

E-ISSN: 2469-4339

Management and Economics Research Journal, Vol. 5, Iss./Yr. 2019, Pgs. 13

Original Research Article

Provider–Customer Perceptions in
Service Quality: A Gap Analysis at
Ishik University, Sulaimani, Iraq

Jaf et al.

HATASO, USA

Provider–Customer Perceptions in Service Quality: A Gap Analysis at Ishik University, Sulaimani, Iraq

Khayal Jaf^{1*}, Paveh Muhammed², Ala Omer¹

¹Department of Business Management; ²Department of Architecture
Ishik University, Sulaimani, Kurdistan, Iraq.

*Correspondence: khayal.jaf@ishik.edu.iq

Received: Jul 09, 2019; Accepted: Oct 07, 2019

Copyright: Jaf *et al.* This is an open-access article published under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). This permits anyone to copy, distribute, transmit, and adapt the work provided the original work and source is appropriately cited.

Citation: Jaf K, Muhammed P, Omer A. 2019. Provider–customer perceptions in service quality: A gap analysis at Ishik University, Sulaimani, Iraq. Management and Economics Research Journal, Vol. 5, Article ID 932232, 13 Pages. <https://doi.org/10.18639/MERJ.2019.932232>

Abstract

It is known that the service quality is the main parameter of every service providing organization for survival. Therefore, the organizations must evaluate their service quality periodically and plan for improvement. While evaluating their service quality, companies should rely not only on the end users' evaluations but also on the gap between the service providers' perception and the customers' perception about the service quality level. The study aims to compare the service providing perceptions of department/unit managers and the service quality evaluations of students at private universities. For this purpose, we used the ServQual survey questionnaire to assess all service providing academic and administrative units of Tishk International University (formerly known as Ishik University). The data have been collected in two phases; first, we gave the ServQual survey questionnaire to managers and employees of each department/unit. The survey contained questions about the opinions of managers and employees about how quality service has been delivered in their unit. In this context, cafeteria, students' affairs, dean of students, academic department of student, and accounting unit were evaluated. Second, ServQual was modified for the students to evaluate the service quality that they perceive in those units. Finally, the evaluated results of the managers and the students were subtracted from each other, and the gap was determined. Based on the results, we gave some suggestions to the administration.

Keywords: Education service quality; ServQual; Student satisfaction; Gap analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

The service quality in the private education institutions is an important issue in the contemporary literature. As the students are the main customers in those organizations, their satisfaction plays an important role for the business success of the private universities (Poturak, 2014). From this point of view, it can be expected that a satisfied student would be more committed to the university in case the services provided by the university are conforming their expectations. Hence, the administration of the universities must first understand the expectations of the students and must plan to conform the expectations.

According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), if the perceived service is less than expected, it leads to unsatisfied customers. Besides, the customers would be satisfied if the actual service exceeds their expectations. Therefore, it is important for the administration of the private universities to understand the expectations of the students and then conform it ideally.

A crucial question comes out here: Do the opinions of the administration and the students about the service quality are close to each other or not? Besides, does the administration think that they provide a good level of quality service while students do not? The difference between the opinions of service provider and customer is considered as one of the main gaps in the service provision (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988).

There are many private universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Those universities surely focus on the education quality and aim to become one of the best universities among all alternatives in the region. Besides, those universities show poor performance in evaluating the service quality provided in every unit of their organizations. It can be said that closeness of this gap will enhance private universities to develop more strategically and evaluate their real service quality level more accurately. From this point of view, this research contains practical and managerial implications.

The study aims to compare the service providing perceptions of department/unit managers and the service quality evaluations of students at private universities. For this purpose, we used the ServQual survey questionnaire to assess all the service providing academic and administrative units of Tishk International University (Formerly known as Ishik University). The data were collected through the survey questionnaire given to the staff and the students. We asked the staff about their opinion of the service quality provided in their unit. Besides, students were asked to evaluate the service quality in every unit they receive it. Finally, the opinions of staff were subtracted from the perceptions of the students to indicate a gap in service quality for each unit. The results were analyzed descriptively. A result close to zero indicates that the unit has the ability to conform the expectations of the students

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Service Quality

Service quality is a framework that helps one to understand the reasons of customer satisfaction (Aydinli and Demir, 2015). Moreover, perceived service quality can be defined as the customers' judgment about superiority or excellence of a product. Service quality is a measure that shows how well an actual service delivery matches with customer expectations. Delivering quality service means conforming to customer expectations on a consistent basis (Torlak *et al.*, 2019).

"Quality" in a service organization can be defined as meeting customers' expectations with what actually is served (Demir *et al.*, 2015). The nature of most services is such that the customer is present in the delivery process. Therefore, the perception of quality is influenced not only by the "service outcome" but also by the "service process" (Demir and Eray, 2015). The "perceived quality" lies along a continuum (Demir and Mukhlis, 2017). "Unacceptable quality" lies at one end of this continuum, while "ideal quality" lies at the other end. The points in between represent different gradations of quality (Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982; Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). Measuring the service quality is important because the firms can understand the customers' expectation and make further plan to conform it.

Service quality is a key tool to achieve customers' satisfaction. Varying behaviors and attitudes of customers demand high service quality to attain their positive perception of service quality. Service quality has linear and positive relationship with success and profitability of business (Ladhari *et al.*, 2011). As service quality improves, the chance of customer satisfaction increases. In turn, perceptions of better service value in service exchanges provided by service organizations lead to increased customer satisfaction (Arasli *et al.*, 2005; Lovelock and Wirtz, 2007).

For the measurement of service quality, the SERVQUAL instrument is considered to have a wide applicability (Sasser *et al.*, 1978; Johnston and Lyth, 1991). Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) provided a list of 10 determinants of service quality as a result of their focus group studies with service providers and customers: access, communication, competence, courtesy, credibility, reliability, responsiveness, security, understanding, and tangibles. Furthermore, Berry *et al.* (1985) added that "although the relative importance of the categories would vary from one service industry to the next, we believe the determinants of service quality in most (if not all) consumer service industries are included in this list."

In 1988, Parasuraman *et al.* have decreased the determinants of service quality to five, namely empathy, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and tangibles.

Tangibles at higher education mean physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of university personnel. It is the appearance of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials (Demir and Guven, 2017) In simple words, tangibles are about creating foremost impressions. All organizations desire that their consumers get an exceptional and positive foremost impression. Focusing on this

particular dimension will help them to gain maximum benefit (Swar and Sahoo, 2012). Based on the tangibles, universities should utilize the state-of-art technologies in their classes, laboratories, and staff offices. Moreover, university buildings and facilities must be modern, clean, and neat. However, the academic and administrative staff must wear and seem modern, clean, and neat (Demir, 2017). Another dimension of the service quality is reliability.

Reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately the first time (Demir *et al.*, 2015). It is the ability to deliver the promised service precisely and consistently. Estimates that the cost of not doing things right the first time for a typical service organization is equal to around 40% of the total operating costs. The association between dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction was investigated by Ibáñez *et al.* (2006). They found a significant relationship between reliability of services on the satisfaction level of customers. The literature reveals an increased degree of positive relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and performance (both financial and non-financial) where face-to-face dealing between customer and employee is the only focus (Muyeed, 2012).

Another dimension of the service quality is responsiveness. In education, it is the willingness to help student and provide prompt advice and service, provide timely service and eagerness to help the customers, the ability to deal effectively with complaints, and promptness of the service (Ghobadian *et al.*, 1994; Sedigheh, 2015). Responsiveness to customers is considered an important predictor of service quality, and driver of customer satisfaction (Andaleeb and Basu, 1994; Handfield and Bechtel, 2002; Tiedemann, 2009).

Assurance is another important element of service quality. In education, it can be defined as the ability of the university to demonstrate competence, confidence, courtesy, credibility, and security. Knowledge and politeness of employees and their skills inspire trust and confidence. In addition to tangibles, reliability, and responsiveness, assurance has been identified as a significant dimension of service quality by Parasuraman *et al.* (1988). They propose that all of these dimensions significantly enhance customer satisfaction. It is believed that if the employees of financial institutions display trustworthy behavior, the satisfaction level of customers can be enhanced significantly. It may also positively influence repurchase intension of customers (Ndubisi and Wah, 2005; Ndubisi, 2006).

Empathy is the fifth element of service quality. In education, it can be defined as the ability to care and provide individualized attention to students. However, a positive and significant relationship is found between empathy and customer satisfaction (Iglesias and Guillén, 2004). It was proposed in another research study by Jamal and Al-Marri (2007) that customers may remain unsatisfied with service quality if a gap is left in empathy. Customer satisfaction is significantly impacted by empathy. It makes customers contented and in the long run serves as an important predictor in improving the financial performance of the organization. Luo *et al.* (2012) empirically investigated the role of empathy in service quality and its impact on customer satisfaction. It was established that customers treated emphatically are more often visitors and prone to forgive any mistakes that may occur. Empathy creates an emotional relationship with customer, providing customer a touch of importance for business. This leads to retention and creation of new customers' pool. Juneja *et al.* (2011) have also studied the correlation between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction in Bangladesh banking industry. It was found that customer loyalty can be won through empathy. Empathy can play a role in improvement of service quality, customer loyalty, and finally satisfaction. Karatepe (2011) explored the service environment impact with empathy and reliability on loyalty. Empathy works as a moderator between quality and customer satisfaction. Empathy can ultimately change the behavior of customers.

Considering these dimensions of quality, service quality is determined as the difference between student expectations and perceptions of service delivery quality. In general, consumers are dissatisfied only if the experienced quality is worse than expected (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988).

2.2. Service Quality in Higher Education Institution

Numerous studies have been studied on service quality in higher education. For example, Hill (1995) proposed an exploratory study that has monitored a group of students' expectations and perceptions of service

quality over time. However, Sultan and Yin Wong (2010) have found five critical research agenda in the field of service quality in higher education sector as follows:

- (1) The role of importance, expectation, and performance on service quality in higher education.
- (2) The critical service attributes and dimensions of service quality in higher education.
- (3) The critical antecedents of service quality in higher education.
- (4) The effectiveness of ECSI methodology in higher education.
- (5) The quest for an effective model in higher education.

Focused on the relationship and the relation between the determination of service quality and students' satisfaction. The result of the study shows that service quality in private higher education institution is positively associated with students' satisfaction. Similarly, Ali and Mohamed (2014) studied the relationship between service quality and students' satisfaction. The authors have found that there is a positive and significant relationship between service quality and students' satisfaction. However, Abu Hasan *et al.* (2008) suggested that service quality has a significant positive impact on students' satisfaction. Furthermore, improving the service quality may potentially improve the students' satisfaction. Attempted to measure the students' attitude of registration and academic advising across different faculties to assure positive quality service. The results suggested that the registration process is one of the processes that make students frustrate, in particular, the time taken to complete registration.

Cardona and Bravo (2012) suggested that the service quality was the most important element that influences students' satisfaction positively. However, it fosters the commitment of students toward their universities. Hossain, Hossain, and Howdhury (2018) developed a model that tests the determinants that impact the success of students in higher education. Moreover, they have suggested that "curriculum quality," "teaching competence," "service facility," and "service delivery" provided by a private university are positively related to "perceived value," while students' perceived satisfaction is dependent on "service facility."

Osman and Saputra (2019) investigated the relationship between service quality, program quality, institutional image, and student satisfaction in the context of higher education. Moreover, the study attempted to describe the mediating impact of institutional image between service quality, program quality, and student satisfaction. Results confirmed the direct relationship between the service quality and student satisfaction. Therefore, a deficiency of indirect relationship has emerged between service quality and student satisfaction in the circumstance of higher education. This investigation has emphasized the role of service quality and program quality as the two independent variables that have a relationship on the dependent variable, that is, student satisfaction.

Studied the student perception of service quality in higher education, and students suggest that students' perceived service quality has three dimensions: "requisite elements," which are essential to enable students to fulfill their study obligations; "acceptable elements," which are desirable but not essential to students; and "functional elements," which are of a practical or utilitarian nature. Students' evaluation of certain aspects of service quality may change resulting from students' experience. Similarly, Jusoh *et al.* (2004) claimed that seniority has a significant effect on the perception of service quality, the higher the grades they are, the more expectation they will have for the university. Besides, Ada *et al.* (2017) claimed that students' perception of service quality in higher education institution shows a significant difference according to the year of university establishment, physical facilities, and the diplomas gained by the university, and a study shows that female students show a higher evaluation to the service quality than the male students in spite of academic position and university image.

Anim and Mensah (2015) stated that students in private institutions are more informed than students in public institutions; furthermore, students' expectations in private institutions are higher, and the quality of service perceived is greater than the students in public institutions. To further elaborate the findings, it can be suggested that the service quality of students in private education is more precise than the students in public education. For example, students in private education might have higher expectations from the cafeteria in the sense of variety, taste, and service of the products as well as the space and layout in the café. However, students might have special expectations during the classes. Voss *et al.* (2007) investigated the students' needs in the lectures during their education. The results

have revealed that students prefer their lecturer to be knowledgeable, enthusiastic, approachable, and friendly, and the academic interest of students encourages them less than the vocational aspect of their study.

Along with their study, Cardona and Bravo (2012) investigated the service quality factor that impacts students' satisfaction. The study showed significant variables in explaining student satisfaction as follows: trust developed toward the university and the academic program, and the perception they have of assessment techniques as a challenge to improve intellectual growth. Finally, Green (2014) has elaborated the service quality in higher education. The study revealed that, on average, customers have higher expectation in tangibles, reliability, and assurance. Furthermore, a very few studies have investigated the service quality in higher education in every department and unit simultaneously. Only Demir (2017) has studied the impact of ServQual determinants on the students' satisfaction in every unit and department at Ishik University, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Furthermore, Demir and Guven (2017) have studied the impact of ISO quality management systems on the students' satisfaction at the same university.

No study has investigated the perceptions between service providers and the customers of the services in higher educations. In this study, we have evaluated the perceptions of managers in each department/unit and the students who receive services of the concerning department/unit.

2.3. Customer Satisfaction

Kotler (2000) defined satisfaction as follows: "a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from an evaluation process comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations," that is, when the consumer of a good or service compares what is received with what is expected from the utilization of that good or service. Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) said that satisfaction can be associated with feelings of acceptance, happiness, relief, excitement, and delight (Demir, 2019a). Customer satisfaction is the result of a comparison between customer purchase of the expected performance with actual performance and perceived and payment expenses. Customer satisfaction is a physical concept that is due to personal comparison from understanding of the product performance with the experience obtained of the performance (Chu and Lin, 2002).

Many factors affect customer satisfaction. According to Hokanson (1995), these factors include friendly employees, courteous employees, knowledgeable employees, helpful employees, accuracy of billing, billing timeliness, competitive pricing, service quality, good value, billing clarity, and quick service. To achieve customer satisfaction, organizations must be able to satisfy their customers' needs and wants (LaBarbera and Mazursky, 1983). Customers' needs state the felt deprivation of a customer (Kotler, 2000). In contrast, customers' wants, according to Kotler (2000), refer to "the form taken by human needs as they are shaped by culture and individual personality."

Satisfaction is the condition that is obtained after use of the product or service for the customer. Satisfaction is a process to evaluate and indicate the feelings of customers after they purchase a product/service. This study suggests that satisfaction is achieved because of two parallel processes that include emotional process and normative process (Robinot and Giannelloni, 2010; Abdulla *et al.*, 2019). Although satisfaction and service quality have a common feature, satisfaction contains broader concept than quality generally. The reason is that service quality focuses only on the dimensions of services while satisfaction requires more dimensions such as price, marketing, layout, location, situational indicator, and personal indicator. Therefore, service quality can be considered as a part of satisfaction.

Many researchers have looked into the importance of customer satisfaction because it is something beyond a positive impact after the customer purchase a service/product. Customer satisfaction does not turn out only profit to a firm but also leads to customer retainment, consequently loyalty, word of mouth, and more customers attracted.

3. METHOD(S)

3.1. Data Collection and Sample Description

The aim of this research was to elaborate a gap between the service quality perceptions of staff and students. The research has been studied at Tishk International University (formerly known as Ishik University),

Sulaimani, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Tishk International University has established a new campus in Sulaimani, Kurdistan Region of Iraq since 2015, and the campus needs further managerial improvements from the service quality point of view. The campus has around 200 students by 2019.

The survey questionnaire was given to the students who were willing to fill the survey. After making announcement of the survey questionnaire, 120 students were willing to fill the questionnaire for every unit. Moreover, survey questionnaire for every unit was filled by 120 students as one survey each day. At the end of 5 days, each of the 120 students has filled the questionnaire for cafeteria, students' affairs, accounting, academic departments, and dean of students (social activities office).

However, managers and employees from each department have fulfilled the same service quality survey for the gap analysis. A total of 20 academic and administrative staff have filled the questionnaire to evaluate their own unit. Thus, there are two survey groups in this study: staff and students.

3.1.1. Survey group (managers and employees)

Managers are the people who are primarily responsible from the quality of service at every organization. Furthermore, division managers are mainly responsible for the service quality of their own department. Thus, their perceptions of service delivery quality would be very important. Secondly, employees are the people who follow the rules and regulations that have been determined by their managers and deliver the service with their motivation. Consequently, the perceptions of those two administrative parts are important to understand. Thus, we conducted the survey, which was conducted to the students, to the managers and employees of each unit as well. The difference was that we changed the phrase from service receiving to service delivery. Please see appendix.

3.1.2. Survey group (students)

Students are the main internal customers who receive services from various units/departments of the university. However, they pay for those services, and their perception of service quality is very important and a main variable to improve quality. Therefore, we conducted the service quality survey as the party that receives services from each unit/department. Please see appendix.

3.2. Measures

For service quality, ServQual of Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) is undeniably important. The concerning questionnaire has been used in a very wide range of studies in service providing field. Hence, we have used the same variables in this study as well. The questionnaire contained five variables of service quality such as empathy, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and tangibles, and one variable for customer satisfaction.

The survey questionnaire (ServQual) contained five dimensions of service quality such as empathy, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and tangibles. It is known that ServQual contained 22 questions. Besides, we have modified those questions for each department. The service quality of academic and administrative units was evaluated through the ServQual questionnaire. We used the Likert scale: 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. The meanings of the scale were explained to the participants before they started filling the questionnaire.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we analyzed the data that were gathered from the students and evaluated the level of empathy, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and tangibles at each unit/department of the university along with the satisfaction. Business management, civil engineering, and architectural engineering departments are the academic departments where the students are receiving private education. Furthermore, accounting, dean of students, students' affairs, and cafeteria are the administrative units where students receive financial, social-cultural sports, official, and nutrition services, respectively. Besides, the managers and employees of the concerning units/departments have evaluated their service providing quality. The difference between students' perceptions and staff perceptions indicate the gap between students' and administration's perceptions. The negative results indicate that staff perceptions are greater than the students' perceptions. Besides, if the results are positive, staff perceptions are lesser than the students' perceptions; see Table 1 for further details.

Table 1. Staff Perceptions of Service Quality.

Dimensions	Unit/Department	Staff perceptions		
		N	Mean	Std. deviation
Empathy	Business Management	2	3.58	0.12
	Civil Engineering	3	3.39	0.35
	Architectural Engineering	6	4.53	0.49
	Accounting	2	3.75	0.35
	Dean of Students	1	5.00	–
	Students Affairs	3	3.78	0.79
	Cafeteria	1	4.00	–
Responsiveness	Business Management	2	4.20	0.28
	Civil Engineering	3	4.13	0.23
	Architectural Engineering	6	4.53	0.50
	Accounting	2	3.80	0.85
	Dean of Students	1	5.00	–
	Students Affairs	3	3.60	0.72
Assurance	Business Management	2	4.17	1.18
	Civil Engineering	3	4.22	0.51
	Architectural Engineering	6	4.22	0.66
	Accounting	2	4.00	0.00
	Dean of Students	1	4.67	–
	Students Affairs	3	3.56	0.51
	Cafeteria	1	4.00	
Reliability	Business Management	2	3.75	0.00
	Civil Engineering	3	3.17	0.76
	Architectural Engineering	6	3.21	1.46
	Accounting	2	3.50	1.06
	Dean of Students	1	4.75	–
	Students Affairs	3	3.22	0.38
	Cafeteria	1	2.75	–
Tangibles	Business Management	2	3.33	0.00
	Civil Engineering	3	3.00	0.87

(Continued)

Table 1. Staff Perceptions of Service Quality (Continued).

Dimensions	Unit/Department	Staff perceptions		
		N	Mean	Std. deviation
	Architectural Engineering	6	4.22	0.83
	Accounting	2	3.50	0.00
	Dean of Students	1	4.00	–
	Students Affairs	3	3.17	0.50
	Cafeteria	1	3.83	–
Satisfaction	Business Management	2	3.67	0.47
	Civil Engineering	3	2.67	0.88
	Architectural Engineering	6	4.17	0.55
	Accounting	2	3.33	0.47
	Dean of Students	1	4.00	–
	Students Affairs	3	3.56	0.96
	Cafeteria	1	3.67	–

In Table 1 shows the students evaluated students' affairs unit's (4.83) and architectural engineering department's (3.94) empathy level toward students as good. Besides, dean of students (3.22) and accounting (3.14) units showed relatively low empathy to the students. When every determinant of service quality was investigated, it was observed that generally units/departments evaluated their service quality as good and above. In some particular cases such as civil engineering, the staff have evaluated their service quality and students' satisfaction level as low. For further details, see Table 1.

Table 2 represents the students' evaluation of service quality at every unit. Furthermore, the table shows the difference (gap) between the evaluations of staff and student. For every determinant of service quality, service evaluation of students was subtracted from the evaluation of staff. The negative results show that staff cannot offer sufficient services for the students as they think. Besides, the positive results represent that the staff of the concerning unit is aware what they provide for the student.

When the differences between the students and staff are investigated, we observed that staff perceptions in civil engineering (3.39) and business management (3.58) departments and cafeteria (4.00) were closest to the students' evaluations in both departments' empathy dimension. Besides, dean of students (5.00) had highly greater perceptions that what the students actually perceived (3.22) about the empathy of the concerning unit. As a result, the biggest difference between students' and staff evaluations had occurred in these units (–1.78). On the other hand, administration of the students' affairs had the biggest positive gap, whereas the students' perceptions have been greater than the perceptions of the staff (1.05).

As responsiveness is willingness to solve the problems of the students, students' affairs were the top department that shows responsiveness to the students in problem solving (4.73). Besides, civil engineering (3.07), accounting (3.12), and dean of students (3.11) were the lowest achieving units/departments. When the perceptions of students were subtracted from the perceptions of staff, it has been revealed that the biggest negative gap was in deans of students' unit (–1.89). Besides, students' affairs unit had the biggest positive gap (1.13) as the students perceive more than the responsiveness shown by students affairs.

Assurance in the education has been evaluated as the knowledge about what a unit or department is performing. Table 1 shows that the students' affairs (4.73) and architectural engineering (3.98) had the highest assurance in perceptions of the students. On the other hand, business management (3.21), civil engineering (3.13), dean of students (3.23), and cafeteria (3.19) had relatively low assurance dimension.

Table 2. Students' Evaluation of Service Quality.

Dimensions	Unit/Department	Student perceptions			Difference between staff and student
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Empathy	Business Management	35	3.41	1.01	-0.17
	Civil Engineering	31	3.38	1.13	-0.01
	Architectural Engineering	68	3.94	0.99	-0.59
	Accounting	124	3.14	1.23	-0.61
	Dean of Students	114	3.22	1.10	-1.78
	Students Affairs	85	4.83	1.62	1.05
	Cafeteria	114	3.92	1.02	-0.08
Responsiveness	Business Management	35	3.37	1.00	-0.83
	Civil Engineering	30	3.07	1.23	-1.06
	Architectural Engineering	68	3.88	1.03	-0.65
	Accounting	124	3.12	1.27	-0.68
	Dean of Students	115	3.11	1.03	-1.89
	Students Affairs	85	4.73	1.65	1.13
Assurance	Business Management	35	3.21	1.24	-0.96
	Civil Engineering	31	3.13	1.23	-1.09
	Architectural Engineering	68	3.98	0.99	-0.24
	Accounting	124	3.27	1.25	-0.73
	Dean of Students	113	3.23	1.05	-1.44
	Students Affairs	85	4.73	1.62	1.17
	Cafeteria	114	3.19	1.11	-0.81
Reliability	Business Management	34	3.26	1.08	-0.49
	Civil Engineering	31	2.79	1.03	-0.38
	Architectural Engineering	68	3.86	1.02	0.65
	Accounting	124	3.14	1.23	-0.36
	Dean of Students	115	3.15	1.06	-1.60
	Students Affairs	85	4.74	1.63	1.52
	Cafeteria	114	3.21	1.04	0.46
Tangibles	Business Management	34	3.27	1.06	-0.06
	Civil Engineering	30	3.43	1.01	0.43

(Continued)

Table 2. Students' Evaluation of Service Quality (Continued).

Dimensions	Unit/Department	Student perceptions			Difference between staff and student
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Architectural Engineering	68	3.90	1.09	-0.33
	Accounting	124	3.34	1.31	-0.16
	Dean of Students	112	3.21	1.02	-0.79
	Students Affairs	85	5.06	1.79	1.90
	Cafeteria	114	3.24	0.99	-0.60
Satisfaction	Business Management	30	3.29	1.27	-0.37
	Civil Engineering	31	2.92	1.27	0.26
	Architectural Engineering	68	3.98	1.11	-0.19
	Accounting	123	3.22	1.35	-0.11
	Dean of Students	115	3.13	1.07	-0.87
	Students Affairs	85	4.89	1.64	1.33
	Cafeteria	113	3.27	1.13	-0.40

Evaluating the gap between students and staff perceptions, dean of students (-1.44) and civil engineering (-1.09) had the biggest negative gap while the biggest positive gap was observed in students affairs unit (1.17). The results reveal that the biggest gap between students and the staff has occurred at this point.

Reliability is doing it right and continuously while providing a service. In Table 2, the study shows that with the value of 4.74, students' affairs unit had the highest evaluation results while civil engineering had dramatically low (2.79). However, Table 2 represents the gap evaluation results, which shows that dean of students (-1.6) had the biggest negative gap between student and staff evaluation. Besides, students' affairs (1.52) had the biggest positive gap.

Tangibles explain the technology and equipment the department or unit is utilizing as well as how neat and modern the appearance of the academic and administrative staff is. In Table 2, the tangibles in the students' affairs (4.9) had the highest perception value. On the other hand, dean of students (3.21) and the business management (3.27) units were relatively low than others. The gaps between students and the staff evaluations show that the departments and the units are relatively close to the students' evaluations although they are aware about the lacking tangibles in the campus. On the other hand, students' affairs had the biggest positive gap between students and the staff (1.9).

Satisfaction is a main determinant that retains the customers and makes them loyal to a brand. The results shown in Table 2 reveal that the students of students' affairs (4.89) department were most satisfied. Besides, the students of civil engineering (2.92) department were less satisfied than the students of the other departments. When the gap analysis was proposed, it has been revealed that the dean of the students (-0.87) had the biggest negative gap between students and staff while students' affairs (1.33) had the biggest positive gap. Overall, the satisfaction of the students in units and departments has been on average around three.

5. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to investigate the gap between the service quality perceptions between the staff and the students at private institutions. It is known that the service quality is the main parameter of every service

providing organization for survival. Therefore, the organizations must evaluate their service quality periodically and plan for their improvement. While evaluating their service quality, companies should not rely only on the end users but also on the gap between what the customers perceive and what the providers do.

In this research, we have asked questions to unit/department employees and managers as service providers and students as service receivers at a private university. The services of all units/departments have been evaluated by the students and the service providers of those units/departments. The results have been subtracted from each other and the gap has been determined.

The initial results have shown us that the service quality of the students' affairs in the university is highly appreciated by the students. The staff of the unit show good level of empathy, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and tangibles to the students. Therefore, students are highly satisfied with that administrative unit. Besides, the employees and the managers of the unit are not aware of what they are providing to the students. This situation might be considered as a problem for the unit. Service quality must be known by the unit, and they must be aware of their strengths and weaknesses for their future plans. Thus, the results must be shared with the managers and the employees of the students' affairs, and they must know about the evaluation results of the students and act accordingly. They must continue what they are doing well and even develop it.

The second important result of the research was about the dean of students in the university. Based on the analysis results, students satisfaction with the dean of students was average and close to dissatisfaction. Besides, the administration of the department evaluated their service quality and the student satisfaction as very high. This case is a big danger for a department while indicating their strengths and weaknesses of the unit/department. It has been determined that the gap between what the students evaluate and what the department administration thinks is very different from each other. Thus, the administration must reevaluate what they need to analyze and plan for further improvement of service quality in the unit.

The third important result of the research was about the service quality in civil engineering department. Students evaluated the service quality of the department as weak overall. Besides, the administration is also aware of the situation. Although the weakness is a problem for the future of the department, it is a strength that the administration and the employees are aware of what they are providing for the students. In this manner, the department can use this potential and make a good plan for the future to develop the service quality of the department.

The research has some managerial implications. By this methodology, the management may see how the service receivers perceive the service quality of a unit or department. This makes an organization to evaluate their service quality comprehensively. Secondly, they can see the gap between what the managers and employees think they are providing to the customers, and what actually the customers perceive. In this manner, the management can make better plan for further development of the service quality unit/department.

Research has some limitations. First, the research has been done only in one campus of Tishk International University and cannot be generalized to all private institutions in the region. Second, the study contains only around 124 data for each department and must be increased in the future research.

Acknowledgment

No financial or material support.

Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to this study.

Conflict of Interest

None.

References

- Abdulla N, Wirya H, Top C. 2019. Service quality among kurdistan hotels. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management* 7(6): 717-723.
- Ada S, Baysal ZN, Erkan SSS. 2017. An evaluation of service quality in higher education: Marmara and Nigde Omer Halisdemir Universities' Department of Education Students. *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 5(11): 2056-2065.
- Ali AYS, Mohamed Al. 2014. Service quality provided by higher education institutions in Somalia and its impact on student satisfaction. *European Journal of Business and Management* 6(11).

- Andaleeb SS, Basu AK. 1994. Technical complexity and consumer knowledge as moderators of service quality evaluation in the automobile service industry. *Journal of Retailing* 70(4): 367-381.
- Anim SK, Mensah J. 2015. Service quality in higher education: a comparative study in tertiary institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Global Journal of Educational Studies* 1(2): 24-44.
- Arasli H, Mehtap-Smadi S, Turan Katircioglu S. 2005. Customer service quality in the Greek Cypriot banking industry. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal* 15(1): 41-56.
- Aydinli C, Demir A. 2015. Impact of non-technical dimensions of service quality on the satisfaction, loyalty, and the willingness to pay more: a cross-national research on GSM operators. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management* 3(11): 1-16.
- Cardona MM, Bravo JJ. 2012. Service quality perceptions in higher education institutions: the case of a colombian university. *Estudios Gerenciales* 28(125): 23-29.
- Chu TC, Lin YC. 2002. Improved extensions of the TOPSIS for group decision making under fuzzy environment. *Journal of Information and Optimization Sciences* 23: 273-286.
- Demir A. 2017. Importance of data analysis on achieving the organizational goals during the short term strategic plan: case of service quality and students' satisfaction level at Ishik University. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies* 3(3): 110-121.
- Demir A. 2019a. The impact of strategic operations management decisions on shoppers' wellbeing. *Asian Academy of Management Journal* 24(1): 25-57.
- Demir A. 2019b. A benchmarking of service quality in telecommunication services: case study in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies* 5(3): 216-231.
- Demir A, Eray O. 2015. Effect of non-technical dimensions of service quality on "Satisfaction", "Loyalty", and "Willingness to Pay More" of the customers: the case of Georgian internet service providing companies. *Journal of Research in Business, Economics and Management* 5(1): 500-508.
- Demir A, Eray O, Erguvan MM. 2015. How non-technical dimensions of service quality effects satisfaction and loyalty of costumers at GSM service sector in Georgia. *International Journal of Engineering Technology and Scientific Innovation* 1(2): 150-162.
- Demir A, Guven S. 2017. The influence of ISO certificate on quality evaluation of students: a case study at Ishik University. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 4(3). doi:10.14738/assrj.43.2715
- Demir A, Mukhlis M. 2017. An evaluation of gated communities as a product: an empirical study in Sulaimaniyah, Iraq. *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management* 12(3): 63-84.
- Demir A, Talaat K, Aydinli C. 2015. The relations among dimensions of service quality, satisfaction, loyalty, and willingness to pay more: case of GSM operators service at Northern-Iraq. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences* 5(4): 146-154.
- Ghobadian A, Speller S, Jones M. 1994. Service quality: concepts and models. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management* 11(9): 43-66.
- Green P. 2014. Measuring service quality in higher education: a South African case study. *Journal of International Education Research* 10(2): 131-142.
- Grönroos C. 1984. A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing* 18(4): 36-44.
- Handfield RB, Bechtel C. 2002. The role of trust and relationship structure in improving supply chain responsiveness. *Industrial Marketing Management* 31(4): 367-382.
- Hasan HFA, Ilias A., Rahman RA, Razak MZA. 2008. Service quality and student satisfaction: a case study at private higher education institutions. *International Business Research* 1(3): 163-175.
- Hill FM. 1995. Managing service quality in higher education: the role of the student as primary consumer. *Quality Assurance in Education* 3(3): 10-21.
- Hokanson S. 1995, January 2. The deeper you analyse, the more you satisfy customers. *Marketing News* 29(1): p 16.
- Hossain MA, Hossain MM, Chowdhury TH. 2018. Understanding the success of private universities: an empirical investigation from graduates' perspective. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management* 35(1): 145-162.
- Hoyer WD, MacInnis DJ. 2001. *Consumer Behaviour*. 2nd ed. Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston.
- Ibáñez VA, Hartmann P, Calvo PZ. 2006. Antecedents of customer loyalty in residential energy markets: service quality, satisfaction, trust and switching costs. *The Service Industries Journal* 26(6): 633-650.
- Iglesias MP, Guillen JY. 2004 Perceived quality and price: their impact on the satisfaction of restaurant customers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 16(6): 373-379.
- Jamal A, Al-Marri M. 2007. Exploring the effect of self-image congruence and brand preference on satisfaction: the role of expertise. *Journal of Marketing Management* 23(7-8): 613-629.
- Johnston R, Lyth D. 1991. Implementing the integration of customer expectations and operational capabilities. In *Service Quality: Multidisciplinary and Multinational Perspectives*, Brown S, Gummesson E, Edvardsson B, Gus-tavsson B (eds). Lexington Books: Lanham, MD; 179-190.
- Juneja D, Ahmad S, Kumar S. 2011. Adaptability of total quality management to service sector. *International Journal of Computer Science & Management Studies* 11(2): 93-98.

- Jusoh A, Omain SZ, Majid AA, Som MH, Shamsuddin AS. 2004. Service quality in higher education: management students' perspective. Unpublished Project Report. UTM [Technology University of Malaysia]: Skudai, Johor.
- Karatepe OM. 2011. Service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty: the moderating role of gender. *Journal of Business Economics and Management* 12(2): 278-300.
- Kotler P. 2000. *Marketing Management*. 10th ed. Prentice-Hall: Upper Saddle River.
- LaBarbera PA, Mazursky D. 1983. A longitudinal assessment of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction: the dynamic aspect of cognitive process. *Journal of Marketing Research* 20: 393-404.
- Ladhari R, Souiden N, Ladhari I. 2011. Determinants of loyalty and recommendation: the role of perceived service quality, emotional satisfaction and image. *Journal of Financial Services Marketing* 16(2): 111-124.
- Lehtinen U, Lehtinen JR. 1982. A study of quality dimensions. *Service Management Institute* 5: 25-32.
- Lovelock C, Wirtz J. 2007. *Service Management: People, Technology, Strategy*. 7th ed. Pearson Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River. HF5415.13.L588.
- Luo X, Wieseke J, Homburg C. 2012. Incentivizing CEOs to build customer-and employee-firm relations for higher customer satisfaction and firm value. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 40(6): 745-758.
- Muyeed MA. 2012. Customer perception on service quality in retail banking in developing countries-a case study. *International Journal of Marketing Studies* 4(1): 116.
- Ndubisi NO. 2006. Effect of gender on customer loyalty: a relationship marketing approach. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 24(1): 48-61.
- Ndubisi NO, Wah CK. 2005. Factorial and discriminant analyses of the underpinnings of relationship marketing and customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Bank Marketing* 23(7): 542-557.
- Osman AR, Saputra RS. 2019. A pragmatic model of student satisfaction: a viewpoint of private higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education* 27(2): 142-165.
- Parasuraman A, Zeithaml VA, Berry LL. 1985. A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing* 49(4): 41-50.
- Parasuraman A, Zeithaml VA, Berry LL. 1988. Servqual: a multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing* 64(1): 12.
- Poturak M. 2014. Private universities service quality and students satisfaction. *Global Business and Economics Research Journal* 3(2): 33-49.
- Robinot E, Giannelloni JL. 2010. Do hotels' "green" attributes contribute to customer satisfaction? *Journal of Services Marketing* 24(2): 157-169.
- Sasser WE, Olsen RP, Wyckoff DD. 1978. *Management of Service Operations: Text, Cases, and Readings*. Allyn & Bacon: Boston.
- Sultan P, Yin Wong H. 2010. Service quality in higher education—a review and research agenda. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences* 2(2): 259-272.
- Swar B, Sahoo P. 2012. Determinants of effective service delivery: a study of selected public, private and foreign sector banks in Odisha. *Business Perspectives and Research* 1(1): 47-60.
- Tiedemann J. 2009. News from OPUS—a collection of multilingual parallel corpora with tools and interfaces. *Recent Advances in Natural Language Processing* 5: 237-248.
- Torlak NG, Demir A, Budur T. 2019. Impact of operations management strategies on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions at café-restaurants. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. doi:10.1108/ijppm-01-2019-0001
- Voss R, Gruber T, Szmigin I. 2007. Service quality in higher education: the role of student expectations. *Journal of Business Research* 60(9): 949-959.