Quality Education in the Private Universities in Bangladesh: A Study from the Perspectives of SERVQUAL Approach

Surajit Sarbabidya* and Md. Abdur Rashid**

The trend of pursuing higher education is particularly upward in Bangladesh from the last two decades. Before the establishment of the private universities, the public universities have been the only resort for higher education. Later on, the private universities have become new incorporation in this scenario. Now, both public and private universities are playing significant role in developing human resource (HR) for the nation. But ensuring quality education has so far remained as a great challenge for these academic entities due to some gaps in the respective services and support. However, the existing literatures are not sufficient to demonstrate the actual level of academic service quality in the private universities in Bangladesh. So this indicates to the research problem and this is the reason which motivated to endeavor the current study through a modified questionnaire of the prominent SERVQUAL model based primary survey during the month of October 2016. Finding the gap in the service quality, the study recommends the administration of the private universities to ensure career oriented finest quality education related services through active and sincere support by the faculty members, officials and other staffs.

Field of Study: Education Research

Keywords: Quality Education, Private Universities in Bangladesh, SERVQual Approach

1. Introduction

Higher education is an essential precursor in producing and nurturing intellectual human capital like critical thinkers and innovators, enthusiastic citizens, etc. (Chaudhary et al. 2009)**.** There is upward moving trend of pursuing higher education in Bangladesh from the last two decades. Apart from the Government funded thirty seven (37) public universities including 1 national university and one (1) open university, three (3) international universities, there are around ninety three (93) private universities in Bangladesh (www.ugc.gov.bd). In addition to the public universities, the private universities have so far been established to significantly contribute in fulfilling the national human resource (HR) gap or demand in one hand and saving or retaining a lot of foreign currencies that would otherwise be remitted to the developed countries of the east and west in pursuing higher education by a formidable number of country's career aspirant students on the other hand. In such a situation, the administration of such private universities has challenges to be at par with quality education standard of the reputed universities at home and abroad.

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*Dr. Surajit Sarbabidya, Professor, Department of Business Administration, School of Business, Britannia University, Comilla, Bangladesh, **Email:** surajitsarbabidya@gmail.com

** Md. Abdur Rashid, Assistant Professor, Department of English, School of Business, Britannia University, Comilla, Bangladesh

The adoption of the proven SERVQual model in developing, maintaining and continuing quality education and allied services may enable the concerned to create best quality higher education opportunities by mitigating the prevailing challenges. The present study, in this regard, is the result of motivation to develop quality HR for the nation by saving valuable foreign currencies in one hand and contributing in the overall development of the country on the other hand. This paper aims to examine whether the level and standard of educational service quality of the private universities in Bangladesh is at par with their benchmark.

Realizing the importance of developing and maintaining quality education standard, secondary data have been collected. The current paper is unique because this paper not only focuses on service quality aspects of academic institution but also examines the gap between the perceptions and expectations of the respondents of the university students. However, the current study is not free from limitations. For example, the major limitation of the present study is that the secondary data did not exhibit the application of SERVQual model in the context of education quality of private universities in Bangladesh. So, it is yet to get a concrete idea about the true situation of quality education in the private universities in Bangladesh. It is because the findings of the earlier research mostly exhibit the result of adopting the SERVQUAL framework in the universities and higher education institutes of the other countries rather than Bangladesh. Despite the proven success of the SERVQUAL framework in other countries, relatively few studies in higher education in the private universities in Bangladesh have adopted this approach. Again some studies focused only on the few aspects of the subject matter of the current study. So, it is clearly evident that there is a research gap and to mitigate this gap a rigorous research is yet to be attempted.

Since the existing researches are not showing the actual level of academic service quality in the private universities in Bangladesh, more researches are required in this field and in this respect the findings of this study are different than those of previous researches. To fill up the knowledge gap left out by the previous researches, the present study investigates the research question: "Is there any gap in the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh?" Here, with relation to the question, the following hypothesis has been set to exhibit the appropriate answer:

H_0: There is no gap in the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh.

H_a: There are gaps in the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh.

From the light of the above hypothesis, the principal objective of this study is to investigate whether there is any gap in the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh or not.

This paper is organized with the various sections. Section 1 deals with introduction, Section 2 focuses on the background of the study, Section 3 contains the theoretical framework of service quality; Section 4 portrays the literature review, Section 5 defines the research problem, Section 6 goes with the methodology of the study, Section 7 exhibits the rationale of the study, Section 8 deals with the analysis and findings, and Section 9 draws a constructive conclusion including uniqueness of the study, new findings, significance and implications and limitations.

2. Background of the Study

The government is spending substantially to flourish both public and private sectors in order to provide higher education opportunities for all the citizens to meet the future challenges (Mamun 2008). Towards this end, the establishment of new departments in the existing universities, colleges and institutes as well as new universities in both public and private undertakings is remarkable. As a result, various Acts for autonomous public and privately funded and managed universities have been passed in the parliament of Bangladesh to give such entities a strong footing so that quality education together with competent and efficient human resources can be developed. In this process, many technical institutes which were earlier affiliated with the public and national universities and would impart career oriented education for the graduating students have been converted and transformed into degree awarding full-fledged universities within the jurisdiction of the prevailing laws of the country. However, the establishment of such academia under the government funding and initiative was not adequate to meet the rising demand trend of the academic development at national level. Realizing this fact, when Government of Bangladesh took decision to include private initiative and funding through Private University Act many entrepreneurs have come forward in the last 25 years and are still joining in this sector. The Act was also amended in the year 2010 to ensure fair image of academic service quality. The result is the establishment of ninety three (93) private universities in Bangladesh since the year 1991 under the direct supervision of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and control of the Ministry of Education (MoE), Bangladesh.

Academicians, education thinkers, education researchers, education policy planners, and other stakeholders are in common consensus that the quality of higher education in Bangladesh has been deteriorating steadily, in some areas quite alarmingly, over the last two decades (Salahuddin and Aminuzzaman 2011). Chowdhury & Alam (2011) have investigated the factors affecting the Quality Education in Colleges and Universities offering higher business and management education in Bangladesh. To develop the quality they suggested measures to remove the barriers like lack of financial support, research and training to faculties for publications and professional development, a positive environment and teachers' active participation in politics.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Service Quality

Service quality is the overall assessment of a service by the customers (Eshghi et al., 2008). Service quality is an important area to academicians because of its relevancy to service companies and therefore many researchers have tried to develop various models to measure it, even though some claim it is hard to measure because of its intangibility which is hard to quantify (Douglas & Connor, 2003; Eshghi et al., 2008). Service quality is also an important area for practitioners because according to (Douglas and Connor, 2003), (Saravanan and Rao, 2007) the need for survival and growth in ever increasing competitive markets are main critical factors in the search for providing superior service quality and achieving customer satisfaction. Researchers have proven that providing good service quality to customers retains them, attracts new ones, enhances corporate image, positive word-of-mouth recommendation and above all guarantees survival and profitability (Negi, 2009; Ladhari, 2009).

McDougall and Levesque (2000) found that quality leads to satisfaction. Negi, (2009) clearly points out that overall service quality is significantly associated with and contributes to the overall satisfaction of customers. Negi (2009) also suggests that customer-perceived service quality has been given increased attention in recent years, due to its specific contribution to business competitiveness and developing satisfied customers. According to Saravanan & Rao (2007), customer satisfaction is based on the level of service quality delivered by the service providers which is determined by the consumer's cumulative experiences at all of the points of contact with company. This shows that there is a link between service quality and customer satisfaction which highlights that importance of customer satisfaction when defining quality (Wicks and Roethlein, 2009).

3.2 SERVQUAL Model

The SERVQUAL instrument (Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml 1991, 1994; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988) is a widely recognized in the service sector as a multi-item scale developed to assess customer perceptions of service quality. Haque A, Sarwar AA-M, Yasmin F, Anwar A. (2012) described SERVQUAL as the most complete attempt to conceptualize and measure service quality and a standard tool that can be used in a wide variety of activities in services sectors such as healthcare and education.

The SERVQUAL instrument has five dimensions; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Ham et al. 2003).

Van Iwaarden et al. (2003) found SERVQUAL instrument as the predominant method used to measure consumers' perceptions of service quality with its five generic dimensions or factors which are: (1) Tangibles: Physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel, (2) Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, (3) Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, (4) Assurance (including competence, courtesy, credibility and security): Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence and (5) Empathy (including access, communication, understanding the customer): Caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers.

According to the study carried out by Ladhari (2009) recommended the SERVQUAL model as a good scale to use when measuring service quality in various specific industries.

3.3 Gap Analysis

Friman and Fellesson (2009) measured the gaps between expectations (E) and perceptions (P) which help the researchers to reach at meaningful conclusions about current state of service quality. It has been observed that service quality researchers always come up with some gaps which are understandable because customers have higher expectations.

The Servqual gap analysis is a disconfirmation approach (Bayraktaroglu and Atrek, 2010) which views customer satisfaction judgments as the result of the consumers' perception of the gap between their perceptions of performance and their prior expectations, and allows service providers to identify service gaps (Parasuraman et al., 1994). When expectations

exceed service performance, disconfirmation is negative and when performance exceeds expectations, disconfirmation is positive. The gap theory suggests that perception of service quality is driven by the difference between consumers' expectations about the performance of a general class of service providers and their assessments of the actual performance of a specific provider within that class (Shekarchizadeh et al., 2011).

Kong and Muthusamy (2011) used a 37 -item questionnaire developed from Gronroos's perceived service quality model to measure students' perceptions of service quality in a local private higher education institution; service gaps were then calculated from the differences between perceptions of the services received and their respective expectations.

4. Literature Review

Retaining students have become a challenging problem for the academic community, and that effective measures for students retention must be implemented in order to increase the retention of qualified students at higher education institutes (Lau, 2003). From this perspective, the climate in higher education suggests that students could be seen as primary customers (Sander, Stevenson, King and Coates, 2000). According to Sunanto, Taufiqurrahman, and Pangemanan (2007) higher education institutes (HEIs) should view students as their primary clients and seek to maximize their satisfaction, not only with curriculum and administrative processes but also in terms of educational services offered. Similarly, Qureshi et al. (2010) based their work on the assumption that students are considered "service recipients or customers" while teachers play a vital role as "service providers."

4.1 Service Quality in Higher Education

Quality in higher education means the estimates of education quality are essentially the achievement of planned goals (Cheng, 2003), associated with elitism and the perceived excellence of university education (Mai, 2005). Service quality in higher education is important for success of an institution (Landrum, 2007). Many researchers agree that it is important to understand expectations and values of students in higher education (Telford and Mason, 2005). The subject of service quality measurement in higher education has recently attracted the attention of many researchers (Koni, et al., 2013; Sultan and Wong, 2012; Jain, Sinha and Sahney, 2011; Lee, 2010; Abu Hasan et al., 2008; Pereda et al., 2007; Peng and Samah, 2006).

Again a growing debate on the definition of quality in higher education has led to the suggestions that service quality should be defined based on student perceptions (Aldridge & Rowley, 1998; Mai, 2005). Perception of service quality has become paramount strategic importance for an organization due to its influence on the post-enrolment communication behavior of the students (Marilyn, 2005). Students' perceptions of the higher education experience have become increasingly important as institutions of higher education have attempted to become more student-centric (Khodayari and Khodayari, 2011; Mahadzirah and Wan, 2003).

To gain competitive advantages, efforts to adopt the quality management system philosophy are fast spreading within the higher education institutions (HEIs) (Sohail, Rajadurai and Rahman, 2003). Brooks (2005) stated that the measurement of quality should encompass more university activities. The author recommends the following

criteria to assess a quality of a university i) Reputation, ii) Faculty Research Productivity, iii) Students Educational Experiences and Outcomes, iv) Program Characteristics: Counts of degree issued; financial support; fellowship grant support; teaching assistantship, v) Program Effectiveness: Timeline of their program; proportion of students; completing their intended degree program, vi) Students Satisfaction: Classroom; co-curricular activities; interaction with faculty and peers; instructions; campus life, vii) Students Outcome: Assessment of learning and career outcomes of educational programs

Among others, Russel (2005) and Mahapatra and Khan (2007) preferred SERVQUAL to use as a higher education service quality measurement instrument due to its simple structure, generalization capability and the ease of use. A good number of research studies on service quality at various levels of higher educational institutes exhibit the following findings:

In a Classroom Setting: Stodnick and Rogers's (2008) study applied the Servqual instrument to measure student perceptions of service quality in a classroom setting, and the results demonstrated that a customer-centric quality scale such as Servqual could be applied in a classroom setting. Their findings showed that the Servqual scale exhibits both reliability and validity.

4.2 At the Under Graduate Level

Sander et al. (2000) undertook a Gap analysis" to develop a number of questions in order to compare what students look for "(expect) and what they experience" on a course meanwhile examined undergraduates" expectations and preferences in teaching, learning and assessment. Using a modified SERVQUAL scale, O'Neill (2002) undertook a longitudinal study on a sample of undergraduate students in Western Australia. Although his findings demonstrated that the measurement items failed to load on the five prescribed SERVQUAL dimensions, he discovered that student perceptions of quality had deteriorated – suggesting service quality in higher education may be influenced by time. In another study O'Neill (2003) found that perceptions of service quality in higher education appear to go down over time; the findings also confirmed suggestions that rising expectations have the effect of downgrading perceptions of previous service. LaBay & Comm (2003) also developed a number of measures to evaluate students" expectations and perceptions, concerning their faculty members, on a sample of undergraduate and distance learning students. In their study on undergraduate level Voss et al (2007) found that students may have idealistic expectations, and if higher institutions know about their students' expectations, they may be able to respond to them in a more realistic ways.

4.3 At the Graduate and Post Graduate Levels

Servqual instrument has been used to assess service quality in higher education at the graduate and postgraduate levels (Barnes, 2007; Shekarchizadeh, Rasli, and Hon-Tat, 2011; Smith and Clark, 2007). Barnes (2007) used a modified Servqual instrument to investigate expectations and perceptions of service quality among a sample of postgraduate Chinese international students at a leading business and management school in the UK, and found significant differences between students' perceptions and expectations of service on all statements. Barnes also discovered that the reliability dimension appeared to be the most important dimension, followed by responsiveness, tangibles, empathy, and assurance. Barnes's (2007) findings demonstrated that the

Servqual instrument is a useful tool for measuring service quality in higher education, and is applicable as a research tool for measuring postgraduate students' perceptions. Angell et al.'s (2008) findings suggested that the "academic" and "industry links" aspects of service quality are the most critical to postgraduates. Shekarchizadeh et al. (2011) focused on international postgraduate students studying in selected Malaysian universities, and found that all items were perceived as significantly negative compared to expectations.

4.4 At the Doctoral Levels

Oldfield and Baron (2000) conducted an empirical study of business and management students in the UK; their findings revealed three dimensions of perceived service quality in higher education: "requisite elements" (essential to enable students to fulfill their studies), "acceptable elements" (desirable but not essential), and "functional elements" (practical or utilitarian). Lau (2003) claims that many American institutions are experiencing a loss in students not returning to campus to complete undergraduate programmes. As a result, she provides a conceptual framework consisting of three factors based on learning, teaching and resources (Institutional Administrators, Faculty, and Students), which are considered to influence student involvement/learning, and which in-turn lead to student retention, and graduation. Smith et al. (2007) used the original Servqual scale to explore service quality in an Information Technology service department in an HEI, and found that service quality gaps were the same for students and academic staff. In that study, Smith et al. showed that reliability was the most important dimension for all customers, and that the greatest improvement in service quality would be achieved through service reliability. Qureshi et al. (2010) examined service quality in HEIs using the Servqual instrument in which they assessed only reliability and responsiveness, and found a significant relationship between these two service quality dimensions and students' satisfaction. Shekarchizadeh et al. (2011) used 35 items in a modified Servqual and distributed them into five different factors: professionalism, reliability, hospitality, tangibles, and commitment. Disconfirmation was negative for all the items, indicating that international postgraduate students' expectations in Malaysia exceeded perceptions of service quality for every item.

From the aforementioned research findings it is evident that the actual level of academic service quality in the private universities was not properly exhibited in the literature review. So, the reviewed findings do not exactly answer to the main research question of the current study to know whether there is any gap in the quality education of the private universities in Bangladesh or not. For reliable answer to this question, the development of research hypothesis such as 'There are gaps in the quality education of the private universities in Bangladesh' has been necessitated. Now, this has to be statistically proved on the basis of the primary data.

5. Research Problem

Establishing visually appealing permanent campus, computer lab with modern technology and equipment, rich library with latest books, journals and references, well-furnished classrooms with multimedia facilities, well equipped auditorium, seminar and conference rooms, acquiring and retaining talented students and faculty members, providing sufficient fund for scholarships and waivers, affordable tuition fees, standard and up to date curriculum, on campus job facilities, and the likes stand as severe challenges to the private universities in Bangladesh which do not receive any fund or financial support from the Government like those of public universities in the country. In such a situation, it is

really difficult to maintain such standard of education without quality commitment and sound financial and infrastructural base.

6. Methodology of the Study

This study is the result of both primary and secondary data analysis and interpretation. The primary data have been collected during the month of October 2016 using random sampling method from 120 respondents who were the enrolled students of six (6) private universities in Bangladesh and their guardians through a Likert 5 scale structured and self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire in this study has been adopted with some modifications to the original one proposed by Parasuraman et al (1988). The service quality gap has been tested by utilizing the mean scores of both perceptions and expectations of the respondents from the light of the five (5) dimensions of educational service quality including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles through SERVQual approach. The appropriateness, timeliness, construction and relevance of the study may be assessed through the following reliability and validity tests.

6.1 Reliability of the Study

For the reliability, Cronbach Alpha scores must be grater or equal to 0.5 (Nunnally, 1967).

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

	Expected	Perceived
SERVQUAL Dimensions	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
Responsiveness	.671	.730
Assurance	.742	.770
Empathy	.734	.767
Tangibles	.584	.621
Reliability	.706	.743
Overall	**.887**	**.907**

Table 1 shows that all the dimensions employed for both Expected and Perceived level of the respondents are reliable individually and together as overall with value greater than 0.5, indicating an overall higher reliability factors of service quality variables used in this study for the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh. Thus, it can safely be stated that the reliability of this study is substantial in every perspective because the sample size and the data collected are reliable and also the reliability is shown to be good using all the 16 items of respondents' expectations and perceptions.

6.2 Validity of the Study

For the validity, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity have been adopted. According to Kaiser (1974) values greater than 0.5 are acceptable which indicates that samples selected against the variables are adequate. Kaiser also recommends that values less than 0.50 "unacceptable", between 0.5 and 0.6 are "mediocre", between 0.5 and 0.6 are "miserable", between 0.6 and 0.7 are "mediocre", between 0.7 and 0.8 are "middling", values between 0.8 and 0.9 are "meritorious" and values above 0.9 are "marvelous". The values of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure in the **Table 2** shows that all the dimensions employed individually and together as overall are acceptable since they are greater than 0.50. This suggests the adequacy of the sample size for the research study. From the results of the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, it

is seen that the approximate chi-square statistics in case of each dimension as well as overall are significant since they are greater than the table value. So, it is clearly evident that the study is valid for each dimension individually and together as overall for both Expected and Perceived level of the respondents.

Table 2: Validity Analysis

SERVQUAL Dimensions	Expected		Bartlett's	Sig.	Perceived		Bartlett's	Sig.
	KMO				KMO			
	Value	Acceptable Status			Value	Acceptable Status		
Responsiveness	.627	mediocre	56.058	.000	.684	mediocre	70.454	.000
Assurance	.681	mediocre	77.191	.000	.696	mediocre	89.057	.000
Empathy	.684	mediocre	74.536	.000	.699	mediocre	89.236	.000
Tangibles	.636	mediocre	33.835	.000	.638	mediocre	41.507	.000
Reliability	.747	middling	76.902	.000	.762	middling	94.729	.000
Overall	.832	meritorious	775.291	.000	.872	meritorious	831.721	.000

7. Rationale of the Study

Against the high waves of acute competition, each of the private universities in Bangladesh needs its own strategic plan to ensure competitive advantage in providing quality education with student oriented approach in one hand and resource orientation like hiring and retaining talented faculty members, establishing physical facilities with true academic environment on the other hand. This in turn will enable them in enhancing education with holistic orientation. From this perspective, the current study is justified as it uses SERVQUAL framework to investigate whether there is any gap in the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh or not. Thus, the findings and implications of this research will contribute to the existing theories by empirically investigating the impact of the quality gap on the education system of the Private Universities in Bangladesh.

8. Gap Analysis Results

Based on the survey data, the following section exhibits the analysis and findings of this study.

The mean scores from the sample are illustrated in **Table 3**. For each statement the mean Expectation (E) and Perception (P) values, along with a service quality (Q) value from the formula are presented, $Q = P - E$ (Parasuraman *et al.* 1988). The three columns provide summary results for the service quality of the Private Universities in Bangladesh, where the gap $(P - E)$ is negative. This refers to perceptions of the respondents falling short against their initial expectations, and the presence of service quality gaps. The findings suggest a short fall on all the items measured. The expectation and perception items were measured using a five (5) point Likert scale, from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree, with 3 serving as a mid-point/neutral opinion on the scale. Mean scores greater than 3 identify a tendency for respondents to agree with a particular statement, whereas means of less than 3 indicate disagreement.

Table 3: Mean scores for the modified SERVQUAL dimensions

S/L No.	Items	Perceptions (P) Mean	Expectations (E) Mean	Quality Gap Q = P - E
	Reliability			
1	University tries to keep promises to offer quality education related service	3.8103	4.4914	-0.6811
2	University shows a sincere interest in solving education related service limitations	3.9397	4.6034	-0.6637
3	University provides quality education at the time it promises to do so.	3.7155	4.4397	-0.7242
	Responsiveness			
4	Employees give prompt academic service to the students	3.6724	3.9310	-0.2586
5	Employees are always willing to help students	3.8017	4.1638	-0.3621
6	Employees are interested to respond to students' queries	3.5603	4.2414	-0.6811
	Assurance			
7	Behavior of the employees builds confidence in students	3.5345	4.2759	-0.7414
8	Students feel safe in with the university	3.9569	4.5862	-0.6293
9	Employees are consistently courteous with students	3.5086	4.3793	-0.8707
	Empathy			
10	Employees give individual attention to students	3.3621	4.2845	-0.9224
11	Students have the heartiest interest to the academic services of the university	4.0086	4.6724	-0.6638
12	Employees understand students' specific academic needs	3.3621	4.2069	-0.8448
	Tangibles			
13	University has modern equipment to provide quality academic service	3.6293	4.4397	-0.8104
14	University's physical facilities are visually appealing to students	3.2069	4.1466	-0.9397
15	Employees appear neat	3.7155	4.5345	-0.8190
16	Academic materials are usually of good quality.	3.5690	4.3534	-0.7844
	SERVQUAL totals	**62.00049**	**74.10948**	**-12.109**
	SERVQUAL average	**3.647088**	**4.359381**	**-0.71229**

8.1 Expectations (E)

It can be concluded from the Table data that Expectation (E) values among the respondents were higher (means ranging from 3.9310 to 4.6724). Sixteen (16) statements (v1 to v16) illustrate mean scores of 4 or greater from 4.1466 to 4.6724 except 3.9310 of variable v4. This suggests that respondents really have higher expectations in terms of need for all the items covering these 16 statements.

8.2 Perceptions (P)

It can be concluded from the **Table 3** data that most of the items exceeded midpoint 3 such as from 3.2069 to 4.0086 suggesting that the sample had a tendency to agree that sufficient items have given adequate perception among the respondents.

The total mean scores for service quality perceptions and expectation items were 62.00049 and 74.10948 respectively with a service gap of -12.109. While the averages mean scores for service quality perceptions and expectation items were 3.647088 and 4.359381 with a service gap of -0.71229. This score indicates that there is a gap in the service quality of the Private Universities in Bangladesh.

8.3 Service Quality Gaps Analysis (P-E)

As each item in the third column of **Table 3** has a negative value, respondents' perceptions of the service are falling short of their expectations regarding the service quality of the Private Universities in Bangladesh. So, **Table 3** findings rejects the null hypothesis (H_0): There is no gap in the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh and proved the alternative hypothesis (H_a): There are gaps in the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh. Thus, the model proposed in the earlier section is validated.

9. Conclusion

From the above gap analysis and findings of this study, it is evident that there are gaps in the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh. Hence, the gap analysis model can further be used and developed for similar other researches. The findings of this paper are different from previous authors mentioned in the literature review section in the way that the research question of this paper is new and such question was not asked the previous studies. The present paper is also unique for its compliance with the reliability and validity test criterion. The current paper is regarded as unique because in this study the SERVQual model has been adopted through intensive qualitative review of literature and extensive quantitative analysis through gap analysis between the perceptions and expectations of the respondents on the basis of the identified variables from the secondary data.

This paper will add to the body of knowledge by incorporating the new findings of the study which proved the SERVQual dimensions through statistical analysis on mean scores and exhibited that there are gaps in the quality education of the Private Universities in Bangladesh. This paper will also add into the area of research by highlighting the five (5) SERVQUAL dimensions to mitigate the identified gaps so that the concerned private universities in Bangladesh can pay more attention and take necessary measures by ensuring willing, prompt, sincere, whole hearted, promising, consistent, safe, neat and clean, confident, visually appealing and above all quality services by the faculty members, admission, accounts and administrative officers, logistic, cleaning and other supporting staffs of all kinds relating to career oriented finest quality academic activities.

The higher scores in the reliability and validity tests of the current paper have exhibited that the study is very much significant. In practice, the quality of education in the private universities of Bangladesh can be ensured if the:

   i. Faculty members and administrative staffs of this university show their sincere interest and keep promises to offer quality education,
  ii. Employees are always willing give prompt academic service to the students by helping students and responding to their queries,
  iii. Consistently courteous behavior of the employees builds confidence in students and let them feel safe,
  iv. Employees give individual attention to students with their heartiest interest to students' specific academic needs,
  v. Universities ensure good quality academic materials and set up modern equipment and physical facilities are visually appealing to students to provide quality academic service.

The present study contributes to the development of quality education in the private universities in Bangladesh through a systematic process of extensive literature review followed by the primary survey findings and analysis together with conclusive implications. Thus, the paper will enable the private sector of higher education with necessary course of actions which will enable the academia in developing its knowledge centric theory based on proven practice.

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