

Service Quality Improvement through Work Ethic Development, Interpersonal Communication and Professional Commitment of Education Staff

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Abstract

This study aims to figure out ways and strategies to improve service quality through impact analysis between several variables, specifically work ethic, interpersonal communication, and professional commitment. Samples for this study were gathered from 306 education staff, consisting of civil servant education staff and regular full-time education staff at IPB University. Method for this study uses Quantitative analysis with *Structural Equation Modelling* (SEM) Lisrel 8.8 to perform data analysis for this study. Evaluation of measurement model was performed using t-statistic and *estimate test (loading factor)*. The result of measurement model evaluation shown that (a) Work ethic positively affects interpersonal communication with t-statistic value of 18.28 > t-table 1.96 and path coefficient value of 0.70, (b) Work ethic has a direct positive impact on professional commitment with t-statistic value of 9.38 > t-table 1.96 and path coefficient value of 0.24, (c) Interpersonal communication has a direct positive impact on professional commitment with t-statistic value of 6.74 > t-table 1.96 and path coefficient value of 0.75, (d) Work ethic has a direct positive effect on service quality with t-statistic value of 2.74 > t-table 1.96 and path coefficient value of 0.11, (e) Interpersonal communication has no significant and direct positive impact on service quality with t-statistic value of 0,41 < t-table 1,96 and path coefficient value of 0.021, (f) Professional commitment has no significant and direct positive impact on service quality with value of 6.97 < t-table 1.96 and path coefficient value of 0.024

Keywords: *Service Quality, Work Ethic, Interpersonal Communication, Professional Commitment.*

INTRODUCTION

Academic service quality has quite a significant impact on academic society members' satisfaction (students, education staff). Result of a study conducted by Ayu Purwati et al. (2018:84) shown that academic service quality improvement, especially in the educational information system segment, will increase student satisfaction but not necessarily able to improve the loyalty of students directly. However, through customer satisfaction, service quality related to the system will consequently increase the loyalty of its user (lecturer, student). Academic service quality has a significant positive impact on intellectual society members' satisfaction. Hence, the institution needs to improve academic service quality to increase academic society members' satisfaction (Martasubrat, 2016:143).

In operating an education unit system, like schools and universities, an educated workforce is crucial. Encompassing administrative service, academic service, public and library service, cleaning staff, room staff, and security staff, the Education workforce is a synergistic unity that carries the education unit to achieve its purpose, visions, and missions.

In performing daily tasks, education staffs were not only required to improve service quality, but should also be able to create comparative, generative and innovative values, like intelligence, creativity, and imagination with positivity; Without exploiting raw materials, land, water, and other forms of resources (Sutrisno, 2009: 4). Service quality is highly dependent on work ethic. A high work ethic will result in work engagement. Work engagement is invaluable to workers and organizations because it influences the way employees work and complete their tasks (Puspitasasri & Darwin, 2021).

According to the data from previous studies, it is evident that there were multiple factors hindering staff from providing quality service specifically, 1) inadequate technical instruction from their superior after a new policy has been released, 2) lack of communication between education staffs and their superiors, which hinder staffs from implementing the new policy as they did not understand the full extent of it, 3) lack of supervision, evaluation, and a penalty from the higher-ups against low-performing staffs, 4) Education staffs were adapting slowly to the changes that come with Industry 4.0, 5) not every team possesses a complex and comprehensive way of thinking which enables them to provide exceptional services to academic society members.

From the results of several problem identifications and previous studies, it is evident that there is a need to improve service quality, specifically by improving work ethic, interpersonal communication, and professional commitment to move forward and adapt to the development of information technology bringing innovation.

METHOD

This study used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis. There are two types of use of SEM analysis, namely, Covarian-based (CB-SEM) and variant (VB-SEM) (Darwin & Umam, 2020). But in this study, using SEM-based variants (CB-SEM). The software used is Lisrel 8.8. SEM is a statistical modelling technique that is highly cross-sectional, linear, and general. This study's population was sampled from Civil Servant Education Staffs and regular full-time employees at IPB University, numbering 1.294 people. The sample was collected proportionally, with a total minimum sample at 306.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2013:122), a pivotal point to maintain customer satisfaction is quality and customer satisfaction. Dimensions in service quality are (1) responsiveness, which is swiftness and perceptiveness in providing service, (1) Assurance, which is a guarantee to maintain service quality, (3) Empathy, which is thorough attention to customer needs, (4) tangibles, which defined as infrastructures, tools, and service facilities provided, (5) reliability, which is consistency and dependability in providing service. If the service is not maximized, then it will be easy for consumers to have a conversation on social media about the service they feel. Because at the moment, there is no more cover-up about the products offered because everything has been seen in the media prepared by marketers through the internet and other media (Darwin, 2020).

Gibson (2012: 439) defines interpersonal communication as direct communication between individuals in a particular situation shared among individuals in a specific group situation. Several factors affect interpersonal communication: (1) the presence of feedback, (2) occurrence of direct (face to face) interaction and (3) perception of the meaning is conveyed between communicating individuals.

According to Greenberg (2011: 234), commitment is an individual attitude in making the decision to get involved or to leave the organization.

This study's exogenous variables are work ethic, while endogenous variables were interpersonal communication, professional commitment, and service quality. an exogenous variable is a latent variable that affects other variables, while the endogenous variable is the variable that gets affected by an exogenous variable.

Measurement Model Analysis

Measurement model analysis was carried out using the t-statistic test and estimate test (loading factor). The t-statistic test is used to observe the impact of exogenous/latent variable (work ethic) on other variables. An estimate test (loading factor) is used to indicate the latent variable's effectiveness.

Variable of service quality

The goodness of fit analysis using the *chi-square* test on each indicator revealed a p-value at $0,20453 > 0.05$; therefore, H_0 is accepted, and H_1 is rejected, which indicates the measurement model is fit. Another test was done using RMSEA criteria, resulting in a $0,043 \leq 0,08$, meaning that the model is fit. The application of other goodness of fit measures such as GFI, NFI and CFI resulted in a value of > 0.9 , which indicates that this model is undoubtedly fit. Because the analysis results from multiple indicators conclude that this measurement model is fit. Therefore further testing for the theoretical hypothesis can proceed

Variable of work ethic

The goodness of fit analysis using the *chi-square* test on each indicator revealed a p-value at $0.1360 > 0.05$; therefore, H_0 is accepted, and H_a is rejected, which indicates the measurement model is fit. Another test was done using RMSEA criteria, resulting in a value at $0.040 \leq 0.08$, meaning that the model is reasonable. The application of other *goodness of fit* measures such as GFI, NFI and CFI resulted in a value of $> 0,9$, which indicates that this model is undoubtedly fit. The analysis results from multiple indicators conclude that this measurement model is fit. Therefore further testing for the theoretical hypothesis can proceed.

Variable of interpersonal communication

The goodness of fit analysis using the *chi-square* test on each indicator revealed a p-value at $0,91551 > 0,05$; therefore, H_0 is accepted, and H_a is rejected, which indicates the measurement model is fit. Another test was done using RMSEA criteria resulting in a value at $0.040 \leq 0.08$; tests using other Goodness of Fit measures such as GFI, NFI and CFI resulted in > 0.9 . All discounts on previous tests indicate the model is fit. Therefore further testing for theoretical hypotheses can proceed.

Variable of professional commitment

The goodness of fit analysis using the *chi-square* test on each indicator revealed a p-value at $1.0000 > 0.05$; therefore, H_0 is accepted, and H_a is rejected, which indicates the measurement model is fit. Other tests using the goodness of appropriate criteria were conducted, an examination using RMSEA reveals p-value at $0.000 \leq 0.08$, and tests using GFI, NFI and CFI resulted in a value at > 0.9 , which indicate this model is undoubtedly fit, therefore further testing for the theoretical hypothesis can be proceeded.

Measurement model evaluation

Measurement model evaluation was performed using t-statistic and estimate (loading factor) tests as presented in Figure 1 and 2. The table for the result of path coefficient analysis is shown in Table 1.

Work ethic influence on interpersonal communication

The work ethic of staff is considered low if they often procrastinate, lacking discipline, lazy, lacking initiatives, low accomplishment of the quality target at work, and easily content with their current results. The work ethic of staff is considered high if they are honest, quick to utilize an opportunity, looking further ahead into the situation, willing to adapt, have good teamwork capabilities, and able to follow rational thinking to make decision and action.

Communication act as a bridge among academic society members, where relaying messages can be accomplished at a specific goal. Work ethic and communication become one of the main requirements to improve service quality in the education sector.

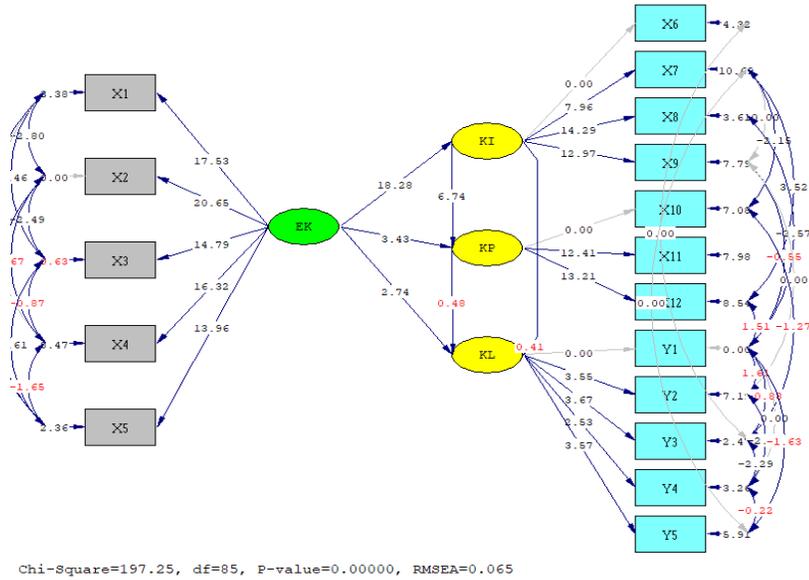


Figure 1. Evaluation of the t-Statistic Test Measurement Model

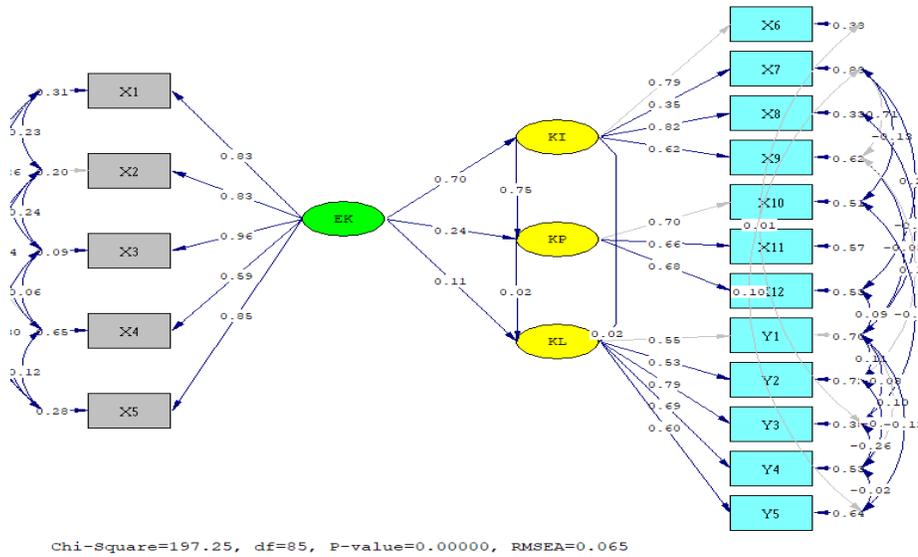


Figure 2. Evaluation of the Loading Factor Measurement Model

Table 1. Summary of Path Coefficient Calculation Result

Path	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	t-count > 1.96	Conclusion	Relationship Direction
WE->IC	0.700	0.039	18.28	significant	positive
WE->PC	0.240	0.071	9.38	significant	positive
IC->PC	0.750	0.110	6.74	significant	positive
WE->SQ	0.110	0.041	2.74	significant	positive
IC->SQ	0.021	0.050	0.41	insignificant	positive
PC->SQ	0.024	0.049	0.48	insignificant	positive

Results of the study point out that work ethic positively affects interpersonal communication. The analysis revealed a path coefficient value at 0.70, which indicates that a higher work ethic value will correlate to a higher interpersonal communication value and *vice versa*.

This study is in line with the results of a previous study by Enggarayu Weningtyas about The Effect of Interpersonal Communication and Customer Satisfaction on Service Quality (2012:17-26) which stated that the variable of interpersonal communication has an r value = 0.239; p worth = 0.006 ($p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination value represented by R-Square was 0.057. Those number indicates that interpersonal communication effectively contributes about 5.7% to service quality.

Work ethic influence on professional commitment

Work ethic is an individual mannerism characterized by an excellent attitude that brings higher values and better work performance. Interpersonal communication is a mean to mutually convey and receive a message, either directly or indirectly, by individuals to achieve specific goals.

High professional commitment is crucial within an organization to create a professional working environment. The work ethic is considered low if they often procrastinate, lacking discipline, lazy, lacking initiatives, low accomplishment of the quality target at work, and easily content with their current results.

The result of this study stated that work ethic has a direct positive impact on professional commitment. Analysis result reveals the path coefficient value of 0.240, which indicates that a higher work ethic value will correlate to a higher professional commitment value and *vice versa*.

A study conducted by John P. Meriac (2015:249–254) tested work ethic as a predictor of diligence and work quality, with 147 people taking part as respondents. The result of the study stated that work ethic significantly affects work quality. However, spare time's work ethic dimension was not mainly related to work diligence as previously hypothesized. This result shows that if left alone in an unmonitored situation, an individual with a higher morality/ethic would respond while being more efficient in doing the task at hand.

Interpersonal communication impact professional commitment

Interpersonal communication is a mean to mutually convey and receive a message, either directly or indirectly by individuals to achieve specific goals. The professional commitment of an employee defined as their loyalty level to their profession. Professional commitment is a responsibility and confidence in oneself to perform a task according to their respective profession and expertise with sincerity and respect to the values of regulation

The result of this study reveals that interpersonal communication has a direct positive impact on professional commitment. The development of the analysis shows path coefficient value was 0.75, which indicate higher interpersonal communication will correlate directly to a higher professional commitment and *vice versa*.

A study by Lenni Lukitasari (2018:111-126) about the Impact of Work Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment on Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Their Impact on X University Service Quality in Bandung City that concluded work satisfaction has a direct impact valued at 20.34%, commitment has a direct impact of 27.14%, Organizational commitment has an indirect effect through work satisfaction at 12.43%, that overall impact of organizational commitment was valued at 39.57%. Overall total impact value was 72.34%. Influence of other factors that were not included in the study against Organizational Citizenship Behavior is shown by = 0.2766 or as much as 27.66%, and the impact of Organizational Citizenship Behavior on service quality was 75.3%, the effect of other factors that were not included in the study against service quality is shown by the value of = 0.247 or as much as 24.7%.

Work ethic impact on service quality

Service quality is a product/amenity to fulfil customer needs and requests, either directly or indirectly with precision, speed, and responsibility to obtain a higher value. High service quality is marked with positive disconfirmation trait, which is a higher performance compared to the expectation, while low-quality service is marked with negative disconfirmation, which is a lower performance compared to the expectation.

Hypothesis 4. stated that work ethic has a direct positive impact on service quality. The analysis result shows the path coefficient value of 0,11, which indicates that a higher work ethic value will correlate to a higher service quality value and *vice versa*.

The result of this study is following a previous study by Deasy Afriani Simbolon (2019:202), entitled The Effect of a Work Ethic on the Quality of Civil Servants' Services in the Bandung City Youth and Sports Service (DIASPORA), which stated that the value of t: t-count at 4.768 > t-table 3.61, so it can be inferred that work ethic variable has an impact to the variable of service quality. This can be proven by calculating the significant value and the value of t. 1) According to the significance value: from coefficient table, a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05 were revealed. which can be concluded that work ethic variable affect the variable of service quality; 2) According to t-statistic value: t-count value were 4.768 > t-table 3.61, which can be concluded that work ethic variable affect the variable of service quality.

Interpersonal communication impact service quality

The fifth hypothesis stated that interpersonal communication had a direct positive impact on service quality. Result of the analysis shown a path coefficient value at 0.021, which indicates that a higher interpersonal communication value will correlate to a higher service quality value and *vice versa*. This result shows that the proposed theoretical hypothesis is disproved with the t-statistic value of 0.41 < t-table 1.96, which accept H0, so it is evident that interpersonal communication has no positive impact on service quality

This study's result is in line with the previous research conducted by Mira Asmal et al. (2012: 173-189) that points out the significant difference in interpersonal communication between the experimental and control group, with t-value =4,847 and p-value =0,000. While scaling analysis of service quality resulted in a considerable difference between the service quality of the experimental and control groups, with t-value =3,937 and p-value =0,001. Another study by Handayani, L. et al. (2019:743-757) stated that staff performance, interpersonal communication, and physical working environment directly impacted people's satisfaction at a district, regency, and city Kudus. Results of hypothesis and path analysis also indirectly impact employee performance, interpersonal communication, and physical working environment on people's satisfaction through service quality.

Interpersonal communication impact on service quality

Interpersonal communication is a mean to mutually convey and receive a message, either directly or indirectly, by individuals to achieve intended goals. Service quality is a service within the form of product/amenities in an attempt to fulfil customer needs and requests, either directly or indirectly, with precision, speed, and responsibility to meet customer satisfaction and follow-up actions.

The result of this study stated that interpersonal communication has a direct positive impact on professional commitment. The analysis result shows a path coefficient value reaching 0.75, indicating a higher interpersonal communication value will correlate to higher professional commitment value and *vice versa*.

The result of this study is following the research conducted by Lenni Lukitasari (2018: 111-126) with a title of the impact of Work Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment on Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Their Impact on X University Service Quality in Bandung City, and it was evident that work satisfaction had a direct impact valued at 20.34%, the commitment had a direct consequence of 27.14%, Organizational commitment had an indirect effect through work satisfaction at 12.43%, so that the total influence organizational commitment was valued at 39.57%. Overall total impact value was 72.34%. Development of other factors that were not included in the study against Organizational Citizenship Behavior is shown by = 0.2766 or as much as 27.66%, and the impact of Organizational Citizenship Behavior on service quality was 75.3%. The effect of other factors that were not included in the study against service quality is shown by the value of = 0.247 or 24.7%.

Professional commitment impact on service quality

6th hypothesis stated that professional commitment has a direct positive impact on service quality. The analysis result reveals the estimated coefficient value is 0.024, which indicates a higher professional commitment value will directly correlate to a higher service quality value, and *vice versa*. This proves the proposed theoretical hypothesis with the t-
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statistical value of $6.97 < t\text{-table } 1.96$, which reject H_0 , hence it can be concluded that professional commitment positively affects service quality.

Result of this study is following a previous survey of Donovan Mandey (2015: 9) which states that the impact of professionalism variable of a subdistrict government official on public service quality is obtained from the analysis result of product-moment correlation coefficient $r = 0.809$, hence coefficient of determination (r^2) is $= 0.654$ or 65.4%. This means that the factor of subdistrict government official professionalism did affect or contribute to public service quality as much as 65.4%, while the rest 34.6%, were affected by other factors.

CONCLUSION

Work ethic has a direct positive impact on interpersonal communication with a path coefficient of 0.70. Work ethic can improve interpersonal communication value if led in a positive relationship direction, supported with a coefficient of determination at 0.50. Work ethic has a direct positive impact on professional commitment as its path coefficient measured at 0.240. Work ethic can improve professional responsibility if led to positive relationships as supported with a coefficient of determination at 0.60. Interpersonal communication has a direct positive impact on professional commitment as its path coefficient measured at 0.75. Interpersonal communication can improve professional responsibility if led to positive relationships, as supported with a coefficient of determination at 0.28. Work ethic directly impacts service quality, as shown by its path coefficient value at 0.11. Work ethic can improve service quality if led in the direction of the positive relationship as supported with a coefficient of determination at 0.021. Interpersonal communication has no positive impact on service quality as its path coefficient value were only 0.021. Interpersonal communication can improve service quality if projected in a positive relationship. However, the improvement would be insignificant, as shown by its coefficient of determination value at 0.00. Professional commitment has no direct positive impact on service quality, as the value of the path coefficient were only 0.024. Professional responsibility can improve the value of service quality if directed at a positive relationship. However, the improvement would be insignificant as its coefficient of determination were only 0.00.

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