



Measuring university service quality by means of servqual method

■ Khodayar Abili, Fatemeh Narenji Thani and Maryam Afarinandehbin

Mehralborz University, TEHRAN (IRAN)

Email : abili@ut.ac.ir; fnarengi@yahoo.com, maryam_afarinandeh@yahoo.com

ARTICLE INFO :

Received : 09.06.2012
Revised : 20.09.2012
Accepted : 28.10.2012

KEY WORDS :

Service quality, University services, SERVQUAL

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE :

Abili, Khodayar, Thani , Fatemeh Narenji and Afarinandehbin, Maryam (2012). Measuring university service quality by means of servqual method, *Adv. Res. J. Soc. Sci.*, 3 (2) : 196 - 200.

ABSTRACT

In this study, a total of 102 students in 5 courses(Electronic engineering, Civil engineering, Mechanical engineering, Chemical engineering and MBA) in the international branch of Amirkabir University, were asked to complete a SERVQUAL questionnaire. This questionnaire measured students' perceptions and expectations in five dimensions of service that consists of assurance, responsiveness, empathy, reliability and tangibles. The quality gap of university services was determined based on differences between students' perceptions and expectations. The results demonstrated that in all of the five SERVQUAL dimensions, there was a negative quality gap ($p < 0.05$). Also responsiveness was the most important dimension for the students but had the largest gap. So, improvements are necessary and university must pay more attention to the students requirements. There was limitation in this research because the current research was conducted among international branch of Amirkabir university. So, the results are limited to these faculty, not to the whole of the university. Also there were many questions in the questionnaire which makes the students tired and impatient. There are limited researches that consider service quality in the Iranian higher education. However, for the first time, the service quality of international branch of Amirkabir university was measured by the SERVQUAL in this research.

INTRODUCTION

The problem in managing service companies is that quality is not easily measurable. To solving this problem different scales for measuring service quality have been put forward and Servqual is one of the most famous of them. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) were amongst the earliest researchers to emphatically point out that the concept of quality prevalent in the goods sector is not extendable to the services sector. As against the goods sector where tangible cues exist to enable consumers to evaluate product quality, quality in the service context is explicated in terms of parameters that largely come under the domain of 'experience' and 'credence' properties and are as such difficult to measure and evaluate (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988).

In an equation form, their operationalization of service quality can be expressed as follows (Jain and Gupta, 2004:27):

$$SQ_i = \sum_{j=1}^k (P_{ij} - E_{ij})$$

where:

SQ_i = Perceived service quality of individual 'i'

k = Number of service attributes/items

P = Perception of individual 'i' with respect to performance of a service firm attribute 'j'

E = Service quality expectation for attribute 'j' that is the relevant norm for individual 'i'

But when we can say a service is good? The idea is that the service is good if perceptions meet or exceed expectations and problematic if perceptions fall below expectations (Ahmed and Shueb, 2009: 18). So, filling the gaps between customer perceptions and expectations about the service received is vital for customer satisfaction. More and more firms use satisfaction ratings as an indicator of performance for services and consequently an indicator of company's future. Since service quality is a vital element in creating customer satisfaction, it also plays an important role in sustaining profit levels of companies (Baki *et al.*, 2009: 106). Consumers inferences about quality rather than the reality itself can be