Student’s Attitude towards Academic Quality of Higher Education Institutes of Indore: A Comparative study

Minal Uprety,
Assistant Professor,
Prestige Institute of Management and Research,
Indore, India.

ABSTRACT

This study compares the undergraduate and post graduate student’s attitude towards the overall academic quality of higher educational institutes of Indore. A random sample of total 119 undergraduate and postgraduate students was considered in the study. The overall academic quality of institutions was evaluated on certain parameters which include academic faculty quality and course curriculum quality. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used to compare the student's attitude towards overall academic quality. It was found that there is significant difference in the undergraduate and post graduate student's attitude towards overall academic quality. Undergraduate students had more positive attitude with overall academic quality in comparison to post graduate students.

Keywords: Service quality, Under graduate, Post graduate students, Attitude, Higher educational institutes.

INTRODUCTION:

In today’s competitive era, education sector is also in front of several challenges from last few decades. Now youngsters are very cautious for selecting their course and institutes as they are getting a range of course options for their career development and learning. It was observed that students are more likely to enroll themselves with the institute where the programmes and services closely meet their expectations and if that institute failed to fulfill student’s expectations, they likely to switch their institute (Plank & Chiagouris, 1997). Kimani et al., (2011) said that customer i.e. students, is an important principle of service quality and the customers of a higher education institution could be categorized into five groups; students, employees, government and its public sector and the industry with its broad community. Like customers are quality witting in other sectors, students also became more sensitive for the quality programme and services of higher educational institutes. Higher education institutes also focusing on the quality education programme, so that students will be able to face the increasing competition and make themselves employable globally. Beaumont (2012) stated that in higher education institutes, students are the main stakeholders therefore it is vital to review the service quality from their point of view. Ugboma et al. (2007) revealed that most of the institutes are paying attention towards the service quality as a competitive weapon especially in the context of attracting new customers and enhancing relationship with existing customers (Ugboma, Ogwude, & Nadi, 2007). It is the demand of current scenario that the players of higher education institutes should satisfy their students by high quality performance. Talmacean & Domnica, (2013) and Lai et al. (2011) stressed that educational institutes not only focused on the graduate’s skill and competencies which the society values but it also vital for them to understand how students perceive their programme learning experience as a whole.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Due to the intangible attribute, it is not easy to define service quality. O'Neill and Palmer (2004) also supported that the quality of education is difficult to define (Macukow, 2000). There is no universally accepted definition of quality in higher education but the most wide and conventional definition of quality of education (Houston, 2008; Cartwright, 2007; Venkatraman, 2007; Lomas, 2007,2002; Parri, 2006; UNESCO, 2006; Lagrosen et al, 2004; Harvey, 2002) is that proposed by Harvey and Green (1993) who explained it in the framework which consists of five definition of quality, namely quality as exceptional, quality as perfection, quality as value for money, quality as fitness for purpose and quality as transformation. In the field of management and marketing, service quality is defined as the extent to which customers’ perceptions of service meet and/or exceed their expectations (Zeithaml et al. 1988), cited in Bowen & David, 2005, p. 340). It was observed by Majeed et al. (2008) that the university which is much concerned for the quality system, will be able to accomplish students’ needs based on students’ persona and desires. Ravindran and Kalpna (2012) found that the overall satisfaction of students in higher education institutions is greatly influenced by location, academics, infrastructure, image and personnel. For the institution progression and effectiveness, the knowledge of students’ expectations, academic preferences and quality perception about the educational environment should be kept by the higher authorities of the institute (Palacio, Meneses and Perez 2002). Kuh and Hu (2011) said that institutes should focus of effective interaction between students and faculty in order to satisfy them for their quality services. Previous literature also focused more on academic than administration emphasizing on effective course delivery mechanisms and the quality of courses and teaching (Atheeyaman, 1997; Cheng and Tam, 1997; Soutar and McNeil, 1996; Griemel-Fuhrmann and Geyer, 2003). Farahmandian, Minavand & Afshardost (2013) also done a study on students satisfaction in higher education institutes and revealed that there is significant and positive association correlation between the advising, curriculum, teaching quality, financial support and tuition costs and facilities. Student’s achievement is generally understand by obtaining their learning objectives and if the student’s achievement is low, teaching and learning must be properly analyzed such as qualities of teaching and course curriculum, appropriateness of teaching approach for the students’ development and also student’s learning and integration atmosphere and climate (Bergamo et al., 2012; Lawson et al., 2012; Korkmaz, 2007).

Objective:
To compare the student’s attitude towards
- Quality of academic faculty of educational institutes between under graduate (UG) and post graduate (PG) students.
- Quality of course curriculum of educational institutes between under graduate and post graduate students

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The proposed study is empirical in nature based on survey research. The survey has been done in Indore city and the targeted population for this study was under graduate and post graduate students of Indore. The primary data was collected through self structured questionnaire which was framed by reviewing the previous literature. The questionnaire consists of five point likert scale, where 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. Secondary data were collected from different sources like books, journal, internet etc. The targeted respondents were 150 but only 119 were duly filled. The academic faculty quality was measured on 9 parameters and course curriculum quality was measured on 4 parameters. To compare the attitude of UG and PG students towards academic faculty and curriculum quality of the educational institutes of Indore, arithmetic mean, standard deviation and independent t test were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

| Table 1 | Descriptive Statistics |
|---------|------------------------|
|         | Course | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Academic faculty Quality | UG  | 66 | 3.6740 | .86548 | .09698 |
|                      | PG  | 53 | 3.2558 | .80187 | .13143 |
| Curriculum Quality   | UG  | 66 | 3.5164 | .93749 | .10754 |
|                      | PG  | 53 | 3.0872 | .76956 | .13566 |
Table 2: Independent sample t test

|                          | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | t-test for Equality of Means |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                          | F            | Sig. | T    | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Academic quality faculty | Equal variances assumed | 0.487 | 0.486 | 2.574 | 117 | 0.011 |
|                          | Equal variances not assumed | 2.560 | 8.5923 | 0.012 |
| Curriculum quality       | Equal variances assumed | 0.027 | 0.870 | 2.443 | 117 | 0.016 |
|                          | Equal variances not assumed | 2.480 | 9.1203 | 0.015 |

From the above table, it can be seen that
- There is a significant difference between the UG and PG student’s attitude towards Academic faculty quality (p<0.05). The mean value for UG students and PG students was 3.674 and 3.2558 respectively for the Academic faculty quality. It can be inferred that UG students have more attitude positive for the Academic faculty quality of their respective education institute in comparison to PG students.
- UG and PG student’s showed different attitude towards curriculum quality (p<0.05). The mean value for UG students and PG students was 3.516 and 3.087 respectively for the curriculum quality. It was found that UG students have more positive attitude for the Course curriculum quality of their respective education institute in comparison to PG students.

DISCUSSION:

It is very well known that service quality affects the student’s satisfaction towards the education institute. There are several dimensions of measuring service quality but academic quality and curriculum of the course are the key dimensions of overall service quality of the higher education institute. Maushart (2003) also observed that teaching and learning process is more important criteria for student’s assessment of service quality, Clewes (2003). O’Driscoll (2012) and Nadiri (2011) also supported that teaching staffs and teaching methods were the major contributor on student’s satisfaction. Abdullah (2005, 2006) also examined that the major contributor of service quality of education institutes are the responsibilities of academics, include positive attitude, good communication skills, provision of sufficient consultation, and the ability to provide regular feedback to the students.

It was found that UG students have more positive attitude towards the academic faculty and course curriculum quality of the higher education institute. In India, students generally start their career after completing their post graduate course or after doing some specialized course after their graduation. Since PG students are more career oriented than UG students, they were found less satisfied with the course curriculum and academic faculty quality than UG students. It is also supported by a survey study done by higher education academy (2012) that most students now see postgraduate training as an investment for strengthening career development and improving employability, rather than just taking up any programme at any institution. Though UG students were showing more positive attitude towards the overall academic quality but it was observed that they less were consistent in their responses while the PG students were more consistent in their responses. It could be due to the maturity level of students, UG students were less career oriented than PG students.

CONCLUSION:

The objective of the study was to analyze the attitude of undergraduate and post graduate students towards the quality of academic faculty and course curriculum in higher education institutes of Indore. It was investigated that the overall academic quality offered to the undergraduate students in higher education institutes was more effective in building positive attitude whereas post graduate student were showing significantly less positive attitude in Indore. It is the increasing quality consciousness of students which makes them feel that academics quality always is a key factor in shaping their career. This academic quality includes the quality of class room teaching, faculty student interaction, course curriculum design, faculty’s knowledge & skills, understanding of students etc. The higher education institutes of Indore should give more emphasis on the quality of post graduate courses so that it can increase the satisfaction level of PG students and it can attract more students nationally and internationally.
REFERENCES:

Abdullah, F. (2005). HEdPERF versus SERVPERF: The quest for ideal measuring instrument of service quality in higher education sector, *Quality Assurance in Education*, 13(4), 305-328. 2005.

Abdullah, F. (2006). Measuring service quality in higher education: three instruments compare, *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 29(1), 71-89. 2006.

Atheeyaman, A. (1997). Linking student satisfaction and service quality perceptions: the case of university education. *European Journal of Marketing*, 31(7), 528-540.

Arunachalam, P. (2010). Higher Education Sector in India: Issues and Imperatives. *Journal of Global Economy*, 6(4), 266-286.

Aspiring Minds.(2014). National Employability Report - Engineers, Annual Report 2014. Retrieved from Bergamo, F.V.M., Giuliani, A.C., Camargo, S.H.C.R.V., Zambaldi, F., & Ponchio, M.C. (2012). Student Loyalty Based on Relationship Quality: An analysis On Higher Education Institutions. *Brazilian Business Review*, 9 (2), 26-46.

Bitner, M.J. and Zeithaml, V.A. (1996). *Services Marketing*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

Bowen and David E. (2005). Service Quality Blackwell encyclopaedic Dictionary of Human Resource management, PI 341, 340P.

Cheng, Y. T., & Tam, W. M. (1997). Multi-models of quality in education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 5(1), 22-31.

Clewes, D. (2003). A Student-centred Conceptual Model of Service Quality in Higher Education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 9(1), 69-85.

Cartwright, M.J., (2007). The rhetoric and reality of —quality! in higher education-An investigation into staff perceptions of quality in post-1992 universities, *Quality Assurance in Education*.15(3), 287-301.

Griemel-Fuhrmann, B., & Geyer, A. (2003). Students' evaluation of teachers and instructional quality-analysis of relevant factors based on empirical evaluation research. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28 (3), 229-238.

Farahmandian, S., Minavand, H., & Afshardost, M. (2013). Perceived service quality and student satisfaction in higher education. *JSR Journal of Business and Management*, 12(4),65–74.

Higher Education Academy(2012). *Post Graduate Taught Experience (PTES) Survey*. London: Higher Education Academy.

Houston, D., (2008). Rethinking quality and improvement in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education* 16(1), 61-79.

Kahn K, Tollman SM. (1992). Planning professional education at schools of public health. *Am J Public Health*, 82(12):1653–1657. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.82.12.1653.

Kamal Abouchedid, & Ramzi Nasser (2002). Assuring quality service in higher education: registration and advising attitudes in a private university in Lebanon. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 10(4), 198-206.

Kimani, S.W., Kagira, E.K., & Kendi, L. (2011). Comparative Analysis Of Business Students’ Perceptions Of Service Quality Offered In Kenyan Universities. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 2(1), 98-112.

Korkmaz, I. (2007). Teachers’ Opinions about the Responsibilities of Parents, Schools and Teachers in Enhancing Students Learning, Education, 127(3), 389–399, 2007.

Kuh, G.D. and Hu, S. (2001). The effects of student-faculty interaction in the 1990s, *Review of Higher Education*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 309-321.

Lai, M.M., Lou S.H., Yusof, N.A.M., & Chew, K.W., Perceived Factors And Value By Undergraduates On Private University Education, International Conference on Innovation, *Management and Service*, 14, 34-38, 2011.

Lawson, A., Leach, M., & Burrows, S. (2012). The Implications For Learners, Teachers And Institutions of Using Student Satisfaction As A Measure Of Success: A Review Of The Literature. *Education Journal*, 138, 7–11.

Macukow, B. (2000). Education Quality in the Warsaw University of Technology. *European Journal Of Engineering Education*, 25(1), 9.

Majeed, Sawsan and Ziadat, Muhammad (2008). Quality and Accreditation of public education institutions and university. *Amman: Dar al -Safaa for publication and distribution*.

O’Driscoll, F. (2012). What matters most: An exploratory multivariate study of satisfaction among first year hotel/hospitality management students. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 20 (3), 237–258. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09684881211240303.
O’Neill M.A., & Palmer, A. (2004). Importance–performance analysis: a useful tool for directing continuous quality improvement in higher education. *Quality Assurance Education, 12*(1), 39–52.
Sudharani D. Ravindran and M. Kalpana (2012). Student’s Expectation, Perception and Satisfaction towards the Management Educational Institutions, *Procedia Economics and Finance, Elsevier*, Vol 2, 401-410.
Soutar, G. & McNeil, M. (1996). Measuring service quality in a tertiary institution. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 34(1), 72-82.
Shinde, V. V., & Inamdar, S. S. (2013). Problem Based Learning (PBL) for engineering education in India: Need and recommendations. *Wireless personal communications*, 69(3), 1097-1105.
Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A. and Berry, L.L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality, *Journal of Retailing*. Vol. 64, No. 1, pp. 14-40.
Palacio, A. B., Meneses, G. D. & Perez, P. J. P. (2002). The configuration of the university image and its relationship with the satisfaction of students. *Journal of Educational Administration, 40*(5), 486-505.
Plank, R., & Chiagouris, L. (1997). Perceptions of quality of higher education: An exploratory study of high school guidance counselors. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, 8*(1), 55-67.
Talmacean, I., & Domnica, M.D. (2013). Viewpoints concerning educational quality management at a superior level, management and economics, nicolae balcescu land forces academy, 2 (70), 198-204.
Venkatraman, S., (2007). A framework for implementing TQM in higher education programs. *Quality Assurance in Education, 15*(1), 92-112.

---