



Graduate and Employer Satisfaction as Indicators of Higher Education Service Quality

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Abstract :

This study aims to analyze the satisfaction levels of graduates and graduate users with higher education services as an indicator of institutional service quality. A qualitative approach, employing a survey method, was used, involving two main respondent groups: graduates from various study programs and graduate users from government, private, and industrial sectors. The primary instrument was a Likert 1–4 scale satisfaction questionnaire, complemented by open-ended questions to explore respondents' experiences and perceptions in depth. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The results indicate that satisfaction levels across all faculties were high (mean > 3.80), with the Midwifery Study Program recording the highest score (4.00) and the PG PAUD Study Program the lowest (3.81), though still within the satisfied category. Lecturer ethics and learning quality received the highest ratings from graduates, while laboratory facilities received the lowest. For graduate users, discipline and work ethic scored highest, whereas mastery of information technology was relatively lower. These findings confirm that academic services and soft skills are strong; however, improvements in technological facilities and competencies are necessary to enhance graduate competitiveness further.

INTRODUCTION

Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri, as one of Indonesia's private universities, plays a crucial role in producing graduates who are qualified and relevant to the needs of the workforce. Higher education services at this university encompass various aspects, including the quality of learning, curriculum suitability, administrative services, and career development support (Alenezi & Akour, 2023; Razali et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). Recent research shows that the quality of educational services has a significant effect on stakeholder satisfaction and institutional image (Amoako et al., 2023; Seitova et al., 2024; Zeqiri et al., 2023). A high level of satisfaction also contributes to loyalty and the spread of a positive image through word of mouth (Alemu, 2023; Lin et al., 2025; Rabah et al., 2024). Therefore, an in-depth analysis of graduate satisfaction and graduate users is a strategic step to strengthen the quality of service and competitiveness of universities in a sustainable manner.

Various cutting-edge studies confirm the crucial role of stakeholder satisfaction in enhancing the quality and sustainability of higher education. Wong & Chapman (2023) show that student interaction and experience have a direct effect on the level of satisfaction and quality of learning. Bwachele et al. (2023) found that perceptions of the quality of academic services are significantly correlated with student satisfaction levels in African universities, highlighting the importance of the institutional context in building

responsive services. Surya Bahadur et al. (2024) find that the quality of higher education services has a direct impact on the satisfaction of business students in India and Nepal, as well as on their loyalty to institutions. Mendoza-Villafaina & López-Mosquera (2024) affirm that a positive educational experience and student satisfaction strengthen the institution's reputation and the university's sustainability. Ramírez-Hurtado et al. (2021) noted that measuring the quality of online services is a crucial factor in maintaining student satisfaction during the transition to a new learning system following the pandemic. These findings underscore the importance of a stakeholder satisfaction-based approach in improving the overall quality of higher education.

Although the level of satisfaction of graduates and graduate users with higher education services at UNP Kediri generally falls into a high category, several aspects still require critical consideration. Some indicators received lower scores than others, such as the suitability of the curriculum in relation to the workforce's needs and the mastery of information technology by graduates. This condition indicates a gap between stakeholder expectations and the actual services provided. In addition, these findings also highlight the need for a more systematic feedback mechanism so that survey results do not stop at reporting, but actually become the basis for curriculum and service improvement. The primary issue addressed in this study is how the level of satisfaction among graduates and graduate users reflects the effectiveness of the UNP Kediri education service system, and what factors need to be strengthened to improve the relevance and quality of services sustainably.

The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which combines quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews to provide a more comprehensive picture of stakeholder satisfaction. Not only does it display survey scores and figures, but this study also explores the in-depth views of graduate and alums users to understand the context behind numerical data. In addition, this study focuses on a critical analysis of the service gap using the Customer-Based Management framework in the context of Indonesian universities. This approach has not been widely adopted in similar studies, which typically focus on reporting satisfaction rates without conducting qualitative analysis. By integrating these two types of data, this study provides practical and strategic insights for improving the quality of educational services and enriching the literature on evaluating higher education quality based on stakeholder satisfaction.

This study focuses on comprehensively analysing the level of satisfaction of graduates and graduate users with higher education services at Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri through a quantitative descriptive survey approach combined with qualitative interviews. This focus is important because stakeholder satisfaction is a key strategic indicator for measuring the effectiveness of higher education governance. In the context of global competition, universities are required to ensure the compatibility between academic services, curriculum, and the needs of the world of work. Without a deep understanding of graduate perceptions and the needs of graduate users, institutions risk losing their relevance and competitiveness. This research makes a significant contribution to policymakers, enabling them to improve the curriculum, strengthen administrative services, and develop quality improvement strategies based on honest feedback from key stakeholders. Thus, this research has strategic significance in encouraging a sustainable transformation of higher education quality.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, utilising a survey method, to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of graduates and graduate users of higher education services at Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri. This approach allows researchers to combine the breadth of survey data with the depth of qualitative exploration of the context and meaning behind respondents' assessments (Ashi, 2025; Lee et al., 2024; Saad & Elshaer, 2020). The research was carried out within UNP Kediri by involving two main groups of respondents, namely: (1) graduates from various study programs, and (2) graduate users, which include external partners such as government agencies, the private sector, and alums recruitment institutions. The focus of the research is on how stakeholders assess the quality of academic and non-academic services provided by universities and how these experiences shape their satisfaction with the institution (Bwachele et al., 2023; Dahri et al., 2024; Dugenio-Nadela, 2023).

The primary instrument of the research is a satisfaction questionnaire developed by the Institute for Quality Assurance and Human Resource Development (LPMPSDM) at UNP Kediri. This instrument uses a Likert scale of 1 to 4 (1 = Dissatisfied, 4 = Very Satisfied) to measure various aspects of service, including the quality of administrative services, curriculum suitability with graduate competencies, career development support, and satisfaction with learning, research, community service, and institutional cooperation ((Hoque et al., 2023; Rouder et al., 2021). The survey data also included qualitative open-ended responses, comments, and narratives of respondents' experiences, allowing researchers to understand the reasons and context behind satisfaction scores (Hahn et al., 2024; Memduhoğlu & Cough, 2025).

Data collection was carried out through two methods. First, online questionnaires are distributed through the official campus website and Google Forms to alumni and graduate users to capture their perceptions on a wide scale. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted selectively with several graduate users to obtain more detailed qualitative information about their expectations and evaluation of alum competencies and institutional services. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between satisfaction indicators (Braun & Clarke, 2021a, 2021b). In addition, a gap analysis was conducted between respondents' expectations and reality, as well as a SWOT analysis, to provide a comprehensive picture of the factors affecting internal and external stakeholder satisfaction (Dokyi et al., 2025; Puyt et al., 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Satisfaction of Management Services per Faculty

The results of a satisfaction survey conducted by LPMPSDM Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri indicate that the level of satisfaction with management services across all faculties falls within the category of 'satisfied to delighted'. The average satisfaction score was above 3.80 on a scale of 1 to 4. The Faculty of Health Sciences and Sciences (FIKS) achieved the highest score of 3.93, followed by the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) with a score of 3.92. In contrast, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) and the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science (FTIK) obtained the same score, namely 3.91. At the study program level, the Midwifery Study Program (FIKS) recorded the highest score of 4.00.

In contrast, the lowest score was in the satisfied category, specifically for the PG PAUD (FKIP) Study Program, with a score of 3.81. This pattern indicates the consistency of the quality of management services across all faculties, with no units having a satisfaction score below the satisfied category. This reflects the effectiveness of applying the principles of Customer-Based Management in the governance of academic services. One alumnus stated in an interview that "campus administration services are now much faster and more accessible than ever before," which reinforces the survey results of high satisfaction with management services. This is as illustrated in the survey data presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Management Service Satisfaction Statistics per Faculty

Faculty	Average Satisfaction Score
FKIP (Teacher Training and Education)	3,91
FIKS (Health Sciences and Sciences)	3,93
FEB (Economics and Business)	3,92
FTIK (Engineering and Computer Science)	3,91

Survey results in Table 1. It shows that all faculty members have an average satisfaction score above 3.90, which falls within the category of 'satisfied to very satisfied'. The Faculty of Health Sciences and Sciences (FIKS) recorded the highest score with 3.93, followed by the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) with 3.92. FKIP and FTIK have identical scores, namely 3.91. At the study program level, the highest score was obtained in the Midwifery Study Program (FIKS) with a score of 4.00, while the lowest score was in the PG PAUD (FKIP) Study Program, at 3.81, which remained in the satisfied category. This pattern indicates a relatively consistent quality of service across all faculties, reflecting the university's management services' success in meeting the expectations of graduates and external partners. The comparison pattern of satisfaction levels between faculties is visualized in Figure 1.

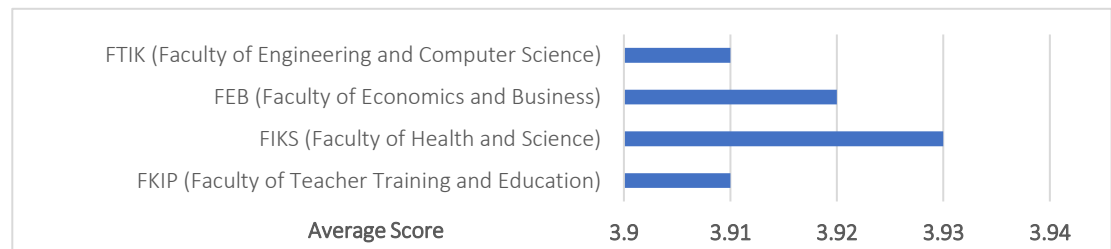


Figure 1. Management Service Satisfaction Graph by Faculty

The survey results indicate that the level of satisfaction with management services across the faculty is high, with an average score of 3.90 or above. There are no striking differences between faculties, which reflects that the quality of administrative and academic services is consistently maintained. The Faculty of Health Sciences and Sciences recorded the highest score, followed by the Faculty of Economics and Business, while FKIP and FTIK received the same score. This pattern demonstrates the stability of service quality across all faculties, indicating the effectiveness of the university's management system in providing equal services to all academics.

Graduate Satisfaction with Educational Services

The level of satisfaction among UNP Kediri graduates with educational services exhibits a stable trend, with a majority of respondents indicating satisfaction to being very satisfied. The aspect with the highest score was lecturer ethics in teaching (3.97), followed by the quality of learning in the classroom (3.93) and academic and administrative services (3.89). Meanwhile, the aspect of curriculum suitability in relation to the world of work received a score of 3.78, and the availability of laboratory facilities was the lowest, with a score of 3.65. The average total satisfaction of graduates is 3.84. This data pattern suggests that graduate satisfaction is primarily driven by the quality of lecturers and academic processes, while aspects such as facilities and curriculum relevance require further development. A graduate respondent explained, "Our lecturers are very supportive of the learning process, but laboratory facilities still need to be equipped to make practice more optimal." This is illustrated in the survey data in Table 2.

Table 2. Average Graduate Satisfaction with Educational Services

No	Aspects Assessed	Average Score
1	Lecturer on Ethics in Teaching	3,97
2	Quality of Learning in the Classroom	3,93
3	Academic and Administrative Services	3,89
4	Curriculum Fit with the World of Work	3,78
5	Availability of Laboratory Facilities	3,65
Overall Total Average		3,84

Table 2. Regarding the overall average satisfaction of graduates with educational services, it is 3.84, in the high category. The lecturer ethics indicator recorded the highest score (3.97), indicating the professional attitude of lecturers that graduates appreciate. The quality of learning in the classroom also receives a high score (3.93), indicating that the learning process is progressing well. The administrative service received a score of 3.89, indicating that the service system is quite responsive. The two indicators with the lowest scores were curriculum suitability (3.78) and laboratory facilities (3.65). Although both remain relatively high, this highlights the need to enhance learning facilities and adapt the curriculum to meet the demands of the workforce. This data pattern suggests that graduate satisfaction is primarily driven by the quality of lecturers and academic processes, while aspects such as facilities and curriculum relevance require further development. To clarify the comparative pattern of satisfaction levels in each aspect of educational services, the data in Table 2 are visualized in the bar graph shown in Figure 2.

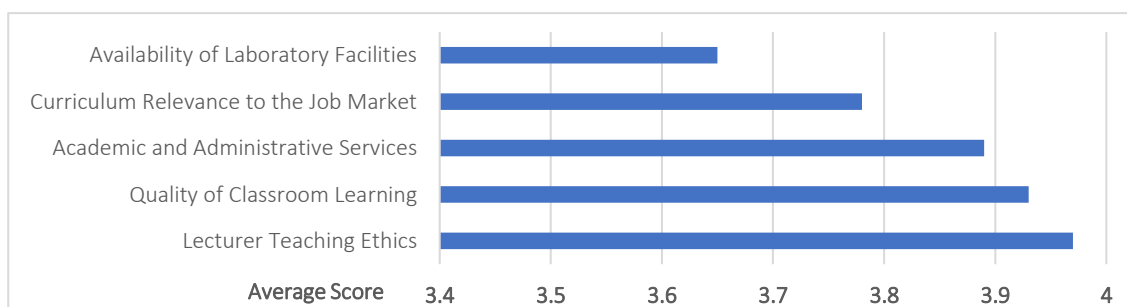


Figure 2. Graduate Satisfaction Graph with Educational Services

The findings in the second theme indicate that graduate satisfaction with educational services falls into the high category, with an average score of 3.84. The lecturer's ethical aspects and the quality of learning obtained the highest scores, reflecting the graduates' appreciation of the teaching and learning process during the study period. Academic and administrative services also received favorable ratings. On the other hand, the suitability of the curriculum in relation to the world of work and the availability of laboratory facilities received lower scores compared to other aspects. However, it remained in the high category. This pattern emphasizes excellence in pedagogic aspects and academic services, while showing opportunities for improvement in supporting facilities and curriculum relevance.

Graduate User Satisfaction with Alumni Competency

A survey of graduate users, involving 61 respondents from the workplace and external partners, revealed a high level of satisfaction with alum competencies. The discipline and work ethic aspect received the highest score of 3.96, followed by the ability to work in a team (3.94), interpersonal communication (3.90), and scientific mastery in the field of study (3.88). Meanwhile, the mastery of information technology ranks the lowest, with a score of 3.68. The overall average is at 3.87. This pattern indicates that the world of work recognises that UNP Kediri alumni possess good work character and soft skills; however, there is still a need to enhance their technological competence to remain competitive in an increasingly digital job market. This condition indicates that, although the core competencies and soft skills of alums are strong, their technical capabilities in the field of technology still need to be strengthened to meet the demands of the modern workplace. This is evident in Table 3.

Table 3. Average User Satisfaction of Graduates on Alumni Competency

No	Aspects Assessed	Average Score
1	Discipline and Work Ethic	3,96
2	Teamwork Ability	3,94
3	Interpersonal Communication	3,90
4	Scientific Mastery According to the Field of Study	3,88
5	Mastery of Information Technology	3,68
Overall Total Average		3,87

Table 3 displays an average assessment of graduate users on alum competencies of 3.87. The discipline and work ethic aspect received the highest score, at 3.96, followed by teamwork skills, which scored 3.94. Interpersonal communication scored 3.90, showing that alums's ability to build work relationships is good. Scientific mastery, as measured by the field of study, achieved a score of 3.88, indicating adequate academic readiness. Meanwhile, the mastery of information technology obtained the lowest score, at 3.68, indicating a need to improve technical competence. Overall, this data pattern indicates that graduate users perceive UNP Kediri alumni as possessing strong work character and social competence. However, they need to enhance their technological literacy to remain competitive in the job market. Furthermore, to comprehensively describe the alum competency profile based on the assessment of graduate users, the data in Table 3 is visualized in a radar graph as seen in Figure 3. This graph clarifies the most prominent aspects of the competencies as well as areas that still need improvement.

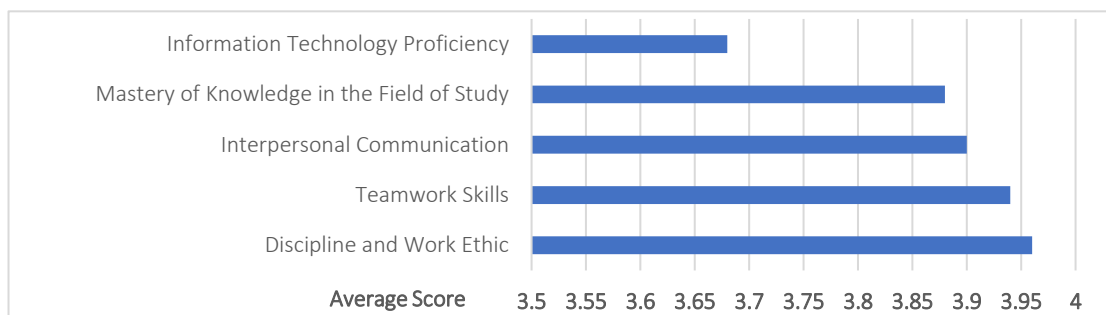


Figure 3. Graduate User Satisfaction Graph on Alumni Competency

The results of the survey on the third theme showed a positive assessment of alum competence among graduate users, with an average overall score of 3.87. The discipline and work ethic aspects obtained the highest scores, followed by teamwork skills, interpersonal communication, and scientific mastery. In contrast, the mastery of information technology receives the lowest score, indicating a need to improve technical competence to align with the demands of today's workplace. Overall, this pattern indicates that the work character and soft skills of alums have met the expectations of graduate users, while digital literacy remains a strategic area for future development.

Discussion

The survey results revealed a consistent pattern of satisfaction, with all aspects measured falling into the high category. The faculty management service recorded an average score above 3.90, reflecting a positive perception of academic governance. Graduate satisfaction with educational services is also in the high category, with advantages in lecturer ethics and learning quality, while laboratory facilities are the aspect with a relatively lower score. Graduate user assessments of alum competencies show a similar trend, with discipline, work ethic, and cooperative ability as dominant aspects. This pattern suggests that the university's academic system has been stable and is capable of producing graduates with an appreciated work ethic (Cordero & Mateos-Romero, 2021; Delprato & Antequera, 2021; Demis Alamirew, 2024). These findings align with research by Yoon et al. (2021), which emphasises the importance of social interaction in the learning process. Román-Caballero et al. (2022). It also emphasizes that consistent, student-centered learning can improve academic satisfaction. In addition, several studies have shown that the quality of educational services significantly contributes to graduate satisfaction (Gopal et al., 2021; Jena et al., 2019; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

The analysis of the findings showed a positive relationship between faculty management services, graduate satisfaction with learning, and graduate user assessment of alum competence. Faculty members with high management service scores also generally recorded high levels of graduate satisfaction with their learning. Aspects of lecturer ethics and learning quality correlated with positive assessments of the discipline and cooperation ability of alums. This pattern supports the argument that the quality of internal services and the quality of the academic process shape the competencies of graduates that are relevant to the needs of the workforce. These findings are consistent with Sökmen (2021), who states that a positive learning environment strengthens student engagement and motivation. Hellín et al. (2023) also found that managerial

support and quality learning were closely related to good graduate outcomes. Conversely, weaknesses in laboratory facilities and technology literacy point to areas of negative linkage that require strategic attention to ensure alignment between graduate expectations and industry needs.

The survey results reflect the factual conditions in the implementation of education in the field. A stable academic management system supports uniformity of service quality in each faculty. The learning process is characterised by active interaction between lecturers and students, which accounts for the high assessment of lecturer ethics and the quality of learning. However, the limitations of laboratory facilities remain a significant challenge faced by graduates. Graduate users give a high assessment of discipline and teamwork, which aligns with the work character that has been developed during the study period. This finding aligns with the results of Kurniawan and Wibowo (2022), which demonstrate that the personal involvement of lecturers impacts students' confidence and readiness. In addition, a study by Cayubit (2022) highlights the importance of equitable institutional support in maintaining student satisfaction across faculties. Thus, the data of this study describe the supportive field conditions, while also highlighting aspects that still need strengthening.

The findings of this study have significant implications for university policies, learning strategies, and the development of graduate competencies. The consistency of service satisfaction between faculties shows the success of a management system that can be maintained and expanded as the foundation of quality governance. High scores on lecturer ethics and learning emphasize the importance of strengthening pedagogic competence and quality lecturer-student interaction. Improving laboratory facilities should be a priority to enhance the relevance of the curriculum to the needs of the workforce. Additionally, the low score in information technology mastery highlights the need for digital literacy programs that are integrated into the curriculum. This implication aligns with Wong & Chapman (2023), which emphasises the importance of active learning and technology in enhancing the learning experience. Seitova et al. (2024) also affirm that a strong learning environment can significantly improve academic performance. Therefore, the policy of strengthening learning facilities and strategies is a strategic step to maintain and improve the quality of graduates.

This research makes several strategic contributions to the development of university policies and learning practices. The consistency of service satisfaction across all faculties demonstrates the success of the management system, which can serve as a foundation for expanding innovation and strengthening quality governance. High scores on lecturer ethics and learning quality affirm the important role of lecturers as the primary driver of academic quality. Therefore, pedagogic competency development programs need to be continuously improved to maintain the quality of lecturer-student interaction. On the other hand, the relatively low aspect of laboratory facilities needs to be a development priority so that the curriculum is more relevant to the demands of the workplace. The low score of information technology mastery also indicates the need to strengthen students' digital literacy through the integration of technology-based training and learning programs. These implications underscore the importance of a comprehensive approach that encompasses the enhancement of academic services, learning facilities, and digital competencies to foster the competitiveness of graduates.

In general, the results of this study reveal a pattern of high satisfaction and positive relationships among variables, ranging from faculty management services to

satisfaction with the learning process and graduate alumni assessments of alum competencies. This data confirms that the consistency of academic services and the quality of learning play a crucial role in producing graduates with competencies relevant to the needs of the workforce. The findings also highlight aspects that need to be strengthened, such as improving laboratory facilities and technological literacy, to support the readiness of graduates to face professional challenges. This research provides an empirical basis for comprehensive planning to improve educational quality. For further research, an inferential approach or mixed-methods design can be used to test causal relationships between variables and explore contextual factors that affect graduate satisfaction and competence in greater depth.

CONCLUSION

This research focuses on analysing the level of satisfaction among graduates and graduate users with faculty management services, the quality of the learning process, and the competence of alums. The study's results revealed a consistent pattern of high satisfaction in all measured aspects, indicating a positive perception of academic governance, learning quality, and the relevance of graduate competencies to the needs of the workforce. Lecturer ethics, the quality of learning, as well as the discipline and work ethic of alums, emerged as the main factors that strengthen the institution's image and the readiness of graduates. These findings make an empirical contribution to academic service improvement strategies and curriculum development that is adaptive to professional change. Additionally, the research results can serve as a basis for formulating policies to enhance student learning facilities and technological literacy. Advanced research can use an inferential approach or mixed methods to explore causal relationships and contextual factors that affect graduate satisfaction and competence in more depth.

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