



The Effect of Service Marketing Elements on Student Satisfaction in Higher Private Institutions in Bamenda and Buea, Cameroon

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Abstract

In a competitive society, for customers to stay loyal, every institution has to meet their demand on time and while putting in place dimensions of service qualities, Institutions must learn to understand customer attributes, customer purchasing behaviour to satisfy them. The main aim of this study was to examine how service marketing elements influence student satisfaction in higher private institutions in Bamenda and Buea council areas, Cameroon.

Methods: The study make used of quantitative research design, the consumers, students of the selected private institutions in both regions, were taken as the population for this study and a sample size of 1000 participants was simple random sampling technique, the source of data was primary data and instrument use in collecting was self-administered questionnaires and the study make used of ordinary least squares (OLS) in analyzing the data.

Results: The findings revealed that process quality has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.004). The finding shows that people's quality has a negative and significant effect on student satisfaction, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.000). The finding further revealed that physical evidence has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction, and the result was statistically significant at 5% level of significance (P value <0.033). The finding revealed that security has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.000). The finding revealed that time management has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.000).

Recommendations: The study therefore recommends that the institutions should improve in administrative activities and academic processes. This can be done by implementing a digital platform that eases communication between students and administration during registration procedures, admission procedures and school payment.

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1. Introduction

In a competitive society with the rapid growth of private lay educational institutions, student satisfaction has emerged as a key determinant of competitiveness, student enrollment, and long-term sustainability (Pedro *et al.*, 2024; Yamin, 2024) ^[24, 32]. Zhong *et al.* (2025) ^[33] demonstrated a direct and favourable relationship between student happiness and the higher educational institutions' competitiveness. According to Zhong *et al.* (2025) ^[33], "student satisfaction is influenced by various aspects, including the quality of instruction, the rapport between teachers and students, extracurricular activities, campus facilities, tuition fees, curriculum design, the overall environment of the institution, and the availability of academic resources".

Private institution continues to struggle with enrollment and student satisfaction (Shaffer, 2021; Passenti *et al.*, 2024)^[23, 26]. Perceived quality of teaching, physical evidence, and process quality. Time management and people quality dimensions are significant predictors of student satisfaction in the literature, with student satisfaction having both direct and mediating influences on students' staying and supportive intentions (Al Hassani & Wilkins, 2022)^[2].

The rise of private universities since the 1990s has diversified the higher education landscape in Cameroon (Akemche *et al.*, 2022; Noutchie, 2024)^[1, 18]. As a result of the country to boost professionalism in the country to match skills and employment. Private higher institutions have become popular due to their flexibility and responsiveness to job market demands in Cameroon (Nyenty-Stephen, 2023; Mve, 2020; Tigma *et al.*, 2024)^[16, 19, 30]. As a result of that, these institutions were made to offer various programs leading to bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees across disciplines such as arts, sciences, engineering, business, and health (Nyenty-Stephen, 2023; Mve, 2020; Tigma *et al.*, 2024)^[16, 19, 30]. Without leaving behind, technical and vocational educational programs, which were also crucial, providing practical skills for the workforce (Che, 2007; NGUv& Teneng, 2020)^[17]. The continuous expansion of urban areas and an increase in population have further led to an increase in demand for higher educational institutions, and entry into this educational sector as a form of business is much easier than satisfying the students due to numerous challenges in the face of these institutions (Elken, 2020; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2021). Despite the challenges surrounding these objectives to ensure the quality of education across both public and private institutions, the government has established accreditation bodies to address this issue (Elken, 2020; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2021).

Business services-oriented efficiency and level of growth depend heavily on how well they implement the service marketing mix elements, particularly People, Process, and Physical Evidence (Darmawan & Grenier, 2021; Khan, 2014)^[8, 10]. In the educational sector, which is a service-dominant sector, these three elements play a critical role in shaping students' perceptions of quality and institutional value (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2018). The physical evidence, such as the infrastructure of the school and competence of their staff, and well-maintained discipline, is evidence that students' performance is guaranteed, and when this happens, students become satisfied and become the talk of the day (Musyoka, 2013; Eneiga, 2024)^[9, 15]. Students' satisfaction greatly depends on these services marketing determinants with people qualities of the service marketing mix remains one of the most critical determinants of students' satisfaction service-oriented organization. Academic and administrative staff directly influence student experiences through their competence, responsiveness, and professionalism, ultimately shaping perceptions of service quality (Blythe, 2008).

The current study is based on three major significant, it provides an insight on how students satisfaction through quality of instruction, the rapport between teachers and students, extracurricular activities, campus facilities, tuition fees, curriculum design use to influence private lay educational institutions, secondly, study significant to the fact it give insight to private educational instructions that it is important to know that students satisfactions directly depends

on institutional services, such as equality of instruction, the rapport between teachers and students, extracurricular activities, campus facilities, tuition fees, curriculum design first before you are able lure parents to do unplanned enrollment in their institutions. From the literature review, few studies have been carried out to critically established the relationship that exist between services marketing elements and students' satisfaction in higher educational institution in Bamenda and Buea in particular in Cameroon, while controlling for other variables; therefore, this study is important because it helps to bridge this literature gap. It is against this that the current study seeks to investigate the extent to which service marketing elements influences students' satisfaction: evidence from private higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea council Areas. Based on this objective, the current study states its hypothesis in Null form since it is the hypothesis to be tested.

Ho: Service marketing elements has no significant effect on students' satisfaction in private higher educational institutions in the Bamenda and Buea Council area.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Service Marketing Mix Elements

In more than three decades now, services have been considered as pure intangibles capable of providing satisfaction to the customer, which could be marketed like tangible products. scholars such as Soroya and Ameen (2021)^[28], Kutip *et al.* (2024), and Lim (2021)^[12] marketing services mix are embedded in the 7ps that affects both products and service performance, the extended 3ps is a significant part of a service plan which essential for optimum service delivery (Soroya & Ameen, 2021; Kutip *et al.*, 2024)^[28]. According to Kotler and Bloom (1984) "Service is any act or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything, and its production may or may not be tied to a physical product, and this service is characterized by intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity (variability), and Perishability".

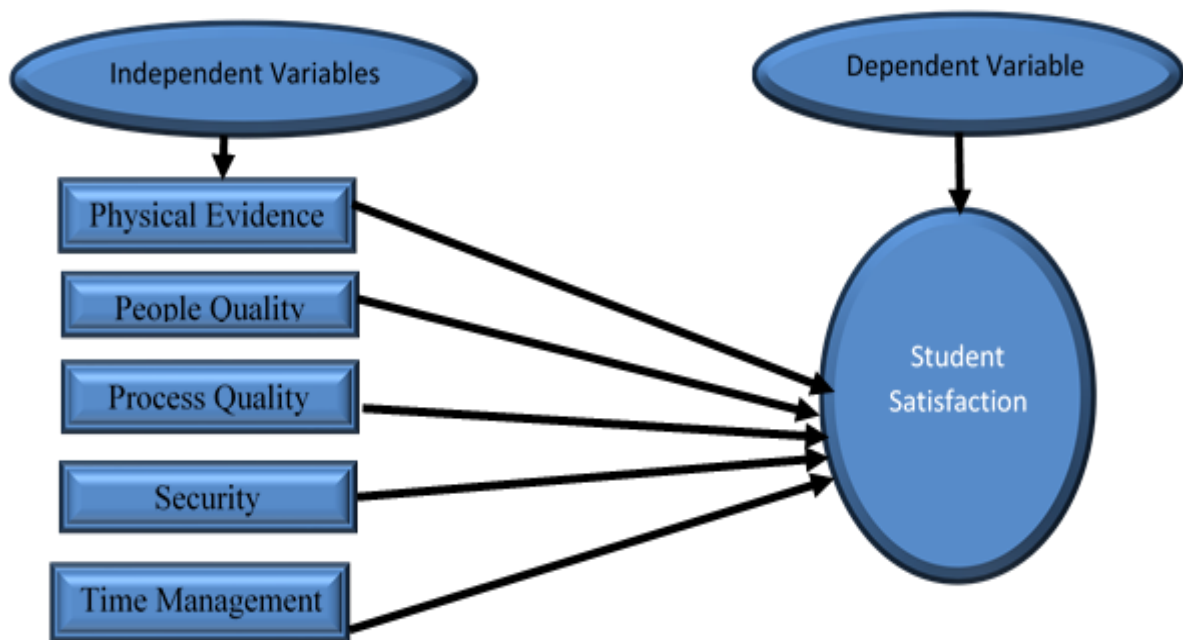
According to Booms and Bitner (1996) suggest three additional Ps in service marketing, People, Physica Evidence, and Process, are needed in institutions that render services. Higher private educational institutions' services are a process included in a system. According to Lovelock (1999) "service is a process and a system. This implies that service as a process is produced from three input processes: people (consumer), material and information. As a system, the servicing business is a combination of the Service Operating System and the Service Delivery System. Service marketing emphasises on service delivery system; how a company delivers services to consumers. The accuracy of service marketing strategy of a company is determined by perceived service quality and measured by the quality of customer-perceived service (service performance / perceived service) as well as the expected service (customer expectation). Overall service quality is the totality of each element of the service mix".

Service marketing mix and service quality, including educational services, can be improved through service quality elements/determinants. According to Lovelock & Wright (2002) "five elements determine the service quality: tangible, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance or certainty. Tangibles reflect the physical facilities such as lecture hall, offices, lecture rooms, clothes and appearance of

employees, the location of campus, lecture facilities and offices. Empathy includes the ease of communication and understanding of student needs, such as attitude, reasonableness of fees being offered, the willingness to help students, responding to every request of students, courtesy of employees, individual attention to students, understanding of employees to students, attention to the interests of students, attention to student needs and attention to personal student needs. Reliability includes the trust in institutions, the accuracy of student records, and student confidence in employees and lecturers. Responsiveness includes the speed of service and the institution's support for faculty and staff. Assurance includes an institution's promise to students, determining the timing of service provision, lecture security, determining operational timing and the certainty of rendered services”.

2.2. Student Satisfaction

2.3. Conceptual Framework



Source: Author Computation (2025)

Fig 1: Conceptual framework linking the dependent Variables (service marketing elements) and dependent variable (Students Satisfaction)

2.4. Empirical Review

Syaiful *et al.* (2025) ^[29] the registration processes were found directly related to students' satisfaction. Maulanan *et al.* (2025) ^[13], campus facilities, and university image have a strong influence on student satisfaction. Amoako *et al.* (2023) ^[5]. The results reveal that administrative services, academic services, and physical evidence have a positive relationship between satisfaction. Alfianto and Suryawardana, (2021) ^[3] results show that the dimensions of service quality (reliability, responsiveness, assurance of empathy, and physical evidence) have a positive effect on student satisfaction.

Mulyono *et al.* (2020) ^[14] and Onditi and Wechuli's (2017) ^[21] school infrastructure such as qualities of the teachers, equipment, administration procedures have a direct influence on students' satisfaction and also increasing awareness programs for administrative staff are important. For the reputation aspect, carrying out several marketing campaigns,

Satisfaction is the utility derived from the consumption of a product or service. In the educational institution where services are being rendered, satisfaction is measured by student retention rate, which refers to the percentage of students who remain with an institution over a specific period. Understanding retention helps businesses identify what drives continued engagement and reveals opportunities to enhance customer loyalty (Wong & Chapman, 2023; Pandita, & Kiran, 2023) ^[22, 31]. Student satisfaction begins with the customer's first contact with the brand, such as liking a social media page or subscribing to an email newsletter and continues as long as the customer does not disengage (Ogunnaike *et al.*, 2014; Sharif & Sidi Lemine, 2024) ^[20, 27], this metric helps firms understand long-term customer loyalty and assess the effectiveness of customer service, onboarding, and relationship management strategies.

which are expected to have an effect on students in building positive perceptions of the campus, has to be executed as well. Meanwhile, “for the access aspect, it should be ensured that every student can have direct access to staff employees, and it is necessary to improve dimensions which can increase

students' satisfaction so that students are convinced of their choice of campus”.

Onditi and Wechuli (2017) ^[21] and Ali *et al.* (2016). The findings show that all five dimensions of higher education service quality influence student satisfaction, which in turn influences institutional image, and together, they influence student loyalty. Rathod (2016) ^[25], “the primary aim of the research paper is to study the effects of service marketing mix elements on Indian customer for making the appropriate marketing mix strategy which reveals that in service marketing, some elements of marketing mix such as physical evidence, process, place & people have a positive and

significant effect on customer rather than product/service, price/fees & promotion”.

Brown and Mazzarol (2009) ^[6] “student loyalty is predicted by student satisfaction, which is in turn predicted by the perceived image of the host university. While the perceived quality of “humanware” (e.g., people and process) and “hardware” (e.g., infrastructure and tangible service elements) has an impact on perceived value, this was found to be weak and indeterminate. Of most importance was the impact of the institution’s institutional image, which strongly predicted perceived value, and to a lesser extent, student satisfaction. The findings have implications for newer, less prestigious universities seeking to compete in a more deregulated, market-driven environment”.

3. Methodology

The study applied an institution-based survey. For the current study, the working sample size consisted of all the students of the selected Private Higher Educational institutions of learning in Bamenda and Buea council areas (Approved schools in Buea are 34 and Bamenda 21). The researcher administered 2300 questionnaires and 2110 for the study. It should be noted that the questionnaires were administered only private institutions, and the study make used of a stratified and random sampling technique to ensure fair representation of students from various Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) within the Bamenda and Buea Council Areas.

The data for this study were from primary sources. This included data collected with standard structural questionnaires conducted by the researchers themselves. This study is articulated around a single model as shown in the equations below.

$$\text{Students Satisfaction} = \beta_0 + f(\text{Service Marketing Mix}$$

Elements) + εequation1
The econometric model was specified as;

$$SS_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 PROC_i + \alpha_2 PEO_i + \alpha_3 PHE_i + \alpha_4 SECU_i + \alpha_5 TIME_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Where:

SS is Students Satisfaction index, PROC is the process quality index, PEO is the people quality index, PHE is the physical evidence quality index, SECU is the security index, and TIME is the Time management index. ε is the error term while α_0 is the constant term and α_1 to α_5 are the coefficients of the independent and control variables measuring the change in the dependent variable resulting from a change in the specific independent variable holding all other variables constant.

The study used the ordinary least squares technique (OLS) to estimate the coefficients (β) and explore the significant effect of services marketing mix elements on student satisfaction higher private educational institutions in Buea and Bamenda. This technique was chosen over other techniques due to its flexibility under assumptions, and it is straightforward and easy to interpret. The current also considered the validity and reliability with concepts like credibility, trustworthiness, truth, value, application, and consistency. The ability of a case study to show that study operations (data collecting, processes) are repeated and produce the same results is the final and most important test. The consistency of the study’s findings throughout time is evaluated by reliability (Hayashi *et al.*, 2019). A pre-test was carried out on a considerably smaller sample to confirm that the respondents access the items on the instruments, so ensuring the reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Scale per Variable

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Physical Evidence	8.2100	0.7996
People Quality	8.2222	0.7851
Process Quality	8.2187	0.7651
Security	8.1121	0.7221
Time Management	8.2111	0.7321

Source: Author Computation (2025)

This study's ethical concerns were appropriately addressed in terms of voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality. “Such issues were adequately addressed to increase the chances of getting honest responses from respondents and consequently more reliable data. Ethical considerations pervaded each phase of data collection in this study. Concerning the construction of the instruments for data collection, the researchers ensured that the questions asked,

the language used, the length of the questionnaire, and the duration of the interview were appropriate and acceptable to the respondents. Every questionnaire was given with a cover letter that explained the goal of the study to the respondents so they may choose whether or not to participate. Since respondents were not required to submit their names on the questionnaire, their privacy was assured”.

4. Results

Table 2: Demographic Information

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	1149	54.45
	Female	961	45.55
Age	16-20	898	42.56
	21-25	301	14.27
	26-30	552	26.16
	31-35	221	10.47
	Above 36	138	6.54
	Married	194	9.19
Marital Status	Single	1916	90.81
Year of Study	1	659	31.23
	2	1004	47.58
	3	272	12.89
	4	97	4.60
	5	78	3.70
Field of Study	Business Studies	715	33.89
	Engineering	678	32.13
	Medical	354	16.78
	Agriculture	217	10.28
	Education	77	3.65
	Arts	12	0.57
	Others	57	2.70

Source: Authors (2025)

Table 2 Presents the demographic profile of respondents in a study examining the effect of service marketing mix, institutional reputation, and student satisfaction in private higher education institutions in Bamenda and Buea Council Areas. The study involved more males, with 1149 respondents representing 54.45% of the total population, while females accounted for 45.55% with 961 respondents. This slight disparity may indicate a higher interest or participation rate among males in the surveyed institutions. The majority of respondents, 898 students, fell within the 16-20 age range, constituting 42.56% of the total population. This is followed by the 26-30 age group, which accounted for 26.16% with 552 respondents. The 21-25 age group had 301 respondents, representing 14.27%. Students aged 31-35 comprised 10.47% of the population, while those above 36 made up 6.54%. This age distribution suggests that most students in these private higher education institutions are likely in their early years of study.

A significant proportion of respondents, 1916 students, were

single, accounting for 90.81% of the total population. Married students comprised only 9.19% with 194 respondents. This demographic indicates that the majority of students are likely focused on their education before taking on marital responsibilities. The distribution of students across different years of study shows that 47.58% of respondents were in their second year, with 1004 students. First-year students accounted for 31.23% with 659 respondents. Third-year students made up 12.89% with 272 respondents, while fourth- and fifth-year students represented 4.60% and 3.70%, respectively. Business Studies attracted the highest number of respondents, with 715 students accounting for 33.89% of the total population. Engineering students comprised 32.13% with 678 respondents, followed by medical students at 16.78% with 354 respondents. Agriculture students accounted for 10.28%, while Education and Arts students represented 3.65% and 0.57%, respectively. Other fields of study made up 2.70% of the respondents.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Process Quality	2110	.735	.441	0	1
People Quality	2110	.734	.442	0	1
Physical Evidence	2110	.726	.446	0	1
Security	2110	.73	.444	0	1
Time Management	2110	.727	.446	0	1
Students Satisfaction	2110	.725	.447	0	1

Source: Authors (2025)

Table 3 Presents the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the study. "The table shows the number of observations (Obs), mean, standard deviation (Std. Dev.), minimum (Min), and maximum (Max) values for each variable. The mean value for Process Quality is 0.735, indicating a relatively high level of process quality. The standard deviation is 0.441, suggesting some variation in process quality among the institutions. The mean value for

People Quality is 0.734, indicating a relatively high level of people quality. The standard deviation is 0.442, suggesting some variation in people quality among the institutions. The mean value for Physical Evidence is 0.726, indicating a relatively high level of physical evidence quality. The standard deviation is 0.446, suggesting some variation in physical evidence quality among the institutions. The mean value for Security is 0.73, indicating a relatively high level of

security. The standard deviation is 0.444, suggesting some variation in security among the institutions. The mean value for Time Management is 0.727, indicating a relatively high level of time management. The standard deviation is 0.446, suggesting some variation in time management among the

institutions. The mean value for Students Satisfaction is 0.725, indicating a relatively high level of student satisfaction. The standard deviation is 0.447, suggesting some variation in student satisfaction among the institutions”.

Table 4: Pairwise Correlation Coefficients

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Process Quality	1.000					
2. People Quality	0.038	1.000				
3. Physical Evidence	0.008	0.513	1.000			
4. Security	-0.156	0.418	0.633	1.000		
5. Time Management	-0.062	0.548	0.581	0.540	1.000	
6. Students Satisfaction	-0.007	0.200	0.368	0.425	0.424	1.000

Source: Authors (2025)

Table 4 Presents the pairwise correlations between the variables used in the study. “The table shows the correlation coefficients between each pair of variables. Process Quality has a weak positive correlation with People Quality (0.038) and Physical Evidence (0.008). However, it has a weak negative correlation with Security (-0.156) and Time Management (-0.062). The correlation with Students Satisfaction is also weak and negative (-0.007). People Quality has a strong positive correlation with Physical Evidence (0.513) and Time Management (0.548). It also has

a moderate positive correlation with Security (0.418) and Students Satisfaction (0.200). Physical Evidence has a strong positive correlation with Security (0.633) and Time Management (0.581). It also has a moderate positive correlation with Students Satisfaction (0.368). Security has a strong positive correlation with Time Management (0.540) and a moderate positive correlation with Students Satisfaction (0.425). Time Management has a moderate positive correlation with Students Satisfaction (0.424)”.

Table 5: Variance Inflation Factor

	VIF	1/VIF
Physical Evidence	2.072	0.483
People Quality	1.571	0.637
Process Quality	1.054	0.949
Security	1.883	0.531
Time Management	1.846	0.542
Mean VIF	1.685	.

Source: Authors (2025)

Table 5 presents the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for the variables used in the study. “The VIF is a measure of multicollinearity, which occurs when two or more independent variables are highly correlated with each other. The VIF values range from 1.054 to 2.072, with Physical Evidence having the highest VIF value of 2.072 and Process Quality having the lowest VIF value of 1.054. The mean VIF value is 1.685. A VIF value of 1 indicates no multicollinearity, while a VIF value greater than 1 indicates some level of multicollinearity. In this case, all VIF values are less than 5, which suggests that multicollinearity is not a severe problem in the data. Specifically, the VIF values for Physical Evidence (2.072), Security (1.883), and Time Management (1.846) are slightly higher, but still within acceptable limits. The tolerance values (1/VIF) range from 0.483 to 0.949, with Physical Evidence having the lowest tolerance value of 0.483 and Process Quality having the highest tolerance value of 0.949. These values confirm that multicollinearity is not a significant issue in the data. In conclusion, Table 5 provides evidence that multicollinearity is not a severe problem in the data, as indicated by the VIF values and tolerance values. This suggests that the regression

analysis results will be reliable and accurate”.

4.1. The Effect of Service Marketing Elements on Students’ Satisfaction

The R-squared value is 0.248, indicating that the model explains 24.8% of the variation in student satisfaction. The F-test value is 133.825, which is significant at the 1% level, indicating that the model is a good fit. The results indicate that all coefficients are significant at the 1% level. Process Quality, Physical Evidence, Security, and Time Management have positive coefficients, while People Quality has a negative coefficient. The constant term is also significant at the 1% level. In conclusion, Table 4.15 provides evidence that Process Quality, Physical Evidence, Security, and Time Management are important predictors of student satisfaction, while People Quality has a negative effect. These findings have implications for private higher education institutions in the Bamenda and Buea Council Areas to focus. Table 6 below presents the robust Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression results examining the effect of service marketing elements on student satisfaction.

Table 6: Robust OLS Results of the Effect of Service Marketing Elements on Students' Satisfaction

Students' Satisfaction	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Sig
Process Quality	0.081	0.029	2.840	0.004	0.025	0.137	***
People Quality	-0.133	0.023	-5.76	0.000	-0.178	-0.088	***
Physical Evidence	0.095	0.032	2.990	0.003	0.033	0.158	***
Security	0.278	0.024	11.73	0.000	0.232	0.325	***
Time Management	0.355	0.037	9.590	0.000	0.283	0.428	***
Constant	0.986	0.123	8.000	0.000	0.744	1.227	
Mean dependent var	3.431		SD dependent var			1.009	
R-squared	0.248		Number of obs			2110	
F-test	133.825		Prob > F			0.000	
Akaike crit. (AIC)	5436.706		Bayesian crit. (BIC)			5470.633	
*** $p<.01$, ** $p<.05$, * $p<.1$							

Source: Authors (2025)

The finding revealed that “process quality has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in process quality will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.081 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.004). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that process quality has a significant effect on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. For policy recommendations on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea, process quality should be given special consideration”.

The finding shows that “people quality has a negative and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in people quality will lead to decrease in student satisfaction by 0.133 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.000). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that people quality has a significant effect on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. For policy recommendations on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea, people quality should be given special treatment”.

The finding further revealed that “physical evidence has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in physical evidence will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.095 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 5% level of significance (P value <0.033). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that physical evidence has a significant effect on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. For policy recommendations on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea, physical evidence should be given special consideration”.

The finding revealed that “security has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in security will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.278 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1%

level of significance (P value <0.000). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that security has a significant effect on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. For policy recommendations on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea, security should be given special consideration”.

The finding revealed that “time management has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in time management will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.278 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.000). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that time management has a significant effect on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. For policy recommendations on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea, time management should be given special consideration”.

4.2. Discussion of Results

The finding revealed that process quality has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in process quality will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.081 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.004). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that process quality has a significant effect on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. The finding was similar with the work of Brown and Mazzarol (2009) ^[6], infrastructure and tangible service elements were found to have influence on students' loyalty, this implies that students' loyalty reflect their satisfaction of the process quality of the institutions.

The finding shows that people's quality has a negative and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in people quality will lead to a decrease in student satisfaction by 0.133 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.000). this was contrary with work of Syaiful *et al.* (2025) ^[29]. The academic service quality variable has a path coefficient value of 0.207, a P-

value of 0.00, and an epsilon v value of 0.898, all of which indicate that tuition fees have a significant indirect impact on student satisfaction. Maulanan *et al.* (2025)^[13] academic service quality, campus facilities, and university image have a strong influence on student satisfaction.

The finding further revealed that physical evidence has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in physical evidence will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.095 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 5% level of significance (P value <0.033). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that physical evidence has a significant effect on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. The finding was similar to the finding of Rathod (2016)^[25], physical evidence, process, place & people have a positive effect on customer rather than product/service, price/fees & promotion.

The finding revealed that security has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in security will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.278 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.000). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that security has a significant effect on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. The finding was similar to result of Ali *et al.* (2016)^[4]. The findings show that all the five dimensions of higher education service quality influence student satisfaction which in turn influences institutional image, and together, they influence student loyalty.

The finding revealed that time management has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in time management will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.278 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.000). the finding was supported by the work of Onditi and Wechuli (2017)^[21] the quality of lecturers to improve students' academic abilities and communication skills has direct relations with students' satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

To concur, it was observed that process quality has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.004). This shows that process quality, such as administration procedure, admission and registration, tuition payment procedure, courses scheduling and feedback, is efficient and reduces delay and student frustration, thus increasing their satisfaction. The finding shows that people quality has a negative and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in people quality will lead to a decrease in student satisfaction by 0.133 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value

<0.000). this signified that there needs to be improvement in the recruitment of staff quality (experts and experienced staff). The physical evidence has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in physical evidence will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.095 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 5% level of significance (P value <0.033). The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that physical evidence has a significant effect on student satisfaction in higher private educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This shows that educational institutions that maintain quality school infrastructure, such as a well-equipped lecture hall and office layout, retain students due to student satisfaction. Security has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea, and time management has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction in higher educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea. This implies that there is a likelihood that an increase in time management will lead to an increase in student satisfaction by 0.278 points, all things being equal, and the result was statistically significant at 1% level of significance (P value <0.000). These, therefore, revealed that students in private educational institutions are satisfied with the time management put in place, such as timely examination programming, holiday and administrative activities. In conclusion, study services marketing elements were all found to significantly influence students' level of satisfaction in privately educational institutions in Bamenda and Buea, Cameroon. The study therefore recommends that the institutions should improve in administrative activities and academic processes. This can be done by implementing a digital platform that eases communication between students and administration during registration procedures, admission procedures and school payment.

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