

## HESQUAL – TOOL FOR ANALYSIS OF HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE QUALITY

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### **Abstract:**

Research paper aim was to assess the 17 attributes of four dimensions that are part of core educational quality theme in the HESQUAL model. HESQUAL – Higher Education Service Quality model was developed by Teeroovengadum et al, (2016) for measuring service quality in higher education. HESQUAL model contains five main themes that are thematic with a total of eleven dimensions. The administrative quality theme has two dimensions attitude and behavior of the staff, and administrative processes. Three dimensions are merged as a physical environment quality theme, that is learning setting, general infrastructure, and support infrastructure. The third theme comprises of core educational quality which has four dimensions; curriculum, the attitude and behavior of academics, pedagogy, and competence of academics. The last two dimensions are support facilities quality and transformative quality. notably, to obtain appropriate results, a survey was conducted on students that study in Higher.

*Keywords: Higher Education, quality, HESQUAL, quality of teaching, evaluation*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The higher education sector has been making notable changes in the recent past to make the quality of their services of a high standard. Even though Universities are considered as non-business entities, they operate like a business where service quality is urgently sought for. It is for this reason that Universities are seeking means to remain relevant since internationalism is at a high notch while government funding is gradually decreasing (Harvey and Williams, 2010), They seek to improve service quality to their clients (students) by creating a positive image that will attract more of their targeted clients (Halai, 2013). It is evident from studies done by researchers that client loyalty depends wholly on the quality of services rendered. Universities should, therefore, seek to improve the quality of services rendered and before the development of measures to improve, it is essential to measure the quality of services now. It is a necessity for institutions of higher education to use a certain tool for measuring service quality. HESQUAL is an instrument developed by Teeroovengadum et al, (2016) for measuring service quality in higher education.

Statistics show that in most countries across the world many of the institutions of higher education that are being established in the recent decades are private. The valid reason behind this is that most countries have reduced funding to public institutions hence paving the way for private investors to set up colleges and universities to accommodate the high number of students willing to further their studies. As a result, the increased number of universities has stimulated a concern over the quality of education offered. The right measures must be put in place to monitor and improve the quality of services offered in universities. Studies conducted on university students in various developing countries across the world shows that the HESQUAL model is termed as essential in measuring and improvement of service quality in institutions of higher education. The conclusion has been made and appropriate recommendations laid on the incorporation of HESQUAL model in higher education to measure and improve service quality.

## 2. DATA ANALYSIS

Each higher education service quality dimensions of HESQUAL can be analyzed through;

1. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis
  - i. Mean
  - ii. Standard Deviation
  - iii. Skewness
  - iv. Kurtosis
2. Independent samples t-test
  - i. T-test
  - ii. Degree of Freedom
  - iii. Significance Level
  - iv. Mean Difference
3. Inferential tests for group differences
  - i. Sample mean
  - ii. Standard Deviation
  - iii. T/F-test
4. One-way ANOVA.

In this research paper, we assessed the contribution of core educational quality theme to the HESQUAL model with the aim of achieving quality services in Higher Education.

## 3. CURRICULUM

The curriculum is essential in propelling the education quality. It marks as the map, of what should be taught in institutions of higher education (Bates, T., & Sangrà, A., 2011). Therefore, the curriculum explains the kind of education offered in an institution and is the first educational tool in measuring the quality of education.

### **3.1. Course Content and Course Objectives**

Course content and course objectives are a guide in the teaching of any course. They describe what should be taught in any direction. The two items are essential in measuring the quality of education in institutions of higher learning whereby they give a summary of the information contained in a module. It is therefore essential to check on the course content, and the objectives intended to decipher the quality of information in the course. The ultimate priority of an institution is to disseminate quality information to the students, and this can be achieved by primarily building an understandable and up to date course content and clear course objectives.

### **3.2. Usefulness of Module Content and Design to The Needs of a Student**

Module content is essential to both the lecturer and student. The benefits of the module content and design to a student are many. First, it allows the student to set forth his/her target of what he/she ought to have grasped by the end of the module. Secondly, it gives the student a chance to do personal reading and studies. A student who has intentions to carry out further studies on an individual basis can effectively use the module content as a guide for research, be it from online sources or the library. Thirdly module content caters for the revision needs of the student. A student must weigh if they have understood the module content. The module content will aid a great deal in revision as the student prepares for exams. Lastly, the module content and design will also help the student to recap when applying the knowledge gained in his or her field of profession. The module content and design are as well of great importance in shaping the quality of education an institution of higher learning.

### **3.3. Challenging Academics Standards of Programs to Ensure Students' Overall Development**

There are various academics standards of programs that can be improved to bring forth overall development of a student. The competitiveness of the students can determine the quality of education in terms of education and co-curricular activities as for the administration they should set aside funds to cater to ever increasing needs for those activities. Offering tests and assignments occasionally will also help challenge the quality of education and the student's overall performance. The tasks help in measuring the students understanding and progress. It is significant to focus on the achievements of the students and turn their failures around. The effect of this improves the student's self-esteem and determination to grow further (Concordia University, Portland, 2019). A student's confidence and high self-esteem contribute to the quality of education of the institution with improved behavior and excellent grades.

### **3.4. The Relevance of Course Content to The Future/Current Job of The Students**

Other than the current benefits to the student's education while in school, course content works well as a tool in nurturing of the student's future career. Once the student is employed in his field of study, the students' needs to occasionally to be supported the career path they have chosen. Course content enables the student to know that as an employee, you need to monitor your performance in the workplace. They can measure their success or failure at work by what is required of them from the course content they learned while in school. The success of a student in their area of expertise in the future implies the quality of education and related systems during their time in college. An employee whose work is impeccable shows that their career was shaped well and hence the education standards they were exposed to were quality.

## **4. ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR**

The approach of lecturers towards their work and their students dramatically contributes to the quality of knowledge they give to the students. Their behavior in school and classroom is also of great importance as they mirror the acceptable professional ethics to their students. Time management, follow-up of assignments and allowing active participation from students is the right attitude and behavior that can help shape the quality of education in institutions of higher learning (Mukhopadhyay, M., 2016).

#### **4.1. Lecturers Understanding Students' Needs**

It is ultimately essential for the lecturer to recognize the academic needs of his or her students. The quality of education in institutions of higher learning can be shaped well if the lecturers understand the educational needs of the students. The requirements may include the ability to understand student's self-esteem and autism cases among others. Academic needs are the core of the higher education systems and must be attended to ensure all students are catered for, during teaching. The lecturer should give personal attention to students who fail in tests and help them out. Such acts will result in consistently good results from students and mark the quality of education in the institution.

#### **4.2 Lecturers Giving Personal Attention to Students**

Knowing the needs of the students academically is attained by providing them with a chance for consultations on areas they failed to understand during class time. By so doing the lecturer will recognize the students and even offer extra classes to those interested. As a result, the quality of education in the institution will improve with the improvement in grades of individual students.

#### **4.3.The Availability of Lecturers In Guiding and Advising Students**

It is important for lecturers to give academic advice to students and guide them afterward. They can carry out career talks in the event of helping students make the right choices and allow students to shift to courses they feel best at. As a result, the students will be in a position to tackle and grow into careers they are well at, and this implies the high quality of education in the institution.

#### **4.4. Prevalence of The Culture In Collaboration and Sharing Among Lecturers**

Lecturers must embrace teamwork to see to it that they deliver quality education services to the students. There is power in coming together. Collaboration among lecturers ensures sharing of ideas related to their various faculties as well as seeking information and help on matters that concern them. If this culture is administered, then it means that service delivery in the institution will be of excellent quality. Suppose an issue emerges concerning the content taught by any of the lecturers, coming together and sharing will help solve the matter for the benefit of both the lecturers, institution and more so to the students. Lecturers are human as well, and they also experience issues that bother them. If the culture of sharing and teamwork is embraced, such matters can be resolved in good time to ensure each one of them is in the right sense and state of mind to deliver teaching services to the students. Every institution should enforce this culture for the benefit of all.

#### **4.5.The Behavior of Lecturers Instilling Confidence in Students**

Earlier on we discussed the response of students and how it can be improved or managed to challenge improved academic standards. In this, area, we term the behavior of lecturers in instilling confidence in students. As adults present in the institution of learning, lecturers must show good behavior since they act as the role models of the students they teach. A lecturer who has high self-esteem and has self-actualization is in a better position to instill confidence in his students.

On the other hand, if the lecturer is intimidated by the students themselves and is less bold, then the students are likely to follow suit. Notably, the moral behavior of the lecturers works best in building their confidence even before they instill the same into their students. Whatever they do in the presence of students is very important.

#### **4.6.Lecturers Appearing in Having The Students' Best Interest at Heart**

The goal of each lecturer should be to deliver quality services with the benefits of the students at heart. A dedicated lecturer must plan his or her work considering the interests of his students. The implication here is that the lecturer must consult with his students on how best they would want the knowledge given to them. For instance, if the students prefer to take-away assignments over seat-in regular assessment tests, then the lecturer might consider such interests. Offering notes of the module as soft copy is also essential and interest of the student that should be adhered to.

## **5. PEDAGOGY**

Pedagogy refers much broadly to the theory and the practice of education, and how it influences the growth of the learners. Pedagogy is taken to be an academic discipline. Hence, it is the study of how skills and knowledge are exchanged in an educational context, and it considers the interactions that take place during learning. The item is essential in developing the various ways of transmitting knowledge to students concerning their different needs (Hernon, P., & Altman, E., 2010). Pedagogy helps in coming up with the best method of transmitting knowledge like the use of slide shares, videos, and pictures to ensure students understand the intended concepts. It is therefore vital in adding quality to education in higher education with improved grades and practical knowledge.

### **5.1. The Use of Multimedia in Teaching**

The purpose of multimedia in education is an essential tool in service delivery for educators. The tool is used to ensure that the intended content is delivered appropriately. The use of multimedia involves the provision of information more practically. Multimedia provides that the information is given in phases to ensure that a concept is grasped singly and appropriately. Demonstrative pictures, graphs or tables can accompany the information per slide. The use of multimedia may also include videos for further understanding of the intended information.

### **5.2. Allowing Active Participation of Students in Their Learning Process**

Participatory learning is a vital tool in ensuring proper dissemination of knowledge to the students. During learning sessions, it is essential for lecturers to make it participatory. They can do this by asking questions while teaching, giving assignments, and allowing for group works. A presentation of assigned group work is also essential. The use of participatory learning by educators can bear fruits if it is well implemented through proper follow up of assigned work. It can be used to measure the level of understanding of the students and allow them to inquire about where they have not understood. It is therefore crucial for lecturers to incorporate the participatory learning tool into their purposed teaching scheme.

### **5.3. Provision of Regular Feedback to Students Concerning Their Academic Performance**

Giving routine tests and assignments to students is essential. However, what is more, critical is the provision of results of the tests to the students regularly. Results or instead of feedback allows the students to understand and identify their areas of strengths and weaknesses. It enables the students to improve on their strengths and work on their weaknesses. As a result, it will improve their overall performance at the end of the semester or academic year. Lecturers also get the opportunity to identify areas they did well in knowledge delivery and those they failed at. It will then call for them to work extra hard to ensure the weak areas are well taken care of for the benefit of both.

Feedback also gives a chance for students to feel the worth of the amount they pay to be taught and how appropriately their time was used. They can give credit to the lecturers that did well and those that failed. Feedback can also be obtained from participation in the classwork as observed by the lecturer.

### **5.4. Well-Designed Examinations and Continuous Assessment to Promote the Enhancement of Knowledge and Skills**

Continuous assessment tests and quizzes are essential in developing feedback from the content taught in a course. Other than classwork assignments mentioned earlier, it is crucial for lecturers and the institutions to organize on the continuous assessment tests that can be done in the middle of the semester and the results provided before the end of semester exams. The continuous assessment tests will not only capture the level of understanding on personal analysis of the student but also in the revision and preparations of examinations that come at the end of the semester. It is therefore essential for the institution and lecturers to organize for the tests in good time. Results for the end of the semester examinations should also be provided in good time before the next semester to awaken student from their comfort zone.

## **6. COMPETENCE**

The ability of lecturers to deliver information as it is required to the best of their knowledge is competence. Determining such abilities in lecturers will help ensure that they provide the best quality of experience to students and hence contributing to the quality of education in the institution.

### **6.1. Theoretical Knowledge, Qualifications and Practical Knowledge of Lecturers**

The skills and practical knowledge (experience) that lecturers hold are essential in value addition in their line of duty. It is crucial to acknowledge the academic prowess and expertise in the work the responsibility assigned to ensure they deliver the best and are allocated fields they are familiar with. With this, they help in adding quality to education (Turner, D. A., 2011).

### **6.2. Communication Skills of Lecturers**

Communication is a critical factor in knowledge delivery. The use of good communication is vital in the delivery of information to the students. The excellent discussion starts with the knowledge of the appropriate language to use all the students to know that. The word of choice should be used with simple vocabularies that can be understood with ease. The lecturer must communicate audibly and must as well be fluent in his speech. It also implies that the lecturer should be able to use body language that includes facial expressions, postures among others. Proper communication also mentions that the lecturer should allow feedback from his audience to ensure they understand. The lecturer must take it upon himself to capture the attention of his students through puns and jokes and ensure there is class order when teaching. In the event of participatory learning, he or she should encourage the use of turn-taking skills to provide order in the classroom. Proper communication, therefore, marks a great tool in knowledge dissemination.

### **6.3. Lecturers Being Up to Date in Their Area Of Expertise**

It is essential for lecturers to be up to date in their area of expertise which requires knowledge concerning possible changes in their area. It is necessary for lecturers to be consistently updated with their field of work as this would aid in molding their careers and ensuring that they deliver quality services to their students. Whatever improvements are made in their line of work they should have firsthand information and act upon it accordingly.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Conclusively, following the information above, HESQUAL has proved to be an essential tool in measuring and improving service quality in institutions of higher learning. Firstly, HESQUAL has proved to be necessary for measuring the quality of education through the curriculum imposed in institutions of higher learning. It has helped in analyzing the importance of course content and objectives towards the quality of education in higher education. Secondly, the tool has been and can be used in the analysis of the role of attitude and behavior more so of lecturers towards improving service quality in their line of duty. Thirdly, the tool has proved helpful in the analysis of the role of multimedia in the quality of higher education. Lastly, the tool has proved essential in analysis of competence as a factor towards measuring and improving service quality in institutions of higher learning. Therefore, having researched well, it is necessary to recommend to all institutions of higher learning across the world to use HESQUAL in measuring and improving service quality. If the tool is used accordingly, then the quality of education will be highly rated.

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