

EFFECT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON STUDENT SATISFACTION AMONG BLENDED LEARNING MODEL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

This research aims to test the model whether there is a gap between expectations and perceptions of the quality of services in the blended learning process of Widya Dharma University Klaten Republic of Indonesia (Unwidha) students during the Covid-19 pandemic. The model used is the Service Quality (Servqual) test. Research design uses quantitative methods. The hypothesis was formulated using the Importance ServQual Model test (Cronin & Taylor, 2002). The research population is all Unwidha students who have received blended learning services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The sampling technique for respondents was through purposive sampling of 120 students in six faculties and 16 study programs in Unwidha. The test results concluded that all dimensions still have gaps where the empathy dimension has the largest gap. Quality improvement should start on the dimension that has the biggest gap and then continue on other dimensions to improve the quality of learning and student satisfaction. With the improvement of the quality of learning services, the competitive advantage of Unwidha institution will be created in the future.

Keywords: service quality, blended learning, student satisfaction

1. Introduction

The global health crisis in 2020 with the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the learning model on all fronts. The internet, network learning technology, information technology and computers with all their advantages and disadvantages have become the main learning media. The behavior and attitude of students changed completely. Therefore, the lecturers' attitude and approach in providing learning materials also should change. Fundamental changes occur in not only how lecturers carry out the teaching and learning process but also what lecturers learn and what students can learn. Lecturers and students must be conformable in setting targets for achieving the knowledge, skills and attitudes that must be developed. With limited time and intensity compared to face-to-face learning, lecturers must sort out the main material that is a priority to be conveyed to students. Stakeholders must be able to rearrange the curriculum, learning achievement targets according to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis conditions. So that all parties must be able to adapt to the new normal era in the future (Pranoto, 2020).

It becomes a concern for all parties if with limited time and intensity the lecturer cuts the content of curriculum and learning outcomes during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. It is feared that cutting curriculum content will reduce the quality of learning content and the quality of outputs and reduce the quality of services in all aspects which can lead to a decrease in student service satisfaction.

Efforts to spur universities to continue to achieve quality excellence need to be continued. The implementation of the quality management system is pursued through a process approach that emphasizes several criteria, including a) fulfilling all requirements, the need to always consider the process in generating added value, b) obtaining process performance results effectively and making continuous improvements based on clear measures (Rangkuti, 2013).

Private Universities are currently experiencing major challenges in providing higher education services. In the era of globalization, with the permitting of operational permits for foreign university branches to Indonesia through a combination of online and offline modern learning models, this is a real challenge that must be faced. The front line of university units, namely lecturers and education staff, are faced with difficult choices. On the

one hand, higher education institutions are required to provide qualified, fair and prevalent education services, on the other hand, a total adjustment to the online learning model is needed, which really requires infrastructure readiness that requires large capital investments. Increasing the cost of education in a recession with the current pandemic coupled with stakeholder demands for a comprehensive improvement in the quality of higher education services is an inevitability.

Some Private Universities have different qualities from one another related to the readiness of learning infrastructure. This readiness has led to higher education institutions that are able to carry out learning through a full online model and some through a blended learning model. At this time, at Widya Dharma University there are still often problems with service quality and the discipline of lecturers and academic staff in carrying out the teaching and learning process. From the description of the background above, the basic question arises "Are Unwidha students satisfied with the quality of blended learning during the Covid-19 pandemic and what strategies can the academic community do in the coming period in presenting quality learning in the new normal era? "

Research to measure service quality and satisfaction with the emergence of gaps in expectations with the reality of the services provided has been studied by (Parasuraman et al., 1998) or to measure the difference between expectation service and perceived service. Dimensions in Service Quality include five categories. Five categories of education service quality dimensions can be in the form of **physical evidence**, this dimension includes physical learning facilities for lecture buildings, room air conditioning facilities, learning equipment both hardware and software, learning LCDs, physical appearance of lecturers and education staff, online learning communication facilities along with bandwidth capacity for internet access. **Reliability**, this dimension measures the service ability of lecturers and education staff to be carried out immediately, accurately and satisfactorily. **Responsiveness**, this dimension measures lecturers and education staff to help students and immediately respond to provide satisfactory services. **Assurance**, this dimension measures the knowledge, abilities, manners and character of the lecturers, education staff can be trusted and free from doubts **Empathy**, this dimension measures the ease with which lecturers have relationships with students, good communication, personal attention and understand the students' needs. This dimension can be used as an analogy such as the manager of a higher education service institution acts as a student or a party who needs services

The Servqual concept rests on a model called the Conceptual Model of Service Quality, which measures the gaps that might appear. Among the five gaps, the last gap between the expectations of users of higher education service institutions and the reality provided by the institution becomes the starting point for the first quality improvement activity. Furthermore, improvements are made to the value of the next gap.

Research measuring the quality of Higher Education services in several studies using the Servqual model had been carried out by several researchers in recent years, (Kanakana, 2014) and (Sweis et al., 2016) but obtained some findings that have not consistent. The most important dimension is responsiveness, which has the biggest gap felt by students. (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2013) stated that the dimensions that have the greatest impact on service quality are empathy and tangibles. (Kanakana, 2014) stated that the dimensions of tangibles and empathy have the greatest impact on the quality of service perceived by students. (Rezaei, et al., 2017) stated that the most important dimensions are assurance and tangible. (Sweis et al., 2016) explained that the Servqual dimension still needs to be combined with several dimensions of the latest research findings.

From several studies, it was found that the concept of measuring the service quality of higher education institutions using the Servqual scale can be used in several activities. Question instruments in service quality variables can be adapted according to the application and research objectives to be achieved. (Thurau et al., 2001) examined student confirmation of the quality of higher education services consisting of several aspects, including: (a) learning structure is in the form of physical learning facilities, the ability of lecturers and educational staff involved, (b) the process includes all activities academic administration, the quality of mid-semester examination activities, the quality of the final examination activities, the quality of practicum and the concern of the education staff to the problems that arise in students (c) learning outcomes include student

evaluations of the benefits of the learning model applied by the lecturer to students to face the challenges of competition in the future.

The concept of blended learning is a concept of combining traditional face-to-face learning and online learning where the best elements of online learning are combined with regard to flexibility and accessibility, as well as the best elements of classroom learning such as lively atmosphere, synchronous and dynamic interactions in face-to-face learning. (Kemendikbud, 2019).

The success of blended learning has several main criteria that must be carried out by lecturers in order to be successful, including the readiness of system facilities and careful planning, development of complete and interesting content for students and periodic evaluations related to the learning process (Setiawan et al., 2019).

The selection of the model to be carried out depends on the readiness of human resource competition, the readiness of learning infrastructure both software and hardware owned by each higher education institution.

Service quality is very important for higher education institutions. As an organizational entity, higher education institutions are required to prioritize superior service quality as a form of management responsibility towards stakeholders. With the quality of education services getting better in the midst of increasingly fierce competition, students are expected to be able to evaluate the reputation of the university concerned. A good reputation will bring the university to continue to exist for a long time.

From previous research studies, researchers try to formulate the Servqual model in the case of Unwidha higher education services on five dimensions including physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy with modifications to the five aspects of learning in the Covid-19 era through a blended model. By knowing the biggest gaps in research findings, it is possible to immediately reform the learning system at Unwidha as soon as possible. The basis of quality improvement will increase Unwidha's excellence and competitive competence compared to competitors. All of which will make Unwidha have the excellence of the best higher education institution governance system in the national arena.

2. Method

Method of collecting data

The survey method is used in research to obtain information directly to students receiving blended learning services through questionnaires distributed. The survey method is a research method by taking a sample from the observed population through a questionnaire as the main instrument (Singarimbun & Effendi, 1989).

Research data taken

Primary data of respondents is data taken from students directly. In this research activity, a number of students were taken from 16 study programs in the Unwidha Klaten environment who had received blended learning model services for one year ago. From this response, information can be obtained from students' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the quality of learning services that have been provided.

Secondary data is in the form of data obtained from searching for journal information via the internet, library sources and other sources relevant to the topic of research activities.

Data collection technique

The distribution of questionnaires to students was carried out randomly to all students to find out information on satisfaction from the quality of blended learning in one latter year. The search for literature studies, social media sources continues to be carried out to obtain the latest and relevant information from research activities.

Sampling Method

The population is the entire object of observation to be studied. The population in the study were all Unwidha students who had experienced the quality of blended learning. The students who were taken as samples in this research were 120 respondents. The sampling technique was carried out purposively.

Data Analysis

Quantitative tests were carried out in research activities in the form of testing the validity and reliability of item instruments and confirmation tests of the ServQual perceptual mathematical model so that an analysis can be drawn from quantitative calculations.

Data analysis method

Item Validity and Reliability

Validity test is a test to analyze the ability of the questionnaire to be able to measure what is to be measured in the sense that the items are valid. Reliability test is used to test whether the instruments in the questionnaire can describe the existence of consistency or appear constancy (Sekaran, 2017).

The research validity test is usually done by the Pearson product moment correlation and corrections are made through the part whole test (Hair et al., 2018). In this research reliability test, the Hoyt model was used with the help of the SPSS 21 statistical programming tool.

Service Quality Model Confirmation Test

The model test was carried out using the ServQual perceptual gap test (Cronin & Taylor, 2002) where the formula was used:

$$I_{kj} = (P_{ij} - E_{ij})$$

The meaning of the coefficient I is the results obtained whether students are satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of service, P is the performance of service quality and E is the expectation of the quality of services provided by the institution.

3. Results

The calculation of the primary data test obtained 15 statement items related to the concept of blended learning service quality carried out by the Unwidha institution, all of which were calculated r values greater than r table so that the statement items are stated valid. From the reliability test, the Cronbach alpha value of the statement of the expectation factor is 0.690 and the performance factor is 0.921. This value is above the minimum Cronbach alpha value of 0.6 so that in the reliability test the item status is stated reliable. The total quantification of the average of confirmation value of the quality of blended learning services as a whole obtained a number of - 115.75 points. The maximum or minimum confirmation value with the number of student respondents as many as 120 people can be achieved by multiplying 4 points. From the calculation of the quantitative test, the maximum satisfaction index value is 480 points while the maximum dissatisfaction index is -480 points.

The maximum confirmation value can be achieved with the assumption that students have minimal expectations of the quality of service that will be received and feel the actual performance maximally from the perceived service quality. On the other hand, the minimum confirmation value is obtained with the assumption that students have maximum expectations for the perceived quality of blended learning, but in reality students feel that the actual learning performance is minimal for the perceived service quality.

Quantitative calculations of the model can explain the value of confirmation of the quality of blended learning services perceived by 120 Unwidha students as respondents. As for the distance interval, a number of 960 points is obtained, the number is then divided into 4 confirmation level scales, namely very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, satisfied and very satisfied. From the 4 student preference category scales, the value of the interval range between categories is 240 points.

Figure 1 shows the confirmation results of the average of Unwidha students from the quality of blended learning services during the Covid-19 pandemic:

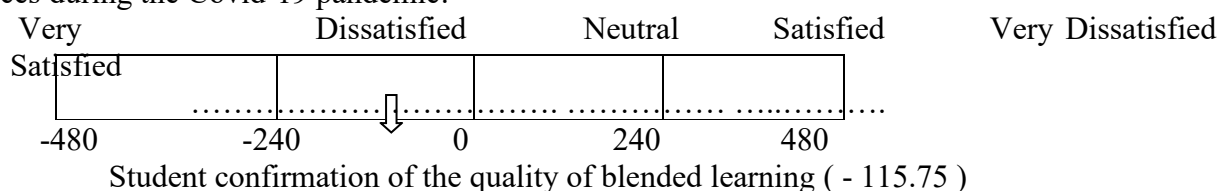


Figure1. Student confirmation

From the quantitative data presented above, it can be explained that the average of confirmation value of Unwidha students on the blended learning model on the five dimensions of Servqual is obtained by a number of -115.75 points. The position on the line is in the dissatisfied category. This value clearly shows the position

of student confirmation of service quality is on the left side of the neutral point line (0) so that the service quality is stated that blended learning model during the pandemic at Unwidha does not satisfy the students yet. From the calculation of the respondents' primary data, the empathy dimension has the largest negative gap value of -180.27 points, successively followed by physical evidence of -160.26 points, assurance of -90.50 points, reliability dimension of - 80.00 points and the last dimension of responsiveness - 67.50 points. The empathy dimension relates to how much lecturers give individual attention to students and education staff treat students with full attention, prioritize student interests and how far lecturers understand student needs during the Covid-19 pandemic through the blended learning model. The dimension that has the largest gap value must be addressed as soon as possible to improve the quality of service followed by improvements to the dimension that has the second, third and so on.

4. Discussion

The research findings above support the findings (Martono, 2021) and (Novinvar et al., 2011) where the empathy dimension has the largest gap value. There is hope for Unwidha students for lecturers and academic staff who are able to give attention and feelings to students sincerely, are willing to listen and to respect each student's ideas and opinions, able to explain guidelines, academic policy rules, lecture materials through blended learning model patiently and properly, so far this has not been fulfilled.

There is a meta-analysis finding by (Argaheni, 2020) that with online learning it was found that 66% of students experienced moderate and severe stress caused by stressors, namely difficulty in understanding material online and concerns that each lecturer and student had the potential to be infected of Covid-19. Feelings of worry about being infected, the increasing sense of putting health, personal and family safety first, causes a decrease in individual empathy for other parties, especially for someone who had survived the Covid-19 virus.

5. Conclusion

Conclusion from the results of the study includes:

Confirmation of the quality of blended learning during the Covid-19 pandemic at Unwidha has an average gap for the five dimensions of service quality minus 115.75 points. This means that the average of student dissatisfaction with the five dimensions of service quality still provides a gap of 24 percent. To raise service quality points to a value equal to zero or in other terms to minimal satisfaction, the academic community must be able to cover student disappointment by an average of 24 percent of the five dimensions of Servqual's service quality. The conclusion that can be drawn is that Unwidha managers have not been able to provide excellent service to students in blended learning during the Covid-19 pandemic conditions towards a degree of satisfaction with service quality.

Quantitative test of respondents' data from five dimensions, empathy gives the largest gap value of - 180.27 points, successively followed by physical evidence of -160.26 points, assurance of 90.50 points, reliability dimension of - 80.00 points and the last dimension of responsiveness - 67.50 points. The Unwidha party must prioritize the first improvement on the dimension that has the largest gap value followed by improvement of the service quality dimension on the next gap.

From the conclusion, suggestions are made:

The Unwidha management immediately improves service quality in the empathy dimension, followed by the need for investment in software and hardware infrastructure as soon as possible because this dimension gives students the greatest disappointment in the quality of blended learning services.

Surveys on the quality of learning services must be carried out periodically, the Covid-19 pandemic still has the potential to continue due to slow community immunity as a result of the slowness of overall vaccination and virus mutations. For future learning models, operationally blended and online learning model innovations will become mandatory for higher education institutions. Institutions that are late in implementing modern

learning innovations will be left behind by increasingly competitive competition among universities in the new normal era in the future.

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