

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

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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 stake holders 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; Lagrossen 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 faculty Quality	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.

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