An empirical examination regarding quality in higher education

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Abstract

The majority of the excellence methods which are frequently employed in businesses have been modified and utilized to the field of teaching. In the current paper, it is suggested to approach the issue of excellence in higher education from a promotion standpoint, that is, by first understanding the requirements of the target audience through their views of excellence. The purpose of the essay is to evaluate the qualities of higher education from a range of perspectives, including those of close relatives, pupils, teachers, and businesses. Utilizing the input-process-output structure, these quality characteristics are then categorized. With the help of the study's findings, an incorporated strategy which will include a range of high-quality practices to handle quality problems in higher learning is being proposed. The end goal is to raise the bar on quality.

Keywords: Examination; Quality; higher education; students

I. Introduction

The way quality is managed in the education sector should be different from how it is in the industrial or examination sectors. The company world's excellence control replicas have been modified and used in the educational field. In actuality, high-quality education should start in schools(Basak, 2013). For instance, the Total Quality Management (TQM) methodology has been implemented in universities and colleges in the UK, the USA, and Asia, including Malaysia(Carnoy & Dossani, 2013). Yet, the TQM strategy is not totally accepted in the educational sector. Customer happiness is one of the core tenets of TQM. The institutions believed that a TQM approach was inappropriate since they are not primarily focused on delighting their student consumers(Ghosh & Kshitij, 2016). As a substitute, colleges might adopt quality practices to raise achievement. Possibly the nearly widely utilized approach for calculating service quality, SERVQUAL (Gupta, 2011), is used to assess quality in the context of education. Educational institutions frequently use replicas and ideas.

These models adhere to the TQM principle, which has been adjusted for the educational setting. The advantages of such quality models are being recognized by numerous educational institutions, and in-depth study has been done in this field to look at how well schools function with respect to the quality administration concept(Islam et al., 2012).

Learners have the right to get the highest possible standard of education because, according to the consumer behavior theory as applied to education, they are seen as customers buying the services that education provides. How do the businesses meet the demands of the clients? Various customer categories are dealt with in education(Joshi, 2012).

The university sees students as their main clients who pay for their schooling, parents as clients who fund their kid's education, employers as clients who employ pupils, and professors as clients who provide the students with the knowledge necessary to execute the job(S. Kumar, 2015). (Madu & Kuei, 1993). We have to first understand these clients' wants in order to provide better quality services to them. Understanding the qualitative features that the clients value is crucial to comprehend their wants. Diverse viewpoints exist on quality. Some attribute it to the caliber of the instruction, the students, and the interns' work. An author has made the argument that for assessing quality & subsequently enhance it, it is essential to ascertain(S. Kumar, 2015).

For the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of the educational process, it is crucial to define the qualities of quality. (Cheng & Tam, 1997). The goal of this study is to evaluate how various customer groups, including students, parents, teachers, and employers, view the standard of learning. These perceptions will then be categorized using an Input-Process-Output (IPO) paradigm. The study's findings will serve as the foundation for developing quality efforts pertaining to the education market using an acceptable quality model(P. S. Kumar & Mahadevan, 2012).

Owlia and Aspinwall (1996) used the Garvin's quality structure (Garvin, 1987), the service quality aspect, and the application quality dimension to interpret the standards for higher learning in terms of the quality aspect. (Watts, 1987). The dimensions and identification structures, however, primarily focus on determining the quality component of the product characteristics

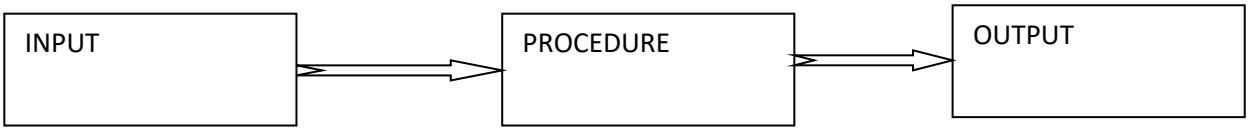
and service characteristics (Garvin, 1987). The current study, however, has employed a more thorough technique to categorize the quality features of education(Mahani & Molki, 2011).

The suggested approach is based on an authors' Input-Process-Output (IPO) perspective on quality in higher education. 'Input' may be referred to as entry requirements, 'Process' refers to the instructional and educational process, and 'Output' refers to employment and academic rankings in this framework. (depicted in Fig 1). This quality characteristic classification is consistent with the organization's operation system of transforming inputs (e.g., raw materials) into outputs via the method in question. (Like methods). In this approach, enhancements to quality can be linked to the computer system of any business, including those working in the education sector(Martins, 2015).

The IPO paradigm addresses a few of the quality aspects described in Owlia' and Aspinwall's study.

The Quality Labeling Input-Process-Output Structure

Educational Structure



Assortment of Learners • Entry needs	• Teaching and knowledge	Financially rewarding work
	• Content and releaseof course	Job
	• Faculy's knowledge ability	Educational Performance
	• Correctness of curriculum content	
	• Concern for Learners	
	• Medium of instruction	
	• Social actions	
	• Evaluation	

II. PROCEDURE EXAMPLE

A questionnaire that had been tested was created, and respondents were questioned for their thoughts on higher educational quality. In addition, respondents were asked to make recommendations for improvements. The literature yielded 22 elements of anticipation and perceptual assertions(Sahni & Kalyan Shankar, 2012). These 22 components are representative of the five service aspects of tangibles, dependability, adaptability, confidence, and compassion(Sahoo, 2013).

Galloway's description for SERVQUAL's dimensions was used. (1998). Customers of higher education were regarded in the study to be learners, parents, teachers, and businesses. The questionnaire was distributed to 35 third-year students at a college in the heart of Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. The review was carried out on the very first day of class. Parents of students participating in the same course were given an identical questionnaire form. Only 27 of the 35 parents answered the surveys(Schwartzman, 2015). The identical survey was completed by ten teachers. Furthermore, we submitted the identical questionnaire to 60 businesses, directing it to human resource directors(Shahani & Nair, 2011). There were just 12 surveys returned.

III. RESULTS ANALYSIS

The survey findings are summarized in Table 1. They categorized the consumer replies as inputs, processes, and results. Every respondent mentioned more than one quality attribute(Trilokekar, 2010). Table 1 displays the total amount of quality characteristics and row proportions.

Table 1
Qualitative Characteristics Segmentation

Consumers	**Input**	**Procedure**	**Output**	
Learner n=5	22	145	147	314
Row %	7%	46.17%	46.81%	
Parents n=27	88	14	88	190
Row %	46.31%	7.35%	46.31%	
Teachers n=10	86	85	67	236
Row %	36.44%	36.01%	28.38%	
Corporates n=12	0	27	38	65
Row %	0.00%	41.53%	58.46%	

Source: Computed from Primary Data.

The kids' perception of quality is mostly in the process (46.17%) and output (46.57%) categories; nevertheless, the parents appeared to believe that quality should be defined in terms of both input (46.53%) and result (46.53%). According to the information, the faculty has a broader sense of quality than the other clients. They believed that learning should cover all elements of their operations. (i.e. input, process and output). Companies, on the other hand, only valued excellence in terms of procedure (41.27%) and outcome (58.73%). The result reinforces the notion that various client categories have varied perceptions on quality.

Given this conclusion, we propose that a combined quality model would be a superior model for dealing with the quality issue. It would then cater to the demands of four consumer groups: pupils, parents, educators, and businesses.

Table 2
Customers' expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction with service gaps in the educational institution

SERVQUAL extent		**Learners**	**Parents**	**Company**	**Teachers**
Substantial	Anticipation	5.93	6.05	6.06	5.92
	Observation	4.93 -	5.07 -	5.92 -	5.24 -
	Gaps	1.03 -	1.01 -	0.19 -	0.67 -
	t-value	5.34**	4.25**	1.70	2.83*
Steadfastness	Anticipation	6.07	6.04	6.02	5.61
	Observation	5.99 -	6.03 -	5.91 -	5.62 -
	Gaps	0.09 -	0.04 -	0.11 -	0.03 -
	t-value	2.41*	0.79	1.58	0.24
Receptiveness	Anticipation	6.05	6.18	6.34	6.19
	Observation	4.98 -	5.24 -	5.11 -	5.51 -
	Gaps	1.07**	0.93**	1.26**	0.69 -
	t-value	-5.54	-3.50	-6.99	1.67
Assertion	Anticipation	5.99	5.80	6.12	6.01
	Observation	4.21 -	4.47 -	4.58 -	4.88 -
	Gaps	1.79 -	1.37 -	1.58 -	1.14 -
	t-value	8.28**	5.37**	5.36**	2.40*
Compassion	Anticipation	5.22	5.56	5.26	5.61

	Observation	4.34 -	4.54-	4.64 -	5.66
	Gaps	0.88 -	1.04 -	0.64 -	0.06
	t-value	3.85**	3.79**	2.35*	0.14

* significant < 0.05

** Significant < 0.01; a unenthusiastic gap shows that anticipation exceeded observation; a positive gap shows that observation exceeded anticipation.

The majority of the improvement proposals linked to the structure of the education system to attain excellent output came from students. Some of the ideas were a compassionate professor, numerous student support services, a range of advising products and services, involvement in the development of curriculum, and support for continuous education. They additionally saw a wide range of quality teaching—such as content, feedback, and assessments—to motivate learning. Parents would prefer open communication. Businesses suggested improving the relevance of knowledge and incorporating more soft skills into the curriculum. Employers ought to offer feedback to the college.

This input into the system might directly prepare pupils for employment; hence, the concept of excellence goes beyond the classroom. The characteristics of a 'quality' education include processes at every level of the educational process, from the start of studies until the student's exit from the educational system. This perspective of quality implies that it is a constantly changing procedure rather than a static activity evaluated at any given time.

Although higher learning has played a significant part in the growth of India's economy and growth as a nation, the emphasis has been on school education and literacy due to the country's low level of literacy at the time of freedom (only 12%). In 1950-1951, the overall enrollment was only 0.21 million. (Sreenivas & Babu, 2015, p. 33). No surprise, the government's priority following freedom was to improve "access and equity" in higher learning as opposed to "quality and relevance.

Table 2 shows that, for the majority of parameters, pupils, parents, and businesses demand more than what they believe the school will give. Utilizing the paired t-test, we discovered that every factor are significant excepting reliability. Apart for material objects and confidence, instructors tend to be content in every way.

We attempted to connect the components of SERVQUAL to our IPO structure and discovered that these factors are mainly concerned with the procedure of learning. (see Table 3).

According to the management's concept, quality is viewed as "an icon, a selling point for a growing variety of goods and services." Though the concept of excellence has a totally dissimilar connotation in higher learning, it has creep into its arena as a measure of legitimacy. Some HEIs use the management concept of quality to demonstrate how 'modern' and 'progressive' they are as far as of the most recent societal and international norms. Occasionally they accept the concept of quality voluntarily, and sometimes it is imposed on them by government agencies and financial organizations in the name of educational reforms, but no one appears to be concerned with supplying specific significance to the term "quality." Instead, each adopting

Table 3
The Connection Between SERVQUAL Features and the IPO Layout

SERVQUAL scope	IPO structure
Substantial	Procedure
Steadfastness	Procedure
Receptiveness	Procedure
Assertion	Procedure
Compassion	Procedure

An excellent college education is not primarily concerned with the educational process itself. It necessitates an organized structure that connects all of the system's required stages. The SERVQUAL measurement parameters can be updated so that its quality measures are able to fit into the structure defined by the IPO framework.

Quality can be defined as a standard view of excellence, the absence of academic system dysfunctions, orderly inputs and processes, status in relation to peers in research and its release, the caliber of students who excel and their appropriateness for higher education, the upkeep of skills and norms that are appropriate for different employers and organizations, and outstanding

instruction in terms of understanding. It is possible to generalize from projects to an institution's total activities or to a state or federal system.

Some suggestions to enhance the quality of higher education

Following the evaluation of NKC by the renovation and regeneration committee, which was chaired by Prof. Yashpal and Mr. Pitroda, certain individual observations are made in an effort to raise the standard of higher education. Below they are mentioned:

- It has been decided by committees led by Kothari, Pitroda, and Yashpal that autonomous educational institutions should be exempt from political pressure from any party.
- To address the lack of qualified instructors at the undergraduate and graduate levels as well as the teacher shortage, a sincere public relations effort for hiring better instructors must be launched. Some suggestions to enhance the quality of higher education
- Following the evaluation of NKC by the construction and rejuvenation committee, which was chaired by Prof. Yashpal and Mr. Pitroda, certain individual observations are made in an effort to raise the standard of higher education. Here they are mentioned:
- It is absolutely necessary to replace the fixed-pay structure for new appointments in order to reward expertise and inspire those entering the educational profession.
- The duty of a teacher goes beyond the classroom, thus they ought to share various real-world learning experiences with their students.
- Educators should be urged to engage in research since it is the best way to learn about best practices both locally and globally.
- It is crucial to educate pupils in accordance with labor market demands. Rethinking the curriculum and syllabus in key areas will help with this.
- The whole system of higher learning should be designed to provide students with inter-disciplinary knowledge, which was previously provided via the ancient Gurukul method at Takshshila or Nalanda, the historic and dynamic educational educational institutions, in addition to specialization or super specialization.
- To improve the employability rate of skilled and qualified workers for society, higher education institutions should take steps to build repo with business on a timely basis.

IV. Conclusion

It is not unexpected that parents, pupils, teachers, and businesses all have varied perspectives on quality in educational institutions. Parents associate quality with input (e.g., school rankings, reputes) and outcome (like. employability, job). Learners, on the other side, associated quality with the educational procedure and outcomes. The faculty's regarded excellence in terms of the entire educational system. Companies viewed quality as being primarily tied to production.

The overall distribution of excellence features in terms of process, input, and product varies amongst service recipients. The outcome appeared to imply that, in order to address the demands of every population, the university must concentrate on all parts of the educational system. Quality models seek to take a holistic approach to enhancing quality. In truth, most institutions engage in a range of practices in order to achieve their goals. Effective companies frequently use a holistic approach to measurement that involves the use of multiple approaches. (Ahmed & Rafiq, 1998).

Scientists in service-based industries, such as retail trade and schooling, will face a problem in measuring and studying 'dynamic' management of quality. Our Input-Process-Output content classification paradigm provides as a starting point for such a future quality evaluation system. One critical issue that has yet to be addressed is how to assess disparities in perceived excellence among grandparents, pupils, teachers, and businesses. Further research into this theme will present a foundation for policies and quality enhancement programs implemented by educational institutes. It would additionally be fascinating to investigate how learners, parents, teachers, and businesses perceive educational quality qualities and how these variances influence the types educational planning and policy decisions made (Basak, 2013)**.**

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