Impact of Quality of Service Delivery in Business Education

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Abstract

Purpose – *Quality of Service* (QoS) is a not new word now and it has become more of a necessity than a choice. If organizations want to have competitive edge in the industry they need to introduce quality based practices. With the increasing focus on the quality measures in all sectors; it is also the need of education sector for applying service quality concepts to business education.

Design/Methodology/Approach – In this paper certain quality indicators are identified for the business schools of Pakistan by conducting a comparative study between public and private sector business schools. The purpose of this study is to incorporate quality indicators and measuring QoS delivery, as a result of that business schools may be able to create benchmarks of quality to be used in other schools to sustain quality education.

Findings – Currently in Pakistan, there are few business schools which are providing quality in the limited context of teaching only, and have not been able to effectively focus on *Quality of Service* delivery to the external customers that is students. A preliminary model for Quality of education is designed and later on a comparative study between the public and private business schools of Pakistan is conducted.

Value – There is a lot of emphasis on class quality, that is, *Quality of Education* (QoE) where as process quality is equally important but ignored in *Developing Countries* (DCs) like Pakistan. The paper attempts to create an awareness of having a tradeoff between QoS delivery and QoE by maintaining the impact of QoE as opposed to quality of teaching in determining the overall quality of organization.

Keywords – Business Education, Business Schools, Quality of Service, Quality Indicators

Paper type – Research Paper

Introduction

Service industries are playing an increasingly important role in the economy of developing and emerging nations. In today's world of global competition, rendering quality service is a key for success, and many experts are of the view that the most powerful competitive trend currently shaping business and marketing strategy is service quality. The same need has been identified in universities and specifically business schools are concerned about the *Quality of Education*. The identification of the dimensions which signal quality and the achievement of excellence in business education have emerged this decade as key issues facing the academy. (LeBlanc, Nha Nguyen, 1997.

Historically it is the businesses schools in developing countries that are showing keen interest in improving the *Quality of Education* but unfortunately they remain unsuccessful due to limited, poor and ambiguous definition of quality in academia.

So far there has been focus on improving teaching methodologies and students learning outcome. Now it has been realized that it is not only the teaching or the students' learning process which needs to be improved, but a combination of multiple processes which need a collective redressal.

Quality of Education is a myth in third world; it is a concept which is least understood, vaguely defined and not properly addressed; and contains a limited portion of overall Quality of Education concept. In order to address this grave misconception and eliminate existing ambiguity the authors have attempted to develop a preliminary model to assess quality from a system's perspective.

The model described in figure 1 explains that QoE is not just related to classroom teaching only but it also has QoS aspect too, classroom teaching is further divided into two sub processes; class delivery process that defines how knowledge is delivered to students and intellectual stimulation process which explains to which extent quality of knowledge is being imparted. QoS is also sub grouped into student support process that defines all those processes that help and facilitate students and grooming process that defines the development of students' personality.

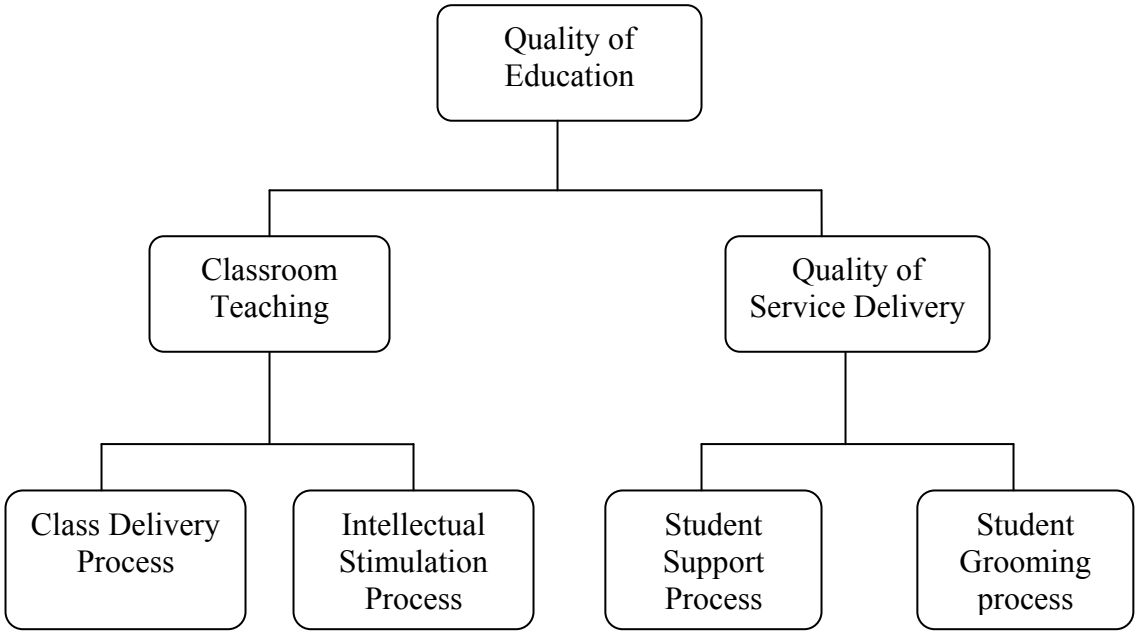

Figure 1: Model for Quality of Education (QoE)

For this, educationists normally encounter the problems of developing measurement indicators and identifying components of quality education. For the purpose of defining quality the authors meant all those step and actions facilitating the students to absorb knowledge in a user friendly way and in a conducive environment.

In seeking to design the instruments to measure quality of education, it is important to appreciate complexities associated with measuring and enhancing quality in higher education; the central role of perceptions and expectations of different type of customer that contribute in the

complexity of evaluating and determining the nature of and resources available to create the educational experience.

Quality – Value Chain

As according to Rowley the QoS as perceived by customers originates by comparison of what they feel that service organizations should offer, that is, from their *expectations* with their *perception* of the performance of organizations providing the services:

Quality = Customer's Perception – Customer's Expectations. (*Rowley, 1997).*

In developing countries the students do not have any perception about quality as per defined model suggest the perception model of student.

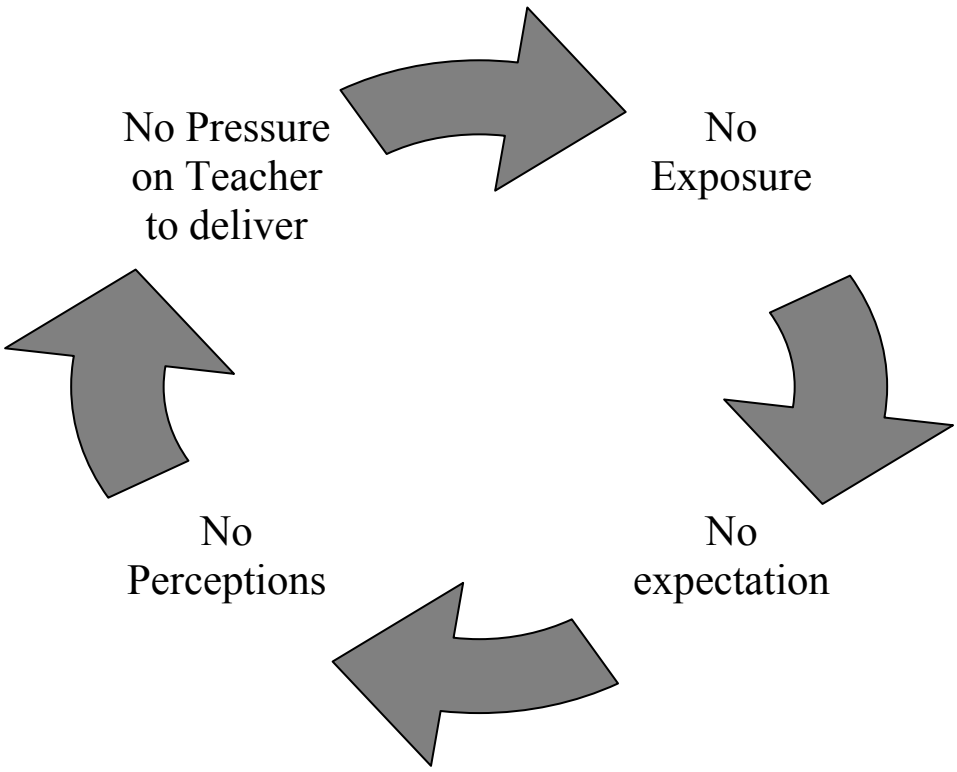

Figure 2: Quality - Value Chain Model

Thus the resultant of the model is that teachers do not have requisite exposure to perform differently and think innovatively.

Literature Review

The lessons of quality management apply to services as well as tangible goods. Awareness also has been increasing that services, like tangible goods, can be guaranteed as a means of implementing a total quality management (TQM) orientation in the organization. While higher education has been exploring some of the tenets of TQM, it has been slow to embrace the power

of service guarantees. The higher education sector in the UK has adopted an outcomes-based approach to the curriculum, assessment, evaluation and quality management that emanated from the behavioral objectives movement in the USA (Mager, 1975; Gosling and Moon, 2001).

Following rapid economic development, the education systems of most countries or areas in the Asia-Pacific region have been expanded quickly. Currently, the people in this region are concerned with not only education quantity but also education quality (Yin Cheong Cheng and Wai Ming Tam, 1997).

Education quality is a rather vague and least defined concept in research and policy discussion in developing countries (DCs), definition may be different to different people, group and nations so it is logical to assume that the indicators used to define education quality would be different. Some may emphasize the quality of inputs to the education systems whereas others emphasize the quality of processes and its outcome. No matter whether referring to input, process, outcome, or all of these, the definition of education quality may often be associated with fitness for use, the satisfaction of the needs of strategic constituencies (For example, policy makers, parents, school management committee, teachers, students, etc.) or conformance to strategic constituencies' requirements and expectations (Yin Cheong Cheng and Wai Ming Tam, 1997). Education quality is a multi-dimensional concept and cannot be easily assessed by only one or few indicators as in DCs.

The design of quality measures for specific service providers should lead to a better understanding of the construct and to the adaptation of quality improvement programmes which correspond to service company needs. From the design perspective, dependable measures of service quality for specific service industries are a viable research strategy to pursue (Brown and Koenig, 1993; Carman, 1990; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Finn and Lamb, 1991; Zeithaml, 1988). The concern for excellence in business education and the lack of empirical research on the cues that signal quality to students were the bases for this exploratory study on service quality.

Literature review, along with different brainstorming sessions were held that provided the basis for developing questionnaire used in this study, participants of both genders were selected in order to eliminate any biasness. The questionnaire focuses on different aspects and contained 60 service quality variables related to the business school's service offering, such as curriculum, contact personal, physical evidence, reputation, responsiveness, on campus facilities, faculty, students, assessment and grading, fee structure, development planning and discipline. The items were measured on a 5-point, likert-type scale that varied from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, some questions were on availability of services for hostel and common room facilities for males and females students where 0 = none, 1 = either for male or female students and 2 = for both males and females. Description for the quality indicators is given below

Curriculum – It means that the business school has specialized programs and courses to offer, which are in-line with industry needs, the course contents are updated when required and the curriculum enhances individual capabilities.

Contact personnel – This indicator measures the follow-up and response time of staff, and evaluates if the staff is aware of the policies and procedures.

Physical evidence – It means that if the institution has proper lighting and backup facility for power failure and optimum classroom temperature is maintained according to weather conditions. The class rooms and study rooms are comfortable, premises and guide maps are

available for easier navigation. The parking lot spacious enough to accommodate reasonable number of vehicles, lawns and cafeteria are good enough to meet the needs of students. Also aesthetics and cleanliness of institute is maintained.

Reputation – means that students are satisfied with academic achievement of institution and their institution is affiliated with regulatory authority. The overall degree of the institute has good name in the market.

Responsiveness – determines the availability of instructors and support staff, and their concern towards students learning and growth. The institute gives weight age to student feedback and the students keep on receiving updates on procedural or academic activities.

Access to Facilities – includes auditorium which is spacious enough; an interactive website, proper hostel, transport and lab facilities, common rooms and prayer rooms.

Assessment and Grading – means if the students are satisfied with the grading criteria and find it transparent

Faculty – this indicator talks of faculty individual competence like personality, emotional Intelligence and qualification. It also measures courteousy and friendliness, and professors' communication skills. Also, it includes if the faculty facilitates innovation, arranges lectures by guest speakers and are actively involved in research work.

Student – defines output in terms of student quality, Student teacher ratio, student leadership behavior. The institute provides learning environment to the student, parents are satisfied with institute and workload on student is challenging enough to enhance their individual capabilities.

Fee structure – means that it is at par with kind of facilities provided to the students, and provides merit based and need base scholarships. The students find the fee submission process as simple and flexible.

Development planning – means that the institute focuses on trainings and development for administrative staff has centralized authority.

Discipline – it includes mechanism to resolve conflicts and measures the extent of implementing plagiarism policies, management rules and regulations according to standard operating procedures.

This research paper investigates the impact of the identified indicators on the quality of service delivery in business education and the extent to which these quality indicators are applied in public and private sector business schools of Pakistan. Comparison between public and private sector universities is therefore drawn and its inference is used to get some meaningful inferences. The paper attempts to create an awareness of having a trade-off between QoS delivery and *Quality of Education* by maintaining the impact of quality service as opposed to quality of teaching in determining the overall quality of organization.

Research Approach

Some quality indicators have been identified by the mutual brain storming sessions and field visits to academic institutions. Quantitative analysis technique is used to analyze the impact of different quality indicators on service delivery in business education. Using these indicators the survey was designed and feedback has been collected and statistical measures are applied on the collected data. The analysis of the results identified the impact of these quality indicators on business education and their application in public and private sector business schools.

Hypothesis of research are.

H_1: Private sector business schools are better in delivering quality of service as compared to public sector.
H_2: There is a positive correlation between QoS and customer satisfaction in business schools of Pakistan.

In order to justify or nullify the above mention hypotheses focus has been on following two questions

- What is the impact of the identified indicators on the quality of service delivery in business education?
- To what extent these quality indicators are being applied in public and private sector business schools?

For statistical analysis of data MS-Excel, StatPro and SPSS were used on different levels and observations.

Findings and Conclusions

As per the analysis of data performed following are the correlation values on QOS variable.

The correlation values from the table 1 between means of different identified indicators and mean of QoS it can be observed that QoS delivery in Pakistan is strongly affected by faculty factor and the secondly to students(output) where as other factors like responsiveness, reputation and contact personal factors also have a positive impact on the QoS.

Mean Values Comparative Study

Data collected from different public and private sector business institutions were analyzed and mean of each factor is compared table 1 illustrate values of each indicator.

Factor	Public	Private	Correlation b/w QoS
Curriculum	3.553	3.835	0.627
Contact Personnel	3.567	3.705	0.729
Physical Evidence	2.907	3.303	0.687

Factor	Public	Private	Correlation b/w QoS
Reputation	3.701	3.869	0.727
Responsiveness	3.343	3.815	0.751
On campus facilities	2.397	2.510	0.567
Grading and assessment criteria	3.314	3.711	0.666
Faculty	3.579	3.857	0.792
Students	3.546	3.808	0.777
Fee structure	3.274	3.703	0.633
Development & planning	3.307	3.455	0.628
Discipline	3.268	3.544	0.695

Table 1: Correlation between QoS and Mean Values Comparison of public & private sector business schools

The mean values depict a clear difference between public sector and private sector business schools. Values from table 1 reflect that there is not much difference between public and private sector institution but still private sector business schools are doing a bit better rather than public sector institutions. However, these are not the only indicators which can guarantee quality of service delivery in itself.

Conclusion

The aim and philosophy of identifying quality parameters is not the measurement of quality performance as an end in itself, but the continuing and continual improvement of quality through a process. There has been a trend of increasing competition among business schools and the students explore options globally for business education. Business Schools need to implement quality based practices in their institutions so that they perform well and customers of education, that is, students are being served well too.

Both of the hypotheses have been proved and can be observed from the statistical data that there is limited awareness of the quality indicators in business schools. However, business schools of either of the sector are not performing up to the required standards. So, it is suggested that private sector schools may invest in quality education at higher levels and public sector schools may work on secondary education.

The indicators identified are merely indicative of some of ground realities but may not necessarily depict or reflect the actual ground situation. For that matter a thorough investigation would be required which may entail the cultural aspect of teaching requirements as well. However authors have not discussed the cultural aspects affecting the quality of education and service. This impact of cultural competencies can be measured in further phases of the research. The suggested quality – value model gives the complete picture of QoE in D*eveloping Countries* and by implementing this mentioned model, the business schools of DCs can compete on international level for QoE and QoS.

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