

Impact of Service Quality on Customers' Satisfaction: A Study from Service Sector especially Private Colleges of Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract- This paper is concentrated on quality of services offered by colleges so that those colleges can compete their rivals and seek satisfaction from students. In whole of the world especially Pakistan's focus is concentrated on spreading education. For education enhancement, role of Private Colleges is extremely admissible. Competition of Colleges is also crucial point for each of college in term of number of students. It is accepted that colleges who are providing quality of services, their students are satisfied and in this way commitment with colleges is increased which results in reputation of college. Dimensions of quality of service include tangible, empathy, reliability, responsiveness and assurance. Youngsters were randomly selected for the purpose of studies that are from Inter level to Master level of education. Results of study show that service quality is found to be very important factor for satisfaction of customers. All of perspectives of service quality are found to be positively correlated while one of those factors that are empathy shows negative relationship with service quality and with satisfaction of customers and it is advice for future researcher not to research on this variable. Main participation of this research in whole of the world is that it identifies the main factors of service quality which ultimately affect the satisfaction of customers. This paper will help top management of organizations and institutes to make strategies better for enhancing quality of service rendered to customers so that satisfaction customers' level can be increased. It is also observed if management of organization is conscious about quality of service then the customers' satisfaction can be increased which leads to customers' loyalty and at the end customers will be committed with those organizations.

Index Terms- Service Quality, Customers' satisfaction, Private Colleges

I. INTRODUCTION

Every organization wants to strive for excellence. Many factors contribute for excellence of any organization. In current era, organization's ultimate goal is to generate profit. Colleges are also included in organizations. Students are the main factor for success of any college. When students' satisfaction is more they obliged more and as a result of it students of that college will be increased. Now students and their parents are very wise for selecting college so that students learn more for facing all of world troubles come in their life and lead a life like ruler of the world. Because through education we learn how to tackle the problems in our life. Colleges which are providing more quality of services their students are increased and also fame of college will be increased which results not in only repute but their profit margins are raising rapidly. For attracting new students are become crucial point for colleges. Quality is main factor for attracting new customers for manufacturing as well as service sector. This research is only for service sector peculiarly education especially colleges so variables which are proved as perspectives of SERVQUAL are taken. Five perspectives of SERVQUAL are identified by (Parasuraman et al.1988) which are tangible, empathy, assurance, responsiveness and reliability. Colleges which are agreed to increase students should have to focus on quality of services offered. In the words of Sattari et al, organizations which pay more attention to customers as offering service quality survive as a center of excellence. Many studies were conducted on satisfaction of customers but up till now no study is conducted in education especially colleges. So this study elaborates satisfaction of students with colleges in Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. There is more competition among colleges and these couldn't cooperate on one component which represent merit component among different colleges. This study is used to check the relationship between components of quality of services and satisfaction of customer.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Service quality

In service sector especially colleges thinking about service quality has considered as a premeditated problem. Service quality defined as "it is a form of behavior that relates to satisfaction but not equivalent to it which results as a balance of prospect with performance" (Bolton and Drew, 1991; Cronin Jr. and Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988; Shepherd, 1999). Precisely,

SERVQUAL can be described as “thinking-minus-hopes” through depth support of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1991). Other researchers defined quality as “it is a degree to which any service fulfills customer’s requirements or hopes (Dotchin & Oakland, 1994; Lewis & Mitchell, 1990). It is also thought as “it is the thinking of customer about inadequacy or supremacy of services (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1990). From customers’ point of view, five factors of SERVQUAL are found by Sureshchandar, Rajendran, and Anantharaman (2003). Those are:

- a) Foundation service
- b) Service delivery as a Human element
- c) Non-human element
- d) Service Tangibles
- e) Societal dependability

In the early hours, researchers has been elaborated SERVQUAL as “ It is an outline of manner which comes due to the difference between customers’ hopes about any service received and thinking about service being received (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). As a view of Grönroos (1983), SERVQUAL consists of two elements – practical quality (“what” is proceed) and efficient quality (“how” is proceed). As a conventional approach, consumers’ expected service quality is difference between actual performances and hopes (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Commonly measures used for dealing this factor are SERVPERF and SERVQUAL (Zeithmal et al., 1993; Cronin and Taylor, 1992), both are used to identify different perspectives in most analysis of banking sector (Oppewal and Vriens, 2000; Bahía and its aptitude for organize purpose to expand them (Subramaniam and Youndt, 2005; Santos-Rodrigues et al., 2010). So, intangibles can differentiate those values which are offered to different customers. Rational capital form can be taken into consideration for thinking about factors determining quality, satisfaction and image. Definition of rational capital is as “it is the series of subtle resources which directly shows in financial statement of any firm, creation of exact value or can be do in upcoming (Ding and Li, 2010). As a result of concept studied in detail by Alama et al. (2006), rational capital is the combination of four elements: human, relational, organizational and technological capital. These factors are explained by Bueno et al. (2008) as follows:

Human capital: It is a capital of human characteristic and accepts both contemporary abilities (awareness, skills and behavior) and the capabilities of teams and individuals for learning and conception.

Technological capital: It is hi-tech intangibles which are indulged in doing the functions and tricks for production processes or rendering of services for any firm. It also consists of endeavors for examine, improvement and modernism, industrial personal qualities of technological, logical and business possessions (Bueno et al, 2008).

Organizational capital: A series of casual and official intangibles which makes process of any organization. Elements of organizational capital are activities, traditions and compositions.

Relational capital: It is the link build by any firm with agents within its environment. Environment includes customers, suppliers, associate members, competitors, the general public, institutions etc. All of elements of rational capital are explained in these elusive factors.

1. Attention to customers: It is the part of human capital. It includes effectiveness and efficiency of college employees when serving to the present students. It also includes convenience, liability and proficiency.

2. Organizational efficiency: It is the part of capital of any firm. It is related to efficiency in procedure of college e.g. simple and takes less time for permission about services demanded by customers, take care of customers within appropriate time.

3. Web efficiency: It is the division of technological capital. It is related to efficiency of web podium, online service and steadiness of availability of web pages of college. The degree of easy to use and security of web page is also include in it.

4. Personalization: It is the part of relational capital of a firm. It consists of choice of services of college for fulfilling customer’s needs by providing some special payback to current students. It also includes promotional paybacks any college offers as alliances with other college e.g. better points or any other service provide as to interest of customers. Personalization can also be defined as “any service adapted to fulfill demands of individual customer” (Ball et al., 2006; Vesanen, 2007). Form also consists of these factors:

Physical equipment: It refers to material transportation and equipment which make it possible to provide appropriate concentration to students at college.

SERVQUAL is affected by four factors of which three are intangible including attention to customer, organizational efficiency and web efficiency but one is physical equipment that’s called tangible. All these factors have affected the picture identified by customers which has indirect effect on satisfaction and direct effect on loyalty. As a concept of intangible elements of human capital and from banking experts on service quality attention of customers have image which urge confidence. Bitner and Hubert (1994) think about service quality as “a customer thinking about superiority of the performance of services.”

2.2 Service Quality Perspectives

Five perspectives of service quality have been identified by Parasuraman et al. (1988). These are empathy, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and tangibles which connect particular service character with hopes of customers.

- (a) **Tangibles** – corporal impression of human resources, conveniences and equipments
- (b) **Empathy** – more attention towards things individually and concern about them
- (c) **Assurance** - employee’s awareness and politeness and their potential to deliver faith and self-belief
- (d) **Reliability** – potential of institute, organization and employees to carry out service in promised and correct way

(e) **Responsiveness** – willingness of employees to help customers when they needed and deliver quick service to them. Asubonteng, McClery and Swan (1996) discussed in their research that service quality scope is changed from one industry to another industry. As an example, Kettinger and Lee (1994) found four perspectives in their study about quality of information system that have not material perspective. Cronin and Taylor (1992) identified one-factor depth as a combination of five factor s' measure introduced by Parasurama et al., (1988). After inspection of all of evidence it can be concluded that definition of SERVQUAL provided by Sureshchandar et al. (2003) is as which is provided by Parasuraman et al., (1988). For this research, I have used five perspectives of SERVQUAL provided by Parasuarman et al., (1988).

2.3 Customers' Satisfaction

Customers' satisfaction is defined through different perspectives (Egert and Ulaga, 2002; Srijumpa et al., 2007). It is considered as "the feeling of welfare resulted from experience of use" (Lévy and Varela, 2006). At another phase, customer satisfaction is the response of completion of consumers' needs. It is considered as a service characteristics or service itself which gives a happy fulfillment of consumption-related factors (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). As discussed by ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) form in Fornell et al's (1996) that "customer satisfaction is greater quality-pull than price-pull and value-pull." From the translation of many researchers it was observed that satisfaction is a sense of feeling which comes from a procedure of interpreting and judging what is received as a result of expectation as an inclusion of wishes and requirements coupled with the purchase and purchase choice (Armstrong & Kotler, 1996). From point of view of Wang, Lo and Yang (2004) cumulative satisfaction is used more as compared to definite satisfaction for evaluation of performance of any firm and attitude of customer. Focus of this paper is on cumulative satisfaction because on customers' satisfaction most of studies have done.

It is stated by Bitner and Zeithaml (2003) that "satisfaction is estimation of customers of a service or product either those fulfill their hopes and requirements. As defined by Boselie, Hesselink and Wiele (2002) satisfaction is an affective and positive form which comes as a result from the appreciation of all of aspects of working of party in relation with another. Two aspects of satisfaction of customers have been inspected by previous researchers: definite transaction satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction (Andreassen, 2000).

It is discussed by Giese and Cote (2000) as an evaluative concept that satisfaction is the analysis by consumer effectively. As a definition of (Oliver, 1993) it is the thinking of customer accomplishment of demands, objectives and requirements. In different areas, satisfaction of customer is mostly known and conventional concept. Different areas include economics, consumer research, marketing, economic psychology and welfare-economics. Literature of service management persuade that satisfaction of customer is conclusion of a thinking of customer about the value received in any links or transaction about SERVQUAL where service quality in terms of acquisition, cost of customer and price (Blanchard and Galloway, 1994; Heskett et al., 1990). It relates to hope value from links or transactions with combination of competing suppliers (Zeithaml et al., 1990).

Literature of service management argues that customers' satisfaction affects loyalty of customers which automatically influences profitability. Researcher for this theory include (Rust, et al. (1995); Schneider and Bowen (1995); Anderson and Fornell (1994); Heskett et al. (1994); Storbacka et al. (1994); Gummesson (1993); and Zeithaml et al. (1990) Reicheld and Sasser (1990); Heskett et al. (1990). Above mentioned researchers explain the relationship between profitability, satisfaction and loyalty. Examination of link as a result of calculating statistically by Nelson et al. (1992) who explain link between satisfaction and retention of customers in banking especially in retail banking Rust and Zahorik (1993).

2.4 Service quality and customers' satisfaction

Link between satisfactions of customers is provided by theoretical basic knowledge of SERVQUAL. SERVQUAL is now discussed as difference between thinking and hopes of service of customer. Literatures presented in past years criticized on model of service quality (Brown, Churchill Jr. and Peter, 1993; Buttle, 1996).

Firstly, proof about service quality disconfirmation prototype was little which evaluate service quality of customers (e.g. contrast between actual performance of service and hopes of service).

Secondly, SERVQUAL based on hopes-disconfirmation form which is improper as compared to behavioral for SERVQUAL. It is explained by Cronin Jr. and Taylor as "It is a hurdle to call service quality as a behavior."

Thirdly, SERVQUAL didn't attract the movements of changing hopes (Buttle, 1996). In measuring of SERVQUAL as an improper base was considered as "Hopes-minus-performance" (Cronin Jr. and Taylor, 1994). As a thinking of Teas (1993) that idea of hope of service quality should have to distinguish valued shortcoming (e.g. hopes as expected to measure service quality were not as much) thinking minus hopes measurement outline of SERVQUAL was deluded point of thinking about customers of service quality. So, he intimated that measure of eliminating the hopes could advance in value form of the SERVQUAL which is basically trust on the component of thinking. However, by arguments of Cronin for the betterment rely on only performance and measure of service quality when comparison is made to the "thinking minus hopes" measures (Cronin Jr. and Taylor, 1994).

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Hypothesis for the research

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between SERVQUAL and customers' satisfaction

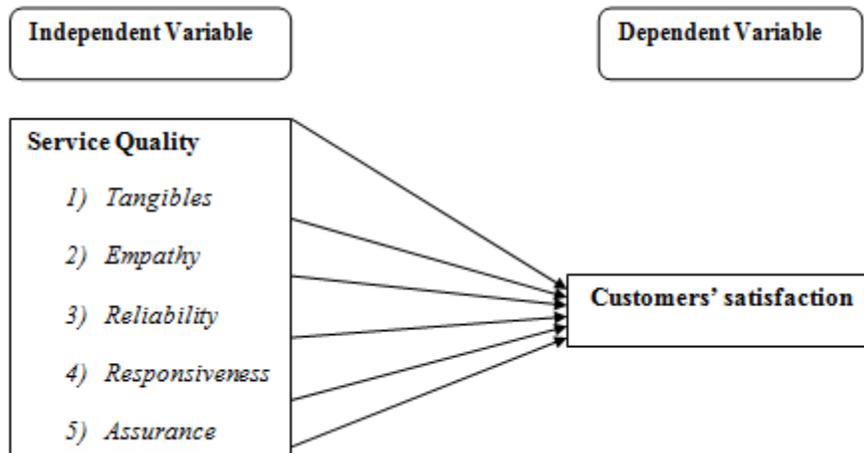
H2: There is a positive relationship between tangibles and customers' satisfaction

H3: Empathy is positively correlated with customers' satisfaction

H4: There is a positive relationship between assurance and customers' satisfaction

H5: Responsiveness is positively related with satisfaction of customers

H6: There is a positive and significant relationship between reliability and customers' satisfaction



IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample

Most of population of Pakistan is comprised of youth. In colleges all are youth students are admitted. This research is based on data taken from students of colleges. The reason for choosing students of colleges is that they are all wise and respond correctly as compared to others respondents. After taking results of this research colleges will be in position for adapting strategies suggested by researcher. All of youth students give more emphasis on quality provided by college. 185 youngsters were chosen from different colleges and questionnaires were administered personally. 150 questionnaires were return back with 81.08% response rate.

4.2 Instrument and measurement

For measuring dimensions of SERVQUAL, instrument was taken from research of Tung Lai (2004). Service quality includes tangibles, assurance, empathy, responsiveness and reliability. Instrument used for customers' satisfaction is taken from research work of (Yu et al. 2005) and (Syed Saad Andaleeb and Carolyn Conway, 2010). Questionnaire consists of 26 Question excluding demographic variables of respondents e.g. Gender, age, experience and qualification etc. Variable excluding demographic were measured on 5 point Likert scale.

4.3 Data Analysis

The survey research was started to check satisfaction of students with colleges of Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan. Primary data was gathered from students of different colleges. The data was entered in Microsoft Excel 2007 and analysis is done through using of SPSS Version 19.0.

V. RESULTS

Table 1 shows Mean and Standard Deviation for satisfaction, service quality and dimensions of service quality. 5 point Likert scale instrument was used which ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Average score of SERVQUAL dimensions depicts that respondents are less satisfied with dimension empathy whereas with tangibles, assurance, responsiveness and reliability are more satisfied. The Mean Score of satisfaction shows that up to some extent people are satisfied with colleges' service quality.

For testing Correlation, Pearson's Co-efficient of Correlation is used. Table 2 shows relationship between satisfaction, Service quality and service quality dimensions. The results shows that SERVQUAL has positive and significant relationship with satisfaction ($r=0.570$, $p<0.01$). This peculiar judgment confirms Hypothesis H1 that SERVQUAL is positively correlated with customers' satisfaction. The dimension Tangible has a significant relationship with satisfaction of customer ($r=0.446$, $p<0.01$). This specific discovery confirms Hypothesis H2 which shows there is a positive relationship between satisfaction and tangibles. The dimension Empathy of SERVQUAL depicts a negative link with the customers' satisfaction ($r=-0.328$, $p<0.01$). This peculiar judgment not confirms Hypothesis H3 that Empathy is positively correlated with customers' satisfaction. Assurance, the dimension of service quality represent a significant and positive relationship with customers' satisfaction ($r=0.599$, $p<0.01$). This peculiar result confirms the H4 that assurance has significant and positive relation with satisfaction of customers. The dimension of SERVQUAL is also

responsiveness which represents a significant and positive relationship with satisfaction of customer ($r=.431, p<0.01$). This specific kind of finding confirms the Hypothesis H5 that responsiveness, a dimension of SERVQUAL also has a significant and positive relationship with satisfaction of customers. There is a positive and significant relationship between reliability and customers' satisfaction ($r=0.570, p<0.01$). It has confirmed H6 that reliability has a positive and significant relationship with customers' satisfaction.

Regression analysis is also calculated to check whether SERVQUAL is an interpreter of satisfaction of customers or not. Results of regression are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 represent that there is a low percentage of variation due to variables studied for satisfaction. Satisfaction is elaborated by variable entered in equation ($R\text{-Squared} = 32.4\%$, $\text{Adjusted Rate Squared} = 32\%$). So, 32% variation is explained by SERVQUAL which is measured by 5 dimensions in satisfaction. Other score for it is given in Table 4.

VI. DISCUSSIONS

The given score depicts that students are up to some extent satisfied with quality of service provided by colleges. Assurance and tangible have greater score than other perspectives of SERVQUAL while empathy has lowest score. On the other hand, Correlation represent that four perspectives of SERVQUAL including tangibles, responsiveness, assurance and reliability are positively associated with satisfaction and one perspective which is empathy negatively linked with satisfaction. So in future there is no need to conduct research on variable Empathy. All of perspectives of SERVQUAL have a significant relationship with customers' satisfaction. The regression analysis shows that in satisfaction of customer 28% change comes due to service quality and its perspectives and other changes comes due to some other variables.

VII. FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

This study is conducted only on service sector particularly education especially colleges. By broadening its scope other services must be included in this study. This study will provide commands to upper level management of colleges that they must follow and enhance quality of service by paying attention towards such kind of things. They have focused on all of perspectives of service quality i.e. Tangibles, responsiveness, reliability and assurance. If colleges want to improve then they have to make strategies keeping in mind the perspectives of quality of service so that receive productive results of the strategies. In this way, colleges compete others even become successor by focusing on perspectives of quality of service and such like factors.

VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research is limited up to only service sector especially colleges. Other service sector can also show different results.

APPENDIX

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Average Mean and S.D. for Service quality, its perspectives and Customer satisfaction

	Mean	Standard Deviation
SERVQUAL	2.3958	.32925
Tangibles	2.0350	.47153
Empathy	3.6173	.70012
Assurance	2.0805	.64086
Responsiveness	2.0683	.56006
Reliability	2.1787	.57889
Satisfaction	1.3200	.42851

Table 2: Relation among SERVQUAL, its perspectives and customer satisfaction

		SERVQUAL	Tangibles	Empathy	Assurance	Responsiveness	Reliability
Tangibles	Pearson Correlation	.683**					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	-.064**	-.313**				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.436	.000				
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	.802**	.587**	-.379**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000			
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.776**	.455**	-.315**	.589**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		

Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.722**	.411**	-.415**	.581**	.591**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.570**	.446**	-.328**	.599**	.431**	.570**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Regression study (Satisfaction as dependent variable)

Regression	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
.570	.324	.320	.35407

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Beta	Standard Error for Beta	T	Sig.
.743	.088	.570	.000

Dependent Variable (Satisfaction)

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