

A MODEL OF SERVICE QUALITY IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION: A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT

In the pursuit of excellence, it is increasingly important to identify and provide value to customers. Service quality has been identified as one such demand. The present study tries to develop and empirically validate the model for service quality in technical education. Based on the current conceptualization of service quality, the proposed model suggests that service quality is a multidimensional and hierarchical construct.

In the proposed model, service quality comprises two primary dimensions which are defined by several corresponding sub dimensions: (a) *Program Quality*, consisting of curriculum, industry interaction, input quality, academic facilities; and (b) *Quality of Students' Life*, consisting of extra-curricular activities, support facilities, and interaction quality. The conceptual model was tested and the findings supported the conceptualization.

Educational institutes measure their performance not in financial terms but in terms of their ranking which is majorly determined by the quality of their outcome and reputation. Thus, a structural model linking Service Quality to Outcome and Reputation of the institute was developed. The structural model was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling. Results of the study supported a significant positive relationship between Service Quality on the one hand and Outcome and Reputation of an institute on the other. The study further investigated the mediating role of Outcome; the results confirmed the mediating role of Outcome in relationship between Service Quality and Reputation of an institute.

The model put forward in this study makes an important contribution to theory and practice. Findings suggest that students evaluate service quality at an overall level, a dimensional level, and at a sub-dimensional level. The proposed hierarchical structure of the service quality model fills the gaps that exist in the conceptualization of service quality in the technical education. The scale developed can be used by practitioners as a diagnostic tool for identifying poor and/or excellent service performance. This information is particularly important given that perceptions of the service quality are shown to influence outcome and reputation of an institute.

Keywords: Service Quality, Technical Education, Hierarchical Model, Structural Equation Modeling