

THE EFFECT OF QUALITY OF INSTRUCTOR SERVICE ON STUDENT LOYALTY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF STUDENT SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT: *With the rapid increase in the number of tertiary institutions, management, and administration need to entice more students to be loyal in order to market their program offerings. This study then focused on determining the mediating role of student satisfaction towards the effect of the quality of instructor service on the loyalty of the students. A total of 1,200 college students were surveyed using an adapted questionnaire. There were four hypotheses tested in this study analyzed using a predictive-correlational research design and partial least squares–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). This study revealed that the quality of instructor services is statistically and positively related to student loyalty. The mediation analysis showed that student satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between the quality of instructor service to the loyalty of the students.*

Keywords: instructor service; student loyalty; student satisfaction; PLS-SEM

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the education sector has been rapidly evolving. This is primordially brought about by globalization and digital advances. In an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy, higher education is becoming a crucial driver of economic competitiveness. And with the increase in the number of emergent higher education institutions, intense competition has surfaced [1]. Colleges and universities across the globe have been putting utmost importance and emphasis on attaining the various needs and expectations of their students, as their primary clientele [2]. More to that, students tend to be attracted to the institutions to which they are satisfied with the services provided [3].

An educational institution finds its strength in robust student loyalty and a pool of quality teaching faculty. According to a number of studies, student loyalty is considered significant in higher education institutions [4]. With this, various types of research have been made vis-à-vis student loyalty in universities [5, 6] which have seized a comprehensive view of its numerous antecedents. However, most of these antecedents would just revolve around service quality, student satisfaction, and image [7, 8, 9]. Moreover, the quality of instructor service in this context is recognized as a key measure that provides a concrete indication of instructional efficiency such as strategies that would affect positive impacts on student satisfaction [10].

Needless to say, it's understandable that many university professors were unable to see themselves as part of a service industry. When this misguided idea is introduced in academia, it is likely to lead to problems. Furthermore, faculty and staff in a university appear to oppose an institutional change to a service-oriented model because they believe it is not their responsibility to provide service to students.

This study pursues developing a conceptual framework for the quality of instructor service, student satisfaction, and loyalty. Considering that there have been no studies yet about these three constructs in the Philippines, this would be timely research. The specific objective of the study is to analyze and validate how student satisfaction mediates the relationship between the quality of instructor services towards student loyalty. It also presents the extent of the relationship for the constructed model, and the multifarious implications of the

results as utilized for the discussion of the theory development and management.

Research Hypotheses and Framework

Student Loyalty

Since students are the prime clientele in the academe, student loyalty is given utmost importance and attention. Hennig-Thurau et al. [11] remarked that there are two (2) components that comprise student loyalty: the attitudinal component and the behavioral component. The first consists of *cognition* or the attitude towards the acquired information of the institution; *affect* or the liking towards the growing satisfaction of the institution; and, *conation* or the intention, commitment, and motivation of the students in registering at the institution [7]. The latter relates to the intention and decision-making of the students with regard to their desired actions and the frequency of continuous patronage [5, 12]. And in a simpler sense, student loyalty is established through willful recommendations and committed patronage of the same university despite the presence of various choices.

Educational research that focused on student loyalty referred to this as the extent that the students would have their allegiance and connection at the same institution even after graduation [13]. Determining student loyalty in the higher education sector aids administrators in developing appropriate strategies that increase, build, develop, and maintain strong long-term connections with both current and former students [7]. This necessitates forging strong bonds with students, who will ultimately provide the financial foundation for potential university activities. An educational institution profits from having loyal students not only when they are formal attendees, but also when they are former students.

Quality of Instructor Service to Students

Teaching is crucial in higher education institutions. Despite the fact that quality teaching covers a wide range of meanings and principles that are constantly changing, there is an increasing number of initiatives (actions, techniques, and policies) aimed at improving teaching quality [14]. The vast majority of programs aimed at improving teaching quality are empirical in nature and are tailored to the needs of individual institutions at any given time. In view of changing contexts in higher education, quality teaching must be considered dynamically.

University teachers play an important role in higher education in terms of understanding and improving the teaching and

learning process. Teaching is described as assisting someone in learning something by providing information about it. The act of giving directions or directing students in a classroom is referred to as "teaching." In a broader sense, it encompasses interactions between teachers and students, lesson planning and scheduling, gathering required "teaching aids," as well as tasks such as instruction assessment and communication [10]. A good university instructor was one who regularly delivered results that were either directly or indirectly related to the student's learning. It took a long time to achieve instructional excellence. A successful teacher must have a basic understanding of his or her subject. He must stay current in his profession and be able to effectively convey his information to others at a comprehension level. He must be familiar with psychological concepts and be able to put them into practice in the classroom [14].

The level of help students receive from their professors does not always match their expectations. According to Emanuel and Adams [10], in order to fully appreciate the importance of the program, students must engage in the service delivery process. However, their interpretation is their truth, and those who want to provide excellent service should be aware of this. It's also possible that students' standards are excessively high. If this is the case, teachers will need to stress what standards are appropriate for their particular course. It's still unclear if this is a situation of extravagant outlooks, erroneous assumptions, or a precise evaluation of poor service. Hennig-Thurau et al., [11] remarked that the quality of teaching was crucial for students' loyalty.

Student Satisfaction

In developing parts of the world, several studies have been performed to assess the satisfaction of students in tertiary institutions. Several factors have been described as having the ability to influence student satisfaction with various university education services. Student retention was once thought to be an indicator of satisfaction of the students with the programs on their campus, and thus, implicitly, of university education efficiency [15].

Student satisfaction can support higher education institutions (HEIs) in a variety of ways. Students who are satisfied are less likely to discontinue their schooling [16]; have a higher tendency to receive higher grades [17]; and have greater chances to spread constructive thoughts and words, and work in partnership with the organization after graduation [18].

Hill et al. [19] discovered that the quality of the discussion in a classroom, the quality of interaction provided to students s, and instructor-student associations in the classroom were the most significant factors in determining what quality education meant to students. Similarly, Ahmad [20] posited that the general view of the university, the general view of the curriculum's quality, teachers' competence and enthusiasm in their area of study, the ease of access to IT facilities, and the potential of the degree broadening learners' careers are by far the most significant predictors of student satisfaction. In the same way, DeShields Jr, Kara, and Kaynak [21] established that the instructors' success and training were the most important influences in determining the consistency of students' university involvement, which contributed to satisfaction. Furthermore, the excellence of teachers, instruction, materials, and other support-to-learning briefs

prior to attending university were all important aspects considered in determining student satisfaction. All of these studies focus on specific aspects of educational offerings that influence students' satisfaction with their education and, as a result, their loyalty to the institution.

Hypotheses Development

There have been various studies concerning the association between service quality and student loyalty as mediated by student satisfaction [8]. However, there were only a handful of scholarly investigations that focus on the relationship between the quality of instructor service and student loyalty as mediated by student satisfaction. With this, it is hypothesized that:

H₁. The quality of Instructor Service to Students positively affects Student Satisfaction.

H₂. The quality of Instructor Service to Students positively affects Student Loyalty.

H₃. Student Satisfaction positively affects Student Loyalty.

H₄. Student Satisfaction mediates the positive relationship between the Quality of Instructor Service and Student Loyalty.

From the identified research hypotheses, this study proposed the research model as presented in figure 1. This explored the mediating effect of student satisfaction on the relationship between the quality of instructor services and student loyalty.

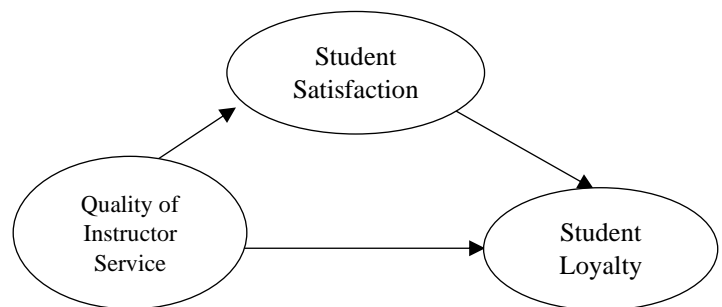


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

II. Methods

Participants of the Study

The respondents of this study are the students of the Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCST) the only state college in the Province of Davao Oriental, Philippines with a population of 7,714 as of the first semester of the academic year (AY) 2019-2020. A total of 1,120 students were randomly surveyed in this study.

Research Instrument

An adapted-modified survey questionnaire is utilized in this study. It was comprised of two (2) parts: the demographic profile of the respondents and the constructs of quality of instructor service student satisfaction and student loyalty. The demographic profile includes their course, year level, gender, and age. The second part is comprised of the quality of instructor services to the students modified from the scale used by Emanuel and Adams [10] student satisfaction and student loyalty measured using the scale used in the study conducted by Annamdevula and Bellamkonda [7].

Analysis of the Data

A predictive-correlational design was employed in this investigation to ascertain the interrelationships of the three (3) constructs – the quality of instructor service to students, student satisfaction, and student loyalty with the use of partial least squares – structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). This statistical test is a multi-stage test that follows three (3) steps: model specification, outer model evaluation, and inner model evaluation. Model specification involves the creation of logical path models [22]. Outer model evaluation, on the other hand, includes validity and reliability tests for the model constructs. And, inner model evaluation involves the analysis of the path coefficients of the structural model.

III. RESULTS

Respondents' Profile

There were 1,120 respondents in this study. Presented in Table 1 is their demographic profile, particularly on their sex, year level, and course. Most of the respondents were female (56.52%). In terms of their year level, nearly half of them were freshmen (42.50%). And amongst the courses, students from the Bachelor of Business Administration (BSBA) represented 10% of the total number of respondents.

Model Fit and Quality Indices

Table 2 displays the model fit and quality indices of the PLS structural model. The assessment involves the evaluation of the model fit with the data [23]. To assess the fit of the structural model, the coefficients of average path coefficient (APC), average r-squared (ARS), and average adjusted r-squared (AARS) must have p-values equal to or lower than 0.05. Since APC, ARS, and AARS are within the acceptable threshold, therefore, the model fits with the data. And with regards to the average block variance inflation factor (AVIF) and average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF), the coefficients should ideally be equal to or lower than 3.3 (Kock & Lynn, 2012). With AVIF = 2.078 and AFVIF = 2.060, both indices are within the acceptable ranges.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	487	43.48
Female	633	56.52
Year Level		
1st year	476	42.50
2nd year	323	28.84
3rd year	96	8.57
4th year	197	17.59
5th year	28	2.50
Course		
BEED	84	7.50
BEEDSpEd	35	3.13
BITM	43	3.84
BSAM	88	7.86
BSBA	112	10.00
BSBio	29	2.59

BSCE	88	7.86
BSEDE	54	4.82
BSEDFil	49	4.38
BSEdM	68	6.07
BSEDTLE	75	6.70
BSES	29	2.59
BSHRM	93	8.30
BSIT	98	8.75
BSM	39	3.48
BSMRS	32	2.86
BSN	54	4.82
MAEd	15	1.34
MST	35	3.13

Legend: *BEED-Bachelor of Elementary Education; BEEDSpEd-Bachelor of Elementary Education in Special Education; BITM-Bachelor in Industrial Management; BSAM-Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness Management; BSBA-Bachelor of Science in Business Administration; BSBio-Bachelor of Science in Biology; BSCE-Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering; BSEDE-Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English; BSEDFil-Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Filipino; BSEdM-Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Mathematics; BSEDTLE-Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Technical Livelihood Education; BSES-Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science; BSHRM-Bachelor of Science in Hotel Restaurant and Management; BSIT-Bachelor of Science in Information Technology; BSM-Bachelor of Science in Mathematics; BSMRS-Bachelor of Science in Mathematics with Research Statistics; BSN-Bachelor of Science in Nursing; MAEd-Master of Arts in Education; MST-Master of Science Teaching*

Table 2. Model Fit and Quality Indices

Indices	Coefficients
APC	0.472, p<0.001
ARS	0.468, p<0.001
AARS	0.467, p<0.001
AVIF	2.078
AFVIF	2.060
Tenenhaus GoF	0.523

For the Tenenhaus good of fit (GoF), an index signifying the power of the structural model [24], the following criteria are used: small if the coefficient is greater than or equal to 0.1; medium if it is greater than or equal to 0.25; and large if the value is greater than or equal to 0.36 [25]. The Tenenhaus GoF=0.523 signifies that the explanatory power of the structural model is large.

Reliability, and Validity Measurements

To examine the robustness of the measurement model, both reliability and validity tests were conducted. Reliability tests assess the quality of a study's survey instrument. Table 3 displays the convergent validity and reliability measures for the three constructs. The item loadings of these constructs were found to be statistically significant at 0.001. Furthermore, the factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach's alpha (CA) were measured for each construct. Field [26] suggests that factor loading

should be at least 0.60, regardless of the sample size. And according to Kock [23], in order for the coefficients of the CR and CA to be acceptable, these must be greater than 0.70; and the AVE values must be at least 0.50. Hence, all of these latent variables – student satisfaction (AVE=0.599, CR=0.898, CA=0.862), quality of instructor service (AVE=0.564, CR=0.942, CA=0.935), and student loyalty (AVE=0.687, CR=0.898, CA=0.847) – were highly reliable.

Table 3. Convergent Validity and Reliability Measures

Construct	No. of Items	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	CA
Student Satisfaction	6	.655 - .879	.599	.898	.862
Quality of Instructor Service	19	.692 - .883	.564	.942	.935
Student Loyalty	4	.753 - .855	.687	.898	.847

Moreover, the discriminant validity was measured in order to assess the associations among constructs with square roots of AVE coefficient [23] which should be greater than any of the correlations in the same variable. This implies that the values in the diagonals must not be less than any of the values from the left. Hence, the measures in this study were found to have strong discriminant validity as shown in table 4.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

	Quality of Instructor Service	Student Satisfaction	Student Loyalty
Quality of Instructor Service	.681		
Student Satisfaction	.611	.774	
Student Loyalty	.587	.606	.829

Mediation Model Results

Figure 3 illustrates the PLS path model. The path coefficients of the mediation model are indicated by the beta coefficients (β). The beta coefficients between student satisfaction and quality of instructor service ($\beta=0.72$, $p<0.01$) between student satisfaction and student loyalty ($\beta=0.38$, $p<0.01$), and quality of instructor service and student loyalty ($\beta=0.31$, $p<0.01$) were all significant and positive. The r-squared (R^2), which is also considered the determination coefficient, was also shown in the PLS path model in the same figure. Further, these R^2 coefficients explained in terms of variance percentage the effects of the hypothesized variable on a certain latent variable [23]. This then implies that 46% of student loyalty is affected

by student satisfaction, and 52% of student satisfaction is affected by the quality of instructor service.

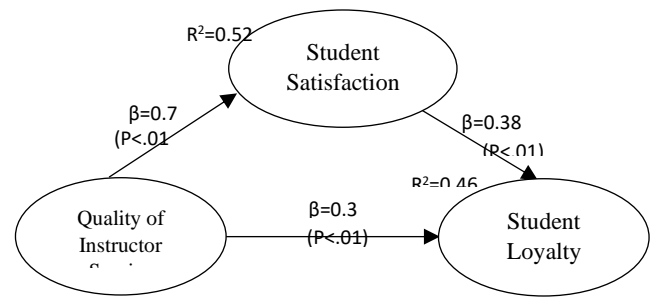


Figure 3. Student Satisfaction – Student Loyalty Model with Parameter Estimates

Direct and Indirect Effects

Table 5 displays the parameters of the PLS path model. These results indicated that the quality of instructor service positively affects students’ student satisfaction ($\beta=0.717$, $p<0.001$). The path coefficient clarifies that the quality of instructor service significantly affects the level of satisfaction of the students. The effect size of QIS→SS is large (Cohen’s $f^2=0.509$) which suggests that H_1 is supported. Moreover, the quality of instructor service significantly and positively affects student loyalty ($\beta=0.314$, $p<0.001$). The beta coefficient also indicates that the quality of instructor service to students augments the level of their loyalty with an effect size of medium (Cohen’s $f^2=0.186$). Therefore, H_2 is supported. Similarly, student satisfaction has a significant and positive affect on student loyalty ($\beta=0.383$, $p<0.001$). H_3 is also sustained considering that the effect size of this relationship is large (Cohen’s $f^2=0.334$).

Table 5. Parameter Estimates (Direct and Indirect Effects)

	β	SE	p-value	f^2
Direct Effects				
H ₁ . QIS→SS	0.717	0.029	<0.001	0.509
H ₂ . QIS→SL	0.314	0.030	<0.001	0.186
H ₃ . SS→SL	0.383	0.030	<0.001	0.334
Indirect Effects				
H ₄ . QIS→SS→SL	0.273	0.022	<0.001	0.161

QIS=Quality of Instructor Service; SS=Student Satisfaction; SL=Student Loyalty

The indirect effect of student satisfaction on the relationship between the quality of instructor service and student loyalty is statistically significant ($\beta=0.273$, $p<0.001$). This suggests that student satisfaction mediates the relationship between the quality of instructor service and student loyalty with a medium degree of mediation effect (Cohen’s $f^2=0.161$) and hence, H_4 is also supported.

DISCUSSION

The present study confirmed that the quality of instructor service significantly and positively affects loyalty among college students. Moreover, it has also provided sufficient statistical evidence that the effect of the quality of instructor services on the students' loyalty to the college is mediated by their satisfaction in terms of the various services and facilities of the college. Previous studies also suggested that the teaching quality of the faculty members in any institution increases student loyalty [11]. This was further remarked by the recent study conducted by Annamdevula and Bellamkonda [7] which revealed that there was indeed a positive relationship between the quality of lecturer's services and student loyalty.

Moreover, the results of this study have been encompassing with the previous studies. Service quality and student satisfaction, service quality and student loyalty, and student satisfaction and student loyalty have all been linked in previous studies [7]. And considering that the learners generally prefer higher education that delivers better teaching quality and would make them satisfied with the diverse services [27], this relationship then has direct or indirect effects on student loyalty [8]. That is, when the students would experience the better quality of their instructor and that they are satisfied, then they will be loyal to their institution.

Nevertheless, despite the number of studies suggesting the relationships between these variables, there were also researches that revealed otherwise. For example, Martha-Martha and Priyono [28] recently identified a positive relationship between service quality and student satisfaction, as well as a positive relationship between student contentment and student loyalty, but no relationship between student quality and student loyalty. This was also true with the study of Dib and Mokhles [29] which purported that there was found no correlation between the quality of service and the satisfaction of the students, not even in student loyalty. They concluded from their research that while good service quality does not ensure student loyalty, it can boost student pleasure, which eventually ensues in loyalty. And that increasing student loyalty was ineffective without gauging service quality and without measuring student pleasure.

Conclusions and Future Research Directions

With the increasing number of universities and colleges across the globe, it is very imperative for higher education institutions to always keep abreast with the current trends and activities that would make their clientele, who are the students, satisfied for them to remain loyal. Quality in the teaching and learning experience of the students, companies by their satisfaction will positively posit for their loyalty.

This research, however, is limited only to the quality of the instructor and the student satisfaction based on the services. Future researchers may find attention to identifying other factors that would affect the loyalty of the students to the institutions. Additionally, researchers may consider utilizing

other statistical tools or analyses in order to further determine the overall experience of the students in tertiary education.

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