

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES IN HEI's OF OMAN

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Abstract

Quality has become a common term off late in higher educational Institutes (HEIs) in order to meet the national and international level requirements. Placing service quality in all aspects of higher education has become the need of the era. There are several researches that deal with naming the major dimensions of service quality in higher education institutes. Sometimes the HEIs generate the information which serves their quality monitoring either internally or benchmarking with similar institutions. This study is restricted to analyse the service quality in the aspect of teaching in the educational institutes located in Oman. The various quality management issues with respect to teaching are studied and analysed which are used in HEIs. To understand the present state of the quality assurance in the educational institutions the factors are analysed.

In this study, we focused on the teaching and learning is the centre of quality assurance system. Quality assurance is not comprehensive in nature although it leads to quality management system. This study tries to give the internal and external factors which are to be modified to achieve the quality in teaching and learning.

Key Words: HEIs, Quality Assurance, Factors, Quality Management System and Quality Assurance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Universities have realised that higher education is a product that is to be delivered with quality of service to withstand the competition in the sector. In order to reframe their structure and product, universities and educational institutes measure customer satisfaction similar to the term present in marketing. It is been realised globally that the only source of survival depends on the service delivered along with the quality of the service (Aly and Akpovi, 2001; Kanji et al., 1999). When it comes to educational sector, it is definitely a challenge to design a module to study on service quality since the outcome of this sector deals with the transformation of an individual in terms of knowledge, behaviour and character. Hence, there cannot be a single definition of quality in higher education sectors.

The industrialized countries across the globe identified that the economy of the country depends on the skilled people. Therefore, higher education institutions are constantly being

increased in these countries to enhance science and technology disciplines in the education sector. Hence, it directly puts a pressure on colleges and universities to contain quality in the outcomes of their institutions. The question is how institutions can plan to meet this burning requirement of their nation. Well increasing the cost of education is the most common path followed in many countries. But "value for money" is also a concern to deal with. This paper narrates literature review on quality assurance in educational societies.

The organizations in each country work upon this context to define and assess quality of higher education institutes in their countries. However, these organizations or agencies did not serve the purpose and had no great influence on the perception of quality in this sector (Parri, 2006). Therefore, a simple concept of defining quality in educational sector is to define the term briefly and set some basic standards to assess the term. Compare the work framed by each institute, gather the outputs and draw a common conclusion in terms of questions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hassan et al (2008)

In this paper, the author studied about student satisfaction and service quality considering the private education institutions in Malaysia. The results of the study concluded that responsiveness, tangibility, assurance, empathy and reliability are the major factors influencing the relationship with student satisfaction.

Malik et al (2010)

Malik proposed a research on identifying the impact of service quality on student's satisfaction. The research was conducted among the higher education institutes present in Punjab and in Pakistan. The research implemented the SERVQUAL instrument to fetch the result of the study. The result shows that students were satisfied with the assurance, tangibles, empathy and reliability as stated in the above literature review. The results also demonstrated that students were not happy with the computer labs, parking facilities, cafeteria service and the system that was used for handling complaints.

Asaduzzaman et al (2013)

The author analysed the relationship between student satisfaction and service quality in non-governmental universities of Bangladesh. A sample of 550 students participated in the survey. The SERVQUAL dimensions were used in this analysis and the results show that there is a correlation between all the dimensions that were considered in this research with student satisfaction.

Sultan and Wong (2010)

Sultan and Wong developed an empirical test based on performance of higher education service quality model abbreviated as PHed. The model comprises of a sample of 360 students from universities of Japan. The final result indicated that among the dimensions that were considered, these eight dimensions namely: effectiveness, dependability, capability, competency, efficiency, unusual situation management, assurance and semester

and syllabus had a significant impact on student satisfaction.

Annamderula and Bellamkonda (2012)

This paper proposes a new measurement to analyse service quality in education sector called the HiEDQUAL. This was specifically developed for Indian based educational institutes. A sample comprising of 358 students were used to survey this proposed method. The findings show that there is a significant impact of teaching, course content, academic facilities, administrative services, support services and campus infrastructure on student's perception towards service quality.

Van Schalkwyk and Steenkamp (2014)

The author experimented on the term service quality in the private education sectors of South Africa. 984 students from the country were counted for this research using SERVQUAL instrument to collect service quality data. The observation shows that the five dimensions considered in the research has significant impact on the perception and satisfaction of service quality of students.

Poturak (2014)

Poturak examined about service quality and students' satisfaction in the educational institutes of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A sample of 300 respondents was considered and the results show that service quality has significant impact on the level of students' satisfaction.

Mang'unyi and Go vender (2014)

This research analysed customer satisfaction and service quality through student's perception of Kenyan private universities with the help of a sample size of 522 students. The HEDPERF framework was used to collect the research data and the results demonstrate that the variables of service quality had a significant impact on customer satisfaction and service quality.

Kundi et al (2014)

Kundi investigated on the impact of quality and service on customer satisfaction with regards to higher education. This study was oriented towards Gomal University in Pakistan considering a sample size of 200 students. The SERVQUAL instrument was used to collect data and the results made it obvious that there is a positive and significant impact of service quality variables on customer satisfaction.

Douglas et al (2006)

Douglas analysed various factors affecting student satisfaction in a university in England. The author concluded that quality of academic resources was not an important factor to affect student satisfaction. This study is not consistent with the observation made in the study proposed by Encabo (2011) who stated that academic resources has a significant impact on student's satisfaction.

Tuan (2012)

This research studies on the effect of service quality upon student satisfaction. The study

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was proposed in the universities of Vietnam and the results show administrative service quality has a positive impact on student's satisfaction. In contrast to this study Ahmed and Masud (2014) proved in their case study that administrative services are not of major concern in deciding the satisfaction level of students.

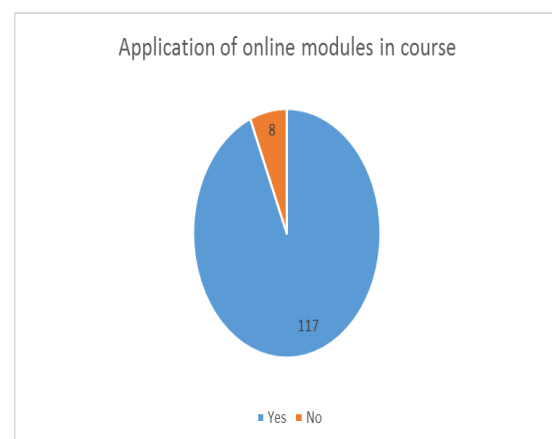
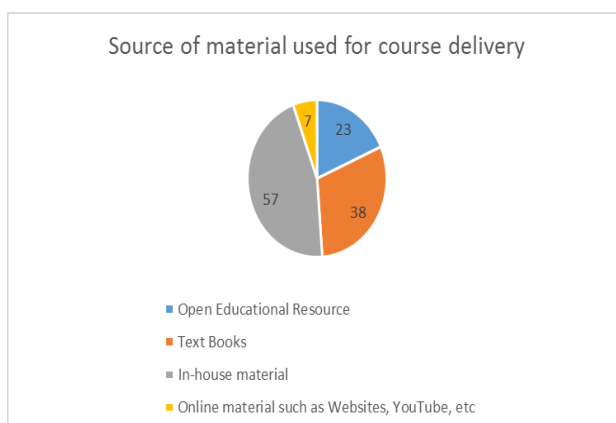
III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was framed to determine the quality of teaching as a service in the educational institutions. Hence, a survey approach was proposed for the teachers of institutional organizations through questionnaire. A soft copy version of the questionnaire was distributed to the teaching staffs and the results were graphically represented for further investigation.

Analysis

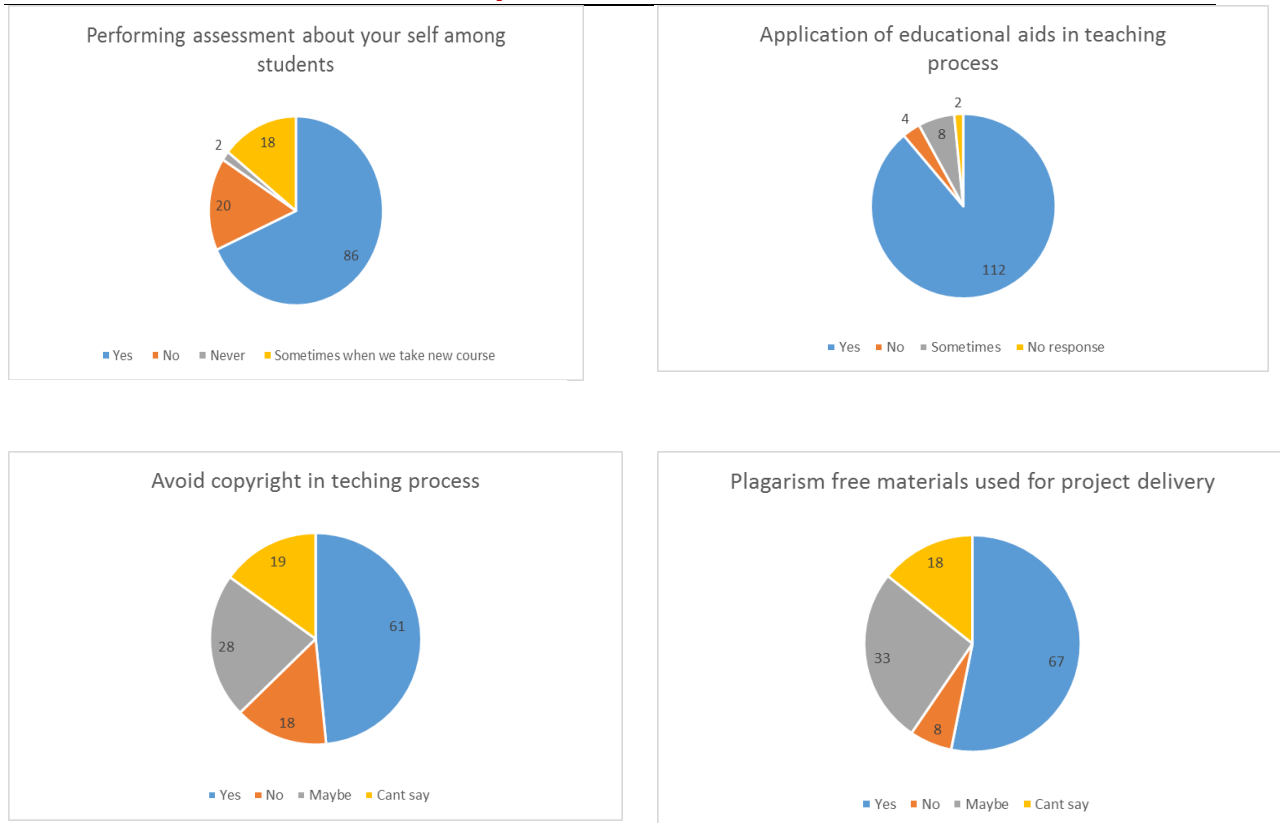
The analyses of the results are demonstrated graphically to have a comparison idea on the options. The questionnaire was designed only for the teachers and it focuses on service quality towards teaching and teachers aspects. Total of 126 respondents participated in the survey whose population includes; Nizwa College of Technology (Nizwa), Walijat College (Muscat), University of Buraimi (Buraimi) and Oman College of Management and Technology (Barka).

The population comprises of total 40 female respondents and 86 male respondents



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Important findings about the analysis

- 68% of the respondents are male.
- 30% of the respondents belong to Engineering branch.
- 75% of the respondents belong to the category of more than 8 years of experience.
- 46% of the respondents use in-house material to support their course module.
- 60% of the respondents use student-centered learning approach as teaching technique.
- 93% of the respondents use online modules to support their course material.
- 52% of the respondents use e-learning for online assessments.
- 57% of the respondents say that they receive regular feedbacks from concerned departments.
- 68% of the respondents perform assessment about themselves among students to get feedback.
- 72% of the respondents are comfortable and satisfied with the office environment.
- 73% of the respondents agree that there are methods and mechanisms to maintain fairness in student assessment.
- 78% of the respondents are happy with the class room ambience to conduct lectures.
- 89% of the respondents use educational aids in their teaching process.

- 53% of the respondents use plagiarism free materials for project delivery.
- 48% of the respondents avoid copyright in their teaching process.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Impact of experience of the faculty towards preferred teaching technique.

Null hypothesis H 0: There is no significant impact of experience of the faculty towards preferred teaching technique

Alternative hypothesis H 1: There is significant impact of experience of the faculty towards preferred teaching technique

Result: There is significant impact of experience of the faculty towards preferred teaching technique.

Hypothesis 2: Impact of classroom atmosphere in implementing educational aids in teaching mode.

Null hypothesis H 0: There is no significant impact of classroom atmosphere in implementing educational aids in teaching mode.

Alternative hypothesis H 1: There is significant impact of classroom atmosphere in implementing educational aids in teaching mode.

Result: There is no significant impact of classroom atmosphere in implementing educational aids in teaching mode.

IV. CONCLUSION

Service quality in education is a multi-dimensional factor that cannot be constrained to an individual opinion on evaluating service quality in terms of higher education. Some of the literature works identifies the important dimensions of service quality in higher education as competency of teaching staff, reputation of the educational institute, teaching method or techniques, reliability, responsiveness, availability of resources and ambience of the educational institute. This study concentrates its work on analysing service quality in teaching. The study was designed with a questionnaire that was proposed to the teaching staffs of four different educational institutes and results were gathered accordingly. The study reveals that the institutions should include both academic and non-academic dimensions that play a vital role in enhancing the student and teacher life experience. This includes teaching and non-teaching competency, institutional environment, teaching styles, facilities (libraries, computer labs, dormitories, etc.). This paper focuses only on service quality in teaching but it is important to be aware of service quality from student's perspective as well to define service quality and student satisfaction and identify the major areas of interest.

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Appendix
Questionnaire
Quality Assurance in HEI
A study in Higher Educational Institutes in Oman

Dear Respondents,

We are conducting a study to know the quality assurance management in Higher Educational Institutes in Oman. We are pleased to get your support in our study. We assure that the details are used for purpose of research only. (Please select your responses.)

1. Gender
 - a) Male
 - b) Female

2. Specialization/ Area
 - a) Business
 - b) Engineering
 - c) IT
 - d) Social Sciences/Humanities
 - e) Others (Pl Specify) _____

3. Teaching Experience (Years)
 - a) $1 \leq \text{Experience} \leq 2$
 - b) $2 < \text{Experience} \leq 5$
 - c) $5 < \text{Experience} \leq 8$
 - d) More than 8 years

4. Which material you are using in your course delivery process
 - a) Open Educational Resource
 - b) Text Books
 - c) In-House material
 - d) Online material such as Websites, YouTube ...etc

5. Which approach you prefer in your teaching method.
 - a) Traditional
 - b) Student Centered Learning
 - c) Content Focus Method
 - d) Blended Learning

6. Do you conduct any online applications (eLearning) in your teaching process like Moodle for your course?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

7. If the answer to using eLearning is Yes, which part of the following you are using:
 - a) As file depository only.
 - b) Live course delivery
 - c) Online assessments.
 - d) Chatting
 - e) Forum

8. Are you receiving feedback from your unit management?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Sometimes
 - d) Only during Probation

9. Do you take your self-assessment from the students during your course of delivery
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Sometimes when a take a new course

10. Do you feel that your office is comfortable to you for your daily works
 - a) Yes
 - b) Not at all
 - c) Can't say

11. Is there is a mechanism (policy) for ensuring fairness of student assessment in the Dept?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) May Be
 - d) Don't know

12. Do you have suitability of room for theoretical lectures in terms of size, ventilation and lighting, audio, hygiene?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Neutral

13. Do you use educational aids in your teaching and learning process
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Sometimes

14. Do you use plagiarism free material in your delivery process?



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- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) May Be
 - d) Can't say
15. Do you avoid the copyright in your teaching process?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) May Be
 - d) Can't say

Thank You for your valuable time and cooperation