

The Impact of Service Quality on Students Satisfaction in Private Higher Education Institutes in Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka is a developing country that the importance of knowledgeable generation is increasing day by day. There are universities in private and government sector that provide Degrees in different areas. Universities play a main role in Sri Lankan economy in generation, Preservation and dissemination of knowledge. In order to provide higher standard of service in the education sector it is important to develop and maintain service quality. With the emerging demand and higher competition in the higher education sector in Sri Lanka, maintaining service quality in the private education is a main factor to survive in the industry. Higher education sector in Sri Lanka plays a wide and important role in achieving economic development, the higher education sector is engaged in performing three major functions in a knowledge economy; Knowledge generation, knowledge diffusion and knowledge transfer. Service sector in Sri Lanka is very important in developing knowledge economy and the competition in the private education sector provide pressure to increase service quality as it is a main tool that create competitive advantage for private institutions in developing marketing strategies. The objective of this research is to measure service quality in higher education institutions with the use of SERVQUAL model. Another objective is find whether there is a negative gap in the expectation and perception of service quality. To identify whether it can be used to find gap between expectation and perceptions of higher education services provided. The research was conducted in three reputed institutions in Sri Lanka. In order to conduct the research sample size of 300 students has taken who are following different undergraduate programmes such as Business Management, Biomedical Science, Hospitality Management and Information Technology. Those three institutions used got accreditation from UGC Sri Lanka, the institutions have similar code of conduct governed by Higher education ministry in Sri Lanka. All the institutions are conducting curriculum UGC and they conduct courses related to affiliated countries such as UK, USA and Malaysia. In order to gather data, structured questionnaire has given to students that consist of 25 questions. It is very difficult to achieve higher satisfaction from the students. The students' satisfaction may depend on different factors other than quality. The service quality of these private educational institutes is not in the expected level of the students as the service quality gap is ranging. The study fulfilled its objectives mentioned in the research. The SERVQUAL model was appropriate to measure service quality of the private institution who are performing in higher education sector in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Private Sector, Higher Education, Service Quality, Satisfaction