A Review of Higher Education Service quality in Pursuit of Future Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT: The impact of an Education sector on society's growth and development is far greater than any service sector along with its economic implication for the country. As a surge in private players in the domain of education services, various challenges have emerged. These Challenges are broadly related to services provided by higher education systems including quality of education, faculty, infrastructure, placements, and others. Government and regulatory bodies are regularly monitoring the education sector to identify loopholes and suggest measures to further improve service quality in the education sector. However, the level of education services still not matching standard levels. The objective of the paper is to review empirical studies of service quality in the education sector and suggest future research agenda to plug the existing research gap in the evaluation of the quality of higher education services so that corrective action can be taken by various stakeholders. The paper significantly contributes to understanding future research agenda by an extensive review of papers related education service quality domain.

Keywords: Higher Education, Perception, Service quality, SERVQUAL, Students, Service standards.

Abbreviations: SERVQUAL, Service quality; SQ, Service quality; PHEI, Private Higher Education Institute; ANOVA, Analysis of Variance; LMS, Learning Management System; IPA. Importance performance analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades or so, a large number of studies on service quality has developed the service marketing literature review. The increasing competition between institutions of higher education to fascinate highly competent students to achieve high academic profiles is forcing them to pay more attention to the quality of service issues. Quality of service in higher education is critical for an institution's success [1]. Institutions need to develop and implement quality standards and programs and track them constantly to improve the quality of education and achieve a competitive edge in fast-growing private sector institutions [2]. Students view the quality of service in universities as one of the most important issues [3]. Students are well educated and motivated and assume their educational institutions to deliver them with excellent quality education services [4]. Perceived quality of service represents the disparity in the aspirations and experiences of customers [5]. Service quality in higher education is a multidimensional structure, therefore researchers do not consent to the common measurements or optimal method for evaluating the level of service in higher education institutions [6]. "The diversity of research in service quality domain poses a challenge for researchers to find out emerging gaps in educational service quality. Previous studies specific research agenda has been explored and thus lack a comprehensive review of education service quality. This study fills this research gap and attempts to present the extensive review."
This study reviews pertinent literature and develops a set of research agendas. This study sought to make a useful contribution to the quest for measuring service quality in the higher education context.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The service quality domain for any researcher poses a very big challenge due to its size and exhaustiveness. Therefore, a systematic process of searching, filtering, and categorizing papers for the literature review has been selected. Initially electronic search in several vital databases like Scopus, Ebsco, ProQuest, Elsevier science, Emerald database, Springer, Inderscience, and Google Scholar. To discover the pertinent research papers from vital databases diverse groupings of keywords were used Like Service quality, SERVQUAL, service quality in higher education, Gaps in Service quality. The initial stage led to an exploration of more than a hundred papers. In the next step of categorization manual glance was completed for all the titles of the articles, so that inappropriate papers can be separated. This process helps to eliminate duplication of research articles. After the filtration of papers, each paper was analysed with a focus on abstract and findings. The entire procedure leads to the development of a tabular literature review of empirical studies on service quality measurement in higher education.

Authors	Findings
(Naidoo, 2011)	Students were very disappointed with the University's facilities and performance [7].
(Chang *et al.,* 2014)	The satisfaction of the students was greatly affected by the quality of the food [8].
(Abdullah & Mohamad, 2016)	There is still a shortage of universities in recreational facilities and standard activities that might encourage students to be physically active [9].
(Sabandar *et al.,* 2018)	It is believed that there is still a need to improve the quality of learning at Makassar's private university [10].
(Nathan & Scobell, 2012)	There is a need to keep on maintaining the high level of resources and

	services as a world-class university which will lead to a high level of user satisfaction [11].
(Hossain & Rahman, 2013)	There is a need to change and devise quality standards and programs and track them on an ongoing basis to improve educational quality and achieve a competitive edge in the fast-growing private sector [2].
(Ada *et al.*, 2017)	For higher education, the understanding of the standard of service is stronger for a third grade than in fourth grade. For certain sub-factors, including structural administrative and instructional paths, the students who had low-performance rates expected poor standards of service for higher education [12].
(Adinegara *et al.,* 2016)	The quality of services offered for private university students is not in accordance with students ' preferences or aspirations [13].
(Satar, 2017)	The analysis found that the efficiency of the educational services provided by KUMS in five dimensions of service quality did not fulfill the needs of the students [14].
(Cardona & Bravo, 2012)	This satisfaction is informed by the expectations of the students about the school, and especially their sense of commitment to academic excellence, the role of the professional career, and the educational system itself, to perceive an intellectual growth [15].
(Ravindran & Kalpana, 2012)	To school managers, organizational performance is the most important thing to focus on [16].
(Akhlaghi *et al.,* 2012)	Responsibility and assurance are major deficiencies in service quality [17].
(Van Schalkwyk & Steenkamp, 2019)	The analysis concentrated on the strategic objective of quality of service, the need for quality of service performance, organizational sensitivity of service quality, highlighting the value of leadership in quality of service for PHEIs [18].
(TuranKatircioglu *et al.,* 2012)	The results suggest that all five variables used in the analysis are significantly correlated, including non-academic aspects, educational aspects, credibility, participation, program problems, and the overall satisfaction of the participant [19].
(Quinn *et al.,* 2009)	The findings of this research show that there is a difference between the beliefs of the student and the expectations of the student and that consistency, tangibility, sensitivity, confidence, and empathy are important to the student among the variables and measurements of the SERVQUAL system [20].
(Leonnard, 2018)	Factors influencing student success at a private university are measurable and consistent, containing spacious lecture rooms, 2) sufficient library services, 3) tidy staff presence, 4) Impartial care received by staff and faculty, 5) good expertise and information provided by staff and faculty, 6) relevant learning resources offered by the university. Satisfaction has a significant influence on student engagement [21].
(Ramaiya & Ahmad, 1994)	The level of service in higher education is key to the performance of an organization. Service quality aspects should, therefore, reflect the overall needs and opinions of the customers. The beliefs and desires of the participant about the quality of the service are dynamic, unique, and subjective [1].
(Lim Kok Seng & Pei Ling, 2013)	Learning tools such as effective teaching technology, applicable digital sources of information, high-speed network, well-maintained campus infrastructure, as well as open computer labs and library services play a significant part in the institutions of higher learning [22].
(Onditi&Wechuli, 2017)	Higher education organizations ought to be conscious of the dimensions of thestandard of service that influence the happiness of their students and thus it is necessary to remember that these dimensions will be decided by the students and not by the management of the institution [6].
(Prentice *et al.,* 2018)	Therefore, a rational pricing structure will have a strategic advantage for universities in the higher private education sector in Ireland, Not only by attracting new students to the college but also by making the students happier to join the courses, which further promotes a positive brand image [23].
(Beaumont, 2012)	University service management is required to determine and control the value and efficiency of various service reliability attributes. For each feature, management should change the level of service performance [24].
(Kara *et al.*, 2016)	Overall, the satisfaction of the students was moderate in universities. Improvements in these measurements are likely to result in a proportionate improvement in the experience of participants [25].
(Hasan *et al.*, 2009)	According to the ' One-Sample Test, ' it was clearly revealed that most of the institute's students have high expectations of the service provided by the academic staff and the institute's physical facilities, but the service has not delivered in a manner that meets their expectations [26].
(Kontic, 2014)	Measuring the quality of higher education service is a complex issue as well as attracting students in a transition economy in particular. The factors that affected the students' perception of service quality were seniority and gender [3].
(Relation, n.d.)	The results indicate that from the students ' point of view, the overall service quality is associated with dissatisfaction. This study was proposed to try to analyze the divergence between the management point of view and the students ' point of view [27].
(Nguyen Thi Hoang, 2013)	It suggests that Vietnamese university managers should focus more on measures to improve their employees ' attitudes to improve the quality of higher education services [28].
(Son *et al.,* 2018)	Such findings will help Thainguyen University administrators to have effective approaches to improve the quality of service for the satisfaction of higher students. The research structure is critical to the satisfaction of shareholders with Thainguyen University's education services [29].

(Trivellas & Dargenidou, 2009)	The culture of adhocracy encourages exploration, ingenuity, proactivity, adaptation, and innovation in the discovery of new opportunities and development paths. Such principles are conducive to better teaching and administration efficiency [30].
(Zafiropoulos *et al.*, 2005)	Their organization offered some evidence that SERVQUAL can be used successfully to document the performance of the academic system. This should be acknowledged as this initiative was one of the first in Greece to tackle academic concerns [31].
(Theresia & Bangun, 2017)	Students are worried about aspects of tangibility and reliability. The aspects of responsiveness, assurance, and empathy do not influence student satisfaction, as students are more concerned with tangible factors rather than physical factors [32].
(Singh & Singla, 2018)	Twenty-first - century students are well educated and endeavouring and believe that their educational establishments will provide them with top-quality educational facilities. Private universities students are more ambitious and better informed hence, they have higher expectations from their institutions [4].
(Green, 2014)	The findings reveal that with tangible, reliability, and assurance dimensions, customers had high exceptions on average, and their highest perceptions were found in the assurance dimension [33].
(Anastasios & George, 2018)	There is a huge difference in the attitudes and desires of teachers and students [34].
(Lien, 2017)	The five variables of performance of the learning system (including compassion, consistency, tangibility, reliability, and responsiveness) have an important correlation with student satisfaction [35].
(May & Viljoen, 2014)	The problem that the college does not fulfill the students ' needs [36].
(Faganel, 2010)	The lowest level of perceived quality is the same as with faculty building and accompanying academic staff presence [37].
(Lodesso *et al.,* 2019)	This showed a low level of student satisfaction with the quality of service [38].
(Terzakis *et al.,* 2012)	Four SQ measurements are such as facilities/equipment/services, staff expertise and capacities, quality of education/course, and the performance and credibility of the school[39].
(Siti Falindah & Azizul Yadi, 2013)	There are positive relationships to student satisfaction between academic and non-academic aspects [40].
(Management, 2015)	This analysis would provide guidance to prospective researchers and assist politicians in evaluating the value of the service offered to achieve desired effects in the shape of engagement, inspiration, and success of students. The analyzes above offer useful information for decision-making for university administrators [41].
(Saleem et al., 2017)	Specific attention is needed to upgrade infrastructure and other relevant services, as well as develop students ' communication skills, create effective performance improvement cells and job placement cells, and schedule industrial visits and research tours in order to meet global educational standards [42].
(Petruzzellis *et al.*, 2006)	As a consequence of the field study, satisfaction is mainly determined by economic conditions and an optimistic yet parochial mentality forcing students to value universities in the region of origin [43].
(Gul *et al.*, 2019)	The research contributes significantly to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's understanding of service performance and customer satisfaction [44].
(Pawanchik & Mustapha, 2012)	If it is easy to use, students will prefer to use the LMS more, thereby increasing their learning potential. Thus, the high quality of service will increase the satisfaction of students [45].
(Sarki & Khuhro, 2011)	The findings of ANOVA's study of disparity in one way show that there is no substantial difference between male and female students ' assessment of the business institutes/universities for service quality [46].
(Canic& McCarthy, 2000)	While the initial results are positive, there is still a lot to do. The quality support policy of the Vice-Chancellor must take on increasing importance. And more attention should be paid to procedures that cross-departmental borders [47].
(Prasad & Jha, 2013)	This model can contribute to marketing measures by introducing new and focused variables that would provide more specific information about the quality of service and its "contribution to the satisfaction of students."[48]
(Mang & Govender, 2017)	The results show that expectations of SQ and overall satisfaction do not differ significantly [49].
(Lee & Chen, 2015)	In turn, IPA can integrate with Kano template, two-dimensional performance, to address the quality of service for the leadership units in sports competitions and offer better initiatives and approaches to improve the quality of service [50].

III. FINDINGS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

After analysis of a large number of empirical studies in the area's higher education service quality, it is quite evident that there is no consensus on the use of existing models to evaluate service quality among scholars in higher education, however, the theoretical background of major studies has been driven from SERVQUAL. Another important finding is related to constructs used to measure service quality in higher education has been different, the SERVQUAL model has been modified by scholars to suit specific environments and conditions for a particular country.

The majority of the studies have focused on the investigation of student satisfaction with reference service quality in higher education. A large number of studies have suggested that students are dissatisfied with present education services. Students of the twenty-first century are well informed and connected. They are evaluating service quality in higher education sectors vis a vis other service sectors like banking telecommunication, restaurants, aviation, and other prominent sectors of the economy.

Student's expectations are increasing rapidly with a focus on fees, placement facilities, extra-curricular activities. Overall, they are looking forward to value for money service. Future research should focus on empirically testing the validity and reliability of existing models. They should also focus on exploring new models for measurement of service quality in the higher education sector with special reference to private education, professional education vocational courses, skill development course. Another research area to explore is to understand why students are still dissatisfied with the present education system, what are new constructs, and dimensions that are missing in existing models. As the world is grappling with COVID 19 pandemic, online learning platforms have seen exponential growth rates in recent times, therefore new models can be evolved for measuring service quality of online education and major challenge of online education.

IV. CONCLUSION

The vulnerability of Higher Education Institutions is due to challenges related to sustainability, credibility, and quality of education systems. This is a result of developments in recent years that have witnessed the emergence of consumerism in the higher education market, whereby policymakers and their institutions gradually regard students as buyers of higher education. The level of service in higher education can often include facets of other stakeholders such asgovernment, employees, and members of the family. Service quality must remain a competitive concern for every higher education organization because emerging problems like student dissatisfaction at many public and private universities have put the question mark on service quality status of the Higher education system as legitimate providers of higher education. Therefore, there is a need to understand research gaps in higher education service quality and challenges coming into this domain. The paper attempts to present a holistic view of empirical studies in the service quality of the higher education sector and suggest a future research agenda for prospective studies.

V. FUTURE SCOPE

The higher education is going in transformation, as digital learning is getting more competitive and cost-effective. Due to COVID 19, the process of digital learning has got a boost as social distancing becomes a norm. The challenges for higher education have increased may fold, service quality will be a deciding factor in the future. Only those higher education institutes will be able to survive that can cater to the diverse needs of students.

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