

SERVICE QUALITY IN SCHOOLS: SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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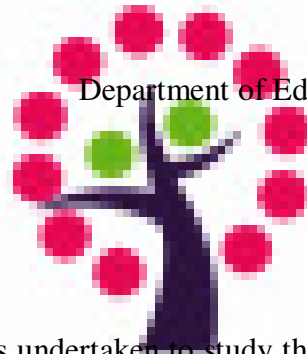
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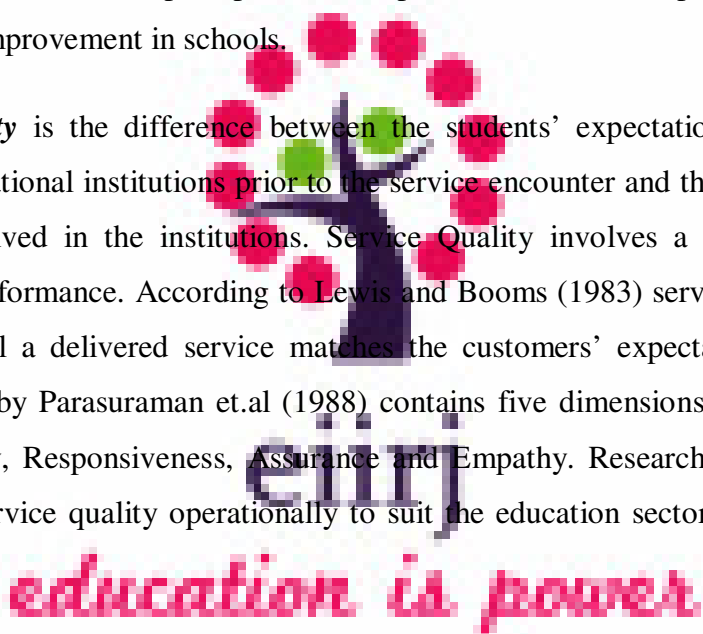
Abstract

The present investigation was undertaken to study the perceptions and expectations of secondary school students regarding the quality of services in schools on the basis of board affiliation. The researcher had selected 1281 secondary school students from schools of Greater Mumbai as sample for this study. Service quality rating scale by Parasuraman and Zeithaml(1985) was used as tool for the study. In order to describe the data collected, numerical determinants like mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis were worked out. ANOVA and t-test was done to find out the significance difference between the groups. The study found that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of secondary school students on service quality dimensions i.e. reliability, responsiveness, and assurance, whereas a significant difference was found in the perceptions on tangibles and empathy dimensions of service quality on the basis of board affiliation. However there is a significant difference in the expectations of secondary school students on service quality dimensions i.e. tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy on the basis of board affiliation.

Introduction:

The globalization and privatization of education are great causes for concern of educational institutions particularly schools. Educational quality analysis is gaining popularity throughout the world, leading growing competition in education industry. To stay competitive in the community the schools are using various tools and method to assure quality. Education comes under service sector, therefore the feedback from the exact customer i.e. students about their perception and expectation of services provided plays a vital role in quality improvement in schools.


Service quality is the difference between the students' expectations for service performance of educational institutions prior to the service encounter and their perceptions of the service perceived in the institutions. Service Quality involves a comparison of expectations with performance. According to Lewis and Booms (1983) service quality is a measure of how well a delivered service matches the customers' expectations. Service quality model given by Parasuraman et.al (1988) contains five dimensions of quality i.e. Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. Researcher has defined the dimensions of service quality operationally to suit the education sector, which are as follows

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- i. **Tangibles:** Appearance of well maintained school buildings, equipment of laboratories with latest materials, outstanding teachers, notice, PTA meetings, telephone, e-mail, materials used for communicating with the students and parents.
 - ii. **Reliability:** The school performs the service right the first time. The school also honors what it promises. It conducts fair admissions, a fair and correct test result, solutions of the parents' and students' complains judiciously.
 - iii. **Responsiveness:** It involves schools' willingness to timeliness of service immediately. Solution of problems of parents and students are immediately

- iv. provided by the principal, teachers and office staff.
- v. **Assurance:** It involves schools' knowledge of the students' problems and courtesy shown by the teaching and non teaching staff to the students so that they will feel safe in the process of teaching learning in the school.
- vi. **Empathy:** The school takes care of student's specific needs and gives individual attention. The school always has students' interest at heart.

Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives of the study:

1. To study secondary school students' a) perception and b) expectation of following service quality dimensions in Greater Mumbai
 - i. Tangibles
 - ii. Reliability
 - iii. Responsiveness
 - iv. Assurance
 - v. Empathyon the basis of board affiliation
2. To compare secondary school students' a) perception and b) expectation of following service quality dimensions in Greater Mumbai
 - i. Tangibles
 - ii. Reliability
 - iii. Responsiveness
 - iv. Assurance
 - v. Empathyon the basis of board affiliation

Hypothesis of the Study

Following is the hypothesis of the study:

- There is no significant relationship in the secondary school students' a) perception and b) expectation of following service quality dimensions in Greater Mumbai

i. Tangibles

ii. Reliability

iii. Responsiveness

iv. Assurance

v. Empathy

on the basis of board affiliation

Design of the Study

Sample: Stratified random sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample. The final sample consists of 1281 students of IXth standard of 28 selected English medium schools of Greater Mumbai. This final sample consists of 743 SSC, 342 ICSE and 196 CBSE school students.

Tools Used: The service quality rating scale prepared by Parasuraman and Zeithaml(1985) modified by the researcher was used for this study. Each parallel statement focuses on an aspect of one of the dimensions of service quality and has a response scale ranging from one to seven. The scale is used by students to indicate the extent or degree he or she agree or disagree with the statement.

Method: Normative survey method was adopted to find the difference between perception and expectation of SSC, ICSE and CBSE school students on service quality dimensions in schools.

Analysis of Data: The analysis of the complex factors into the simplest ones and their


interpretation fulfills the desired purposes and objectives. Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis was used to describe the data. ANOVA and t-test were used to test the hypotheses.

Findings and Conclusions of the Study

Hypotheses were tested and the results were interpreted.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in secondary school students' a) perception and b) expectation of following service quality dimensions in Greater Mumbai:

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- i. Tangibles
 - ii. Reliability
 - iii. Responsiveness
 - iv. Assurance
 - v. Empathy
- and their board affiliation

This hypothesis is tested separately for each service quality dimensions on the basis of board affiliation.

Table 1: F ratio for Perception and Expectation Scores on Service Quality Dimensions on the Basis of Board Affiliation

Service Quality Dimensions		Source of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square (Variance)	Obtained F-ratio
Tangibles	P	Among Means	2	179.17	89.59	3.54*
		Within Groups	1278	32,325.75	25.29	
	E	Among Means	2	163.82	81.92	5.34[#]
		Within Groups	1278	19,619.25	15.35	
Reliability	P	Among Means	2	3.74	1.87	0.04[@]
		Within Groups	1278	62,215.74	48.68	
	E	Among Means	2	1,675.27	837.64	26.05[#]
		Within Groups	1278	41,097.83	32.16	


Responsive-ness	P	Among Means	2	55.94	27.97	0.91[@]
		Within Groups	1278	39,541.42	30.94	
	E	Among Means	2	781.92	390.96	18.01[#]
		Within Groups	1278	27,740.71	21.71	
Assurance	P	Among Means	2	35.63	17.82	0.60[@]
		Within Groups	1278	37,871.09	29.63	
	E	Among Means	2	766.56	383.28	20.20[#]
		Within Groups	1278	24,254.85	18.98	
Empathy	P	Among Means	2	348.35	174.18	3.17[*]
		Within Groups	1278	70,239.43	54.96	
	E	Among Means	2	1,605.97	802.99	19.43[#]
		Within Groups	1278	52,827.39	41.34	
P=Perception E=Expectation						

*Significant at 0.05 level, #Significant at 0.01 level, @ Not Significant

Table 1 reveals that F ratio for the scores on perceptions of tangibles and empathy dimensions and expectations of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy dimensions of service quality for the schools on the basis of board affiliation exceeds the tabulated F-ratio at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Thus the null hypotheses are rejected. However F ratio for the scores on perceptions of reliability, responsiveness and assurance dimensions neither exceeds nor equals to F-ratio at 0.05 level. Thus the null hypotheses are accepted.

The difference in the perceptions and expectations of dimensions of service quality in secondary schools in Greater Mumbai on the basis of board affiliation was further analyzed by t-test.

Table 2: Board Affiliation Wise Difference in the Perception and Expectation of Tangibles Dimension of Service Quality as Perceived by Secondary School Students



Service Quality Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	Obtained t-value
Tangibles	SSC & ICSE	743	19.86	5.20	2.59[#]
	ICSE	342	19.04	4.44	
	ICSE & CBSE	342	19.04	4.44	0.43[@]
	CBSE	196	19.24	5.33	

		CBSE	196	19.24	5.33	1.41[@]
		& SSC	743	19.86	5.20	
		SSC	743	22.44	4.05	2.60[#]
		& ICSE	342	23.09	3.68	
	E	ICSE	342	23.09	3.68	0.55[@]
		& CBSE	196	23.27	3.81	
		CBSE	196	23.27	3.81	2.76[#]
		& SSC	743	22.44	4.05	
P=Perception E=Expectation						

#Significant at 0.01 level, @ Not Significant

Table 2 reveals that for perceptions of tangibles dimension of service quality for SSC and ICSE, expectations of tangibles dimension for SSC and ICSE, and CBSE and SSC school students, the obtained t-value is greater than the critical t-value at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypotheses are rejected. However the obtained t-value for the scores of perception of tangibles dimension of service quality for ICSE and CBSE, CBSE and SSC school students, and expectation of tangibles dimension for ICSE and CBSE school students is neither equal to nor exceeds the critical t-value at 0.05 level. Thus the null hypotheses are accepted in these cases.

Table 3: Board Affiliation Wise Difference in the Expectation of Reliability Dimension of Service Quality as Perceived by Secondary School Students

Service Quality Dimensions		Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	Obtained t-value
Reliability	E	SSC	743	26.03	6.01	6.78[#]
		&				
		ICSE	342	28.47	5.15	0.79[@]
		&				
		ICSE	342	28.47	5.15	
&				4.71[#]		
CBSE	196	28.10	5.19			
		CBSE	196	28.10	5.19	
		&				
		SSC	743	26.03	6.01	
E=Expectation						

#Significant at 0.01 level, @ Not Significant

Table 3 reveals that the obtained t-value for the scores of expectations of reliability dimension of service quality for SSC and ICSE school students, and CBSE and SSC school students are greater than the critical t-values at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected in these cases. However the obtained t-value for the scores of expectation of reliability dimension of service quality for ICSE and CBSE school students is neither equal to nor exceeds the t critical value at 0.05 level. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted in this case.

Table 4: Board Affiliation Wise Difference in the Expectation of Responsiveness Dimension of Service Quality as Perceived by Secondary School Students

Service Quality Dimensions		Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	Obtained t-value
Responsiveness	E	SSC	743	21.53	4.89	6.39[#]
		&				
		ICSE	342	23.32	4.26	2.03*
		ICSE	342	23.32	4.26	
		&				
		CBSE	196	22.53	4.42	
CBSE	196	22.53	4.42	2.78[#]		
&						
		SSC	743	21.53	4.89	
E=Expectation						

*Significant at 0.05 level, #Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 reveals that the obtained t-value for the scores on secondary school students' expectations of responsiveness dimension of service quality in SSC and ICSE board schools, CBSE and SSC board schools, ICSE and CBSE board schools are greater than the critical t-values at 0.01 level and 0.05 level. Thus the null hypotheses are rejected in these cases.

Table 5: Board Affiliation Wise Difference in the Expectation of Assurance Dimension of Service Quality as Perceived by Secondary School Students

Service Quality Dimensions		Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	Obtained t-value
Assurance	E	SSC	743	22.21	4.64	5.65[#]
		&				
		ICSE	342	23.77	3.97	0.06[@]
		ICSE	342	23.77	3.97	
		&				
		CBSE	196	23.79	3.86	
CBSE	196	23.79	3.86	4.79[#]		
&						
		SSC	743	22.21	4.64	
E=Expectation						

#Significant at 0.01 level, @ Not Significant

Table 5 reveals that the obtained t-value for the scores on expectations of assurance dimension of service quality for SSC and ICSE school students, and CBSE and SSC school students are greater than the critical t-values at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypotheses are rejected in these cases. However the obtained t-value for the scores of expectation of assurance dimension of service quality for ICSE and CBSE board students is neither equals to nor exceeds the critical t-values at 0.05 level. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted in this case.

Table 6: Board Affiliation Wise Difference in the Perception and Expectation of Empathy Dimension of Service Quality as Perceived by Secondary School Students

Service Quality Dimensions		Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	Obtained t-value
P	SSC & ICSE	SSC	743	22.00	7.64	2.58[#]
		ICSE	342	23.21	6.97	
	ICSE & CBSE	ICSE	342	23.21	6.97	1.57[@]
		CBSE	196	22.20	7.29	
Empathy	CBSE & SSC	CBSE	196	22.20	7.29	0.34[@]
		SSC	743	22.00	7.64	
	SSC & ICSE	SSC	743	25.43	6.66	6.34[#]
		ICSE	342	28.03	6.07	
E						

		ICSE	342	28.03	6.07	2.57*
		&				
		CBSE	196	26.62	6.14	2.37*
		&				
		CBSE	196	26.62	6.14	2.37*
		&				
		SSC	743	25.43	6.66	
P=Perception E=Expectation						

*Significant at 0.05 level, #Significant at 0.01 level, @ Not Significant

Table 6 reveals that for perceptions of empathy dimension of service quality, the obtained t-value for SSC and ICSE school students, and expectations of empathy dimension for SSC and ICSE school students, ICSE and CBSE school students, and CBSE and SSC school students are greater than the critical t-value at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected. However the obtained t-value for the scores of perception of empathy dimension of service quality for ICSE and CBSE school students, and CBSE and SSC school students is neither equal to nor exceeds the critical t-value at 0.05 level. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted in this case.

Major Findings of the Study

Tangibles Dimension

1. A significant difference was found in the secondary school students' perception on tangibles dimension on the basis of board affiliation

- There is a significant difference in the secondary school students' perception on tangibles dimension of service quality in SSC and ICSE schools. The mean score on perception of tangibles dimension of service quality of SSC students is greater than the mean scores of ICSE students. This implies that SSC students have perceived better tangibles services such as appearance on their school building, physical facilities, laboratory and other equipments, school staff, and notices and other communication materials in their schools as compared to ICSE students.
 - There is no significant difference in the secondary school students' perception of tangibles dimension of service quality in ICSE and CBSE schools, and CBSE and SSC schools. This implies that ICSE and CBSE school students, and CBSE and SSC school students have almost similar perceptions of quality of tangibles services in their school.
2. A significant difference was found in the secondary school students' expectation on tangibles dimension on the basis of board affiliation
- There is a significant difference in the expectation of tangibles dimension of service quality of secondary school students in SSC and ICSE schools, and CBSE and SSC schools. The mean scores on expectation of tangibles dimension of service quality for CBSE school students is greater than the mean scores of ICSE school students followed by SSC school students. This implies that the expectation in tangibles dimension of service quality of CBSE school students is greater than the expectations of ICSE school students followed by SSC school students.
 - There is no significant difference in the expectation of tangibles dimension of service quality of secondary school students for ICSE and CBSE school students. This implies that ICSE and CBSE students have expected the quality of tangibles services such as appearance on their school building,

physical facilities, laboratory and other equipments, school staff, and notices and other communication materials in their schools to the same extent.

Reliability Dimension

3. No significant difference was found in the secondary school students' perception on reliability dimension on the basis of board affiliation
4. A significant difference was found in the secondary school students' expectation on reliability dimension on the basis of board affiliation
 - There is a significant difference in the secondary school students' expectations of reliability dimension of service quality in SSC and ICSE schools, and CBSE and SSC schools. The mean scores for the expectation of reliability dimension of service quality for ICSE school students are greater than the mean scores of CBSE students followed by SSC school students. This implies that the expectations of ICSE and CBSE students are higher than the expectations of SSC school students as far as the reliability is concerned.
 - There is no significant difference in the secondary school students' expectations of reliability dimension of service quality in ICSE and CBSE schools. This implies that ICSE and CBSE students have expected the quality of reliability services such as schools' ability to perform the promised service right for the first time, solves students complains judiciously etc in their schools to the same extent.

Responsiveness Dimension

5. No significant difference was found in the secondary school students' perception on responsiveness dimension on the basis of board affiliation

6. A significant difference was found in the secondary school students' expectation on responsiveness dimension on the basis of board affiliation
 - There is a significant difference in the expectation of responsiveness dimension of service quality of secondary school students in SSC, ICSE and CBSE schools. The mean values for the expectation of responsiveness dimension of service quality of ICSE students is greater than the mean scores of CBSE students followed by SSC students. This implies that ICSE school students expect their schools to be more responsive as compared to SSC school students.

Assurance Dimension

7. No significant difference was found in the secondary school students' perception on assurance dimension on the basis of board affiliation
8. A significant difference was found in the secondary school students' expectation on assurance dimension on the basis of board affiliation
 - There is a significant difference in the secondary school students' expectations of assurance dimension of service quality between SSC and ICSE school students, and between CBSE and SSC school students. The mean value for the expectation of assurance dimension of service quality of CBSE school students is greater than the mean scores of ICSE students followed by SSC students. This implies that the expectations of CBSE and ICSE school students in assurance dimension of service quality are greater than SSC students.
 - There is no significant difference in the expectation of assurance dimension of service quality of secondary school students for ICSE and CBSE school students. This implies that both ICSE and CBSE school students have

similar expectations in terms of assurance dimension of service quality.

Empathy Dimension

9. A significant difference was found in the secondary school students' perception on empathy dimension on the basis of board affiliation

- There is a significant difference in the perception of empathy dimension of service quality of secondary school students in SSC and ICSE schools. The mean value for the perception of empathy dimension of service quality of ICSE students is higher than the mean scores of SSC school students. This implies that ICSE school students have better perception of empathy dimension in terms of school taking care of student's specific need and interest at heart and giving individual attention to the students in their schools, than SSC school students.

- There is no significant difference in the secondary schools' perception of empathy dimension of service quality of secondary school students in ICSE and CBSE schools, and CBSE and SSC schools. This implies that ICSE and CBSE school students, and CBSE and SSC school students have similar perceptions of empathy dimension of service quality in their schools.

10. A significant difference was found in the secondary school students' expectation on tangibles dimension on the basis of board affiliation

- There is a significant difference in the secondary school students' expectations of empathy dimension of service quality in SSC and ICSE schools, ICSE and CBSE schools, and CBSE and SSC schools. The mean value for the expectations of empathy dimension of service quality of ICSE students is greater than the mean scores of CBSE students followed by SSC students. This implies that the expectations of empathy dimension of service quality in terms of school taking care of student's specific need and interest at heart, and giving individual attention to the students in their schools of

ICSE school students is greater than the expectations of CBSE school students followed by SSC school students.

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