

A SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL FACULTY MEMBERS' OPINIONS TOWARDS THE SERVICES OF THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Abstract— The objective of this research was to investigate and assess the levels of opinion among foreign lecturers regarding the services provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), as part of the institution's internationalization strategy. The study employed a quantitative research design using an online questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection from a sample of 7 international faculty members. Data were analyzed using percentage, mean (\bar{X}), and standard deviation (S.D.).

The findings revealed that the overall opinion toward the Faculty's services was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.02$). When categorized by dimension, Academic and Teaching Support received the highest score ($\bar{X} = 4.29$), followed by Communication ($\bar{X} = 4.07$) and Administrative Support and Coordination ($\bar{X} = 3.93$). Conversely, Buildings and Environment received the lowest mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.79$), though it remained within the high-level range. The results indicate that while the Faculty effectively supports its core academic mission, there is a "service gap" in physical infrastructure and the workplace ecosystem that requires strategic enhancement. Policy recommendations focus on modernizing facilities with bilingual support and internationalizing administrative processes to sustainably retain high-quality international talent.

Keywords— Service Quality, Foreign Lecturers, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, SERVQUAL

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, higher education institutions in Thailand are increasingly prioritizing the development of academic quality and educational services to meet international standards. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), as a leading institution committed to local development and global competitiveness, has placed significant emphasis on international collaboration. A key strategy involves recruiting foreign lecturers to enhance teaching quality, foster an international learning environment, and elevate the university's global presence (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2023)[1].

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences plays a pivotal role in this endeavor by integrating international expertise into its language, cultural, and social management programs. However, the successful integration of foreign faculty members depends heavily on the quality of administrative and academic support services provided. According to the SERVQUAL model, service quality in dimensions such as responsiveness, assurance, and empathy is crucial for employee satisfaction and performance (Parasuraman et al., 1988)[2]. Efficient services, including visa processing, IT support, and welfare, not only motivate lecturers to perform at their full potential but also reduce cultural and linguistic barriers. Conversely, deficiencies in these services can lead to operational inefficiency and undermine the faculty's reputation.

Therefore, this research aims to explore the opinions of foreign lecturers toward the services of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The findings will serve as a vital framework for improving service quality, strengthening international academic cooperation, and aligning human resource management strategies with the university's long-term vision of global excellence.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. To explore the levels of opinion of foreign lecturers toward the services provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
2. To identify suggestions and guidelines for enhancing the quality of services to better support foreign faculty members.

LITERATURE & THEORY

This research explores the theoretical foundations of service quality within the context of higher education, specifically focusing on the following key areas:

1. SSRU's Strategic Internationalization and the Service Organization Concept In alignment with the Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University Strategic Plan (2023-2027), the institution has committed to becoming a "Premier University" with a strong emphasis on internationalization and global competitiveness. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHS) serves as a critical driver of this vision by recruiting international faculty members to enhance academic excellence. Within this framework, the university operates as a "Service Organization," where the Faculty's administrative units act as a support ecosystem for foreign lecturers and Job type significantly influences staff perception of executive leadership at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (Chanhom, et al., 2024)[3], As highlighted by Grönroos (2019)[4], service excellence in education is no longer confined to the classroom but extends to the co-creation of value between the institution and its staff, ensuring that foreign personnel can overcome linguistic and cultural barriers to fulfill their academic roles.

2. The SERVQUAL Framework in Service Assessment To objectively evaluate service quality, this research adopts the SERVQUAL Model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988)[2], which assesses five core dimensions of perceived service quality:

- **Tangibles:** Focuses on the physical and digital infrastructure, including well-equipped faculty lounges, reliable high-speed internet, and bilingual signage and documentation that facilitate a professional working environment.
- **Reliability:** Concerns the accuracy and consistency of administrative processes, particularly regarding Visa and Work Permit processing, which are vital for the legal and financial security of foreign staff.
- **Responsiveness:** Evaluates the promptness and willingness of support staff to assist with immediate challenges, such as classroom technical issues or navigating complex university regulations.
- **Assurance:** Examines the professional competence, English language proficiency, and integrity of the administrative staff, which fosters trust and a sense of security among international faculty members.
- **Empathy:** Measures the degree of individualized attention and cultural sensitivity provided by the Faculty, recognizing that effective cross-cultural adjustment is essential for the long-term retention of international talent (Knight & de Wit, 2018)[5].

3. The Link Between Service Quality and Organizational Performance Recent studies within the Rajabhat University system (e.g., Sirimas et al., 2021)[6] suggest that high-quality support services directly correlate with increased organizational commitment and enhanced teaching performance. By surveying the opinions of foreign lecturers, the Faculty can identify “Service Gaps” – the discrepancies between faculty expectations and perceived service delivery—thereby providing a roadmap for strategic improvements that align with the university’s mission of global excellence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research entitled “A Survey of Opinions of Foreign Faculty Members Regarding the Services Provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University” is a survey research study aiming to examine and compare the opinions of foreign faculty members regarding various services provided by the faculty. The researcher has defined the research methodology in the following steps:

Research Design and Participants

This study employs a quantitative survey research design to investigate the opinions of international faculty members toward the services provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The population consists of foreign

lecturers currently teaching within the Faculty. The sample includes 7 respondents who completed the survey. This is a “census” study, or the collection of data from the entire population that actually existed at that time. Data collection was conducted on-site at the Faculty from October 2024 to August 2025.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument is an online questionnaire, systematically divided into three sections: Section 1 gathers demographic profiles (gender, age, nationality, etc.) using a checklist format. Section 2 assesses the level of opinion regarding service quality—including academic support, administration, and general services—utilizing a 5-point Likert Scale. Section 3 features open-ended questions designed to collect qualitative feedback and constructive suggestions for service improvement.

Data Analysis and Statistics

The collected data are processed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, specifically frequency and percentage, are used to analyze demographic information. Mean (\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) are applied to evaluate service quality opinions, with results interpreted through a five-level scale ranging from “Lowest” to “Highest.” Furthermore, qualitative data from the open-ended section are analyzed via Content Analysis to synthesize key themes and provide a comprehensive narrative summary for future service enhancements.

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis collected from an online questionnaire completed by a sample group of seven foreign faculty members of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The research, titled “A Survey of Opinions of Foreign Faculty Members Regarding the Services Provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,” examines the findings. The analysis follows the research objectives and is divided into three main parts: analysis of respondents' personal information, quantitative analysis of opinions regarding services, and qualitative analysis of suggestions.

1. Analysis of Participants' Demographic Profile

The demographic analysis of the 7 international faculty members from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, reveals the following key characteristics:

1.1 Duration of Employment at SSRU: The majority of respondents have been employed at the university for **4-6 years (3 persons, 42.9%)**, indicating a stable core of mid-career personnel. This is followed by those with less than 1 year of service (2 persons, 28.6%), while respondents in the 1-3 year and 7-9 year brackets represent 14.3% each.

1.2 Academic Department: In terms of departmental distribution, the largest group belongs to the **Business English Department (3 persons, 42.9%)**. This is followed by the English and Chinese Departments, each comprising 28.6% of the sample, and the Japanese Department at 14.3%.

The demographic data underscores that the majority of the participants possess a high degree of organizational familiarity, having served the institution for over four years. This long-term engagement suggests that their feedback on service quality is grounded in consistent, direct experience with the faculty's administrative and academic support systems. The diversity in length of service—ranging from newly recruited staff to those with nearly a decade of experience—ensures that the survey captures a comprehensive spectrum of perspectives, from initial service encounters to long-term institutional observations.

2. Academic Analysis of Service Quality Results

An analysis of the opinions of foreign lecturers regarding the services provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, both overall and in specific aspects, revealed the following key issues in Table 1:

Table 1 Mean, standard deviation, and level of opinion regarding the faculty's services.

List of services	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level of opinion	Ranking
1. Academic and teaching support	4.29	0.69	High level	1
2. Communication	4.07	0.81	High level	2
3. Administrative and coordination support	3.93	0.83	High level	3
4. Buildings, facilities, and environment	3.79	0.91	High level	4
Overall average	4.02	0.81	High level	

The overall assessment of international faculty members' opinions toward the services provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is at a High Level ($\bar{X} = 4.02$, S.D. = 0.81). This outcome indicates a generally favorable perception of the faculty's administrative and academic support systems. The detailed analysis reveals several key insights:

Academic Excellence as a Core Strength: The highest mean score was recorded in Academic and Teaching Support ($\bar{X} = 4.29$). This suggests that the faculty successfully prioritizes and facilitates the primary academic duties of international staff, thereby fostering a conducive environment for educational delivery.

Communication Efficacy: Communication ($\bar{X} = 4.07$) was ranked second, indicating that the information flow within the organization is effective. Nevertheless, the results suggest room for refinement to ensure that information reaches all faculty members consistently and clearly.

Opportunities for Infrastructure Improvement: While Buildings and Environment ($\bar{X} = 3.79$) remained within the high level, it received the lowest mean score and the highest standard deviation (S.D. = 0.91). This variance points toward inconsistent experiences regarding physical facilities, identifying infrastructure as a primary area for future strategic development to enhance the overall workplace experience for foreign personnel.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The study concludes that foreign lecturers hold a high level of overall satisfaction toward the services provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University ($\bar{X} = 4.02$). This positive perception validates the faculty's efforts in aligning with the university's internationalization goals (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2023)[1]. According to Teeroovengadam et al. (2019)[7], such perceived service quality is a critical antecedent of institutional image and stakeholder boundedness.

The analysis reveals that Academic and Teaching Support is the most significant strength, while Buildings and Environment, despite being rated highly, represents the most substantial opportunity for improvement. Addressing this "Service Gap" in physical infrastructure is essential for creating a more inclusive and supportive ecosystem for international staff. Ultimately, these findings provide a data-driven roadmap for the faculty to enhance its administrative standards and foster global academic excellence.

Suggestions for future research (Future Work)

To further advance the knowledge in this field, the following areas are recommended for future research:

- 1. Comparative and Benchmarking Studies:** Future research should involve a broader scope by comparing service quality across different faculties within SSRU or conducting benchmarking studies across the Rajabhat University network to establish standardized international staff support systems (Pornpimon & Suthitphon, 2021)[8].
- 2. In-depth Qualitative Analysis:** Given the limited sample size of this survey, future studies should employ mixed-method approaches. In-depth interviews could reveal nuanced challenges related to cultural adjustments and linguistic barriers that quantitative data might not fully capture (Knight & de Wit, 2018)[5].
- 3. Longitudinal Impact Assessment:** It is recommended to investigate the longitudinal relationship between service quality and the retention rates of international faculty members. This would provide strategic insights into how administrative efficiency contributes to long-term institutional stability and global ranking competitiveness.

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this study indicate that the overall opinion of international faculty members toward the services provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, is at a high level. This favorable perception suggests that the Faculty's administration has successfully integrated the university's proactive internationalization policies, as outlined in the Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University Strategic Plan (2023–2027), which aims to position the institution as a “Premier University” on a global scale (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2023)[1]. These results align with the conceptual framework proposed by Teeroovengadam et al. (2019)[7], who argue that high-quality service in higher education is a pivotal indicator that significantly influences institutional image and stakeholder commitment. When an institution effectively addresses the fundamental needs and operational support of its staff, it fosters a stronger sense of organizational belonging.

A significant insight from the data is that “Academic and Teaching Support” received the highest mean score. This finding is consistent with research by Al-Fraihat et al. (2020)[9], which emphasizes that in educational contexts, personnel prioritize support systems that facilitate their core academic mission and teaching efficacy. The availability of instructional technology and academic resources allows international faculty to perceive “Service Value” through direct improvements in their professional performance. Conversely, while “Buildings and Environment” remained within the high-level range, it received the lowest mean score among all dimensions. This can be interpreted as a “Service Gap” in the “Tangibles” dimension, where the physical infrastructure may not yet fully accommodate multicultural workplace expectations. This observation supports the argument by Knight and de Wit (2018)[5] that the primary challenge for modern internationalized universities is to create a seamless “Work Ecosystem” that caters to diverse international personnel, ranging from bilingual navigation systems to specialized workspaces.

Furthermore, the results regarding “Communication and Administrative Coordination” reflect the Faculty's effective efforts in mitigating linguistic barriers. However, the existing gap in this area may stem from the inherent complexity of Thai bureaucratic regulations, which frequently pose challenges for international staff within the Rajabhat University system (Pornpimon & Suthitphon, 2021)[8]. This discussion underscores that while the Faculty has achieved a commendable standard of service, the strategic prioritization of infrastructure upgrades and the internationalization of administrative processes will be the key drivers in attracting and retaining high-quality international talent sustainably in the future.

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