

Improving Service Quality To Enhance The Sustainability Of Higher Education

(Case Study: Division of Creativity and Study Consultation, University X)

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Abstract

HE institutions need to continuously improve their quality to be able to compete and maintain their sustainability. The Division of Creativity and Study Consultation (CSC) is a division at University X, which plays a major role in promoting University X. Various complaints from prospective new students and their parents have been received regarding the inaccurate delivery of the information provided. This study aims to determine the satisfaction index of prospective students/parents with the Division of CSC and propose improvements for the Division of CSC based on the expectation of prospective students/parents and the performance of the Division of CSC. Data was collected using a questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL Model. Questionnaires gathered from 100 respondents who meet the purposive sampling requirements, namely prospective students or their parents who have received services (online or offline services) from the Division of CSC from promotion until admissions, have seen the University X website/social media, and have received services from the Division of CSC via telephone or email. Consumers' expectations and performance of the Division of CSC were processed using the Gap Analysis Model, hypothesis testing for 2-paired-means, Consumer Satisfaction Index, and Importance-Performance-Analysis (IPA). A cause-effect diagram consisting of 8 Ps (People, Process, Policies, Procedures, Price, Promotion, Place, Product) is used to find out the root of the problem. The suggestions from this research are training for the Division of CSC staff, making direct and indirect delivery procedures, and developing market research to support service activities.

Keywords: *Cause Effect Diagram, Customer Satisfaction Index, Hypothesis Testing, Importance-Performance Analysis, SERVQUAL*



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INTRODUCTION

The importance of service quality is very supportive to improve the delivery of information on products or services so that services satisfy consumers. Service quality is a consumer's assessment of the service it receives. In the SERVQUAL model, service quality is defined as the gap between consumers' perceptions of what happens during service transactions and their expectations of how service transactions should be carried out (Culiberg and Rojšek, 2010).

Just like other industries, higher education institutions also need to continuously improve their quality to be able to compete. Along with the dynamics of globalization, the influence of service quality is very substantial on the management and marketing of services (Warraich, Warraich and Asif, 2013). With high competitiveness, higher education institutions can continue to maintain sustainability, so that they can continue to develop and fulfill their responsibilities to educate the nation's children. The SERVQUAL model is a valuable tool for higher education institutions to measure, track, establish and maintain superior service quality (Bhuian, 2016).

In Indonesia, there are 4593 higher education institutions, consisting of 4 groups, namely Religious Higher Education Institutions, Government Higher Education Institutions, Public Higher Education,

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and Private Higher Education (PDDikti, 2020). A large number of higher education institutions in Indonesia certainly form competition among the four groups. University X is a private university that has been established for 56 years, which provides education for diploma, undergraduate, graduate and profession levels. The university has 9 faculties and more than 20 study programs and has produced many graduates. To improve the quality of students and graduates, the university is equipped with various programs and facilities in academic and non-academic fields. The increasing competition among higher education institutions has spurred University X to further improve the quality of its services, both for students and employees who are already members of University X, as well as for prospective students and their parents.

The Division of Creativity and Study Consultation (CSC) is a division at University X, which is tasked with planning and supervising customer care programs, maintaining customer satisfaction, and controlling all programs related to the Division of CSC. This division plays a major role in promoting University X, by conveying information related to faculties, programs, and various other promotional activities to prospective students and their parents. Various complaints from prospective new students and their parents have been received by the Division of CSC regarding the inaccurate delivery of the information provided. Some of the complaints submitted were inaccurate information regarding the new student registration process, errors in the registration system, and unclear terms and conditions for the new student registration program. These complaints will certainly cause dissatisfaction of prospective students and their parents, especially during this Covid 19 pandemic. In Indonesia, during this pandemic, various activities outside the home are still very limited, activities at University X are still not running normally. Prospective students and their parents will rely heavily on the information provided by the Division of CSC, to obtain information about University X. The ambiguity and inaccuracy of the information/process that occurs will disserve prospective students and their parents, will also harm University X.

The Division of CSC must pay special attention to the level of service it provides, even invest in systems and tools that can be used for the development of service quality, to maintain sustainable development (Noaman et al., 2017). Research with strong quantitative measurements can provide factual information for higher education institutions so that they can set clear strategies (Latif et al., 2019). In addition to strategy, along with increasing service quality, the possibility of a satisfied customer will increase (Arasli, Mehtap-Smadi and Katircioglu, 2005). Consumer satisfaction is the level of a person's feelings after comparing the performance or results he feels compared to his expectations (Kotler and Keller, 2016), and customer satisfaction in the context of service, cannot be studied without paying attention to service quality (Tripathi, 2018).

The Division of CSC has never researched the satisfaction of prospective students/parents of prospective students as consumers of the services of the Division of CSC, so this research will be very beneficial for improving the quality of services of the Division of CSC. This study aims to determine the satisfaction index of prospective students/parents for the Division of CSC and propose improvements to the Division of CSC based on the expectation of prospective students/parents and the performance of the Division of CSC. Assessment from service users from the Division of CSC is very much needed because the university must provide services that are customer-centric-oriented in providing services. (Latif et al., 2019).

With the improvements made, the satisfaction of prospective students and their parents will increase. Prospective students and their satisfied parents will give positive word-of-mouth for University X because satisfied consumers will provide positive word-of-mouth and

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recommendations to others (Bufquin, DiPietro and Partlow, 2017). So that University X still has high competitiveness to maintain its sustainability, especially from the economic aspect.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service quality is a measure of how well the level of service delivered is in accordance with customer expectations (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). Defining service quality means consistently meeting customer expectations. The following are service quality attributes: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy (Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml, 1994).

The SERVQUAL model is widely used in various service industry sectors in measuring quality. This model is widely used in studies related to increasing the company's competitive ability, for example in research on marketing strategies to increase consumer satisfaction for bank retail service users (Culiberg and Rojšek, 2010), consumer behavior research in several telecom industries to increase company competitiveness (Warraich, Warraich and Asif, 2013), comparing student expectations and school performance to maintain campus sustainability (Bhuian, 2016), and many other studies.

These studies show the benefits of the SERVQUAL model in assessing company quality, to improve the company's competitive ability. In research on retail banks, all dimensions in SERVQUAL significantly affect consumer satisfaction with retail bank service users, and the Assurance and Empathy dimensions are the most important factors in shaping consumer satisfaction (Culiberg and Rojšek, 2010). Research on telecom companies in Pakistan uses variables from the SERVQUAL model to compare the results of consumer assessments of five companies, with the results showing that tangibility is the dimension that has the largest score, followed by reliability (Warraich, Warraich and Asif, 2013). The negative gap between students' expectations and perceptions of school on the five SERVQUAL dimensions causes schools to experience problems in admitting new students, where the number of new students enrolling is below the break-even number (Bhuian, 2016).

As service quality increases, the likelihood that consumers will be satisfied will increase (Arasli, Mehtap-Smadi and Katircioglu, 2005). This statement is reinforced by research on 20 medium-sized restaurants in the Southeastern United States which shows that quality affects consumer satisfaction (Bufquin, DiPietro and Partlow, 2017).

Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment that arise after comparing the performance of the product thought to the expected performance (Kotler and Keller, 2016). If the product's performance is above expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the product's performance is below expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. Three factors that influence customer perceptions and expectations are Word of Mouth, personal needs, past experiences and external communications (Kotler and Keller, 2016). This statement is reinforced by research on restaurant consumers in Delhi shows that customer satisfaction has a significant influence on loyalty and the desire to do word-of-mouth (Tripathi, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 3 parts, namely an assessment of the level of consumer interest (using a Likert scale), an assessment of the performance level of the Division of CSC according to consumers (using a Likert scale), and filling

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in the weights of each SERVQUAL dimension (using a weight of 0-100). The research variables were arranged based on the SERVQUAL model, which consisted of Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Tangible, and Empathy. Questionnaires distributed to respondents who meet the purposive sampling requirements, namely prospective students or their parents who have received services (online or offline services) from the Division of CSC from promotion until admissions, have seen the University X website/social media, and have receive services from the Division of CSC via telephone or email. Of the 123 returned questionnaires, only 100 questionnaires met the criteria and were further processed.

Research questions answered in this research are:

1. Is there a significant gap between the consumer's expectation and performance of the Division of CSC based on the SERVQUAL model from Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Tangibles?
2. How is the Customer Satisfaction Index of prospective students and their parents with the services of the Division of CSC?
3. What are the priority to improve the performance of the Division of CSC?
4. What suggestions will be made to increase the satisfaction of prospective students and their parents with the services of the Division of CSC?

Validity testing was carried out using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and declared valid. Reliability testing was carried out using Cronbach's Alpha and the results are the perception attribute has an alpha value of 0.956 and the expectation attribute has an alpha value of 0.962 which means high reliability because it has a value > 0.7 . Data on consumers' expectations and performance of the Division of CSC were processed quantitatively using the Gap Analysis Model, hypothesis testing for 2-paired-means, Customer Satisfaction Index, and Importance-Performance-Analysis (IPA). The results of all data processing are analyzed together to obtain priority improvements that must be made by the Division of CSC. In giving the proposal, we used a cause-effect diagram consisting of 8Ps (People, Process, Policies, Procedures, Price, Promotion, Place, And Product), so that the proposal is right on target.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the satisfaction index of prospective students/parents with the Division of CSC and propose improvements to the Division of CSC based on the expectation of prospective students/parents and the performance of the Division of CSC. The following are some of the findings and discussions in this research:

Research question 1: Is there a significant gap between the consumer's expectation and performance of the Division of CSC based on the SERVQUAL model from Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Tangibles?

Table 1. Service Quality Gap Scores.

| Dimensions | Perception Mean | Expectation Mean | Gap Score | Weight | Importance Gap | Weighted Scores |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Reliability | 3,38 | 3,74 | -0,36 | | 0,21 | -0,08 |
| Responsiveness | 3,31 | 3,72 | -0,41 | | 0,23 | -0,09 |
| Assurance | 3,38 | 3,75 | -0,37 | | 0,21 | -0,08 |
| Tangibles | 3,41 | 3,68 | -0,27 | | 0,19 | -0,05 |
| Empathy | 3,41 | 3,72 | -0,32 | | 0,16 | -0,05 |
| Overall | 3,38 | 3,72 | -0,34 | | | |

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Overall, the Division of CSC has a negative gap of -0.34 between consumer's expectations and the Division of CSC performance, which means that service provided by the Division of CSC is still not satisfactory for prospective students and their parents. The Responsiveness dimension has the highest gap, namely willingness to help customers and provide fast service has a service quality value, which is -0.09.

Hypothesis testing for the 2-paired-means was performed to test the statistical significance of the gap score. The hypothesis testing result is that all average performance of Division of CSC is significantly smaller than the expectations of prospective students and their parents with a t value of -6.048 to -2.659. The lowest t value is owned by The Staff Serves Consumers Responsively variable. This significant negative gap means that prospective students and their parents are dissatisfied.

Research question 2: How is the Customer Satisfaction Index of prospective students and their parents with the services of the Division of CSC?

The Customer Satisfaction Index was conducted to determine the satisfaction index of prospective students and their parents for all SERVQUAL variables, using the Mean Score, Weighted Factor, and Weight Score. The CSI formula is as follows:

$$\text{Customer Satisfaction Index} = k = \frac{1}{n} \sum WSkHS \cdot 100\% \quad (1)$$

CSI = Customer Satisfaction Index

WSk = Weight Score

HS = High Scale / maximum scale used

The result of the CSI calculation = 84.85%, which means that prospective students and their parents are very satisfied with the services of the Division of CSC.

Research question 3: What are the priority to improve the performance of the Division of CSC?

Improvement priority is determined using the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) method and t-score form hypothesis testing for 2-pair-means. In IPA, each quadrant shows a different priority for improvement, depending on the value of consumer's importance and Division of CSC's performance.

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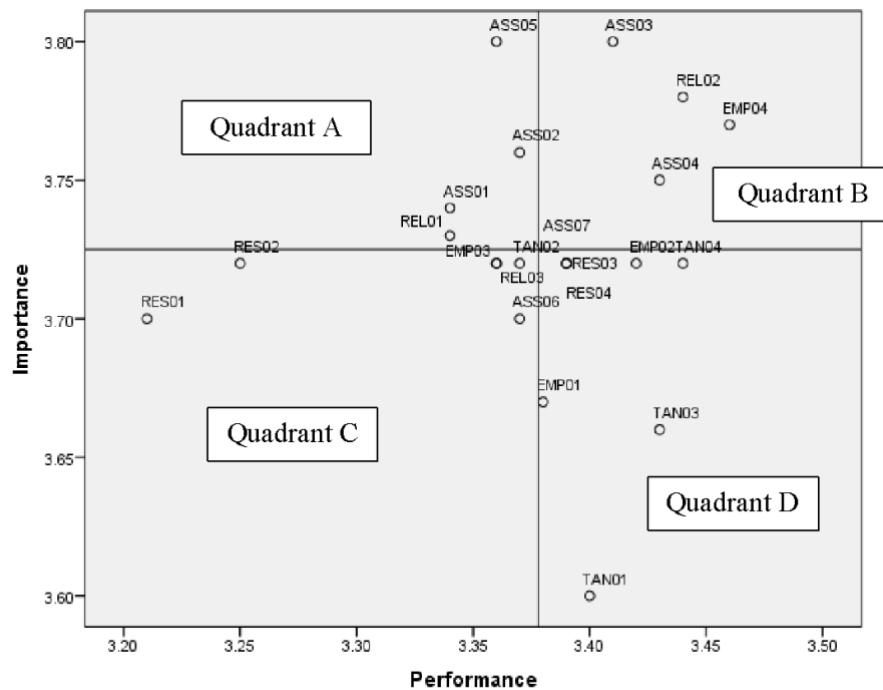


Figure 1. Importance-Performance Analysis

Based on the Importance-Performance Analysis quadrant, the 22 service quality variables are divided into 4 quadrants, namely high priority for improvement (Quadrant A), low priority for improvement (Quadrant C), variables for development (Quadrant A), and variables that are considered excessive by prospective students and their parents (Quadrant D). The result is 4 attributes that have a high priority for improvement, 6 attributes that have a low priority, 4 attributes that need to be developed, and 8 attributes that are considered excessive by consumers. All attributes are improved because they have performances value below consumer expectations.

Priority is determined by sorting the t-score value of the hypothesis testing for each quadrant. The lower the t-score, the higher the priority for improvement.

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Table 3. SERVQUAL Attribute Improvement Priority

| Priority | Dimention | Code | Attributes |
|----------------------|----------------|-------|--|
| High Priority | Assurance | AS05 | Creativity staff and Consulting Studies convey program information clearly to consumers. |
| | Assurance | AS01 | Staff creativity and study consulting have sufficient knowledge and information in work. |
| | Reliability | REL01 | The suitability of the new student registration program promised by execution. |
| | Assurance | AS02 | Staff creativity and study consulting are polite and friendly when serving consumers. |
| Low Priority | Responsiveness | RES01 | Creativity staff and consulting studies serve consumers responsively. |
| | Responsiveness | RES02 | Staff creativity and study consulting can respond to consumer complaints responsively. |
| | Empathy | EMP03 | Staff creativity and study consulting are able to understand consumer needs. |
| | Reliability | REL03 | Staff creativity and study consultation deliver a new student registration procedure consistently to consumers. |
| | Tangible | TAN02 | Social Media Creativity and Study Consultation (Instagram: @xxx) Provide clear information. |
| | Assurance | AS06 | Social Media Creativity and Study Consultation (Instagram: @xxx) provides information that is easy to understand. |
| Need Development | Reliability | REL02 | Staff creativity and study consultation deliver information on new student registration programs correctly to consumers. |
| | Assurance | AS03 | The new student registration program provided in accordance with the information received by the consumer. |
| | Assurance | AS04 | The ability of staff creativity and study consultation provide trust to consumers. |
| | Empathy | EMP04 | Staff creativity and study consulting seeks to understand different consumer needs and try to help. |
| Considered Excessive | Responsiveness | RES03 | Social Media Creativity and Study Consultation (Instagram: @xxx) Provide information that is always updated. |
| | Responsiveness | RES04 | The willingness of creativity staff and study consulting to provide information requested by consumers. |
| | Assurance | AS07 | The new student registration procedure provided by staff creativity and study consultation is easy to understand. |
| | Empathy | EMP02 | Ease of information submission to understand, both verbal / direct delivery and social media and web site. |
| | Tangible | TAN04 | Web Site Creativity and Study Consultation (xxx) makes it easy for consumers to get information. |
| | Empathy | EMP01 | Clock service creativity and study consulting can flexibly follow consumer needs, according to mutually agreed time. |
| | Tangible | TAN03 | Web site creativity and study consulting (xxx) are easily accessible to consumers. |
| | Tangible | TAN01 | Social Media Creativity and Study Consultation (Instagram: xxx) Looks interesting. |

From the results of the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) and hypothesis testing for 2-paired-means, different conclusions are obtained, where based on CSI consumers are very satisfied with the services of the Division of CSC, but the results of hypothesis testing show that all variables do not satisfy consumers. This difference may occur due to differences in the processing for both methods, wherein CSI each attribute is given a weight, meaning that CSI pays attention to the level of importance of each variable but does not pay attention to the value of the standard deviation of the data. Meanwhile, in hypothesis testing, attribute weighting is not carried out but pays attention to the standard deviation of the data so that hypothesis testing is more sensitive. Researchers want to pay attention to the weight of each attribute, as well as the significance of the difference between

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the value of the consumer's expectation and performance of the Division of CSC so that both data processing is important for this study.

Research question 4: What suggestions will be made to increase the satisfaction of prospective students and their parents with the services of the Division of CSC?

The root of the problem is analyzed using a cause-effect diagram, which consists of 8Ps, namely people, process, policies, procedures, price, promotion, place, and product so that the proposal is right on target. Here is an example of a cause-effect diagram for the first improvement priority: Improvement priority 1: variable AS05, Division of CSC staff conveys program information to prospective students and parents of prospective students

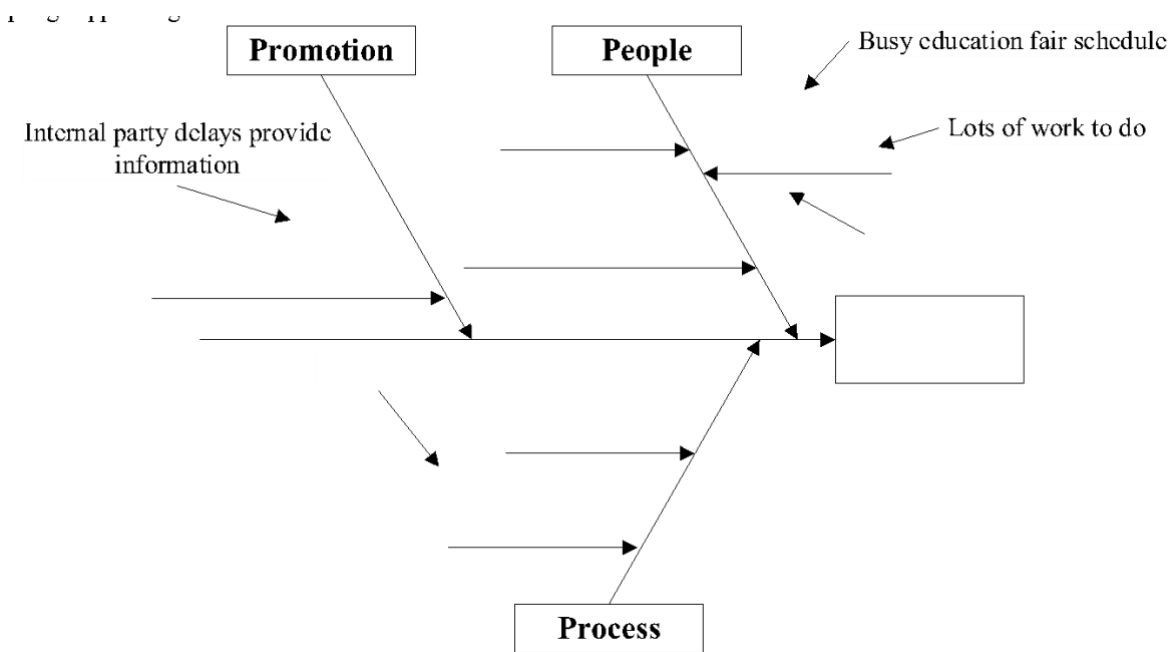


Figure 2. Cause-effect diagram for AS05

Cause-effect diagrams were also made for other research variables. The suggestions from this research are training for the staff of CSC, making direct and indirect delivery procedures, and developing market research to support service activities.

With the improvements made, the satisfaction of prospective students and their parents will increase, and they will provide positive word-of-mouth so that University X still has high competitiveness to maintain its sustainability.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The Division of Creativity and Study Consultation (CSC) is a division at University X, which is tasked with planning and supervising customer care programs, maintaining customer satisfaction, and controlling all programs related to the Division of CSC. Various complaints from prospective new students and their parents have been received by the Division of CSC regarding they services. This study aims to determine the satisfaction index of prospective students/parents with the Division of

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CSC and propose improvements to the Division of CSC based on the expectation of prospective students/parents and the performance of the Division of CSC.

Data was collected using a questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL model, which consisted of Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Tangible, and Empathy. Questionnaires distributed to prospective students or their parents who have received services (online or offline services) from the Division of CSC from promotion until admissions as new students, have seen the University X website/social media, and have receive services from the Division of CSC via telephone or email.

Based on data processing, the Division of CSC has a negative gap of -0.34 between consumer's expectations and the Division of CSC performance, which means that service provided by the Division of CSC is still not satisfactory for prospective students and their parents. The Responsiveness dimension has the highest gap, namely willingness to help customers and provide fast service has a service quality value, which is -0.09. Results of the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) and hypothesis testing for 2-paired-means have different conclusions, where based on CSI = 84.85% means consumers are very satisfied with the services of the Division of CSC, but the results of hypothesis testing show that all variables do not satisfy consumers. The root of the problem is analyzed using a cause-effect diagram, so that the proposal is right on target. The suggestions from this research are training for the staff of CSC, making direct and indirect delivery procedures, and developing market research to support service activities.

For further research, service quality measurements can be carried out for all divisions that are directly related to students and their parents, where this service quality measurement must be carried out continuously to provide maximum results. (Latif et al., 2019).

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APPENDIX**Table 4. Items of the Questionnaire**

| Dimensions | Code | Expectation | Perception |
|----------------|-------|---|--|
| Reliability | REL01 | 1. The suitability between the new student registration program promised by implementation. | 1. The suitability between the new student registration program promised by implementation. |
| | REL02 | 2. Staff convey information on new student registration programs correctly to consumers. | 2. Study Creativity and Consultation staff convey information on new student registration programs correctly to consumers. |
| | REL03 | 3. The staff conveyed a new student registration procedure consistently to consumers. | 3. Creativity staff and Consultation Studies deliver a new student registration procedure consistently to consumers. |
| Responsiveness | RES01 | 4. The staff serves consumers responsively. | 4. Kreative staff and consulting studies serve consumers responsively. |
| | RES02 | 5. Staff can respond to consumer complaints responsively. | 5. Study staff and study consulting can respond to consumer complaints responsively. |
| | RES03 | 6. Social media provides information that is always updated. | 6. Social Media (Instagram: @xxx) provides information that is always updated. |
| | RES04 | 7. The willingness of staff to provide information requested by consumers. | 7. The willingness of staff creativity and study consulting to give trust to consumers. |
| Assurance | AS01 | 8. Staff has adequate knowledge and information in work. | 8. Creativity staff and study consulting have sufficient knowledge and information in work. |
| | AS02 | 9. The staff is polite and friendly when serving consumers. | 9. Creativity staff and study consulting are polite and friendly when serving consumers. |
| | AS03 | 10. New Student Registration Program provided according to the information received by consumers. | 10. New Student Registration Program provided according to the information received by consumers. |
| | AS04 | 11. Staff's ability gives trust to consumers. | 11. The ability of staff creativity and study consultation provide trust to consumers. |
| | AS05 | 12. The staff conveys program information clearly to consumers. | 12. Creativity staff and Consulting Studies convey program information clearly to consumers. |
| | AS06 | 13. Social media provides information that is easy to understand. | 13. Social Media (Instagram: @xxx) provides information that is easy to understand. |
| | AS07 | 14. The new student registration procedure provided by staff is easy to understand. | 14. New Student Registration Procedures provided by staff creativity and study consultation are easy to understand. |
| Tangibles | TAN01 | 15. Social media looks interesting. | 15. Social Media (Instagram: @xxx) looks interesting. |
| | TAN02 | 16. Social media provides clear information. | 16. Social Media (Instagram: @xxx) provides clear information. |
| | TAN03 | 17. Web Sites are easily accessible by consumers. | 17. Web Site (xxx) is easily accessible by consumers. |
| | TAN04 | 18. Web Site makes it easy for consumers to get information. | 18. Web Site (xxx) makes it easy for consumers to get information. |
| Empathy | EMP01 | 19. Service hours can be flexible following consumer needs, according to the agreed time together. | 19. Clock Service Creativity and Study Consultation follows consumer needs, according to the agreed time together. |
| | EMP02 | 20. Ease of information submission to understand, both verbal / direct delivery or social media and web site. | 20. Ease of delivering information to understand, both verbal / direct delivery or social media (xxx) and web site (xxx). |
| | EMP03 | 21. Staff are able to understand consumer needs. | 21. Creativity staff and study consulting are able to understand consumer needs. |
| | EMP04 | 22. The staff seeks to understand different consumer needs and try to help. | 22. Creativity staff and study consulting seek to understand different consumer needs and try to help. |