

## Service Quality in Educational Institutions: Signalled The Start Of a New Age

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### Abstract

Appraisal of quality of service at higher education institution in delivering education is a conspicuous affair around the globe. Exhibiting quality education at higher education institutions is an analogous concept considering all the stakeholders of education and the circumstances in which it is associated. Institutions of higher education progressively sweeping of one's feet towards quality of service because slowly it is occupying top position in social requirements of all the stakeholders. Quality service and satisfaction of stakeholders of education both in public and private institutions occupies prime importance in order to stand in competitive environment. This current study is trying to explain the students' "expectations" and "perceptions" of "public" as well as private "higher education institutions" of Jaipur measured by SERVEQUAL questionnaire. This is based on seven - point Likert scale measuring the perceptions and expectations of students. Finally, the gap scores have been analyzed.

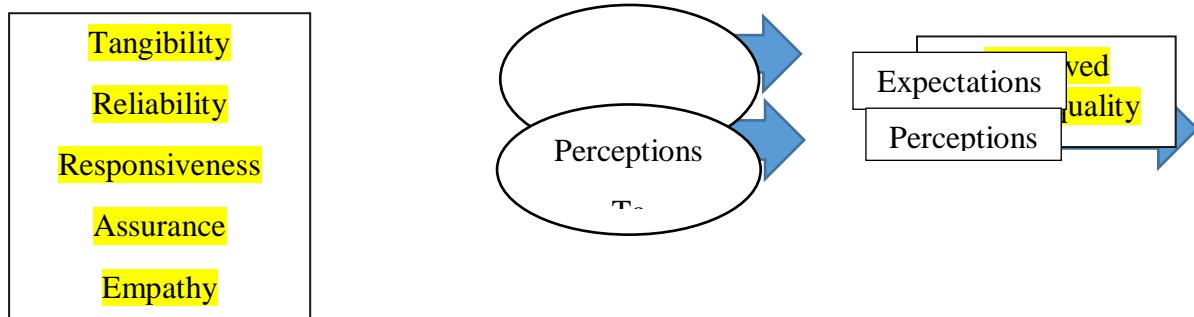
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### 1. Introduction

Due of great competition, quality of service is progressively becoming mainspring at institutions of higher education around the globe. This entirely emphasizes how crucial enhancing the higher education institutions are since their growth and survival as well as to preserve its competitive spirit is very much dependent on quality they are providing. Appraisal of quality of service at higher academic institutions in delivering education is a noteworthy issue around the globe. Exhibiting quality education at higher education institutions is precondition considering all the stakeholders irrespective of the situations from which they evolve. Institutions of higher education increasingly sweeping of its foot towards quality of service since slowly it is taking top place in societal requirements of all the stakeholders (Irfan et.al, 2011). In terms of both the numbers as well as enrolment of institutions, it is opined that private players are outpacing government higher education institutions. Involvement of private players in academic fraternity is characterized by their adoption of market philosophy (Sharma and Kaur, 2020). Educational institutions are evaluated using quantitative indicators such as the number of students, academics, cash moving ratios and enrolment numbers. These metrics can also be used to analyze educational provision, but they are not that much useful to assess quality. According to previous study, such metrics can provide the measurements of educational activity but not sufficient as appropriate measurement of service quality (Soutar and McNeil, 1996).

Now a days higher education institutions have started focusing on students' expectations and

**Fig 1: Concept of service quality**



Source: Mitra (2010)

perceptions of students (Fig – 1) which further helps in generating creative methods that will aid in making best choice of institutions and student satisfaction. Countries around the world, enhancing the performance of institutions is becoming very important. But it is also true that society's ability to manage its institutions and development programmes should not be reduced to focusing only on the institution's efficacy but should also focusing on effectiveness in terms of fairness, originality, programme fit for interacting users as well as its potential to meet the users' requirements and expectations (Mastoi, 2019).

Rapid developments in economics, social technology and demographics have resulted in rising demands for the degree of service given by diverse institutions (Alhabeeb, 2015). "Service quality" can be described as "the mismatch between consumers' perceptions of services delivered by a given firm and their expectations about firms offering such services. At present, education sector is not an exception (Parasuraman et al, 1985, 1988)".

## 2. Literature Review

Delhi.N (2015) in this way after liberalizing the conditions for opening up colleges and passing the private universities act 2005 in Rajasthan, there has been unprecedented mushrooming of the number of private colleges and universities. Unfortunately, the mushrooming of institutions has come up mainly with three types of imbalances viz. regional imbalances, imbalances in SC & ST enrollment and imbalances in the teacher student ratio. The majority of universities have been established in Rajasthan's previously developed districts, resulting in a regional imbalance in the distribution of institutions.

Khodapasti, Gharebagh (2015) with the help of this study service quality provided by banks to their clients is analyzed using SERVQUAL model. The study reveals that expectations of Saderat bank clients are much more than their judgments of the level of services provided. It depicts the fact that the bank lacked in satisfying the expectations of its consumers, and as a result, customers are dissatisfied with the services rendered to them, as a result output of the sub-hypothesis akin to service quality variables depicts that all five dimensions have an impact on satisfaction of customer, and customers' expectations are higher than their perceptions in all aspects. The significance level was steadfast using a paired t-test, and data normality was determined with the help of Wilcoxon test. However, service quality evaluations should be performed on a regular basis so that processes for service quality improvement plans can be laid out.

Bruce mwiya et.al (2017) The goal of this examination is to investigate the impact of each service quality attribute on total service satisfaction using the service performance (SERVPERF) model in a Zambian environment. The research used a quantitative correlational methodology to collect data from a core sample of final-year undergraduate students at a Zambian public university. Each of the five service quality performance elements (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance) is significantly and positively associated with overall customer satisfaction, which is linked to loyalty and positive word of mouth, according to the study's primary findings.

Aadm (2015) in his study revealed considerable disparities between the students' expectations of service and the service provided by Sudan University of Science and Technology. Gap Score (Gap 5) is -1.8, computed by subtracting perceptions from expectations with a variation of 31.9 percent when analyzed with the Average SERVQUAL Expectation Score (5.63), indicating that the services quality provided by Sudan higher education institute of Science and Technology is 69.1%, which is a good result by classical measures but not according to student expectations according to the SERVQUAL instrument. While Sudan institute of Science and Technology now provides good higher education services, it is failing to meet the overall expectations of its students, who are dissatisfied with the service quality level provided to them. As a result, our null hypothesis was rejected which indicated that numerically there will be no significant difference between students' expectations of service and the service provided by the institution.

Costas Zafiroopoulos (2006) The SERVQUAL factors were tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alphas (Table 2). With the exception of Assurance, which yield value of 0.65, all of the components produced high alphas, with most exceeding 0.70. As a result, SERVQUAL is regarded as a trustworthy instrument. Students in the study were asked to rate the relative importance of SERVQUAL components in order to calculate the total SERVQUAL score. The most important aspects that shape service quality, according to students, are reliability, assurance, and responsiveness. SERVQUAL is a useful tool for assessing service quality. It appears to be particularly useful for research in the educational context. The Technological Education Institute of Serres benefited from this research and was able to identify which student groups the Institute should target. For the explanation and understanding of the students' perspectives, research, primarily qualitative, is required and is currently underway.

Alhabeeb (2015) The findings revealed that the college of education did not provide the academic service that students expect and wish for, with all aspects and axes revealing gaps between students' expectations and views. - Reliability had the largest performance gap in the categories, followed by empathy, tangibility, assurance, and responsiveness. This means that the college must devote additional resources to closing gaps in each dimension, in order of priority. This study suggests that King Saud University develop the scale and ensure that it is appropriate for all faculties and specializations. Furthermore, further measurements on other faculties should be

taken in order to compare results and have a complete picture of the quality of services provided to students at the institution.

Mastoi et.al (2019) The prime aim was to identify certain parameters through a literature review that are responsible for improving students' overall satisfaction in university settings all over the world nowadays due to increased emphasis on students' performance in institutions of higher education their overall satisfaction of university settings, and then test those parameters in Pakistani universities because cultural differences can change personal preferences and parametric conclusions

Daniel and Berinyuy (2010) According to Umea University, service organization management assistance can be provided on the knowledge of perceivance of service quality and their quantification of service quality. Service quality evaluation can help management provide accurate data that can be utilized to monitor and maintain higher levels of service. Accuracy of data can be assisted by measurement of service quality Management can better understand the many attributes and their effect on service quality and customer gratification by testing on the SERVQUAL model to evaluate quality of service. This will assist them in identifying their strengths and limitations and, as a result, making essential improvements. However, in this study, we used the SERVQUAL model to try to assess the quality of service and customer gratification in grocery shops and see if it is an effective method for analyzing consumers' views of service quality.

### 3. Objectives:

The present study tries to find out different aspects of “quality of service” in understanding the extent of difference between “expectations and perceptions”. On this basis, this study tries to deduce the major facet of quality of services offered at higher education (HE) institutions. This study pinpointing the “expectations and perceptions” of students of HE institutions through survey services offered to students at HE institutions of Jaipur by using SERVQUAL model.

### 4. Methodology

Explaining and motivating the choice of data, gathering and analysis method, (both conceptually and practically) in contrast to the relative advantages and disadvantages of other prospective data collecting and analysis methods may be more or less relevant to the study's context. The “SERVQUAL instrument” was pre-owned to examine students’ “perceived expectations (PE) and perceived perceptions (PP) of service quality of the institutions of choice”<sup>1</sup>. This model helps to validate the service quality of existing actual Infrastructure (Physical) etc. through its extensive use (of academic institutions). This model is consisting graded questionnaire. The questionnaire incorporates 2 sets of statements (for each and every) for 22 items. The questionnaire covers all the 5 dimensions (indicated in Variables of service quality). The “Expectations” section comprising 22 statements is utilized to establish the general expectations of pupil concerning a service in their respective academic institutions. Again, the “Perceptions” part featuring a matched 22 statements using to test assessments of people about certain service on the basis on 7 point Likert - scale. 4 of the 22 assertions are used to access TA, 5 for RA, 4 for RN, 4 for AN & 5 for EM. It is assumed that the more “the degree” of uniformity as well as strength of the variables, better would be reliability. To investigate its authenticity a “repeat measurements” was conducted under continuous settings which provide the same result (Daniel, 2010). Reliability test was performed to view the consistency of performance of the measurement parameters. This implies, excepting giving precise outcomes, this instruments should yield analogous results over a given period. The reliability was proved by multiple past researchers (Pillay, 2017)

#### 4.1 Variables of service quality

This study considered five variables of service quality.

Variables *	Dimensions of “SERVQUAL”
TA	Infrastructure ( Physical), apparatus, staff’s appearance
RA	“Ability” to provide given service conscientiously & precisely
RN	Eagerness for support clients, deliver fast service
AN	Knowledge & civility of staff, capacity to get trust as well as confidence
EM	Caring customized attention, corporation with consumers

Source: Parasuraman et.al (1988)

\*Where “TA=Tangibles, RA =Reliability, RN = Responsiveness, AN = Assurance, EM = Empathy”

<sup>1</sup>“Parasuraman et al, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1994; Zenithal et al., 1990”

#### 4.2 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the present study is

H1: There are considerable disparities in students' expectations about service quality of HE institutions at Jaipur  
 The corresponding null hypothesis is

H0: There are no significant disparities in students' expectations about service quality of HE institutions at Jaipur

#### 4.3 Sample design and data collection

The primary data was collected through questionnaire administered for the students of public and private institutions of Jaipur. The data was collected in 2021 using convenience sampling method. Our research approach is quantitative in nature. We used this approach because it is appropriate to answer research objectives.

#### 5. Data analysis and procedures

A descriptive study of student's expectations & perceptions towards service was carried out through definitive approach of service quality model (SERVQUAL). A "Paired t-test" was performed to examine the "significance of differences" between the means of expectations and perceptions. The "reliability of the scale" was tested through "Cronbach's alpha"<sup>2</sup>. The test gives the "reliability coefficient" as 0.911 which is regarded appropriate to justify primary hypothesis and utilization of "Paired t-test". The calculated "significance level" is less than 0.05 of error level (Table 1). Thus H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and H<sub>1</sub> is validated. This result helps to affirm with 95 percent certainty that, there are substantial disparities between "expectations and perceptions" of service quality of HE institutions and student's expectation is higher than institutions performance.

Table-2 indicates the expectations score of institutions of Jaipur estimate reliability (5.898) and assurance (5.857) as maximum whereas responsiveness' (4.959) and tangibles (5.551) as minimum. For the perception dimensions' reliability (5.061) and tangibles (5.143) as maximum whereas assurance (5.041) and empathy (4.959) as minimum. Considering the gap scores responsiveness (-.086) as maximum and tangibles (-.408) as minimum gap.

Table-2 summarizes standard deviation of perceived and expected service. The acceptance level of higher or greater than 0.05, it justifies that the nature of distribution is normal in rapport to Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z test.

**Table-1: Table summarizing values of descriptive**

Variables	Expectation (Mean)	Perception (Mean)	Gap Scores (P-E)	Sig.(2 tailed)
Tangibles	5.551	5.143	-.408	.000
Reliability	5.898	5.061	-.837	.219
Assurance	5.857	5.041	-.816	.011
Responsiveness	4.959	5.045	-.086	.000
Empathy	5.776	4.959	-.817	.008

Source: Authors own calculation compiled from primary data

**Table-2 Table summarizing values of descriptive**

Variables	Expectation(SD)	Perception(SD)
Tangibles	1.7207	1.581
Reliability	1.3578	1.807
Assurance	1.258	1.743
Responsiveness	1.8815	1.734
Empathy	1.026	1.719

<sup>2</sup> Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20.0) for Windows was used for this result

Source: Authors own calculation compiled from primary data

Table-3 shows rapport of the output acceptability level in gross variables except TA and AS are bigger or larger than 0.05, it justifies that disposal of numeric values under tangibles and assurance is abnormal or not normal and so Wilcoxon test is applied. (Table-3, 4) (Khodapasti, 2015)

Variables such as tangibility and assurance lack normal distribution to test, Wilcoxon test was performed. As depicted the estimated significance level is virtually zero is less than 0.05 of error level. Thus hypothesis H0 is rejected and hypothesis H1 is validated.

**Table-2: Test of normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
TA	.142	49	.015	.899	49	.001
RA	.105	49	.200*	.939	49	.013
RN	.098	49	.200*	.930	49	.006
AS	.142	49	.015	.925	49	.004
EM	.106	49	.200*	.940	49	.015

Source: Authors own compilation \* This is a lower bound of the true significance

So we may assert with 95 percent confidence that there are significant disparities in student's expectations and perceptions of the certainty dimension and tangibility dimension.

**Table-3 Wilcoxon Test for Assurance Variable**

Sum of ranks	Mean rank	N		
672.5	21.02	32	Negative	Assurance(Perception)- Assurance(Expectation)
107.5	15.36	7	Positive	
		10	Ties	
		49	Total	
Tangibles(Perception)-Tangibles(Expectation)				
-3.955				
0.000				
*Assurance(perceived service)<Assurance(Expected service).**Assurance (Perceived service)>Assurance(Expected service) ***** placed on absolute ranks				

Source: Authors own compilation

**Table-4 Wilcoxon Test for Tangibility Variable**

Sum of ranks	Mean rank	N		
1182	25.7	46	Negative	Tangibility(Perception)- Tangibility(Expectation)
43	14.33	3	Positive	
		0	Ties	
		49	Total	
Tangibles(Perception)-Tangibles(Expectation)				
-5.672				
0.000				
*Tangibility(Perceived service)<Tangibility(Expected service).**Tangibility(Perceived service)>Tangibility(Expected service) ***** placed on absolute ranks				

Source: Authors own compilation

**Table-5 Friedman Test**

**Test Statistics**

N	49
Chi-Square	155.543
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Source: Authors own compilation

Application of Friedman test, helps in providing with the ranks to service quality descriptive from definitive view of students are illustrated in the table below. As can be visualized, accordingly considering the significance of every variable(Table-5)

**Table-6 The peaking order of service quality model**

Variables	Rank of mean	Rank of variables
Tangibles(TA)	1.07	5
Reliability(RA)	4.70	1
Responsiveness(RN)	3.48	3
Assurance(AN)	3.57	2
Empathy(EM)	2.17	4

Source: Authors own compilation

**6. Conclusion**

The major goal of this probe is to investigate the quality of services imparted to students of higher education institution of Jaipur by utilizing service quality (SERVQUAL model). According to this probe, service quality is derived “from the difference between students' expectations (expected service)” as well as “perceptions (perceived service) of service” obtained. The analyses of this study depicts that students demand more than what they are offered or we can rightly say “expected service is higher than perceived service”. It manifests that performance of institutions of Jaipur does not fulfill its students' expectations and consequently the services imparted are not up to the mark. Also the outcome of the hypothesis associated with variables of “service quality” displays variables<sup>3</sup> is compelling on student’s peace of mind and in all aspects, student’s expectation (expected service) are greater than perceptions (perceived service) (of the quality of services offered”. This shows differences do existed on variables of “service quality”. In other words, institutions could not able to fulfil categories of the learners' “expectations”. This illustrates students’ displeasure “from the quality of services” (Daniel, 2010). The results reveal “weaknesses and gaps” associated with the “quality of services” rendered at higher education institution. This can be develop programmes to improve quality based on the findings of this investigation. However, emphasized should be given so that “service quality evaluations” could be undertaken on a regular basis in order to stay informed about service quality improvement activities (khodaparsti, 2015).

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<sup>3</sup> As discussed “tangibility(TA), reliability(RA), responsiveness(RN), assurance(AN) and empathy(EM)”

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