The Effect of Service Quality on Student Satisfaction: A Field Study for Health Services Administration Students

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Abstract

Over the past decade and because of increasing pressure for institutions to respond to the labor market and prepare students for employment after graduation, many Jordanian universities have incorporated quality standards for higher education. This study examines the experiences of health administration colleges in the application of service quality standards and the effect of those standards on student satisfaction. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to 490 students in four colleges, and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used for data analysis. The study produced several findings, including that health administration colleges are applying quality service standards at medium levels and that applied quality service standards affect student satisfaction levels. This study makes a set of recommendations to health administration colleges to improve the implementation of quality standards, which will ensure continuous improvement and student satisfaction.

Keywords: health administration colleges, service quality standards, student satisfaction, Jordan

1. Introduction

Higher education in the Arab world has experienced a number of major developments such as the expansion of previously established universities, increased numbers of students, public and private sector enthusiasm for investing in higher education, and the emergence of new disciplines and styles of learning. By noting these developments, sector leaders have recognized a need to support the application of quality standards in higher education to ensure the quality and final outputs of universities (Bashour, 2005).

Health administration is considered one of the most important higher education programs, necessitating continuous development and improvement because of the important role health administration plays in the progress of communities. The educational system no longer operates in isolation from other systems, and health administration colleges are expected to play a prominent role in meeting labor market needs and developing society. Significantly, any deficiency or omission in student education will result in workers who are unable to adapt to rapid and competitive change in the labor market.

Based on the role of health administration colleges in preparing the necessary manpower for the purpose of health and social and economic development, these colleges are responsible for providing services that respond to the full range of challenges and competition. To achieve their objectives, health administration colleges must consider new ideas and develop quality and excellence. Because the quality of university services and the performance evaluation process for these services are some of the basic elements of a quality higher education system (Bhatia, 2009), evaluation of the work of health administration colleges combined with student feedback is key to developing a quality higher education system (Katiliūtė, 2010). The current study investigates student evaluations of health administration colleges' application of the service quality standards provided to them and the levels of student satisfaction. It is hoped that these evaluations will assist in quality standards implementation in the form of adopting strategic client concentration philosophies that consider stakeholder needs and, in turn, increase the efficiency of health education institutions in Jordan.

The purpose of this study is to explore the descending ranking of service quality standards' implementation in health administration colleges and the effect of those standards on student satisfaction.

2. Research Significance and Problem

The significance of this research emerged from the importance of modern educational theory implementation, which supports learner participation in educational settings (Coates, 2009), introduces continuous improvements to educational institutions' services, and adapts these improvements to achieve substantial improvements in service quality (Hafeez et al., 2011). The impetus for this study arose from the health administration colleges in Jordan, which have been engaged in program development to implement and measure their service quality. Improving and developing an institution necessitates understanding and knowing it, and information derived from studies is the fuel of future improvements. Accordingly, the study problem can be demonstrated by answering the following questions and investigating the following hypotheses:

Q1: What is the descending ranking of the implementation of service quality standards in health administration colleges?
Q2: How do students rank the implementation levels of service quality standards in health administration colleges?
Q3: Do the implementation levels of service quality standards affect student satisfaction with health administration colleges?

The hypotheses for this study are as follows:

H1: Students evaluate service quality as low.
H2: Students evaluate teaching staff service quality as low.
H3: Students evaluate acquired knowledge as low.
H4: Students evaluate acquired skills quality as low.
H5: Students evaluate the quality of learning resources as low.
H6: Students evaluate administrative and personnel quality in health administration colleges as low.
H7: Students evaluate the service quality of community services and students' interaction with these services as low.
H8: Students evaluate the quality of the infrastructure in educational institutions as low.
H9: Student satisfaction with health administration college services is low.
H10: The effects of implementing quality standards in health administration colleges on student satisfaction are minimal.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. The Quality of Educational Services

Quality in the context of business organizations refers to an administrative philosophy that addresses policy formation or a comprehensive administrative system based on positive radical changes within the organization. These changes should include thought and behavior, culture, leadership style, and work procedure improvements and achieve outputs of the highest quality. Quality in universities refers to a set of attributes, dimensions and characteristics that relate to university services. If quality is embedded in the system, then the university will be able to fulfill students' needs based on students' traits and desires (Majeed et al., 2008).

The concept of educational quality can be identified as a set of terms and conditions that must be available in the educational process to meet the needs of recipients. Educational quality is an integrated system-oriented approach geared toward fulfilling student needs (Randall, 2002). Additionally, quality is an approach to work performance that requires the renewal of traditional administrative methods (Abu Nabah, 2004) and appears in quality academic and non-academic aspects, infrastructure, and the internal and external environments. Quality in education and enterprise, combined with the use of modern technology, indicates administrative-level quality in terms of its interaction and openness with the environment (Akal, 2008).

3.2. Quality of Health Administration College Services

The quality of college services in health administration reflects a number of criteria and characteristics that should be present in the service elements of every college.

These criteria and characteristics are related to the inputs, outputs, and processes that meet society's needs and requirements as well as students' needs and desires (Alfrejat, 2009) because of the emergence of new trends indicating the possibility of establishing the service-direct recipient (the student) as the basis for assessing service quality (Taei, 2008, Jiju et al., 2007, Nayef University, 2008). Using the extant literature, studies argued that the service quality of health administration colleges is embodied in such elements as the quality of the teaching and administrative staffs, the quality of knowledge acquisition and skills, community service activities, and the quality of learning resources and infrastructure (Accreditation Commission of Higher Education, 2012).

Teaching Staff Service Quality: Teaching staff quality depends on how the teaching staff is selected and the staff's development because teachers are responsible for implementing high-quality educational programs, acting as academic counselors, and providing advice to their students.

Knowledge Acquisition Quality: Quality standards require that programs offered by educational institutions include various fields of knowledge, clear definitions of objectives, the knowledge content that will be covered, and adequate opportunities to discuss difficult learning material and strategies for achieving the goals contained in students' academic plans within the specified time frame.

Skills Acquisition Quality: Skills acquisition includes prior identification of skills and capabilities in which students must become proficient, determination of professional competencies, and preparation of students for the labor market. Programs should seek to provide students with those skills and advertise the program's objectives.

Quality of Learning Resources: Quality standards in educational institutions emphasize providing library services, electronic information resources, teaching centers, computer labs, and qualified personnel to help achieve the organization's mission and goals.

Administrative and Personnel Quality: Quality standards stipulate the recruitment of a sufficient number of professionally qualified workers and technicians who possess the skills necessary to fulfill their career responsibilities; those responsibilities have been identified clearly and accurately. Additionally, these quality standards necessitate learning about student needs, communicating with students, helping solve students' problems, and responding to students' demands.

Interaction and Community Service Quality: Community service activities are largely centered on adopting clear policies to work with community institutions to achieve their mission and objectives, which depends on proper planning. This sort of relation must be based on cooperation and should include the development of strategies and specific programs to establish priorities.

Infrastructure Quality: Because of the infrastructure concept framework, which supports quality education, appropriate teaching tools should be available such as halls, yards that suit their functions, required tools and equipment, and adequate sporting facilities (Abdullah, 2006).

3.3. Student Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a feeling of happiness and joy that individuals obtain when they have fulfilled their human needs and desires. Educational institutions use certain methodologies to determine the level of their students' satisfaction regarding the services and programs they offer to better fulfill student needs and satisfy student aspirations (Qureshi et al., 2011). Identifying the factors of student satisfaction entails answering questions related to students' satisfaction with educational services, how much students trust those services, and whether current students would advise prospective students to attend the institution.

Student satisfaction measurement is considered a strategic issue for educational institutions because satisfaction is similar to profit-and-loss accounting in business organizations. If satisfaction is high, then the university is making sizeable profits as a result of having provided students with knowledge, skills and targeted abilities. Student will be pleased with their academic achievement and their university life and will speak positively about the college because satisfaction is the ultimate goal, and the ultimate goal is a reflection of high levels of service quality (Majeed et al., 2008).

4. Study Methodology

The current study relies on a descriptive approach that can be used to detect and interpret facts. The importance of this approach is not limited to data collection but also allows for an appropriate degree of interpretation.

4.1. Population and Sampling

The study population comprised all health administration students in Jordan between 2013 and 2014, totaling 2,450 students with higher diplomas, bachelor's and master's degrees. Three of the four health administration colleges in Jordan are public, and the fourth college is private. Students were treated as a research unit because the goal of the study was to measure quality from the customer's perspective. The sample was selected randomly and represents 20% of the study population. Data were collected from 490 valid questionnaires.

4.2. Study Instrument

The study used questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument. A five-point Likert scale was applied to statement responses in a questionnaire. Statements related to the evaluation of the quality of health administration colleges were formulated and amended on the basis of quality assurance standards in higher education institutions in Jordan (Accreditation Commission of Higher Education, 2012).

4.3. Validity and Reliability

To ascertain validity, the questionnaire was administered to five high-quality professionals in the field. Their comments were considered when finalizing the questionnaire. To create a clear instrument that would help achieve our study objectives, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated. Table 1 indicates the obtained results.

4.4. Data Analysis Method

The following methods and statistical indicators were used for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing:

 1. Frequencies and percent for study sample distribution breakdown.
 2. Means and standard deviations to indicate concentration levels or dispersion of sample responses regarding statements related to the application of service quality standards and student satisfaction. The interpretation of the results was based on means functions ranging from 2.60-3.60, which indicate a medium application of field elements whereas means of less than 2.6 indicate a low application of field elements and an urgent need for improvement. Means greater than 3.60 indicate that there is a high level of service quality application in the field.
3. *T*-test for independent variables to investigate whether there is a difference in the sample's attitudes toward service quality application in the universities and to ascertain the participants' attitudes toward their own satisfaction with university service quality (H1-H9).
4. Regression test to determine the effect of independent variables on dependent variables (H10).
5. Reliability analysis to ensure the instrument reliability of Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

5. *Study Results*

5.1. Study Sample Description

Table 2 indicates that females composed 52.4% of the sample. The majority (51.5%) of the sample participants possessed diplomas, indicating that most health service students attended community colleges for two years after secondary school. Community college attendance can be attributed to a scarcity of higher-level health administration educational institutions in Jordan.

5.2. Study Question Responses

Q1: What is the descending ranking of the implementation of service quality standards in health administration colleges?

Infrastructure Quality in Table 3 indicates that infrastructure quality ranked first in terms of the relative importance estimated by the study population, who noted that health administration colleges are implementing standards at a medium level related to facilitating student movement within the college and providing large lecture halls, parking, sports facilities, and tools and equipment. These results conform to those of Saifi et al. (2011), which indicate the importance of financial resources and infrastructure in advancing the health sector and the satisfaction of university students.

Learning Resources Quality in Table 3 indicates that the sample's individual attitudes regarding the ability of health administration colleges to provide sufficient learning resources to achieve university objectives ranked second in terms of relative importance.

It was clear that the evaluation of learning resources quality was at a medium level and that colleges had succeeded in providing an appropriate educational environment that provided students with access to multiple types of learning resources and with learning and self-development opportunities. Such results are consistent with those of Gudo et al. (2011), who observe that providing students with appropriate learning resources increases the quality of Kenyan university services.

Knowledge Acquisition Quality in Table 3 indicates that students' evaluation of efforts by health administration colleges to provide targeted and planned knowledge ranked third in terms of relative importance, at medium levels. All aspects of this field have medium acceptance. The statement, "knowledge targeted student acquisition" had the highest acceptance, which indicates that health administration colleges have succeeded in delivering targeted knowledge to students. Paragraphs related to "clarity of course goals" had the lowest acceptance among the field paragraphs and had medium levels. The results were consistent with those of Stukalina (2012) in terms of the positive role of knowledge obtained by students in European universities and the students' levels of satisfaction.

Skills Acquisition Quality in Table 3 reveals that targeted skills acquired by students ranked fourth, at medium levels, consistent with the study scale. The statement "Students are acquiring targeted skills" had the highest mean, whereas the statement "The university prepares students to deal with the labor market after graduation" had the lowest mean. All of the statements had medium levels, indicating the success of health administration colleges in providing students with targeted skills.

Quality of Community Services ranked fifth in terms of the relative importance to respondents, with medium agreement. Table 3 clarifies that the students' evaluations was positive at high levels regarding colleges' performing their expected roles in community service whereas the colleges' communication and information collection efforts relating to community needs were medium. This indicates that universities do perform their duties toward society and the surrounding environment. The role of the university is not limited to scientific and academic aspects but includes services to the community as a whole.

Quality of Administration and Personnel Services ranked sixth in terms of relative importance, at medium levels. Accordingly, Table 3 indicates that the university is expending great effort to gather information to improve student services although those efforts are not garnering the same level of interest as information conversion in fulfilling students' needs. These results indicate that universities are responsible for achieving student desires and needs at higher levels than the universities have currently reached, which is consistent with the information flow related to fulfilling student needs and desires. These results differ from those of Husniyah (2009), who investigated the satisfaction levels of economics students at Aleppo University and concluded that their satisfaction with managerial services was low and needed urgent improvement.

Quality of Teaching Staff Member Services in Table 3 ranked seventh according to the study scale, with a medium level of approval. The statement "Teaching staff members respond to student observations and needs" had the highest mean, whereas the statement "There are distinguished academic and educational experiences" had the lowest mean. All statements were at medium levels. Such results suggest trust in the academic offerings of health education institutions in Jordan.

Based on the preceding, student perceptions of and beliefs regarding health administration colleges were at medium levels, consistent with previous studies, because the mean of all educational services quality was 3.38. Fields were arranged according to their relative importance as follows: infrastructure quality, learning resources, knowledge acquisition, skills acquisition, community service, managerial and personnel services, and teaching staff service quality. Health administration colleges are required to address service quality concepts in general and provide distinguished academic experiences in particular. These results are consistent with the results of Karami et al. (2012), which indicate that the teaching staff's service quality in Iranian universities must be improved to better fit student needs and desires and to raise students' levels of satisfaction. Additionally, our results are consistent with those of Man et al. (2010) regarding the role of the teaching staff in achieving quality and excellence in Japanese universities.

Q2: How do students rank the implementation levels of service quality standards in health administration colleges?

To answer the second study question, hypotheses H1-H9 were formulated, as shown in Table 4. One sample *t*-test was used to test these hypotheses.

The results indicate that the mean values are greater than the study scale, that the *t*-calculated values are greater than the tabulated values, and that the significance level of all of the hypotheses (0.00) is less than 0.05. These results lead to the conclusion that health service administration colleges are implementing medium-level quality university services.

Q3: Do the implementation levels of service quality standards affect student satisfaction with health administration colleges?

To answer the third question and to ensure the appropriateness of the data hypothesis regression analysis used, hypothesis H10 was formulated (Table 4). In Table 5, a Variation Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to ensure that there is neither a high correlation between independent variables nor allowed variation for each variable, taking care not to exceed the Variation Inflation Factor (VIF) value (10). The allowed variable value is more than 0.05. The normal data distribution was calculated using the skewness coefficient, considering normal distribution data when the coefficient value was less than 1.

Overall, Table 3 shows that student satisfaction with health administration college services was at medium levels when investigating the effect of the implementation of service quality standards on satisfaction. Because both the independent and dependent variables are quantitative, simple linear regression analysis was used. Table 4 demonstrates that the correlation coefficient ($R = .68$) indicates a positive and strong correlation between service quality and satisfaction. The result is consistent with Jager et al. (2010) in terms of the existence of a positive relation between university services' quality and student satisfaction in South Africa. Additionally, Table 4 shows that ($R^2 = .46$), indicating that service quality represented 46% of the change in student satisfaction with a possible error of less than 0.05. This result indicates that there are other variables that affect student satisfaction in addition to the variables studied here. Moreover, the (F) calculated value is more than the tabulated value and is statistically significant at a level of significance less than or equal to 0.05. Accordingly, one may assume that university services' quality implementation affects student satisfaction at medium levels. These results are consistent with those of Bergamo et al. (2012), which indicate that there is a clear effect of university services' quality on student satisfaction with and loyalty to higher education institutions in Brazil. These results also conform to those of Purgailis et al. (2012) in terms of the existence of a positive relation between student acquisition of expected skills and student satisfaction with and loyalty toward university services in Latvia.

6. Conclusions

The objective of this study was to explore student evaluations of health administration colleges concerning their application of the service quality standards provided to them and the effect of the level of quality on student satisfaction. A descriptive method approach was adopted for this study. As noted in the results, the descending order of the implementation of service quality standard levels are as follows: infrastructure quality, learning resources, knowledge acquisition, skills acquisition, community services, managerial personnel services, and teaching staff services. The results suggest that the procedures utilized by health administration colleges are infrastructural elements to ensure the quality and continuous improvement of the colleges' activities. A lesson that can be drawn from these findings is that colleges have not been able to achieve identical levels of quality in teaching methods and techniques.

The major finding of this study indicates that the health administration services colleges in Jordan are applying service quality standards at medium levels from the perspective of students. A medium level of quality standards application leads to medium levels of satisfaction among students, indicating that upgrading and developing educational processes and the satisfaction of students require more attention and better implementation of service quality standards.

The study results highlight the importance of communication with students as a strategy to ensure quality in the health administration colleges. To raise staff consciousness of the importance of quality levels, health colleges must implement ongoing comparable programs for all relevant staff regarding the benefits of implementing quality standards.

7. Recommendations

To improve the application of quality standards in higher education and to improve student satisfaction, we recommend implementing the following:

1. Continued implementation of service quality standards in health administration colleges is important to ensure the continuous improvement of student satisfaction.
2. Colleges must focus on improving teaching staff services because of the role of teachers in increasing student satisfaction and fulfilling student needs.
3. Ongoing mechanisms and clear measurements of student satisfaction, which constitute essential elements of quality, should be established.
4. Health administration colleges must listen to student complaints and problems and identify effective solutions.
5. Health administration staff should be trained in the importance of converting the results of information analysis into projects and activities that increase student satisfaction.
6. Further research must be conducted to identify the most significant factors that can contribute to the successful implementation of quality standards in Jordanian universities. The findings can be used to obtain the ranking of each university.
7. Further research must be conducted to overcome the limitations of the study: the data were obtained from a particular group of people at one point of time, and there is the suggestion that the study results were affected by students' exams results.

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Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Reliability

Field	Alpha	Field	Alpha
Knowledge Gained	.61	Acquired Skills	.72
Learning Resources	.72	Administrative Staff	.83
Infrastructure	.72	Community Service	.60
Staff Services	.70	Satisfaction	.61

Table 2: Sample Breakdown According to Gender and Education Level

Variable	Details	Freq.	%	Details	Freq.	%
Sex	Male	233	47.6	Female	257	52.4
Degree	H. Diploma	252	51.5	Bsc	153	31.2
	Master's	85	17.3	PhD	00	00

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations of Questionnaire Statements

Statement	Results	
	$\bar{X}$	SD
Quality of Staff Services	3.11	.67
Constant contact is available between faculty and students	3.44	1.00
Faculty responds to students' comments and needs	3.48	1.01
Faculty provides adequate opportunity for discussion during lectures	3.25	1.06
Faculty makes time for student guidance	2.70	1.25
Academic, educational, and distinguished experiences are available at the university	2.67	1.29
Quality of Acquired Knowledge	3.45	.71
Course goals are clear	3.13	1.06
By the end of a course, students acquire targeted knowledge	3.65	1.12
I already possess the knowledge that the course intends to impart	3.52	.99
I can always find someone to help me understand difficult course material	3.51	1.01
Quality of Acquired Skills	3.36	.67
Students acquire targeted skills by the end of the course	3.58	.91
I already possessed the skills that the course intended to impart	3.40	.95
Courses contain sufficient practical applications	3.47	.94
Teamwork among students is encouraged	3.36	1.26
The university prepares students to deal with the labor market after graduation	3.05	1.13
There is diversity in university disciplines that fit labor market needs	3.27	1.11
Quality of Learning Resources	3.50	.76
The university's website meets all my needs	3.56	1.02
The university has adequate laboratories	3.50	1.03
The university has a supportive library	3.47	.99
Quality of Administration and Personnel	3.20	.77
Staff are interested in students	3.48	.94
The university administration knows students' needs in detail	3.18	1.11
The university administration is interested in meeting student needs	2.90	1.15
The university administration responds to student complaints and grievances	2.93	1.15
Staff respond to students despite work requirements and pressures	3.05	1.06
The university collects information regularly from students to improve its services	3.69	1.02
Quality of Infrastructure	3.58	.71
Sufficient parking is available at the university	3.76	1.07
The appearance and design of the university buildings fit their functions	3.32	1.24
Signage for university facility access is available	3.87	1.06
Lectures halls are appropriate for teaching	3.79	1.06
Lecture hall equipment is sufficient and appropriate for teaching	3.32	1.33
It is easy to access the university (availability of transportation)	3.42	1.03
The university has adequate sporting facilities for students	3.52	1.09
Quality of Community Service	3.30	.82
Necessary data collection and analysis are available for community needs identification	3.00	1.18
There is adequate communication between the university and community groups	3.23	1.10
The university performs its expected community service role	3.66	1.03
Quality of Student Satisfaction	3.42	.82
I trust the services provided by the university	3.18	1.18
Your degree of satisfaction with university learning services	3.47	1.08
Your recommendation to others whether to attend the university	3.61	1.06

Table 4: Summary of Study Hypotheses' Test Results

Result	Sig.	Df	T	SD	⁻X	No.
Students evaluate quality of services as low						H1
Reject	.00	489	125.5	.59	3.38	
Students evaluate teaching staff services as low						H2
Reject	.00	489	90.4	.67	3.11	
Students evaluate acquired knowledge as low						H3
Reject	.00	489	107.3	.71	3.45	
Students evaluate acquired skills as low						H4
Reject	.00	489	110.6	.67	3.36	
Students evaluate learning resources as low						H5
Reject	.00	489	100.8	.76	3.50	
Students evaluate administrative and personnel service quality as low						H6
Reject	.00	489	91.9	.77	3.20	
Students evaluate the quality of community services and students' interaction with community services as low						H7
Reject	.00	489	88.6	.82	3.30	
Students evaluate the quality of the infrastructure in educational institutions as low						H8
Reject	.00	489	110.3	.71	3.58	
Students' satisfaction with health administration college services is low						H9
Reject	.00	489	87.8	.86	3.42	
The effects of implementing quality standards in health administration colleges on student satisfaction is low						H10
Reject	.00	489	**F**	**R S**	**R**	
			417.1	.47	.68	

Table 5: Results of Variance Inflation Coefficient and Skewness Tests

Variables	Variance Inflation Coefficient	Allowable Variation	Skewness Coefficient
Teaching staff services	2.2	.45	.09
Knowledge acquisition	2.6	.44	.39
Skills acquisition	2.8	.30	.39
Learning resources	2.9	.46	.30
Administration and personnel	2.0	.49	.15
Infrastructure	3.0	.32	.47
Community service	2.5	.39	.04