MPJSS

Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Sciences

Peer-reviewed Journal of
M.P. Institute of Social Science Research

CONTENTS

"A REVIEW ON APPLICABILITY OF SERVICE QUALITY MODELS BY HEIs"

Smita Shyamsunder Khatri.
Assistant Professor Anekant Institute of Management Studies (AIMS), Dist- Pune, Baramati, India

Abstract:

In order to ensure the ability of HEIs to compete in the education market, universities must go through processes of review of quality metrics. HEIs and universities measure service quality based on factors such as structural and procedural frameworks, learning environments, faculty research output and experiences of students and its outcome. The five main components of tangibles, dependability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy can be used to categorize service quality measurement in relation to teaching and learning. To manage and improve the quality of the services offered, universities frequently need to measure service quality (Latif et al., 2017). To gain thorough understanding of service quality, a contextual examination of various service models is essential. Hence the main objective of the study was to review the models being used in measuring service quality of HEIs. For the present study, three models were reviewed. First, being the most popular model in the service sector i.e. SERVQUAL, second is the GAP Model and third one that is reviewed is HEdPERF. The review revealed the prominence of SERVQUAL over the other two.

Keywords: Service Quality, Quality Metrics, SERVQUAL, GAP Model and HEdPERF.

Introduction:

Literature reviewed suggests that the facts and figures of education sector in India seems to be promising, more probe is required to understand the quality of it. As one of the literature reviews pointed out, a quote of an eminent educationist Dr. Takwale. He says-

Quote- In 1961-62, there was a big agitation of students in Pune University. Feeling frustrated that the university degrees were useless for getting jobs, students shouted slogans: "We do not want degrees, we want jobs". The university authorities told the agitating students: "Our job is to give you education and not the jobs. We don't promise you jobs. If you don't want to study here, go somewhere else." The university's academic community was not aware what these students were trying to communicate. It was: "Please give us education that will enable us to get jobs". – Unquote (Wagh, 2015).

Literature suggests large shift in higher education thereafter and rapid rise in management education in India and mushrooming of management institutions across nation. But the problem to be addressed here is that these institutions face 'quantity versus quality' conundrum. The quality of management programmes varies greatly amongst institutions. Hence measurement of service quality becomes important. But again, the question arises, how can this measure be taken? Which are various service quality models that could be used by HEIs? Hence this study.

Objectives:

1. To identify the models that could be used by HEIs to measure the service quality.
2. To review the models identified to measure the service quality of HEIs.

Service Quality Models:

SERVQUAL

The SERVQUAL model is a well-known instrument that is widely accepted and utilized by many

academics in the field of services marketing (Gronroos, 2000). A benefit of the SERVQUAL model, according to Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml (1985) is that it may be used to assess perceived service quality in a range of service sectors. But the model's terminology needs to be changed to fit the particular service sector and satisfy requirements unique to the context. Goumairi et al. (2020) in their study mentioned that the SERVQUAL ((SERVice QUALity-Quality of Service) model, when applied to the educational system and, more specifically, higher education, enables one to quantify non-quality by determining the discrepancy between students' perceptions and their expectations for high-quality services. It benefits decision-makers by assisting them in implementing the necessary corrective measures to improvise services offered by universities as part of a process of continuous development to achieve greater levels of excellence.

In order to assess the quality of the services, the difference Q is formulated as follows:

Q (quality of service) = P (perceived service) – E (expected service)

Regarding the SERVQUAL questionnaire, the authors Ko & Chou (2020) state that SERVQUAL is simple-to-use, comprehensive, multidimensional tool that can be used to assess subjective feelings. Since its creation, many service sectors, including finance, communications, higher education, healthcare, and information technology, have used it. It has acceptable general validity. It is also well known for its conceptualization and evaluation of service quality. Rinanto et al. (2019) in their study measured the expectations and perceptions of students towards education services using a questionnaire based on SERVQUAL. A study by Gregory (2019) revealed that an alternative to resource-intensive self-study methods for information gathering programmes is SERVQUAL. It can be utilized to enhance their initiatives and narrow the gap between expected and actual performance. Programmes can improve their reputation and track improvement efforts by using the gap analysis on a regular basis. Many scholars have customized the SERVQUAL tool for the educational field (Priya, 2017). Many SERVQUAL model applications are available in the state-of-the-art internationally. One prominent among them is a study on "A SERVQUAL-based framework for assessing quality of international branch campuses in UAE: A management students' perspective." The five SERVQUAL model dimensions were investigated at seven distinct campus universities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in a study involving 300 students. The key findings showed that services with higher quality differences fall under assurance. This outcome indicates the students' high standards for assurance (Datta & Vardhan, 2017). In his study on "Measuring Service Quality in Higher Education: A Study of Post-Graduate Students in Northern Cyprus," Vazirova (2016) employed both SERVQUAL as well as SERVPERF scales. He reiterated that the SERVQUAL or Gap scale developed by Parasuraman is unquestionably the most widely used and acknowledged scale for evaluating service quality. This view is supported by Begum (2016) who states that although SERVQUAL has drawn criticism and had its construct validity questioned, it is still frequently used in modified variants (RATER) to gauge customer expectations and perceptions of service quality. The supporting literature for SERVQUAL can also be seen in the study on "A Review of Service Quality at Higher Learning Institutions," by Al-Otaibi et al., 2016 which concluded that the SERVQUAL model has received a number of critiques, yet despite this, it is still the most often used model for evaluating service quality and the most widely used scale for conducting research in higher education institutions.

GAP Analysis Model

According to Zeithaml et al. (1990), there are five gaps in the quality of service delivery that make up the gap analysis model. Service quality is demonstrated via the Gap Analysis Model (Gronroos, 2000). The Gap Analysis Model is depicted in the following part, after which the five gaps will be briefly explained. The original model by Zeithaml et.al (1990) has been altered by the researcher to suit the need of study. As the study in question is about HEIs, the word customer in the original model is replaced by the word stakeholders and the word provider is changed to educational institutions and likewise some more changes in words are done in the model.

Figure 1|Gap Analysis Model
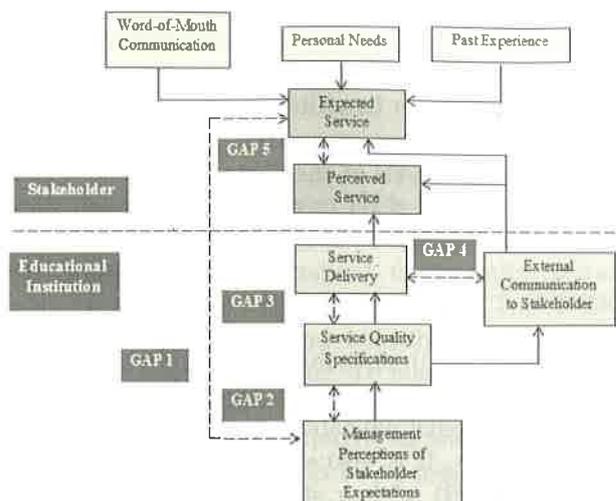
Source: Zeithaml et al. (1990)

GAP 1: This is the knowledge gap. This means a gap between management perceptions of customer expectations.

GAP 2: This is the standards gap. This means a gap between management perceptions of customers' expectations and the specifications of service quality.

GAP 3: This is the delivery gap. This means a gap between service quality specifications and service delivery.

GAP 4: This is the communications gap. This means a gap between service delivery and what is communicated to the customer.

GAP 5: This is the expected and perceived service gap. This means a gap between the customers' expectations and their perception of the actual service delivered.

HEdPERF

Abdullah (2006a) created the Higher Education Performance only (HEdPERF) measuring scale in an effort to provide an industry-specific instrument for gauging service quality in the higher education sector. According to Abdullah (2006a), who conducted the study, students are the only and main consumers of higher education.

However, HEdPERF had some limitations.

According to Kimani et al. (2011), there are no significant differences in how HEIs and other service organizations see service quality. As a result, these ideas have become more prevalent in the services market. As the HEdPERF model was created exclusively for the HEI sector and is only applicable to measuring service quality in the unique service environment, this may present a restriction for the model (Abdullah, 2006a).

Discussion: According to Zeithaml et al. (1990), service organizations should constantly monitor how customers perceive the quality of their services, identify any gaps in the services being provided, and take corrective measures to increase the quality of services. The Gap Analysis Model can help service

organizations discover quality issues and find solutions, which can lead to an improvement in overall service quality (Gronroos, 2000). The researcher also pointed out that (Abdullah, 2006a), the HEdPERF model is focused on treating students as the sole and most important consumer. Because HEIs must also satisfy other customer groups, this could be a restriction.

Conclusion

The review was undertaken for the service quality models available for the measurement of service quality. When it comes to studying the expectations and perception of customers then SERVQUAL seems to be a better choice as the SERVQUAL model analyses overall service quality as the gap between what customers perceive about the services that they receive and the expectations that they have from the services delivered. Research focusing on stakeholders other than the students of HEIs can certainly apply SERVQUAL as the scale items can be modified as per the study making it even more flexible for a researcher to construct research instruments.

References:

1. Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2009) Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm (5th edition). Boston: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

2. Wagh, P. V. K. (2015). Study Of The Challenges In The Managemnet Of Quality And Quantity In The Fast Growing Higher Education Sector In India. Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, Pune.

3. Priya, B. S. (2017). An Assessment of Quality among Higher Educational Institutions with special reference to Southern Tamilnadu. Kalasalingam University.

4. BEGUM, S. A. (2016). Need for Service Quality in Indian Management Education [ACHARYA NAGAJUNA UNIVERSITY]. http://hdl.handle.net/10603/287681

5. Đonlagić, S., & Fazlić, S. (2015). Quality assessment in higher education using the servqual model. Management (Croatia), 20(1), 39–57.

6. Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of services quality. Journal of Retailing, 64(1), 12–40.

7. Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1991). Refinement and reassessment of the SERVQUAL scale. Journal of Retailing, 67(4), 420–450.

8. Abbas, J. (2020). HEISQUAL: A modern approach to measure service quality in higher education institutions. Studies in Educational Evaluation, 67(September), 100933. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2020.100933

9. Goumairi, O., Aoula, E. S., & Souda, S. B. E. N. (2020). Application of the servqual model for the evaluation of the service quality in Moroccan higher education: Public engineering school as a case study. International Journal of Higher Education, 9(5), 223–229. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v9n5p223

10. Gronroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. European Journal of marketing, 18(4), 36-44.

11. IBEF. (2023). Services Industry Report. India Brand Equity Foundation.

*****

M.P. Institute of Social Science Research
Ujjain - 456010 (M.P.)

The M.P. Institute of Social Science Research (MPISSR) is an autonomous, multi-disciplinary centre for research and training of Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Ministry of Education, Government of India, and Department of Higher Education, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Research activities of MPISSR are concerned with issues relating to social, economic, political, cultural, administrative and civic aspects of India in general and Madhya Pradesh in particular. The Institute has been working for the last three decades with an unfettered spirit of exploration, rationality and enterprise to pursue research and training activities for generating understanding. knowledge and linkages between field realities and public policies.

The basic aim of MPISSR is to engage in research on relevant contemporary issues and disseminate the research findings for the enhancement of the existing knowledge and for the well being of the society through policy input. MPISSR has been working on following thematic areas: Panchayat Raj and Rural Development; Studies in Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes; Democracy, Electoral Behaviour, Social Justice and Human Rights; Development and Deprivation; Studies in Education; Gender Studies; Studies in Environment; Information Technology and Society; and New Economic Policy and Society.

MPISSR caters to the needs of policy planners, academia, legislators, non-governmental organisations, researchers, research organisations and functionaries of international organisations. Dissemination of knowledge through research publication; collaborating in research; imparting research training; assisting and advising through policy research and evaluation studies are core activities of the Institute.

MPISSR is registered under section 6 (1) of the Foreign Contribution (Regulations) Act, 1976, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi. Donations made to MPISSR are qualified for exemption under section 80- G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.