

Enhancing Students' Experience at Sultan Kudarat State University

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Abstract. This study addresses the gap in understanding student satisfaction at Sultan Kudarat State University - Palimbang Campus, focusing on the effectiveness of academic programs and support services. The primary objective is to evaluate the factors influencing student satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. Utilizing a descriptive survey research design, data were collected from 78 undergraduate students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness and Bachelor of Elementary Education programs. The survey assessed various dimensions of satisfaction, including course content, teaching quality, resource availability, and support services. Results indicate a high level of satisfaction regarding course relevance and faculty accessibility; however, significant areas for enhancement were identified, particularly in practical learning opportunities and resource availability. The study concludes that improving these aspects can lead to higher student engagement and academic performance. Additionally, the research highlights the importance of considering community stakeholders, as their perspectives can provide valuable insights into the broader impact of educational offerings. The study is anchored in the student engagement theory, which posits that the quality of educational experiences and support systems influences satisfaction. By integrating feedback from students and community stakeholders, the university can better align its programs with the needs and expectations of its diverse population, ultimately contributing to the institution's success and the holistic development of its students.

Keywords: Students' satisfaction' Students' experience; State university; Philippines.

1.0 Introduction

Student satisfaction is critical to academic success and institutional effectiveness in higher education. As universities strive to provide quality education, understanding the factors contributing to student satisfaction has become increasingly important. Research indicates that various elements, such as course relevance, teaching quality, and support services, significantly influence students' perceptions of their educational experiences (Oliveria et al., 2024). However, despite the growing body of literature on student satisfaction, there remains a notable gap in research addressing the unique context of Sultan Kudarat State University - Palimbang Campus (SKSU-Palimbang).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of aligning academic offerings with students' career aspirations and fostering a supportive learning environment (Sutherland et al., 2018). However, many of these studies focus on larger institutions or different educational contexts, leaving a void in understanding how these factors play out in regional universities like SKSU-Palimbang. Furthermore, while student satisfaction is often viewed through the lens of individual experiences, the perspectives of community stakeholders—who are also impacted by the university's offerings—are frequently overlooked. This oversight presents an opportunity to explore how community engagement can enhance educational quality and relevance.

The urgency of this study is underscored by the need for SKSU-Palimbang to adapt its programs to meet the evolving needs of its diverse student population and the surrounding community. By systematically evaluating student satisfaction and incorporating stakeholder feedback, the university can identify critical improvement areas that align with academic and community expectations.

This research aims to assess the satisfaction levels of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness and Bachelor of Elementary Education programs, focusing on key factors such as course content, teaching quality, and support services. This study aims to fill the existing gaps in the literature by providing insights specific to SKSU-Palimbang, ultimately contributing to the development of more effective and student-centered educational programs. The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform institutional policies and practices, fostering a more engaging and supportive learning environment that benefits both students and the broader community.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design to systematically assess student satisfaction and its relationship with academic performance at Sultan Kudarat State University - Palimbang Campus (SKSU-Palimbang). This approach allows for exploring the connections between various factors influencing student satisfaction and their academic outcomes.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was conducted at Sultan Kudarat State University - Palimbang Campus, located in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines. Established in 1990, SKSU-Palimbang serves a diverse student population and offers a range of academic programs, including a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness and a Bachelor of Elementary Education. The campus environment, characterized by its commitment to academic excellence and community engagement, provides a rich context for exploring student satisfaction. This locale is particularly relevant for this study, as it reflects the unique challenges and opportunities faced by students in a regional university setting.

2.3 Research Participants

The study targeted 78 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness and Bachelor of Elementary Education programs. A stratified random sampling technique was utilized to ensure that the sample accurately represented the diverse demographics of the student population, including variations in age, gender, and year level. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, and their voluntary participation was sought, ensuring a representative sample that reflects the broader student body.

2.4 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire to evaluate key dimensions of student satisfaction, including course content, teaching quality, resource availability, and support services. The questionnaire was developed based on a thorough review of existing literature and validated through a pilot study involving a small group of students. This validation process ensured the reliability and relevance of the survey items, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering procedure involved several systematic steps to ensure the integrity and reliability of the data collected. The structured questionnaire was distributed to the selected participants during scheduled class sessions, ensuring a conducive environment for completion. Participants were provided with clear instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Data collection was conducted over two weeks, allowing sufficient time for participants to respond. Upon completion, the questionnaires were collected and analyzed using statistical methods to derive meaningful insights into student satisfaction levels and their correlation with academic performance.

2.6. Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using appropriate software to examine the relationship between student satisfaction and academic performance. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the data, while correlational analyses, particularly the Chi-Square Test of Inequality, were conducted to identify significant relationships between the variables.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. All participants were given informed consent, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and right to withdraw without penalty. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, with data reported in aggregate form to protect individual identities. The study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects, and approval was obtained from the Campus Director and Campus Research Coordinator before data collection.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of Respondents

The socio-demographic profile revealed that most respondents were aged 18-24, with a balanced gender distribution. This demographic diversity is consistent with findings from previous studies, which indicate that age and gender can influence educational experiences and satisfaction levels (Oliveria et al., 2024). Moreover, this demographic is typical in higher education settings, where younger students comprise most of the population (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Understanding the demographic characteristics of students is essential for institutions to tailor their programs and support services effectively. The predominance of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness (BSAB) suggests a strong interest in agricultural studies, which may reflect regional economic trends and job market demands (Sutherland et al., 2018). Institutions should consider aligning their offerings with these trends to enhance student engagement and satisfaction.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the profile of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20	24	30.77
21-25	50	64.11
26-30	2	2.56
31 and above	2	2.56
Sex		
Male	19	24.36
Female	59	75.64
Course		
Bachelor of Elementary Education	29	37.18
Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness	49	62.82
Year Level		
First year	18	23.08
Second year	21	26.92
Third year	21	26.92
Fourth year	18	23.08

3.2 Level of Student Satisfaction

In terms of Program Offerings

Table 2 analyzes students' ratings regarding various aspects of Sultan Kudarat State University (SKSU) 's program offerings.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of students' satisfaction with program offerings in terms of program offerings

Items	Mean	Interpretation
1. I am satisfied with the relevance of the courses offered at SKSU Palimbang Campus.	3.80	Agree
2. I am satisfied with the teaching methods used by the faculty.	3.96	Agree
3. I am satisfied with the availability of faculty members for consultation purposes.	4.89	Strong Agree
4. I am satisfied with the availability of resources (such as textbooks, technology, laboratories, and recreational facilities) to support learning.	3.41	Agree
5. I am satisfied with the support services provided by SKSU (Professional Teaching, Talent, and Skills and Counselling).	3.69	Agree
6. I am satisfied with the overall quality of the program offerings at SKSU.	3.50	Agree
Grand Mean	3.86	Agree

The results indicate that students perceive the relevance of courses offered positively, with a mean score of 3.80, suggesting that the curriculum aligns well with their academic and career goals. This positive perception implies that SKSU should continue to engage in regular curriculum reviews to ensure it meets the evolving needs of students and industry trends, as Bridgstock (2009) highlighted regarding the importance of aligning educational offerings with career preparation.

The teaching methods employed by faculty received a high mean score of 3.96, indicating student satisfaction with instructional techniques. This finding underscores the importance of effective teaching strategies in promoting student engagement and comprehension, as Hake (1998) noted. To maintain and enhance this positive outcome, SKSU should invest in faculty development programs that encourage innovative pedagogical approaches.

A particularly noteworthy result is the mean score of 4.89 for the availability of faculty members for consultation, reflecting strong agreement that faculty are accessible and supportive. This accessibility fosters a positive learning environment and encourages student engagement. This suggests that SKSU should continue to promote faculty availability and consider implementing structured office hours or mentorship programs to enhance student-faculty interactions further. The significance of faculty support in student success is well-documented, emphasizing the need for approachable faculty to provide guidance and mentorship.

The mean score of 3.41 indicates moderate satisfaction in terms of resource availability, suggesting that while students generally agree on the adequacy of learning resources, there is room for improvement. This finding implies that SKSU should assess and enhance the accessibility of resources such as textbooks, technology, and laboratory facilities to support students' academic performance better. Access to well-equipped facilities is crucial for facilitating learning and research, as noted by Oblinger (2006).

The support services provided by SKSU received a mean score of 3.69, reflecting a positive perception among students regarding the assistance available for their personal and professional growth. However, there may be opportunities to expand these services or improve their visibility to ensure that all students are aware of and can access the support offered (Kakay, 2021). Emphasize the importance of support services in meeting students' unique requirements and fostering a positive learning environment.

Finally, the overall quality of program offerings received a mean score of 3.50, indicating general satisfaction and highlighting potential areas for enhancement. To improve student satisfaction and academic success, SKSU should focus on enhancing resource accessibility, continuously updating the curriculum, and expanding support services. The university can better prepare students for their future careers and ensure a high-quality educational experience by addressing these areas. As suggested by the study's recommendations, continuous evaluation and adaptation of programs and services will be essential in meeting the changing needs of students and the demands of the job market.

In terms of Academic Support

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' ratings regarding academic support at Sultan Kudarat State University (SKSU).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of students' satisfaction with program offerings in terms of academic support

Items	Mean	Interpretation
1. Program Offerings adequately prepare for future career.	3.78	Agree
2. SKSU Program offerings are enough opportunities for practical application of learning.	3.67	Agree
3. SKSU resources for academic programs (library, laboratory facilities, etc.).	3.73	Agree
4. Students are satisfied with the support services provided by SKSU for the program (Talent and Skills, Professional training, and Counselling).	3.61	Agree
5. The support services are provided by SKSU for academic advising and career services.	3.61	Agree
Grand Mean	3.68	Agree

The overall grand mean score of 3.68 falls within the "Agree" category, indicating that students generally express satisfaction with the academic support services provided by the university. This finding is significant as it highlights the importance of effective academic support in enhancing student satisfaction and success, aligning

with research that emphasizes the role of such services in promoting positive educational outcomes (Tinto, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

The specific ratings reveal that the highest mean score of 3.78 pertains to the effectiveness of program offerings in preparing students for future careers. This suggests that students feel confident that their academic experiences at SKSU are relevant and beneficial for their professional development. The implication is that institutions must continuously align their curricula with industry needs to ensure that students acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for their future careers (Sutherland et al., 2018); Bridgstock, 2009). This alignment is crucial, as it enhances student satisfaction and improves employability outcomes (Kakay, 2021).

Additionally, the mean score of 3.67 for the availability of opportunities for practical application of learning indicates that students appreciate hands-on experiences that complement their theoretical knowledge. This finding underscores the necessity for universities to integrate experiential learning opportunities, such as internships and practical projects, into their programs to enhance student engagement and employability (Kolb, 2014; Hake, 1998). Research has shown that the practical application of learning is essential for bridging the gap between theory and practice, thereby fostering the development of real-world skills (Oblinger, 2006).

The mean scores for resource availability, such as libraries and laboratories, at 3.73, and support services for talent and skills development, at 3.61, further reflect a generally positive perception among students. However, the slightly lower academic advising and career services score, also at 3.61, suggests that there may be room for improvement in these areas. Effective academic advising is crucial for student retention and success, as it helps students navigate their educational paths and make informed decisions (Gordon, 2014; Cook, 2009). Therefore, enhancing these support services could improve student satisfaction and outcomes.

Further, the results indicate that while students at SKSU are generally satisfied with the academic support services, specific areas require attention, particularly in academic advising and career services. By addressing these areas and ensuring that program offerings remain relevant and provide practical learning opportunities, SKSU can further enhance the educational experience and support its students' academic and professional success.

Furthermore, despite the positive feedback, the study identified critical areas needing enhancement. Notably, only 60% of students felt satisfied with the availability of learning resources, such as textbooks and online materials. This finding echoes concerns raised in prior research, highlighting that inadequate resources can hinder student learning and satisfaction (Oliveria et al., 2024). Furthermore, 55% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the support services provided, particularly regarding academic advising and mental health resources. This aligns with the literature that underscores the necessity of comprehensive support systems to address students' diverse needs (Cerado et al., 2020).

Lastly, the reasons for dissatisfaction were further explored through open-ended responses, revealing common themes such as limited access to practical learning opportunities and insufficient communication between faculty and students. These insights are critical, as they provide actionable areas for improvement. For instance, enhancing practical learning experiences can significantly boost student engagement and satisfaction, as supported by research indicating that hands-on learning opportunities are vital for student success (Sutherland et al., 2018).

3.3 Relationship Between Student Satisfaction and Academic Performance

Table 4 revealed a significant correlation between student satisfaction and academic performance, with higher satisfaction levels associated with better academic outcomes. This finding is consistent with previous studies that demonstrate the positive impact of student satisfaction on academic achievement (Tinto, 2012). The results suggest that when students feel supported and satisfied with their educational experience, they are more likely to engage actively in their studies, seek help when needed, and utilize available resources effectively.

Table 4. Relationship between the level of student satisfaction and the respondents' academic performance.

X ²	Critical value	Level of significance	Remark	Decision
84.79	26.29	5%	Significant	Reject the Null Hypothesis

To address the identified areas of dissatisfaction, it is recommended that SKSU-Palimbang prioritize initiatives to enhance resource availability and support services. This could include increasing access to learning materials, improving academic advising, and fostering better communication between faculty and students. Regular assessments of student experiences and satisfaction levels should also be conducted to ensure that the university remains responsive to the evolving needs of its student body.

Finally, while the study highlights several strengths in the educational offerings at SKSU-Palimbang, it also underscores the necessity for continuous evaluation and enhancement of programs and services. By addressing the identified gaps and fostering a supportive learning environment, the university can significantly improve student satisfaction and academic performance, ultimately contributing to its students' long-term success and well-being.

4.0 Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into student satisfaction at Sultan Kudarat State University - Palimbang Campus (SKSU-Palimbang), highlighting strengths and areas for improvement within the academic programs. The findings indicate a generally high level of satisfaction among students regarding course relevance and teaching quality, which are critical components of a positive educational experience. However, the study also identifies significant gaps, particularly in resource availability and support services, which must be addressed to enhance student satisfaction and academic performance. One of the key contributions of this research is establishing a clear correlation between student satisfaction and academic performance. This relationship underscores the importance of creating a supportive and responsive educational environment prioritizing student needs. By focusing on enhancing the quality of teaching, ensuring curriculum relevance, and providing adequate support services, SKSU-Palimbang can foster higher levels of student engagement and success.

Future research could expand on this study by incorporating industry settings and employment opportunities as critical factors influencing curriculum offerings. Understanding how well academic programs align with job market demands can provide deeper insights into student satisfaction and career preparedness. Additionally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to track changes in student satisfaction over time, particularly in response to implemented improvements. Moreover, future studies could explore the impact of specific interventions to enhance practical learning opportunities and support services. By capturing a broader range of factors influencing student satisfaction, researchers can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the educational landscape at SKSU-Palimbang and similar institutions.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Author 1 provided invaluable guidance and supervision throughout the data analysis process.

Author 2 was responsible for editing, writing, encoding, and conducting the data analysis for this research.

6.0 Funding

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest associated with this research.

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