

ABSTRACT

SERVICE QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: EXPECTATIONS VERSUS EXPERIENCES OF THE MBA STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA, DHAKA, BANGLADESH

BY

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The purpose of this study was to determine if a gap analysis model (SERVQUAL) of service quality measurement could be appropriately applied to higher education. This research was aimed at the assessment of the service quality as per the expectations and perceptions of the MBA students of the Faculty of Business Administration and the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of the University of Dhaka. It focused on the five dimensions of service quality in the broad variety of services provided by the University of Dhaka to its MBA students. In doing so, this research methodology also considered specific demographic factors such as age, gender, working experience, occupation, and income, which might have influence the expectations and perceptions of the respondents.

The research design included seven research questions, with seven null hypotheses, which were grouped into two groups by the researcher. The first group consist of one hypothesis used to measure the difference between students' expectations and perceptions of service quality provided by the university of Dhaka to its MBA students in terms of demographic factors-age,

gender, working experience, occupation and income. And the second group consisted of five hypotheses, which were used to measure the differences between students' expectations and perceptions of service quality provided by the University of Dhaka to its MBA students in terms of five dimensions of SERVQUAL instrument-tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

As a result of the findings, the researcher concludes that, gaps between expectations and experiences of Dhaka University MBA students do exist. The practical value in identifying expectation/experience gaps at the University of Dhaka lies in the use of this information in quality improvement initiatives. Dhaka University wishing to improve the quality of services delivered to its MBA students would do well to address those items exhibiting the largest gaps at this university.

As a result of the study, the researcher also concludes that, knowledge of an MBA student's age, gender, working experience, occupation and income is of little value in predicting overall satisfaction or in predicting the size gap scores for that student. There seems to be very little practical difference between the gap scores or overall satisfaction scores of IBA and Business Administration faculty students or between male or female students.

Because the gap scores were inversely related to the overall satisfaction scores of MBA students, this would seem to indicate that the Dhaka University programs designed to reduce the size of gap scores, thereby improved service quality, would also improve the overall satisfaction of all its MBA students.