



An Empirical Study on Changing Scenario of Higher Educational Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed that how socio economic attributes influence the students' level of satisfaction on service quality of higher education. Service quality is the difference between what a student expects to receive and his/her perceptions of actual delivery. Education in India is seen as one of the ways to upward social mobility. Good education is seen as a stepping stone to a high flying career. Service quality has become a strategic option for many institutions of higher learning around the globe. The role of service quality has also become critical to the success of an organization. The characteristics of service quality which is intangible, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability, cannot be measured by making the comparisons between customers' expectations and perceptions.

KEYWORDS : Education, Quality, earning, Comparisons, Expectations, Perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

Education System in India currently represents a great paradox. On the one hand we have IIMs and IITs that rank among the best institutes in the world and on the other hand there are number of schools in the country that don't even have the basic infrastructure. Even after more than 50 years after independence we are far away from the goal of universal literacy. But on a positive note, Indian professionals are considered among the best in the world are in great demand. This signifies the inherent strength of Indian education system. The Educational structure in India which operates at all conceivable levels from pre-school to post doctoral is of monumental proportions. According to a World Bank report there are more than 7,40,000 formal schools; more than 3.6 million teachers are working on full time basis; there are more than 175 Universities offering under graduate and post graduate courses and about 6000 colleges affiliated to these universities.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of effectively responding to student needs cannot be overstated, because students' perceptions of services are likely to impact their choice of continued enrollment or defection to another institution. Another problem of educational service is English language proficiency barrier faced by higher educational students who take their primary and secondary education in their regional languages and go on to pursue their graduation where the medium instruction is English. The lack of good quality of text book and reference book at regional languages at post graduation level put the students at disadvantage. More higher education institution recognized that their continued profitability depended on student's satisfaction and loyalty, which, in turn, resulted from the student's perception of value received. In an effort to increase market share, institutions focused on meeting or exceeding their student's expectations. Higher education institutions share the same characteristics as those of other service businesses. From the student's vantage point, the perception of institutional services is inseparable from the people who deliver those services—the service providers. Their services are intangible, heterogeneous, variable, and perishable and the students themselves participate in the service delivery process because they must interact with the service providers. Unlike other service businesses, however, many higher education institutions erroneously view students as a captive audience and consider the demand for their educational services as inelastic. As competition intensifies between private, public, and online education providers, the business methods for measuring customer satisfaction will prove valuable to higher education institutions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In a competitive higher education marketplace, the quality of services delivered separates an institution from its competitors. Providing Institutional services that exceeds students' expectations does not happen automatically; rather, it must be deliberately managed. In order to effectively manage the quality of services, management must first

ascertain a comprehensive understanding of students' needs and expectations. Measuring service quality in higher education institutions continues to be a challenging and incommensurate endeavor. Although there have been numerous studies and continuous efforts on the part of many institutions to improve the quality of their services, much of this improvement has been driven by regional and national accrediting agencies using tangible quality measures. Measuring the quality of teaching in higher education has been a contentious issue, with little agreement on what it is or how to measure it. The institutional services that support student learning are changing based on growing student demands in service areas such as admissions and registration, academic advising, food services, and financial aid, among others. Higher education leaders must be attuned to these changing demands to maintain student loyalty and ensure that their institutions are meeting or exceeding student expectations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of socio economic background on the satisfaction level of higher education students in Erode district.
2. To suggest better ways and means for providing quality education to the higher education students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hamid, et al.(2010) in their study entitled on "An Analysis of Student Satisfaction in Higher Education Courses Delivered Online and in the Live Classroom" analyzed the students satisfaction. Regression analysis was used to compare degrees of student satisfaction with learning as affected by class size, technical content, interaction, feedback, and course duration. In online classes, having more students in a class enhances student satisfaction with the level of student interaction. In live classes, they find the opposite: larger class sizes have a negative effect on satisfaction with student-to-student interaction. Student satisfaction with instructor feedback in online classes declines with class size. Average levels of student satisfaction with technical courses taken over the Internet are significantly lower than with non-technical online courses. The findings are providing helpful insights to best practices research, especially in targeting the course activities, functions and format to achieve the best learning outcomes. Technical courses achieve lower satisfaction scores than non-technical courses, and this gap appeared in courses taught both online and in the live classroom. Thus, one strategy would be for course designers and faculty to collaborate in developing more effective approaches for the design and delivery of technical content in both environments, online and live class. Babar et al. (2010) examined the students' satisfaction in higher education in Pakistan. The study focused on the factors like teachers' expertise, courses offered, learning environment and classroom facilities. Students' response measured through an adapted questionnaire on a 5-point likert scale. The sample size of the study consisted of 350 students belong to different private and public sector universities. The results of regression analysis reveal that all at

tributes have significant and positive impact on students' satisfaction in higher education though with varying degree of strength. However, teachers' expertise is the most influential factor among all the variables, therefore it requires special attention of the policymakers and institutes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The validity of any research depends on the systematic method of collecting the data, and analyzing the same in a sequential order. In the present study, extensive uses of both primary and secondary data were made. For collecting the primary data, field survey technique was employed in the study. First-hand information was collected from 900 respondents of Arts and Science Colleges in Erode district. This district was purposively selected due to increase in quick inflow of students for higher education. Stratified random sampling method was employed for selecting the respondents from the selected District. Structural Equation Modeling was employed for further analysis.

STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING (SEM)

Structural Equation Modeling is a very general statistical modeling technique, which is widely used in the behavioural sciences. It can be viewed as a combination of factor analysis and regression or path analysis. The interest in SEM is often on theoretical constructs, which are represented by the latent factors. The relationships between the theoretical constructs are represented by regression or path coefficients between the factors. The structural equation model implies a structure for the covariances between the observed variables, which provides the alternative name covariance structure modeling. However, the model can be extended to include means of observed variables or factors in the model, which makes covariance structure modeling a less accurate name. Structural Equation Modeling provides a convenient framework for statistical analysis that includes several traditional multivariate procedures, for example factor analysis, regression analysis, discriminant analysis, and canonical correlation, as special cases.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Socio economic attributes are having positive impact with the satisfaction level of the students on service quality of higher education.

RESULTED HYPOTHESES MODEL



VALIDITY OF THE MEASUREMENT

In structural equation modeling, the confirmatory factor model is imposed on the data. In this case, the purpose of structural equation modeling is twofold. First, it aims to obtain estimates of the parameters of the model, i.e. the factor loadings, the variances and covariances of the factor, and the residual error variances of the observed variables. The second purpose is to assess the fit of the model, i.e. to assess whether the model itself provides a good fit to the data. The ability of SEM to produce a meaningful identification of the correlations between factors is a key strength. To obtain unstandardized and standardized regression weights, a variance estimate for the residual errors and the squared multiple correlation of the dependent variable 'Satisfaction of the students on service quality of higher education'. In this case, the calculated value of chi-square test is 320.953 on 104 degrees of freedom, which gives a p-value of 0.00 and this model is a good fit for the analysis. The real strength of SEM is to estimate more complicated path models, with intervening variables between the independent and dependent variables, and latent factor as well.

MAXIMUM LIKELIHOOD ESTIMATES REGRESSION WEIGHTS

Measured Variable		Latent Variable	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	P
Gender	<-	Satisfaction	1.000			
Mode of conveyance	<-	Satisfaction	-.928	.195	-4.771	1%
Mode of transport	<-	Satisfaction	1.696	.378	4.489	1%
Distance from residence	<-	Satisfaction	-2.892	.530	-5.452	1%
Residential area	<-	Satisfaction	.699	.221	3.156	5%
Community	<-	Satisfaction	-.411	.371	-1.107	NS
Course of the study	<-	Satisfaction	.111	.336	.330	NS
Nature of educational institution	<-	Satisfaction	.064	.119	.537	NS
Nature of scholarship eligibility	<-	Satisfaction	.484	.243	1.993	5%
Privileges provided by the institution	<-	Satisfaction	-2.400	.464	-5.176	1%
Reason for undergoing the course	<-	Satisfaction	.197	.364	.541	NS
Fees structure	<-	Satisfaction	-1.302	.283	-4.601	1%
Method of teaching	<-	Satisfaction	.423	.300	1.412	NS
Family size	<-	Satisfaction	.514	.222	2.313	5%
Family annual income	<-	Satisfaction	.148	.279	.530	NS
Siblings' education	<-	Satisfaction	-.193	.269	-.719	NS

The above table shows the regression coefficient of the exogenous variables. It is noted that the critical ratio of Mode of conveyance, Mode of transport, Distance from residence, Privileges provided by the institution and Fees structure are above the table value 3.707 and

it is significant at 1 and Residential area, Nature of scholarship eligibility and Family size are significant at 5 percent level. Among the selected sixteen attributes, eight attributes are the most influenced factors to determine the satisfaction level of service quality of higher education.

MODEL FIT SUMMARY

CMIN

The following table shows that CMIN for the 'default model'. A significant chi-square indicates satisfactory model fit.

CMIN

Model	NPAP	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	48	320.953	104	.000	3.086
Saturated model	152	.000	0		
Independence model	32	524.818	120	.000	4.373

CMIN is a chi-square statistics comparing the default model and the independence model with the saturated model. The above table infers that the default model has been associated as 3.086 percent with saturated model and other side, the independence model has been associated as 4.373 percent with saturated model.

BASELINE COMPARISONS

The NFI, Normed Fit Index, also known as ($\Delta 1$), was developed as the alternative to CFI, Comparative Fit Index, is also known as the Bentler Comparative Fit Index, compares the existing model fit with the null model which assumes the latent variables correlates with the independent variables.

BASELINE COMPARISONS

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.902	.794	.874	.822	.915
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

From the above table, it is noted that the model fit indices are good fit with the evidence of NFI (0.902) and CFI (0.915) which is greater than 0.9.

RMSEA

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation is the popular measure of fit, because it does not require comparison with the null model. It is one of the fit indexes less affected by sample size. There is good model fit if RMSEA less than or equal to 0.05.

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.001	.093	.131	.000
Independence model	.264	.249	.280	.000

It could be noted from the above table that the RMSEA value is 0.001 which is lesser than 0.05 and the model resulted as good fit.

FINDINGS

From the path diagram, the measured variables with latent variable of level of satisfaction of students are having positive relationship and also significant at 1 percent and 5 percent level except the variables community, course of the study, nature of the educational institution, reason for undergoing the course, method of teaching, annual income of the family and sibling's education. The analysis of the model, from the viewpoint of the level of satisfaction among the students, suggests that the variables such as mode of conveyance, mode of transport, distance from residence, privileges provided by the institution, fees structure, residential area, and nature of scholarship eligibility and family size of the measured variables are showing significant impact on the level of satisfaction of the students.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Educational institutions should recruit well equipped and qualified staff members for academic work to improve the quality of students.
2. The rural based students are severely suffered by the fees structure of higher education. So the higher educational ministries should regulate the fees structure with adequate analysis on infrastructure facilities provided by the higher education institutions.
3. Equalize system in curriculum and skill based subjects for higher educational students should be implemented by higher educational institutions to disseminate and generate new knowledge and information among the students.

CONCLUSION

Educational division is the lifeline for the social economic development of a country. It is today the major and fastest growing sector globally contributing more to the global output and giving more skill based students for all sectors. The real reason for the growth of the educational sector is due to the awareness of importance of higher education. Availability of quality services in higher education is vital for the well being of the economy. The purpose of this study is to find out the impact of socio economic attributes on satisfaction level of higher education students. So the educational institutions could reduce the fees structure, implement new strategies to improve the quality of service and equalize the curriculum to the higher educational students.

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