

Student Satisfaction with Academic Services and its Strategic Implication

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This study aims to determine student satisfaction with higher education services that contain four elements; academic services, campus conditions, academic advisors, and teaching activities in higher education—the survey conducted with a quantitative descriptive approach. Data was collected through a survey of 264 students. The results showed that students were satisfied with the academic services provided by researched institutions. However, specific points show less encouraging data, so it becomes essential to discuss this. This research implies essential strategies that higher education needs to increase to achieve student satisfaction with the academic services provided.

Key words: *Student satisfaction, academic services, strategic management, higher education.*

Introduction

Issues on the higher education customer satisfaction have attracted researchers' attention in recent years (Douglas et al., 2006; Gruber Thorsten et al., 2010). Several studies link student satisfaction with loyalty (Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2016; Subrahmanyam, 2017), while other researches link it with the quality of education (Abidin, 2015), campus technology and college marketing (Ogunnaike et al., 2014), and several other studies link it to other factors (Eshun et al., 2018). The results of the previous studies on student satisfaction with academic services are also varied. Some showed a positive response from students to the campus educational services, and some others showed a negative response. All of those researches indicate that HE customer satisfaction surveys need to be carried out to determine the quality of the services provided to customers (Aldemir & Gülcan, 2004; Butt & ur Rehman, 2010). From the available researches, there is still rarely research on student satisfaction with specific academic services. There are a few types of research carried out in these issues decades ago (Startup, 1972). The direction is more to the assessment of academic staff alone (Lomas, 2007) so that further research is needed to enrich the literature on the issues.

The UIN Maliki is an educational service provider that is needed by prospective students. Educational institutions in the city of Malang are very numerous. Therefore this institution must face very keen competition, especially in finding qualified prospective students. Besides, UIN Maliki must have advantages to meet the expectations of graduate users. For universities to have benefits, the key is to provide higher service than students expect (Hill, 1995) by providing good and quality academic services.

UIN Maliki Malang's vision is to produce graduates who have professional intellectuals and scholars who are professional intellectuals who have the depth of faith, breadth of knowledge, spiritual wisdom, and professional future (UIN, 2020). For this mission to achieve, the entire academic community must provide quality services (Ozdem, 2011) by creating a conducive situation, including educational, administrative, and financial service activities. Various efforts can be made by institutions to improve services to students, such as providing services quickly and in a friendly manner, providing financial assistance, and providing infrastructure so that the sustainability of higher education can be maintained (Yanez et al., 2019).

A survey of student satisfaction with academic services needs to be conducted. So that the institution gets a complete picture of student satisfaction with the services provided (Lomas 2007, the institution can use it as a guideline to direct the entire organisation towards meeting student needs so that it becomes a source of excellence and sustainable competitiveness (Elliott & Shin, 2002).

Literature Review

The Concept of Student Satisfaction

Satisfaction is the level of one's feelings after comparing the reality he feels with his expectations. When someone buys a particular product, he hopes to get something he wants from that product. If he feels a match between what expected and the experience of consuming the product, he will be satisfied (BİLGİN et al., 2010). However, the concept of satisfaction not only applies to the consumption of certain products, but also to institutions that offer services to the community, such as higher education institutions (Athiyaman, 1997). One of the closest tertiary institution customers is students. They are consumers who can feel how good is the level of service provided by tertiary institutions. Students experience one of the most basic levels of satisfaction. (1) If performance is below expectations, students will not be satisfied, (2) if performance is in line with expectations, students will be happy, and (3) if performance exceeds expectations, students will feel delighted and satisfied (Alves & Raposo, 2007).

This feeling of dissatisfaction, satisfaction, or extreme satisfaction will influence further action. Satisfied students will convey positively about the services they use and will be loyal to their institution (Butt & ur Rehman, 2010). Dissatisfied students will react differently. Disappointed students will take one of the following two actions: (1) they may try to reduce the dissatisfaction by leaving or moving to another study program or another tertiary institution. (2) they may try to mitigate dissatisfaction by finding information that can strengthen the services' high value (Alves & Raposo, 2007).

Student expectations are shaped by friends' comments and acquaintances, as well as influenced by information and promises from the institution and its competitors. If the institution raises student expectations too high, students may be disappointed if they fail to fulfill them. On the other hand, if the institution sets student expectations too low, the institution cannot attract enough prospective students even though students will be satisfied. A high level of satisfaction or pleasure will create a high emotional bond. Institutions need to shape their culture so that people in the institution aim to please students (Weerasinghe I.M.S. & Fernando R.L.S., 2018). Students choose a service provider based on information from friends, family, or an institution, and after receiving the service, they compare the service they experience with the expected service. If the services experienced are below the expected services, students will feel dissatisfied. Whereas if the services experienced by students meet or exceed their expectations, then they will be satisfied or delighted (Hemsley-Brown et al., 2010).

According to Philip Kotler (2009), the dissatisfaction arises because of the gap between (1) consumer expectations and management perceptions, (2) management perceptions and service quality specifications., (3) service quality specifications and service delivery, (4) delivery of services and external communications, and (5) services experienced by customers and expected services.

Elements of Student Satisfaction

Many theories explain the elements that are indicators of customer satisfaction in college. Parasuraman argues that five dimensions can measure customer satisfaction, namely: 1. tangibles, 2. reliability, 3. responsiveness, 4. assurance, and 5. empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Whereas Yusoff et al. (2015) identified 12 factors that influence student satisfaction. The 12 elements are professional, comfortable environment, student assessments and learning experiences; classroom environment; lecture and tutorial facilitating goods; textbook and tuition fees; student support facilities; business procedures; relationship with teaching staff; knowledgeable and responsive faculty; staff helpfulness; feedback; and class sizes. Zineldin et al. (2011) developed a new quality assurance model (5Qs) that included five factors:

technical, functional, infrastructure, interaction, and the atmosphere of higher education institutions. He developed it into 39 attributes of the five elements to measure student satisfaction with higher education services.

While this study combines some of the above theories by taking four critical dimensions in academic services in tertiary institutions, namely (1) The level of student satisfaction with educational services, (2) The level of student satisfaction with the conditions of campus facilities, (3) The level of student satisfaction with academic advisory services, and (4) The level of student satisfaction with teaching activities. Base on the four items, the researcher then developed into 30 questions concerning aspects as follows:

1. Library: availability of books (completeness, up-to-date) and services.
2. Laboratory: number of computers available, up-to-date, and easily accessible programs.
3. Give a higher value than the fees paid by students.
4. The attitude of communicating face-to-face or using the telephone from relevant parties who are attentive, interesting, responsive, and timely, and transmit messages with certainty and easily understood that meet students' desires and needs who need to be listened to.
5. The environment is truly welcoming and non-threatening, which encourages student convenience and makes students feel emotionally comfortable.
6. Staff means employees who are not dishonest, responsive, empathic, trustworthy, knowledgeable, loyal to the team of institutions, trained, and authorised to act.
7. Documentation, meaning brochures, proposals, contracts, invoices, delivery letters, training manuals/user manuals, etc., which are plain and precise, each of which includes reference details/officers that must be contacted to request help and everything is accurate and up to date.
8. Handling complaints, which means authorising staff to respond to student/customer complaints quickly, sincerely, honestly, sympathetically, and thoroughly; suggestions from students/customers channelled through a process that handles complaints; and use technology as a tool, not as a determinant of everything.
9. Location means that it is easy to reach and explains the institution/company's position, the name of the institution/company, address, and telephone number of the institution/company.
10. Access, which means clear directions to locations. Ideally, in all places that can go to sites within a five-mile radius; and ensuring that all exterior faces of buildings, gates, and entrances, as well as all institutional lands, reflect a corporate image that exudes empathy with customers.
11. Safety and comfort
12. Ensure that there is no discrimination against groups who have special needs.
13. Time includes working hours and speed of service.
14. Do not make a distinction of service, high morals, and honest.
15. Behaviour, which means holding a presumption of innocence, willing to assume

responsibility, objective, fair, honest, not to be suspected, and authentically focused on students and learn from constructive criticism.

16. Internal relations, which means ensuring that everyone understands, accepts and carries out missions against students.

17. Creating a feeling that is entirely consistent with the right of students to receive total care and satisfaction.

Research question: how is students' satisfaction level with the academic services in the Postgraduate of UIN Maliki Malang Indonesia?

Research Method

Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach. Data was collected through a survey of the Postgraduate students of UIN Maliki Malang. Therefore in this study, no treatment was carried out on the research respondents. Respondents were asked to respond to various phenomena related to student satisfaction without manipulation of the research variables.

Research Sample

This study's population were all postgraduate students of UIN Maliki Malang, who were registered as students with as many as 1340 students. The survey was conducted by purposive random sampling, namely Masters students majoring in Management of Islamic Education and Islamic Education, who are still active as students. Two hundred seventy-eight students were participating in the study. However, after selecting the distributed questionnaires, only about 264 surveys were eligible to proceed in the analysis process, while the rest were deemed defective due to imperfect answers. Demographically, the characteristics of the students involved in this study are described in the following table:

Table 1: Demographic data of respondents.

Sex		Semester				Department	
Woman	Men	I	II	III	IV up	Islamic Education	Islamic Education Management
134	130	72	76	65	51	122	142

Validity and Reliability

In this study, the instrument was adopted from The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory theory (Odom, 2008). Question points were developed relating to academic services, campus conditions, academic advisors, and teaching activities; in this study, satisfaction was measured by the method of measuring student satisfaction directly by using a questionnaire. From the theoretical concept the researcher broke it down to a research question that contains 30 questions.

The validity and reliability test aims to show the extent to which the instruments used were trusted and reliable. In this study, the analysis was carried out using SPSS Version 16 for Windows. Before knowing the level of validity of an item, the r-table value must be searched for first. R-table values sought at the 0.05 significance with $df = 33$. The number 33 comes from the number of 35 respondents minus 2; then, the quantity of 0.3334 was obtained. Furthermore, the r-table value compared with the r-calculated value of the data processing results, and the item is declared valid if the r-count value $>$ r-table.

Tabel 2: The result of data validity analysis

Satisfaction				
Item Number	r count		r table	Validity
Item1	0.66	>	0.3334	valid
Item2	0.74	>	0.3334	valid
Item3	0.68	>	0.3334	valid
Item4	0.72	>	0.3334	valid
Item5	0.53	>	0.3334	valid
Item6	0.67	>	0.3334	valid
Item7	0.47	>	0.3334	valid
Item8	0.68	>	0.3334	valid
Item9	0.63	>	0.3334	valid
Item10	0.56	>	0.3334	valid
Item11	0.59	>	0.3334	valid
Item12	0.58	>	0.3334	valid
Item13	0.68	>	0.3334	valid
Item14	0.48	>	0.3334	valid
Item15	0.75	>	0.3334	valid
Item16	0.67	>	0.3334	valid
Item17	0.75	>	0.3334	valid
Item18	0.48	>	0.3334	valid
Item19	0.53	>	0.3334	valid

Item20	0.43	>	0.3334	valid
Item21	0.61	>	0.3334	valid
Item22	0.60	>	0.3334	valid
Item23	0.63	>	0.3334	valid
Item24	0.61	>	0.3334	valid
Item25	0.66	>	0.3334	valid
Item26	0.82	>	0.3334	valid
Item27	0.68	>	0.3334	valid
Item28	0.39	>	0.3334	valid
Item29	0.68	>	0.3334	valid
Item30	0.61	>	0.3334	valid

Table 2 shows that all items, items of the satisfaction level, have a value of $r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$. Based on the calculation of the validity and reliability test, it can be seen that all items are valid and reliable, so that it can proceed to the next test phase. Furthermore, to see the items' reliability, it can be seen from the Cronbach alpha value (α) from the results of SPSS processing. If the value $\alpha > 0.05$, then the item is declared reliable. From the data in table 3 below, note that the α value for satisfaction items is $0.964 > 0.05$. Thus all items of satisfaction level are declared reliable. The α value for satisfaction items is $0.972 > 0.05$.

Table 3: The result of data reliability analysis

Reliability Item of Satisfaction	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.964	30

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study was measured manually. Because this research is exploratory, the data analysis was performed using descriptive methods. To determine student satisfaction, graphic analysis techniques were used with ideal criteria, namely the ideal mean and ideal standard deviation.

The formula used is as follows:

$$M_i = \frac{1}{2} (HS + LS)$$

$$SD_i = \frac{1}{2} (HS - LS)$$

Note:

M_i = ideal mean

SD_i = ideal standard deviation

HS = higher score

LS = lower score

The highest ideal score and the lowest ideal score were obtained from the sum of each variable's scores. The lowest score for each item was 1 and highest score 4. Based on the ideal mean calculation, an ideal standard deviation is categorised using the following reference:

Table 4: The level of satisfaction measurement

No	Category	Range
1	Very satisfied	$> Mi + (1,5 \times SDi)$
2	Satisfied	$Mi + (1,5 \times SDi)$
3	Dissatisfied	$Mi - (1,5 \times SDi)$
4	Very dissatisfied	$< Mi + (1,5 \times SDi)$

Result

The Level of Student Satisfaction with Academic Services

In this study, the level of student satisfaction with educational services measured by 25 questions with a score of 1-4. The results showed the highest score obtained is 94 of the highest rating that can be achieved of 100, and the lowest score of 42 from the lowest score that can be made of 25. The mean is 66.15, the median is 66.00, the mode is 63, and the standard deviation is 6.8. To determine the tendency of the level of satisfaction with academic services, the ideal mean, and ideal standard deviation were used. The highest ideal score is 100, and the lowest ideal score is 25. To determine Mi and SDi as follows:

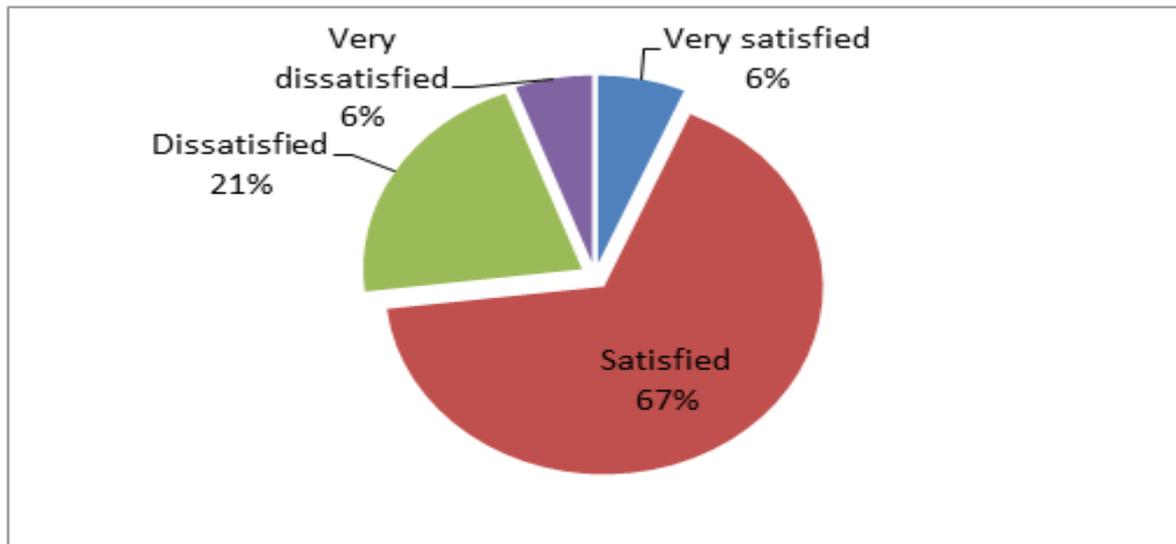
$$\begin{aligned}
 Mi &= \frac{1}{2} (HS+LS) & SDi &= \frac{1}{6} (HS+LS) \\
 &= \frac{1}{2} (100+25) & &= \frac{1}{6} (100-25) \\
 &= 62,5 & &= 12,5
 \end{aligned}$$

Based on the analysis of Mi and SDi , the tendency of the level of student satisfaction with academic services can be identified as follows:

Table 5: Student Satisfaction Categories of Academic Services

No	Category	Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very satisfied	> 80.25	17	6%
2	Satisfied	62.50 – 80.25	176	67%
3	Dissatisfied	43.75 – 62.49	56	21%
4	Very dissatisfied	< 43.75	15	6%
Total score			264	100%

Figure 1. Percentage level of student satisfaction with academic services



The data above shows that most students or (67%) of students are satisfied with academic services. While 21% were dissatisfied, only a small proportion was very satisfied, namely 6% and 6% of students were very dissatisfied with academic services.

The Level of Student Satisfaction with Campus Conditions

In this study, student satisfaction with campus conditions was measured by 11 questions with a score of 1-4. The results showed the highest score of 41 of the highest score that could be achieved being 44, and the lowest score of 20 of the lowest score that could be achieved being 11. The mean was 30.27, the median was 30.00, the modes were 30.00, and a standard deviation was 3.24. To find out the tendency of the level of satisfaction with the campus's condition the ideal means and an ideal standard deviation were used. The highest ideal score is 44, and the lowest ideal score is 11. To determine the M_i and SD_i is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} M_i &= \frac{1}{2} (HS+LS) & SD_i &= \frac{1}{6} (HS+LS) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} (44+11) & &= \frac{1}{6} (44-11) \\ &= 27.5 & &= 5.5 \end{aligned}$$

Based on M_i and SD_i , it can be identified as the tendency of the level of student satisfaction with campus conditions presented in the following table.

Table 6: Student Satisfaction - Categories of Campus Conditions

No	Category	Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very satisfied	> 35.75	22	8
2	Satisfied	27.50 – 35.75	182	69
3	Dissatisfied	19.25 –27.49	52	20
4	Very dissatisfied	< 19.25	8	3
Total score			264	100

Figure 2. Percentage level of student satisfaction with campus condition

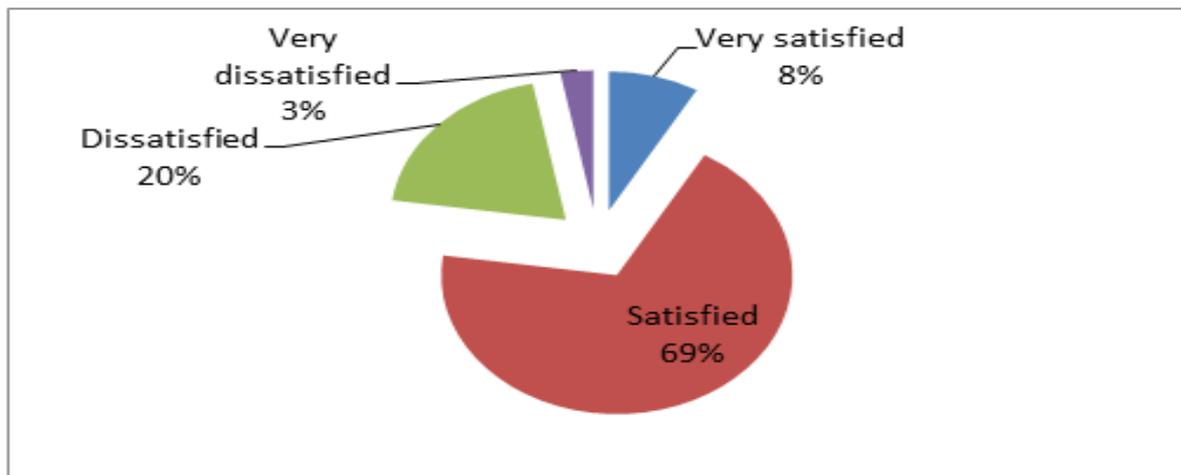


Table 6 and Figure 2 show that the majority (69%) of students were satisfied with the campus's condition; students who were dissatisfied were as much as 20%; a small portion were very satisfied at 8% and 3% of management students who felt very dissatisfied with campus conditions.

The Level of Student Satisfaction with Academic Advisory Services

Student satisfaction with academic advisors was measured by six questions with a score of 1-4. The results showed the highest score of 23 of the highest score that can be achieved being 24. While the lowest score of 11 from the lowest score that can be achieved being 6. The mean was 17.28, the median was 18.00, the mode was 18.00, and standard deviation was 2.56. To find out the tendency of satisfaction level with academic advisors the ideal mean and the ideal standard deviation was used. The highest ideal score is 24, and the lowest ideal score is 4. To determine the M_i and SD_i is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 M_i &= \frac{1}{2} (HS+LS) & SD_i &= \frac{1}{6} (HS+LS) \\
 &= \frac{1}{2} (24+6) & &= \frac{1}{6} (24-6) \\
 &= 15 & &= 3
 \end{aligned}$$

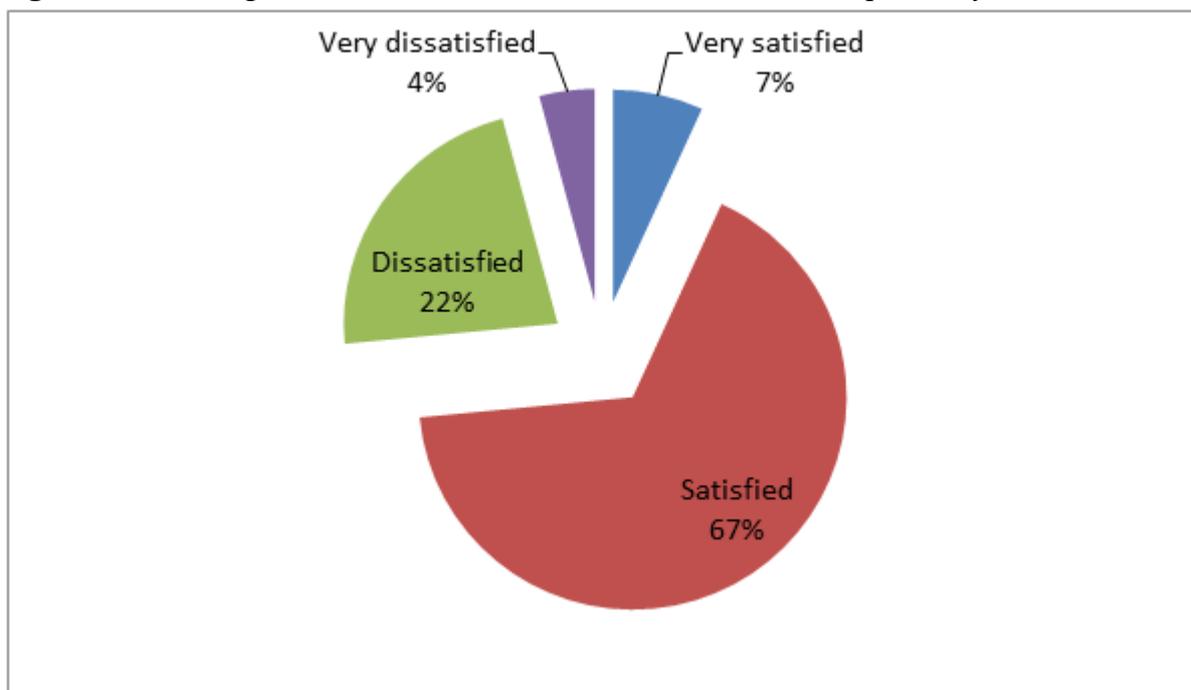
Based on Mi and SDi, it can be identified as the tendency of student satisfaction level towards academic advisors. Based on the trend of students' satisfaction level with academic advisors, the following table can be prepared.

Table 7: Student satisfaction with academic advisory services

No	Category	Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very satisfied	> 35.75	18	7
2	Satisfied	27.50 – 35.75	176	67
3	Dissatisfied	19.25 –27.49	59	22
4	Very dissatisfied	< 19.25	11	4
Total score			264	100

Table 7 shows that the majority (67%) of students were satisfied with academic advisors, 7% of students were very satisfied, and 22% of students were dissatisfied. While the rest, 4% of students felt very dissatisfied with academic advisory services.

Figure 3: Percentage level of student satisfaction with academic supervisory



The Level of Student Satisfaction with Teaching Activities

In this study, student satisfaction with teaching activities was measured by 12 questions with a score of 1-4. The results showed the highest score of 44 of the highest score that could be achieved being 48, and the lowest score of 22 of the lowest score that could be achieved being 12. The mean was 32.65, the median was 33.00, the mode was 32.00, and a standard deviation was 3.57. To find out the tendency of the level of satisfaction with teaching activities, the ideal mean, and ideal standard deviation were used. The highest ideal score is 48, and the lowest ideal score is 12. M_i and SD_i were determined as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} M_i &= \frac{1}{2} (HS+LS) & SD_i &= \frac{1}{6} (HS+LS) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} (48+12) & &= \frac{1}{6} (48-12) \\ &= 30 & &= 6 \end{aligned}$$

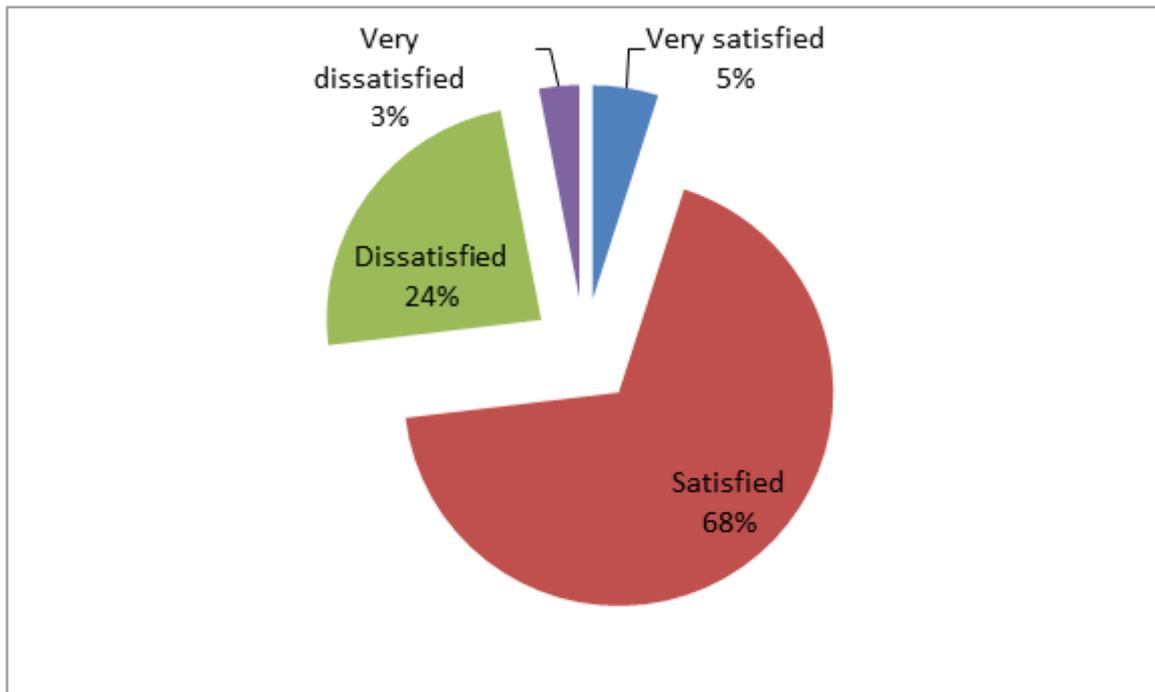
Based on M_i and SD_i , the tendency of student satisfaction level with teaching activities can be identified as follows:

Table 8: Student Satisfaction of Teaching Activities

No	Category	Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very satisfied	> 35.75	13	5
2	Satisfied	27.50 – 35.75	180	68
3	Dissatisfied	19.25 – 27.49	63	24
4	Very dissatisfied	< 19.25	8	3
Total score			264	100

Table 8 shows that most students (68.2%) were satisfied with teaching activities, 23.9% of students were dissatisfied, 4.9% of students were very satisfied, and 3.0% were very dissatisfied with teaching activities. In general, it concluded that students were satisfied with teaching activities. For more details, the distribution of student satisfaction with teaching services can be seen in the following pie chart:

Figure 4. Percentage level of student satisfaction with teaching activities



Lecturer services for students in the learning process get a good appreciation from students because 68% of students expressed satisfaction with the lecturers' teaching activities. But there are still a small number of students who are dissatisfied with lecturers in the course and the number is quite large, which is 23.9%. After observing student dissatisfaction, a lecturer responded to differences in student characteristics in learning activities and a schedule that was felt to be not in line with student expectations.

Conclusions and Strategic Implications

Based on the research findings described earlier, it can generally be concluded that the majority of students are satisfied with the four academic services provided by the studied tertiary institution because the four elements measured in this study show, more than 60% of students are satisfied with the services offered. However, many students are still not happy with the services provided by the campus to them. More than 20% of students said they were not satisfied with the researched tertiary institution's academic services. Even though the amount is not too much, this can be a threat to the research universities if not resolved immediately. Because if they express their dissatisfaction with their friends or to wild parties, it can become a threat to the campus because dissatisfied customers' behaviour can change (Cho & Song, 2012). Therefore, based on the data above, researched campuses can do several things to increase student satisfaction with academic services.



First, higher education institutions need to improve student satisfaction by improving academic service management quality in general. One of the lowest scores in student satisfaction is related to employee attitudes in communicating with students. Most students feel that employees are not friendly in serving students. Students feel when employees serve them in a variety of existing academic services, ranging from registering new students to graduation registrations, they treat students less well. Indeed, not all employees or staff understand that students are customers who must be served well (Lomas, 2007). Seeing this phenomenon, institutions need to take steps to improve employee attitudes by providing special treatment to employees to change their attitudes towards students (Bommer et al., 2005). This process can be carried out by institutions by, for example, training them on service quality management. It's not easy to change the attitudes and behaviours of these employees. However, with the right change method and good understanding, the change will be realised, so that employees can provide services with excellence (Jamali, 2005).

Second, institutions need to increase the dimensions that are felt by students to be unsatisfactory, for example, campus comfort and safety. Internal repairs need to be done first, then followed by external repairs by establishing excellent communication with students. Leaders can minimise the amount of student dissatisfaction, for example, by holding periodic communication. Interaction with students can be done by providing an excellent communication forum for student complaints and quickly handling them (Allen, 1987).

Third, academic advisors need to provide time under working hours and inform the consultation schedule to students. Academic advisory or academic supervision is one crucial component in higher education services. Therefore this service must receive considerable attention from management to always be improved (Strang, 2010). Through this service, students get directions related to academic achievement achieved in the semester. Academic advisors should sign the student papers when they are going to register at the beginning of the semester and take the time to be able to discuss it with them outside the usual time. Academic advisors and students should be close administratively and emotionally, so students feel reluctant when going to do things that deviate or feel guilty when academic achievement declines. Academic advisors are a substitute for parents in directing students to complete their studies with maximum performance.

Fourth, lecturers need to choose teaching methods that can accommodate individual differences, and university managers need to arrange schedules that are oriented to student needs. Most students are not satisfied with the monotonous and conventional teaching methods of lecturers. Changes in the world of technology and information require lecturers to increase their capacity, so they can use it to improve services to students. Although conventional methods can still be used, if their use is not monotonous and varied with other ways that are more up to date, students are eager to learn and not feel bored. Online learning,



lecturing with online systems, the use of e-libraries and other e-learning programs need to be improved so that students can follow them over long distances (Lunze et al., 2001). One factor that makes students disappointed with the regular lecture system is students who cannot attend lectures; they are considered absent and will get poor grades. Even though they could not participate because they could not leave their main job at school or work, lecturers should be aware of this to hold lectures with an online system (Kim & Bonk, 2006). Students can present their work online and be followed by other students present in class or in other places that they cannot attend for obvious reasons. Video call group applications such as Zoom, Novelme, and other video conferences can help students access lectures (Torres-Gastelú et al., 2015). The lecturers can also upload lecture material on Youtube, Instagram, and other social media. When students are not present in conventional lectures, they can access it through social media, so they do not miss information.

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