

Original Article

Gap Analysis of Educational Services Quality based on SERVQUAL Model from Iranian Medical Students' Viewpoint (2014)

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Abstract

Introduction: Identifying service recipients' perceptions and evaluating service quality are the basic steps toward compiling quality assurance programs. In this regard, the present study aimed to determine the quality of educational services using service quality (SERVQUAL) model and from students' viewpoint.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted on 176 Iranian students of Alborz University of Medical Sciences in 2014 who were selected through stratified random sampling. Students' perceptions and expectations of educational service quality were measured through a questionnaire that was designed according to SERVQUAL approach based on five dimensions of assurance, responsiveness, empathy, reliability and tangibles. Data was analyzed by the SPSS 21 software through paired-sample t-test and one-way ANOVA statistical tests.

Results: The results revealed that, in all five dimensions of SERVQUAL, students' expectations were higher than their perceptions and there was a significant quality gap between their perceived and expected educational services provision. The highest and the lowest quality gaps belonged to the tangibility (1.16) and reliability (1.03) dimensions, respectively. Moreover, The empathy's sub-dimensions of "exterior attractiveness of physical facilities like buildings, classrooms, chairs, and restrooms" and "respectful behavior of teachers toward students" showed the highest (-1.93) and the lowest (-0.80) quality gaps, respectively. Also, the results showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of different majors in all aspects of service quality and significant differences in empathy, reliability and tangibles dimensions between the different academic degrees ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: According to the results, the quality of current services provided by this public university was not meeting the expectations of students particularly in case of physical space of faculties. Thus, it is recommended to provide and deliver services based on students' needs and expectations.

Keywords: Education, Quality assurance, Student, SERVQUAL model

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Introduction

Nowadays, compared to any other time, the quality of services as a key factor to accelerate success and stability of organizations (1) and as a strategic, effective and pervasive issue is highlighted in organizations management agenda (2). As the quality of services improves, the satisfaction and decision to reuse of the service also increase (3). Therefore, the study of service quality as a necessity inside business and institutions due to its benefits such as increasing the number of regular customer, attracting new customers, creating opportunities to extend the institution, explaining the cost reduction policies, providing a desirable image of institution, retaining and reinforcing the member of institution, has been given attention (4). Education, in current competitive world, has become not only a vast industry and daily need but also an investment for children by their parents (3). Educational services in particular those presented by universities and higher education institutions are the most important services in a community, serving a fundamental role in development of societies (5). Increasing competition among higher education institutions in attracting talented students leads to more attention of these institutions to quality of services issue (6). As the quantity of educational centers increases, students look for institutions which provide imminent, exclusive and important educational experiences. Moreover, they request educational programs which make them capable to a professional and high-salary job (7). In Iran, in spite of the high number of unemployed graduates, request to attend universities are dramatically increasing. As a result, in order to meet the needs, the number of public and non-public universities is growing as well without any quality control regarding their services provision (8). In order to prevent wasting of resources and dedicated budgets to higher education centers, it is necessary to identify service recipients' perceptions and evaluate quality of services.

There are many definitions for service quality (SERVQUAL), but one of the most popular definitions that have considerable attention is the SERVQUAL model developed in 1991 by Parasuraman et al. which underlines that customers assess service quality by comparing their expectation of services (SE) with their perception of services (SP) received (9). The contradictory meanings of education quality lead to using different methods to assess quality in higher education (1). One of the service quality assessment methods in universities and higher education is SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. in 1985 (10). The SERVQUAL instrument is based on 5 Gaps. Parasuraman et al. (1985) reported that consumers assessed service quality by comparison of expectations with perceptions in

ten aspects: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding/knowing customers and access, which these ten dimensions were subsequently merged into five generic service-quality dimensions (10).

The five dimensions of SERVQUAL model are presented as follows (11):

- (1) Tangibles: The appearance of physical facilities, tools, staff and communication materials,
- (2) Reliability: The ability to dependably and accurately perform the services promised,
- (3) Responsiveness: The willingness to help customers and to present quick services,
- (4) Assurance: The knowledge and courtesy of personnel and their ability to deliver trust and confidence,
- (5) Empathy: The level of caring and individualized attention the firm provides the customers with.

Empirical use of SERVQUAL model has revealed that against other scales it has more capability such as; the high adoption possibility of their dimensions with different types of service environments, high validity and reliability to compare clients' perceptions and expectations, the ability to compare its own values again, the relative importance of its five dimensions to perceive service quality and its analysis ability based on demographic attributes and other areas (5).

Alborz University of Medical Sciences as a faculty of medical sciences and a part of Iran University of Medical Sciences accepted students in some majors at first. Hence, it did not have independence and appropriate budget and facilities. After independence in 2012, the Faculty of Medicine and Nursing-Midwifery in a school environment, Health Faculty and Paramedical Faculty were formed in an independent space. But due to lack of space and the large number of students of medical emergencies, this group as an independent school was located in an area outside of Karaj city. Now this university has students in the majors of medicine, dentistry, nursing, midwifery, occupational health, public health, environmental health, nurse anesthesia, surgical technology and emergency medicine.

Various studies in Iran and elsewhere have considered the application of SERVQUAL model in measuring the quality of educational services. For example, Farahbakhsh showed that current situation of educational service quality is significantly lower than average index of questionnaire while desirable situation was significantly higher than this index. Moreover, a negative gap was observed between students' perceptions and expectations toward educational service quality of Lorestan University (8). In this regard, Foroughi Abari et al. conducted a study

on one of Iranian non-public universities which revealed that there was a significant difference between perceived and expected quality of services in all dimensions of services (12). Also, according to Beheshtirad et al., students were not pleased with the quality of the educational services provided by Urmia University of Medical Sciences and the gaps between the existing situation and desirable one were deep in all five dimensions (5). Simultaneously, faculty members of the University of Mazandaran, Enayati et al. reported that the students' expectations of service quality were higher than their perceptions in all service dimensions except reliability and subsequently they had not complete satisfaction of educational services. Indeed, students reported relative satisfaction with the service they received (13).

Using SERVQUAL model, Green has measured service quality in a higher education institute of South Africa and reported that students' expectations were high in tangibles, reliability and assurance dimensions while the most perceptions were seen in assurance (6). Legčević also used an original SERVQUAL instrument among students of Law Osijek Faculty to measure quality gap of educational services and found that there was a negative quality gap between perceptions and expectations of students in all of the five service dimensions. In addition, the lowest and the highest negative quality gaps were reported for reliability and empathy dimensions, respectively (14). Lastly, Adeleke presented the results of using adapted SERVQUAL approach to evaluating service quality of higher institutions in Oyo State. His study results showed that except teaching services quality score which was positive, other services in all the three campuses were given a negative quality score which means that services within these institutions were available only but not meeting the needs of the students except teaching services (15).

Considering recently constructed Alborz University of Medical Sciences in Iran and significance of recognizing students' perceptions and expectations in order to promote educational service quality and fill quality gap between current and desirable situation, this study was performed to assess educational service quality in this university based on SERVQUAL model and from students' point of view.

Methods

This cross-sectional study was conducted to measure students' expectations and perceptions of service quality to determine their satisfaction in a higher education institution. The sample was 176 Iranian students who were studying in Alborz University of Medical Sciences

in 2014. At first, a pilot study was conducted on 15 students and then according to students' perception and expectation scores of educational service quality in five dimensions, sample size calculation was performed using Cochran's formula. Indeed, the numbers of 156 students were calculated but according to response rate of 90%, sample size was estimated to 176. The inclusion criteria were studying in second semester and above, and willingness to participate in this study. Exclusion criterion was incomplete filling of questionnaires. The students were provided with all study procedures and their informed consent was acquired before their participation. Since dentistry students were studying in first semester and also school of emergency medicine was outside of city, we selected students among medicine, nursing, midwifery, occupational health, public health, environmental health, nursing anesthesia and surgical technologist students through stratified random sampling based on the number of students in each major.

Data were collected through a questionnaire consisted of 26 statements based on 5-point Likert scale which constructed according to SERVQUAL approach. So that "strongly agree" was coded as five, while "strongly disagree" was coded as one. These statements covered five service quality dimensions of tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy and reliability with 4, 4, 5, 6 and 7 statements, respectively. Validity and reliability of instrument had been approved in previous studies (13). The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts' opinion, and its reliability was also confirmed through Cronbach alpha coefficient for both perception and expectation parts, which were 0.91 and 0.95, respectively. Total of 176 questionnaires were distributed among students and they were given sufficient time to complete them. The response rate of questionnaires was 100%.

To determine students' expectation and perception scores of educational service quality, they were required to rate the statements that would show their expectations of the services presented by an ideal higher education organization. Then they were asked to rate another set of statements that would indicate their perceptions of the actual services presented to them by Alborz University of Medical Sciences. In the next phase, quality gap was measured by comparing students' perception (Per.) and expectation (Exp.) scores (Per.-Exp.) of service quality. If the gained score was either zero or positive, means that there is no quality gap and in case of positive one, perceived educational service quality is higher than students' expectations. Reversely, being negative means that there is a quality gap and perceived services quality does not meet students' expectations. This study is in compliance with all principles of research ethics and the

ethical approval of the University Research Committee has been obtained (ethic code: Abzums. Rec. 1392.24). Students were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and comments in the questionnaire. SPSS version 20.0 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to measure students' expectation and perception scores. Paired t-test was carried out to test the possible significant difference between the two means of expectations and perceptions. Also one-way ANOVA was used to investigate the relationship between demographic characteristics and quality of educational services.

Results

The demographic data of Alborz University of Medical Sciences students who participated in our study consisted of gender, age, academic degree, major and academic year (Table 1). Most of the participants were female (58%), between 16-21 years old (71%), and undergraduates (85.2%).

Table 1. Demographic data of Alborz University of Medical Sciences responder's students

Groups	N (%)	
Sex	Female	102 (58%)
	Male	74 (42%)
Age groups	16-21	125 (71%)
	22-27	36 (20.5%)
	28-38	15 (8.5%)
Academic degree	Associate's degree	9 (5.1%)
	Undergraduate	150 (85.2%)
	Professional doctorate	17 (9.7%)
Major	Nursing	30 (17%)
	Midwifery	9 (5.1%)
	Medicine	19 (10.8%)
	Health	34 (19.3%)
	Nursing anesthesia	40 (22.7%)
	Surgical technologist	44 (25%)
Academic year	First	28 (15.9%)
	Second	104 (59.1%)
	Third	38 (21.6%)
	Fourth	6 (3.4%)

In order to identify the gap, analysis of identified variables was conducted for both the perceived and expected scores. Mean scores for each variables were computed (Table 2). The highest and the lowest mean scores of students' expectation belonged to tangibles (4.38 ± 0.60) and responsiveness (4.32 ± 0.57) dimensions, respectively while the highest and the lowest mean scores of students' perceptions were related to assurance (3.20 ± 0.73) and responsiveness (3.05 ± 0.74) dimensions, respectively. The highest quality gap was observed in tangibles dimension equal to -1.30 ($P < 0.001$) and the lowest was for reliability dimension equal to -1.03 ($P < 0.001$). The total score of all service quality dimensions for expectations was 4.35 ± 0.52 and for students' perceptions was 3.19 ± 0.55 , and also the quality gap was -1.16 .

The highest and the lowest quality gaps were attributed to tangibles' sub-dimension of "exterior attractiveness of physical facilities like buildings, classrooms, chairs, and restrooms" (-17.94 , $P < 0.001$) and empathy' sub-dimension of "respectful behavior of education staff toward students" (-8.04 , $P < 0.001$), respectively (Table 3).

The average score of students' perceptions in all dimensions of educational service quality was higher than 3, in the other word, it was moderate. But the greatest gap in each statement of each dimension was seen in the statement "preparing students toward future job by theoretical and empirical educations" (-1.44) from assurance dimension; "students' easy access to management unit to pass their opinions about educational issues" (-1.37) from responsiveness dimension; "a quiet place to study inside the faculty" (-1.78) from empathy dimension; "easy accessibility to existent study resources of university" (-1.19) from reliability dimension; and finally "exterior attractiveness of physical facilities like buildings, classrooms, chairs, and restrooms" (-1.93) from tangibles dimension (Table 3).

Table 2. Paired-sample t-test to compare students' perceptions and expectations of educational service quality along with gap quality

Dimensions	Perceptions		Expectations		Mean Quality Gap (Per.-Exp.)	t value	P-value
	Mean	SD.	Mean	SD.			
Assurance	3.20	0.73	4.35	0.57	-1.15	-16.81	< 0.001
Responsiveness	3.05	0.74	4.32	0.57	-1.27	-18.16	< 0.001
Empathy	3.21	0.65	4.35	0.60	-1.14	-16.82	< 0.001
Reliability	3.33	0.63	4.36	0.58	-1.03	-16.74	< 0.001
Tangibles	3.08	0.72	4.38	0.60	-1.30	-19.63	< 0.001
Service quality	3.19	0.55	4.35	0.52	-1.16	-21.07	< 0.001

Table 3. Paired-sample t-test to compare students' perceptions and expectations of educational service quality among dimensions and their statements

Dimensions	statements	Perceptions		Expectations		Mean Quality Gap (Per.-Exp.)	t value	P-value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Assurance	Facilitating discussion and idea exchange about class subject by teachers	3.22	0.92	4.32	0.76	-1.1	-11.49	< 0.001
	Preparing students toward future job by theoretical and empirical educations	2.97	0.98	4.41	0.79	-1.44	-15.10	< 0.001
	Dedicated time by teachers to answer students' questions about educational issues	3.30	0.97	4.30	0.73	-1.00	-11.58	< 0.001
	Existence of enough study resources to increase students' specialty awareness	3.22	1.00	4.38	0.70	-1.14	-12.48	< 0.001
Responsiveness	Availability of supervisors and advisors when students need	3.07	1.12	4.36	0.75	-1.29	-12.52	< 0.001
	Students' easy access to management unit to pass their opinions about educational issues	2.95	1.01	4.32	0.75	-1.37	-14.23	< 0.001
	Exerting students' opinions and suggestions about educational issues in educational programs	2.98	1.00	4.29	0.8	-1.31	-14.29	< 0.001
	Providing suitable study resources for students to read more	3.30	0.94	4.33	0.72	-1.03	-11.77	< 0.001
	Announcing the time for students to meet their teachers to discuss their educational issues	2.97	0.99	4.32	0.69	-1.35	-15.38	< 0.001
Empathy	Giving proportionate tasks (not few or not a lot) and related to lesson	3.16	0.99	4.19	0.88	-1.03	-10.27	< 0.001
	Teachers' flexibility in specific conditions which may happen for each student	2.97	1.08	4.28	0.84	-1.31	-12.80	< 0.001
	Appropriateness of the classes' time	3.25	0.91	4.34	0.80	-1.09	-11.30	< 0.001
	A quiet place to study inside the faculty	2.69	1.23	4.47	0.84	-1.78	-15.77	< 0.001
	Respectful behavior of education staff toward students	3.59	1.04	4.41	0.78	-0.82	-8.04	< 0.001
Reliability	Respectful behavior of teachers toward students	3.63	0.89	4.43	0.66	-0.80	-10.42	< 0.001
	Presenting the content of each lesson systematically and relevantly	3.34	0.94	4.38	0.75	-1.04	-11.76	< 0.001
	Informing students from their tasks evaluation results by teachers	3.20	1.01	4.32	0.72	-1.12	-11.64	< 0.001
	Presenting the content of lessons for the students to understand	3.34	0.87	4.41	0.72	-1.07	-12.69	< 0.001
	Gaining more scores for each piece of work by students	3.34	1.00	4.38	0.83	-1.04	-11.05	< 0.001
	Recording and conservation of students' academic information without shortcoming and error	3.47	0.93	4.37	0.73	-0.90	-10.34	< 0.001
	Easy accessibility to existent study resources of university	3.19	0.99	4.38	0.72	-1.19	-13.00	< 0.001
Tangibles	Keeping promises by teachers	3.43	0.91	4.30	0.73	-0.87	-10.73	< 0.001
	Decorous and professional appearance of teachers	3.55	0.99	4.37	0.70	-0.82	-9.54	< 0.001
	Exterior attractiveness of physical facilities like buildings, classrooms, chairs, and restrooms	2.53	1.13	4.46	0.79	-1.93	-17.94	< 0.001
	Using class time effectively	3.16	0.95	4.33	0.76	-1.17	-12.67	< 0.001
	Helping students to identify professional responsibilities and rules in their majors	3.09	1.05	4.39	0.77	-1.30	-13.87	< 0.001

The results showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of different majors in all aspects

of service quality and significant differences in empathy, reliability and tangibles dimensions between the different academic degrees (P<0.05) (Tables 4 & 5).

Table 4. One way ANOVA to compare students' major with educational service quality

Service dimension	Major	Mean \pm SD	F ANOVA	P-value
Assurance	Nursing	3.41 \pm 0.65	3.14	0.01
	Midwifery	3.58 \pm 0.68		
	Medicine	3.04 \pm 0.58		
	Health	3.03 \pm 0.59		
	Nursing anesthesia	2.96 \pm 0.84		
Responsiveness	Surgical technology	3.39 \pm 0.75	7.17	< 0.001
	Nursing	3.22 \pm 0.47		
	Midwifery	3.62 \pm 0.62		
	Medicine	2.68 \pm 0.66		
	Health	2.96 \pm 0.55		
Empathy	Nursing anesthesia	2.68 \pm 0.83	7.15	< 0.001
	Surgical technology	3.38 \pm 0.77		
	Nursing	3.36 \pm 0.58		
	Midwifery	3.55 \pm 0.64		
	Medicine	2.53 \pm 0.53		
Reliability	Health	3.05 \pm 0.33	3.07	0.01
	Nursing anesthesia	3.25 \pm 0.69		
	Surgical technology	3.41 \pm 0.70		
	Nursing	3.42 \pm 0.62		
	Midwifery	3.80 \pm 0.67		
Tangibles	Medicine	2.97 \pm 0.71	4.29	0.001
	Health	3.23 \pm 0.39		
	Nursing anesthesia	3.26 \pm 0.66		
	Surgical technology	3.44 \pm 0.63		
	Nursing	3.07 \pm 0.74		
Total service quality	Midwifery	3.72 \pm 0.53	6.37	< 0.001
	Medicine	2.63 \pm 0.69		
	Health	3.19 \pm 0.59		
	Nursing anesthesia	2.89 \pm 0.74		
	Surgical technology	3.23 \pm 0.72		
	Nursing	3.31 \pm 0.40		
	Midwifery	3.66 \pm 0.57		
	Medicine	2.77 \pm 0.43		
	Health	3.10 \pm 0.35		
	Nursing anesthesia	3.05 \pm 0.61		
	Surgical technology	3.38 \pm 0.61		

Table 5. One way ANOVA to compare students' degree of study with educational service quality

Service dimension	Academic degree	Mean \pm SD	F, P-value
Assurance	Associate's degree	2.80 \pm 0.68	1.71, 0.52
	Undergraduate	3.23 \pm 0.74	
	Professional doctorate	3.08 \pm 0.58	
Responsiveness	Associate's degree	2.93 \pm 0.64	2.55, 0.081
	Undergraduate	3.10 \pm 0.75	
	Professional doctorate	2.69 \pm 0.67	
Empathy	Associate's degree	2.92 \pm 0.23	11.40, < 0.001
	Undergraduate	3.30 \pm 0.64	
	Professional doctorate	2.57 \pm 0.55	
Reliability	Associate's degree	3.19 \pm 0.43	3.11, 0.047
	Undergraduate	3.37 \pm 0.48	
	Professional doctorate	3.01 \pm 0.52	
Tangibles	Associate's degree	3.11 \pm 0.70	4.21, 0.016
	Undergraduate	3.13 \pm 0.71	
	Professional doctorate	2.60 \pm 0.70	
Total service quality	Associate's degree	3.00 \pm 0.37	5.72, 0.004
	Undergraduate	3.24 \pm 0.55	
	Professional doctorate	2.80 \pm 0.45	

Discussion

According to study results, scores (Per.-Exp.) of service quality revealed that there is statistically a significant quality gap between students' perceptions and expectations. So that, the current services quality was not able to meet students' needs. A quality gap was observed not only among all dimensions but also among all sub-dimensions (statements). In other words, students' expectations of educational services quality were significantly higher than their perceptions. These results are consistent with other studies conducted in Iran and other countries (1, 5, 12-24).

In general, by comparing the results of conducted studies, it can be inferred that there is a gap in five dimensions of educational service quality in most Iranian universities and colleges. However, in some cases, differences stem in the number of students and faculty members, with the roots in the university or faculty, staffing, and also physical space and training facilities used.

Based on quality gap ranking, tangibles and responsiveness dimensions were ranked first and second (the highest quality gap), respectively, which are consistent with the study of Kanakana (25) and also nearly consistent with conducted studies in Iran (26-29). Moreover, the reliability dimension was ranked in the last (the lowest quality gap) which is consistent with other conducted studies (27-29). Also, the highest and the lowest mean scores of students' expectations belonged to tangibles and responsiveness dimensions, respectively while the highest and the lowest mean scores of students' perceptions belonged to assurance and responsiveness dimensions, respectively. In addition, among sub-dimensions or statements of measuring educational service quality, "exterior attractiveness of physical facilities like buildings, classrooms, chairs, and restrooms" and "respectful behavior of teachers toward students" respectively showed the highest and the lowest quality gaps with the first one belonging to the tangibles dimension and the second statement belonging to the empathy dimension. Also in Kanakana (25) and Shams et al. (27) studies, the expectations of students about supplies, equipment and physical facilities were more than their perceptions. Since Alborz University of Medical Sciences is newly constructed, Iran's economic situation and budget shortages particularly for education services, and lack of students' satisfaction with physical spaces and faculties' facilities are predictable. Responsiveness dimension is associated with willingness to help customers and provide immediate services. Service quality gap in this dimension indicates a difficulty in access to consultants and supervisors for students and also to pass their opinions, criticisms and suggestions

about educational issues. Therefore, it seems that education administrators at all levels should devote certain time to student meetings.

This quality gap between students' expectations and perceptions may arise from many various reasons. These reasons may include: dominant educational atmosphere on country and study area, lack of financial resources and enough budgets for higher education centers or misusing current credits in this area, different strategies to manage universities, overemphasis on quantity of higher education centers instead of quality, rapid increase in the number of students and lack of suitable prospect of the future for higher education services to be added to this list (8). In regard of limited resources particularly financial support which is one of the main challenging issues of institutions and hamper running the service quality assurance programs, the results of service quality gap analysis help management system to fill current quality gap by optimal distribution of institutions' available resources and improve quality of services which are more important from students' viewpoint (5).

According to results of this study, teachers should be available to answer students' questions even out of classroom. Moreover, educational managers should be ready to hear students' opinions and viewpoints in case of educational challenges, curricula, etc. and apply them accordingly.

According to the results of our study, some of the students' expectations which are more important than others and deserve high priority include: preparing students for the future job, announcing the time for students to meet their teachers to discuss their educational issues, providing a quiet place to study inside the faculty, presenting the content of lessons for the students to understand, and exterior attractiveness of physical facilities like buildings, classrooms, chairs, and restrooms.

In this study, the relationship between major and quality of educational services was significant in all aspects. The highest and the lowest mean scores of service quality were observed in midwifery and medical students, respectively. In Abbasian et al. study (26), the highest gap score was belong to surgical technologist, nursing and medicine and the lowest gap score was seen in emergency medical technicians and also health students. In a recent study, a significant difference was observed between the mean scores of different academic degrees in all aspects of service quality except assurance and accountability dimensions. Results in study of Tofighi et al. (1) showed a significant relationship between gap quality of tangibles

dimension and students in academic years 3 and 4. Also, Khatibi et al. (16) reported a significant difference between mean scores of educational service quality from viewpoint of students in academic years "3 and 4" and "2 and 4". In study of Ghalavandi et al., a significant difference between educational service quality and degrees of education was observed (30). Since medical students have always attracted special attention as the talented students, they have more expectations than other students in other majors. On the other hand, satisfaction of employed midwifery students at Alborz University of Medical Sciences might be due to their age, their experience in therapeutic environments, and familiarity with such difficulties.

Impossibility of emergency medical technicians students' participation because of the distance was amongst the limitations of this study, as well as lack of access to the fourth year students due to attending in the hospitals. Furthermore, because the faculties were not completely independent, it was not possible to analyze each faculty separately. Since the results of these studies can analyze the existing insufficiencies, they can be used as an appropriate reference to plan, prioritize and make decision about the allocation of resources (31). With a focus on the dimensions with a larger gap in the quality of services, aiming to reduce the gap in these dimensions, the quality of other dimensions is also improved from the perspective of the receivers. Because enhancing quality in one dimension can increase the quality in the other dimensions (the reverse is also true) (27). Thus, in addition to using the results of this study and performing a proper intervention, the quality of educational services is suggested to be analyzed by SERVQUAL model and results be compared with each other in order to monitor the interventions carried out to promote the quality of educational services of university.

Conclusion

According to results of our study, students' expectations of educational services quality were significantly higher than their perceptions. It means that the quality of current services provided by this public university was not able to meet the students' expectations particularly in the case of physical space of faculties. There is long distance to reach desirable situation and students' satisfaction which are the main clients of educational services. Thus, it is recommended to provide and deliver services based on students' needs and expectations. It is also recommended that management system pay attention to students' effective opinions during different stages of scheduling a program, designing, running and evaluating. Additionally, institutions' staff should participate in training courses in

terms of effective methods of delivery services and effectiveness communications with students.

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