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THE SATISFACTION OF THAI STUDENTS TOWARDS THE TEST ADMINISTRATION OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE

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Abstract

One of the main missions of the National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS) is the measurement and evaluation of Thailand's education, such as the administration of Thailand's national test. NIETS has assigned some universities to work as the test centers administering the standardized tests in accordance with the standardized procedures in order that the scores of the standardized tests for grade-12 students could be used as a part of university admission. The objectives of this research were: 1) to study students' satisfaction, 2) to compare the levels of students' satisfaction towards the NIETS's testing administration, and 3) to study some problems and suggestions for the effective work improvement. The research samples consisted of 1,024 grade-12 students under the administration of Srinakharinwirot University Test Center, obtained by simple random sampling. The research instruments were the five-rating-scale questionnaires and the interview questions. The content validity of the research instruments were verified by the item-objective congruency (IOC=0.67-1.00). Its reliability was verified by the coefficient of Cronbach alpha = 0.89. The data were analyzed by frequency, percentage; mean, standard

deviation, two - way anova and content analysis. The research finding were as follows:1)The research findings indicated that the overall satisfaction was at the high level. 2)The satisfaction levels of the students in the test sites in Bangkok and those in the provincial test sites towards the NIETS' testing administration were not significantly different; ($p = 0.119$). However, the satisfaction levels of the male and female students were different at the significant level of 0.05; ($p = 0.004$) and 3) some suggestions for work improvement.

Keyword

Satisfaction, Thai students, Test Administration

1. Introduction

The national institute of educational testing service (Public Organization) or NIETS has set five test standards: 1)Test Management Standard 2)Testing Personnel Standard 3)Test Development Standard 4)Printing / Transmission / Inspection and Evaluation Standards an 5)Reporting standard and implementation results to make the operation in test management, organizing testing methods related to testing personnel, development of measurement and evaluation tools, reporting and implementation results is acceptable both nationally and internationally. All five standards are standards that directly affect the students who come to the examination.

Srinakharinwirot University is a higher education institution assigned by the national institute of educational testing (Public Organization) to be the central examination center to conduct the ordinary national education test (O-NET) examinations for grade 12 students and the general aptitude test and professional and academic aptitude test (GAT / PAT) for the candidates who are grade 12 students or equal or graduate and continue to work. Srinakharinwirot University is the unit responsible for the examinations in schools in Bangkok and other provinces by administering standardized tests according to the NIETS such as test management preparation, survey areas responsible for providing schools to use as the test venues. Moreover, they also ask for classroom information to arrange for the exam seating and then send it to the website of the NIETS. Then, the university appoint a teamwork of the test centers and test venues to coordinate with various sites with the NIETS and the test venues as well to prepare for the test management and delivery of the examination center delegates who can not only make decisions and solve problems on a regular basis, but also can monitor and

examine the test management of the test venues for efficiency, transparency and compliance with the practice of the NIETS. And finally, the university submit the performance report to the NIETS.

It is evident that all five test standards directly affect the students. The researcher was one of the staff of Srinakharinwirot University's Examination Services in the test center who was interested in studying the Thai students' satisfaction on the test administration of the NEITS because the students' satisfaction is the information expressing the students' feelings and opinions toward the standards of the test management and the demand in a desire to help those involved are aware of the expectations of students and to meet the services that match the look and expected style as well. The results of the research will be presented to the NEITS in order to improve to meet the standards and lead to the quality assurance that can guarantee the test management system in terms of appropriateness, clarity, accuracy, quality, acceptable and reliable at national and international level.

2. Purpose of the Study

2.1 To study students' satisfaction towards the NIETS's testing administration.

2.2 To compare the levels of students' satisfaction towards the NIETS's testing administration.

2.3 To study some problems and suggestions for the effective work improvement.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Theoretical Concepts on Test Management

The researcher summarized the concept of Griffin (2000) was a collaborative grouping of people with a clear, coherent organizational structure that aims to achieve goals. The resources included man, money, material, machine, method and management.

So management was the direction of the agency or the operation of various functions to be able to use existing resources efficiently and effectively.

3.2 Test Management of the National Institute of Educational Testing Service (Public Organization)

The National Institute of Educational Testing Service (Public Organization) has set five National Educational Test Standards as follows : (The National Institute of Educational Testing Service, 2013) 1) Test management is the standard for quality assurance that can

guarantee its system in terms of clarity, actual implementation, quality, acceptable and reliable at national and international level. 2) Testing Personnel is the standard for quality assurance that personnel involved in testing have quality, features and functions in accordance with international standards. 3) Test development standard is the standard for quality assurance that the tests used to measure and evaluate are systematically developed with a reliable standard operating procedure. Moreover, the tests not only have empirical information but also they are tests of quality, accuracy, validity and fairness. 4) Printing / Transmission / Inspection and Evaluation is the standard for quality assurance that the system used to print the tests and answer sheets is controlled by a clearly defined process. What's more, there are security measures and strict confidentiality, a valid scoring process with the clear system whose errors can be detected, the results that are reported with significant scores with a proper score translation compared to the results of each test / year. and 5) Reporting and implementation are the standards for quality assurance that they are accurate, appropriate and fair.

3.3 Standards of the test management

The test management has following sub standards:

3.3.1 Transparency of test management

Transparency of test management includes 1) Policies and executives. And 2) The management system of the working group conducting educational tests.

3.3.2 Information and Public Relations

Information and Public Relations includes 1) Information with system and mechanism of test information, clear rules of disclosure of test data, preparation of test data, and disclosure of important information about the tests and 2) Public Relations with public relations management systems, production of public relations documents and manuals, and publicity of proactive testing information of all kinds.

3.3.3 Services

Services include 1) On the service system, there are the standard sets and the service system with the personnel directly responsible for the technology used to provide services on the website of the NIETS including a variety of information service channels. And 2) On complaints compliance system, there is an agency with the personnel directly responsible in dealing with complaints together with their appropriate procedures through a variety of complaint channels.

3.3.4 Security of the test

On security of the test, there are the strict security system and methodology and the development of the examination system with all documents and materials with the systems for storing, applying, and moving restricted object media and electronic media.

3.4 Expectancy

Victor H. Vroom, (1964) a psychologist in the Cognitive Group, has proposed the Expectancy Theory as an impulse that drives people to do what they want to achieve. Vroom's Expectancy Theory consists of:

3.4.1 Expectancy

Expectancy is the perceived possibility that if more effort is made, it will lead to better goals or results. It is also the relationship between the effort and the results that will arise to achieve the defined goals.

3.4.2 Instrumentality

Instrumentality or the opportunity to bring about results is the possibility that results will come from increased efforts to the desired reward.

Valence is the nature of liking or dislike of the rewards or the outcomes of the need. And how valuable is the result of the outcomes? To consider the rewards or the results are satisfied or not, every action has outcomes arising. Those outcomes mentioned will be satisfied or not. They must consider the value of what they receive. If perceived and responded as expected, it will make more effort. The person must be able to define and understand the desired results to be achieved and the opportunity to achieve them.

3.5 Service Quality (Cite in Mohammad and Alhamadani, 2011)

Beer (2003) defined service as a set of characteristics and overall properties of the service which aim to satisfy the clients and meet their needs.

Kotler (2003) defined service as any behavior or act based on a contact between two parties: the provider and the receiver, and the essence of this reciprocal process in intangible.

Walfried, et. al.(2000) defined service as a set of characteristics that meet the clients' needs, strengthen the links between the organization and them, and enhance the clients' value as well.

From the existing literature, it can be easily recognized that the most important aspect of service quality is its direct effect on customer satisfaction (Alkhahas, 2011).

Parasurama, Zeltham, and Berry (1988) said that there exist ten criteria and dimensions through which service quality can be assessed:

3.5.1 Reliability

Reliability: the ability of an organization to accurately achieve its services in the proper time and according to the promises it has made to its clients.

3.5.2 Responsiveness

Responsiveness: the tendency and willingness of service providers to help clients and satisfy their needs, immediately reply to their inquiries, and solve their problems as quickly as possible.

3.5.3 Competence

Competence: having adequate skills and knowledge that enable the employees to perform their jobs properly.

3.5.4 Accessibility

Accessibility: providing easy access to a service in terms of location and through services provided via the telephone, the internet, or any other means of communication.

3.5.5 Courtesy

Courtesy: treating clients respectfully in a polite friendly manner, understanding their feelings, and answering their phone calls gently.

3.5.6 Communication

Communication: this occurs through gentlemanly listening to the client conveying information to them clearly and facilitating external communication with workers.

3.5.7 Credibility

Credibility: this can be achieved through full trust and confidence in the service provider as well as his honesty and straight forwardness.

3.5.8 Security Security

Security: this depends on whether the service is free from risks and hazards, defects or doubts so that it provides bodily safety, financial security as well as privacy.

3.5.9 Understanding

Understanding/ knowing the customer: this can be made achievable through the ability to pinpoint the customers' needs as well as understanding their individual problems.

3.5.10 Tangibility

Tangibility: this includes physical aspects connected with service such as instruments and equipment, persons, physical facilities like buildings and nice decoration and other observable service facilities.

3.6 Customer Satisfaction

Kolter and Armstrong (1999) defined the customer satisfaction as the customer's perception that compare their pre-purchase expectations with post purchase perception.

Oliver (1997, p. 13) defines satisfaction as “the consumer’s fulfillment response” a post consumption judgment by the consumer that a service provides a pleasing level of consumption-related fulfillment, including under or over-fulfillment.

Oliver (1981 cite in Parasuraman Zeithaml and Berry,1988) said that satisfaction is a summery psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled is the consumer’s prior feelings about the consumption experience.

3.7 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is influenced by customers’ perceptions of quality (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). Wilson et al. (2008) demonstrated some determinants of customer satisfaction to be product and service quality, price, personal and situational factors

Mohammad and Alhamadani (2011) studied **Service** Quality Perspectives and Customer Satisfaction in Commercial Banks Working in Jordan. The aim of this research was to examine the level of service quality as perceived by customers of commercial bank working in Jordan and its effect customer satisfaction, Service quality measure is based on modified version of SERVQUAL as proposed by the results of this study indicated that service quality is an important antecedent of customer satisfaction. It is apparent from the present study that managers and decision makers in Jordanian commercial banks to seek and improve the elements of service quality that make the most significant contributions on customer satisfaction

4. Methodology

4.1 Population and sample

Population are 58,296 students who took the exam at Srinakharinwirot University examination center in 2014.And the random sampling by using the multi-stage random sampling technique consisted of 1, 024 students.

4.2 Research instruments

The instruments used to collect data were semi-structured interview and the satisfaction questionnaire for students taking the exam that was five point rating scale, representing a range from 1 – dissatisfied /strongly disagree to 5 – completely satisfied /strongly agree to measure satisfaction. The questionnaire was divided into 2 parts: Part (1Personal Information Part 2) Satisfaction questionnaire for students taking the exam in 4 aspects as follows: Admissions, Examination Management, Invigilators and Tests.

4.2.1 Interpretation

Interpretation of the score is divided into 5 levels as follows :

- 1.80 - 1.00 points mean the lowest level of satisfaction with the service.
- 1.81 - 2.60 points mean the less level of satisfaction with the service.
- 2.61 - 3.40 points mean the medium level of satisfaction with the service.
- 3.41 - 4.20 points mean the high level of satisfaction with the service.
- 5.00 - 4.21points mean the highest level of satisfaction with the service.

4.2.2 Creating and developing the research instruments' quality

Creating and developing the research instruments' quality as follows 1) Examine the quality of every instrument in terms of content validity by asking 3experts the questions for their consideration and calculating the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), using a value greater than .0.67Then, correct it before experimenting, $IOC = 0.67$ and 2) Take the questionnaire to try out with 30 people who are similar to the sample and find the quality in terms of validity by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the reliability value was 0.89.

5. Data collection

The researcher and research assistants collected data by themselves by presenting research assistants on the process of collecting and using data collection instruments. Moreover, the researcher asked for permission to collect data from the sample after they had finished the test in the evening of April 29- 26, .2014

6. Data analysis

The researcher used the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire to analyze Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and Two way Anova analysis of variance.

For the qualitative data from open - ended questions and from the interviews, the researcher used the content analysis method.

7. Results

The results are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Mean and satisfaction level of Thai students with the test administration of the NIETS
(n=1024)

No	Variables	\bar{x}	SD	level
Admissions				
1	Public relations for examinations of the NIET	3.56	.94	high
2	The convenience of the online application process by accessing the website : www.niets.or.th	3.88	.92	high
3	The convenience of registering for a username and password code	3.78	.92	high
4	Payments made through a designated payment service providers in the system	4.00	.88	high
5	The convenience of data validation on the website	3.92	1.10	high
Overall mean		3.82	.95	high
Examination Management				
6	The exam room atmosphere facilitating the students taking the exam	3.31	1.13	medium
7	The appropriateness of the desks or chairs used to sit while taking the exam	3.26	1.10	medium
8	The appropriateness of the temperature inside the exam rooms	2.86	1.29	medium
9	The appropriateness of the lighting in the exam rooms	3.74	1.01	high
10	The silence of the sound from outside the exam rooms	3.50	1.19	high
11	The appropriateness of the time spent in each subject of the exam	3.41	1.10	high

12	The invigilators' instructions	3.81	.94	high
13	The duty of the invigilators to ensure that the exam meets the standards	4.03	.90	high
	Overall mean	3.49	1.08	high

Table 1: (Continued) Mean and satisfaction level of Thai students with the test administration of the NIETS. (n=1024)

no	Variables	\bar{x}	SD	level
	Invigilators			highest
14	Be strict in corruption exam protection.	4.27	.85	
15	Check the students' identity cards every time before allowing them into the examination rooms.	4.44	.81	highest
16	Invigilators Remind the students not to bring all types of communication equipment into the examination rooms.	4.36	.99	highest
17	The invigilators do other activities during the examinations such as private work, reading books, talking on the phone, etc.	3.13	1.23	medium
18	There is no information on the boards that will benefit the students while taking the exam.	3.36	1.35	medium
19	Execute strict timetable exams from the admission administration.	4.25	.98	highest
20	The invigilators have good responsibilities in proctoring the examination.	4.30	.87	highest
21	This test management is transparent.	4.36	.94	highest
	Overall mean	4.06	1.00	high
	Tests			
22	Identifying information in the answer sheets matches the candidates as they have informed first.	4.44	.88	highest
23	The tests are clearly printed.	4.33	.98	highest
24	The exam has a good page layout, facilitating the convenience of taking the exam.	3.97	1.20	high

	Overall mean	4.24	1.02	highest
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Table 1 The research findings indicated that the overall satisfaction was at the high level. The mean of the students' satisfaction in terms of application was mean = 3.82, SD = 0.95. The variables with highest and lowest means included "payment" (mean = 4.00, SD = 0.88) and "the publicizing of NIETS' tests" (mean = 3.56, SD = 0.94) respectively. The mean of the students' satisfaction in terms of testing operation was (mean = 3.49, SD = 1.08). The variables with highest and lowest means included "the work of Invigilators" (mean = 4.03, SD = 0.90) and "the appropriateness of the temperature in examination rooms" (mean= 2.86, SD = 1.29) respectively.

Table 2: Using two- way anova to examine the interaction between area of the test field and Gender

Source of variance	SS	df	MS	F	p
Area of the test field	177.671	1	177.671	2.433	.119
Gender	812.693	1	406.364	5.564*	.004
Interaction between area of the test field and Gender	580.400	1	290.200	3.973*	.019
Between group	74132.587	1017	73.037		

P < .05

Table 2 , The satisfaction levels of the students in the test sites in Bangkok and those in the provincial test sites towards the NIETS' testing administration were not significantly different; (p = 0.119). The satisfaction levels of the male and female students were different at the significant level of 0.05; (p = 0.004).

In addition, from qualitative data analysis, the students who take the exam have commented and summarized the main ideas in various aspects as follows :

1. Admission should extend to a longer time and many channels such as television, websites and media with more public relations. Many students miss the opportunities. In addition, the application schedule should be announced before the exact dates start and the candidates should pay at all banks. And lastly, there should be the telephone numbers in the application information to inform the news that may be changed.

2. Choosing the test venues should be improved because if some of the venues are full, they should be taken out to reduce the problem of moving the students. Furthermore, the test venues should be located near the residence of the students taking the exam and they should not be moved without advance notice. Moreover, the students should be clearly warned that once the payment is completed, they should confirm the test venues immediately. If the test venues will be changed, the students should be informed in advance by e-mail and if they are full, they should be re-selected by students themselves.

3. Every test venue should have the same standard. The schools that have air conditioners should be provided to the students who take the exam in order to get the appropriate temperature to do the tests in the examination rooms than in the hot and noisy ones.

4. The invigilators talk to each other loudly or talk on and play the cellphones. They should not be allowed to do so because they will distract the students doing the tests. When the exam starts, they should stop every explanation because their loud noise disturbs the students' concentration.

5. The tests should print the content on the same page for easy reading, not to flip the pages back and forth. The paper used to print the tests is too thin and it should be white to look easy on the eyes. The problems having the tables should be on the same page in order not to flip the pages. In addition, the articles and diagrams answer should also be arranged on the same page. For the Thai language section of General Aptitude Test (GAT), the students cannot see any bold or thin fonts. In some cases, there should be the solutions with their explanations after the exam results are announced to the students after the examination.

6. For the other issue, e.g. the amplifiers are not clear as they should be. The voice on the line should be turned on loudly and clearly enough.

8. Discussions

Based on the student satisfaction questionnaire towards the test management, which was classified as service quality. Because the quality of service obtained from the user's decision (Zeithaml, (1988, it was important to the program being implemented (Ahmedand Masud, .(2014 The results of the student inquiry found that admissions and examination management had the average scores as a whole at a high level. When considering each item in the exam management, it was found that the variables of the temperature suitability in the test room were less than the

other variables, i.e. the scores were at the medium level. Thus, the average scores on the overall of the test management were lower than the admissions' scores. The results coming out like this may be due to the exam period that was during a high temperature range. While the exam rooms had only fans, they affected the feelings of students who took the exam if they compared the perception of service quality with expectations (Kotler, .(36 : 2000In addition, the students also had tensions with exams. If they could not eliminate anxiety or inequalities in their bodies, their satisfaction in what they wanted could be affected. In line with the findings of Mohammad and Alhamadani (2011) found that tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy had significant influence on customer satisfaction and also concluded that the service quality was an important antecedent of customer satisfaction

On the satisfaction of the invigilators and the tests, it was found that the overall average scores were at the highest level. While the results of the comparison of students' satisfaction levels classified by the service area of the test venues found that were not significantly different. It showed that the test management of the NIETS was fair to the students in the city and in the countryside. In line with The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2013) that all states and territories administer the tests in accordance with nationally agreed protocols. The national protocols for test administration provide detailed information on all aspects of the administration of the tests. They specify security requirements and uniform processes and procedures to ensure students complete the tests under similar conditions. In cases where individual students require special arrangements to complete the tests these are provided at the school in consultation with the school and the relevant. In order to maintain the integrity of the tests, the testing process and ultimately test results, these protocols must be followed carefully. Breaches of the National Protocols for Test Administration and allegations of cheating or improper behavior are taken very seriously.

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