Evaluating Quality of Services in Islamic Azad University of Aliabad Katoul Using Servqual Model

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Abstract

The present study seeks to evaluate the quality in different serving organizations; such evaluations date back to less than 20 years ago. This research project has used Servqual Model in order to evaluate the quality of services in Islamic Azad University of Aliabad Katoul Branch from the following five aspects:

1. The appearance and organization facilities or physical dimensions
2. Reliability of supplied services
3. Accountability rate
4. Service quality guarantee
5. Understanding the customer

This research is an applied one in nature; the methodology being used is descriptive and inferential. The society of the research was 6000 university students and the selected sample was 361 people. Books, magazines, questionnaires and interviews were utilized to collect the data and inferential statistics model was applied to analyze the data. The result showed a gap in all standards of Servqual. The gaps (from lowest to highest) are: tangible factors, reliability, empathy, confidence and accountability.

Keywords: Service Quality; Quality; Servqual Model.

1. Introduction

Complexity in knowing qualities or affective parameters on quality of services in comparison with manufacturing processes is the main reason which hinders development of quality evaluating tools. Studies by Parasoraman, Zithamel, and Berry in the 1980s are the starting point of the scientific studies regarding quality of services. Servqual is made up of 22 different variables which evaluate quality of services in organizations from five aspects. These five aspects are as follows:

- The appearance and organization facilities or physical dimensions
- Reliability of supplied services
- Accountability rate
- Method of service quality guarantee
- Understanding the customer

Servqual analytical model of gap quality can present managers appropriate tools to recognize quality deficiencies systematically (Bayat, Alizadehsani, 2006). The present study tries to apply a suitable model in order to evaluate quality of the services in Aliabad Katoul Islamic Azad University to understand whether the held services are qualified enough or not?

2. Statement of the problem

It is difficult to define quality of services; it includes:
- The appearance and organization facilities or physical dimensions
- Reliability of supplied services
- Accountability rate
- Method of service quality guarantee
- Understanding the customer

The above mentioned aspects are used to define the concept of gap quality. This gap is based on what a customer expects of a service. Due to the importance of the quality, quality of services is one of the fundamental issues. To this end, Islamic Azad University has to use new strategies to measure quality of services; this action leads to more customer satisfaction and less complaints; so the research question is as follows: *how should quality of services in Islamic Azad University of Aliabad Katoul be?*

3. Research questions

1. Of what kind are aspects of quality with regard to Servqual model?
2. Is there any gap between students' expectations and presented services by the university?

   - Is there any gap between responsiveness and expectations?
   - Is there any gap between self-reliance and expectations?
   - Is there any gap between empathy and expectations?
   - Is there any gap between visible understandings and expectations?
   - Is there any gap between reliability and expectations?

4. Review of the related literature

New trends in recent years show that services have developed in nowadays. Industries are getting smaller and services are rendered more. Managers of the manufacturing and serving institutions in all governmental, cooperative and private sectors understand that quality is not the only discrimination factor and the focus of attention should turn from market oriented into customer oriented (in Arabi, et al, 200).

Due to the variety and number of customers, not only organizations have to consider the customers' expectations, but also they need to understand customers' attitude toward organizations and the way they render services; so it has made organizations pay more attention to the measurement of quality of services. The problem that organizations face is nothing but how to evaluate a problem which is different in size, kind, and presentation (Alvani, Riahi, 2004).

Services are not as visible as goods and are considered as an inseparable part of servers**;** it has made customers' evaluation difficult (Zinhamel, 1981; Rushton& Carson, 1989; cited in Prugsamatz & Pentocost, 2006). So,

organizations need defined models in order to evaluate quality of services; such a model has proved the ability of the evaluation system and is a suitable criterion to evaluate customers' satisfaction (Alvani & Riahi, 2004).

Services

- Machines are of physical goods but the way they behave with customers is a kind of service, as a result throughout the 60s and 70s, many of the introduced definitions consider services; however, a perfect definition of a service has not been introduced yet (Gronroos, 2000).
- A service is a kind of activity or profit that is presented and is basically invisible and contains no possession of anything; the result may be physical or not (Kolter& Armestrong, 2000, in Seyyedjavadian & Kimasi, 2006).
- A service is a process including a series of more or less invisible activities which naturally, but not necessarily, happens in interactions among customers, employees, physical resources, goods, or service rendering systems in order to be a solution for customers' problems (Gronroos, 2000).

Quality

Quality means correspondence with specifications (Levitt, 1979), with needs (Karzabi, 1979), deserve to use (Juran & Binghan), value (feigenbaum, 1951), loss avoidance (Taguchi, 1979), achieving customers' expectations (Parasoraman et al, 1985; cited in Ebrahimi, 2003).

Quality of services

Throughout the past decades, acceptance and application of TQM and other quality frameworks both in industry and servicers have increased; quality is considered as an important factor of success and growth (Quinn & Humble,1993; Anderson et al, 1994; Donaldson, 1995; Rust et al, 1995, in Sahni, 2003).

Most definitions of quality of services are customer oriented (Gallowy& Wearn, 1998in Sahni et al, 2003) though customer satisfaction is part of the presented service (Anderson & Sullian, 1993) or those presented services are part of customer satisfaction (Parasoraman, et al, 1998).

5. Methodology

This research is applied in nature, descriptive as well as inferential statistical model were utilized to analyze the data. The participants were all university students in Aliabad Katoul Islamic Azad University (6000 students) and the chosen sample included 361 individuals. TWO questionnaires were used to collect data; two of which considered understanding and expectations of the customers (students). The questionnaires were valid enough because they were checked and analyzed by the experts in the field; the reliability of these questionnaires was calculated via Alfa Cronbach and to analyze the data, Excel as well as SPSS was used.

Data analysis

To analyze the data, descriptive as well as inferential statistical methods were utilized. The collected data is correlated, so it is tried to answer the following question: 'Is there any gap between students' expectations and understandings of university services?'

In all tests, the null hypothesis has been rejected and hypothesis 1 has been accepted meaning that there is a kind of confirmed gap.

6. Conclusion

In the present study, Servqual model were used to examine the quality of services held in Aliabad Katoul Islamic Azad University. Servqual Model is composed of five aspects such as:

- The appearance and organization facilities or physical dimensions

- Reliability of supplied services
- Accountability rate
- Method of service quality guarantee
- Understanding the customer

And 22 minor factors. The comparison between students' expectations and understandings shows that quality of services in Aliabad Katoul Islamic Azad University is not high enough. According to the gained results, we can conclude that students are not satisfied with the presented services by the university because the university has received negative points in all aspects. The ranking of the gaps are as follows:

- Visible factors
- Reliability
- Empathy
- Self-reliance
- Responsiveness

In order to make sure of the above mentioned gap of services Sign test also confirmed the above gaps.

Table 1: Expectations Criteria Percentage

question	criterion	very little	little	average	much	too much	expectations (percent) E
4-1	visible factors	116	132	295	429	472	73.98
9-5	reliability	95	151	343	562	654	76.94
13-10	responsiveness	83	139	263	444	515	76.19
1`7-14	self-reliance	64	159	264	445	512	76.37
22-18	empathy	110	176	312	558	649	76.18

Table 2: Understandings Criteria Percentage

question	criterion	very little	little	average	much	too much	expectations (percent) E
4-1	visible factors	152	277	508	408	99	60.35
9-5	reliability	221	396	598	435	155	58.97
13-10	responsiveness	242	367	407	312	116	55.75
1`7-14	self-reliance	208	363	431	341	101	56.
22-18	empathy	305	416	519	395	170	

Table 3: Gap Between Expectations And Understandings

criterion	understandings (percentage)	expectations (percentage)	quality of

	P	E	services (percent)
visible factors	60.35	73.97	-13.63
reliability	58.97	76.94	-17.97
responsiveness	55.75	76.19	-20.44
self-reliance	56.73	76.37	-19.64
empathy	56.78	76.18	-19.40

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