

## How to Improve Service Quality in School Counselling Services?

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this research is to examine service quality model for increasing the quality of Guidance and Counselling (GC) services. The research oncoming uses the quasi experiment pre-test and post-test control group design. The result of this research: (1) In the pre-test, the quality score of GC services experimental and control group is in the basic category; (2) After the service quality model has been implemented, an increasing quality happen to the experimental group and become the surprising to unbelievable category. Besides that, the controlling group still in the basic category; (3) The service quality model is effective for increasing the service of performance dimension the GC teachers; (4) service quality model is effective for improving service quality on the performance dimensions of school counsellor, but it needs special formulation and longer time to increase the dimension of expectation and importance.

### 1. Introduction

School counseling services is an integral part of the school education program that is aimed at supporting the process and educational goals of the students in planning their future. However, in reality, school counseling service position is still negligable compared to other educational services. It reveals that school counseling services is still in a low bargaining position. This situation is caused by the service activities of school counseling services that are still very distinctive and intangible, so that the impact can be felt directly by all units. It is in contrast with the results of instructional and administrative service activities that is instantaneously perceived by all communities in the world of education.

If this position of school counseling services keeps being neglected, the school counseling services will continue to fall. On the hand, the existence of school counseling services is legally and formally recognized because the students need school counseling services for their own future planning, but on the other hand, the significant acknowledgement of school counseling services from the whole society of education and the utilization of school counseling services by students have not been appropriately executed. Guidance and counseling in the school was implemented as merely administrative work; there were gaps between students' aspiration or expectations and service provided by school counselor [1].

One of the strategic efforts that can be done to improve the quality of school counseling services in schools is by analyzing students' satisfaction (as service users) for services received by them. The understanding of the voice of the customer is a prerequisite for continuous quality improvement in order to achieve total customer's satisfaction [2]. The voice of the customer appears in the needs, desires, expectations, and level of customer's satisfaction of one service. Referring to the ideas and



conditions, because the products of school counseling services are in the form of services, then the students' satisfaction is a way to analyze the quality of school counseling services. This is due to the fact that students are the stakeholders of school counseling services. The satisfaction analysis is the significant a part of paying attention to students as service users. In relation to that, customer loyalty occurs when service users are taken care adequately [2,3,4,5,6,7,8].

This research focuses on developing a standardized service quality model to improve the quality of school counseling services and establish a measuring tool of school counseling services based on a service quality model to measure the services. Specifically, the objectives of this research are to determine the following points: (1) to obtain an estimation of the quality of school counseling services at SMAN X in Bandung through the use of school counseling services measuring tool based on service quality model, and (2) to apprehend the effectiveness of service quality model to improve the quality of school counseling services at SMAN X in Bandung.

The following perspectives are used in conducting this research. *First*, the development of guidance and counseling perspective, because poor guidance and counseling service does not mean that the service is maladaptive. Its concerns is more on effective school counselor's performance and to prevent its deviations. *Second*, the perspective of gap analysis model that is closely related to the students' satisfaction model. The gap analysis model is based on the design of disconfirmation [9]. This design asserts that when the performance attribute increases greater than the expectation or concerned attribute, then the perception of service quality will be positive and vice versa. *Third*, the theoretical perspective of service quality developed by d that describe the quality of service in a form of attitude as a result of the comparison between expectations and performances.

## 2. Methods

This research employs mixed method design sequence. The quantitative approach is used to assess the dynamics of students' satisfaction on school counseling services and the effectiveness of the service quality model in improving the quality of school counseling services. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach is used to determine the rational validity of the hypothetical service quality model and the process of each intervention or service step of each session. At the technical level, the following steps are taken: quasi-experimental method, descriptive analysis method, and collaborative participatory method.

In accordance with the focus, problem, and objectives of this research, the method employs quasi-experimental method with pre-test and post-test control groups design. In the field test, the effectiveness test of the hypothetical service quality model was conducted to improve the quality of school counseling services. The sample was taken from SMAN X in Bandung.

The measuring instrument used to reveal the data is the School Counseling Services Quality Measuring Tool (AUK-LBK), which is an adaptation of Service Quality Scale. The data analysis used analysis of service quality score of school counseling services that is an adaptation from service quality model added with presentation. It is expected that this data analysis can reveal the characteristics of the quality and the students' needs of school counseling services based on service quality model.

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1. The profile of school counseling services quality at SMAN X in Bandung

The first step of this research was to conduct an empirical research on the quality of school counseling services at a senior secondary school (SMAN X) in Bandung in 2010/2011 ( $n = 303$ ). The results of the analysis are taken into consideration in developing the service quality model to improve the quality of school counseling services at SMAN X in Bandung. The results of the analysis show that there were variations in the order of the category starting from the 'Basic' category at 45.21%, the 'Surprising to Unbelievable' category at 25.42%, the 'Criminal' category at 21.45%, and the 'Expected' category at of 7.92%. More detailed description of the quality of school counseling services in the preliminary research is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** The Overview of the Quality of School Counseling Services and Students' Satisfaction

at SMAN X in Bandung				
Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category	
			Quality	Satisfaction
$Q < -1$	65	21.45	<i>Criminal</i>	<i>Not satisfying</i>
$-1 \leq Q < 0$	137	45.21	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Good enough</i>
$Q = 0$	24	7.92	<i>Expected</i>	<i>Satisfying</i>
$Q > 0$	77	25.41	<i>Surprising to unbelievable</i>	<i>Very satisfying</i>
Total	303	100		

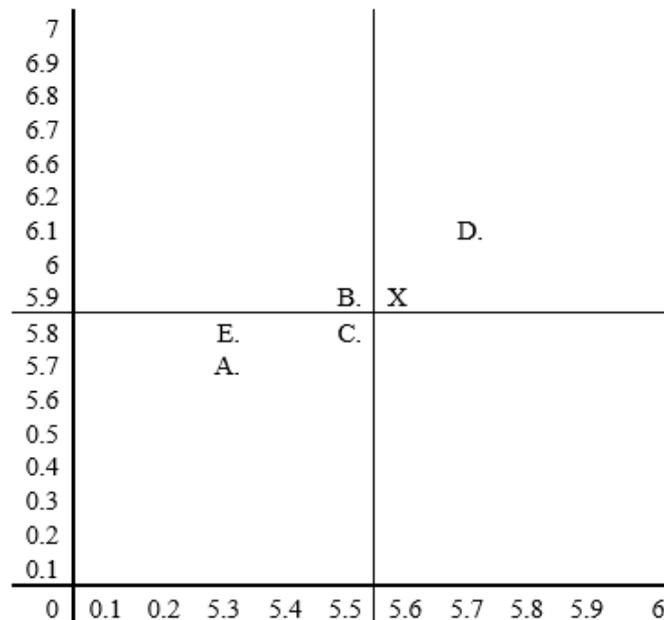
The evaluation of service quality in the preliminary research by using the service quality model includes the calculation in the differences between the values given by the customers for each pair of statements related to Expectations (E) and Perceptions (P) [10]. The score of the service quality of school counseling services at SMAN X in Bandung was at the score of -0,502 and is included in the 'Basic' category. Meanwhile, the quality score based on the dimensions of the service quality is presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** The Overview of the Quality of School Counseling Services in Each Service Quality Dimensions

Dimension	Quality	Category
<i>Tangible</i>	-0.57	<i>Basic</i>
<i>Reliability</i>	-0.42	<i>Basic</i>
<i>Responsiveness</i>	-0.39	<i>Basic</i>
<i>Assurance</i>	-0.49	<i>Basic</i>
<i>Empathy</i>	-0.63	<i>Basic</i>

From the Table 2 above, there is an empirical fact from the overall dimension quality of school counseling services in SMAN X in Bandung that shows it is in 'Basic' category. In addition to measuring the aspects of expectations and perceptions and gaps between them, this research is also designing the aspects of importance (*importance level* = I). Through the calculation of service quality, it can be acknowledged which dimension is considered to have the most interest level according to the students' perspective.

Another important part on the analysis of importance and perceptions toward performance is the quadrant mapping. There are four quadrant mapping analysis of importance and perceptions toward performance. The four quadrants are built on two axes, the horizontal axis (X) that is filled with the score of perception toward performance, and the vertical axis (Y) that is filled with the score of the importance level. To simplify the formula, every factor that affects the quality and students' satisfaction through the quadrant of interest level analysis based on preliminary research is presented in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** Cartesian Quadrant Analysis of Interest Chart

The result of the preliminary research presented in Figure 1 shows that the entry in quadrant I is the dimension of reliability (letter B). Then quadrant II is filled with the dimension of assurance (letter D), whereas Quadrant III is filled with three dimensions at the same time, the dimension of tangible (letter A), the dimension of responsiveness (letter C), and the dimension of empathy (letter E). Then, the quadrant IV is not filled with any dimension.

3.2. *The quality of school counseling services in experiment and control groups at SMAN X in Bandung before and after the implementation of the model (pre-test and post-test)*

The quality of school counseling services in both experiment and control groups at SMAN X in Bandung is presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** The Characteristics of the Quality of School Counseling Services Before and After the Implementation of the Model

Data	Experiment		Control	
	Score	Category	Score	Category
Pre-Test	-0.29	<i>Basic</i>	-0.60	<i>Basic</i>
Post-test	0.27	<i>Surprising to unbelievable</i>	-0.39	<i>Basic</i>

The score of the quality of school counseling services before the implementation of quality of school counseling services improvement model based on service quality shows that both group were in ‘Basic’ category. The characteristics of the quality on ‘Basic’ category show that the organization of school counseling services was still in the determined goal, regardless the way, strategy, and personal conditions itself. The main purpose is simply to reach the service goal. However, after the implementation of the model that was conducted in 3 months, the changes occurred in the experiment group with the quality score is in the category of ‘Surprising to unbelievable’. This means that model implementation can assist the counselor in organizing services beyond what the counselee expects to include that beyond the specified service standard. This condition is in a level that can surprise the counselee, because the counselor performs the service unexpectedly, yet it is very helpful. In addition, the counselor conducts the school counseling services as well as possible not only by standards and provides other unexpected thing, but more than that, the counselor provides school counseling

services wholeheartedly by involving humanist-psychological elements. This quality improvement is due to the implementation of school counseling services model based on the service quality that has been in accordance with service quality concept.

Seen from the Table 4 below, in the experiment group, there was a decrease in the distribution of frequency in the category of 'Criminal', 'Basic', and 'Expected'. However, the category of 'Surprising to unbelievable' showed a significant increase. It means that on the experiment group, the counselor organizes services beyond what the counselee expects because it is outside the defined service standard. This condition is in a level that can surprise the counselee, because the counselor performs the service unexpectedly, yet it is still very helpful. This condition indicates that the school counseling services is performed distinctively because the counselor performs the school counseling services as perfect as possible, not only according to standards and provides other unexpected thing, but more than that, the counselor provides school counseling services wholeheartedly by involving humanist-psychological elements.

In contrast, there are deteriorating value in the 'Criminal' and 'Surprising to unbelievable' categories on the distribution of frequency of the control group in the post-test. An escalating value of distribution of frequency was seen in 'Basic' and 'Expected' categories. It shows that in the control group, the changes led to the median level of the category. It means that the counselor organizes the service to a defined destination, regardless of the way, strategy and personal conditions. The main purpose is simply to reach the service goal and leads to normal conditions, according to the standards of service and carried out by counselor when organizing the services. In other words, the quality of services moves toward the implementation of services in accordance with the set. The quality of services is the delivery of good or excellent service when compared with customer's expectations [10].

**Table 4.** The Distribution of Frequency in the Quality of School Counseling Services Before and After Implementation Model (Pre-Post Test)

Category	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Experiment	Control	Experiment	Control
<i>Criminal/</i> Not satisfying	10.43%	27.63%	0.87%	11.84%
<i>Basic/</i> Good enough	51.30%	40.79%	19.13%	57.89%
<i>Expected/</i> Satisfying	10.43%	5.26%	13.91%	10.53%
<i>Surprising to unbelievable/</i> Very satisfying	27.83%	26.32%	66.09%	19.74%

### 3.3. The effectiveness of service quality model to improve the quality of school counseling services at SMAN X in Bandung

There are major hypothesis and derived hypothesis to be tested in this research. The main hypothesis to be tested in this research is as follows:

"Service quality model can improve the quality of school counseling services on the dimension of Expectation, Performance, and Importance"

The hypothesis was tested using t-test in the experiment and control group. The Table 5 below presents the results of the t-Test thoroughly.

**Table 5.** The Results of the Quality of School Counseling Services t-Test in Experiment and Control Group

Group	Dimension	t-Test Statistics	t-Table	Description
Experiment	Expectation	-1.292	2.598	Not significant
	Performance	4.167		Significant
	Importance	1.479		Not significant
Control	Expectation	-0.535	2.609	Not significant
	Performance	1.014		Not significant
	Importance	-1.717		Not significant

Experiment  $t(0.995)(228) = 2.598$ ; Control  $t(0.995)(150) = 2.609$

The results of the effectiveness test on all dimensions of the control group showed that  $t_{\text{calculated}}$  was smaller than  $t_{\text{table}}$ . It means that in the control group there was no significant improvement on the quality of school counseling services. On the other hand, in the experiment group, only one alternative hypothesis test is accepted. Based on the causality of hypothesis test, although the accepted hypothesis is only on the performance characteristic, the main hypothesis remains rejected. It means that based on  $t_{\text{calculated}}$ , the analysis in the experimental group of the service quality model cannot improve the quality of school counseling services. The service quality model is proved to be effective to improve counselor's performance.

The score of  $t_{\text{calculated}}$  on the expectation test was negative. It means that after the service quality model test on the students' expectation characteristic toward the school counseling services had decreased. The decreased score in the experiment group was larger than in the control group with the score of  $t_{\text{calculated}}$  at 1.292 for the experiment group and at 0.535 for the control group. It means that after conducting the service quality model on the experiment group, there was a lot of declining values in expectation characteristics. Quality improvement will make better performance and service expectations decrease as customers feel satisfied with the service [5].

The  $t_{\text{calculated}}$  score on the test of the importance of the experiment group showed a positive improvement. It means that although the  $t_{\text{calculated}}$  was not significantly increased, but the score showed a positive improvement and it indicates that students feel school counseling services is important to their future. After the implementation of the service quality model, students feel the benefits are good for themselves. Meanwhile, in the control group, the  $t_{\text{calculated}}$  score was negative. It means that in the control group there was a decrease in the importance level of students on their perception of school counseling services due to several school counseling services factors that support the declining value.

Thus, the service quality model in improving the quality of school counseling services can significantly improve the performance of counselor, but less significant in the expectation and student's perception on the importance of school counseling services. The results show that in the implementation of the service quality model to improve the quality of school counseling services, a further attention is needed to the size of expectation and the interest of the students. Emphasize that the delivery of good or excellent service will make performance condition better than customer expectation [10]. It does not matter when expectation and importance are not giving significant changes, because it takes a long time to make both dimensions change significantly.

The customer's satisfaction strategy is a long-term strategy that requires commitment, both in terms of funds and human resources [11]. Therefore, those who want to improve the overall service quality measure will need longer research time.

#### 4. Conclusion

The characteristic of the quality of school counseling services at SMAN X in Bandung is in the 'Basic' category. Prior to the implementation of the service quality model to improve the quality of school counseling services, the characteristics of quality of the experiment and control groups are in the basic category.

After the service quality model was implemented, there was an increase of service quality score in the experimental group to the 'Surprising to unbelievable' category, but the control group was still in the 'Basic' category.

To conclude, the service quality model is effective to improve service quality in the performance dimension of the counselor, while it is not effective in the expectation and importance dimensions. It means that those who want to improve both dimensions, will need more than three months to implement the service quality approach, because the service improvement takes longer time. It is recommended that the service quality model is tested again for at least one year. This is due to an assumption that the quality cannot change instantly, since it needs cooperation and time to achieve customers' satisfaction (students).

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