

INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY ON STUDENT SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY OF SAEGIS CAMPUS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This study aims to assess the effects of service quality in student services on student satisfaction within the context of non-state universities in Sri Lanka. Specifically, the research focuses on Saegis Campus as a case study to explore the relationship between service quality and student satisfaction. By understanding the impact of service quality on student satisfaction, educational institutions can identify areas for improvement and enhance the overall student experience. The research has been conducted considering the Saegis campus as a population of the study, and the sample was elected as four hundred using probability sampling by considering the quantitative nature of the study. The independent variables, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, have been considered with the mediator variable of perceived service quality to find the influence on the dependent variable, student satisfaction. The data has been tested for reliability as well as validity at the initial level, and the hypotheses were tested based on the regression analysis. The study has been designed in a quantitative manner where the research instrument has been taken to collect the data was a structured questionnaire. The study recommends to the decision makers of the private educational institutes that tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance as well as empathy impact service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in private universities in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the decision-makers of the private institutes should consider the said aspects when making decisions related to improving the service quality of student services to ensure student satisfaction among private universities in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Higher education, non-state university, service quality, student satisfaction.

1. Introduction

Providing high-quality services to students is crucial for fostering satisfaction, engagement, and academic success in the educational sector. This research investigates the correlation between service quality in student services and student satisfaction in non-state universities in Sri Lanka, with a specific focus on the Saegis Campus. By conducting a case study, this study seeks to shed light on the significance of service quality and its impact on student satisfaction, aiding educational institutions in their pursuit of delivering excellent student services.

The higher education landscape in Sri Lanka has witnessed significant growth in the private sector, with the establishment of numerous private universities (Asian Development Bank, 2016). While this expansion is commendable, it also raises concerns regarding quality and cost (Ashraf, Ibrahim, and Joarder, 2009). Additionally, the global trend of education marketization has intensified competition in the sector, prompting institutions to vie for students and academic staff (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010). In this context, private campuses must strive to develop competitive advantages to attract and retain students while maintaining competitiveness. The heightened demand for higher education has increased expectations and fierce competition among institutions (Shahin and Samea, 2010).

To address these challenges, private universities need to focus on enhancing their service quality to differentiate themselves from competitors. By providing exceptional student services, these institutions can create a unique value proposition that attracts and satisfies students. The delivery of high-quality services encompasses various aspects, including administrative efficiency, academic support, facilities, faculty-student interactions, and overall student experience.

Investing in improving service quality not only leads to higher levels of student satisfaction but also contributes to the reputation and success of the institution. Satisfied students are more likely to recommend the university to others and become loyal advocates, which can positively impact the institution's enrolment and retention rates. Furthermore, developing competitive advantages should not be limited to academic aspects alone. Private universities must also focus on building strong industry connections, fostering a culture of innovation, and providing career development opportunities for students. These efforts contribute to creating a holistic educational experience that prepares students for the demands of the job market. The growth of private universities in Sri Lanka's higher education sector has brought both opportunities and challenges. To thrive in this competitive landscape, private campuses must prioritize

service quality and establish competitive advantages that set them apart. These institutions can attract and retain students by meeting and exceeding student expectations while maintaining their market position.

1.1. Research Problem

To attract and retain students, private universities in Sri Lanka need to differentiate themselves by offering unique value propositions. One potential avenue for achieving this is by providing quality services to students (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2008). However, there is a lack of empirical research specifically focusing on private university students' perceptions of service quality (SQ), particularly in non-academic services (Raza, 2020). Therefore, there is a research gap in understanding private university students' perceptions of service quality and their satisfaction levels, specifically in the context of the Saegis Campus. This study aims to address this gap by employing a questionnaire-based approach to investigate private university students' perceptions of service quality and satisfaction at the Saegis Campus. By examining the students' perspectives on service quality and their levels of satisfaction, this research seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of current services and identify areas for improvement. Ultimately, the findings of this study can contribute to enhancing the service quality provided by private universities and their ability to attract and retain students in the competitive higher education market.

1.2. Research Objectives

The objectives aim to explore the different dimensions of service quality within student services and understand their impact on student satisfaction in private universities in Sri Lanka. By specifically examining tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy factors, the study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the elements that contribute to service quality and ultimately influence student satisfaction. The findings will provide valuable insights for improving service quality in student services, enhancing the overall student experience, and strengthening private universities' ability to attract and retain students.

1.To identify, understand, and analyses tangible factors that impact the service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus.

2.To analyze reliability factors that impact the service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus

3.To analyze responsiveness factors that impact the service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus.

4.To explore the assurance factors that impact the service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus.

5.To analyze empathy factors that impact the service quality of student services on satisfaction among students among students in Saegis Campus

1.3. Research Questions

These research questions aim to investigate the specific impacts of different service quality factors on student satisfaction at Saegis Campus. By examining the influence of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy on student satisfaction, the study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of how these factors contribute to the overall perception of service quality and student satisfaction. The findings will provide insights into the areas that require attention and improvement to enhance service quality and ultimately improve student satisfaction at Saegis Campus.

1.Do tangibles impact the service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in the Saegis Campus?

2.Does reliability impact the service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus?

3.Does responsiveness impact the service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus?

4.Does assurance impact the service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus?

5.Does empathy impact service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in the Saegis Campus?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Saegis Campus is one of the leading institutions in Sri Lanka, having the 'degree awarding status' of higher education, with students coming from many different areas of the country. The study is expected to reveal data that can lead to a better understanding of students who come to private universities for their higher education in an increasingly globalized higher education environment. University administrators may use the findings to understand student perceptions better. This could then be used to serve students better, which could help with recruitment and retention. This will also help administrators to focus on non-academic services needing SQ improvement.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

The researcher conducted the study with a limited sample size of a hundred respondents due to their availability and accessibility. Additionally, the researcher faced limitations in obtaining relevant past research papers and journals aligned with the study's objectives and scope.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Service Quality

Customer interaction and loyalty are greatly influenced by service delivery. Service industries strive to provide better customer satisfaction and fruitful interactions by incorporating high-quality aspects that meet customer needs and wants. Decision-makers and authorities within organizations prioritize implementing best practices and standards to establish strong customer relationships and gain a competitive edge in the business environment (Dabholkar, 2015). Ensuring superior service quality is crucial for differentiation and long-term business sustainability. Organizations can analyze competitors' service deliveries to identify areas of dissatisfaction and enhance their service quality across relevant parameters (Kaura, 2015).

Furthermore, organizations may seek to elevate service quality by pricing their goods and services at a premium in competitive markets to generate higher revenues in a shorter timeframe. The pricing strategies employed by organizations are closely tied to the quality of services offered, enabling them to maintain a competitive advantage that local or global competitors may struggle to match (Hussain, 2016).

Moreover, decision-makers within organizations prioritize activities related to service quality to cater to customer preferences, allowing customers to choose the best options available. Differentiation through service delivery is crucial for brand positioning and revenue generation (Farooq, 2018). Additionally, organizations recognize the importance of service quality in establishing customer relationships and increasing market share in a competitive environment. Happy customers who experience superior service and an emotional connection tend to remain loyal to the brand, contributing to a higher market share. Furthermore, optimal service quality has a positive impact on productivity, advertising, and distribution (Arcand, 2017).

2.2. Student Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is defined as their perception that their consumption produces results that measure up to a benchmark of pleasure against pain. (P.34,

Oliver, 1999). Recently, the idea of contentment has also been extended to the setting of higher education. According to the few research that is currently available, student happiness is a multifaceted notion (Marzo-Navarro et al. 2005ab; Richardson, 2005). Elliott and Shin (2002, p. 198) define student satisfaction as the favourability of a student's subjective judgment of the many experiences and outcomes involved with education, drawing on Oliver and DeSarbo's (1989) definition of satisfaction. Repeated encounters with campus life continuously shape students' satisfaction levels (Gruber, Fuß, Voss, & Glaeser-Zikuda, 2010).

2.3. Service Quality in the Education Sector

In the education sector, decision-makers recognize the importance of service quality and focus on various aspects to ensure a positive experience for students. Assurance is a key factor, as educational institutes aim to build confidence and trust among students, demonstrating their commitment to students' best interests. Politeness and respect are emphasized in interactions with students, parents, and corporate entities. Empathy is another crucial aspect, with educational firms prioritizing caring approaches and meeting customer needs. The education industry emphasizes service quality throughout the student journey, from entry to graduation and beyond. Tangibility is also considered, encompassing physical facilities such as clean classrooms, well-equipped labs, and a conducive study environment. Decision-makers in the education sector pay attention to these tangible aspects of service quality to enhance the overall experience for students (Gong, 2018; Fatima, 2018).

Decision makers in the education sector prioritize reliability by ensuring that services provided have a strong foundation of positive service quality. Educational institutes focus on delivering accurate services, responding promptly to requests, and fulfilling promises made to students and stakeholders. These reliable aspects contribute to the overall service quality in the educational sector (Gupta, 2018). Additionally, responsiveness is emphasized as an important aspect of service quality. Educational organizations are willing to assist customers effectively and take swift action to rectify any instances of poor service. They aim to minimize waiting times and prioritize rapid service delivery to enhance service quality in the education sector (Choi, 2020).

2.4. SERVQUAL Model

Nunkoo and Teeroovengadum (2019) developed the SERVQUAL model as an analytical tool to measure service quality (SQ) and its impact on customer satisfaction. However, scholars have raised concerns about the model. Psychometric issues were identified regarding SERVQUAL's difference score, and operationalizing the anticipation module was debated. Some argued that the

model's five dimensions may not be applicable in different settings due to a lack of economic, statistical, and psychological background. Additionally, the word "excellent" in the model's outlook segment raised concerns about participants choosing the highest scale score, leading to an emphasis on ideal expectations rather than realistic ones. The SERVPERF model was introduced, removing the expectations factor To address these concerns. The SERVPERF model has been extensively used to measure perceived SQ in sectors like banking, hotels, and education, demonstrating high reliability and validity. In the higher education, the SERVPERF model has shown a positive relationship between perceptions of SQ and student satisfaction, with reliability being the strongest predictor, followed by responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibility. Numerous studies using the SERVPERF model have yielded reliable outcomes in measuring the correlation between SQ and satisfaction (Pham, 2019; Rather, 2019).

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The methodology provides a detailed description of the current research design, data collection, and analysis procedures employed in the study. It serves as a roadmap that outlines how the research objectives will be addressed and provides transparency in the research process. This section further elaborates on the reliability and validity of the study's findings.

3.2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 3.1- Conceptual framework

3.3. Hypotheses of the Study

H10: Tangibles impact on service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus

H20: Reliability impact on service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus

H30: Responsiveness impact on service quality of student services on satisfaction among Saegis Campus

H40: Assurance impact on service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus

H50: Empathy impact on service quality of student services on satisfaction among students in Saegis Campus

3.4. Operationalization

Table 1: Operationalization

No	Variables	Indicators	Measurements	Q No
1	Tangibles	Equipment availability	1- 5 Likert Scale	1.1- 1.4
		Lectures availability		
		Communication materials		
		Physical look		
2	Reliability	Deliver promises	1- 5 Likert Scale	2.1- 2.4
		Trust on institute		
		Career opportunity		
		Accurate services		
3	Responsiveness	Help the students	1- 5 Likert Scale	3.1- 3.4
		Provide prompt service		
		Availability for services		
		Rapidly responding		
4	Assurance	Knowledge of the employees	1- 5 Likert Scale	4.1- 4.4
		Courtesy of employees		
		Convey the trust		
		Confidence of the students		
5	Empathy	Care towards students	1- 5 Likert Scale	5.1- 5.4
		Individualized attention		
		Flexible in payments		
		Understand the needs		
6	Perceived service quality	More than expected services	1- 5 Likert Scale	6.1- 6.4
		Available of physical instruments		
		Lecture availability		
		Students believe in the institute		
7	Satisfaction	Service innovations	1- 5 Likert Scale	7.1- 7.4
		Consistency in customer services		
		Value-added services		
		Quality of the service		

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3.5. Research Design

The study was designed as a primary research methodology due to the limited availability of relevant secondary data aligned with the study's objectives. The researcher opted for a quantitative approach, considering the nature of the study and the need to collect data from a large sample size. This choice allowed for firsthand data collection, ensuring the research objectives could be effectively addressed.

3.6. Research Instrument

Within the framework of a quantitative research methodology, the researcher has chosen to employ a questionnaire as the data collection tool in accordance with the study's objectives. The structured questionnaire has been carefully designed to encompass all relevant variables and facilitate the provision of insightful recommendations to decision-makers. To ensure convenience and accessibility, data collection was conducted through an online medium.

3.7. Population and Sample

The research study focuses on the population, which refers to a collective group sharing similar characteristics. The population represents the entire cluster of entities under investigation. This study identifies the population as Saegis Campus, consisting of approximately 1,500 students. To ensure practicality and feasibility, a sample size of 400 participants was selected based on the specific characteristics and availability of respondents. The sample serves as a representative subset of the population with similar characteristics.

3.8. Sampling Technique

The study employs two main sampling techniques: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling ensures that all sample elements have an equal chance of being selected, typically using random sampling. This technique is commonly used in quantitative research methodologies. On the other hand, non-probability sampling involves selecting sample elements based on the researcher's convenience or judgment, and it is often utilized in qualitative methodologies. For the current study, probability sampling was chosen due to the quantitative nature of the research, aligning with the research methodology.

3.9. Data Analysis

Data analysis is done through SPSS as it offers a range of statistical techniques and tools that allow researchers to explore, summarize, and draw conclusions from their data. The researchers performed statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and data visualization, by leveraging the capabilities of SPSS to support the research objectives.

4. Presentation of findings

4.1. Introduction

This section focuses on the collected data from the fieldwork, aligned with the research objectives. The independent variables of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are analysed in relation to the mediator variable of perceived service quality and the dependent variable of satisfaction. The data undergoes reliability and validity testing, and the findings are presented in tables and graphs for clarity and explanation. Additionally, the relationships between the variables are examined through correlation and regression analyses to test the hypotheses and provide recommendations for decision-makers.

4.2. Measuring the Reliability of the Variables

Data reliability refers to the dependability and consistency of the data, which is essential for effective data analysis and making recommendations to decision-makers. This study assesses data reliability using Cronbach's Alpha test, which assigns a value between zero and one. If Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.5, the data is reliable and can be used to test the relationships between variables. This assessment ensures the data's credibility and provides a foundation for meaningful analysis and accurate conclusions for decision-makers and stakeholders.

Table 2: Reliability

Attributes	Cronbach's Alpha
Tangibility	.884
Reliability	.902
Responsiveness	.907
Assurance	.884
Empathy	.833

Perceived service quality	.940
Satisfaction	.911

Source: Output of Data Analysis

Table 2 confirms the consistency and reliability of the data for various variables, including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, perceived service quality, and satisfaction. The Cronbach's Alpha value, exceeding 0.5, provides further evidence of the data's reliability. This validation reinforces the researcher's confidence in the data's quality and allows for meaningful analysis and interpretation of the study's findings.

4.3. Measuring the Validity of the Variables

Data validity is crucial to assess the rationality and appropriateness of the data for further analysis and making effective recommendations to decision-makers. This study evaluates data validity using the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) test, which yields values ranging from zero to one. A KMO value above 0.5 indicates that the data is valid and suitable for testing relationships between variables. Upon reviewing the table, the researcher confirmed the consistency and validity of the data for variables such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, perceived service quality, and satisfaction. The KMO value exceeding 0.5 further supports the data's validity, providing a solid foundation for testing variable relationships and drawing meaningful conclusions.

Table 3: Validity Test Results

Variable	KMO	Bartlett's Measure of Sphericity		
		Chi-Square Value	p- value	Significance
Tangibility	.835	871.176	<0.05	Significant
Reliability	.831	1043.000	<0.05	Significant
Responsiveness	.850	1060.335	<0.05	Significant
Assurance	.831	894.776	<0.05	Significant
Empathy	.690	777.740	<0.05	Significant

Perceived service quality	.867	1466.691	<0.05	Significant
Satisfaction	.853	1282.250	<0.05	Significant

Source: Output of Data Analysis

4.4. Factor Analysis

4.4.1. Tangibility

Table 4: Factor Analysis for Tangibility

Constituent	Preliminary Eigen amount			Withdrawal Amounts of Squared		
	Overall value	% of Alteration	Growing %	Overall value	% of Alteration	Growing %
1	2.968	74.207	74.207	2.968	74.207	74.207
2	.401	10.023	84.230			
3	.330	8.262	92.492			
4	.300	7.508	100.000			

Source: Output of Data Analysis

The factor analysis has been proven to the researcher as the data was extracted in 74% of the variable tangibility in single loaded manner.

4.4.2. Reliability

Table 5: Factor Analysis for Reliability

Constituent	Preliminary Eigen amount			Withdrawal Amounts of Squared		
	Overall value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %	Overall value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %
1	3.096	77.399	77.399	3.096	77.399	77.399
2	.405	10.131	87.531			
3	.270	6.747	94.277			
4	.229	5.723	100.000			

Source: Output of Data Analysis

The factor analysis has been proven to the researcher as the data was extracted in 77% of the variable Reliability in single loaded manner.

4.4.3. Responsiveness

Table 6: Factor Analysis for Responsiveness

Constituent	Preliminary Eigen amount			Withdrawal Amounts of Squared		
	Overall value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %	Overall value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %
1	3.127	78.181	78.181	3.127	78.181	78.181
2	.337	8.429	86.610			
3	.303	7.585	94.195			
4	.232	5.805	100.000			

Source: Output of Data Analysis

The factor analysis has been proven to the researcher as the data was extracted in 78% of the variable Responsiveness in a single loaded manner.

4.4.4. Assurance

Table 7: Factor Analysis for Assurance

Constituent	Preliminary Eigen amount			Withdrawal Amounts of Squared		
	Overall Value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %	Overall Value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %
1	2.973	74.334	74.334	2.973	74.334	74.334
2	.419	10.465	84.798			
3	.358	8.940	93.739			
4	.250	6.261	100.000			

Source: Output of Data Analysis

The factor analysis has been proven to the researcher as the data was extracted in 74% of the variable Assurance in a single loaded manner.

4.4.5. Empathy

Table 8: Factor Analysis for Empathy

Constituent	Preliminary Eigen amount			Withdrawal Amounts of Squared		
	Overall value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %	Overall value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %
1	2.672	66.791	66.791	2.672	66.791	66.791

2	.801	20.033	86.824			
3	.272	6.797	93.620			
4	.255	6.380	100.000			

Source: Output of Data Analysis

The factor analysis has been proven to the researcher as the data was extracted in 66% of the variable Empathy in a single loaded manner.

4.4.6. Perceived Service Quality

Table 9: Factor Analysis for Perceived Service Quality

Constituent	Preliminary Eigen amount			Withdrawal Amounts of Squared		
	Overall value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %	Overall value	% of Alteration	Cumulative %
1	3.394	84.853	84.853	3.394	84.853	84.853
2	.228	5.709	90.562			
3	.205	5.113	95.674			
4	.173	4.326	100.000			

Source: Output of Data Analysis

The factor analysis has been proven to the researcher as the data was extracted in 84% of the variable Perceived service quality in a single loaded manner.

4.4.7. Satisfaction

Table 10: Factor Analysis for Satisfaction

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.253	81.334	81.334	3.253	81.334	81.334
2	.366	9.139	90.473			
3	.198	4.955	95.428			
4	.183	4.572	100.000			

Source: Output of Data Analysis

The factor analysis has been proven to the researcher as the data was extracted in 81% of the variable Satisfaction in a single loaded manner.

The demographic characteristic of age among the respondents indicates a notable majority, with approximately 80% of the overall sample falling within the age range of 18 to 24. The gender distribution among the respondents reveals a significant majority, with approximately 57% of the overall sample being female.

Regarding the programs pursued by the respondents, a significant majority, comprising approximately 43% of the overall sample, were enrolled in an advanced diploma in business. The research also encompassed participants from diverse programs, indicating a comprehensive representation within the study.

4.5. Descriptive Statistics

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics

	Tangibilit y	Reliabilit y	Responsivenes s	Assuranc e	Empath y	Perceive d service quality	Satisfactio n
Mean	4.11	4.11	4.24	4.16	3.98	3.85	3.96
Standard Error	0.022698	0.023276	0.021625	0.021691	0.024025	0.026132	0.028668
Median	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mode	5	5	5	5	4	4	5
Standard Deviation	0.920314	0.943765	0.87681	0.879476	0.97411	1.059573	1.162394
Sample Variance	0.846977	0.890692	0.768795	0.773478	0.94889	1.122696	1.351159
Kurtosis	0.507683	0.618514	0.823347	0.402587	0.359623	-0.02616	0.876169
Skewness	-0.93329	-0.98567	-1.06423	-0.86829	-0.82949	-0.73848	-0.29914
Range	4	4	4	4	4	4	7
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Source: Output of Data Analysis

The selected educational institute's mean scores for tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, perceived service quality, and satisfaction were found to be 4.11, 4.11, 4.24, 4.16, 3.98, 3.85, and 3.96, respectively. The corresponding standard deviations were 0.920314, 0.943765, 0.87681, 0.879476, 0.97411, 1.059573, and 1.162394. The median and mode scores for all variables at the institute were five. The standard errors were 0.022698, 0.023276, 0.021625, 0.021691, 0.024025, 0.026132, and 0.028668 for tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, perceived service quality, and satisfaction, respectively. Skewness values were -0.93329, -0.98567, -1.06423, -0.86829, -0.82949, -0.73848, and -0.29914, while kurtosis values were 0.507683, 0.618514, 0.823347, 0.402587, 0.359623, -0.02616, and 0.876169, indicating the distribution characteristics of the collected data. The sample variances were calculated as 0.846977, 0.890692, 0.768795, 0.773478, 0.94889, 1.122696, and 1.351159 for tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, perceived service quality, and satisfaction, respectively.

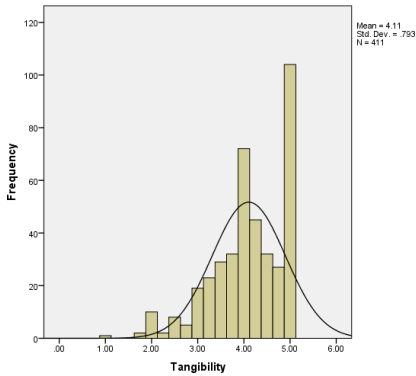
4.5.1. Descriptive Analysis

Regarding tangibility, respondents agreed that the institute possesses adequate study-oriented equipment, accessible staff and lecturers, advanced communication materials, and an appealing physical appearance compared to other institutes. In terms of reliability, respondents agreed that the institute fulfils its promises, instils trust in students and lecturers, and offers courses that facilitate career development. In terms of responsiveness, respondents agreed that the institute's staff and lecturers are helpful and provide prompt service, responding promptly to student inquiries. In relation to assurance, respondents agreed that the institute's employees and lecturers possess sufficient knowledge, exhibit courtesy, and inspire trust among students. Regarding empathy, respondents agreed that the institute demonstrates care for its students, offers individualized attention from lecturers, and understands student needs and preferences. Regarding perceived service quality, respondents agreed that the institute exceeds their expectations, provides excellent customer service, and meets students' requirements. Finally, in terms of satisfaction, respondents agreed that the institute demonstrates service innovation, maintains consistency in customer service, offers value-added services, and provides high-quality service compared to competitors in the market.

4.5.2. Tangibility

A normal distribution has been observed in the histogram presented above, depicting the variable of tangibility. Furthermore, the calculated skewness value from the descriptive table reveals a notable negative value of -0.933288236.

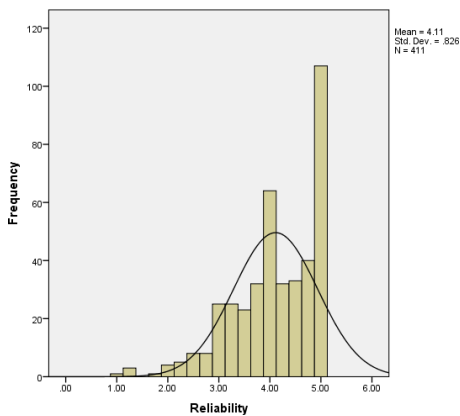
Figure 1: Histogram- Tangibility



Source: Output of Data Analysis

4.5.3. Reliability

Figure 2: Histogram- Reliability

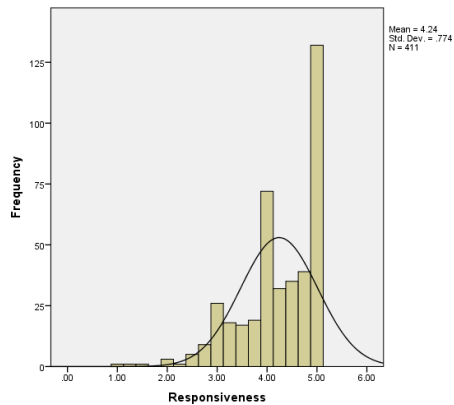


Source: Output of Data Analysis

The above histogram illustrates that the variable of Reliability follows a normal distribution. Moreover, the descriptive table reveals a skewness value of -0.98567, indicating a significant negative skew.

4.5.4. Responsiveness

Figure 3: Histogram- Responsiveness

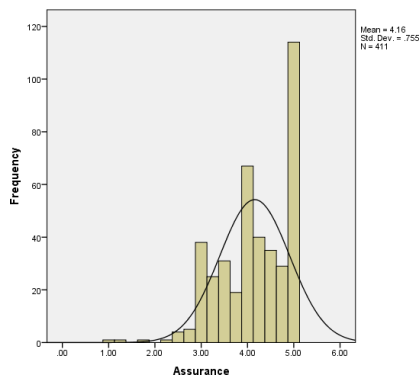


Source: Output of Data Analysis

The histogram presented above indicates that the variable of Responsiveness exhibits a normal distribution. Furthermore, the descriptive table reveals a skewness value of -1.064231229, signifying a substantial negative skew.

4.5.5. Assurance

Figure 4: Histogram- Assurance

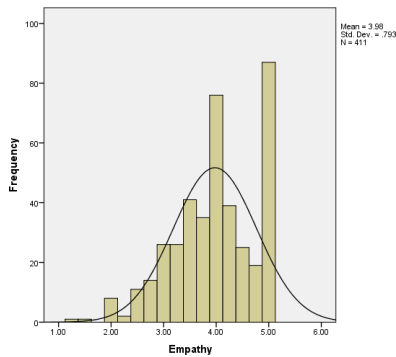


Source: Output of Data Analysis

The histogram shown above suggests that the variable of Assurance follows a normal distribution. Additionally, the descriptive table reveals a skewness value of -0.868287716, indicating a noticeable negative skew.

4.5.6. Empathy

Figure 5: Histogram- Empathy



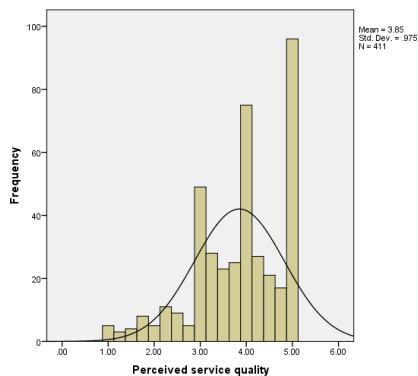
Source: Output of Data Analysis

A normal distribution has been attained as per the above histogram for the variable of empathy. In addition, the skewness value as per the descriptive table was observed as -0.829486707

4.5.7. Perceived Service Quality

A normal distribution has been attained as per the above histogram for the variable of perceived service quality. In addition, the skewness value as per the descriptive table was noticed as -0.738476278

Figure 6: Histogram - Perceived Service Quality



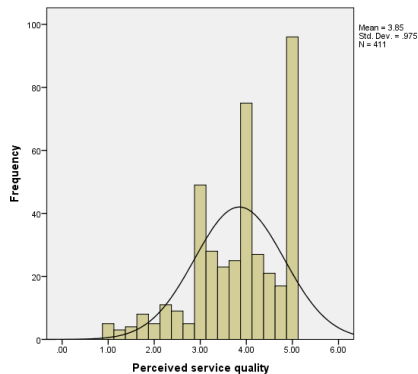
Source: Output of Data Analysis

4.5.8. Satisfaction

There is a normal distribution has been attained as per the above histogram for the variable of Satisfaction.

In addition, the skewness value as per the descriptive table also noticed as - 0.299135925.

Figure 7: Histogram – Satisfaction



Source: Output of Data Analysis

5. Discussion of Findings in Relation to Literature

This summary discusses the use of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models to assess service quality and its relationship with customer satisfaction. The SERVPERF model originates from the SERVQUAL model, and both models consider service quality as a determinant of customer satisfaction. This study employs a modified version of the SERVPERF model as the conceptual framework. The SERVPERF model evaluates customer perceptions across five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions collectively define the quality of service experienced by customers. The perceived overall quality derived from these dimensions is utilized to predict or indicate customer satisfaction.

5.1. Findings and Literature

A correlation test was performed to examine the relationships between the variables in the study. The assessment included calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient and determining the significance level for each independent variable, as well as the mediator and dependent variables.

5.2. Correlations

Table 8: Correlation Test

		Tangibility	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy	Perceived service quality	Satisfaction
Tangibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.856**	.801**	.788**	.659**	.485**	.482**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	411	411	411	411	411	411	411
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.856**	1	.851**	.839**	.669**	.516**	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	411	411	411	411	411	411	411
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.801**	.851**	1	.883**	.691**	.517**	.559**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	411	411	411	411	411	411	411
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	.788**	.839**	.883**	1	.767**	.572**	.607**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	411	411	411	411	411	411	411
Empathy	Pearson	.659**	.669**	.691**	.767**	1	.837**	.809**

	n							
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	411	411	411	411	411	411	411
Perceived service quality	Pearson Correlation	.485**	.516**	.517**	.572**	.837**	1	.861**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	411	411	411	411	411	411	411
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.482**	.521**	.559**	.607**	.809**	.861**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	411	411	411	411	411	411	411

Source: Output of Data Analysis

Upon observing the table, it becomes evident that a relationship exists between the variables of tangibility and perceived service quality at the educational institute, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.485. The hypotheses pertaining to the relevant variables are presented below.

H10: The researcher concludes that tangibility has a positive impact on the service quality of student services, leading to increased satisfaction among students. Decision-makers in private institutes should focus on tangibility aspects in their decision-making activities to enhance service quality and improve student satisfaction in private universities in Sri Lanka. Emphasizing physical aspects that align with service-oriented activities is crucial for global service organizations, as it improves the practices of employees and enhances the reliability of services provided (Gregory, 2019).

H20: The researcher asserts that reliability has a positive impact on the quality of student services, resulting in increased satisfaction among students. Decision-makers in private institutes should consider reliability aspects in their decision-making activities to enhance service quality and improve student satisfaction. Consistency in service delivery is crucial for organizations relying heavily on

services, as direct customer interactions and service consistency contribute to customer loyalty and sustainable relationships in a competitive environment (Ibrahim, 2019).

The provided table shows a relationship between the variables of responsiveness and perceived service quality at the educational institute, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.485. The hypotheses pertaining to these variables are presented below.

H30: The researcher posits that responsiveness positively impacts the service quality of student services, leading to increased student satisfaction in private universities in Sri Lanka. Decision-makers in private institutes should consider responsiveness aspects in their decision-making activities to enhance service quality and improve student satisfaction. Responsiveness in service organizations plays a crucial role in making customers feel cared for and receiving relevant services, fostering a strong business relationship.

H40: The researcher suggests that assurance positively impacts the service quality of student services, leading to increased student satisfaction in private universities in Sri Lanka. Decision-makers in private institutes should prioritize assurance aspects in their decision-making activities to improve service quality and enhance student satisfaction. Organizations can guarantee their services, either before or after sales, aligning with the scope and needs of their business activities.

H50: The researcher asserts that empathy positively impacts the service quality of student services, resulting in increased student satisfaction in private universities in Sri Lanka. Decision-makers in private institutes should emphasize empathy in their decision-making activities to enhance service quality and improve student satisfaction. Understanding and compassion towards customers are essential in in-service organizations, particularly for firms engaged in pure-service business activities, as it contributes to uplifting the quality of services provided.

6. Conclusion

The study explores the relationships between tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, service quality, and student satisfaction in private universities in Sri Lanka. Positive correlations are found between tangibility and service quality ($r = 0.482$), reliability and service quality ($r = 0.621$), responsiveness and service quality ($r = 0.669$), assurance and service quality ($r = 0.607$), and empathy and service quality ($r = 0.809$). The recommendations suggest that decision-makers should focus on improving tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy to enhance

service quality and student satisfaction. Future research is suggested to include additional service quality factors, qualitative methodologies, comparisons across service industries, and studies in different regional sectors.

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