

# Analysis of the Influence of Academic Service Quality on Improving Student Satisfaction Using the SERVQUAL Method

Academic Service  
Quality in Improving  
Student Satisfaction

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## ABSTRACT

In the context of increasing competition among higher education institutions, maintaining high-quality academic services has become essential to ensure student satisfaction. This study aims to analyze the influence of academic service quality on student satisfaction using the SERVQUAL method, which comprises five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. A total of 150 students from three academic programs participated as respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires measuring students' expectations and perceptions of academic services and were analyzed using the gap score (P-E) for each indicator. The findings show that the assurance dimension has the highest positive gap value, indicating that staff competence, politeness, and professionalism exceed student expectations. The tangibles and empathy dimensions also demonstrate relatively favorable performance. In contrast, the responsiveness and reliability dimensions exhibit negative gaps, suggesting that response speed, staff attentiveness, and service consistency still require improvement. Academic service quality is categorized as adequate but necessitates enhancements in responsiveness and reliability to increase student satisfaction. This study contributes to the evaluation of service quality in higher education and serves as a reference for decision-making in improving academic service performance.

**Keywords:** Academic Services, Higher Education, Service Quality, SERVQUAL, Student Satisfaction.

## INTRODUCTION

Academic service quality is one of the key factors determining the success of higher education institutions in creating a satisfying learning experience for students (Hai, 2022). High-quality academic services not only function as administrative support but also reflect the institution's commitment to providing effective, responsive, and student-oriented services. In the context of competition among universities, improving academic service quality has become an essential strategy for maintaining student trust and enhancing institutional reputation. Therefore, a comprehensive assessment of academic service quality is necessary to enable institutions to identify areas that require improvement and ensure that the services provided align with student expectations (Nguyen et al., 2024; Kaulu et al., 2025; Amiri et al., 2025).

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), is one of the most widely used approaches for measuring service quality by evaluating the gap between user perceptions and expectations. This model consists of five main dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, which collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of service quality from the users' perspective. Numerous studies have shown that the application of SERVQUAL offers valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of service delivery in educational institutions (Tjiptono, 2019;

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Zeithaml et al., 2020). In the context of academic services, these five dimensions play a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions of overall service quality.

Previous research has identified that high-quality academic services significantly influence student satisfaction, particularly in relation to the reliability of administrative processes, accuracy of information, and the ability of staff to provide administrative support (Dewi & Pramudiana, 2020; Suardika & Indriani, 2023). Additionally, the dimensions of empathy and assurance often serve as key indicators of students' confidence in the professionalism of the institution (Wardhani & Rahardjo, 2022). Other studies have emphasized that student satisfaction is influenced not only by academic service quality but also by the direct experiences students encounter during service interactions, such as lecturer responsiveness, academic information systems, and ease of access to services (Hidayat & Nugraha, 2022).

However, research on academic service quality in various universities still reveals gaps between student expectations and perceptions, particularly in aspects such as service speed, information accuracy, and the use of digital technologies in administrative processes (Nguyen et al., 2024). These findings underscore the need for continuous evaluation of academic service quality to ensure that universities can meet the increasing demands and expectations of students, especially in the digital era, which prioritizes efficiency and effectiveness.

Universitas Budi Darma, as one of the higher education institutions in Medan, also faces challenges in improving academic service quality, given the growing student demand for fast, accurate, and technology-based services. This study is therefore important to determine the extent to which the academic services provided meet student expectations and how each SERVQUAL dimension contributes to overall student satisfaction. Using the SERVQUAL approach, this research measures and analyzes the gap between expectations and perceptions, providing constructive recommendations for improving academic services (Santos et al., 2020).

Universitas Budi Darma faces challenges in delivering optimal academic services, particularly in service digitalization, response speed, and information consistency, which reflect broader issues in Indonesian higher education, such as limited staff training, partially integrated academic information systems, and increasing student demands. A clear research gap exists in the limited number of studies that simultaneously examine all five SERVQUAL dimensions within technology-oriented private universities and assess the relative contribution of each dimension to student satisfaction (Hidayat et al., 2024; Damayanti & Kurnia, 2025). Therefore, this study contributes both theoretically and practically by identifying the most influential SERVQUAL dimensions in shaping student satisfaction. The research framework integrates SERVQUAL and student satisfaction theory, where academic service quality affects satisfaction through students' perceptions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

This study aims to identify the level of academic service quality perceived by students, examine the influence of each SERVQUAL dimension on student satisfaction, and provide an overview of service areas that require improvement. By employing a quantitative approach and utilizing the SERVQUAL instrument, this study offers empirical evidence on the relationship between academic service quality and student satisfaction within the context of Universitas Budi Darma. The research findings are expected to serve as a valuable reference for policymakers in formulating more effective, efficient, and student-centered strategies to enhance academic service quality.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Academic Service Quality**

Academic service quality refers to students' perceptions of the overall quality of services provided by higher education institutions, including administrative processes, academic systems, and supporting infrastructure (Amoako et al., 2023; Bouranta et al., 2025). It extends beyond teaching quality to include the efficiency of academic administration, accessibility of information systems, and effectiveness of institutional

support services. Tjiptono (2019) and Zeithaml et al. (2020) emphasize that high-quality academic services are characterized by efficiency, accuracy, and responsiveness, particularly in institutions that adopt digital-based service systems. In the current competitive higher education environment, service quality has become a key factor influencing institutional reputation and student retention.

Furthermore, Nguyen et al. (2024) and Dzakwan and Ubit (2025) explain that strong academic service quality significantly enhances students' learning experiences and shapes their overall perception of institutional credibility. Important dimensions such as information accuracy, administrative reliability, and staff responsiveness play a vital role in determining perceived service quality (Hidayat & Nugraha, 2022; Mathesa et al., 2025). When there is a gap between expected and actual service performance, student satisfaction tends to decrease, which may negatively affect institutional trust (Abu-Rumman & Qawasmeh, 2022; Almeida et al., 2025). Therefore, continuous improvement in academic service quality is essential for universities to meet student expectations and maintain competitiveness in the higher education sector.

### **Student Satisfaction in Higher Education**

Student satisfaction in higher education is widely recognized as a crucial indicator of institutional performance in delivering academic services. It reflects the extent to which students' expectations are met through their academic experiences, including teaching quality, administrative services, and institutional support systems (Noerhartati & Budiharseno, 2024; Nooh & Nazri, 2025). Satisfaction is generally formed when there is consistency between expected service standards and the actual services experienced by students during their studies (Santos et al., 2020). In this regard, higher education institutions are increasingly required to provide integrated, efficient, and technology-supported services to meet evolving student expectations in the digital era (Apidana & Prasetyo, 2023). Zeithaml et al. (2020) and Ibrahim et al. (2024) emphasize that modern service environments characterized by accessibility, responsiveness, and digital integration significantly enhance student comfort and satisfaction in academic settings.

In addition, student satisfaction is strongly influenced by the reliability and consistency of academic administrative services provided by universities. Mathesa et al. (2025) highlight that accuracy in academic processes such as grading systems, class scheduling, and information delivery plays a central role in shaping students' perceptions of institutional quality. When academic services are delivered consistently and without errors, students tend to develop stronger trust and positive perceptions toward the institution (Isniah et al., 2025; Tran et al., 2025). Inconsistencies, delays, or administrative failures may lead to dissatisfaction and weaken institutional credibility. Therefore, ensuring stable and well-managed academic services is essential in maintaining high levels of student satisfaction in higher education institutions.

### **SERVQUAL Model**

The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) is one of the most widely used frameworks for measuring service quality in various sectors, including higher education. This model evaluates service quality through five key dimensions, namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, which together represent users' perceptions of service performance. In the context of academic services, these dimensions are used to assess how well universities deliver administrative and educational support to students. Wardhani and Rahardjo (2022) and Oliso et al. (2024) state that among these dimensions, reliability and responsiveness are often considered the most critical because they directly reflect the accuracy and speed of academic service delivery.

Responsiveness refers to the willingness and readiness of academic staff to assist students, respond to inquiries, and provide timely solutions, especially in digital-based academic environments (Hidayat & Nugraha, 2022; Rahmatia et al., 2025; Suherman & Inoe, 2025). Meanwhile, assurance relates to the competence, professionalism, and credibility of staff in building student trust during service interactions (Ismailova et al.,

2025; James-Euin, 2025). In addition, empathy emphasizes personalized attention and supportive communication that address individual student needs effectively (Sohail & Hasan, 2021; Jomah & Abdullah, 2025). Through these dimensions, the SERVQUAL model provides a comprehensive approach to understanding and evaluating academic service quality in higher education institutions.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a structured survey to analyze the influence of academic service quality on student satisfaction based on the SERVQUAL model. The research focused on active students of Universitas Budi Darma who have utilized various academic services, including administrative services, academic advising, and digital academic information systems. This approach was selected to identify the gap between students' expectations and their perceived experience of academic services. The population of the study consisted of all active students of Universitas Budi Darma, while the sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique. The respondents were required to meet specific criteria: they must have completed at least two semesters and have direct experience using the academic services evaluated in this study. A total of 150 students met these criteria and participated as respondents.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale to measure students' expectations and perceptions of the five SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Each dimension contained several indicators assessing physical facilities, administrative accuracy, staff responsiveness, professionalism, assurance, and personalized attention. The questionnaire also gathered demographic information to support the interpretation of the findings. The data analysis involved calculating the mean scores of Expectations (E), Perceptions (P), and the gap value (P-E) for each SERVQUAL indicator. The gap score was used to determine the overall quality of academic services. A positive gap indicates that the service meets or exceeds student expectations, whereas a negative gap indicates dissatisfaction or a mismatch between expectations and service delivery. Further analysis included calculating the gap averages for each of the five SERVQUAL dimensions to identify the strongest and weakest components of academic service quality.

In addition to the gap analysis, the study categorized service quality based on gap ranges and visualized the results using a SERVQUAL radar chart. This visualization provided a comprehensive overview of the strengths and weaknesses across all service dimensions and highlighted the areas requiring improvement. The results revealed that the assurance dimension showed the best performance, while responsiveness and reliability were the dimensions that required the most improvement to enhance overall student satisfaction. The SERVQUAL method was chosen because it offers detailed insights into service quality gaps and is highly relevant for evaluating academic service performance in higher education institutions. Through this quantitative analysis, the study successfully identified specific dimensions of academic services that significantly influence student satisfaction at Universitas Budi Darma and provided a basis for recommendations to improve service quality.

## **RESULTS**

This section presents the findings of the study based on data collected from 150 student respondents. The analysis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of academic service quality and its influence on student satisfaction using the SERVQUAL approach. The results are organized systematically, beginning with descriptive statistics to illustrate students' perceptions and expectations, followed by gap analysis (P-E) across the five SERVQUAL dimensions. Furthermore, the analysis highlights the relative performance of each dimension and identifies key service areas that require improvement.

Table 1. Respondent Profile.

Variable	Category	N	Percentage (%)
Study Program	Information Management	45	30%
	Retail Management	60	40%
	Information Technology	45	30%
Semester	6 <sup>th</sup> Semester	82	54.7%
	8 <sup>th</sup> Semester	68	45.3%
Total Respondents		150	100%

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents, consisting of 150 students from three study programs: information management, retail management, and information technology. The respondents were drawn from the 6th and 8th semesters, who are assumed to have adequate experience in utilizing the university's academic services. The distribution of respondents is balanced across study programs and semesters, providing a comprehensive overview of students' perceptions of academic service quality.

The SERVQUAL analysis was used to assess the gap between students' expectations of academic services and their perceptions of the services actually received. Table 2 presents the average expectation scores, perception scores, and the resulting gap values (P-E) across 17 measured indicators. The findings show that perception values range from 2.78 to 3.19, while expectation values range from 2.84 to 3.16. The gap values range from -0.24 to +0.30. The largest positive gap is found in indicator 11 (+0.30), indicating that the competence, friendliness, and professionalism of academic staff significantly exceed student expectations. Conversely, the largest negative gap is observed in indicator 8 (-0.24), reflecting slow information delivery or suboptimal staff responsiveness in providing academic services.

Table 2. Mean Expectation (E), Perception (P), and Gap (P-E)

Indicator	Expectation (E)	Perception (P)	Gap (P-E)
1	2.98	3.09	+0.11
2	3.11	3.04	-0.07
3	3.11	3.09	-0.02
4	2.84	2.99	+0.15
5	3.11	2.99	-0.12
6	2.89	3.13	+0.25
7	2.87	2.84	-0.03
8	3.02	2.78	-0.24
9	3.13	3.00	-0.13
10	2.97	3.01	+0.05
11	2.89	3.19	+0.30
12	3.05	3.08	+0.03
13	3.05	2.86	-0.19
14	3.11	3.12	+0.01
15	3.16	3.17	+0.01
16	2.93	3.01	+0.09
17	3.05	3.17	+0.12

Table 2 clearly indicates variation in gap values ranging between -0.24 and +0.30. The highest positive gap in indicator 11 suggests that students perceive academic staff as highly competent and professional. In contrast, indicator 8 has the lowest gap (-0.24), indicating that the speed and responsiveness of academic information delivery are well below student expectations. The results show a mixture of indicators that meet expectations and others that require significant improvement.

To evaluate academic service quality based on the SERVQUAL model, each indicator was grouped into the five primary dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Table 3 summarizes the average gap values for each dimension, representing an overall view of academic service quality. The assurance dimension shows the highest average gap (+0.18), indicating that students perceive academic staff as highly competent, courteous, and capable of providing a sense of security and trust. Conversely,

responsiveness shows the lowest average gap (-0.11), suggesting that students consider academic services to be slow, insufficiently responsive, and lacking proactive information delivery.

**Table 3.** Summary of Gap Scores per SERVQUAL Dimension.

SERVQUAL Dimension	Indicators	Average Gap	Interpretation
Tangibles	E1-E3	+0.04	Adequate
Reliability	E4-E6	-0.06	Needs improvement
Responsiveness	E7-E9	-0.11	Weakest dimension
Assurance	E10-E12	+0.18	Best-performing
Empathy	E13-E17	+0.02	Fair

The results in Table 3 show that assurance is the strongest dimension (+0.18), reflecting high student confidence in staff capability. Tangibles and Empathy exhibit slightly positive gap values, indicating moderate satisfaction. In contrast, reliability and especially responsiveness show negative gaps, revealing weaknesses in procedural consistency and service speed.

**Table 4.** Service Quality Categories Based on Gap Values.

Category	Gap Range	Number of Indicators	Description
Very Good	> +0.20	2	Service exceeds expectations
Good	+0.01 – +0.20	7	Service meets expectations
Fair	-0.10 – 0.00	5	Service is moderately adequate
Poor	< -0.10	3	Service does not meet expectations

To provide a clearer interpretation, the gap scores were categorized into service quality levels. Table 4 shows the number of indicators within each category. Two indicators fall under the “very good” category (gap > +0.20), seven indicators are categorized as “good,” five indicators as “fair,” and three indicators as “poor.” Most indicators fall within the “good” and “fair” categories. However, three indicators fall into the “poor” category, indicating that they require urgent improvement.

Table 5 lists the indicators needing special attention. Responsiveness is the weakest dimension, with Indicator 8 showing a gap of -0.24. Reliability and empathy also have several indicators with negative gaps. These results highlight the need to improve the accuracy of information, service speed, and personalized attention.

**Table 5.** Dimensions Requiring Improvement.

Dimension	Gap Value	Indicator	Description
Responsiveness	-0.24	8	Slow information delivery, low responsiveness
Reliability	-0.12	5	Inconsistent service
Empathy	-0.19	13	Lack of personalized attention

As shown in Table 5, responsiveness emerges as the most problematic dimension, particularly in terms of information delivery and staff readiness in addressing student needs. This indicates that students still perceive delays and insufficient responsiveness in academic services. In addition, the reliability and empathy dimensions also include several indicators that require improvement, suggesting the need for greater consistency in service delivery as well as increased attention to students’ individual concerns.

**Table 6.** Best-Performing Dimensions

Dimension	Highest Gap Value	Description
Assurance	+0.30 (Indicator 11)	Staff competence and professionalism
Tangibles	+0.15 (Indicator 4)	Adequate physical facilities

In contrast, Table 6 presents the best-performing indicators. The assurance dimension leads with the highest gap score (+0.30) in Indicator 11, meaning students perceive academic staff as highly competent, friendly, and clear in their explanations. Tangibles

also perform well through Indicator 4, which shows that academic facilities adequately support service performance. These findings confirm that assurance is the key strength of academic services, while Tangibles still receives positive perceptions from students.

As an additional visualization, the SERVQUAL radar chart provides a clearer view of the five dimensions. The chart illustrates the service quality contour based on gap values. The expanding shape in the assurance dimension indicates strong student satisfaction, while the concave pattern in the responsiveness dimension highlights the urgent need for improvement.

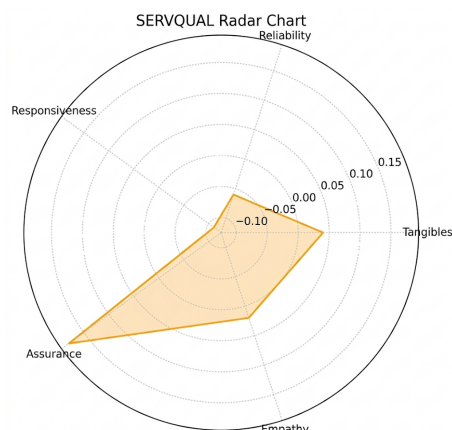


Figure 1. SERVQUAL Radar Chart

Figure 1 shows the SERVQUAL radar chart, which illustrates the gap values across the five dimensions of service quality. The assurance dimension demonstrates the strongest performance with a gap of +0.18, indicating that the competence, politeness, and trustworthiness of academic staff exceed student expectations. The tangibles dimension shows a gap of +0.04, meaning that physical facilities and service-related infrastructure are considered adequate. The empathy dimension has a gap of +0.02, reflecting that personal attention and service accessibility sufficiently meet student expectations.

Conversely, two dimensions show negative gap values. The reliability dimension has a gap of -0.06, indicating that service consistency and accuracy do not fully align with student expectations. The Responsiveness dimension presents the lowest score with a gap of -0.11, highlighting that response speed, staff readiness, and overall service attentiveness require urgent improvement. The radar chart reveals an imbalance in performance across dimensions, with one strong dimension (assurance), two moderately satisfactory dimensions (tangibles and empathy), and two dimensions requiring significant improvement (reliability and responsiveness).

As a general summary, Table 7 presents an overview of the SERVQUAL results. In general, the academic service quality is categorized as moderately good. Assurance represents the institution's key strength, while Responsiveness is identified as the weakest dimension that demands focused enhancement. The presence of negative gaps may reduce student satisfaction, making it essential to improve specific service areas.

Table 7. Overall SERVQUAL Summary

Aspect	Result
Overall Service Quality	Moderately Good
Best Dimension	Assurance
Weakest Dimension	Responsiveness
Areas Needing Improvement	Service speed, information accuracy, personalized attention
Impact	Negative gaps may lower student satisfaction

Table 7 presents a comprehensive summary of the SERVQUAL analysis results, reflecting the quality of academic services across the five core dimensions. Overall service

quality falls within the “moderately good” category, indicated by the mix of positive and negative gap scores across dimensions. Assurance emerges as the strongest dimension, demonstrating that students highly value staff competence and professionalism. In contrast, Responsiveness is identified as the weakest dimension, particularly in terms of response speed and service attentiveness. Key areas requiring improvement include service speed, information accuracy, and personalized attention. The presence of negative gaps suggests a potential decline in student satisfaction if improvements are not implemented.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate that the quality of academic services exhibits substantial variation in performance across the five SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The assurance dimension emerges as the most dominant aspect in shaping positive service perceptions, as reflected by the highest gap value of +0.18. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing that staff competence, courtesy, clarity of information, and professionalism are crucial factors in building student trust toward higher education institutions (Teeroovengadum et al., 2019; Alzoubi & Ahmed, 2020; Qibo & Muslim, 2024). Academic services that are able to provide a sense of security and certainty strengthen the institution’s image and enhance overall student satisfaction. Therefore, improving staff competence, communication skills, and service delivery capabilities becomes essential for maintaining service excellence within this dimension.

Meanwhile, the tangibles dimension shows a positive though relatively small gap (+0.04). This indicates that physical facilities, service area cleanliness, and the readiness of supporting equipment are perceived as adequate by students. This result supports previous research asserting that well-maintained physical facilities and academic infrastructure contribute to student comfort and positively influence service quality perceptions (Marlena et al., 2022; Yusuf et al., 2025). Although tangibles are not the most determining factor, they remain an essential component of the student experience; thus, institutions should consistently update academic information tools and improve facilities to align with evolving educational needs.

In contrast, the study finds that the reliability and responsiveness dimensions fall below student expectations. The reliability dimension shows a negative gap (−0.06), indicating discrepancies between promised services and their actual implementation. Timeliness of service, accuracy of academic information, and consistency in procedures are perceived as suboptimal. Previous studies similarly highlight that unreliable services can reduce perceptions of institutional professionalism and negatively influence student satisfaction (Bui et al., 2023; Hidayat & Ramadhani, 2024). This underscores the need for improvements in service standardization, more consistent scheduling, and better alignment between institutional policies and operational practices.

The responsiveness dimension demonstrates the weakest performance, with a gap value of −0.11. This low score shows that staff responsiveness, readiness to address student inquiries, and timeliness of information delivery require substantial improvement. This finding is consistent with research suggesting that slow service processes and a lack of proactive communication are major contributors to student dissatisfaction (Azzahra et al., 2025). Institutions should enhance service capacity through strategies such as accelerating administrative workflows, expanding digital communication channels, and providing additional staff during peak service hours to improve overall responsiveness.

The empathy dimension shows a positive but small gap (+0.02), indicating that personal attention, understanding of student needs, and accessibility of services are perceived as adequate but not yet optimal. This is consistent with research suggesting that academic staff empathy plays an important role in shaping students’ learning experiences, as personalized attention and support can boost student motivation and foster positive perceptions of campus services (Darawong & Widayati, 2022). Nevertheless, the relatively small gap indicates that personalized attention is not yet felt evenly across all

students, highlighting the need for strengthened individualized approaches, particularly in academic consultation services.

The SERVQUAL radar chart further reinforces these findings by displaying an unbalanced service performance pattern. The widest area appears in the Assurance dimension, whereas the responsiveness dimension shows the narrowest contour, reflecting the largest gap between expectations and perceptions. This visualization underscores the need for institutions to focus improvement efforts on service speed, responsiveness, and accuracy. If left unaddressed, these imbalances may negatively affect overall student satisfaction and ultimately shape perceptions of institutional quality.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study confirm that academic service quality, measured through the five SERVQUAL dimensions, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, plays a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions of campus services. The main results show that the assurance dimension achieved the best performance, indicated by the highest positive gap value, meaning that the competence, courtesy, and professionalism of academic staff greatly exceeded student expectations. Conversely, the responsiveness and reliability dimensions displayed negative gap values, indicating that service speed, information accuracy, and procedural consistency have not yet met students' expectations. These results emphasize that improvements in academic service quality should prioritize response speed, staff attentiveness, and procedural reliability to significantly enhance student satisfaction.

From a practical perspective, academic administrators need to strengthen digital-based service systems, accelerate academic communication processes, and improve staff readiness to deliver responsive and consistent services. Enhancing physical facilities, implementing service excellence training, and conducting regular monitoring of service standards are also important steps to meet student expectations for faster, more accurate, and more efficient academic services.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the body of literature on service quality in higher education by reinforcing the relevance of the SERVQUAL model in identifying strengths and weaknesses in academic services. The limitations of this study include its focus on a single institution and a sample size restricted to 150 respondents. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct comparative studies across multiple higher education institutions, expand the respondent base, and employ more diverse methodological approaches to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of academic service quality and its impact on student satisfaction.

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