# EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITIES SERVICE QUALITY THROUGH SERVQUAL METHOD

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Universities play a crucial role in societal development and growth, with higher education expanding every day. Therefore, it is essential for universities to prioritize the quality of educational services to ensure student satisfaction. Evaluating the quality of educational services is a fundamental step in improving higher education. This research is an applied study that uses descriptive and exploratory methods for data collection. The statistical population for this research includes students from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University and the Faculty of Management at Tehran University. To gather information, a standard Servqual questionnaire was used to measure the significance of each educational service criterion on student satisfaction levels. In the end, the results have been reviewed and analyzed.

Keywords: Evaluation; Service Quality; Servqual model; Quality Gap.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, universities can't succeed without paying attention to the wishes and needs of students (Wilkinson, 2013). Research shows that the effect of service quality in obtaining customer satisfaction and loyalty is much greater than the effects of the characteristics of that product or service (Parasuraman et al., 1988). On the other hand, universities play an essential role in the development of countries, and students are one of the most important areas of education in universities (Owens, 2017; Rashid & Rokade, 2019). Therefore, nowadays in all scientific centers of the world, students' opinions about all fields of educational services provided in universities are considered as the main reason for monitoring the quality of education (Mirzahosseini et al., 2009). Quality and productivity represent the elements for establishing a globally competitive position (Đorđević et al., 2013). The ultimate goal of higher education is to create suitable opportunities for students to increase their abilities, in such a way that it helps them to be effective for themselves and society (Boud, 2000). Paying close attention to

the process of current developments in higher education indicates that they should pay attention various crises and bottlenecks in the to development of quality. Most universities try to be more successful than other universities in this field with strategies such as quality support (Damme, 2001). Knowing what the students expect from the services provided by the universities makes it possible to know the important features of the services (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). O'Neill and colleagues (2005) define service quality in higher education as the difference between what students need to get and what they correctly perceive. The quality of services observed by the students causes the satisfaction of the students, and the positive results obtained from the quality of the services cause the satisfaction of the students (Marzo Navarro et al., 2005).

Evaluation of service quality is a fundamental factor for quality improvement (Huang et al., 2019; Suuroja, 2003). Therefore, the quality of services is one of the important steps in carrying out quality development programs (Enaiti Navinfar et al., 2019). Service is an intangible process, and

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requires some level of contact with the customer (Parasuraman, 1998). Communication with the customer may be brief and short, but it must be there for the service to be complete (Seth et al., 2005). Services are different from day to day and even hour to hour for different customers. The servqual model is one of the extended models in service quality evaluation in services organizations (Maghsoodi et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2017). This model tries to measure the quality of services. This model helps customers to compare the services provided by different organizations. Measuring the quality of services is the proper understanding of the services that organizations must provide and whether these services are suitable for the needs of customers or not, and also comparing the quality of services of one organization with other organizations (Seth et al., 2005). This measurement determines the degree of difference between customer expectations and organizations' services (Parasuraman, 1998). Rajesh and Suri (2018) state that the Servqual model is a standard model for evaluating customer satisfaction with service resources. Manv researches have been done to check the quality of services (Schneider & White 2004). Kehiari Haqit K. and Kehiari Haqit A. (2016) have investigated the role of service quality improvement in improving brand performance in hospitals. Ahmadi Askari (2014) have investigated and the relationship between service quality, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty among customers and the results show that there are differences in the nature of the relationship between quality goals and different behavioral dimensions. Taghipour et al. (2014) analyzed the relationship between the quality of educational services and learning skills among agriculture students of Tarbiat Modares University. Below we give enough of the general approach to enable the reader to follow the paper with ease.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1. Is there a significant relationship between the quality of education and student services in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University and the perceived quality of services?
- 2. Is there a significant relationship between the quality of education and student services in the Faculty of Management at Tehran University and the perceived service quality?
- 3. Is there a significant difference between the perceived services quality in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini

International University and the perceived services quality in the Management Faculty at Tehran University?

4. Is there a gap between the expected and existing conditions of the quality of educational services and its dimensions on the perceived quality of services in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University?

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to the purpose of the current research, the type of research is applied research and it is considered exploratory based on the descriptive data collection method. The statistical population of this research is the students in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University and the Faculty of Management at the University of Tehran, and to collect information, the servgual standard questionnaire is used to measure the importance of each feature of educational services. The questionnaire includes two parts: demographic characteristics and questions related to quality assessment. Questions with a five-point Likert scale starting from very high and ending with very low. The number of 37 questions in the five dimensions of service quality includes the following: tangibles 5 questions, Reliability 6 questions, assurance 13 questions, empathy 7 questions, and responsiveness 6 questions. In this research, an available sampling method has been used. Using Cochran's sampling method, 313 questionnaires were distributed in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University, and 308 responses were collected. Also, 344 questionnaires were distributed in Tehran University's Faculty of Management, and 339 responses were collected. And Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to check the reliability, which was the total reliability value of the questionnaire of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University (0.93) and the Faculty of Management at Tehran University (0.91), which indicates validity and reliability. It is suitable as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Data analysis of this research was done using SPSS-22 software for descriptive and inferential statistics. At the level of descriptive statistics, indicators such as frequency, mean, percentage and standard deviation were used, and at the level of inferential statistics, one-sample T-test, independent T, and one-way analysis of variance were used.

Table 1: The value of Cronbach's alpha according to the quality of services of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International

Scale	Coefficient Alpha of facts	Coefficient alpha of expectations
The entire questionnaire	0.93	0.77
Tangible	0.70	0.66
Reliability	0.75	0.65
Assurance	0.81	0.66
Empathy	0.74	0.55
Responsiveness	0.77	0.74

Table 2: The value of Cronbach's alpha according to the service quality of Management Faculty at Tehran University

Scale	Coefficient Alpha of facts	Coefficient alpha of expectations
The entire questionnaire	0.91	0.85
Tangible	0.78	0.73
Reliability	0.77	0.74
Assurance	0.79	0.63
Empathy	0.70	0.59
Responsiveness	0.76	0.61

## DISCUSSION

Descriptive data of the distribution of respondents based on the characteristics of gender, and educational levels are shown in Table 3. According to Table 4, in the samples of the Faculty of Management at Tehran University, 8% are doctoral students, and 55% are master students (63% postgraduate), which is more than the total number of respondents who studied at the undergraduate level. In the samples of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University, 2% are doctoral students, and 38% are master students (40% postgraduate. 60% of students are in bachelor's degree.

Is there a significant relationship between the quality of educational and student services in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University and the perceived quality of services?

In order to examine the quality of education and student services and their dimensions on perceived services quality in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University, a sample T-test was conducted. In Table 5, the average of the five dimensions of service quality, the T coefficient, and the significance coefficient of the data are reported. Because the significant coefficients for the dimensions of assurance, reliability, and empathy of services quality are higher than the test error level (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is confirmed and at the confidence level of 95%, it can be said that the quality of services perceived by the respondents in the Faculty of Social Sciences has no significant relationship with the average of the society with a value of 3, and it is accepted.

Faculties	Gender Frequency		Frequency percentage	Cumulative Frequency percentage	
	Man	133	43	43	
Social Science	Female	175	57	100	
	Total	308	100	-	
	Man	143	42	42	
Management	Female	196	58	100	
	Total	339	100	-	

Table 3: Frequency distribution of the samples according to gender

Is there a significant relationship between the quality of education and student services in the Faculty of Management at Tehran University and the perceived service quality?

In order to examine the quality of education and student services and their dimensions on perceived service quality in Faculty Management at Tehran University, a one-sample T-test was conducted. In Table 6, the average of five dimensions of service quality, the amount of t, and the coefficient of the significance of the data are reported. Because the significant coefficients for all five dimensions are lower than the test error level (0.05). At the confidence level of 95%, it can be said that the quality of services perceived by the respondents of

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the Faculty of Management, the quality of services, and its dimensions are in a suitable state. Regarding all 5 dimensions, the null hypothesis, that is, the assumption that the community average has no significant relationship with value 3, is accepted.

Faculties	Grade	Frequency	Frequency percentage	Cumulative frequency percentage
	B.Sc.	182	60	60
Social Science	M.Sc.	119	38	98
	PhD	7	2	100
	Total	308	100	-
	B.Sc.	125	37	37
Management	M.Sc.	186	55	92
	PhD	28	8	100
	Total	339	100	-

 Table 4: Frequency distribution of samples according to educational level

 Table 5: The results of the t-test to examine the components of service quality on the perceived service quality of students in the Faculty of Social Sciences

	The assumed value of $T = 3$						
Dimensions of Services Quality	Average	t-Value	Freedom Degree	Significance	D. 66	Confidence Level 95%	
				Coefficient	Differences	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Services Quality	3.094	3.34	307	0.001	0.094	0.038	0.149
Tangible	3.068	2.029	307	0.000	0.068	0.002	0.135
Reliability	3.021	4.044	307	0.043	0.138	0.708	0.205
Assurance	3.021	0.951	307	0.342	0.021	-0.307	0.881
Empathy	3.052	1.590	307	0.113	0.052	-0.126	0.118
Responsiveness	3.261	7.335	307	0.000	0.261	0.191	0.332

 Table 6: The results of the t-test to examine the components of service quality on the perceived service quality of students in the Faculty of Management

	The assumed value of $T = 3$							
Dimensions of Services	A		Freedom	Significance	Diff	Confidence Level 95%		
Quality	uality Average t-Value Degree Coefficient Difference	Differences	Lower Limit	Upper Limit				
Services Quality	3.247	10.768	338	0.000	0.247	0.202	0.292	
Tangible	3.292	8.669	338	0.000	0.292	0.226	0.359	
Reliability	3.175	4.998	338	0.000	0.175	0.106	0.243	
Assurance	3.241	9.189	338	0.000	0.241	0.189	0.292	
Empathy	3.194	7.639	338	0.000	0.194	0.142	0.246	
Responsiveness	3.358	11.843	338	0.000	0.358	0.292	0.418	

Is there a significant difference between the perceived service quality in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University and the perceived service quality in the Management Faculty at Tehran University?

According to the values in the previous Tables, in order to compare the quality of educational services and dimensions of tangible quality, reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness on the quality of services perceived in the Faculty of Management at Tehran University and the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University, independent samples t-test was conducted. Therefore, if the P-value is smaller than 0.05, the decision is made to reject the null hypothesis, that is, the assumption that the averages of the two groups are equal. Although according to the P-value in the table above, all 5 dimensions are greater than 0.05, it can be said that the existence of a difference in the average of the two samples is not significant at the significance level of 5%, and the quality of services perceived by the students from the two universities The opinion does not have a significant difference, so the researcher's hypothesis is not accepted at the significance level of 5%.

Is there a gap between the expected and existing conditions of the quality of educational services and its dimensions on the perceived quality of services in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University?

In order to compare the expected and existing conditions of the quality of educational services and its dimensions on perceived service quality, a paired t-test was performed in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University. For this purpose, the following statistical assumptions were made.

- **H0:** There is no significant relationship between the average expected situation and the existing situation (in each component).
- **H1:** There is a significant relationship between the average expected situation and the existing situation (in each component).

In this test, if the significance coefficient is less than the error level, the null hypothesis is rejected and the significant relationship between the average expected state and the existing state is confirmed. According to the results shown in Table 7, the significant coefficients obtained for the comparison of the average of the existing and expected conditions of service quality and its dimensions in the Faculty of Social Sciences are equal to zero and less than the error level of 0.05. Therefore, the variable of educational service quality and students' perceived service quality is different from the average of the current situation and the expected situation. Considering that the upper and lower limits of services quality and dimensions are in the negative range, and the average of the current situation is less than the desired situation. Therefore, in terms of the quality of educational services and dimensions in the faculty, the current situation is reported to be inadequate compared to the desired situation, and there is a gap it should be improved.

According to the results shown in Table 8, the comparison of the average of the existing and expected conditions of the quality of educational services and its dimensions on the perceived quality of services in the Faculty of Management at Tehran University is equal to zero and less than the error level of 0.05. Therefore, the quality variable of educational services and the average of the existing situation and the expected situation are different. Considering that the upper and lower limits of the quality of the service are in the negative range, and the average current situation is less than the optimal situation. The quality of services in the Faculty of Management is reported to be poor compared to the desired situation, there is a gap and it needs to be improved.

<i>q</i>	The assumed value of T = 3								
Dimensions of Services	Situation			Significance	Differences	Confidence Level 95%			
Quality	Situation	Average	t-Value	Coefficient	Differences	Lower Limit	Upper Limit		
Services Quality	Available	3.094	-8.771	0.000	-0.721	-0.158	-0.249		
Services Quality	Desirable	3.815	-0.//1	0.000	-0.721	-0.138	-0.249		
Tangible	Available	3.068	-2.553	0.000	-0.814	-0.017	-0.135		
Tangible	Desirable	3.882	-2.333			-0.017	-0.135		
Reliability	Available	3.138	-2.465	0.000	-0.731	-0.021	-0.194		
Kenability	Desirable	3.869	-2.403	0.000		-0.021	-0.194		
Aggunonag	Available	3.021	-9.599	0.000	-0.929	-0.974	1.475		
Assurance	Desirable	3.950	-9.399	0.000	-0.929		1.475		
Empothy	Available	3.052	7 000	-7.900 0.000	-0.841	-0.212	-0.352		
Empathy	Desirable	3.893	-7.900		-0.841	-0.212	-0.332		
D	Available	3.261	-4.164	0.000	-0.549	-0.075	-0.211		
Responsiveness	Desirable	3.810	-4.104	0.000	-0.349	-0.075	-0.211		

 Table 7: The results of the t-test to compare the average of the existing and expected situations of the quality of educational services on the perceived quality of the social sciences faculty.

qua	The assumed value of T = 3								
Dimensions of Services	Situation	Awamaga	t-Value	Significance	Differences	Confidence Level 95%			
Quality	Situation	Average	t-value	Coefficient	Differences	Lower Limit	Upper Limit		
Services Quality	Available	3.247	-17.515	0.000	-0.507	-0.514	-0.563		
Services Quanty	Desirable	3.761	-17.313	0.000	-0.307	-0.314	-0.303		
Tangible	Available	3.292	11 452	-11.452 0.000	-0.518	-0.525	-0.606		
Taligible	Desirable	3.817	-11.452			-0.525	-0.000		
Reliability	Available	3.175	-13.374	0.000	-0.636	-0.646	-0.728		
Kenability	Desirable	3.821	-15.574	0.000		-0.040	-0.728		
Assurance	Available	3.241	-11.644	0.000	-0.385	-0.39	-0.450		
Assurance	Desirable	3.631	-11.044	0.000			-0.430		
Empathy	Available	3.194	-14.094	0.000	-0.489	-0.496	-0.557		
Empathy	Desirable	3.690	-14.094	0.000	-0.409	-0.490	-0.337		
Responsiveness	Available	3.358	-17.871	0.000	-0.651	-0.659	-0.723		
Kesponsiveness	Desirable	3.017	-17.071	0.000	-0.031	-0.039	-0.723		

Table 8: The results of the t-test to compare the mean of the existing and expected conditions of service
quality on the perceived service quality of the Faculty of Management

*T-test of independent communities comparing the quality of education and student services and its dimensions on perceived services quality in two faculties.* 

In order to compare the quality of educational services and the quality of services perceived by students in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University and the Faculty of Management at Tehran University, a t-test of independent samples was conducted. Considering that in the test of equality of variances in service quality, it is Sig<0.05, as a result, the variances for

the variable of educational service quality and its dimensions on the perceived service quality of students are considered equal. Therefore, in the ttest for the equality of the means, assuming the equality of the variances of the two communities (Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Management), sig<0.05 was obtained, which shows that there is no significant relationship between the quality of educational services and its dimensions on the perceived quality of services from the perspective of students in these two faculties.

 Table 9: The results of independent societies t-test to compare the quality of educational services and its dimensions in the quality of services perceived by students in two faculties.

Dimensions of	E	quality of	of variances test	Ε	quality of me	ans test
Services Quality	F-Value	Sign Coeff	Result	t-Value	Freedom Degree	Significance Coefficient
Services Quality	5.26	0.022	Equality of variances is accepted.	4.376	645	0.005
Tangible	4.55	0.033	Equality of variances is accepted.	4.601	645	0.000
Reliability	7.70	0.006	Equality of variances is accepted.	0.858	645	0.393
Assurance	5.29	0.022	Equality of variances is accepted.	5.419	645	0.000
Empathy	5.26	0.020	Equality of variances is accepted.	3.536	645	0.019
Responsiveness	0.173	0.678	Equality of variances is accepted.	2.353	645	0.406

## CONCLUSIONS

The university has two quantitative and qualitative dimensions, and its moderate and balanced growth

should be done in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions in line with each other. so that it can play a key role in the all-round progress of the society. Emphasizing its quantitative dimension

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without paying attention to its qualitative dimension creates numerous problems. Therefore, along with quantitative growth, its qualitative development is also very important. Quality assessment is considered one of the important steps for quality improvement because by doing this process defects are identified. And it is a basis for further decisions. Quality assessment is one of the important steps for quality improvement. Because by doing this process, defects are identified, and it is a basis for further decisions. The purpose of the current research was to evaluate the quality of services provided by the Faculty of Social Sciences at Imam Khomeini International University and the Faculty of Management at Tehran University. Therefore, according to the results obtained from Tables 5 and 6, it can be said that the service quality perceived by the respondents in the Faculty

quality perceived by the respondents in the Faculty of Social Sciences does not have a significant relationship with the community average with a value of 3, and it is accepted. Tables 7 and 8 also show that the quality of educational services provided is not up to their expectations, so there is a gap between the quality of services provided and the quality of services that students expect. Therefore, the biggest gap observed in the Faculty of Social Sciences is in the dimension of assurance, empathy, and reliability. Also in the management faculty, the biggest gap is in the dimension of reliability, and empathy, and they should be improved.

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## EVALUACIJA KVALITETA USLUGE UNIVERZITETA PUTEM SERVQUAL METODE

Univerziteti igraju ključnu ulogu u društvenom razvoju i rastu, pri čemu se visoko obrazovanje širi svakim danom. Zbog toga je od suštinske važnosti da univerziteti daju prioritet kvalitetu obrazovnih usluga kako bi osigurali zadovoljstvo studenata. Vrednovanje kvaliteta obrazovnih usluga je fundamentalni korak u unapređenju visokog obrazovanja. Ovo istraživanje je primenjuje deskriptivne i istraživačke metode za prikupljanje podataka. Statistička populacija za ovo istraživanje uključuje studente sa Fakulteta društvenih nauka Međunarodnog univerziteta Imam Homeini i Fakulteta za menadžment Univerziteta u Teheranu. Da bi se prikupile informacije, korišćen je standardni SERVQUAL upitnik za merenje značaja svakog kriterijuma obrazovne usluge u odnosu na nivo zadovoljstva studenata. Na kraju, rezultati su pregledani i analizirani.

Ključne reči: Evaluacija; Kvalitet usluge; Servqual model; Jaz u kvalitetu.