

**CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS' EXPECTATION OF EDUCATIONAL
SERVICE QUALITY AND ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT AT
PRACHOMKLAO COLLEGE OF NURSING ¹**

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Abstract

This descriptive research aimed to survey the customers and stakeholders' expectation of educational service quality and administration management at Prachomkiao College of Nursing, Thailand. We conducted a survey between April and September 2015 in which 492 customers and 134 stakeholders participated. Respondents were selected randomly from nursing students, short-course trainees and alumni, meanwhile, purposive sampling was used on lecturers, staffs, external agencies, and practicum communities of Prachomkiao College of Nursing. Data was collected through the 5-dimension questionnaires include tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. Results reveal the overall expectation of educational service quality and administration management with a mean score of 4.62 (SD=.327). The mean score of each dimension was at "very high" level. The highest expectation was the reliability (= 4.68, SD = .405) and the lowest expectation was the empathy (= 4.52, SD = .500). The findings confirm that customers and stakeholders' expectation of service quality and organizational management is the key to college performance enhancement. Therefore, customers and stakeholders' expectation and feedback are important for high performance and achievement of academic service and mission of the nursing college. However, there is a need to promote service attitudes, attentiveness, and enthusiasm among personnel, lecturers and nursing students along with the academic and professional development.

Keywords: Customer, Stakeholder, Expectation, Educational Service Quality, Administration Management.

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Introduction

Globalization and technological breakthroughs have led to advancement in production and consumption activities. As a result, the importance of high-performance organization development has been recognized worldwide. Higher education institutes play a crucial role in complex social changes. Therefore, institute management paradigm and instructional development roles may need to adjust for sustainable social development in conformity with the direction of country development. New public management is an approach to Public Sector Management Quality Award (PMQA) concept that leads to change of the systems and management strategies of civic organizations. Prachomklao College of Nursing is a college under the jurisdiction of Praboromarajchanok Institute for Health Workforce Development, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. Its vision “to become the leading higher education institution in producing nursing students and developing ASEAN-qualified health personnel for sustainable well-being of communities” (Prachomklao College of Nursing, 2015) reflects its dedication to enhancing educational quality towards the recognized and potential educational institution to deal with changes and to achieve international competitiveness. It is in pursuance with the educational goal under the 2nd Higher education long-term plan of Thailand - “Thai higher education quality is enhanced together with the production and development of qualified and capable personnel to engage in self-adaptation to life-long works. The knowledge and innovation creation potentials of higher education are promoted for the country’s increased competitiveness in the globalized world. The sustainable development of local Thai communities is supported by the mechanisms of good governance, finance, standards assurance and higher education network by academic freedom, diversity and systematic unity” (Office of the Higher Education Commission ,2008).

Prachomklao College of Nursing has thus formulated its primary mission in response to the institutional development towards the high-performance organization. Concerning organizational performance, the strategic and action plans are introduced as the organization’s guideline according to the specified vision. Good strategic plans are comparable to the compass steering the organization to the desired targets. The strategic plan implementation requires the action plan formulation in providing the precise direction for organization personnel to follow and lead the organization to the continuous development. Therefore, the staff of all levels has participated in plan preparation in pursuance of relevant contexts.

New Public Management is the basic concept of PMQA, which leads to the concrete changes of public sector systems and strategies. According to the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC), the enhancement of public sector management quality is the vital goal of promoting Thai civil service system and continual development of people-oriented public service. The new management tools and techniques have been applied, e.g, shortening of public service process and duration. Besides, the integrated work approach is adopted together with the provision of public participation opportunity. It is a footstep towards high-performance organization and creation of a transparent and accountable system for self-monitoring (OPDC, 2012).

As a public organization, Prachomklao College of Nursing is aware of the significance of continuous development and the enhancement of public sector management quality. The relevant principle and concept have thus been used in the education affair development in response to customers and stakeholders’ needs. It also includes the methods to define not only

the relationship with customers and stakeholders but also the important factors in promoting their satisfaction, which is a key for the college performance development leading to the improvement of structure and work process according to customers and stakeholders' needs. The college customers consist of nursing students, short-course trainees, alumni, specialized nursing program trainees or relevant agencies (e.g., schools, Sub-district Administration Organizations, etc.) to which the college has provided academic services or volunteer activities. Meanwhile, the college personnel, employers of graduates, guardians, alumni and practicum communities are its key stakeholders. The understanding of needs or expectation of target group is required for the development in response to the customers and stakeholders' needs.

Therefore, this research aimed to examine the customers and stakeholders' expectation of educational service quality and administration management at Prachomkiao College of Nursing.

Conceptual Frameworks

This study employs PMQA of the OPDC (2012) and service quality assessment model of Zheitaml, et al. (Zheitaml, Parasuraman & Berry (1990). PMQA which consists of 7 criteria; 1) leadership; 2) strategic planning; 3) customer and stakeholder focus; 4) measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; 5) human resource focus; 6) process management; and 7) performance results. The 'customer and stakeholder focus' was used in this research to verify how higher education institution defines customers and stakeholders' needs and expectation, whether customers and stakeholders are satisfied, and how to encourage customers and stakeholders to speak of higher education institution positively or to create their impression (OPDC, 2012). The service quality assessment needs to take into account the ability to satisfy the needs of customers and stakeholders who use services or make contacts.

It has five dimensions: tangibles reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990).

Dimension1 : Tangibles refers to physical characteristics of facilities and environments allowing customers to feel the service providers' care, concern, and determination. The accurate delivery of services enables customers or stakeholders to understand those services.

Dimension2 : Reliability refers to the ability to correctly, suitably and consistently deliver the promised services to customers and stakeholders.

Dimension3 : Responsiveness refers to the preparedness and willingness in delivering services and promptly satisfying customers and stakeholders' needs with comfortable and convenient service access. The service distribution has to be comprehensive and rapid.

Dimension4 : Assurance refers to the ability to strengthen customers and stakeholders' reliability. The service providers must have good conducts and be skillful, knowledgeable and capable of delivering services and satisfying customers' needs. They also efficiently use communication channels and generate the reliability among their customers that the best possible services will be received.

Dimension5 : Empathy refers to the ability to provide the care for customers and stakeholders with different needs from one another.

Method

Design: This descriptive study was conducted between April and September 2015 using a quantitative approach to obtain data. Questionnaire administration was carried out for the purpose.

Ethical Considerations: Approval to conduct the study was granted by the Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Research Subjects, Prachomklao College of Nursing. All potential subjects were informed about: the nature and purpose of the study; what participation in the study involved; confidentiality and anonymity issues; and, the right to withdraw.

Sample and settings: The sample consisted of 510 customers and 165 stakeholders or a total of 675 persons.

Customers refer to those who learned or used academic services of Prachomklao College of Nursing directly or through other communication channels. They consisted of:

- 1) 317 nursing students who are studying in the Bachelor of Nursing Science Program at Prachomklao College of Nursing in the academic year of 2015.
- 2) 104 short-course trainees: 56 trainees who are studying in Practical Nurse Program and 48 trainees who are studying in Nurse Practitioner Program in the academic year of 2015.
- 3) 59 alumni who graduated in the Bachelor of Nursing Science Program in the academic year of 2014.
- 4) 30 Personnel of 10 external agencies, namely, Phetchaburi Provincial Health Office and Sub-district Administration Organizations and eight schools in Phetchaburi Province which the college has provided the academic services in the fiscal year of 2015.

Stakeholders refer to those who were positively and negatively/directly or indirectly affected by works or activities, conducted by Prachomklao College of Nursing in the fulfillment of its missions: the instruction, research, academic services or art and culture maintenance. They consisted of:

- 1) 99 nursing lecturers and personnel - they had worked in the fiscal year of 2015 for at least nine months. All of them were thus the sample.
- 2) 66 Practicum communities - mentors or preceptors in general hospitals, community hospitals and health promoting hospitals in Phetchaburi Province.

Respondents were selected randomly from nursing students, short-course trainees and alumni, meanwhile, purposive sampling was used on lecturers, staff, external agencies, and practicum communities of Prachomklao College of Nursing.

Regarding the random sampling, the table for determining sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) was used indicating that the proportion of sample's desired characteristics is equivalent to 0.5, while the acceptable error and confidence levels were 5% and 95%, respectively.

About the sample of organizations, the purposive sampling was used in choosing 32 agencies that receive the academic service from or are relevant to Prachomklao College of Nursing. The simple sampling was then applied in determining three representatives of each organization, a total number of 96 persons. (30 external agency personnel and 66 practicum community mentors or preceptors)

Exclusion criteria were those that resign, go to a meeting or sick leave more than two weeks during data collection.

The instrument consists of a 5-scale questionnaire on the service quality and management of college includes tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990). It has two parts with 45 items:

Part 1 – general information (10 items)

Part 2 – 5-dimension questionnaire with 35 items on customers and stakeholders' expectation of college service quality. Respondents were asked to respond to each item on a 5-point Likert scale (1= very low to 5 = very high). Total subscale scores and the scores of their respective components, which could range from 1 to 5, were obtained by calculating the mean response scores for all relevant items. Higher scores, on each subscale and its respective components, meant higher levels of expectation. Mean scores were interpreted as: very high level (4.51 - 5.00); high level (3.51 - 4.50); moderate level (2.51 - 3.50); low level (1.51 - 2.50); and very low level (1.00 - 1.50). The content validity was verified by three senior experts before the improvements. The reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha is 0.96.

Data collection. To obtain data regarding external personnel each of them was mailed, via his/her office, an envelope containing a letter of invitation that explained the rights protection for research participants and questionnaires. The letter of invitation also requested each subject to return, within two weeks of receipt, (in the provided envelope, via her office), the completed questionnaires. The questionnaires mailed were returned.

Meanwhile, the researchers collected data from lecturers, staffs, short-course trainees and nursing students during the meeting with each group. They could decide whether or not to participate in the research without any impacts on the service, work, and education. The questionnaire was then distributed to them who responded to and return it within 15-20 minutes or returned in the recipient box.

However, only 626 (92.7 %) of them were complete. The researchers assigned each set of questionnaires received a code number for identification.

Data analysis. Mean, percentage and standard deviation were employed in the data analysis.

Results

Most respondents were female; were 18 to 60 years of age (average = 27.27 years); had 18 to 60 years of age. They were 492 customers (78.6 %) and 134 stakeholders (21.4 %). (Table 1)

Table 1: The characteristics of the customers and stakeholders (n=626)

Demographic data	Sample(n)	percentage	Demographic data	Sample(n)	percentage
gender			Customer	492	78.6
Male	53	8.4	• Nursing students	304	48.6
female	573	91.6	• Short-course trainees	100	16.0
			• Alumni	58	9.3
Age			• External agencies	134	4.8
< 21 years	177	28.3	Stakeholder	75	
21-30 years	287	45.8	• Lecturers and staffs	59	21.4
31-40 years	63	10.1	• Practicum communities		12.0
41-50 years	72	11.5			9.4
51-60 years	27	4.3			
			The frequency of using academic service		
(Average= 27.27, Min= 18y, Max =60 y)			Less than 5 times		12.8
			5-10 times	80	8.0
			More than 10 times	50	79.2
				496	

Customers and stakeholders' expectation of service quality and administration management

A very high level of customers and stakeholders' expectation of service quality and administration management was found. The overall mean score was 4.62 (SD=.327). The highest expectation was "reliability" (\bar{x} = 4.68, SD = .405), and the lowest expectation was "empathy" (\bar{x} = 4.52, SD = .500). (Table 2)

Table 2: Mean score and standard deviation of the customers and stakeholders' expectation (n=626)

Dimension	Expectation	
	\bar{x}	SD
1. Tangibles	4.58	.368
2. Reliability	4.68	.405
3. Responsiveness	4.65	.407
4. Assurance	4.64	.451
5. Empathy	4.52	.500
Total	4.62	.327

Concerning the items, most of them were at "very high" level of customers and stakeholders' expectation of service quality and administration management. There was only one item that got a high level; "Staffs' understanding of customers' diverse needs," and it was the lowest mean scores. (\bar{x} = 4.46, SD = .659). The highest mean score was "Lecturers' possession of instructional knowledge and capability" (\bar{x} = 4.77, SD = .455). (Table 3)

Table 3: Mean score and standard deviation of the customers and stakeholders' expectation of each item (n=626)

Items	Expectation	
	\bar{x}	SD
1. Tangibles		
1. Clean buildings and venues with beautiful landscape	4.54	.565
2. Sufficient availability of clean toilets	4.62	.542
3. Attractive and understandable billboards	4.50	.578
4. Modern and efficient information technology, e.g., high-speed internet with a comfortable and convenient access	4.64	.500
5. Availability of sufficient, comprehensive and up-to-date information	4.56	.580
6. Availability of sufficient and ready-to-use equipment and facilities	4.62	.567
7. Lecturers wearing clean, polite and neat attires	4.65	.548
8. Staffs wearing clean, polite and neat attires	4.65	.529
2. Reliability		
1. Interest, determination, and attention of lecturers in service delivery to all customers	4.72	.495
2. Interest, determination, and attention of staffs in service delivery to all customers	4.69	.510
3. Lecturers' provision of correct, suitable and constant advice or suggestions to all customers	4.72	.502
4. Staffs' provision of correct, suitable and constant suggestions to all customers	4.67	.515
5. Staffs' capability to deliver services within the specified timeframe	4.64	.526
6. College's clear work process in pursuance of the applicable regulations and laws	4.65	.536
7. The college's services that you have received enhance your sense of reliability and trust in those services.	4.68	.524
3. Responsiveness		
1. Lecturers' willingness and enthusiasm to rapidly deliver services	4.70	.483
2. Staffs' willingness and enthusiasm to rapidly deliver services	4.67	.527
3. Lecturers' preparedness to respond to the request for services	4.66	.532
4. Staffs' preparedness to respond to the request for services	4.64	.536
5. College's capability to timely address service-related problems for the fulfillment of customers' needs	4.62	.573
6. College's availability of different communication channels facilitating the request for services (e.g., telephone and fax numbers, website and email address)	4.63	.556
4. Assurance		
1. Lecturers' possession of instructional knowledge and capability	4.77	.455
2. Lecturers' possession of research-related knowledge and capability	4.73	.497

Items	Expectation	
	\bar{x}	SD
3. Lecturers' possession of knowledge and capability to arrange training programs or to deliver academic services	4.70	.521
4. Lecturers' possession of capability to arrange activities for the student development or art and culture maintenance	4.62	.549
5. Staffs' possession of useful knowledge of relevant rules and regulations and service delivery capability	4.58	.569
6. The confidence in college's service quality	4.62	.551
7. Staffs' capability to answer and to give useful advice to customers	4.54	.616
8. College's correct, reliable and up-to-date systems for the information dissemination and public relations	4.55	.595
5. Empathy		
1. Lecturers' understanding of customers' diverse needs	4.52	.617
2. Staffs' understanding of customers' diverse needs	4.46	.659
3. Lecturers' frequent expression of politeness and respect to customers while delivering services	4.58	.557
4. Staffs' frequent expression of politeness and respect to customers while delivering services	4.52	.610
5. Lecturers' constant delivery of excellent services	4.56	.574
6. Staffs' constant delivery of excellent services	4.49	.636
Total	4.62	.327

Discussion

The customers and stakeholders' expectation of service quality and organizational management is the key to college performance enhancement. According to research findings, a high level of customers and stakeholders' expectation of quality of service and college management was found in all aspects within the conceptual framework of service quality assessment in light of tangibility and responsiveness (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990). The researchers discuss the research findings according to the following issues:

Dimension 1: Tangibility –the highest level of sample's expectation of proper wearing of lecturers and personnel reflected the fact that the wearing was the crucial important element for customers and stakeholders. The college performance quality enhancement should thus focus on the personality and proper wearing. Besides, the issue with the second highest mean score was modern and efficient information technology system – an element of physical structure that the college had to promote its efficiency in response to the customers' needs. In the age of information and technological advancement under Thailand 4.0 policy, the efficient information technology facilitates not only the customers' timely accessed to the different information on public relations and knowledge body but also more convenient and rapid provision of services.

Dimension 2: Reliability - the sample expected that the lecturers and personnel would attentively and determinedly provide services and give correct advice or suggestions to the customers. This agreed with the service reception concept - the service provider's provision of accurate services would strengthen customers' reliability.

Dimension 3: Responsiveness - the sample expected the lecturers and staffs to provide services in a willing, enthusiastic and rapid manner.

Dimension 4: Assurance - the sample expected of the lecturers' instructional knowledge and capability, followed by the capability in doing research and arranging training program and academic services. This agreed with higher education institution's main missions on personal production, research, academic service as well as art and culture maintenance. According to the research findings, lecturers were needed to continually develop their competency including qualifications, knowledge and academic and professional experience. Also, it conformed to the Institutional Accreditation Criteria of Thailand Nursing and Midwifery Council requiring that at least 35% of lecturers have to hold Ph.D. and engage in continual self-development in academic and vocational affairs (Thailand Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2013). This is to boost the customers' confidence that they will receive the best service leading to the promotion of the institution's reputation. Regarding the expectation of staffs, the aspect with the highest mean score was the customers' demand for the staffs' possession of rule and regulation knowledge. Therefore, the college should recognize the importance of the enhancement of such competency to promote both the staffs' confidence in performing tasks and the customers' higher trust in service quality.

Dimension 5: Empathy - the sample's most-expected aspect was the regular expression of politeness and respected to customers because it was meant to express the care and attention towards customers and stakeholders.

According to an individual aspect, the one with the highest score of expectation was the confidence and trust, followed by the responsiveness to customers. Meanwhile, the service tangibility had the lowest total score. About the aspect with the highest mean score, the sample expects of the lecturers' instructional knowledge and capability, followed by the capacity of doing research and giving correct and regular advice. For most of sample, the mean score of the expectation of lecturers was higher than the one of personnel since nursing college was a higher educational institution, designated with the primary mission involving the instruction.

Conclusions and recommendations

These research findings confirm that customers and stakeholders' expectation of service quality and organizational management is the key to college performance enhancement. Therefore, customers and stakeholders' expectation and feedback are essential for high performance and achievement of academic service and mission of the nursing college. However,

there is a need to promote service attitudes, attentiveness, and enthusiasm among personnel, lecturers and nursing students along with the academic and professional development.

The lecturers and personnel are enhanced towards high performance and excellent service mind, while physical infrastructure is developed to facilitate the service provision, particularly the modern and efficient information system. The future research approach should be examined for the development of service and management model in response to the customers' needs for Thailand 4.0 era. Additionally, the expectation and recognition of customers and stakeholders towards the quality of service and management quality, provided by one given institution, should also be conducted using the comparative study approach.

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