



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

Service Quality and Stakeholders of Management Education: A Review

Tinu Agrawal

Research Scholar, IMT Nagpur, India

Dr. Jitendra Sharma

Professor, IMT Nagpur, India

Abstract : *The paper deals with review of literature on various aspects of quality of service operations in B-Schools. Over the last 15-20 years an impressive body of research has accumulated in the area of quality of higher education. This paper aims at synthesizing the literature in order to assess the research progress in this area.*

Keywords: *Service Quality, Stakeholders, Education*

1. Introduction

Education being a service industry, researchers have tried to measure the service quality by applying models such as SERVQUAL (Ali and Zairi, 2005; Yeo, 2008; Khodayari and Khodayari, 2011) and SERVPERF (John and Senith, 2012). Over the years, many academicians and scholars have taken advantage of the versatility of QFD and applied it in the fields of education and research from curriculum design to quality improvement in teaching. The service operations of B-Schools have been looked at through various perspectives. Students and Faculty members find mention in most of the studies whereas other stakeholders such as industry and society have rarely been mentioned. "Quality" being a difficult construct to measure in service industry, researchers have limited their research till expectation-performance gap identification. "Education" being a very unique service in every form, the service operations have been of interest to many researchers.

2. Service Quality and Education

Hill, (1995) in his research work pointed out that, "Higher Education Organizations (HEOs) should gather information on students' expectations, not only during their time at university, but at the point of arrival and before, to manage students' expectations from enrolment through to graduation, in order to align them as closely as possible with what can be delivered by way of service quality at many British universities." The results of research undertaken to assess the quality of service provided by a university in Iran show that gap between student's perceptions and student's expectations exist (Khodayari and Khodayari, 2011). Athiyaman, (2000) highlighted the differences between consumer satisfaction and perceived service quality perceptions; also the need for universities to focus on customer satisfaction in order to generate positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Voss et al, (2007) stated in their research work that students want lecturers to be knowledgeable, enthusiastic, approachable, and friendly. It is also observed that students' academic interests motivate them less than the vocational aspects of their studies. John and Senith, (2012) identified that Communication was the most important aspect of overall satisfaction of the students in Indian Technical Education system.

Yeo, (2008) observed that the way students are perceived, whether as customers or products, will have an influence on the type of learning dynamics that develop both within and outside the classroom. Service quality, therefore, needs to be evaluated based on an integrated experience which occurs in a network of learning spaces created to promote dialogue, inquiry and reflection. Quinn et al, (2009) pointed out that it is important to identify the differences and similarities surrounding quality improvement efforts in each of three service areas typically found in higher education: academic, administrative, and auxiliary functions. Sahney et al, (2004) suggested that "Delighting the customer", is the core message of total quality management (TQM) and, hence, there is a need to identify and apply the relevant concepts of TQM to each and every aspect of academic life in Higher Education system i.e. to the teaching, learning and administrative activities. Stukalina, (2012) brought to surface that Higher education institutions need strategic initiative and long-term action plan for regular educational environment evaluation and measuring student's satisfaction. Ali and Zairi, (2005) stated that to understand fundamental concepts on the nature of service quality in Higher Education, it would be useful to develop and strengthen a theoretical framework of research within the relevant context.

Hill, (1995) stated that Higher Education Organizations (HEOs) should gather information on students' expectations at their time of entry in the university as well as at different instances to manage their expectations from enrolment through to graduation. This will help the HEO's to align the expectations closely to what can be delivered by way of service quality. Connelly, (1997) studied internal

quality audit and presented a combined horizontal and vertical internal quality audit system combining both institutional and individual survey into an ongoing process of quality improvement. Joseph and Joseph, (1997) presented requirements of various stakeholders of industrial engineering education and defined how Quality Function Deployment (QFD) can be used to improve them. Athiyaman, (2000) discussed the differences between consumer satisfaction and their perceived service quality. He stressed the need for bodies imparting education to focus on customer satisfaction so that positive word-of-mouth recommendations for the university can be attained. Coll and Chapman, (2000) studied a science and technology cooperative education program at a University in New Zealand. They brought about the perspectives of two stakeholders, the employers and the placement coordinators. The finding of their research was that the perceptions of employers' regarding service quality differed from those of placement coordinators who perceived service quality more favorably than the employers.

Wright and O'Neill, (2002) evaluated the service quality construct in the higher education context of Western Australia. They studied the core service quality dimensions of significance to students in using this service. They demonstrated that the usefulness and relative simplicity of disconfirmation models are important for the evaluation of the service quality construct. Sahney et al, (2004) through their research concluded that there is a need to identify and apply the relevant concepts of TQM to the teaching, learning and administrative activities in Higher Education. Ali and Zairi, (2005) said that to develop and strengthen a theoretical framework of research within the relevant context, it would be necessary to understand the fundamental concepts of the nature of service quality in Higher Education. Joseph et al, (2005) found through their research that the importance-performance grid (I-P grid) points towards a lack of perceived quality in Higher education.

Seth and Deshmukh, (2005) conducted a research which revealed that the service quality outcome and measurement is dependent on type of service setting, situation, time, need etc factors. They reviewed 19 different service quality models for reaching this conclusion. Temponi, (2005) suggested that a culture of a long-term commitment to Continuous Improvement (CI) implies that the administrative and academic systems and all the stakeholders of the institution are engaged. This could act as a major road-block for quality initiatives. Dobrzanski and Roszak, (2007) presented a researched opinion regarding the validity of introducing quality management systems based on standard ISO 9001:2000. Other means of quality assurance in education were also highlighted. Gao and Wei, (2007) studied the application of SERVQUAL instrument in business schools of China. They suggested that there may be some more factors that may significantly influence the satisfaction of students but not included in the SERVQUAL instrument.

Pereda et al, (2007) presented four factors of service quality in higher education. These were recognition; sufficient resources; quality of instruction and interaction with faculty and physical quality. Voss et al, (2007) considered students as the primary stakeholders. The qualities which the students find necessary in lecturers are knowledge, enthusiasm, approachability and friendliness. Students wish to encounter valuable teaching experiences in order to be able to pass their exams as well as to prepare for their profession. They also observed that vocational aspects of their studies motivate the students more than their academic interests.

Angell et al, (2008) used importance-performance analysis (IPA) in a UK university. They found that the "academic" and "industry links" aspects of service quality are very critical to postgraduate students of the university. Becket and Brookes, (2008) studied the prevalent quality management practices within higher education institutions (HEIs) relying on industrial models. They stated that the quality management practices were applied with only partial success. The limitations that were encountered during the study suggested a need for refinement, particularly in relation to the centrality of student learning within higher education. Yeo, (2008) gave importance to the way students are perceived either as customers or products. The perception will surely influence the type of learning dynamics within and outside the classroom. Service quality should be hence evaluated based on an integrated experience occurring in a network of learning spaces generally created to promote inquiry, dialogue and reflection.

Doherty, (2008) focused on the processes and procedures of quality assurance in education and mentioned that quality assurance is a dynamic process. Douglas and McClelland, (2008) conducted a study at Liverpool John Moores University, UK and stated that Education Managers should focus upon three important factors: responsiveness, communication and access. They suggested that Higher Education sector should adapt the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) method to capture data. Johnson and Daugherty, (2008) stressed the need to examine and assess the status of technology education research over the past ten years as there is a lot of emphasis on technology education. They stated that this would help to identify strengths and areas that need to be addressed. Oyo and Williams, (2009) studied the feedback systems in Higher Education Universities of Uganda which provide the quality assurance researchers with tools for analysis of quality process.

Quinn et al, (2009) defined academic, administrative, and auxiliary functions as the three most critical service areas of higher education and specified the importance of identifying the differences and similarities surrounding quality improvement efforts in each of these areas. Crişan A. and Enache, (2011) defined a university study program as the university product and concluded that it has to have high value, flexibility and quality in order to fulfill the requirements of education service market. John and Senith, (2012) identified communication as the most important aspect of overall satisfaction for the students in the Indian Technical Education system. Khodayari and Khodayari, (2011) assessed the quality of service provided by a university in Iran. They showed that there is a gap between student's perceptions and student's expectations. Stukalina, (2012) expressed the need of strategic initiative and long-term action plan by higher education institutions for regular educational environment evaluation and measurement of student's satisfaction.

3. Stakeholders of Higher Education System

Due to the increasing competition in the field of higher education system, many universities have started using customer focused methods in delivering their services (Kara, DeShields 2004). For higher education institutes, it has become imperative to study the expectations and perceptions of all stakeholders such as students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents, alumni, partners, career

advisors, government, recruiters and society (Natarajan, 2002) for quality planning and improvement. In 1996, Owlia and Aspinwall, concluded in their research that students are the primary customers whereas alumni, parents, employers, employees, government, industry and society may be considered as secondary customers. Later in 2001, Hwang and Teo identified the government, private companies, industries, local communities, citizens, alumni groups, etc. as the customer groups. Employers (Coll et al, 2000; Chua, 2004) parents, students, faculty members (Chua, 2004) have been considered the stakeholders of higher education. Students have been considered to be one of the stakeholders in the quality enhancement process (Hill, 1995; Joseph et al, 1997; Harvey, 2001; Gao et al, 2007; Voss et al, 2007).

4. Conclusion

The paper presents the literature review on service quality in higher education keeping into view the management education scenario. The paper has keenly looked into the research work of various researchers and has tried to put forward the various types of stakeholders of higher education. Though most of the studies have considered students as the primary stakeholder but many others have considered industry, society, etc as stakeholders too.

5. References

1. Angell, R. J., Heffernan, T. W., Megicks, P. (2008). Service quality in postgraduate education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 16 (3), 236 – 254.
2. Asif.M., Searcy.C. (2013).Determining the key capabilities required for performance excellence in higher education. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, June, 1-14.
3. Becket, N., Brookes, M. (2008). Quality Management Practice in Higher Education – What Quality Are We Actually Enhancing? *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 7 (1), 40 – 54.
4. Brackin, P. (2002). Assessing Engineering Education: an Industrial Analogy. *Engineering Education*, 18 (2), 151 – 156.
5. Chen.C.Y., Chen.P.C.,Chen.P.Y. (2012).Teaching quality in higher education: An introductory review on a process-oriented teaching-quality model. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*,January, 1-21.
6. Clayton, M. (1993). Towards total quality management in higher education at Aston University – a case study. *Higher Education*, 25, 363 – 371.
7. Coll, R. K., Chapman, R. (2000). Evaluating Service Quality for Cooperative Education Programs. *Asia- Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 1 (2), 1 – 12.
8. Connelly, M. (1997). The academic quality audit of an Asian postgraduate university. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 5 (1), 40 – 45.
9. Crisan, A., Enache, R. (2011). Designing customer oriented courses and curricula in higher education: a possible model. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 11, 235 – 239.
10. Dahlgaard-Park.S.M., Chen.C.K., Jang.J.Y., Dahlgaard.J.J. (2013). Diagnosing and prognosticating the quality movement – a review on the 25 years quality literature (1987–2011). *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*, Special Issue- The Quality Movement and Practices of Excellence around the World, 24(1-2), 1-18
11. Dobrzanski, L., Roszak, M. (2007). Quality management in university education. *Journal of Achievements in Materials and Manufacturing Engineering*, 24 (2), 223 – 226.
12. Doherty, G. D. (2008). On quality in education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 16 (3), 255 – 265.
13. Douglas, J., McClelland, R. (2008). The development of a conceptual model of student satisfaction with their experience in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education*. 16 (1), 19 – 35.
14. Garcia. J.S., Lorente.A.R.M. (2012).Development and validation of a measure of the quality management practices in education. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*, January, 1-23.
15. Garibay, C., Gutierrez, H., Figueroa, A. (2010). Evaluation of a Digital Library by Means of Quality Function Deployment (QFD) and the Kano Model. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 36 (2), 125 – 132.
16. Gonzalez, M. E., Quesada, G., Gourdin, K., Hartley, M.(2008). Designing a supply chain management academic curriculum using QFD and benchmarking. *Quality Assurance in Education*. 16 (1), 36 – 60.
17. Gonzalez, M. E., Quesada, G., Mueller, J., Mueller, R. D. (2011). International business curriculum design: identifying the voice of the customer using QFD. *Journal of International Education in Business*, 4 (1), 6 – 29.
18. Hill, F. (1995). Managing service quality in higher education: the role of the student as primary consumer. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 3 (3), 10 – 21.
19. Ho, W., Higson, H., Dey, P., Xu, X., Bahsoon, R. (2009). Measuring performance of virtual learning environment system in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 17 (1), 6 – 29.
20. Ictenbasa, B. D., Eryilmazb, H. (2011). Linking Employers' Expectations with Teaching Methods: Quality Function Deployment Approach. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 28, 568 – 572.
21. Jaraiedi, M; Ritz, D. (1994), Total Quality management applied to engineering education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 2(1), 32-40.
22. Jasmina,D., Arslanagic.M., Maglajlic. S.K., Markovic.S., Raspor.S.(2013). Exploring perceived service quality, perceived value, and repurchase intention in higher education using structural equation modeling. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*, August, 1-17.

23. John, S. F., Senith, S. (2012). Service quality in Indian technical education. *Canadian Journal on Scientific and Industrial Research*, 3 (3), 130 – 141.
24. Johnson, S. D., Daugherty, J. (2008). Quality and Characteristics of Recent Research in Technology Education. *Journal of Technology Education*, 20 (1), 16 – 31.
25. Joseph, M., Joseph, B. (1997). Service quality in education: a student perspective. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 5 (1), 15 – 21.
26. Joseph, M., Yakhou, M., Stone, G. (2005). An educational institution's quest for service quality: customers' perspective. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 13 (1), 66 – 82.
27. Kazancoglu, Y., Aksoy, M. (2011). A fuzzy logic-based Quality Function Deployment for selection of e-learning provider. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 10 (4), 39 – 45.
28. Khodayari , F., Khodayari, B. (2011). Service Quality in Higher Education. Case study: Measuring service quality of Islamic Azad University, Firoozkooh branch. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research in Business*. 1 (9), 38 – 46.
29. Koksall, G., Egitman, A. (1998). Planning and design of Industrial Engineering Education Quality. *Computers & Industrial Engineering*, 35 (3 - 4), 639 – 642
30. Mcalevey,L., Everett,A. (2003).How can the quality gap be bridged? Avoiding a future of specialist isolation through statistics education. *Total Quality Management*, 14(7), 801-810.
31. Mehta.N., Verma.P., Seth.N. (2013).Total quality management implementation in engineering education in India: an interpretive structural modelling approach. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*, May, 1-17.
32. Oyo, B., Williams, D. (2009). Re-conceptualisation of higher education quality management problems using feedback systems thinking. *International Journal of Management in Education*, 3 (3-4), 220 – 233.
33. Pereda, M., Airey, D., Bennett, M. (2007). Service Quality in Higher Education: The Experience of Overseas Students. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 6 (2), 55 – 67.
34. Quinn, A., Lemay, G., Larsen, P., Johnson, D. M. (2009). Service quality in higher education. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 20 (2), 139 – 152.
35. Sahney, S., Banwet, D. K., Karunes, S. (2003). Enhancing quality in education: application of quality function deployment - an industry perspective. *Work Study*, 52 (6), 297 – 309.
36. Sahney, S., Banwet, D. K., Karunes, S. (2004 a). Conceptualizing total quality management in higher education. *The TQM Magazine*, 16 (2), 145 – 159.
37. Stukalina, Y. (2012). Addressing service quality issues in higher education: the educational environment evaluation from the students' perspective. *Technical and Economic development of Economy*, 18 (1), 84 – 98.
38. Temponi, C. (2005). Continuous improvement framework: implications for academia. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 13 (1), 17 – 36.
39. Voss, R., Gruber, T., Szmigin, I. (2007). Service quality in higher education: The role of student expectations. *Journal of Business Research*, 60, 949 – 959.
40. Wright, C., O'Neill, M. (2002). Service Quality Evaluation in the Higher Education Sector: An Empirical Investigation of Students' Perceptions. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 21 (1), 23 – 39.
41. Yeo.R., Li.J. (2012). Beyond SERVQUAL: The competitive forces of higher education in Singapore. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*, January, 1-29.