

“To Study the Perceptions of Students towards Service Quality in Aided colleges of Haryana India”

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ABSTRACT

The present study entitled “internal marketing and service quality in colleges in Haryana” was conducted in the colleges of Haryana state of India with the objectives of studying perceptions of faculty towards internal marketing, perceptions of students towards service quality and to find out the relationship between internal marketing and service quality in colleges. The study found that internal marketing practices as well as service quality provided in colleges were significantly better in aided and unaided colleges as compared to that in government colleges. It was affirmed by the significantly higher agreement on 9 of the 11 significant statements related to the internal marketing among faculty of aided and unaided colleges as compared to that among faculty of government colleges. Similarly, the significantly higher agreement was found on 8 out of 12 statements related to service quality among students of aided and unaided colleges as compared to that among students of government colleges. There was positive relationship between internal marketing and service quality in colleges. To make the education service-oriented, and not profit-oriented, government educational institutions should be strengthened in terms of internal marketing and service quality.

INTRODUCTION

INTERNAL MARKETING

As has been shown, considerable attention in the literature has been and continues to be paid to the potential benefits of IM programs. The IM concept is a complement to the traditional marketing concept and holds that an organization’s internal market of employees can be influenced most effectively and hence motivated to customer-consciousness, market-orientation and sales mindedness flowing from a marketing-like internal approach and by applying marketing-like activities internally (Gronroos 1981).

Internal marketing is a philosophy, strategy, and process. IM as a philosophy describes a customer-orientated culture in which everyone understands the strategic intent or purpose, and is motivated to participate in implementing the strategy. Integrating front-and backstage activities requires a shared and common understanding of objectives and desired outcomes, as well as clarity of the roles of these activities in the service delivery process. Further at the strategic level IM should create an environment that fosters customer consciousness amongst employees. Thus the concept is concerned with challenging the attitudes and behavior of employees to them more customer-conscious. IM can also be taken as a statement of strategy for the internal marketing process that identifies a product, target customers and capabilities. The products are jobs and the work environment that influence employees’ motivations. The target customers are top management; supervisors; contact personnel; and support personnel. It can be argued that IM requires two capabilities - communication and attitude management.

SERVICE QUALITY

Service sector has become the dominant element in industrialized and developing economies. Literature on services marketing reveals that the service sector encompasses a varied and complex range of organizations. Service industry is now a dominant sector and has been instrumental in changing the way marketers and customers think.

Service quality is an elusive, indistinct and abstract concept (Sachdev and Verma, 2004). described “service quality as a global judgement or attitude relating to the superiority of the service and it continues to increase in importance as service industry grows and outnumbers manufacturing organizations”. The quality by “classifying it into five generic categories relevant to service organizations.

1. **Transcendent:** Quality is defined as innate excellence that is identified in a relationship between individual’s salience and perceived quality.

2. **Product Led:** Quality is equal to the units of goodness served as a part of package of goods and services, more be the number of such units, higher will be the perceived quality.

3. **Supply Led:** Quality here refers to the 'conformance to requirements'. The focus of quality is internal rather than external. It is assessed in terms of organization's ability to supply what is required.

4. **Customer Led:** This approach describes quality as organization's ability to assess customer's requirement and satisfy such requirements. This definition is more appropriate where high contact between customer and service provider is required.

5. **Value Led:** Quality in this context is the customer's evaluation of quality, price and availability taken together. The customer will perceive value on the basis of what equation h derives from the combination".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the perceptions of students towards service quality provided to them in the colleges

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

There is no significant difference between government, aided and unaided colleges students with respect to their perception regarding service quality.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The relevant studies done in the past have been reviewed and presented in this chapter.

Berry et al (1985) described the concept of internal marketing as viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products, and then endeavoring to offer internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization. **Gronroos (1984)**, supports that if an organization adopts Internal Marketing then its employees can be influenced most effectively and hence become motivated towards customer consciousness, market orientation and sales mindedness. This can be done by applying a marketing-like internal approach and marketing like activities internally.

Christopher et al. (1991) discussed Internal marketing as an important activity in developing a customer-focused organization. He further explained that fundamental aim of internal marketing is to build up internal and external customer awareness and eliminate functional barriers to organisational effectiveness. **Payne et al (1991)** suggest that in order to implement IM, external marketing tools, including market research, segmentation, developing a marketing mix and controlling marketing activity, may be used within the organization. In another study conducted on lecturers of private university in West Java, Sihombing and Gustam (2007) tested the effects of internal marketing on job satisfaction leading to organizational commitment. Internal marketing was found to be a significant predictor of increased organizational commitment. The main agenda of Internal marketing as a concept is to develop customer conscious employees that will constantly deliver better-quality service to the external marketplace. Internal marketing is a technique implemented by the organization to ensure excellent service via attraction, retention and motivation of service-minded employees.

The research methodology used to achieve the objectives of the study is given hereunder. State of Haryana (India) is the locale of the study. A list of all the 21 districts of Haryana state was prepared along with the number of colleges in the district. Then three districts having the highest number of colleges were selected for the study. The selected districts came to be Rohtak (72 colleges), Sonapat (70 colleges) and Mohindergarh (66 colleges). From each selected district three government colleges, three aided colleges and three unaided colleges were randomly selected. From each type of colleges, 100 teachers and 150 students were interviewed for data collection.

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY PROVIDED BY COLLEGES

In order to find out the level of agreement/disagreement with the various statements on the basis of ownership status of colleges, weighted average scores were calculated. Weights of 5,4,3,2,1 were assigned respectively to the responses 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Neither Agree Nor Disagree', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree'. A higher score indicates greater agreement with the statement than the lower score.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY: GOVERNMENT COLLEGES

Table showed that the weighted average scores range from as high as 4.12 on the statement S33 (Faculty at my college has the knowledge to answer students' questions) to as low as 2.23 on the statement (My college has latest audio-visual equipment). The Table indicated that out of 40 statements, majority of the students agree to 31 (77.50%) statements. The weighted average scores in all these statements range from 4.12 to 3.30.

Table : Perceptions of students towards service quality provided by their colleges

No.	Statements	Govt. colleges	Aided colleges	Unaided colleges	F-ratio
S1	The physical facilities at my college are attractively designed.	2.91	2.81	2.86	1.18
S2	Faculty at my college is professional and smart appearing.	3.25	3.63	3.44	5.34**
S3	My college has latest audio-visual equipment.	2.31	2.23	2.26	1.84
S4	Materials associated with the services of faculty at my college (such as handouts, notes, case-studies) are very well-prepared.	3.31	3.39	3.35	1.11
S5	Physical facilities at my college are well- maintained	2.82	2.86	2.84	0.48
S6	Physical facilities at my college are adequate	3.07	2.96	3.01	1.33
S7	When a student has a problem; faculty at my college show a sincere interest in solving it.	3.76	3.94	3.85	1.85
S8	Faculty at my college is consistently courteous with students.	3.88	3.92	3.90	0.51
S9	Faculty at my college instills confidence in students	3.95	4.04	3.99	0.97
S10	Faculty at my college gives students personal attention.	3.69	3.95	3.82	3.85*
S11	Faculty at my college has students' best interests at heart.	3.66	3.84	3.74	3.58*
S12	Faculty at my college is never too busy to respond to students' requests.	3.74	3.86	3.80	1.36
S13	Faculty at my college is always willing to help students	3.93	3.96	3.94	0.31
S14	Faculty treats all the students with equity	3.76	3.54	3.64	5.25**
S15	My college is highly reputed in the society	3.95	3.93	3.94	0.26
S16	Students of my college are highly regarded by the industry	3.74	3.76	3.75	0.27
S17	My college is the top choice of aspiring students	3.69	3.64	3.66	0.57
S18	Overall evaluation system at my college is fair and just.	3.33	3.21	3.26	1.41
S19	Vision of my college is communicated to all the students.	3.05	3.04	3.06	0.22
S20	My college contributes towards welfare of society	3.34	3.22	3.29	1.49
S21	Beliefs and values at my college are consistent with social beliefs and values.	3.31	3.27	3.29	0.40
S22	Policies and procedures at my college are consistent with my personal value set.	3.30	3.16	3.23	0.78
S23	Services offered at my college contribute towards my life goal fulfillment.	3.58	3.41	3.50	4.43**

S24	At my college services to the students are provided as per the given schedules.	3.44	3.53	3.48	1.44
S25	At my college exact schedules of lectures and other activities are conveyed to the students	3.66	3.56	3.61	1.34
S26	My college has class timings convenient to all their students	3.29	3.64	3.46	6.72**
S27	My college gives prompt service to students.	3.30	3.52	3.41	5.43**
S28	Office Hours at my college are planned according to convenience of students	3.24	3.58	3.41	5.47**
S29	Faculty and staff are always available during their assigned work hours.	3.50	3.78	3.64	6.12**
S30	Faculty at my college performs well every time.	3.91	3.75	3.83	3.26*
S31	Services offered contribute towards fulfillment of my professional aspirations.	3.87	3.76	3.81	1.76
S32	Faculty at my college understands the specific needs of their students.	3.75	3.99	3.87	7.04**
S33	Faculty at my college has the knowledge to answer students' questions.	4.12	3.93	4.03	5.01**
S34	Faculty at my college has vast knowledge and expertise	4.03	3.96	3.99	0.98
S35	Faculty at my college is always abreast with the latest developments in their subjects.	3.90	3.83	3.86	0.92
S36	Faculty at my college has the capability to contribute towards the holistic development of students.	4.01	3.92	3.96	1.16
S37	Records at my college are always error-free.	2.41	2.54	2.47	3.07*
S38	Administrative/support staff at my college is courteous and responsive.	2.54	2.64	2.59	1.52
S39	Administrative/support staff at my college always perform error-free service	2.41	2.53	2.47	1.73
S40	Administrative/support staff at my college perform service right first time	2.46	2.54	2.50	1.12

The weighted average score of six statements out of 31 was within the range of 4.12 to 3.92 indicating a relatively strong degree of agreement. These statements are S33, S34, S36, S9, S15 and S13 in that order. These statements indicated that most of the students perceived that faculty at their college is highly knowledgeable and expert in their respective fields and possess knowledge to answer students' questions. The students strongly believed that the faculty was always willing to help their students, instil confidence in them and contribute towards their holistic development. The scores of 25 statements indicated that the students 'agree' with these statements with a mean score ranging from 3.91 to 3.24. These statements are: S30, S35, S8, S31, S7, S14, S32, S12, S16, S10, S17, S25, S11, S23, S29, S24, S20, S18, S4, S21, S27, S22, S26, S2 and S28. All these statements highlighted that most of the students perceived their faculty as responsive and courteous. Students feel that their faculty gives them personal attention, understands their needs and problems and do whatever they could do to help them. Students trust their faculty to be having the best interest of their students in their hearts. Students believe that their faculty is fair and just in the overall evaluation and treat students with equity. The colleges are perceived to be contributed towards fulfillment of personal and professional aspirations of the students. Most of the students perceived that their respective institutions are preferred by the industry for campus placements and are top choice of the aspiring students. The services provided in the college are prompt, activities and lecture schedules are convenient to the students and services are delivered in accordance with the given schedules. The study material provided by the faculty is perceived to be well prepared by the students.

The weighted average scores of 5 statements (S6, S19, S1, S5, S38) range from 3.07 to 2.54, indicating that most of the students neither agreed nor disagreed to these statements. These statements signify that most of the students are in doubt about the physical facilities of their colleges to be attractive, adequate and well-maintained. Most of the students are neutral about the responsive and

courteous behavior of the administrative and support staff. The students are not sure regarding the communication of the vision of college to the students.

The remaining statements (S40, S39, S37, S3) with a mean score of 2.46 to 2.23 indicated that most of the students disagreed to these statements. This signifies that most of the students do not find the records of the colleges to be accurate and performance of their administrative and support staff to be error-free and right first time. Students feel that their colleges are not equipped with latest audio-visual aids.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY:AIDED COLLEGES: The Table showed that the weighted average scores ranged from as high as 4.04 on the statement S9 (Faculty at my college instil confidence in students as low as 2.31 on the statement (My college has latest audio-visual equipment). The Table indicated that out of 40 statements, majority of the students agreed to 29 statements. The average scores in all these statements ranged from 4.04 to 3.22.

The average score of 8 statements out of 29 was within the range of 4.04 to 3.93 indicating a relatively strong degree of agreement. These statements are S9, S32, S34, S13, S10, S7, S33 and S15 in that order. Most of the students strongly believed that their faculty understands their specific needs and instills confidence in them. Most of the students hold high opinion regarding the knowledge and expertise of their faculty and their capability to answer their questions. The students feel that their faculty gives them personal attention and is willing to help and solve any of the problems of their students. The scores of 21 statements indicated that the students 'agree' with these statements with a mean score ranging from 3.92 to 3.22 These statements are: S36, S8, S12, S11, S35, S29, S31, S16, S30, S17, S26, S2, S28, S25, S14, S24, S23, S4, S21 and S20 in that order. All these statements highlighted that most of the students perceived their faculty has the best interest of their students in their hearts and is capable of contributing towards the holistic development of the students. Students believe that their faculty treats students with equity. The colleges are perceived to be contributed towards fulfillment of personal and professional aspirations of the students. The study material provided by the faculty is perceived to be well prepared by the students. The value set of the colleges is perceived to be consistent with the social value set. Most of the students perceive that their respective institution is regarded highly by the industry, is highly reputed in the society and is the top choice of the aspiring students. The services provided in the college are prompt, activities and lecture schedules are convenient to the students and services are delivered in accordance with the given schedules.

The average scores of 10 statements (S18, S22, S19, S6, S1, S5, S38, S40, S37, and S39) range from 2.29 to 1.81, indicating that most of the students neither agreed nor disagreed to these statements. These statements signify that most of the students are in doubt about the physical facilities of their colleges to be attractive, adequate and well-maintained. Most of the students are neutral about the responsive and courteous behavior of the administrative and support staff. This signifies that most of the students do not find the records of the colleges to be accurate and performance of their administrative and support staff to be error-free and right first time. The students are not sure regarding the communication of the vision of college to the students. Most of the students are not clear about the overall evaluation system of the college to be fair and just. Only one statement with a score of 2.31 indicates the disagreement on the part of students regarding the availability of latest audio-visual equipment.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY:UNAIDED COLLEGES: The Table further showed that in unaided colleges the weighted average scores ranged from as high as 4.12 on the statement S33 (Faculty at my college has the knowledge to answer students' questions) to as low as 2.41 on the statements S37 and S39 (Records at my college are always error-free) and (Administrative/support staff at my college always perform error-free service). The Table indicated that out of 40 statements, majority of the students agree to 31 (77.50%) statements. The weighted average scores in all these statements ranged from 4.03 to 3.23. Out of these statements, scores of 25 statements indicated that the students 'agree' with these statements with a mean score ranging from 3.90 to 3.23. These statements are: S8 (Faculty at my college is consistently courteous with students); S32 (Faculty at my college understands the specific needs of their students); S35 (Faculty at my college is always abreast with the latest developments in their subjects.); S7 (When a student has a problem; faculty at my college show a sincere interest in solving it.); S30 (Faculty at my college performs well every time.); S10 (Faculty at my college gives students personal attention.); S31 (Services offered contribute towards fulfillment of my professional aspirations); S12 (Faculty at my college is never too busy to respond to students' requests); S16 (Students of my college are highly regarded by the industry); S11 (Faculty at my college has students' best interests at heart); S17 (My college is the top choice of aspiring students); S14 (Faculty treats all the students with equity); S29 (Faculty and staff are always available during their assigned work hours); S25 (At my college exact schedules of lectures and other activities are conveyed to the students); S23 (Services offered at my college contribute towards my life goal fulfillment); S24 (At my college services to the students are provided as per the given schedules); S26 (My college has class timings convenient to all their students); S2 (Faculty at my college is professional and smart appearing); S27 (My college gives prompt service to students); S28 (Office Hours at my college are planned according to convenience of students); S4 (Materials associated with the services of faculty at my college such as handouts, notes, case-studies are very well-prepared); S21 (Beliefs and values at my college are consistent with social beliefs and values); S20 (My college contribute towards welfare of society); S18 (Overall evaluation system at my college is

fair and just) and S22 (Policies and procedures at my college are consistent with my personal value set) in that order. All these statements highlighted that students perceive their faculty to be very responsive, courteous and considerate for students' problems and needs.

The image of their colleges is positive as it is perceived to be consistent with the social and personal value sets. The colleges are perceived as the preferred educational institution by the students as well as the society in general. Students also perceive that their respective institutions are preferred by the industry for campus placements. As far as consistency and convenience of services is considered, the students feel that the services provided at their colleges are planned keeping in view the convenience of the students and the services by the faculty and office staff are provided as per the given schedules.

The weighted average score of 6 out of 31 statements was within the range of 4.03 to 3.94 indicating a relatively strong degree of agreement. These statements are S33 (Faculty at my college has the knowledge to answer students' questions); S9 (Faculty at my college instil confidence in students); S34 (Faculty at my college has vast knowledge and expertise); S36 (Faculty at my college has the capability to contribute towards the holistic development of students); S13 (Faculty at my college is always willing to help students); S15 (My college is highly reputed in the society) in that order. These statements signify that most of the students perceive their faculty to be highly knowledgeable and competent, contributes towards the overall development of the students and are always supportive. The students believe their colleges to be having a high repute in the society.

The weighted average scores of six statements ranged from 3.06 to 2.5, indicating that most of the students neither agreed nor disagreed to these statements. These statements are S19 (Vision of My college is communicated to all the students); S6 (Physical facilities at my college are adequate); S1 (The physical facilities at my college are attractively designed); S5 (Physical facilities at my college are well- maintained); S38 (Administrative/support staff at my college is courteous and responsive); S40 (Administrative/support staff at my college perform service right first time) in that order. These statements signify that most of the students are not sure about the physical facilities of their colleges to be attractive and adequate. Most of the students were in doubt about the responsiveness and effectiveness of the administrative and support staff. A score of 3.06 for statement S19 indicates that students were not certain about the vision of their colleges.

The remaining 3 statements with a mean score of 2.47 to 2.26 indicated that most of the students disagree to these statements. These statements are S37 (Records at my college are always error-free); S39 (Administrative/support staff at my college always perform error-free service) and S3 (My college has latest audio-visual equipment). This signifies that most of the students do not find the records and performance of their administrative and support staff to be up to the mark. Most of the students feel that their colleges lack the latest audio-visual equipment, this observation might be because of the fact the relatively newer institutions are investing extensively in the innovative technology.

COMPARISON OF GOVERNMENT, AIDED AND UNAIDED COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY

As far as statements related to knowledge, competence and effectiveness of faculty is concerned, opinion of government college students is most positive as compared to aided and unaided college students indicated by a relatively high score in statements S33 (Faculty at my college has the knowledge to answer students' questions); S34 (Faculty at my college has vast knowledge and expertise); S36 (Faculty at my college has the capability to contribute towards the holistic development of students); S35 (Faculty at my college is always abreast with the latest developments in their subjects.); S30 (Faculty at my college performs well every time); S31 (Services offered contribute towards fulfillment of my professional aspirations.); S14 (Faculty treats all the students with equity); S23 (Services offered at my college contribute towards my life goal fulfillment).

On the contrary, in case of statements depicting openness and personalization in faculty-student interaction, the opinion of aided and unaided college students is more positive as compared to government college students indicated by relatively high score in statements S7 (When a student has a problem; faculty at my college show a sincere interest in solving it); S8 (Faculty at my college is consistently courteous with students); S9 (Faculty at my college instills confidence in students); S10 (Faculty at my college gives students personal attention); S11 (Faculty at my college has students' best interests at heart); S12 (Faculty at my college is never too busy to respond to students' requests); S13 (Faculty at my college is always willing to help students); S29 (Faculty and staff are always available during their assigned work hours) and S32 (Faculty at my college understands the specific needs of their students). Degree of agreement of aided and unaided college students concerning convenience and consistency of services provided to them, is stronger as indicated by relatively high score to statements: S24 (At my college services to the students are provided as per the given schedules); S26 (My college has class timings convenient to all their students).

The differences in weighted average scores of government, aided and unaided college students have been found statistically significant for 12 out of 40 statements.

Therefore, the hypothesis 2 “there is no significant difference in the service quality provided by different types of colleges” is partially rejected as 12 of 40 statement exhibited significant differences in service quality provided by government, aided and unaided colleges.

RECOMENDATIONS

The internal marketing is stronger in aided and unaided colleges as compared to that in government colleges. This may be due to the profit-orientation in aided and unaided colleges and service-orientation in government colleges. Therefore, the goals of the educational institutions should be subject to the social service and the profit should work under this goal. This may help to impart pro-society education to the youth of the nation.

The service quality is again found to be better in aided and unaided colleges as compared to the government colleges. This may again be correlated with the profit-orientation under private management and service-orientation under government management. All this has been done under the policies of privatization. Therefore, in order to be service-orientation, government educational institutions should be strengthened.

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