



The Service Quality Level of Higher Educational Organizations: An Institutional Strengthening Based View

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The development of education aims to improve the quality of educational services in order to escalate the satisfaction of every user of educational services, particularly the students and the educational outcome generally. In doing so, the improvement of the quality of the educational services providers, e.g. higher education, must be carried out properly by both the government and private organizations. However, this study finds in the literature, that there are less studies explains the service quality inside higher educational institutions with the approach of institutional strengthening to disclose the influence of institutional strengthening on service quality of higher educational institutions, particularly, the institutions from developing countries. As such, the objective of this study is constructed through the emphasis on the role of institutional strengthening on the quality and of public educational service, especially the higher educational public institutions. This study applies quantitative method through the questionnaire distributions and statistical measurement approach. Using the simple random sampling, eventually, this study obtains 93 returned questionnaires that meet the requirement to be tested statistically further. As theoretical

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implication, this study finds that institutional strengthening plays a significant role on service quality development. This study also recommends a constructive guideline for business owners, especially SMEs to enhance their marketing strategy as for the managerial contribution.

Keywords: Institutional strengthening; service quality; institutional relationship; public administration; institutional priority.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of Tolofari [1] explains that the educational services play a critical role in order to develop and/or improve the human resources and eventually the success of educational services may bring a positive impact, e.g. a better quality of educational services outcome such as a highly competitive, well-managed, skillful human resources either for national and/or global job markets [2,3]. Likewise, in Indonesia, especially in South Sulawesi province, the development of national education aims to improve the quality of educational services in order to escalate the satisfaction of every user of educational services, particularly the students [4]. In doing so, the improvement of the quality of the educational services providers, e.g. higher education, must be carried out properly by both the government and private organizations [5]. Based on the annual report of the 9th region of Indonesian higher education service institute, which covers South, Southeast, and West Sulawesi province, this study finds that the educational service of higher education institutions has increased under several circumstances. For example, in 2020, there has been an increasing trend on (a) quality; and (b) innovation of higher education institutions academic service from 20% to 25.27% [6].

However, the literature does not include in-detail the role of several indicators, especially the institutional strengthening, in influencing the quality development of the educational service in South Sulawesi. In addition, the study of Anwarudin and Maryani [7] denotes that the role of institutional strengthening is considered to be vital for every organization, given that institutional strengthening is one of the crucial tools for organization in adjusting, reforming, as well as modifying the vital policies, rules, procedures, work mechanism, and so on that eventually bring the organization to become well-organized and well-managed in terms of skills, knowledge, as

well as, character development of every organization member, which may later bring a better and/or well-improved quality and innovation of public educational service, especially in the context of higher education institution. Hence, as the literature indicates that there is a lack in the body of knowledge in explaining the role institutional strengthening on service quality in Makassar region, this study then aims to conduct a research, which emphasizes the role of institutional strengthening on the quality and innovation of public educational service, especially the higher education public institutions.

1.1 The Policy Quality in Public Administration Perspective

Literature explains that there are two important stages within the quality evolution in the public sector, namely: (a) quality in the sense of respect of procedures; and (b) quality in the sense of customer satisfaction [2, 8-11]. Later, the quality in public sector, especially inside the higher education public institutions, is focused on the policy perspective, especially the important three policy quality indicators, namely: policy making, policy design, and policy implementation [12]. The policy quality then eventually affects the entire public organization in offering product and/or service for the people [13-15]. The policy quality can be measured through several features, which are: the direct evidence of the policy, the reliability of the policy, the responsiveness of the policy, and the assurance of the policy [7]. According to Sabatier and Mazmanian [15], if the applied policy is always in the continuous evaluation, the organization then is on the right track to improve its applied policy. The continuous evaluation includes the review and examination on: (a) systematic monitoring on applied policy; (b) planning and managing the potential change on applied policy; and (c) the target or objective of applied policy, which has been set previously [16,17].

Table 1. Research questions and hypotheses

Questions	Detail
1	Does institutional relationships affect the quality of educational services?
2	Does institutional priorities affect the quality of educational services?
3	Does institutional actions affect the quality of educational services?
4	Does institutional strengthening simultaneously affect the service quality?
Hypothesis	Detail
H _{o1}	Institutional relationships affect the quality of educational services.
H _{o2}	Institutional priorities affect the quality of educational services.
H _{o3}	Institutional actions affect the quality of educational services.
H _{o4}	Institutional strengthening simultaneously affects the service quality.

(Data Produced, 2023)

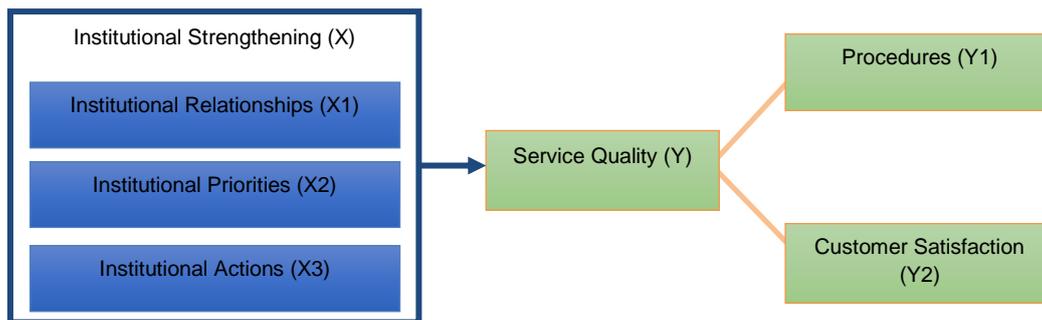


Fig. 1. Research conceptual framework

(Data Produced, 2023)

1.2 Institutional Strengthening

Based on the public administration perspective, the institutional strengthening theory from the study of Helmke and Levitsky [18] and Winter [19], suggest that the institution essentially plays a vital role as a stepping stone unit for formulating, implementing, and evaluating a policy that is primarily based on organization’s objective, which is designed to be achieved further. Within the context of policy, institutional is considered as one of vital units in government’s public administration, that plays an important role in carrying out a formulation, implementation, and evaluation of various programs of public administration. Subsequently, according to Winter [19], the efficient and effective institutional strengthening, that has been implemented to support various applied priority programs, however, tend to deal with a change. The change can be from, for example, the dynamic of organisasi perangkat daerah (OPD) or local government agency’s capability in creating a proper public administration management that is based on the three patterns of institutional need, namely: (1) institutional relationships; (2) institutional priorities; and (3) institutional actions [7,18,19].

1.3 Research Questions and Hypothesis

As shown in Fig. 1, this study initially explores the role independent variable, which is the institutional strengthening (X) that has 3 indicators, namely: institutional relationships (X1); institutional priorities (X2); and institutional actions (X3), on the service quality level simultaneously. Moreover, this study then aims to discover the partial effect of all institutional strengthening (X) indicators on the service quality (Y) dimensions, which are: the procedures of service quality (Y1) and the customer satisfaction of service quality (Y2).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study applies quantitative method, which is through the questionnaire distributions and several statistical measurement approaches. The distribution of questionnaires is conducted that is aimed for the unit analysis of this study, which is, the higher educational institution that is located in Makassar, Indonesia. In order to explore the role of independent variable on dependent variable of this study, an analysis of descriptive is applied, which is suggested by Sekaran and Bougie [20], through the application of several statistical tests,

namely: (1) validity-reliability test; (2) hypothesis test or partial effect test; and (3) simultaneous test or F-test. Moreover, this study has 107 samples, which are from the higher educational institutions' responses on questionnaires. Using the simple random sampling, eventually, this study obtains 93 returned questionnaires over 107 distributed, as such, this study is then supported to analyze such 93 returned questionnaires that meet the requirement to be tested statistically further.

2.1 The Test of Validity and Reliability, Partial Effect, and F-Test

The validity test is useful in measuring the accuracy level as well as the actual content of the research [11,14,20]. Also, the test of reliability is also beneficial in identifying the final measured-score consistency level of similar group. The Cronbach Alpha score should be > 0.60, if the variable is aimed to be reliable [20]. Furthermore, for the hypothesis test, the study of Haeruddin, Natsir [13] explains that if the significance score of a variable is lower than 0.05, the research hypothesis is accepted. Likewise, for the F-test, as recommended by Mustafa, Akbar [11], if the results of F-test show the score of significant is not more than or equal to 0.05, then the independent variables significantly and affects simultaneously the dependent variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Test of Validity and Reliability

As recommended by the study of Sekaran and Bougie [20], the r-count score is an instrument to

express whether a variable is valid or not, and if the score of r-count is higher than r-table, it can be concluded that the variable is valid, and if the score of r-count is lower than r-table, it can be said that the variable is invalid. Moreover, according to the findings of this study's validity test, which are shown in Table 2, all of the variables have positive r-count scores, and each variable's and indicator's r-count score is higher than r-table. As such, all variables in this study are valid and are supported statistically to be tested for further analysis.

Additionally, Table 3 displays the reliability test results of this study. According to Table 3, every variable in this study is reliable because each reliability test result demonstrates that it has a Cronbach's Alpha score that is higher than 0.60, given that based on the rule of thumb from the study of Sekaran and Bougie [20], the variable is reliable if its Cronbach's Alpha score is higher than 0.60. For instance, variable X in Table 3 has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.735 and variable Y is 0.790. As such, this study implies that all of this study's variables are suitable with the criteria of further statistical analysis.

3.2 Hypothesis Test

In this study, the partial effects of institutional relationships, institutional priorities, and institutional actions on service quality are scrutinized in order to disclose if there is significant/insignificant relationship between 3 indicators of institutional strengthening and service quality. The results of the T-test are displayed in Table 4.

Table 2. The validity test results

Variables	r-table	r-count
X1	0.338	0.551
X2	0.338	0.427
X3	0.338	0.692
Y1	0.338	0.914
Y2	0.338	0.538

(Data produced, 2023)

Table 3. The reliability test results

Variable	Dimension	C. Alpha
Institutional Strengthening (X)	Institutional Relationships	0.735
	Institutional Priorities	
	Institutional Actions	
Service Quality (Y)	Procedures	0.790
	Customer Satisfaction	

(Data produced, 2023)

Table 4. The t-test results

Coefficients^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Std. Coefs.	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	28.351	7.85		3.61	.000
Ins. Relationships	.447	.009	.503	4.97	.015
Ins. Priorities	.239	.063	.416	3.79	.038
Ins. Actions	.511	.085	.622	6.01	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service Quality
(Data produced, 2023)

Table 5. The institutional strengthening on procedures

Institutional Relationships	Institutional Priorities	Institutional Actions
• Procedures	(1) Service procedural policy	(1) Determining the service procedural structure, e.g. product knowledge of service officer.
	(2) Service time policy	(2) The improvement on service time procedures, e.g. less waiting time for student in related service requirements.
	(3) Service legal policy	(3) The legal integration in service system, e.g. fraud in service.
	(4) Service transparency policy	(4) The enhancement of transparency on service, e.g. clear service information for students.

(Data produced, 2023)

Table 6. The institutional strengthening on customer satisfaction

Institutional Relationships	Institutional Priorities	Institutional Actions
• Customer Satisfaction	(1) Customer satisfaction orientation policy	(1) The focus on the customer's expectations fulfilment, e.g. the evaluation on product quality and price. (2) The enhancement of affective commitments for the customers. (3) The improvement of service responsiveness. (4) The advancement of service availability, reliability, and assurance.

(Data produced, 2023)

Table 7. The simultaneous test results

ANOVA^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	812.373	3	2700.791	25.065	.000 ^b
Residual	972.335	90	10.804		
Total	1784.708	93			

a. Dependent Variable: Service Quality

b. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Strengthening
(Data produced, 2023)

According to Haeruddin, Natsir [13], if the significance score of a variable is lower than 0.05, the research hypothesis is accepted, i.e. H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected, *vice versa*. As shown in Table 4, eventually, the results of

hypothesis test show that institutional relationships (X1) has 0.015 significance score, and hence, the results of this study disclose that the institutional relationships play significant role positively on service quality because the

institutional relationships (X1) significance score is lower than 0.05. As such, H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected.

Moreover, the results in Table 4 also show that the significance score of institutional priorities (X2) is 0.038, in other words, such score is lower than 0.05, and consequently, this study concludes that H2 is accepted. Likewise, for the institutional actions, the result in Table 4 shows that H3 is accepted because the institutional actions (X3) significance score is lower than 0.05.

Based on Table 4, the formulation is generated by this study, namely:

$$Y = a + b1X1 + b2X2 + b3X3$$
$$Y = 28.351 + 0.447X1 + 0.239X2 + 0.511X3$$

In line with the formula above, this study then recommends that:

- a) The constant score is 28.351 and this illustrates that if there is only one variable, which is institutional strengthening with its 3 indicators (institutional relationships, priorities, and actions), then the Beta unstandardized coefficients score of service quality is 28.351.
- b) As this study finds that the b1 score in the formula is 0.351, as such, this study suggests that if there is an increasing score on institutional relationships for 1 level, then the score of service quality also increases for 0.447, assumed that X2 and X3 are constant.
- c) As this study discovers that the score of b2 is 0.239 in the formula, this study therefore concludes, assumed that X1 and X3 are constant, that the score of service quality increases for 0.239 if there is an increasing score on institutional priorities for 1 level.
- d) As this study finds that the b3 score in the formula is 0.511, as such, this study suggests that if there is an increasing score on institutional relationships for 1 level, then the score of service quality also increases for 0.511, assumed that X1 and X2 are constant.

Tables 5 and 6 are explained in detail in the conclusion and recommendation section.

3.3 Simultaneous Test

This study applies the simultaneous test or F-test for exploring and determining the level of

significance of institutional strengthening simultaneously on service quality. The following Table 7 demonstrates the result of simultaneous test of this study.

As recommended by Mustafa, Akbar [11], if the results of F-test show the significant score is not more than or equal to 0.05, then the independent variable significantly affects the dependent variable. This study then implies that H4 is accepted and H0 is rejected because based on Table 7 of this study, the results show that the significance level score of institutional strengthening is 0.000 i.e. such score is lower than 0.05.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Conclusion

In line with the results that are found in this study, this study then concludes that institutional strengthening has a significant role in influencing the service quality, especially in the higher educational institutions contexts in Makassar, Indonesia. Furthermore, this study indicates that the role of institutional relationships on service procedures, as shown in Table 5, plays significant part. This could be seen, especially in the activity of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling the service procedure quality. For example, a service procedural policy, which is an institutional priority, is conducted through the determination of the service procedural structure, the improvement on service time procedures, the integration of legal in the service system, and the enhancement of transparency on service. The explanations above also support several prior studies, such as the study of Browne, Kaldenberg [16] that denotes that institutional strengthening becomes one of vital factors in influencing the development of service quality level. For example, the role of institutional strengthening in encouraging the willingness of customer to recommend the college and the educational experiences to other people.

Moreover, this study finds that the service quality through the customer satisfaction is also influenced by 3 institutional strengthening's indicators. As shown in Table 6, customer satisfaction dimension is considered plays important role on the institutional relationships. This can be seen in the focus of higher educational institutions on the customer's

expectations fulfilment, e.g. the evaluation on product quality and price, the enhancement of affective commitments for the customers, the improvement of service responsiveness, and the advancement of service availability, reliability, and assurance. The indications above are also similar with the previous study of Bahua, Arsyad [17], that discloses that the empowerment of peasant communities by strengthening institutional can be performed well based on the potential and capability of the farmers in satisfying and assuring the customer.

4.2 Recommendation

Based on the research conclusion above, this study offers several important recommendations, namely:

- a) Institutional strengthening is one of the most important and crucial elements to uphold as well as improve the level of service quality for organization, including higher educational institutions in Makassar.
- b) Following the above explanation, for the theoretical contribution, this study recommends that the role of institutional strengthening on service quality inside higher educational institutions in Makassar is crucial. As such, based on the findings of this study, this study highly advises that it is important for the higher educational institutions, especially in Makassar, to improve, develop, and/or enhance the institutional strengthening in order to come up with a better result on their service quality development and/or improvement.
- c) Likewise, in order to fulfill the managerial contribution, the findings of this study are considered to become a guideline for the higher educational institution, a business owner, or even the government in order to plan, organize, actuate, evaluate, and control the strategical policy in improving the whole institution structure as well as the service quality, that eventually brings a positive impact on all parties, especially the prospective benefits of income and/or image for higher educational institutions.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that they have no known competing financial interests or non-financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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