

SATISFACTION WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS AT SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

A Study on Satisfaction with the Operation of Human Research Ethics at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The objective of this study was to examine the level of satisfaction with the operation of human research ethics at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and to propose guidelines for improving and developing the quality of human research ethics services at the university. The population in this study consisted of 205 personnel who received services from the Human Research Ethics Committee. Data was collected using a questionnaire, and the statistical methods used for data analysis included percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The study found that, Overall, of a very high level of satisfaction with the implementation of human research ethics at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The aspect with the highest mean satisfaction score was staff/service personnel, who were polite, appropriately dressed, attentive, willing to assist, knowledgeable, fair in their treatment of service users, and demonstrated integrity. The aspect with the lowest satisfaction score was facilities, which were limited in space and could not accommodate multiple service users simultaneously. The researcher recommends improving service areas to ensure they are convenient, accessible, and capable of accommodating waiting users efficiently. In addition, communication channels should be diversified to better facilitate service users and enhance overall service convenience.

Keywords: satisfaction, operations, human research ethics

Introduction

In recent years, the number of research projects submitted for ethical review and approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University has steadily increased. Consequently, the number of service users has also grown, leading to rising expectations and demands. To ensure that the university's human research ethics operations are effective and efficient, it is essential to understand the satisfaction level of service users. Gathering such information provides insights into potential challenges and opportunities for improvement. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the satisfaction level toward the implementation of human research ethics operations at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The results will serve as a guideline for improving the quality of ethics review services, ensuring that operations meet user expectations and promote excellence in ethical research management at the university.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the satisfaction of service users with the implementation of human research ethics operations at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
2. To propose guidelines for improving and enhancing the quality of services provided by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Scope of Research

1. Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised 420 individuals who applied for human research ethics approval during the fiscal year 2024 at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The participants included three groups: academic staff, supporting staff, and graduate students.

The sample was determined using Yamane's formula and selected through accidental sampling from individuals who had used the service.

2. Content Scope

The study covered concepts and theories related to satisfaction and service delivery. It also included a review of relevant literature and research studies on service satisfaction and human research ethics management.

3. Time Frame

The research was conducted from December 2024 to August 2025.

Literature Review

This study on Satisfaction with the Implementation of Human Research Ethics Operations at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University involved a review of relevant theories, concepts, and previous research as follows:

Definition of Satisfaction: According to Eakachai Taepsawat and Nanthiya Noichan (2022), satisfaction refers to a person's sense of pleasure or fulfillment resulting from the achievement of desired goals or needs. It is a psychological state that reflects a positive emotional response toward specific experiences, services, or outcomes. Maslow's (1954, pp. 370–396) theory of motivation explains human satisfaction as the effort to eliminate discomfort, imbalance, or tension within oneself. Once these internal tensions are resolved, individuals experience feelings of contentment or pleasure, which consequently influence their attitudes and behaviors toward positive engagement. Satisfaction thus arises when human needs are successfully fulfilled.

Factors Affecting Service Satisfaction

According to the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (2005, pp. 1–9), as summarized from Gilbert and Birdhead's model, satisfaction in public service delivery can be analyzed through a systems-based approach, consisting of the following components:

1. Input (Resources): including personnel, budget, materials, and facilities.
2. Activities (Processes): referring to the utilization and management of these resources.
3. Results (Outputs and Impacts): referring to outcomes after resource utilization.
4. Opinions (Feedback): representing the public's perception and evaluation of the service outcomes.

This systemic approach emphasizes that organizations providing public services must integrate resources and processes effectively to achieve outcomes that meet public expectations.

Kullanda Chotimukta (1995, pp. 50–51) proposed that the factors influencing service users' satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be categorized into three major components, which collectively determine the quality-of-service delivery. These factors are as follows:

1. Service System Factors - referring to the structure and interrelated network of service activities. This dimension includes the following elements:

1.1 Convenience in Service Conditions: This refers to the ease of access and the simplicity of requirements needed to obtain services. The fewer the conditions or barriers, the higher the likelihood of user satisfaction.

1.2 Adequacy and Coverage of Services: This involves the extent to which the quantity of services provided is sufficient and equitably distributed across different areas or groups of users.

1.3 Service Value and Utility: This is determined by evaluating the outcomes of the services provided—specifically, how beneficial or useful they are to the service users in practical application.

1.4 Fairness and Reasonableness of Service Fees: This refers to the appropriateness of service charges in relation to the benefits or quality of services received.

1.5 Advancement and Development of the Service System: This assesses improvements in both quantity and quality of services compared to previous periods, reflecting progress in service delivery and management efficiency.

2. Service Process Factors

These refer to the sequential procedures involved in service delivery, extending continuously from the initiation to the completion of the service activity (final workflow). This dimension consists of the following elements:

2.1 Convenience of Service Access: Refers to the ease or difficulty of contacting and requesting the service. The simpler the process, the higher the user satisfaction.

2.2 Promptness of Service Procedures: Refers to the number of procedural steps and the efficiency with which each is carried out, emphasizing time-saving and streamlined service operations.

2.3 Consistency and Continuity of Service Delivery: Refers to the reliability and stability of the service process, ensuring that users receive continuous and uninterrupted service without procedural obstacles or disruptions.

3. Service Personnel Factors

These factors concern the personnel responsible for providing services within an organization or service unit. They include the following:

3.1 Attentiveness and Commitment of Service Staff: Refers to the degree of attention, responsibility, and diligence that staff demonstrate in performing their duties and providing services to users.

3.2 Equality and Courtesy in Service Delivery: Refers to the fairness and politeness exhibited by staff toward service users, such as friendly demeanor, smiling face, and respectful communication, avoiding rude or dismissive behavior.

3.3 Honesty and Integrity of Service Personnel: Refers to the trustworthiness and moral conduct of service providers, characterized by transparency and impartiality in performing their duties without seeking personal gain or favoritism.

Factors Influencing Service User Satisfaction

According to Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (1996, pp. 38–40), customer satisfaction represents the positive emotional response of service users toward the services they

receive. It reflects their perception of the quality, value, and effectiveness of the service provided. The major factors influencing user satisfaction include the following:

1. Service Location and Accessibility

The convenience of accessing services plays a crucial role in shaping user satisfaction. When services are easily accessible, users are more likely to be satisfied. The location of service facilities and the equitable distribution of service centers are essential to ensure accessibility and convenience for the public.

2. Service Promotion and Information

Satisfaction can arise from users' exposure to positive information or recommendations about service quality through communication channels or word of mouth. When this information aligns with users' trust and expectations, it reinforces their favorable perception and motivates them to seek further services.

3. Service Providers

Both service administrators and front-line personnel are vital to achieving user satisfaction. Administrators who establish policies with public interest as the central concern are more likely to meet user expectations effectively. Likewise, service employees who recognize the importance of users and demonstrate attentiveness, enthusiasm, and a service-oriented mindset can significantly enhance satisfaction levels.

4. Service Environment

The physical environment and atmosphere of the service area strongly influence user satisfaction. Clients often appreciate well-designed facilities that feature aesthetic appeal, pleasant interior decoration, proper use of color, organized layout, and functional furniture and materials. The overall environment contributes to comfort and a positive service experience.

5. Service Process

The method by which services are delivered is another crucial factor affecting satisfaction. Efficient service systems enhance operational fluidity and enable staff to respond effectively to users' needs with accuracy and quality. For instance, the integration of computer technology in service systems—such as online hotel or airline reservations, automated teller machines (ATMs), automated call-transfer systems, teleconferencing, and internet-based communication—demonstrates how process innovation contributes to service efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Evaluation Procedures for Assessing Satisfaction

According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1990), evaluation is considered one of the most essential components in project and organizational management. Following the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation, this process serves as a vital mechanism for measuring the success and effectiveness of operations. Evaluation comprises two major components:

1. Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the continuous observation and assessment of progress during project implementation. It involves examining the relationship between inputs (such as resources and materials) and outputs (project results), while also considering external factors that may influence performance. Monitoring functions as a management tool to ensure that resource allocation, work schedules, production of outputs, and overall operations proceed according to the established plan.

2. Evaluation

Evaluation focuses on assessing the performance and effectiveness of operations. It involves studying and analyzing data collected during the monitoring phase to evaluate project progress and determine whether resources and processes have been appropriately utilized. This assessment examines the extent to which activities are implemented according to the plan, procedures, regulations, and timelines, as well as whether outcomes align with established goals and objectives.

Evaluation can take several forms, including:

On-going Evaluation: Conducted during project implementation to assess immediate outputs and short-term outcomes.

Ex-post Evaluation: Conducted after project completion to measure long-term outcomes and impacts.

Research Methodology

1. Data Collection

In this study, the researcher examined the satisfaction of service users by collecting data from individuals who had applied for human research ethics approval through the Human Research Ethics Committee. The data collection process was conducted as follows:

1.1 The researcher requested cooperation from service users to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire link was distributed via email to individuals who had previously used the service.

1.2 The responses collected from the sample group were analyzed to calculate the mean and standard deviation values.

1.3 The analyzed results were summarized to draw conclusions and interpret the research findings.

2. Data Analysis

The analysis of satisfaction levels among the sample group was conducted as follows:

2.1 Data obtained from the questionnaire were based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from the lowest to the highest level of satisfaction. Each response was assigned a score from 1 to 5, where 1 represented “very dissatisfied” and 5 represented “very satisfied.”

2.2 The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentage, mean, and standard deviation, to assess the overall satisfaction level of the respondents.

2.3 The results of the data analysis were interpreted to determine the levels of satisfaction, categorized into five levels ranging from the highest level of satisfaction to the lowest level of satisfaction.

Research Results

Section 1: General Information of the Respondents

Among the respondents, the largest group was male (52.68%), followed by female (47.32%). Regarding age, the most numerous groups were 31-45 years old (56.59%), followed by 46-55 years old (21.46%). In terms of personnel type, academic staff constituted the largest group (70.73%), followed by graduate students (23.90%).

Section 2: Satisfaction with the Implementation of Human Research Ethics Operations at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

The analysis of satisfaction with the human research ethics process at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, specifically regarding the service process/procedures, showed an overall average satisfaction level of 4.81 ($\bar{x} = 4.81$). When broken down by item, the simplicity and efficiency of the service process ranked first ($\bar{x} = 4.87$), followed by fairness in the service procedures (ordering tasks in a logical sequence and ensuring equal treatment), also with the highest satisfaction level ($\bar{x} = 4.82$). Next came speed of service, clarity in explanations and guidance, convenience at each stage of the service, and appropriate service duration, all showing the highest satisfaction level ($\bar{x} = 4.80$).

The analysis of satisfaction with the human research ethics program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, specifically regarding staff/personnel providing services, showed an overall average satisfaction level of $\bar{x} = 4.87$. When broken down by item, the appropriateness of the staff's attire, personality, and demeanor (dressed politely and neatly) ranked first with a high satisfaction level of $\bar{x} = 4.85$. This was followed by honesty and integrity in performing duties (e.g., not accepting bribes, not seeking illicit gain), which received the highest satisfaction level ($\bar{x} = 4.90$). Next was the attentiveness, enthusiasm, willingness, and readiness of the staff to provide services with the highest satisfaction level ($\bar{x} = 4.88$). Finally, the staff's knowledge and ability in providing services (e.g., answering questions, clarifying doubts, providing good advice) and treating all service recipients equally without discrimination also received the highest satisfaction levels.

The analysis of satisfaction with the human research ethics program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, specifically regarding facilities, showed an overall average satisfaction level of $\bar{x} = 4.67$. When broken down by item, the highest satisfaction level ($\bar{x} = 4.70$) was found to be achieved through the cleanliness of the service area, the clarity and ease of understanding of service/information signs, and the availability of promotional materials/manuals and educational documents. This was followed by the location of the unit, convenient for accessing services ($\bar{x} = 4.69$), and finally, the adequacy of facilities such as parking, public telephones, and waiting areas ($\bar{x} = 4.56$), which received the highest satisfaction level ($\bar{x} = 4.56$).

The analysis of satisfaction with the human research ethics program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University revealed that overall satisfaction with the service provided had a high average score of $\bar{x} = 4.84$. When broken down by items, receiving services that met needs was the most satisfying aspect ($\bar{x} = 4.84$), followed by receiving value for money ($\bar{x} = 4.83$), and finally, overall satisfaction with the service provided ($\bar{x} = 4.80$).

Discussion

The results of the study on satisfaction with the operation of the human research ethics committee at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University can be discussed as follows:

The first objective of this research was to study satisfaction with the operation of the human research ethics committee at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The study found that satisfaction was at the highest level. The aspect with the highest average satisfaction score was the staff/personnel providing the service. The staff's work was characterized by politeness, appropriate attire, attentiveness, willingness to serve, knowledge and ability in providing advice, equal treatment of service recipients, and adherence to honesty and integrity. This aligns with the concept proposed by Kulnada Chotimukta (1995, pp. 50-51), who suggested that factors influencing or causing service recipient satisfaction or dissatisfaction include: factors related to the service staff, such as personnel responsible for the service activities; attentiveness to work (interest and dedication to service duties); equality in service (the

demeanor towards service recipients, whether cheerful or unfriendly, including polite or harsh/rude language); and honesty and integrity (trustworthiness and straightforwardness of service providers). Without demanding any benefits from service users, and in line with the research conducted by Nutthathai Ubol and Sasithorn Banjongrat on "A Study of Satisfaction with Services: A Case Study of the Human Research Ethics Committee Office, Faculty of Dentistry and Faculty of Pharmacy, Mahidol University," the study found that applicants for human research ethics approval had the highest level of satisfaction, with an average score of 4.76. The service aspect had the highest average score of 4.86.

Objective 2, to present guidelines for improving and developing the quality of human research ethics services at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, found that the aspect with the lowest average satisfaction score was the facilities. This was due to limitations in space, which is insufficient to accommodate large numbers of users at once. This aligns with the satisfaction evaluations conducted by service users, who suggested that the unit should "*provide adequate and appropriate waiting areas, and assign staff to work continuously, as there are frequent visitors. It is necessary to establish appropriate and comprehensive shift schedules.*"

Recommendations

Recommendations of the Study:

1. The service area should be developed to be more suitable and convenient for contact, with sufficient and efficient waiting capacity.
2. More diverse contact channels should be added to better serve users.

Recommendations for Future Research:

1. A satisfaction survey of service users should be conducted annually to provide data for continuous and effective service improvement.
2. A survey of the problems and obstacles experienced by service users should be conducted to clearly identify issues and use this information as a guideline for further improving service efficiency.

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