

Students' Satisfaction with Academic Services in State-Owned Tertiary Institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Akpan, Kufre

Edem, Uwem

Umah, Martina

Department of Estate Management and Valuation,

Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic,

Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State.

E-mail: kufre4sucez@yahoo.com.

ABSTRACT

The study examines students' satisfaction with the educational services rendered by Akwa Ibom State-owned tertiary institutions. Survey–research design employed a questionnaire to collect data from 292 students to evaluate their satisfaction. Mean, percentage, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze the data. The result showed that the students were averagely satisfied with the educational services rendered by Akwa Ibom State-owned tertiary institutions. The students expressed the highest satisfaction with the time allotted for each lecture as they were always suitable. The worst dissatisfaction was the attitude of the lecturers; they were not friendly, accommodating, or encouraging. These findings did not have significant differences across the schools and gender. Therefore, lecturers should reset their minds to accommodate, encourage, and be professionally friendly with the students. The school libraries should be accessible, conducive, and equipped for students' learning. Examinations should align with the course contents. All schools should set up Quality Assurance Units to monitor educational services and ensure the expectations and quality of services to the students.

Keywords: *Academic services, higher institution, satisfaction, students.*

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is one of the drivers of patronage. It happens because customers are conscious of the quality of service they get from a place; this makes repeated businesses and eventually referrals to others. When it comes to academic institutions, students are the primary customers. There may be no contradiction suggesting that students' satisfaction may have something to do with institutions. Annually, so many students enroll in institutions of higher learning, and this trend has continued to rise (Suwarni, Moerdiono, Prihatining and Sangadji, 2020). Long, Ibrahim and Kowang (2014) opined that attaining student satisfaction as they enroll in higher institutions is one of the most critical objectives of all institutions of

higher learning. Elliot and Healy (2001) defined student satisfaction as a short-term cognitive attitude and emotional feeling from an overall evaluation of their experience with the educational services received. This definition suggests that students evaluate the quality of experience they have in their institutions and may promote the institution if the quality of experience is positive. Suwarni *et al.* (2020) stated that student satisfaction is positive when the actual performance of the higher institution meets or exceeds the student's expectations. Lapina, Roga and Muursepp (2016) opined that in academic programmes, the ability to render high-quality services to students has been crucial for higher education institutions to keep progressing in the increasingly competitive environment in which they must operate now. McLeay, Robson and Yusoff (2017) stated that higher service quality, driven by learning processes and student satisfaction gives a higher education institution an edge over its competitors.

Students' satisfaction with the quality of education services they receive is a crucial index performance of higher institutions (Santini, Ladeira, Sampaoi and da Silva Costa (2017). Williams (2002) asserted that students are end-users, and their feedback regarding their satisfaction is valuable in improving the quality of services rendered; this allows educational institutions to attract and retain quality students. Elliot and Shin (2010) opined that student satisfaction is for higher institutions' performance indicators. Therefore, it is imperative for higher institutions to carefully listen to the feedback from students on their level of satisfaction with educational services rendered. Based on the importance of student satisfaction with higher education institutions, the subject has attracted Suwarni *et al.* (2020) McLeay *et al.* (2017), Santini *et al.* (2017), Lapina *et al.* (2016), Long, Ibrahim and Kowang (2014), Elliot and Shin (2010), Williams (2002), Elliot and Healy (2001). Ekpoh (2018) studied academic services as the core functions of higher institutions in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States focused on service delivery on ICT, health, transport, hostel, and library services with no priority attention. Mfon and Ekong (2021) focused their study on the Obio Akpa Campus of Akwa Ibom State University, whereas there are other State-owned higher institutions in the State. With this research gap, this study examines students' satisfaction with educational services in Akwa Ibom State-owned higher institutions. Due to this gap, it expands the scope to cover other State-owned higher institutions in Akwa Ibom State and focuses on academic services (the core functions of the schools).

Concept of Satisfaction

Giese and Cole (2000) defined satisfaction as an emotional or cognitive response to a particular focus at a specific time. Elliot and Healy (2001) viewed student satisfaction as a short-term cognitive attitude and emotional feeling that results from students' overall evaluation of their experience with the educational services they received. Kurosu (2006), cited in Kurosu and Hashizume (2014), asserted that satisfaction comprises objective and subjective quality characteristics, encompass efficiency, effectiveness, functionality, performance, ease of cognition, and ease of operation; these give rise to utility and usability.

The subjective quality characteristics encompass reliability, cost, safety, compatibility, maintenance, pleasure, joy, beauty, attachment, motivation, and value. This concept suggests that educational services should be efficient and effective, and facilities should be functional for students to be satisfied.

The Resource Theory

Astin (1999) opined that the resource theory of pedagogy is a favourite among administrators and policymakers. The term resource includes many components which can aid students learning. They are well-trained lecturers, student advisors, and other staff (human resources), physical facilities like workshops, studios, libraries, laboratories, and financial resources. The resource theory maintains that students learning and development occur if adequate resources are together in one place. The resource theory believes the proportion of high-quality lecturers and facilities will strengthen the educational environment. Suwarni *et al.* (2020) opined that student satisfaction is positive when actual performance meets or exceeds expectations. They concluded that there is a significant positive and direct correlation between perceived teaching quality and students' satisfaction.

Hearn (1985), as cited in Hoh, Khattak and Li (2018), stated that two main factors of student satisfaction are interest in the course and the teaching style. Miles, Swift and Leinster (2012) concluded that the study environment is the most important factor affecting student satisfaction. Hoh *et al.* (2018) found that students were most satisfied with the peer relationship but dissatisfied with teaching and students' guidance. They also stated that students were pleased with the library resources, learning environment, school policies, and facilities. Elliot and Shin (2010) observed that teaching methods and students' guidance affect student outcomes. Long, Ibrahim and Kowang (2014) concluded that lecturers' knowledge of a subject contributes to students' satisfaction. Yang and Cornelius (2014) found that students become frustrated when their instructors do not participate in discussions or respond to questions. According to Hilda (2018), there is a positive relationship between lecturers' competency and students' satisfaction. Butt and Rehman (2010) concluded that teachers' expertise is an influential factor in students' satisfaction.

Xiao and Wilkins (2015) asserted that lecturers' commitment to students' academic achievement and social integration positively relate to students' satisfaction. Ekpoh (2018) stated that students were dissatisfied with the library, hostel, and information and communication services while moderately satisfied with health and transport services. Mfon and Ekong (2021) opined that teaching styles, administrative services, infrastructure, academic resources, welfare services, and examination/evaluation system had statistically significant positive effects on students' satisfaction and suggested that students were satisfied with the services rendered in the university.

METHOD

A survey research design was employed to collect data from the students to evaluate their satisfaction with educational services provided by the three tertiary institutions Akwa Ibom State-owned. These were Akwa Ibom State University, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, and Akwa Ibom State College of Education. Stratified sampling was adopted to select 100 respondents in each of the tertiary institutions. Three hundred (300) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students through a stratified sampling method. A total of 292 copies of the questionnaire were correctly completed and returned. It represented a response rate of 97%. The responses by the different institutions are presented in Table 1. The study adopted mean, percentage, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Institutions

School	Frequency	percent
College of Education	98	33.6
Polytechnic	97	33.2
University	97	33.2
Total	292	100

From Table 1 above, Akwa Ibom State College of Education (AKSCOE) had the highest response rate of 33.6%. Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic (Akwapoly) and Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU) had the same response rate of 33.2% each. From Table 2 above, 46.6% of the respondents were female, and 53.4% were male students.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
F	136	46.6
M	156	53.4
Total	292	100

Table 3: Analysis of the Students' Satisfaction with Educational Services in the Tertiary Institutions

S/N	Parameters	SA	A	N	DA	SD	Mean
1	The registration process in the school is very seamless.	55	93	110	21	1	3.58

2	The learning environment in terms of conducive classrooms, availability of good seats, and sizeable class population is very satisfactory.	95	116	56	19	6	3.94
3	Lecturers' attitude toward students is friendly, accommodating and encouraging to students.	18	23	15	89	147	1.89
4	The lecturers are very competent in teaching their courses.	9	45	201	34	3	3.08
5	The course contents in the curriculum are comprehensive and very educative to the students.	76	66	111	39	0	3.61
6	Lecturers are always able to satisfactorily cover their course outline before the end of the semester.	53	96	93	43	7	3.5
7	The time allotted for each lecture is always suitable and appropriate for students to assimilate into the course.	83	159	40	8	2	4.07
8	The library is accessible and conducive; the required learning materials are always available	86	9	13	59	125	2.56
9	Examinations are always set based on the course outline as adequately taught by the lecturers	9	33	152	98	0	2.84
10	Students' assessments and results are on merit	56	77	112	47	0	3.49
	Overall average satisfaction						3.26

From the result in Table 3, the educational services for which students had the highest satisfaction in the services rendered by the schools was the time allotted for lectures. The students stated that the time allotted for a class was suitable. The mean satisfaction value for the time allotted for classes is 4.07. This mean score showed that the students were satisfied with the time allotted for their lectures. The students were also satisfied with the registration process; it had a mean score of 3.58. The students were pleased with the learning environment as it had a mean score of 3.94. The course content in the various curricula had a mean score of 3.61 which shows that students were satisfied with the course content as designed in the curriculum.

On the learning environment, Akwa Ibom State Government, in collaboration with Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND), has tried so much to provide new buildings in the schools in the past few years; this may be responsible for the satisfaction. The satisfaction level is 3.94, while 5.00 is the target point. The availability of facilities for e-registration in the schools is satisfactory. The institutions now have portals where students can log on to register against the manual methods. As the mean score is 3.58, there is still a need to improve the satisfaction level if the portal is enhanced to increase the speed and make it more user-friendly. The course content is satisfactory because various academic bodies like NUC and NABTE and professional bodies like COREN, ESVARBON and NIA review the course content before courses are accredited.

The students were neutral on the expressions of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction on five parameters used to test their satisfaction level. These were the competency of the lecturers who taught them, the lecturers' consistency to always satisfactorily cover their course outline before the end of the semester, access to the library and availability of the required learning materials, examination of students based on the course outline and students' assessment based on merit. They had mean scores of 3.08, 3.50, 2.56, 2.84, and 3.49, respectively.

The students expressed dissatisfaction with the attitude of lecturers towards the students as some lecturers were not friendly, accommodating, and encouraging. The mean score for this index was 1.89, the least of all the parameters used to measure the students' satisfaction. As mentors, lecturers are to be friendly, accommodating, and encouraging. It might occur because some lecturers focus on their lectures without creating time to interact with the students to understand their challenges and advise them. The mean score for the students' overall satisfaction was 3.26. It means that students were neutral on expressions of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which implies that the schools met the average expectations of the students overall in the time allotted for lectures, learning environment, and course content; the schools did satisfactorily.

Table 4: T-Test Analysis of the Mean Difference in Response by Gender

Gender	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
F	32.53	2.62	0.172	0.863
M	32.59	3.04		

We conducted a T-test analysis to find out if there was a difference in responses based on gender. The result in Table 4 revealed the P-value of $0.863 > 0.05$ level of significance, which means that the mean responses of male and female students were not statistically different.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	34.461	2	17.230	2.143	.119
Within Groups	2315.237	288	8.039		
Total	2349.698	290			

We carried out the analysis of variance to test the mean response of the students based on the school using one-way ANOVA; the result gave the P-value of $0.119 > 0.05$ (level of significance). It implies that there was no difference in the mean response of the students in the three institutions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined students' satisfaction with the educational services rendered by Akwa Ibom State-owned tertiary institutions. The study showed that the students were neutral (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) in expressing their satisfaction with the level of educational services rendered; the overall mean satisfaction score was 3.26. It was within the neutral satisfaction band, as stated by Latify *et al.* (2017). The students expressed the highest satisfaction with the time allotted for each lecture as they were always suitable. The worst dissatisfaction was the attitude of the lecturers as they were not friendly, accommodating, and encouraging. These findings did not have significant differences across the schools and gender. By these findings, we recommend that lecturers reset their minds to accommodate, encourage, and be professionally friendly with the students. The school libraries should be accessible, conducive and equipped for students' learning. Examinations should align with the course content. All schools should set up Quality Assurance Unit to monitor the education services to ensure the expectations and quality services to the students.

REFERENCES

- Astin, A. W. (1999). Students' involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(5):518-529.
- Butt, B. & Rehman, K. (2010). A study examining the students' satisfaction in higher education. *Procedia –Social and Behavioural sciences*, 2(2):5446-5450.
- Ekpoh, U. I. (2018). Assessing university students' satisfaction with service delivery: Implication for educational management. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6 (6), 67-79.
- Elliot, K.M. & Healy, M.A. (2001). Key factors influencing student satisfaction related to recruitment and retention. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 10(4), 1-11.
- Elliot, K. M. & Shin, D. (2010). Student satisfaction: An alternative approach to assessing this important concept. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 24 (2), 197-209.
- Giese, J. F. & Cole, J. (2000). Defining consumer satisfaction. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 1(1), 1-22
- Hilda, L. (2018). The effect of pedagogic competences toward students' satisfaction. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management*, 6(8), 609-614.
- Hoh, S.C., Khattak, S. I. & Li, H. (2018). Antecedents to students' satisfaction of higher education institutions; A case study of Brunei Darussalam, *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research. (AEBMR)*, 54:345-352.
- Kurosu, M. & Hashizume, A. (2014). *Concept of satisfaction*. Paper presented at International Conference on Kansei Engineering and Emotion Research, Linkoping, June 11-13; 1103-1111.
- Lapina, I., Roga, R. & Muursep, P. W. (2016). Quality of higher education: International students' satisfaction and learning experience. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 8 (3):263-278.
- Latify, R. A., Dahlan, A., Mulud, Z.A. & Nor, M. Z.M (2017). The impact of Rusnani concept mapping (RCM) on academic achievement and clinical practices among Diploma Nursing students. *Education in Medicine Journal*, 9(4):1-12.
- Long, C. S. Ibrahim, Z. & Kowang, T. O. (2014). An analysis on the relationship between lecturers' competencies and students' satisfaction. *International Education Studies*, 7 (1): 37-46
- McLeay, F., Robson, A. & Yusoff, M. (2017). New applications for importance – performance analysis (IPA) in higher education. *Journal of Management Development* 36(6): 780-800.
- Mfon, A. A. & Ekong, J. (2021). Service delivery and students' satisfaction in Obio Akpa Campus of Akwa Ibom State University. *AKSU Journal of Administration and Corporate Governances*, 1(2), 39-56.
- Miles, S. Swift, L. & Leinster, J. (2000). Defining consumer satisfaction. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 1(1): 1-22.

- Santini, F., Ladeira, W., Sampaio, C. & DA Silva Costa, G. (2017). Student satisfaction in higher education: A meta-analytic study. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 27(1):1-18.
- Suwarni, S., Moerdiono, A., Prihatining, I. & Sangadji, E.M. (2020). The effect of lecturers' competency on students' satisfaction through perceived teaching quality. *International Conference on Islam, Economy and Halal Industry*, 1-14.
- Williams, J. (2002). *The student satisfaction approach: student feedback and its potential role in quality assessment and enhancement*. Presented in 24th EAIR Forum, Prague on 8th - 11th September:77-82.
- Xiao, J. & Wilkins, S. (2015). The effects of lecturer commitment on student perceptions of teaching quality and student satisfaction in Chinese Higher Education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 37(1), 98 – 110.
- Yang, Y. & Cornelius, L.F. (2004). *Students' perceptions towards the quality of online education: A qualitative approach*. Paper presented at the Association for Education Communications and Technology 27th Conference, USA.