Graduate and Postgraduate Students' Expectations and Satisfaction about Higher Education

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Abstract

Purpose of the study was to identify expectations and satisfactions of students about higher education. The study was conducted at university of Sargodha, a public sector university in Punjab established in 2002. The researcher selected 11 departments through stratified random sampling from seven faculties of university of Sargodha. A questionnaire after extensive review of related literature was developed for data collection. The tool was tested for validity and reliability before administration to the respondents. The expectations and satisfaction of students about higher education were analyzed by collecting data about six major services at the higher education institution i.e. faculty, administrative and advisory services, campus climate, campus life, support services and career programs .Findings of the study showed that both male and female respondents had no difference of opinion about the services at higher education institution. Overall students showed satisfaction with their experience at the university and especially about campus life. However majority of the students had more expectations and less satisfaction upon behavior of faculty, career programs and attitude of administrative staff working in the campus.

Keywords: students' expectations, students' satisfaction, higher education

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Introduction

In this era of science and technology, opportunities of Higher education are increasing (Butt & Rehman 2010). More and more students are struggling to secure admission in higher education institutions. Hameed and Amjad (2011) reported that in Pakistan the number of higher education ?institutions? has increased to 132 institutions. Simultaneously the number of students studying at higher education level had also increased. This sudden increase in number of students at higher education level is good but at the same time bad as well, because students are becoming dissatisfied of the facilities and guidance (Sukhandi, 2010). Students at higher education level are very ambitious and have high aims and ambitions. (Afzal, Khan, Hamid, 2010). They have lot of expectations from the institutions.), sometimes unrealistic expectations too (Temizer & Turkyilmaz, 2012). While the institutions are running at their own pace and have limited resources and could provide limited facilities and opportunities (Moogan, 2011). The society is changing day by day and so the demands of the era, therefore institutions have to address the changing scenario keeping in view the need of the society and individuals. Both have lot of expectations some are being documented most are not even been documented so never be addressed. this study is designed to explore the untold expectations of the students to measure the satisfaction level of them (Zeitham, Bitner, & Gremler, 2009).. Expectations and satisfactions are interdependent phenomena so the balance between the two is inevitable phenomenon.

Malik, Danish & Usman (2010) quoted Palacio, Meneses & Perez (2002) and stressed upon the introduction of university reforms to facilitate the students to fulfill their expectations and make them more satisfied and motivated to learn within the campus. This study is a timely effort to document the aspirations of students studying at higher education level because without the awareness of needs and expectations of students universities could not be purposefully reformed and modified to fulfill the demands of society. (Abdullah, 2009).

There is a variety of models had been presented to explain the relationship between expectations and satisfaction of students e.g. one very convincing model was being presented by Hom (2003) in which he described four basic factors of customer satisfaction, which are given in the fig.1.
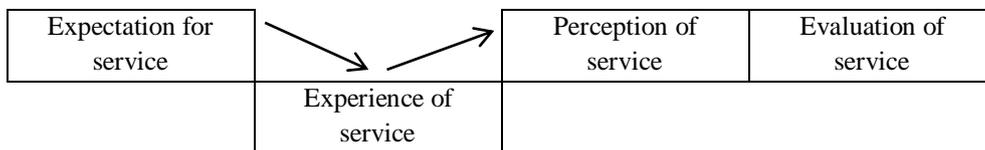
Expectation for service		Perception of service	Evaluation of service
	Experience of service		

Figure 1. Basic Model of Customer (Dis) Satisfaction

Fig 1. describes a chain to evaluate any service and awareness of the expectations is the first step in this journey. It shows that expectation leads a person to experience the service and on the basis of the quality of experience, perceptions emerge. The perceptions of customers/ students would define the quality of service in turn. Similarly in order to measure the degree of effectiveness for services at higher education institutions, views of the students are very important for the university administrators. Students came in the institutions with many expectations and aspirations, they had their fantasies too some are realistic and some are not. But at the end of the day the degree of the fulfillment of their aspirations is the primary yardstick to evaluate the services of institutions. Furthermore the satisfaction of students could guarantee the success of institution. So the major objective of the study was to analyze students' expectations and satisfaction of different departments at the university of Sargodha and to identify gender differences regarding expectations and satisfaction of respondents about university services.

Methodology

The researcher reviewed various studies (i.e. Shekhar, N.C., Rao, K. N. & Subbaiah, K. V. (2010), Jiewanto, A., Laurens, C. & Nelloh, L. (2012); Ravindran, S.D. & Kalpana, M.(2012); Rajab, A., Panatik, S.A., Rahman, A., Rahman, H.A., Shaarib, R. & Saat, M. (2011); Temizer, L. & Turkyilmaz, A. (2012); Khosravi, A.A., Poushaneh, K., Roozegar, A. & Sohrabifard, N. (2013) and selected six factors indicating services at higher education institutions. Those six factors were given as under;
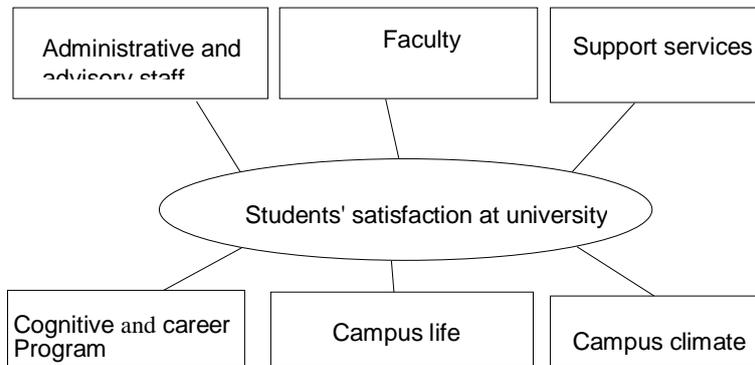

Fig. 2 Model of Students' Satisfaction at Higher Education Institution

The researcher followed descriptive type of research to describe the present state of expectations and satisfactions of students at the university regarding above mentioned services at the university. Through stratified random sampling, researcher selected 11 departments from all the faculties of the University of Sargodha. Researcher

collected data from 50 respondents of each of the department. The response rate is as given;

Sr. no.	Department	Response rate	Sr. no.	Department	Response rate
1.	Sargodha Medical College	50	7.	Urdu	50
2.	Pharmacy	50	8.	Commerce	50
3.	Agriculture	39	9.	Economics	50
4.	Education	50	10.	Chemistry	50
5.	Social Work	50	11.	Mathmatics	50
6.	Islamiat	43	-	-	

The researcher developed the items for each of the six factors of students' expectations and satisfaction at the university. There were total 63 closed ended items, while responses were gathered on 4-point Likert scale. Each statement was followed by two columns, one column indicating the level of expectations and the other column to measure the level of satisfaction of the respondents. Division of items for all the six factors for students' expectations and satisfaction were given as;

Faculty *- Item no. 1 – 10*

Administrative and advisory staff - Item no. 11 – 18

Support services - Item no. 19 – 24, 27 – 29, 31 and 33

Campus climate - Item no. 32, 36, 37, 38 and 39

Campus life - Item no. 25, 26, 30, 35, 40 & 46

Career programs – Item no. 41-45, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52

There were four statements for measuring students' satisfaction at five- point Likert scale.

The researcher consulted with experts for validity of the items and then also conducted a pilot test. The items having low values of Cronbach alpha were omitted from the tool. Final questionnaire had good reliability value of 0.96 under-acceptable value.

Findings of the study

In the light of objectives of the study, researcher used different statistical techniques to analyze data and to find out results.

Table 1.1 Levels of Expectations and Satisfaction of Male and Female Students about Services (Independent Sample T-Test)

	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	F	Sig. (2-tailed)
Students' Expectation to faculty	Male female	52.9383 53.0000	11.09725 10.96817	-0.064	528	0.949
To Administrative and advisory staff	Male female	46.6173 45.4564	10.49073 10.18384	1.290	528	0.198
To Support services	Male female	57.2058 57.6864	13.80078 12.78518	-0.416	528	0.678
To Campus Climate	Male female	21.4198 21.4251	4.72866 4.79297	-0.013	528	0.990
To Campus Life	Male female	36.8436 37.7038	8.31360 7.91693	-1.281	528	0.224
To Career Programs	Male female	52.8272 54.4564	11.95528 10.95656	-1.636	528	0.102
Students' satisfaction to Faculty	Male female	42.4033 41.2857	11.79166 10.87799	1.134	528	0.257
Students' satisfaction of Support services	Male female	45.9424 45.0592	13.19454 11.64300	0.810	487	0.418
Students' satisfaction about Campus Climate	Male female	16.6790 16.9686	5.09536 5.15858	-0.648	528	0.517
Students' satisfaction about Campus Life	Male female	29.7078 30.4634	8.35282 7.32497	-1.097	486	0.273
Students' satisfaction about Career Program	Male female	43.0535 43.1812	11.44738 10.75060	-0.132	528	0.895
Students' satisfaction about Administrative and advisory staff	Male female	37.5350 36.4390	10.80910 9.13165	1.248	476	0.213

(Male= 243, Female= 287)

Considering equality of variance as p<0.05, independent sample t-test is applied to find out any difference of opinion among male and female respondents about services at the university. The result of independent sample t-test shows that there is no significant difference for male and female students' expectations and satisfaction about services at the university.

Table 1.2: university students' expectations about services among different departments (One way ANOVA)

Dependent variable	Department I	J	Mean difference (I-J)	Sig.
Expectations of students about university	Sargodha Medical College	Education	26.200	0.011
		Islamiat	22.379	0.036
		Urdu	20.960	0.041
	Department of	Social work	6.140	0.050

services	education	Commerce	2.440	0.020
		hemistry	-5.240	0.006
		Department of mathematics	-0.440	0.009
	Department of economics	Department of social work	-22,440	0.028
		Department of commerce	-26.140	0.011
		Sargodha medical college	-28.580	0.005
	Department of chemistry	Department of pharmacy	21.280	0.038
		University college of agriculture	25.305	0.022
		Department of education	31.440	0.002
		Department of Islamiat	27.619	0.010
		Department of Urdu	26.200	0.011
		Department of economics	33.820	0.001
	Department of mathematics	Department of Urdu	21.400	0.037
		Department of Islamiat	22.819	0.032

N=530, p<0.05

In order to measure variance of students' expectations about services at the university, one way ANOVA and post hoc are applied (at $p<0.05$). Table shows that all the differences are significant. Values show that students of department of Sargodha medical college, department of chemistry and department of mathematics have more expectations about services at the university as compared to students from all other departments. Similarly students of department of economics, department of education and department of Islamiat have less expectation about services at the university.

Table 1.3: university students' satisfaction about services among different departments (One way ANOVA)

Dependent variable	Department I	J	Mean difference (I-J)	Sig.
Satisfaction of students about university services	Department of Islamiat	Sargodha medical college	-33.767	0.000
		Department of pharmacy	-32.947	0.001
		University college of agriculture	-38.583	0.000
		Department of education	-37.867	0.000
		Department of social work	-34.527	0.000
		Department of Urdu	-46.207	0.000
		Department of commerce	-59.147	0.000
		Department of economics	-30.227	0.002
		Department of chemistry	-45.867	0.000
		Department of mathematics	-22.027	0.000

Department of Commerce	Sargodha medical college	25.380	0.006
	Department of pharmacy	26.200	0.005
	University college of agriculture	20.564	0.038
	Department of education	21.280	0.021
	Department of social work	24.620	0.008
	Department of economics	28.920	0.002
	Department of mathematics	37.120	0.000
Department of Chemistry	Department of mathematics	23.840	0.002

N=530, p<0.05

Satisfaction of students from all the departments (under study) was calculated by one way ANOVA at equality of variance as p<0.05. The differences of mean values between the departments are significant. Values of the table show that students from department of Islamiat are more satisfied as compared to all other departments.

Table 1.4: level of students' Expectations and Satisfaction (Paired Sample t-Test)

		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Expectation – satisfaction	1.080	1.379	18.036	.000
2	Expectation – faculty satisfaction	4.253	1.294	75.720	.000
3	Expectation – administration and advisory staff satisfaction	3.415	2.009	39.173	.000
4	Expectation – support services satisfaction	3.946	1.339	67.883	.000
5	Expectation - campus life satisfaction	4.115	1.492	63.542	.000
6	Expectation - campus climate satisfaction	4.138	1.193	79.903	.000
7	Expectation – cognitive and career development programs satisfaction	5.200	1.070	111.965	.000

N=530, p<0.05

In order to measure the level of satisfaction of students at the university, paired sample t-test was applied. Mean values differences are all significantly different. This means that students are not satisfied with the provision of services at the university. The greatest difference is observed for cognitive and career development programs, secondly for faculty, thirdly for campus climate and fourthly for campus life at the university.

Conclusion and discussion

This study concluded that students' level of expectations and satisfaction about services at the university differ for male and female students. However the difference is

not significant. This means that results can be generalized for all the students. Similarly level of students' expectations and similarly satisfaction significantly varies among the departments. It may be due to the degree to which students of a department consider particular services at the university imperative for them. More they expect, less they be satisfied and vice versa. Differences between expectations and satisfaction measure the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of respondents about services available in the university. Students have high level of expectations to teaching faculty, availability of cognitive and career programs, conducive campus climate and productive campus life due to these high expectations they are less satisfied. However this dissatisfaction of students may be due to their unrealistic expectations to the teaching staff (Crisp, Palmer, Turnbull, Nettelbeck & Ward, 2009). Similarly students come to the university with a dire need to be able to get good jobs. Atay & Yildirim (2010) also reported that it is very important factor for students' satisfaction to got a knowledge about the job opportunities available to them at the end of term and after the completion of degree program.

According to the conclusion of the study, the university of Sargodha particularly and other universities generally should introduce effective reforms to fulfill the aspirations of the students which would definitely lead institutions to achieve the goals of students' satisfaction. One of the effective reform would be the establishment of counseling cells and career advisory desk within the campus.

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