERPRETATION	RANK
Library	4.74	Extremely Satisfied	1
Dormitory	3.56	Very Satisfied	4
Guidance and Counseling	4.24	Extremely Satisfied	3
Mess	3.40	Very Satisfied	5
Medical	4.45	Extremely Satisfied	2

The data indicates that the students are extremely satisfied with the services the academy provides with library ranked #1, medical #2 and guidance and counseling #3. Consequently, the students are very satisfied with dormitory ranked #4 and Mess ranked #5. This implies that the quality services are provided to the students which yields an important impact on PMMA's standing in maritime education rankings.

Areas of Improvement

During the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) the respondents made the following comments and suggestions:

Library

- ✓ Extend the library hours during study call period
- ✓ Install printer/copier/scanner for students to print and reproduce projects etc.
- ✓ Produce more personal computer
- ✓ There must be other aides in education such as gadgets for practical use
- ✓ Additional wi-fi access

Dormitory

- ✓ Our laundry must be cleaned well-Some of the shirts have bad smell and still have stains on it
- ✓ all the shower heads should be fixed and usable
- ✓ Install new electric fans
- ✓ provide cleaner water supply
- ✓ change the mattress and repair the destroyed ones
- ✓ Change beddings every week.
- ✓ Allow us to decorate the quarters during special occasions
- ✓ Provide new lockers
- ✓ Provide more water jags

Medical

- ✓ Provide more ventilation
- ✓ install new air conditioning units
- ✓ Provide new bed, locker and beddings
- ✓ Have more rooms-don't mix patients who are suffering from different illness

Mess

- ✓ Personnel should wear hairnets
- ✓ Maintain cleanliness in the dining area
- ✓ Utensils should be well cleaned or buy new utensils
- ✓ Food should be properly prepared
- ✓ Provide chuckie chocolate drink or coffee in the morning

Guidance and Counseling

- ✓ Give more group counseling to strengthen camaraderie and unity
- ✓ Have a monthly counseling
- ✓ Minimize letters sending to parents about failing grades in the Midterm grading period

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The library, medical, guidance, dormitory and mess services in the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy provide quality services to the students. This means that the delivered services conform with the expectations of the students. The study provided insight on the selection and customization of the assessment approaches of the specific services that fit their purposes, circumstances and desired outcomes.

It is recommended that the PMMA administration conduct a regular assessment of the service quality of the different student service providers in order to improve their service, to quickly identify problems, and to better assess the students' satisfaction. The Academy Leadership should consider the procurement of the necessary equipment, utensils and materials for the different services in order to improve the quality of services provided to the students.

A similar study should be made to assess the students' satisfaction on the Registrar, Information Systems unit, and Sports and Recreation services of the academy.

IMPACT OF THE STUDY

The assessment efforts in this study has significant implications for the Academy's staff development, recruitment and promotion, leadership, resource allocation, communications and so on, to improve the effectiveness of the services.

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