

Phenomenological Profiling of State Universities and Colleges in Region VIII

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Abstract— The study evaluates the quality of service of frontline services of State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) based on the assessments from students, employees, and supervisors to further enhance the services provided by the offices. The descriptive assessment research method was utilized to compare the quality of delivery of frontline services of higher education of the main and external campuses in the state universities and colleges (SUCs) in Region VIII. The status of frontline services, namely, registrar's office, cashier's office, library, medical and dental clinic, guidance office, and scholarship division were determined with the consideration that higher service quality would result to more satisfaction from the clients. Based on the responses from students, employees, and supervisors, frontline services have agreeable quality of service to their respective clientele. The students' responses recorded the lowest mean rating which were resulted to high significant differences between the group of respondents in the perception on the quality of service. The differences could connote that the responses are based on the wide disparity of assessment between the groups of respondents as supported by the Multiple Comparison Test using Tukey's HSD. Furthermore, the quality of service as perceived by the group of respondents had no significant differences between the services of the main and the external campuses of the SUCs. The differences in the perception of the quality of service among the group of respondents serve as an indication that actions to further enhance the quality of service must be implemented. Specific factors were identified as factors affecting the quality of service for the frontline services. Length of service of the employees showed a significant relationship with the quality of service provided. This implies that the more experience the employee has, the better the service is provided. Negative behavior, lack of computer units, books, and medical and dental equipment and supplies were the main problems encountered as reported by the student-respondents. The study emphasizes the importance of the factors in which SUCs could highly enhance the quality of services provided by the frontline services.

Keywords— Descriptive Assessment Research Method: Frontline Services: Quality of Delivery: Quality of Service: State Universities and Colleges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Quality higher education is essential in creating the country's human resources for sustainable development. Growing economies, especially in Asia, had given more importance in developing its human resource and the movement of the people, students, and the workforce [1]. Higher education contributed a lot to the workforce which gave them opportunities to work anywhere in the world. Universities had been the key players in innovation and research in a country [2].

In order to maintain and improve the quality of education, higher education institutions have been invited to be certified by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Fundamental principles were introduced in ISO 9000, ISO 9001, and other quality management-related standards. Customer focus, leadership, engagement to people, process approach, improvement, evidence-based decision making, and relationship management are the fundamental principles that were taken into consideration [3]. The standards and principles required by ISO paved the way of improving the educational system which could be benefitted by the SUCs, the students, and the society.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) had given strong emphasis on the maintenance and improvement of the quality systems of state universities and colleges. The commission aims to educate and train the Filipino People to develop enhanced labour productivity and responsible citizenship in an accessible educational environment without neglecting the improvement of the quality systems. The commission is mandated to provide quality education to the poor and disadvantaged. The amalgamation of public higher education institutions is one of the strategies that would address the problem in the accessibility of quality higher education. With this move, the number, distribution, and growth of SUCs in the country will be controlled to avoid proliferation of the schools and the courses which could result to poor quality education. This reformation would potentially result to the improvement of the efficiency of the schools, increase in the quality of public higher education, and enhancement of the accessibility of high-quality education.

The skills mismatch had also been addresses through the development of Philippine Qualification Framework. This set the standard levels of educational qualifications, trainings, and competencies. The standards had aligned the competencies of local graduates with the international qualifications framework to support local and international mobility of workers with the intent to equalize the Philippine qualifications with the international standards.

This study revolves on the following laws and standards: Republic Act No. 7722 or Higher Education Act of 1994; Republic Act No. 9485 or the Anti Red-Tape Act (ARTA) of 2007; Two-factor Theory of Herzberg (1959); CHED Memorandum Order No, 41. s. 2016; and ISO Quality Management Principles.

The Republic Act No. 7722 or Higher Education Act of 1994 had institutionalized the creation of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) who is primarily responsible on the

management of the higher education system in the Philippines. The commission had managed all activities of institutions especially in improving the quality systems [4].

The Republic Act No. 9485 or the Anti Red-Tape Act (ARTA, 2007) was passed to improve the efficiency in the delivery of government service to the public by reducing bureaucratic red-tape, preventing graft and corruption, and providing penalties. This policy promotes integrity, accountability, proper management, and effective delivery of frontline services [5].

The two-factor theory by Herzberg (1959) stated that there are certain factors in the workplaces that could cause job satisfaction. The nature of the work itself - the opportunities, responsibilities, and achievement can be regarded as motivational factors [6]. While dissatisfaction can be caused by certain factors at the end of the spectrum. This could include policies, procedures, supervision, and working conditions. These factors could cause dissatisfaction among the employees which could eventually affect their performance. This theory focused on the importance of internal job factors that could motivate the employees to improve their service. The CHED Memorandum Order No. 41, s. 2016 created the guidelines governing the sale, merger, or consolidation of higher private higher institutions in the Philippines [7]. It has emphasized on the strengthening of the higher education institutions' delivery of quality learning outcomes and producing globally competitive graduates.

The ISO Quality Management Principles (ISO, 2015) were a set of fundamental beliefs and rules that were accepted as true and improve the status of quality management. The principles should be given equal attention by institutions to improve their quality of service. Collaborative efforts should be done by the different entities of the institution for equitable implementation in the entire school system.

Since educational institutions service the people, the study aims to determine the status of the frontline services of SUCs of Region VIII by profiling and evaluating the effects on the quality of services delivered. Given the data of the evaluation, the study further aims to generate significant educational intervention program to further enhance the delivery system of the frontline services.

II. METHOD

The study utilized the descriptive assessment research method to determine the status of the frontline services of state universities and colleges in Region VIII using a questionnaire as a tool for gathering data. The profile variables of the frontline services for the main and external campuses are sought in terms of the number of employees, number of computer units, number of copying and printing equipment, availability of internet connection, and the accessibility of the office. The study conducted profiling of the employees of the frontline services in terms of age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, employment status, length of service, and number of trainings and seminars related to the assigned work. The status of the frontline services is determined by the students, employees, and supervisors of the registrar's office, cashier's office, library, medical and dental clinic, guidance

office, and scholarship division. Significant differences in the perception in the quality of services among the respondents and between the main and external campuses were determined. Furthermore, the relationship between employees' profile and the status of frontline services of the SUCs were determined. The problems encountered by the students and employees were collated to identify specific problems encountered by the respondents.

A. Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the main campus and 1 external state universities and colleges in Region VIII. The main campuses and the respective external campuses that were included in the study are the following: Southern Leyte State University (SLSU-Main) Maasin City, and SLSU-Hinunangan Campus; Visayas State University (VSU-Main) Baybay City and VSU-Alang-alang Campus; Palompon Institute of Technology (PIT-Main) Palompon, Leyte and PIT-Tabango Campus; Biliran Province State University (BPSU-Main) Naval, Biliran and BPSU-Biliran Campus; Eastern Visayas State University (EVSU-Main) Tacloban City and EVSU-Carigara Campus; Eastern Samar State University (ESSU-Main) Borongan City and ESSU-Can-avid Campus; Samar State University (SSU-Main) Catabalogan City and SSU-Mercerdes Campus; Northwest Samar State University (NwSSU-Main) Calbayog City and NwSSU-San Jorge Campus; University of Eastern Philippines (UEP-Main) University Town, Catarman, Northern Samar and UEP-Catubig Campus. A total of 18 campuses, 9 main campuses, and 9 external campuses were subject universities for the study.

B. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were chosen randomly from the 4 main and 4 external campuses of the state universities and colleges in Region VIII. The student-respondents composed of third year and fourth year students were chosen using the Slovin's formula. The employees of the frontline service offices and supervisors had been chosen by total enumeration.

C. Instrumentation

The data of the study were gathered through questionnaires. There were 3 sets of questionnaires were prepared specific for each group of respondents.

The first set of questionnaires with 2 parts was dedicated to the student-respondents of the main and external campuses of the SUCs in Region VIII. The first part of the questionnaire determined the status of the frontline services. The student responses were based on the 5-point rating scale: 5 – strongly agree (SA), 4 – Agree (A), 3 – Undecided (U), 2 – Disagree, and 1 – Strongly Disagree (SD). The second part focused on the problems encountered by the respondents on the frontline services.

Another set of the questionnaires was dedicated to the employees of the respective frontline services. Part 1 was about the professional profile of the employees. The second part dealt with the status of their respective offices through a

5-point scale rating: 5 – strongly agree (SA), 4 – Agree (A), 3 – Undecided (U), 2 – Disagree, and 1 – Strongly Disagree (SD). The third part of the questionnaire was on the problems encountered by the employees in their respective offices.

The last set of questionnaires was intended for the supervisors of the respective frontline services of the main and external campuses of the SUCs in Region VIII. The first part of the questionnaire focused on the profiling of the respective frontline service. The part 2 dealt on the status of the respective offices in the perspective of the supervisor. The response of the supervisors was based on the 5-point scale rating: 5 – strongly agree (SA), 4 – Agree (A), 3 – Undecided (U), 2 – Disagree, and 1 – Strongly Disagree (SD). The third part of the questionnaire was on the problems encountered by the supervisors of the respective offices.

D. Validation of the Instrument

The questionnaire was patterned from Aniga (2014) with modification to fit the indicators required by the study [8]. To determine the viability of the questionnaire in the actual experimental setup, instrument validation was conducted at the Leyte Normal University, a non-respondent university due to its lack of an external campus. The instrument validation concluded with revisions on the previously proposed questionnaire. The questionnaires produced after the validation was used as the final sets for data gathering.

E. Statistical Treatment

The research undertaking had been subjected to the following statistical techniques in processing the data. Frequency count was used to describe the profile variables of the frontline services. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to characterize the employees’ profile in terms of the following: age; sex; civil status; highest educational attainment; employment status; length of service; and number of training/seminars related to work assigned. Mean and standard deviation were computed to determine status of frontline services of the following: registrar’s office, cashier’s office, library, medical/dental clinic, guidance, and scholarship.

One-Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare significant differences of perception of the students, employees, and supervisors on the status of frontline services. Multiple Comparison using Tukey HSD was employed to determine which pair of respondents had manifested significant difference of perception. T-test for two independent samples was used to compare the perception of the respondents on the status of frontline services between the main and external campuses of the state universities and colleges.

Pearson r Coefficient of Correlation and ETA Coefficient were used to determine significant relationship between the employees’ profile and the status of frontline services. An Alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine the statistical significance of difference/relationship on the perception of respondents on the variables of the study using the appropriate statistical tools to answer the specific questions asked. All the

data gathered were processed through the computer using a statistical software.

III. RESULT

The frontline service offices had an overall mean of 5 employees with the registrar’s office having the highest mean of 6 employees, followed by the library with the overall mean of 6 employees; while the guidance office and scholarship division had the fewest overall mean of 3 and 3 employees, respectively. As regards to the number of computer units, the overall mean was 6.05 with the library having the highest overall mean of 14.00 computer units, followed by the registrar’s office and cashier’s office with 6.33 and 5.93 computer units, respectively. However, the medical/dental and guidance offices had the least number of computer unit. Meanwhile, the number of copying equipment and printers was very few with an overall mean of 1.22 and 3.19, respectively. For the internet connectivity, the registrar’s office, cashier’s office, the library, and scholarship division had the highest allocation of internet connectivity, with others without connectivity. In terms of accessibility, almost all frontline service offices were rated “very satisfactory.”

TABLE 1. Mean and Standard Deviation on the Profile of the Frontline Services of the Main and External Campuses of the State Universities and Colleges in Region VIII

Frontline Services	No. of Employees (n = 227)		No. of Computer Units (n = 587)		No of Copying Equipment (n = 119)		No of Printers (n = 308)	
	Mean	sd	Mean	sd	Mean	sd	Mean	sd
Registrar's Office	6.00	5.13	6.33	7.15	1.39	0.61	4.94	4.89
Cashier's Office	5.00	3.44	5.93	5.04	1.33	1.76	4.53	3.94
Library	6.00	4.88	14.88	10.55	1.53	0.80	2.06	1.95
Medical/ Dental Clinic	5.00	6.47	2.93	3.45	1.00	1.13	3.27	5.92
Guidance Office	3.00	1.69	2.88	2.00	1.19	1.72	2.06	1.57
Scholarship Division	3.00	1.96	3.33	2.50	0.87	0.83	2.27	1.98
Over-all	5.00	3.93	6.05	5.11	1.22	1.14	3.19	3.38

The employees of the frontline services had a mean age of 38.48 years old, majority female, married, majority bachelor’s degree holders only, with permanent status. Moreover, majority had been employed for 4.25 years and above; with a mean of 4.75 relevant trainings/seminars attended.

The perceived status of the frontline services by the students, employees, and supervisors of the main and external campuses of the state universities and colleges in Region VIII was “agree” only and manifested by the narrow spread of the standard deviation. Accordingly, the student-respondents had reflected the lowest rating among the three groups of respondents.

There were highly significant mean differences among the perception on the three groups of respondents as revealed by the overall result of the One-Way Analysis of Variance on the status of frontline services of the main and external campuses of the state universities and colleges in Region VIII. Such

finding was supported by the result of the multiple comparison test using Tukey HSD where the student-employee pair and student-supervisor pair had also manifested highly significant difference. This had rejected the null hypothesis which stated that there were no significant differences on the perception of the students, employees, and supervisors on the status of frontline services of the main and external campuses of SUCs in Region VIII.

TABLE 2. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Perception of Respondents on the Status of Frontline Services of the Main and External Campuses of the State Universities and Colleges in Region VIII

Frontline Services	F-value	df	p-value
Registrar's Office	10.76 **	2, 247	0.00
Cashier	16.95 **	2, 234	0.00
Library	5.19 **	2, 253	0.01
Medical and Dental Clinic	13.92 **	2, 237	0.00
Guidance	8.04 **	2, 216	0.00
Scholarship	13.49 **	2, 207	0.00
Over-all	62.03 **	2, 1399	0.00

**Highly Significant at 0.05 level

TABLE 3. Multiple Comparisons Test Using Tukey HSD Test on the Perception of Respondents on the Status of Frontline Services of the Main and External Campuses of State Universities and Colleges in Region VIII

Frontline Services	(I) Respondent Type	(J) Respondent Type	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Registrar's Office	Student	Employee	-0.324**	0.083	0.000
		Supervisor	-0.412**	0.133	0.006
Cashier	Student	Employee	-0.446**	0.098	0.000
		Supervisor	-0.578**	0.138	0.000
Library	Student	Employee	-0.238 [†]	0.098	0.044
		Supervisor	-0.391 [†]	0.159	0.040
Medical & Dental Clinic	Student	Employee	-0.519**	0.109	0.000
		Supervisor	-0.436 [†]	0.156	0.015
Guidance	Student	Employee	-0.310 [†]	0.105	0.010
		Supervisor	-0.401**	0.131	0.007
Scholarship	Student	Employee	-0.411 [†]	0.139	0.010
		Supervisor	-0.663**	0.146	0.000
Over-all	Student	Employee	-0.358**	0.041	0.000
		Supervisor	-0.483**	0.059	0.000

**Highly Significant at 0.05 level

As shown by the T-test result, there was no significant difference on the perception of respondents on the status of frontline services between the main and external campuses of state universities and colleges in Region VIII which failed to reject the null hypothesis.

TABLE 4. T-test on the Perception of Respondents on the Status of Frontline Services Between the Main and External Campuses of the State Universities and Colleges in Region VIII

Frontline Services	t-value	df	p-value
Registrar's Office	-0.53 ns	57	0.60
Cashier	1.30 ns	49	0.20
Library	-0.28 ns	53	0.78
Medical and Dental Clinic	-1.17 ns	48	0.25
Guidance	-0.32 ns	39	0.75
Scholarship	1.91 ns	40	0.06
Over-all	0.45 ns	296	0.65

ns - Not Significant

Of the selected profile variables of the employees, only their length of service had manifested highly significant relationship, but with negligible relationship with the status of the frontline services of the main and external campuses of the

state universities and colleges in Region VII. On the contrary, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and employment status manifested no significant relationship with status of frontline services but with marked/moderate relationship. This finding had rejected the null hypothesis which stated there was no significant relationship between employees' profile and the status of frontline services.

TABLE 5. Test of Significant Relationship on the Status of Frontline Services of the Main and External Campuses and Profile of Employees of the State Universities and Colleges in Region VIII

Variables	r	Description	p-value
Pearson r:			
Age	-0.03 ns	N	0.71
Length of Service	0.13**	N	0.00
No of Relevant Seminars/Trainings	0.00ns	N	0.95
Eta Coefficient:			
Sex	0.42ns	MR	0.11
Civil Status	0.46ns	MR	0.19
Highest Educational Attainment	0.48ns	MR	0.13
Employment Status	0.40ns	L	0.09

** - Highly Significant
 ns - Not Significant
 1.00 - (P) Perfect Relationship
 0.91 - 0.99 (VH) Very High Relationship
 0.71 - 0.90 (H) High Relationship
 0.41 - 0.70 - (MR) Marked/Moderate Relationship
 0.21 - 0.40 - (L) Low Relationship
 0.00 - 0.20 - (N) Negligible Relationship

For problems encountered by the students, the first five ranked problems encountered were the following: negative behavior of some employees and supervisors; unavailability or lack of computer units for student use; lack of prioritization for the purchase of library, medical and dental facilities, and equipment; inadequate books and other references in every program offered; and unavailability of common medicines in the school clinic.

TABLE 6. Problems Encountered by the Student-Respondents of the Study

Problems	Students	
	f	Rank
Negative behavior of some employees and supervisors	652	1
Unavailability or lack of computer units for student use	556	2
Lack of prioritization for the purchase of library, medical and dental facilities, and equipment	372	3
Inadequate books and other references in every program offered	360	4
Unavailability of common medicines in the school clinic	357	5
Inadequate number of personnel in the frontline services, e.g. library, cashier, guidance, medical and dental, etc.	278	6
Too many restrictions	258	7
Prerequisite course requirement	253	8
Limited number of students per class requirement	213	9
Discrepancy of data on grades, about transcripts, credits, degree classification, etc.	209	10
Limited space of the library	208	11
Lost receipts and unaware of student number	182	12
Competition of resources among frontline services	180	13
No authorization from the concerned when asking for records of students	143	14
Parental influence	121	15

The first five ranked problems encountered by the

employees and supervisors of the frontline services were the following: inadequate office supplies, facilities and ICT equipment, library holdings; teachers’ delayed submission of grades/reports/ completed INC.; poor students’ performance and behavior; late or no submission of PSA birth certificates by students; and no authorization from the concerned when asking for records of students.

TABLE 7. Problems Encountered by the Employee and Supervisor- Respondents of the Study

Problems	Employees		Supervisor	
	f	Rank	f	Rank
Inadequate office supplies, facilities and ICT equipment, library holdings, etc.	119	1	66	1
Teachers’ delayed submission of grades/reports/ completed INC	111	2	49	2
Poor students’ performance and behavior	95	3	34	3
Late or no submission of PSA birth certificates by students	61	4	23	5
No authorization from the concerned when asking for records of students	57	5	29	4
Lack of administrative support from the university heads	45	6	22	6
Indifference of personnel towards clients/work	39	7	17	7
Discrepancy of data on grades, TOR, certificates, degree classification, credits earned, etc.	37	9	12	8
Limited supervision from the university heads	39	8	9	9

IV. DISCUSSION

The study determined the profile of the frontline services of the main and external campuses of state universities and colleges in terms of number of employees, number of computer units, number of copying and printing equipment, internet connection, and accessibility, using mean, and standard deviation.

The number of employees has an overall mean of 5.00 with a standard deviation of 3.93. Relating this figure to finding on accessibility of the frontline services of the SUCs, the student-respondents have favorably rated the quality of the services given by the limited number of employees. The number of computer units has an overall mean of 6.05 with standard deviation of 5.11. Relating again this finding to the data on accessibility and internet connectivity, the frontline services of the SUCs have exuded very satisfactory service to their clients. On the number of copying equipment and number of printers, their overall means are 1.22 and 3.19 with standard deviations of 1.14 and 3.39, respectively. These material resources that have equipped the frontline service offices could commensurate the number of employees in these offices. This has been presupposed that the quality of services rendered by each frontline service is largely dependent on the amount and availability of resources allocated to each office. Unsatisfactory ratings could be attributed to delays or problems in delivery of services, which could be due to distance of the frontline service in the campus, delayed communications, or timeliness of transaction between agencies especially along agencies separated by long distances and unavailability of personnel. This is the reason why state universities and colleges are required to spell out their system

and procedure through Citizen’s Charter (CC) for efficient and effective delivery of frontline services. This complies to Republic Act No.9485, otherwise known as the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007.

From the One-Way Analysis of Variance, the data manifested that there are highly significant mean differences on the perception among the three groups of respondents on the status of frontline services of the state universities and colleges in Region VIII. This has been shown by an over-all computed F-value of 62.03 and p-value of 0.00 which is lower than $<p .01$ level of significance. This finding has, therefore, rejected the null hypothesis which states that there are no significant differences on the perception of the students, employees, and supervisors on the status of frontline services.

Specifically, the cashier’s frontline service has the highest computed F-value of 16.95 with a p-value of 0.00; while the library has an extreme F-value of 5.19 with a p-value of 0.01, both lesser than Alpha 0.05 level of significance, described as “highly significant.” The results would connote that there are wide variations on the perspectives of the students, employees, and supervisors on the status of the frontline services of the main and external campuses in the SUCs in Region VIII. Relating this finding to the previous tables, the student-respondents have registered the least overall mean; then followed by the employees, while the supervisors have the highest rating. These differences in perception could be taken as eye-opener for the SUCs administrators together with the supervisors and employees of the frontline service offices to validate the result of the study.

The overall means of the student-employee respondent-pair ($= -0.358$, p-value = 0.000), and student-supervisor pair ($= -0.483$, p-value = 0.000) have manifested highly significant differences of perception on the six (6) frontline services of the SUCs in Region VIII. Individual analysis of the frontline services of the main and external campuses of state universities and colleges in Region VIII would bear that only the library and scholarship division have shown significant differences of perception of the student and employee – pair, and student and supervisor -pair. The rest of the frontline services have revealed highly significant difference in the perception of the student and employee-pair, and the student and supervisor-pair, have rejected the null hypothesis. There are notable differences of perception between respondent-pairs. This implies that the student-respondents have distinct perspective on the quality of frontline services they expect from said offices.

There is no significant mean difference on the perception of respondents on the status of frontline services between the main and external campuses of state universities and colleges in Region VIII. This is manifested by the overall t-value of 0.45 and p-value of 0.65, being greater than the Alpha 0.05 level of significance. This finding has failed to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference on the perception of respondents on the status of frontline services between the main and external campuses of state universities and colleges in Region VIII. The finding could imply that the perception of respondents on the status of frontline services are the same between the main and external

campuses. This could further connote that the frontline services in both campuses of the state universities and colleges do offer such services for their clients as expected in RA 9485.

Only length of service has manifested highly significant relationship with the status of frontline service. However, this has registered “negligible relationship” only. Such finding could imply that the longer the employee has stayed in the frontline service office, the better would be his/her performance in the said office. In turn the frontline service offices could reduce bureaucratic red tape and processing time which would exude quality service to their clientele. Bejou (2005) had correlated students to customers’ satisfaction on the pretext that students’ pay their education [10]. He continued saying that if the initial encounter with their school is good, and the going relationship is strong, satisfaction and loyalty would remain high. Reiterating the ideas of Vaill (2008), higher education institutions should be mindful of responsive to the characteristics, needs and expectations of the students in the frontline services of their institutions [11].

There are 15 identified problems encountered by the student- respondents, arranged from highest to lowest of the frequencies and the corresponding ranking. The first problem is “negative behavior of some employees and supervisors” with 652 (60.88%) of 1071 student-respondents, construed as the majority. The next problem is unavailability or lack of computer units for students’ use with 556 (51.91%) of 1071 student-respondents, still forming the majority. However, the third problem is lack of prioritization for the purchase of library, medical and dental facilities and equipment with 372 (34.73%) only. The fourth problem is “inadequate books and other references in every program offered” with 360 (33.61%) only; and fifth problem is “unavailability of common medicines in the school clinic” with 357 (33.33%) only. The first five problems are interconnected with each other because of the shortfalls in the inadequacies of the higher education to provide the needs of the students, which on the other hand should also be understood and considered by them. With the government’s subsidy on free tuition fees, the tendency of the college students is to flock to the public schools which would mean additional enrolment. In the study of Pamatmat, Dominguez, Pamin, and Daran (2018), empathy had been one of the service quality dimensions considered [12]. Empathy in their study encompasses consideration of the students’ best interest, and fair and unbiased handling of students concerns. This is related to the negative behavior as clamored by student-respondents, employees, and supervisors of the main and external campuses of the state universities and colleges in Region VIII. Similarly, the study of Jiewanto et al. (2012) also discussed several problems causing dissatisfaction among university students relative to service quality [13].

The first five (5) problems encountered by the employees and supervisors of the frontline services have been coincidentally felt by both respondent-groups. These have been arranged from highest to lowest with their respective ranking, which to wit: inadequate office supplies, facilities and ICT equipment, library holdings (rank 1); teachers’ delayed submission of grades/reports/ completed INC. (rank2); poor students’ performance and behavior (rank 3); late or no

submission of PSA birth certificates by students (rank 4); and no authorization from the concerned when asking for records of students (rank 5).

These five problems are considered vital and imperative; thus, should be given utmost attention, sought solutions and satisfaction. Scrutinizing further, the sixth problem which is “lack of administrative support from the university heads” would contrary to Section 7 of RA 9485, the Accountability of the Heads of Offices and Agencies. This so provides that heads of the office or agency shall be primary responsible for the implementation of this Act and shall be held accountable to the public in rendering fast, efficient, convenient, and reliable service. All transactions and processes are deemed to have been made with the permission or clearance from the highest authority having jurisdiction over the government office or agency concerned. In this aspect, the university presidents/heads should be made aware of the inadequacies of the frontline service offices, such as those articulated by the students, employees, and supervisors. As noted in the identified problems of the employees and supervisors, those matters which would concern teachers and students should have been brought to the attention of the proper authorities to avoid being accused of usurpation of powers. Everybody should know the proper protocol in the transactions made by clients, employees, and supervisors of the frontline service offices. The Citizen’s Charter of every office could limit or avoid controversy of transactions in the state universities and colleges in Region VIII.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding, the following recommendations were formulated:

1. The result of the study could be disseminated to the main and external campuses of state universities and colleges in Region VIII to validate the findings and plan out measures to improve frontline service quality.
2. While factors like number of employees, enough number of computers and printers, internet connections and accessibility had been identified by the three groups of respondents to be available in the frontline services of SUCs in Region VIII, there would still be a need for the management of SUCs to investigate these factors towards effective and efficient exercise of their office functions and satisfaction of clientele.
3. The main and external campus administrators may encourage their frontline service employees, and supervisors to improve their educational qualification and allow them to attend seminars/training in relation to their assigned to task to improve their performance.
4. The SUC administration may give a big push to satisfy the frontline employees and supervisors so that they can be promoted and given permanent status, especially those with job orders only.
5. Educational preparation and work ethics may be considered when hiring employees/staff for the frontline service to maximize their potentials that would help the SUCs’ mission and goals.

6. Negative behaviors and gaps from among frontline employees, supervisors and other faculty and staff may affect individual performance, thus these need to be settled out by the administrator concerned.
7. Problems identified by students, employees, and supervisors on the inadequacies of material, supplies and equipment may be considered in the annual procurement plan of the SUCs. Standard or spacious frontlines service offices with clientele's transaction area in all SUCs in Region VIII are also recommended to provide ideal delivery of services.
8. Another study on frontline services may be undertaken with other variables not considered in this study.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were formulated:

1. The quality of frontline services the main and external campuses of the state universities and colleges in Region VIII could be measured by the efficiency and effectiveness of the number of employees, number of computer units, internet connectivity, number of copying equipment, and number of printers there had been in the frontline service offices. Moreover, there had been equitable number of employees, computer units, internet connectivity, copying equipment and printers in frontline service offices which had more transactions with students and other customer. In this regard, the registrar's office and the library had the highest mean of employees, while the guidance office and scholarship division had the fewest. SUCs libraries had adopted the e-libraries, while other frontline offices with computer units and internet connectivity could have used these for their students' satisfaction. Meanwhile, the limited number of copying equipment and printers could be availed of in nearby vicinities of the SUCs. Accessibility could be one of the quality dimensions of the frontline service offices of the SUCs in Region VIII.
2. The employees of the frontline services are in their middle adulthood, female dominated and mature, with security of tenure and presupposed to have better disposition in dealing with the students. majority bachelor's degree holders only, with permanent status. However, to better serve the students, SUCs administrators should have employees attend customer service training sessions to learn the basics of customer service. This could be the inadequacies of the frontline service employees of the SUCs.
3. The perceived status of the frontline services by the students, employees, and supervisors of the main and external campuses of the state universities and colleges in Region VIII could be a wake-up call to the state universities and colleges administrators to do more with less which could be done by meeting and exceeding the expectations and needs of their students. In this study, the researcher would like to believe that student satisfaction could be considered an important factor in measuring the quality of service provided by the institution. Being the most important beneficiary of the educational institution's

- services, students would in the right position to determine the quality of services offered by their universities.
4. The wide disparity of perception among the students, employees, and supervisors could be eye-opener on the quality of service the frontline service offices have offered to the customers. This would be imperative that the higher the service quality, the more satisfied the customers.
5. The no significant difference on the perception of the three groups of respondents would imply that the status of frontline services are the same between the main and external campuses of state universities and colleges in Region VIII.
6. The highly significant relationship between length of service of the employees and the status of the frontline services of the main and external campuses of the state universities and colleges in Region VIII would imply that the longer the experience of the employees, the better would be the performance of the frontline services.
7. The first five ranked problems encountered by the students would eye-openers for the employees and supervisors of the frontline service offices of the main and external campuses of the state universities and colleges in Region VIII. Student satisfaction could be considered an important factor in measuring the quality of service provided by the institution. Being the most important beneficiary of the educational institution's services, students could be in the right position to determine the quality of services offered by their universities.

The first five ranked problems encountered by the employees and supervisors of the frontline services would remind them of their organizational structure of which their shortcomings in their respective offices could affect the whole university especially if they would not bring the matter to the higher authorities of the school. Such problems could be faced as challenges in the jobs or responsibilities by attending customer service training sessions to learn the basics of customer service.

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