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FEATURE

**Student Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Student Services
in an Adventist College in the Philippines**

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***Abstract** – This study aims to determine the student perceptions of the effectiveness of student services in one Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher education on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. A user satisfaction scale adapted by the researcher from the unpublished master’s project of Mavubi (1996) was completed by 160 college student respondents.*

The study found that there were significant differences in the perceptions of the effectiveness of student services when respondents were grouped according to the demographic variables of age, gender, course, and academic year. Service departments that reportedly need attention are Fax services, Security, Library, Maintenance, and Admissions. Suggestions for improving these services: Prompt delivery of mail, more friendly secretaries, assisting new students especially during enrollment time, and giving more information about the school to prospective students.

Effectiveness is different from efficiency. Daft (2003) has said that organizational effectiveness is the “degree to which the organization achieves a stated goal” (p. 9). Efficiency, on the other hand, is the wise use of resources and without waste (Griffin, 1990). Griffin explains that these two terms are important because they “highlight the basic purpose of management—to ensure that an organization’s goals are attained in an efficient and effective manner” (p. 6).

How can we assess effectiveness? Daft (1986) suggests that we can assess effectiveness of services by determining customer satisfaction. Griffin’s (1990) idea seems to conform to this statement because he said that organizational

effectiveness “requires that the organization do a good job of procuring resources, managing them properly, achieving its goals, and satisfy its constituencies” (p. 104).

There are traditional and contemporary approaches in assessing organizational effectiveness. Under the Traditional Effectiveness Approach are System Resource Approach, Internal Process Approach, and Goal Approach. On the other hand, contemporary approach includes Strategic Constituencies Approach and competing values like the Open System Model, Rational Goal Model, the Internal Process Model, and the Human Relations Model (Daft, 1986).

Traditional Effectiveness Approaches

System Resource Approach. The focus of this approach is on input. One example of this is that an organization is assessed to be effective if it can hire qualified faculty for its college of engineering despite the stiff competition from other organizations (Heizer, & Render, 1998).

Internal Process Approach. This approach focuses on minimizing dissatisfaction among employees. It “looks at internal activities and assesses effectiveness by indicators of internal health and efficiency” (Griffin, 1990, p. 102). In other words, the focus of the organization is to maintain the satisfaction of employees as far as their benefits are concerned. In return the employees perform efficiently, thus satisfying their customers (Klein & Ritti, 1984; Robbins, 1998).

Goal Approach. Output is the main concern of this approach. Assessment of effectiveness is dependent on whether the goal of the organization is achieved to the level so desired. (Griffin, 1990; Kotler, Ang, Leong, & Tan, 1998). As Daft (1986) puts it, the goal approach focuses on “the drive to excel, to achieve in relation to a set of objectives, and to strive to succeed” (p. 102; Beauregard, McDermott, & Mikulak, 1993).

Contemporary Effectiveness Approaches

Constituency Approach. In this approach, satisfaction of the stockholders, suppliers, employees, as well as the owners with the organizational performance is the basis of assessing effectiveness (Daft, 2003). Each group, however, may have different effectiveness criteria because constituents vary in their interest in the organization (Griffin, 1990; Robbins, 1998).

Competing Values Approaches. This approach is an integration of various performance indicators. It consists of four models through which we can assess organizational effectiveness (see Figure 1):

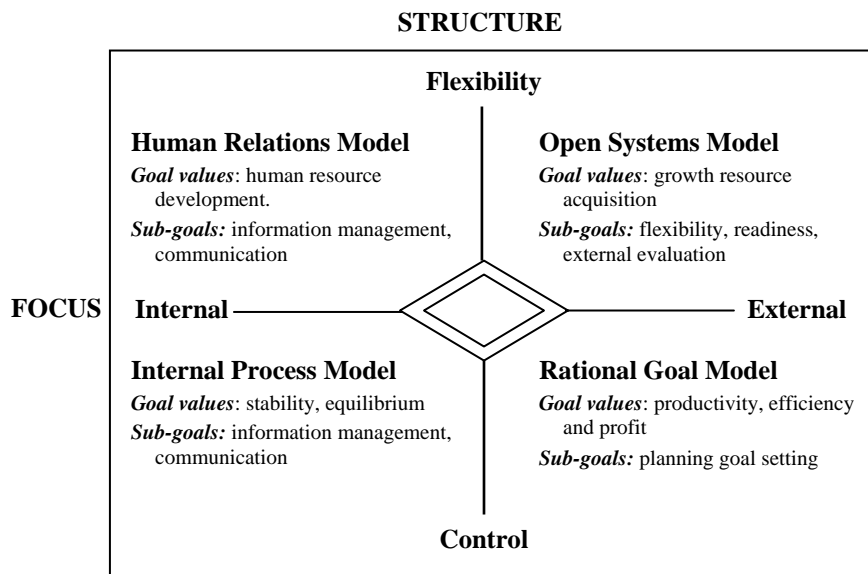


Figure 1. Models of organizational effectiveness.

Note: Adapted from Daft, R.L. (1986). *Organization Theory and Design*. New York: West Publishing Company, p. 113.

Open System Model. The primary goals of this model are growth and resources acquisition. Sub goals are flexibility, readiness, and external evaluation. "The dominant value in this model is to acquire resources and grow (Daft, 1986, p. 112; Daft, 2003).

Rational Goal Model. Productivity, efficiency, and profit are the primary goals. Internal planning and goal setting are the sub-goals. "Structural control and an external focus represent the rational goal model" (Daft, 1986, p.12).

Internal Process Model. This model focuses on the values of internal and structural control. "The primary outcome is stable organizational setting that maintains itself in an orderly way. Organizations that are well established in the environment and simply want to maintain their current position would fit this model" (Daft, 1986, p. 113).

Human Relations Model. In this model, the primary goal is human resource development. other goals are cohesion, morale, and the training of human resources. Empowering as well as understanding the needs of the employees is the main concern because in doing so employees are motivated to perform well (Aquilano, Chase, & Jacobs, 1998; Blau, 1994; Daft, 2003; Petri, 1996).

Methodology

This study was undertaken with three main purposes in mind. The first goal was to test the reliability of the User Satisfaction scale to offer a baseline for theoretical underpinnings on effectiveness. The second was to determine the level of effectiveness of student services on the selected campus. The third was to explore the variations in the perceptions of the students when grouped by demographic variables.

The research questions explored were: (1) What is the level of effectiveness of the student services of the university as measured by the User Satisfaction Scale? (2) Are there significant differences in the perceptions of effectiveness when respondents were grouped according to the demographic variables of age, gender, course, and academic year? (3) What are the service departments that need improvement and what are the recommendations offered to improve them?

This study used a quantitative survey instrument with some open-ended questions to gather information regarding students' perceptions and their degree of satisfaction with the services offered in one of the Adventist tertiary schools in the Philippines. The indicator for effectiveness was user satisfaction. This survey instrument indicated the level of effectiveness of student services based on the User Satisfaction scale. This questionnaire evaluated 16 different service departments offered by the school. It had three sections: (a) A 5-point Likert-scale analysis of service departments with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, (b) a demographic description of the respondents in 4 areas: age, gender, marital status, academic year, and (c) two open-ended questions. The User Satisfaction Scale, originally developed by James Mavubi (1996), was the questionnaire used to gather data on satisfaction, and was adapted by the researcher to fit the purposes and context of this study.

The population of the study was obtained by the researcher from the list of the students in the Registrar's office. The researcher obtained a list of 800 college students and used 20% from the population. Random selection was applied to find a sample of 160 respondents.

Data obtained from the survey has been analyzed using SPSS for Windows version 11.5. The questionnaires were grouped by four categories: Age, Gender, Course, and Academic Year. Descriptive statistics were done. Reliability of the User Satisfaction scale questionnaire was determined with Cronbach's alpha. T-test and ANOVA were used to arrive at significant differences in the perception of effectiveness when the variables were grouped according to age, gender, course, and academic year. Scheffe Post Hoc/Multiple Comparisons were used to find significant differences in the perception of the respondents towards the services offered by the university.

Report of Findings

Research Question No. 1: "What is the reliability level of the User Satisfaction questionnaire? The reliability of the User Satisfaction scale is high, with Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.95.

Research Question No. 2: "What is the level of effectiveness of services offered by the university as measured by the User Satisfaction scale? (Table 1).

Table 1
Ranking of level of effectiveness of services*

Service Departments	Rank	Mean	Std. Deviation
Accounting	1	3.57	0.58
News	2	3.30	0.61
Hospital	3	3.25	0.86
Motorpool	4	3.05	0.57
Registrar	5	3.03	0.57
Mail	6	2.97	0.74
S.A.	7	2.88	0.63
Vehicle	8	2.88	0.79
Dormitory	9	2.82	0.61
Telephone	10	2.66	0.59
Cashier	11	2.60	0.65
Fax	12	2.52	0.77
Security	13	2.48	0.80
Library	14	2.38	0.66
Maintenance	15	2.38	0.79
Admissions	16	2.36	0.53
Total Scale		2.88	0.67

*Scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

The total mean was 2.88, and it ranged from 2.36 to 3.57. Security, Library, Maintenance, Admissions fell below 2.5, suggesting that these areas definitely need attention. University Newsletter, Hospital, Motorpool, Registrar, Mail, Student Affairs, Vehicle, Dormitory, Telephone, Cashier, and Fax ranged from 2.5 to 3.5, which suggests uncertainty. Respondents might not have been sure how to rate these areas, or questions might not have been clearly understood.

The mean for Accounting was 3.57, which is very close to the *agree* level on the scale of 1 to 5 with 1 as *strongly disagree*, and 5 as *strongly agree*.

Research Question No. 3: “Are there significant differences in perceptions of effectiveness when grouped according to demographic variables such as age, gender, course, and academic year?” (refer to Table 2).

There were significant differences in the perceptions of the respondents when grouped according to age. Older respondents (18-19 years old) gave higher scores to all services compared to the scores given by the respondents whose ages ranged from 16 to 17 years old. This suggests that the longer the students stayed in the university, or the older they become, the more they appreciated the services offered to them, thus they give higher satisfaction scores to those service departments concerned.

Table 2
T-test Comparison of Level of Satisfaction in Services According to Age

Service department	Age		Mean Diff (SED)**	t	Sig.
	16-17 n = 105	18-19 n = 55			
Library	2.00 (0.30)	3.10 (0.07)	-1.10(0.07)	-14.04	<.001
Telephone	2.35 (0.04)	3.25 (0.05)	-0.89(0.06)	-13.89	<.001
Fax	2.04 (0.03)	3.46 (0.06)	-1.42(0.07)	-20.05	<.001
Registrar	2.70 (0.04)	3.65 (0.04)	-0.94(0.05)	-16.99	<.001
Accounting	3.36 (0.06)	4.00 (0.00)	-0.64(0.06)	-10.59	<.001
Cashier	2.23 (0.32)	3.31 (0.07)	-1.07(0.07)	-14.06	<.001
SA	2.49 (0.03)	3.63 (0.04)	-1.14(0.05)	-20.63	<.001
Security	2.04 (0.05)	3.37 (0.06)	-1.32((0.07)	-16.75	<.001
Maintenance	1.89 (0.04)	3.30 (0.05)	-1.40(0.07)	-19.95	<.001
Hospital	2.84 (0.80)	4.03 (0.02)	-1.18(0.08)	-14.67	<.001
Mail	2.65 (0.06)	3.59 (0.60)	-0.94(0.09)	-9.56	<.001
Motorpool	2.73 (0.03)	3.67 (0.05)	-0.93(0.06)	-15.46	<.001
Dormitory	2.74 (0.04)	3.47 (0.06)	-0.72(0.07)	-9.57	<.001
News	3.00 (0.05)	3.87 (0.01)	-0.87(0.05)	-15.45	<.001

Note: *Standard Error of the Mean; **Standard Error of the Difference

However, only accounting service had a mean greater than 3.5, which is considered at the *Agree* level. Still, it is fair to conclude that older respondents appreciate the services offered by the university because older students gave higher scores compared to the younger students in almost all service departments.

There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the students by gender (see Table 3) in certain areas such as: telephone, accounting, hospital, and mail and the university newsletter. It is interesting to note, however, that male respondents gave higher scores on the services offered by the university when compared with female respondents. Apparently, males were more satisfied with the services offered by the university.

Table 3
T-test Comparison of Level of Satisfaction in Services According to Gender

Service department	Gender		Mean Diff (SED)**	t	Sig.
	Male n = 85	Female n = 75			
Library	2.50(0.08)	2.24(0.05)	0.25(0.10)	2.53	.012
Telephone	2.75(0.07)	2.60(0.05)	0.15(0.09)	1.93	.055
Fax	2.70(0.09)	2.35(0.07)	0.33(0.11)	2.88	.005
Registrar	3.11(0.07)	3.00(0.05)	0.11(0.08)	2.02	.045
Accounting	3.60(0.06)	3.55(0.07)	0.05(0.09)	0.57	.564
Cashier	2.72(0.81)	2.50(0.05)	0.22(0.09)	2.70	.008
SA	3.01(0.07)	2.73(0.06)	0.30(0.09)	2.83	.005
Security	2.63(0.09)	2.35(0.07)	0.30(0.12)	2.34	.020
Maintenance	2.55(0.09)	2.20(0.06)	0.36(0.11)	3.08	.002
Hospital	3.30(0.10)	3.20(0.09)	0.10(0.13)	0.79	.428
Mail	3.02(0.08)	2.92(0.07)	0.10(0.11)	0.88	.381
Motorpool	3.16(0.07)	2.94(0.05)	0.22(0.08)	2.55	.012
Dormitory	3.09(0.07)	2.89(0.05)	0.20(0.08)	2.31	.022
News	3.36(0.07)	3.23(0.06)	0.12(0.09)	1.32	.190

Note: *Standard Error of Mean; **Standard Error of the Difference

There were significant differences in the perceptions of the students of the services offered by the university according to the course of study being pursued by the respondents (see Table 4). The students in the Theology, Dentistry, and Education departments, termed here as 'Others,' indicated a significantly higher level of satisfaction with the combined services offered by the service departments (M=3.78) than did Business (M=3.35), Nursing (M=2.74) and Arts/Sciences (M=1.94) students. Arts/Sciences students indicated significantly less satisfaction (apparent dissatisfaction) than the students of the other departments mentioned above. The relative degree of student satisfaction by department can be observed in Table 4 as recorded in the notes below the table.

Table 5 shows that there were significant differences in the perceptions of the respondents according to year in almost all the services offered by the university. The average mean by year of study from first to fourth year students was 2.27, 3.0, 3.38, 3.80 respectively. We can conclude that the longer the students stay in the university, the more they appear to be satisfied with the services offered by the school. The relative degree of student satisfaction by year of study can be observed in Table 5 as indicated by the notes below the table.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The effectiveness of any organization is dependent on the importance given to the welfare of the employees, as well as the achievement of the goals of both the administration and the people it serves. This means that the employees, administration, the people or community being served are satisfied. It also means that the employees receive benefits, privileges, the administrators attain their goals and the people or community get their money's worth through the excellent services offered by the organization.

The result of the study support the idea that there is no single method of assessing effectiveness. Daft says "One single effectiveness measurement is inappropriate" p.107). Why is this so? Because there are many effectiveness criteria attributed to the variance of interest in the organization. Effectiveness can be assessed by determining what satisfies each of the stakeholders in the organization. An "effective organization must balance a set of factors to satisfy the expectations of its client" Griffin, 1990, p.102). On the one hand, the management must satisfy the employees to get them to perform well in their jobs, for example, and on the other hand, the employees satisfy the student clients.

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following are my recommendations: (1) That a suggestion box be provided to strategic places on the campus where students as well as the faculty and staff of the university can drop their comments with regards to the services offered by the university. (2) A repeat of this study which will include the employees as respondents.

Table 4
One-Way ANOVA Comparison of Level of Satisfaction in Services by Course

Service department	Course				F	P
	Arts/Sci n=30	Nursing n=74	Business n=26	Others n=30		
Library	1.60(0.04) ^a	2.20(0.02) ^b	2.60(0.05) ^c	3.51(0.10) ^d	415.85	<.001
Telephone	1.70(0.03) ^a	2.61(0.02) ^b	3.00(0.02) ^c	3.50(0.05) ^d	470.35	<.001
Fax	1.75(0.00) ^a	2.15(0.03) ^b	3.00(0.04) ^c	3.85(0.04) ^d	538.91	<.001
Registrar	2.20(0.03) ^a	2.90(0.03) ^b	3.40(0.02) ^c	3.40(0.03) ^d	387.95	<.001
Accounting	2.65(0.12) ^e	3.63(0.03) ^f	4.00(0.00) ^g	4.00(0.00) ^g	98.90	<.001
Cashier	2.00(0.02) ^a	2.35(0.04) ^b	2.87(0.04) ^c	3.66(0.07) ^d	213.10	<.001
SA	2.12(0.04) ^a	2.63(0.03) ^b	3.32(0.01) ^c	4.00(0.03) ^d	431.44	<.001
Security	1.40(0.02) ^a	2.31(0.04) ^b	2.96(0.01) ^c	3.70(0.05) ^d	326.90	<.001
Maintenance	1.40(0.04) ^a	2.13(0.02) ^b	3.00(0.02) ^c	3.55(0.08) ^d	525.85	<.001
Hospital	1.74(0.08) ^h	3.27(0.04) ⁱ	3.90(0.01) ^j	4.13(0.01) ^j	320.15	<.001
Mail	1.77(0.12) ^k	3.00(0.00) ^l	3.14(0.05) ^l	4.00(0.02) ^m	264.34	<.001
Motorpool	2.40(0.09) ^a	2.87(0.09) ^b	3.35(0.03) ^c	3.93(0.05) ^d	194.40	<.001
Dormitory	2.15(0.04) ⁿ	3.00(0.03) ^o	3.20(0.00) ^o	3.70(0.09) ^p	131.00	<.001
News	2.31(0.05) ^q	3.30(0.04) ^r	3.80(0.00) ^s	4.00(0.02) ^s	211.00	<.001

Note: a = significantly different from b,c, and d
 b = significantly different from a,c, and d
 c = significantly different from a,b, and d
 d = significantly different from a,b, and c
 e = significantly different from f and g
 f = significantly different from g,h, and i
 g = significantly different from h and i
 h = significantly different from i and j
 i = significantly different from j, k, l, and m
 j = significantly different from n, o, and p
 k = significantly different from q, r, and s

Table 5
Satisfaction in Services According to Academic Year

Course Service department	Mean (SEM)		Mean (SEM)		F	P
	1 st Year n=55	2 nd Year n=50	1 st Year n=35	1 st Year n=20		
Library	1.77(0.03) ^a	2.24(0.00) ^b	2.76(0.05) ^c	3.69(0.05) ^d	363.02	<.001
Telephone	2.03(0.05) ^a	2.71(0.01) ^b	3.01(0.02) ^c	3.65(0.03) ^d	221.83	<.001
Fax	1.79(0.01) ^a	2.31(0.02) ^b	3.16(0.05) ^c	3.98(0.01) ^d	739.96	<.001
Registrar	2.40(0.03) ^a	3.03(0.02) ^b	3.45(0.02) ^c	4.00(0.01) ^d	373.31	<.001
Accounting	2.94(0.07) ^c	3.81(0.02) ^f	4.00(0.00) ^f	4.00(0.00) ^f	88.73	<.001
Cashier	1.96(0.01) ^a	2.53(0.03) ^b	2.98(0.03) ^c	3.87(0.07) ^d	428.73	<.001
SA	2.25(0.03) ^a	2.75(0.03) ^b	3.42(0.03) ^c	4.00(0.00) ^d	453.33	<.001
Security	1.60(0.04) ^a	2.53(0.03) ^b	3.08(0.03) ^c	3.88(0.04) ^d	454.09	<.001
Maintenance	1.61(0.05) ^a	2.20(0.02) ^b	3.01(0.01) ^c	3.80(0.05) ^d	407.64	<.001
Hospital	2.25(0.09) ^g	3.48(0.03) ^h	3.93(0.01) ⁱ	4.20(0.01) ⁱ	171.23	<.001
Mail	2.33(0.01) ^j	3.00(0.00) ^k	3.36(0.07) ^k	4.00(0.00) ^l	65.66	<.001
Motorpool	2.57(0.05) ^a	2.92(0.02) ^b	3.43(0.03) ^c	4.08(0.03) ^d	168.77	<.001
Dormitory	2.34(0.03) ^j	3.18(0.00) ^k	3.20(0.00) ^k	3.95(0.08) ^l	299.34	<.001
News	2.56(0.04) ^g	3.48(0.03) ^h	3.80(0.00) ⁱ	4.00(0.02) ⁱ	257.71	<.001

Note:

a = significantly different from b,c, and d

b = significantly different from a,c, and d

c = significantly different from a,b, and d

d = significantly different from a,b, and c

e = significantly different from f

f = significantly different from e

g = significantly different from h and i

h = significantly different from g and i

i = significantly different from g and h

j = significantly different from k and l

k = significantly different from j and l

l = significantly different from j and k

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