



Perception of students towards service quality across districts of Kashmir division

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Purpose: In this paper, an effort has been made to explore the service quality perceived by the students in schools of Kashmir division. The success of any organisation depends up on how the services being offered to the customers (students).

Abstract: - The objective of this study is to analyse the six determinants of service quality in public and private schools across three districts namely Baramulla, Kupwara and Srinagar. Data were collected from three district of Kashmir divisions with the sample size of 1976 students studying in these schools. The respondents were asked to fill up the questionnaire. It comprises of six determinants of service quality developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988. i.e Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, tangibility and courtesy.

Findings: - perception of student in terms of the service quality offered by teachers in the private and public school are of same.

Research Gap: - A fewer study has been made to explore the service quality of private and public schools in particular to Kashmir division.

Keywords:-*Empathy, tangibility, responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance and Courtesy, service, service quality.*

Introduction:-

- Service is something, which can be experienced but cannot be touched or seen. A service is any activity or benefit which a service provider can offer to the receiving end and it does not result in the transfer of ownership or anything. Services offered by service providers cannot be seen & touched, as they are intangible activities. Service user can specify about that particular service satisfaction only after availing it for some period of time. **Palmer (2011)** defines service as “the production of essentially intangible benefits, either in its own right or as a significant element of a tangible product, which through some form of exchange, satisfies an identified need.” The service sector has grown considerably since in

1970s and services are now playing an increasingly important role in the economy of many nations (Abdullah 2006). There appears to be a positive relationship between economic development of a country and its service sector. In United Kingdom approximately 77% of the workers are employed in the service sector. The services sector a heterogeneous sector comprising a wide range of activities including trade, hospitality (hotels, restaurants), transportation, communication, entertainment, health, education, public services and so on. Ramaswamy (1996), described service as “the business transactions that take place between the service provider and the receiver (customer) in order to produce outcome that satisfies the customer” Zeithmal and Bitner (1996) defined service as “deeds, processes, and performances.”Yong (2000) reviewed definitions of service and noted the following features of service that are important to understanding of the concept. First, service is a performance. Quality is defined by the customer’s impression of the service provided Berry et al. (1988), and Parasuraman et al. (1985).. There are certain Service Quality parameters as defined by the professional bodies in order to measure the service quality of corresponding service sector. Technical quality relates to what is provided during the service process (Knowledge, Tangibles, Technical solutions,). Functional quality, on the other hand, refers to how the service is provided, the interpersonal behaviors’ contributed by service employees during the service. The most common definition of service quality, nevertheless, is the traditional, in which quality is viewed as the customer’s perception of service excellence. The concept of service quality comes from business literature. Many scholars have offered various definitions of service. Empathy: - Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers. Reliability: - Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Responsiveness: - Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Tangibles: - Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials Assurance: - Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

II. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The study also revealed that offering loyal service gives an organization the advantage not to be able to fulfil customer’s present need but also the ability to anticipate the future needs. Stauss (1996) proposed a qualitative satisfaction model which results in five different qualitative satisfaction types comprising of different patterns of emotions, cognitions and intentions. He argues in his study that a global satisfaction score fails to constitute the only valid indicator for customer loyalty. The research conducted by Parausraman et al. (1988) initially identified ten determinants associated with service quality which were later reduced to five dimensions. The dimensions identified include reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness. Service quality is a fundamental aspect of service provision. Adele (2009) conducted a research on motor vehicles; the study was conducted using a convenience sample of 761 respondents who were owners of various brands of motor vehicles. The questionnaire was a self completion questionnaire which consisted of three sections, factor analysis of

the research indicated that five service quality factors could be identified. Apart from the tangibles' factors, the factors identified differ from the dimensions of service quality proposed by Parasuraman (1988). The implication of this study is that the customer perceives the way in which the service is delivered as critical in evaluating service quality. Sharifudin (1994) used SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality at ten public transportation departments. By using stratified sampling technique, 400 copies of SERVQUAL questionnaire were distributed to the customers and also to the service providers of six departments in Selangor, Penang, Terengganu, Pahang, and Melaka. He found that even though the public Transportation department understands the needs of the customers but the perceptions of the customers are higher. Therefore, this showed that the customer's expectations were not met. Berry et al. (1994) conducted a research on five large famous U.S corporations with more than 1900 customers they found that thirty two out of 100 placed emphases on reliability, followed responsiveness 22%, assurance 19% empathy 16% and tangibles 11%. Thus reliability was considered the essential core of service quality. In addition, other dimensions will matter to customer only if a service is reliable as those dimensions for examples, responsiveness and empathy from service staff cannot compensate for unreliable service delivery. Further they found that more companies were deficient in reliability than in other service dimensions, but their best performance was on the least essential dimension of tangibles. Aliah et al. (1990) they adapted SERVQUAL model comprising of 25 items. They named it as KaulKhi to measure service quality provided by an income tax department in Malaysia. They used convenience sampling technique, 300 copies of KaulKhi questionnaire were distributed to the customers. Result of the studies showed the existence of significant gaps between the expectations of the income tax payers and the services they accepted such as reliability, responsiveness and empathy. These three gaps are bigger than tangibility and assurance dimensions. However the overall service quality is high. This shows that zone of tolerance exists as the income tax payer are willing to compromise with quality. Gronoors et. al. (1982) in his study reveal that there was extensive research on the service quality model, and it has been recognized that customers evaluate service quality by comparing the service providers actual performance with what service performance would be in their experience. Parasuraman et al. (1994) an extensive study were made on service quality and they proposed the service quality can be measured by using the SERVQUAL instrument and managed using expectations the performance gap model. Numerous studies have been conducted in an attempt to determine the essential nature and development of loyalty, that how organizations can create and enhance customer loyalty through products and services. Czepiel et al. (1987) proposed a model showing the development of customer loyalty in services. Gremler et al. (1996) argued that the loyalty of the service customer is multidimensional, comprising three dimensions behavioural loyalty, attitudinal loyalty and cognitive loyalty.

III. RESEARCH GAP

The review of the existing literature reveals that a numbers of studies have been carried out on various aspects of quality but a very few comprehensive studies in this area could be found which provides detailed information regarding service quality perceived by the students in the schools Kashmir division. In the light of the above discussion comprehensive and detailed study regarding service quality carried in three districts of Kashmir division. The comparison of the service quality in schools will be an eye opener to private as well as public sector institutions in improving the work environment of these schools.

IV. NEED AND AIM OF STUDY

This study aims to analyze six determinants of the service quality prevailing in public and private sector schools of three districts of Kashmir division.

V. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on primary data and secondary data. In this research, primary data is collected from students of government and private schools of three districts of Kashmir division Viz, Kupwara, Baramulla and Srinagar, with the help of questionnaire. The questionnaire is developed for the respondents and it is specifically based upon the objectives of this study. The secondary data have also been collected from journals, books and C.E.O offices. The sample size is an important feature of an empirical study in which goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. A total of 4500 survey questionnaires had been sent, to district. After receiving the questionnaire from the respondents it had been screened for errors or incomplete responses. However after the screening process carried out, only 2875 questionnaires received back from all the three districts from kupwara district 1724 respondents, Baramulla district 1564 and Srinagar district 670 responses out of total sample 2635 from government schools and 1323 from private schools have been considered complete and valid for data analysis. Keeping into consideration the objectives of the study, a structured questionnaire was prepared to meet the objectives. The questionnaire was framed on the basis of previous literature, discussion with experts of the related field. The suggestions of experts led to many meaningful modifications. The preliminary draft was pre tested on 120 respondents, including 65 from public sector schools and 55 from private sector schools.

IV Statistical Tools Used: - Mean, Mode, standard deviation, F-test, Coefficient of variance.

IV. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS:-

From the table 1.1 reflects the overall perception of the students in terms of the service quality perceived in the school across districts. With regard to empathy that the students of baramulla district perceived highest score with a mean of 5.1 in comparison to other two districts i.e Srinagar and Kupwara districts with a mean of 4.15 and 3.91. It reflects that the teachers of baramulla are very much caring towards the students and give individual attention during the stay of the students in the school hours and apart from teaching discuss the personal issues with them, followed by Srinagar schools and least in the Kupwara schools.

With regard to Responsiveness in all the three districts, the students of baramulla district perceived higher service quality with a mean of 5.40 followed by Srinagar district with a mean of 4.18 and Kupwara district with a mean of 4.15. It reflects that the teachers of barmulla district are very much concerned and dedicated towards their job and show high degree of willingness to help the students pertaining to any issues and properly understand their problems. On the other hand it is found that the teachers of Srinagar and kupwara districts are least concerned over it as compared to baramulla district. In case of tangibility it is found that the students of Srinagar district are relatively more satisfied than the other two districts of Kashmir division with a mean score of 5.00. This reflect that the students of Srinagar district feel the class room envorinment more pleasant and trust worthy in comparision to the students of other two districts with a mean score of 4.57 (Baramulla) & 3.91 (Kupwara).

1.1 Overall Perception of Students towards Service Quality Across selected Districts of Kashmir Division (N=1976)

Determinants of Service Quality	Districts	N	Mean	Std.dev	F ratio	Sig.
Empathy	Kupwara	669	3.9104	339.483	339.483	.000
	Baramulla	904	5.1832			
	Srinagar	403	4.1594			
Responsiveness	Kupwara	669	4.0125	353.471	353.471	.000
	Baramulla	904	5.4098			
	Srinagar	403	4.1861			
Tangibility	Kupwara	669	3.9154	100.687	100.687	.000
	Baramulla	904	4.5763			
	Srinagar	403	5.0072			
Reliability	Kupwara	669	3.5858	156.581	156.581	.000
	Baramulla	904	4.4776			
	Srinagar	403	4.3200			
Assurance	Kupwara	669	4.1065	190.623	190.623	.000
	Baramulla	904	5.2940			
	Srinagar	403	4.8015			
Courtesy	Kupwara	669	3.8620	235.622	235.622	.000
	Baramulla	904	5.1052			
	Srinagar	403	4.6632			
Overall SQ	Kupwara	669	3.8985	297.754	297.754	.000
	Baramulla	904	5.0074			
	Srinagar	403	4.5223			

In case of tangibility it is found that the students of Srinagar district are relatively more satisfied than the other two districts of Kashmir division with a mean score of 5.00. This reflect that the students of Srinagar district feel the class room envorinment more pleasant and trust worthy in comparision to the students of other two districts with a mean score of 4.57 (Baramulla) & 3.91 (Kupwara).

With regard to reliability the students of baramulla district are slightly agree with a mean score of 4.47, followed by Srinagar district with a mean of 4.32 where as in kupwara district the students are dis satisfied with a mean score of 3.58. It reflects that the teachers and allied staff of baramulla district informed the students regarding the rules and regulations to be followed in the school and the mid day meals served here is more hygienic and relatively better than the other two districts of Kashmir division.

In case of assurance the students of baramulla districts score high with a mean of 5.29 in comparision to the schools of Srinagar and kupwara districts with a mean of 4.80 and 4.10. It reflects that the students of baramulla district have more trust and confidence in their teachers and discuss family issues with them than the students of Srinagar and kupwara districts and this may because teachers of baramulla district gives individual attention in the school.

With regard to courtesy in all the three districts of Kashmir division, the baramulla district score high with a mean of 5.10, this reflects that the students are highly satisfied with the teachers in comparision to sringar students with a mean of 4.66. Where as in case of kupwara districts the students perceived low score with a mean of 3.86. It reflects that the teachers in baramulla district attached students emotionally with their subject and treat their students with great love and show parental affection towards the students in comparision to other two districts.

Conclusion: - The students perception in both the schools of these three district perceived that the overall service perceived by both the students in the schools is find The overall service quality of all the three districts is relatively found to be minimal as it is evident from the table with a mean score ranges from 5.00 to 3.89 respectively.

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