

# Differences on the Stakeholders' View on the Competitive Capabilities of an Asian University

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**Abstract** – *The battle against competition in quality and excellence among higher education institutions is an utmost concern in delivering effective services to various stakeholders. This study explores on the competitive capabilities of an Asian University which deals on service quality; marketing capabilities; and management capabilities. Descriptive type of research was utilized in the study where students, employees and alumni served as the respondents. Results revealed that University under study has strong management capabilities as evidence of various quality assurance mechanisms and accreditations adhering to the national and international standards. The group of Alumni respondents has significantly lower perceptions in competitive capabilities due to some services were not highly accessible online and they were not constantly given information about the events of the university. Suggestions on how to enhance the marketing capabilities and service quality of the University was also presented.*

**Keywords:** *service quality; marketing capabilities; and management capabilities*

## INTRODUCTION

Internationalization is the direction being set by most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in developing countries to remain competitive. The number of HEIs for the past decades has significantly increased resulting to a strong competition among educational institutions offering various programs. Consequently, competition among HEIs has become more and more stiff. For an educational institution to last, building sustainable competitive capabilities is a must. Competitive capabilities which include the quality of the services it offers, the ability of an institution to implement effective marketing strategies and a strong and innovative management culture is an important area every HEI must look into to ensure survival and success in the market.

Quality of service can be measured through reliability of service, speed of service, service flexibility, service safety, ease of service access, rapid customer response, availability of service facilities and variety of services offered. The marketing capabilities of an institution look into the reasonableness of price and convenience of its location while the management capabilities include factors such as IT application, employee development

and business network expansion. These competitive capabilities affect the public's perception of the institution. There could also be a chance to develop the interest of the prospective students to choose a University with high level of competitiveness [1].

Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas (LPU-B) is doing its best to respond in the demand of stiff competition of HEIs in Asia. LPU-B envisions itself to be a recognized University in the Asia Pacific Region by 2022 and it is committed to a culture of quality and excellence as evidenced by the implementation of several quality assurance mechanisms [2] which includes the ISO 9001:2008, Investors in People, voluntary accreditation of its programs as well as institutional accreditation from the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities – Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) among others which led to being a recipient of the Philippine Quality Award (PQA) for Commitment to Quality Management. The University already attained all these achievements and accomplishments through the visionary leadership of its President, Dr. Peter P. Laurel who wants to pursue greater recognition from several accrediting and

certifying bodies to ensure quality is maintained in all aspects of learning and development [3], [4].

Towards the end, the study aims to come up with an image management plan for the University. Coming up with an image management plan is challenging as it is greatly affected by the changes with the institution's environment and the institution itself. The concerns of both business organizations and stakeholders are affected by a host of variables, including market dynamics, technology, and contemporary social and political issues, among others. The challenge for organizations lies in being able to understand these changes and continually adjust the organization's image in anticipation of and/or response to environmental change.

In order to maintain the competitive advantage of the University in realizing its mission and vision, there is a need to determine its competitive capabilities and its corporate image in order to develop strategies to propel with its competitive edge among Asian Universities. Thus, this research is relevant and necessary.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to determine the competitive capabilities of an Asian university which serves as basis for a proposed image management plan. Specifically this study aimed to determine the competitive capabilities of the university as perceived by students, employees and alumni in terms of Service Quality; Marketing Capabilities; and Management Capabilities; to test the significant differences in the perceived competitive capabilities among the three groups of respondents; and to propose an Image Management Plan.

#### **METHODS**

##### **Research Design**

The descriptive correlation research method was utilized in the study. In descriptive correlation research method, the researcher's purpose is to describe the present behaviour or characteristics of a particular population. It uses existing mutual relationships between data to describe it but does not endeavor to establish whether these are statistically significant correlations.

##### **Participants**

The LPU Employees, Alumni and Students are the respondents of the study. Students from all levels were

considered in the study using proportional stratified random sampling technique. Based on Effect size of 0.32 and a power probability of 0.95 using a software, G\*Power 3.1.9, out of more than 6,000 total college student population, 383 students were selected from 10 different colleges representing each year level and degree program. The number of students is based on the current record of the Registrar's Office during 1<sup>st</sup> Semester, SY 2016-2017.

However, non-probability convenience sampling technique was used for the selection of the respondents from the Alumni wherein the researcher selects the respondents who are conveniently available. The process is continued until the desired sample size of 50 alumni-respondents is obtained. Five (5) alumni were taken as respondents each college who graduated from the year 2011 to 2016. Out of 500 employees, 222 respondents or 44.4 percent were randomly selected from all work units.

##### **Instrument**

The instrument used was taken from the study of Dimayuga [5] and adapted from the Service Driven Market Orientation (SERVMO) instrument to determine the competitive capabilities. The questionnaire is composed of two parts. The first part is for the respondents' profile. The second part is dedicated to determine the competitive capabilities of the university in terms of service quality, marketing capabilities and management capabilities. Items in the questionnaire refer to the different variables of competitive capabilities. Items 1 -5 refer to reliability of service, items 6-10 refer to speed of service, items 11-15 refer to service flexibility, items 16-20 refer to service safety, items 21-25 refer to ease of service access, items 26-30 refer to rapid customer response, items 31-35 refer to availability of service facilities, items 36-40 refer to variety of services offered, items 41-45 refer to reasonableness of price, items 46-50 refer to convenience of location, items 51-55 refer to IT application, items 56-60 refer to employee development while items 61-65 refer to business expansion network.

The instrument underwent content validity by the three experts in the field of business and education. The instrument was tested its reliability using 10 faculty members and 10 non-teaching personnel who were asked to answer the questionnaire and 0.74 Cronbach's Alpha was achieved which signifies that the instrument is reliable for use.

### Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the Dean of each college of Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas to administer the questionnaire. One hundred (100) percent retrieval rating was achieved after one week of questionnaire distribution during the last week of November, 2016. The researcher also asked the assistance of the Deans regarding the email-addresses or through the social networking sites of their alumni. The researcher sought the permission of the department heads of 43 work units to allow two of their employees to answer the questionnaire.

### Data Analysis

Weighted mean and ranking were used to describe the extent of beliefs and social influences on stakeholders' behaviour as well as to investigate stakeholders' behaviour towards the competitive capabilities of the University. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the differences of the three groups of respondents in terms of their perceived competitive capabilities and corporate of the University.

The given scale was used to analyze and interpret the results of the gathered data: 3.50 – 4.00: Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49: Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49: Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49: Strongly Disagree (SD).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the Service Quality of the University as perceived by students, employees and alumni in terms of Reliability of Service. The respondents agreed that there is very minimal breakdown of University services as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 2.94 on rank number 1. They also agreed that the University has employees

who are never too busy to respond to my concerns and consistent in implementing on time schedule of activities and services as indicated by the total weighted mean scores of 2.92 and 2.91 on rank numbers 2 and 3, respectively. Employees are guided by their job description and they are well-oriented of their primary duty and responsibility to give priority to the students because it provides great impact to the service quality to the business operation of the organization. Everyone in the work unit with direct contact and transaction to students must ensure that they can deliver the best service to customers because if not, these customers may never come again. Bawa [6] noted that the importance of service quality revealed that delivering high quality in the service industries produces cost savings, better profits, and market share.

Likewise, the respondents also agreed that the University is consistent on error-free records and services as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 2.76 on rank number 4. However, when they were asked if there is no delay in any of their University transactions, it obtained the least total weighted mean score of 2.64 on rank number 5. If delays cannot be avoided, it must be lessened. There are some conditions and situations may be uncontrolled that could lead to interruption of the process to deliver the service on-time. Well-explained status of the request to the customer must be discussed to avoid complaints and grievances.

The composite mean score of 2.85 from the students is higher than the Alumni with only 0.01 difference while the employee obtained the least with 2.80. The total computed composite mean score of 2.83 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high competitive capabilities in terms of service quality specifically in reliability of service.

**Table 2. Service Quality of the University in terms of Reliability of Service**

Reliability of Service	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University has employees who are never too busy to respond to my concerns.	2.94	A	2.91	A	2.86	A	2.92	A	2
2. The University is consistent on error-free records and services.	2.81	A	2.63	A	2.90	A	2.76	A	4
3. The University is consistent in implementing on time schedule of activities and services.	2.93	A	2.84	A	3.06	A	2.91	A	3
4. There is very minimal breakdown of University services	2.89	A	3.01	A	2.96	A	2.94	A	1
5. There is no delay in any of my University transactions	2.70	A	2.59	A	2.40	D	2.64	A	5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.83</b>	<b>A</b>	

Stein and Ramaseshan [7] emphasized that improving service quality also contributes to the value perceived by customers. The key to sustainable business success is the generation of significant value for the customer, thus operate sustainably successful if sufficient value is generated for the customer [8].

The major priority of the employees is to provide the needs of the students in most appropriate time and schedule to give them the service they deserve to get from the university. They have certain level of commitment and work engagement that keep the organization productive as business entity in the community. Stein and Ramaseshan [7] stressed that the reliability and performance of the service is critical in customers' service quality evaluations, service providers must ensure that their service offering is consistently of high quality and meets the expectations of their customers.

Table 3 shows the Service Quality of the University as perceived by students, employees and alumni in terms of Speed of Service. The respondents agreed that they were promptly and efficiently transferred to the correct person to handle the service they needed as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 3.08 on rank number 1. They also agreed that the University employees give prompt services and the process of resolving their concern is efficient as indicated by the total weighted mean scores of 3.01 and 2.95 on rank numbers 2 and 3, respectively.

As part of the Quality Management System, there is always a process owner who will attend to the service needed by the customer. The university ensures that there are always identified personnel in every work unit who will answer to the queries of the customers.

Likewise, the university provides its services at the time it promises to do so with total weighted mean score of 2.94 on rank number 4. On the other hand, there is very minimal waiting time on the delivery of University services which obtained the least total weighted mean score of 2.83 on rank number 5. The University undertakes series of reviews and revisions to trim down some steps in the process to shorten the time spent in completing the service needed as a sign of continuous improvement. El-Said and Kattara [9] emphasized that the speed of delivery and ease of use have been shown to be a situational determinant of preference.

The composite mean score of 3.00 from the employees is nearly close to the perception of the students with 2.96 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.80. The total computed composite mean score of 2.96 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high competitive capabilities in terms of service quality specifically in the speed of service. Tan and Netessine [10] noted that the relationship between speed and quality changes as service providers reach their capacity constraints because delivering high service quality takes a certain amount of time. LPU-B maintains its capacity to provide competitive service experience that would keep the customers loyal and satisfied especially the alumni.

Table 4 shows the service quality of the University as perceived by the three groups of respondents in terms of service flexibility. The respondents agreed that the University is willing to provide customer – designed services to suit their needs as indicated by the total weighted mean score of 3.11 on rank number 1.

**Table 3. Service Quality of the University in terms of Speed of Service**

Speed of Service	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University provides its services at the time it promises to do so.	2.96	A	2.88	A	2.98	A	2.94	A	4
2. The employees give prompt services.	3.00	A	3.08	A	2.80	A	3.01	A	2
3. There is very minimal waiting time on the delivery of University services	2.80	A	2.89	A	2.76	A	2.83	A	5
4. I was promptly and efficiently transferred to the correct person to handle the service I needed	3.04	A	3.18	A	2.96	A	3.08	A	1
5. The process of resolving my concern is efficient	2.97	A	3.03	A	2.52	A	2.95	A	3
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>A</b>	

**Table 4. Service Quality of the University in terms of Service Flexibility**

Service Flexibility	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University is willing to provide customer – designed services to suit our needs.	3.09	A	3.17	A	2.94	A	3.11	A	1
2. The University listens to our feedback and provides options to its services to fit individual needs.	2.96	A	3.07	A	2.86	A	2.99	A	5
3. The University understands my needs as a customer	3.06	A	3.08	A	2.88	A	3.05	A	2.5
4. When uncertainties or any untoward incident happen, the University acts fast to find other effective ways of delivering its services.	3.03	A	3.06	A	2.88	A	3.03	A	4
5. The University has the ability to positively react to possible unexpected changes in the customer needs, in the process or in the supply of resources.	3.07	A	3.04	A	2.96	A	3.05	A	2.5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>A</b>	

They also agreed that the University understands their needs as customers and it has the ability to positively react to possible unexpected changes in the customer needs, in the process or in the supply of resources as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 3.05. They believed that when uncertainties or any untoward incident happen, the University acts fast to find other effective ways of delivering its services with total weighted mean score of 3.03.

The University finds a better way to keep the customers satisfied through giving them possible options to deliver the service in such a manner that would be suitable to their needs and individual differences. Flexibility in customizing services to the customer's preferences, and mirroring the customer's speaking styles and gestures are particularly helpful in building rapport with customers [11].

However, the University listens to the customers' feedback and provides options to its services to fit individual needs which obtained the least total weighted mean score of 2.99 on rank number 5. The composite mean score of 3.09 from the employees is higher than the Students with 3.04 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.90. The total computed composite mean score of 3.04 implies that the respondents perceived that the university has high competitive capabilities in terms of service quality specifically in the flexibility of service.

Alumni will be better served if the university will offer continuing education through e-learning facility to get involve in direct transaction through online technology. Yemini [44] stated that e-learning, collaborative learning and usage of social networks

can facilitate internationalization in school [12]. The University is now doing its best to provide distance learning as another option to its customers through preparing the curriculum and other instructional materials as well as the faculty members to serve the needs of the customers in this mode of instruction. Brennan, Cass, Himmelweit and Szebehely [13] emphasized that providers has been promulgated as expanding the supply of services, controlling costs and more latterly providing flexibility, higher quality services and consumer choice.

Table 5 shows the Service Quality of the University in terms of Service Safety. The respondents agreed that they feel safe when they are inside the University as denoted by the weighted mean score of 3.32 on rank number 1. They also trust the employees of the University and they take part in the safety activities and programs of the University as manifested by the total weighted mean scores of 3.23 and 3.19 on rank number 2 and 3, respectively. The University has secured facilities from the entrance and exit gates and ensures that nobody can bring deadly weapons and illegal drugs inside the campus.

There is also a regular emergency drill every semester to ensure that the students are informed of the safety precautions and practices during disasters. Students were guided by the teachers during the emergency drill and they discussed ways in creating a safe environment [14]. Help the learners understand of taking the risks in a safe environment so they may develop the capacity to handle the demands, challenges, and pressures of the external environment [15].

**Table 5. Service Quality of the University in terms of Service Safety**

Service Safety	Student		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. I feel secured in all my transactions with the University	3.21	A	3.14	A	3.16	A	3.19	A	4
2. I trust the employees of the University	3.25	A	3.24	A	3.02	A	3.23	A	2
3. I feel safe when I am inside the University.	3.32	A	3.31	A	3.36	A	3.32	A	1
4. The University has effective dissemination of its safety programs.	3.15	A	3.07	A	3.12	A	3.12	A	5
5. I take part in the safety activities and programs of the University.	3.18	A	3.21	A	3.16	A	3.19	A	3
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>A</b>	

They also feel secured in all their transactions with the University as indicated by the total weighted mean score of 3.19 on rank number 4. Meanwhile, they also agreed that the University has effective dissemination of its safety programs which obtained the least total weighted mean score of 3.12 on rank number 5. Employees already built trust among the students through maintaining reliable service performance. Anything happens during the transaction, the university would be responsible to assist the clients in resolving any conflicts and problems.

The composite mean score of 3.22 from the students is higher than the Employees with 3.20 while the alumni obtained the least with 3.16. The total computed composite mean score of 3.21 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high competitive capabilities in terms of service quality specifically in the service safety. The LPU-B management disseminates information about maintaining safe environment from chemical hazards,

pollution, accidents and natural disasters through memo, announcements and seminar during Quality Week.

Table 6 shows the Service Quality of the University in terms of Ease of Service Access. The respondents agreed that the University services are disseminated among its customers through various media through website, printed materials and orientations as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 3.13 on rank number 1. They also agreed that the University has operating hours convenient to all its customers and it is very easy for them to find the information they are looking for about the University services and programs as manifested by the total weighted mean score of 3.12 and 3.11 on rank number 2 and 3, respectively.

The University has a functional and updated website that caters to the needs of the current students, alumni and prospective students regarding schedule of activities and entrance examinations.

**Table 6. Service Quality of the University in terms of Ease of Service Access**

Ease of Service Access	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University has operating hours convenient to all its customers.	3.08	A	3.20	A	3.04	A	3.12	A	2
2. The University services are disseminated among its customers through various media (website, printed materials, orientations, etc)	3.14	A	3.17	A	2.88	A	3.13	A	1
3. It is very easy for me to find the information I am looking for about the University services and programs	3.11	A	3.13	A	3.04	A	3.11	A	3
4. The service departments of the university are located in strategic areas accessible to its customers.	3.11	A	3.09	A	2.86	A	3.08	A	4
5. I can still easily access university services even if I'm not in the University premises.	2.90	A	2.87	A	2.38	D	2.84	A	5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>A</b>	

Curricular offerings of each college and employment opportunities of each program are also posted in the website. There are downloadable forms for student's use as well as HRIS for employee online leave application. The utilization of information technology makes the university services easier to access for employees, students, alumni and other stakeholders. Convenience comes at a financial cost to the consumer; in other words reducing time and effort entails a greater financial expenditure [16].

Likewise, they also agreed that the service departments of the university are located in strategic areas accessible to its customers which obtained a total weighted mean score of 3.08 on rank number 4. However, when they were asked if they can still easily access university services even if they are not in the University premises, this obtained the least total weighted mean score of 2.84 on rank number 5. The University provides an area for the freshmen enrollees where they can process the enrolment comfortably.

The composite mean score of 3.09 from the employees is higher than the students with 3.07 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.84. The total computed composite mean score of 3.06 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high competitive capabilities in terms of service quality specifically in the ease of service access. Mitchell and Romero [17] noted that individual candidates or prospective clients are attracted by the convenience and ease of service provided. The University also extend branding and marketing efforts to mobile environments for increased customer convenience and loyalty [18] through visiting high schools to provide scholarship and entrance examinations. Reaching them in their respective places especially those from far-flung areas will give them an access to the university. This is one of the business strategies to extend our service to encourage customers to be part

of the institution.

Table 7 shows the Service Quality of the University in terms of Rapid Customer Response. The respondents agreed that the quality of service is not compensated with fast delivery of services which obtained a total weighted mean score of 2.93 on rank number 1. They also agreed that the service provider attends to them quickly and the university's commitments and deadlines are always met as indicated by the total weighted mean score of 2.87 on rank number 2.5. The University implements speedy feedback mechanisms on their concerns also obtained an "agree" verbal interpretation on rank number 4. However, when they are unhappy, the University acts fast in taking the necessary corrective actions which obtained the least total weighted mean score of 2.72 on rank number 5. Meeting deadline for submission is always being reinforced as part of the process to keep the transaction and records organize as scheduled.

The university personnel need to follow-up the concerned work units or individual through posting in the bulletins and memos for any unfinished business transaction to remind them of any circumstances would arise if no action will be undertaken for that matter. The composite mean score of 2.88 from the students is higher than the employees with 2.84 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.55. The total computed composite mean score of 3.06 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high competitive capabilities in terms of service quality specifically in the rapid customer response. The first view of agility focuses on rapid response or adaptation to environmental changes, emphasizing the speed of the response to both anticipated and unexpected changes [19], [20]. The university would like to ensure that students and other stakeholders are being served with quick response to their inquiries as part of the competitive edge in service quality.

**Table 7. Service Quality of the University in terms of Rapid Customer Response**

Rapid Customer Response	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. When we are unhappy, the University acts fast in taking the necessary corrective actions.	2.75	A	2.76	A	2.30	D	2.72	A	5
2. The University implements speedy feedback mechanisms on our concerns	2.81	A	2.85	A	2.58	A	2.81	A	4
3. The service provider attends to me quickly	2.91	A	2.88	A	2.56	A	2.87	A	2.5
4. Commitments and deadlines are always met.	2.92	A	2.79	A	2.82	A	2.87	A	2.5
5. The quality of service is not compensated with fast delivery of services.	3.02	A	2.90	A	2.48	D	2.93	A	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>A</b>	

**Table 8. Service Quality of the University in terms of Availability of Service Facilities**

Availability of Service Facilities	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University has the right facilities for its customers.	3.07	A	3.12	A	2.82	A	3.07	A	1
2. The University has enough facilities to be used by its customers.	3.11	A	3.10	A	2.66	A	3.06	A	2
3. Service personnel are available to assist in using university facilities	3.07	A	3.04	A	2.74	A	3.03	A	3
4. In case of breakdown, there is always a back-up available for use.	3.01	A	2.99	A	2.54	A	2.96	A	4
5. The University can easily repair or replace damaged and unserviceable equipment & facilities.	2.96	A	2.85	A	2.66	A	2.90	A	5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>A</b>	

Table 8 shows the Service Quality of the University in terms of Availability of Service Facilities. The respondents agreed that the University has the right facilities for its customers (3.07) and has enough facilities to be used by its customers (3.06) and service personnel are available to assist in using university facilities (3.02). They also believed that in case of breakdown, the university has always a back-up available for use with total weighted mean score of 2.96.

However, the University can easily repair or replace damaged and unserviceable equipment and facilities which obtained the least total weighted mean score of 2.90.

The composite mean score of 3.04 from the students is higher than the employees with 3.02 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.68. The total computed composite mean score of 3.00 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high competitive capabilities in terms of service quality specifically in the availability of service facilities.

The university offers state-of-the-art facilities that provide adequate services to cater the needs of the students to develop their full potential as future professionals. Employees are also being provided adequate supplies and resources so that they can productively serve the customers. Badri and Al Khaili [21] stated that schools were developed in designs that enable students to create knowledge and understanding through exploration and experimentation. Likewise, Brewer [22] emphasized that student course representatives typically have a strong relationship with the student body and are well placed to promote important information and raise awareness of the facilities available.

Employees have provided a conducive working environment to offer the school services to its client efficiently and effectively. Guests, visitors and other stakeholders would be able to utilize the school services and facilities through seminars and conferences. School facilities and resources are delivered to meet the international standards.

**Table 9. Service Quality of the University in terms of Variety of Services Offered**

Variety of Services Offered	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University has a variety of services to offer.	3.14	A	3.14	A	3.22	A	3.15	A	3
2. The University has innovative programs and services to offer.	3.18	A	3.21	A	2.96	A	3.17	A	2
3. The University gives attention to research and development to innovate its services.	3.22	A	3.22	A	3.22	A	3.22	A	1
4. The University is very creative in terms of coming up and offering its services to its customers.	3.17	A	3.14	A	2.88	A	3.13	A	4
5. There is a healthy environment suitable to creativity, development and innovation.	3.15	A	3.07	A	2.88	A	3.10	A	5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>A</b>	



Badri and Al Khaili [21] noted that school designs promote an integrated learning environment with sustainability features and adequate health and wellness, technology, library and extra-curricular facilities to support physical and social development. Availability of resources could be understood as opportunities for learning and skill development [23].

Table 9 shows the Service Quality of the University in terms of Variety of Services Offered. The respondents agreed that the University gives attention to research and development to innovate its services with total weighted mean score of 3.22 on rank number 1. The University utilizes the findings of its researches for continuous quality improvement of the organization in terms of program offering, student services, physical plant and facilities, and delivery instruction. Research-based findings are being used for decision making of all levels of management to offer variety of services and evaluate the status or condition of the institution in achieving its goals, mission and vision.

The University has innovative programs and services and it has a variety of services to offer which also obtained an “agree” verbal interpretation and total weighted mean scores of 3.15 and 3.17 on rank numbers 2 and 3, respectively. O’Reilly et al. [24] noted that innovative programs aim at providing education, employment, and training opportunities for students and employees of an academic institution. Various extra-curricular activities are being held inside and outside the university to enhance the competitive skills of students as required by the industries here and abroad. The students would be able to take the TOEIC to identify the level of their English communication skill to ensure that the graduates would have necessary proficiency level of oral and written skills for employment [25], [26], [27].

They also agreed that the University is very creative in terms of coming up and offering its services to its customers as indicated by the total weighted mean score of 3.13. Daquila [28] stated that the education system is constantly changing as it increasingly becomes more creative, innovative, and internationally tradable. The development of new programs and services had profound implication for the organization [29] to signify its commitment and dedication towards quality. Meanwhile, when they were asked if there is a healthy environment suitable to creativity, development and innovation, this obtained the least total weighted mean score of 3.10 on rank number 5.

The composite mean score of 3.17 from the students is higher than the employees with 3.16 while the alumni obtained the least with 3.03. The total computed composite mean score of 3.16 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high competitive capabilities in terms of service quality specifically in the variety of services offered.

Table 10 shows the Marketing Capabilities of LPU-B as perceived by students, employees and alumni in terms of reasonableness of price. The respondents agreed that the payment of fees is in terms convenient to the customer which obtained a total weighted mean score of 2.96 on rank number 1. The University provides services equivalent to their money’s worth and it makes sure that customers understand what they are paying for which also obtained an “agree” verbal interpretation with total weighted mean scores of 2.88 and 2.87 on rank numbers 2 and 3, respectively. The students have an option to pay their tuition fees in instalment basis before the start of major examination week. Breakdown of fees is also listed in the registration form.

**Table 10. Marketing Capabilities of LPU-Batangas in terms of Reasonableness of Price**

Reasonableness of Price	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University provides services equivalent to my money’s worth	2.87	A	2.96	A	2.60	A	2.88	A	2
2. The University makes sure that customers understand what they are paying for.	2.89	A	2.88	A	2.68	A	2.87	A	3
3. Billing and payment issues are fairly, satisfactorily and immediately resolved	2.86	A	2.78	A	2.68	A	2.81	A	4
4. Fees are fair and reasonable	2.71	A	2.72	A	2.54	A	2.70	A	5
5. Payment of fees is in terms convenient to the customer.	2.96	A	2.99	A	2.88	A	2.96	A	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>A</b>	

They were informed to maximize the use of school facilities and services to get what they deserve based on the miscellaneous fees being paid. The university personnel are very much willing to assist them to utilize the school resources intended for their learning and development.

They also agreed that the billing and payment issues are fairly, satisfactorily and immediately resolved as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 2.81. However, when they were asked if the fees are fair and reasonable, they also answered agreed but this obtained the least total weighted mean score of 2.70.

The composite mean score of 2.87 from the employees is higher than the students with 2.86 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.68. The total computed composite mean score of 2.84 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high marketing capabilities in terms of reasonableness of price. The significant relationship between physical surroundings and price perception can be inferred in that this value perception is highly associated with the perceived reasonableness of the price a customer pays to get the benefits [30]. The LPU-B ensures that every student may be given enough attention to provide services equivalent to the capital they invested for their education. Business entities like academic institutions prepare the students to become future professionals which entails money to support their journey towards the achievement of their chosen career. They serve as partner of the parents in molding the character, knowledge and skills of their children to become globally competitive graduates and part of the fast growing economy of neighboring countries. The return of investment of the parents would only take few years after these students get employed several months after graduation. The services provided by

LPU-B still remains even during their employment.

Table 11 shows the Marketing Capabilities of the University in terms of convenience of location. The respondents agreed that the University's location is accessible to public and private vehicles as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 3.13 on rank number 1. The University is situated near the Batangas Provincial Capitol which is accessible to public transportation going to and coming from different locations in Batangas City.

They also agreed that the service departments and facilities are located in areas convenient for the customers and they feel safe even in areas surrounding the University as indicated by the total weighted mean scores of 3.07 and 3.03 on rank numbers 2 and 3, respectively. Directional signages are available both within and outside the university which also obtained an "agree" verbal interpretation with total weighted mean score of 3.01 on rank number 4. However, when they were asked regarding the university's enough parking spaces, they still answered agreed but this obtained the least total weighted mean score of 2.99.

The directional signage is visible enough for the first time customers to visit the campus especially the parents. There are also security guards who will assist them to reach the location where they have to complete their transactions.

The composite mean score of 3.08 from the students is higher than the employees with 3.02 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.90. The total computed composite mean score of 3.04 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high marketing capabilities in terms of convenience of location. Edyburn [31] noted that accessibility describes an environment where access is equitably provided to everyone at the same time.

**Table 11. Marketing Capabilities of LPU-Batangas in terms of Convenience of Location**

Convenience of Location	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University's location is accessible to public and private vehicles.	3.09	A	3.22	A	3.02	A	3.13	A	1
2. The university has enough parking spaces	3.03	A	2.87	A	3.14	A	2.99	A	5
3. I feel safe even in areas surrounding the University.	3.08	A	3.06	A	2.64	A	3.03	A	3
4. The service departments and facilities are located in areas convenient for the customers.	3.12	A	3.05	A	2.82	A	3.07	A	2
5. Directional signages are available both within and outside the university.	3.08	A	2.92	A	2.88	A	3.01	A	4
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>A</b>	

Recreational facilities and school accessibility could also be hypothesized as possible influential factors of adolescents' moderate to vigorous physical activity [32].

When it comes to parking space, due to limited area in Talisay Drive, students and employees have to park their vehicles at the back of administration building where they need to take a short walk to reach their offices and classrooms. As much as the management wanted to expand their parking area which is most convenient to all customers, but due to limited land area being occupied by the University it would not be possible. But the parking space provided by the University is enough to occupy all the registered vehicles of the employees and students inside the campus.

Table 12 shows the management capabilities of the University as perceived by students, employees and alumni in terms of IT Application. The respondents agreed that the University has modern equipment and facilities as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 3.20 on rank number 1. The University enhances its service capabilities through the use of modern and advanced technology and the use of modern equipment is translated to improvement of services which also obtained an "agree" verbal interpretation with total weighted mean scores of 3.17 and 3.13 on rank numbers 2 and 3, respectively. They also agreed that the University personnel are abreast with the use of modern technology as indicated by the total weighted mean score of 3.09 on rank number 4.

The application of information technology is evident in the instructional equipment and facilities being utilized in the process of learning development. Computer laboratories and simulation rooms are equipped with updated software and workstation to better serve the needs of the students in developing

their knowledge and skills. Internet connection is available in the campus to facilitate faster the transmission and acquisition of information from educational web sources. The optimization of the utilization of resources is important as an alternative and as a complement to other strategies [33] like online encoding and viewing of grades; customer satisfaction survey and faculty performance evaluation is also being practiced in the university [34], [35].

However, the University's website and use of social media is very effective in terms of communicating with its customers which obtained the least total weighted mean score of 3.00 on rank number 5. Social networking sites especially for the employees are only available during lunch breaks and after office hours to let them focus their attention in performing their duties and responsibilities rather than making unnecessary activities in social media. But these networking sites are always made available to Strategic Communications and Alumni Affairs Office to disseminate announcement and substantial information for marketing purposes and image building. The Alumni might not be given enough information regarding news and updates about LPU-B, thus they have the lowest mean score in the use of social media.

The composite mean score of 3.19 from the students is higher than the employees with 3.12 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.69. The total computed composite mean score of 3.12 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high management capabilities in terms of IT application. Meanwhile, Dasgupta, Gupta and Sahay [36] noted that feedback obtained from implementation of technological innovation and the evolution of technology should form the basis for the organization to revise its technology strategy.

**Table 12. Management Capabilities of LPU-Batangas in terms of IT Application**

IT Application	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University enhances its service capabilities through the use of modern & advanced technology.	3.24	A	3.15	A	2.82	A	3.17	A	2
2. The University has modern equipment and facilities.	3.29	A	3.18	A	2.74	A	3.20	A	1
3. The University's website and use of social media is very effective in terms of communicating with its customers.	3.07	A	3.02	A	2.52	A	3.00	A	5
4. The use of modern equipment is translated to improvement of services.	3.19	A	3.15	A	2.74	A	3.13	A	3
5. The University personnel are abreast with the use of modern technology.	3.16	A	3.10	A	2.64	A	3.09	A	4
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>A</b>	

**Table 13. Management Capabilities of the University in terms of Employee Development**

Employee Development	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The employees of the University who serve us are well trained.	3.15	A	3.10	A	2.66	A	3.09	A	4
2. I am being provided with quality services by the University employees.	3.13	A	3.12	A	3.06	A	3.12	A	3
3. Service providers adhere to professional standards of conduct	3.14	A	3.15	A	3.00	A	3.13	A	1.5
4. Service providers are well supervised	3.12	A	3.09	A	2.82	A	3.08	A	5
5. The service provider is very knowledgeable	3.19	A	3.06	A	2.96	A	3.13	A	1.5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>A</b>	

Table 13 shows the management capabilities of the University as perceived by the three groups of respondents in terms of Employee Development. The respondents agreed that the service providers adhere to professional standards of conduct and the service provider is very knowledgeable as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 3.13 on rank number 1.5. They also believed that they are being provided with quality services by the University employees as manifested by the total weighted mean score of 3.12 on rank number 3. Likewise, they also agreed that the employees of the University who serve them are well trained as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 3.09. On the other hand, when they are asked if the service providers are well supervised, they still answered agree but this obtained the least weighted mean score of 3.08.

Employees are being evaluated by the customers based on their performance on how they delivered services in the right manner. The results of Customer Satisfaction Measurement served as important voice and feedback from the clients as bases for continuous improvement. Employee evaluation based from the assessment of the department head also serve as

feedback mechanism for staff development program.

The employees have appropriate knowledge and skills on how to make their service more friendly and approachable. The university launched the Customer Friendly Environment to demonstrate its full commitment to serve the clients with adherence to professional standards and maximum customer focus developmental initiatives which according to Ghosh [37] is a way of mentoring need to be attuned to the exclusive needs of each context defined by the unique culture of schools and business organizations. The Learning Institute Program of the university provides every employee the opportunity to participate in various training and seminars that would help them strengthen their capacity to demonstrate appropriate effective customer relation in day-to-day business operation of their respective work units.

The composite mean score of 3.15 from the students is higher than the employees with 3.10 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.90. The total computed composite mean score of 3.11 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high management capabilities in terms of employee development.

**Table 14. Management Capabilities of the University in terms of Business Expansion Network**

Business Expansion Network	Students		Employee		Alumni		Total		Rank
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI	
1. The University meets international standards.	3.24	A	3.21	A	2.88	A	3.20	A	3.5
2. I believe that the University is ready to expand internationally.	3.28	A	3.19	A	2.70	A	3.20	A	3.5
3. The University has strong linkages with academic and training institutions (industry partners).	3.31	A	3.15	A	2.66	A	3.19	A	5
4. The University has strong linkages in terms of its community extension programs.	3.29	A	3.27	A	2.66	A	3.23	A	2
5. The University has strong linkages in terms of its research programs.	3.25	A	3.23	A	3.30	A	3.25	A	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>A</b>	

The University has the capability to provide necessary skills and opportunities for professional development with appropriate mechanism to bring staff together to develop the best ways of problem solving [38] and offering great services to achieve optimum customer satisfaction. Carter [39] advised that it is useful to educational leaders who are looking to engage school faculty in innovative programs and investigate the impact school-college collaborative programs have on the faculty involved to support the management capabilities in the lower level.

Table 14 shows the management capabilities of the University as perceived by the three groups of respondents in terms of Business Expansion Network. The respondents believed that the University has strong linkages in terms of its research programs as denoted by the total weighted mean score of 3.25 on rank number 1.

They also agreed that the University has strong linkages in terms of its community extension programs as indicated by the total weighted mean score of 3.23. They believe that the University is ready to expand internationally and it meets the international standards as manifested by the total weighted mean score of 3.20 on rank number 3.5. Developing and maintaining networking relationships with other organizations creates opportunities to exploit resources in the organization's environment [40].

The University is connected to several research organizations such as International Association of Multidisciplinary Research, Philippine Association of Institutions for Research, Philippine Society of Educational Research and Evaluation and others. Likewise, the faculty members are also members of research organizations related to their fields of specialization and discipline within local, national and international levels. Community Extension has its own private and government agencies that support the extension programs of the University for the adopted barangays like Gawad Kalinga and Couples for Christ

as well as the local government units and non-government organizations.

Various international linkages provide assistance for the university to get foreign students specifically from Nigerian Government. Student mobility is also part of the student exchange program to let them experience the unique character and rich culture of other countries and understand the diversity of customs and traditions in a certain civilization. Wadhwa and Jha [41] emphasized that there is an increasing trend of opening up of branch campuses in developing countries. This trend is an outcome of the mutual response to the internationalization of higher education by both developed and developing countries. The University is now looking for its expansion through establishing LPU campus in other countries in the future. The development of voluntary networks of firms has been proposed as a way of stimulating employer demand for vocational training in more liberal market economies. The emergence of market-based training networks is seen to lead to greater inter-firm cooperation, resource sharing and facilitate employer collective action to address labour market needs [42].

However, when they were asked if the University has strong linkages with academic and training institutions like industry partners, they still answered agreed but this obtained the least weighted mean score of 3.19.

The composite mean score of 3.27 from the students is higher than the employees with 3.21 while the alumni obtained the least with 2.84. The total computed composite mean score of 3.21 implies that the respondents believed that the university has high management capabilities in terms of Business Expansion Network. Dalziel [43] emphasized that networks are important in conceptualising the careers in an organisation as offering an integrated set of menus of services provided to employees, students and faculty members.

**Table 15. Significant Differences in the Perceived Competitive Capabilities among the Three Groups of Respondents**

Competitive Capabilities	Student	Employee	Alumni	Total	F- value	p-value	VI	D
Service Quality	3.03	3.02	2.85	3.01	5.828	.003**	HS	Reject
Marketing Capabilities	2.97	2.95	2.79	2.94	3.523	.030*	S	Reject
Management Capabilities	3.20	3.14	2.81	3.15	19.230	.000**	HS	Reject

\*\*  $p$ -value < 0.01 – Highly Significant (HS); \*  $p$ -value < 0.05 – Significant (S)

Table 15 reveals the significant differences in the perceived competitive capabilities of the University among the three groups of respondents. The responses of alumni in terms of competitive capabilities and corporate image are significantly lower compared to the responses of students and employees as denoted by the computed p-values which are less than the 0.01 except for marketing capabilities which is less than 0.05.

Alumni have no direct contact with the services provided by the university, unless they will be requesting for the copies of their diploma, transcript of records and other credentials needed for employment and other legal purposes. They assessed the variables under study lower than the assessment of the other groups. The Alumni may be lacking information about the achievements and accomplishments of the university to increase the knowledge of the general public regarding the corporate image of LPU-Batangas compared to other universities and colleges of the same level in terms of quality education, institutional performance and attractiveness. Sending them news and updates through their personal email aside from postings in social networking media to increase the possibility that they might read the information to enhance their awareness about LPU-Batangas.

The challenges of higher education institutions were related to students' performance, teacher quality, school governance systems, the quality of school administrators, teaching time and hours of instruction, teachers' professional development, school infrastructures, curriculum standards, education data and research, the language of instruction, the quality of private education and preparing students for the job market [21].

#### **Proposed Image Management Plan**

The proposed image management plan aims to provide suggestions and support to strengthen the marketing strategies of the University through preventing delays in any university transaction and ensure very minimal waiting time on the delivery of University Services. It also offers idea on how to provide various mode of listening to customer needs; effectively disseminate safety programs; provide off campus service access to services; provide fast corrective actions for all customer concerns; and ensure that the University has a healthy environment that is conducive to creativity, development and innovation. Improvement on the accessibility of the

University website and social media networks for effective communicating with customers is also emphasized through regular evaluation and constant update on the content of the website. This serves as the mirror of the University which reflects all the activities and achievements being laid down suitably to the target audience. In terms of management capability, ensuring that the line personnel are properly supervised in providing appropriate and effective services to all clients is also one of the main concerns of the institution.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The University has strong management capabilities as perceived by the students, employees and alumni followed by service quality and marketing capabilities as the least. The respondents believed that they feel safe inside the university and the location is accessible to public and private vehicles. The group of Alumni respondents has significantly lower perceptions in competitive capabilities due to some services were not highly accessible online and they were not constantly given information about the events of the university. A university image management plan was proposed to strengthen the reputation of LPU-Batangas to its stakeholders in national and international level. The findings of the study is only limited to LPU-Batangas and cannot be generalized to all LPU schools.

It is recommended that the Strategic Communications, Linkages and International Affairs (SLIA) may ensure that the people in the academic community are informed and aware of its marketing strategies to check the effectiveness and impact of their promotional activities as a form of Market Research. The Planning and Quality Assurance Office in cooperation with the Center for Research and Development (CRED) may provide significant institutional information to SLIA for further dissemination to all stakeholders through the university website or in any form of business correspondence. The University may offer courses or degree programs under e-learning or distance education mode of instruction to cater the needs of alumni and other interested students here and abroad. Collaboration with other Universities with QS Ranking is one of the strategies that could help in improving the image of the University through making strong linkages with reputable HEIs.

The proposed university image management plan may be implemented and evaluated the effectiveness

to ensure continuous quality improvement in the business operations and marketing plans of LPU-Batangas. Future researchers may compare the competitive environment of LPU-Batangas with other colleges and universities in provincial or regional level.

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