The Impact of Service Quality on Students Satisfaction in higher Education Institutes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

The research article emphases on the impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction in higher education institutes of KPK. The research paper examines the service quality by using the scale developed by Chronin and Taylor defined as SERVPERF. The scale is applied to Higher education institutes of KPK. Research methodology used in the current research is quantitative. The data was collected through questionnaires. The respondents of this research were the students of higher education institutes of KPK. 650 questionnaires were distributed among the students of higher education institutes randomly in which 520 were returned having response rate of 80%. The regression analysis indicated that service quality show a positive impact on the students’ satisfaction.

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1. Introduction

In the current situation of competitiveness where students have many options to select, the higher education institutes should know that to attract the students and to maintain them it is needed to have an insight look on their quality of services they are providing. The education has not only become a key business and necessity of the day but it is also a venture by the parents for their children. Students in higher education are more concerned to the service quality; they seek excellence education and tremendous services at study environment which will satisfy them and develop their capabilities to gain an effective educational personality (Malik, Danish, & Usman, 2010).

The students at higher level seek for quality of education and perfection in the study system. The more quality of service is provided by the universities the more powerful performance will be given by the students. According to (Rowley, 1996) the students of those institution are more capable, good performers and productive who retain the better educational service quality and provide their students what they want for their strong academic and career accomplishment. The objective of this research is to study the impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction in the higher education environment of KPK. The current research aims to answer “Is there any relationship between education service quality and students’ satisfaction?” The Research hypotheses are (1) Tangibility has significant
effect on the students’ satisfaction (2) Reliability has significant effect on the students’ satisfaction (3) Assurance has significant effect on the students’ satisfaction (4) Responsiveness has significant effect on the students’ satisfaction and (5) Empathy has significant effect on the students’ satisfaction.

2. Theoretical Framework

3. Literature Review

The silent features of literature review are as follows:

3.1 Service Quality

Various authors defined service quality as:

• “Quality is meant for the best and certain customer conditions describe the actual use of the product and its selling price (Feigenbaum, 1961)”

• “Quality is about all the things which consists to satisfy needs and wants”. (Edwards, 1968)

• “The level and degree of the product which satisfy the consumer wants and it is the degree regarding the specific product, conforms the design or specification”. (Gilmore, 1974)

• “Service quality reflects about a measure which state that how well the service delivered can match the expectations of the customers”. (Lewis and Booms 1983).

The definitions above support the construct that Service quality and customer satisfaction are directly related to each other. These studies showed consumer satisfaction is substantial when the service provided is equal to or better than expectations. Hence, the review of literature supports the construct that quality of service is one of the primary aspects of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

3.2 Higher Education as a Service and dimensions of service quality in higher education

Like other services providers, higher education institutions are also using different approaches to be specialized and
unique in their delivery of services. DeShields et al. (2005) asserted that the higher education institutions should make such principles and strategies which will make these institutions as profit making; these strategies will help them to get competitive advantage, which will definitely improve their student’s satisfaction. The same kind of findings was documented by many academicians, who argue that service quality assurance helps in improving students’ satisfaction (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). Higher education institutions continuously emphasizing to improve their service quality to meet the needs and expectations of the students (DeShields et al., 2005).

Nadiri et al. (2009) documented that higher education institutions are facing problems in knowing the students’ perception and expectations which constitute the service quality and thereby help to attract and satisfy the needs of the students. They further stated that service quality has an impact on student’s satisfaction. This emerging era really make it necessary for the higher education institutions to foster service quality in their day to day operations to satisfy students’ needs and in order achieve competitive advantage and sustainability in the very competitive service environment (DeShields et al., 2005).

3.3 Dimensions of Service Quality
The core concern with the dimensions of service quality is usually the range of areas which should be included. Cronin and Taylor (1994) state that customers should be the determinants of service quality dimensions rather than the management or the academic staff of the respective institution of higher education. Parasuraman et al. (1990) proposed five dimensions of service quality as follows;

(1) Tangibles are embodied in the appearance of the facilities, buildings, equipment and the staff.

(2) Reliability is the degree to which all the relevant skills and knowledge are provided in timely fashion and in accurate way. 

(3) Responsiveness is a kind of prompt delivery of services to the customers.

(4) Assurance is the building confidence and trust and showing courtesy.

(5) Empathy is the care being offered to the customers by the service provider organization.

3.4 Students satisfaction
Kotler and Clarke (1987) describe satisfaction as the desirous outcome of a task or job that pleases one’s esteem. Rad & Yarmohammadian (2006) sated it as the willful accomplishment which results in one’s contentment. the main concentration with respect to the idea of student’s satisfaction regarding the higher education is that there exists the multi-dimensional quality. So the idea of customer satisfaction has been analyzed in different ways by (Hausknecht, 1990). The same kind of findings was obtained by Giese & Cote (2000) and Wiers-Jenssen, Stensaker & Grogaard (2002) also explained it in the same way.

Bolten (1998) has documented the association among the customer retention, and willingness of customer satisfactions. Anderson et al (1994) also got the same kind of results regarding service quality and student satisfaction. Some other researchers also follow the findings of the above researchers (Johnson & Gustafsson, 2000; Johnson et al., 2001).

4. Research Methodology
The research is quantitative (deductive) in nature to investigate the impact of service quality over students’ satisfaction in higher education institutions of KPK. The population N for this research is all the students studying at higher education institutions of KPK.

4.1 Sampling
At sampling stage 10 universities were selected randomly but with true presentation of population. The size decided was 50% which means 5 universities each from public and private sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, from the total population (Dixon, 2002). As most of the universities are located in Peshawar region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 2 public and 3 private sector universities are taken from Peshawar, to cover the south region Kohat university, Abdul Wali Khan university Mardan was taken and to represent Malakand region Malakand university was taken.

Table 1: Sample Frame

| Sr. No | Sample size of public sector universities | Sample size of private sector universities |
|--------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1      | University Of Peshawar                   | Abasyn University Peshawar               |
4.2 Data Collection

Questionnaires are a useful option while carrying out the surveys as it can be the cheaper and quicker way if the sample used is large and widely dispersed (Mathers, N, Fox, N & Hunn, A). So the data was collected by questionnaire distributed among the students. The questionnaire used was defined by (Chronin & Taylor, 1970) and Kajentheran & Karunanity (2015). 16 questions on tangibility, 7 questions on responsiveness, 7 questions for reliability and 9 questions for assurance. All questions were designed on five point Likert scale. Data analysis was made in different steps described below:

a. Demographic Analysis of the variables such as; gender, age and the education of students, categories of the students and institutions investigated.

b. Reliability of the Instrument through Cronbach’s Alpha

c. Validity of the Research through Factor Analysis

d. Regression: to investigate the impact of variables

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Demographic Analysis

For current study a total 650 questionares were distributed among the students in which 520 errors free questionare were collected back. The demographic variables in the current research effort include age, gender, and degree program of the respondents (students) or target population. The demographic information about the respondents is provided in the following tables:

Table 2: Age

| Frequency | Percent Valid | Percent Cumulative | Percent |
|-----------|---------------|---------------------|---------|
| Valid 18-22 | 295           | 56.7                | 56.7    |
| 22-30    | 170           | 32.6                | 32.6    |
| 31 and above | 55           | 10.5                | 10.5    |
| Total    | 520           | 100                 | 100     |

The age of the respondents is given in the above table, demonstrating that majority of the respondents are comprised of young students as evident from the sample size (n=295), constituting a valid percentage of 56%. While, students above 22years constitute sample size (n=170) with a percentage of 32%. Similarly, students above 31 represent the sample size at (n=55), forming the valid percentage of 10%.

Table 3: Gender

| Frequency | Percent Valid | Percent Cumulative | Percent |
|-----------|---------------|---------------------|---------|
| Valid male | 320           | 58.18               | 58.18   |
| Female    | 200           | 38.4                | 38.4    |
| Total     | 520           | 100                 | 100     |

The details about the gender’s responses of the respondents are given in the above table; where majority constitute male respondents with the sample size (n=320) with 58%. Whereas, female respondents are comprised of (n=200), forming 38%.

Table 4: Education

| Frequency | Percent Valid | Percent Cumulative | Percent |
|-----------|---------------|---------------------|---------|
| Valid undergraduate | 295 | 56.7 | 56.7 | 56.7 |
| Graduate | 170           | 32.6                | 32.6    |
| Post graduate | 55  | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 |
| Total    | 520           | 100                 | 100     |
The education of the respondents (students) is given in the above table, demonstrating undergraduate students evident from the sample size (n=295), constituting a valid percentage of 56%. While, graduate students constitute sample size (n=170) with a percentage of 32%. Similarly, post graduate students represent the sample size at (n=55), forming the valid percentage of 10%.

5.2 Reliability Analysis
For the measurement of entered items, coefficients of the cronbach’s alpha can be used for different variables which are as under. According to Sekaran (2003) if Cronbach’s alphas of any item of the questionnaire ranges less than 0.60 then that item may be deleted from questionnaire. The below mentioned table is showing reliability statistics value of variables of questionnaire administered to the students reveals that there is no issue or problem exists to the separations of questionnaire data items.

| Variable      | No of Items | Cronbach’s Alpha | Reliability, Yes or No |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Tangibility   | 16          | .817              | Yes                    |
| Responsiveness| 7           | .623              | Yes                    |
| Reliability   | 7           | .608              | Yes                    |
| Assurance     | 9           | .732              | Yes                    |
| Empathy       | 7           | .678              | Yes                    |
| Students’ satisfaction | 6 | .651 | yes |

The above table shows that the reliability of the data collected for the variable mentioned in column ony6e is positively reliable because the results showing the Cronbach’s value above the acceptable ranges. The researchers argued that alpha value of above .60 is acceptable; however, the value of alpha of the variables is well above the desired and acceptable level. So the scale is highly reliable for further analysis of this study.

5.3 Validity/ Factor Analysis
The KMO test are mainly and widely used to measure the adequacy of sample that had been used in the study. It also shows the validity of the questions in a construct means variables. Therefore, in most academics and business studies have used KMO test as the part of CFA which gives the significant part in deciding about the sample adequacy. So the KMO test range is always from zero 0 to one 1 and these are the world wide accepted parameter as over the 0.6.

| Constructs         | No. of Items | No. of items eliminated | KMO value | Bartlett’s test of sphericity |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Tangibility        | 16           | 2                       | .678      | .000                          |
| Assurance          | 9            | 1                       | .668      | .000                          |
| Reliability        | 7            | 2                       | .668      | .000                          |
| Responsiveness     | 7            | 1                       | .668      | .000                          |
| Empathy            | 7            | 1                       | .668      | .008                          |
| Students satisfaction | 6          | 1                       | .767      | .000                          |

5.4 Regression

| Model      | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t       | Sig.       | Colinerity statistics |
|------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------|
|            | B | Std.Error | Beta |                      |           | VIF | Tolerance |
| Tangibility| 0.114 | 0.045 | .221 | 2.53 | .016 | 0.122 | .645 |
| Assurance  | 0.127 | 0.055 | .632 | 2.28 | .029 | 0.109 | .867 |
| Responsiveness | 0.178 | 0.047 | .539 | 3.78 | .000 | 0.111 | .686 |
| Reliability | 0.112 | 0.051 | .642 | 2.13 | .046 | 0.233 | .557 |
| Empathy    | 0.07  | 0.041 | .109 | 1.67 | .083 | 0.224 | .535 |
The above table represents the impact of the education service quality on the satisfaction of the students. The results demonstrate that tangibility has positive significant impact on the students’ satisfaction (t=2.53, p<0.05). The beta value of tangibility 0.114 demonstrates that one unit change in tangibility will account for 0.114 unit change in students’ satisfaction. Assurance shows positive significant impact on students’ satisfaction (t=2.28, p<0.05). One unit change in assurance will cause 0.127 unit change in students’ satisfaction. Similarly, responsiveness also predicts positive significant impact on students’ satisfaction as its underlying t-value is significant at 5% probability level (t=3.78, p<0.05). One unit change in responsiveness will cause 0.178 unit change in students’ satisfaction. Reliability also shows positive significant effect on students’ satisfaction (t=2.13, p<0.05). One unit change in reliability will cause 0.112 unit change in students’ satisfaction. Empathy also shows positive insignificant impact on the student’s satisfaction of both public and private sector universities (t=0.07, p>0.05). The reported beta value of empathy is 0.07, which means that one unit change in empathy will bring 0.07 unit change in student’s satisfaction.

The R-square 0.68 indicates that 68% changes are caused by these factors of education service quality on students’ satisfaction. The F-value also demonstrate that the overall model is significant and fit due to its reported value well above its critical value, i.e F=4. The F-value is significant at 5% level of probability.

The results of this study shows the values tolerance and VIF within feasible ranges as per the suggestions of (O’Brien& Robert, 2007). The above tolerance values reflect that the tolerance level is moderate and good and the VIF values also showing within the feasible ranges.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction in higher education institutes of KPK. The results indicate that tangibility dimension of service quality has significant impact on the students’ satisfaction. The hypothesis tested for the impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction proved validated and results declared that tangibility dimension of service quality carries significant impact on the students’ satisfaction supporting Ilias, Rahman & Razak (2008), Kajenthiran & Karunanithy (2015)’s results. The results also indicate that there is positive significant impact of assurance factor and students’ satisfaction. The hypothesis tested for the impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction proved validated and results declared that assurance dimension of service quality carries significant impact on the student’s satisfaction supporting Ilias, Rahman & Razak (2008), Kajenthiran & Karunanithy (2015)’s results.

The results demonstrate that responsiveness has also positive significant impact on the students’ satisfaction. The hypothesis tested for the impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction proved validated and results declared that responsiveness dimension of service quality carries significant impact on the student’s satisfaction supporting Ilias, Rahman & Razak (2008), Kajenthiran & Karunanithy (2015)’s results. The results demonstrate that responsiveness has positive significant impact on the students’ satisfaction. The hypothesis tested for the impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction proved validated and results declared that reliability dimension of service quality carries significant impact on the student’s satisfaction supporting Ilias, Rahman & Razak (2008), Kajenthiran & Karunanithy (2015)’s results. The results demonstrate that empathy has positive insignificant impact on the students’ satisfaction. The hypothesis tested for the impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction is rejected supporting Ilias, Rahman & Razak (2008), Kajenthiran & Karunanithy (2015)’s results.

7. Conclusion

The competitive market in education sector is giving rise to the need to provide better service quality to students so that they will be capable to attract and retain the students. This competition is creating pressure over all the higher education institutions in terms of its quality. So this study aimed to identify the impact of service quality over students’ satisfaction in higher education institutes of KPK. The impact of service quality on students’ satisfaction show a positive impact for the dimensions for tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, while empathy has a positive insignificant impact on the students’ satisfaction. the study offers a significant contribution to the body of knowledge regarding service quality and students’ satisfaction of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study offers a significant contribution to the body of knowledge regarding service quality and students’ satisfaction of higher education institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as it will also help policy makers to develop strategies to their service quality in order to attract and retain the customers.
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