



Empirical Evaluation of Educational Service Quality in the Current Higher Education System

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Abstract

During the transition to the mixed education model during the Covid-19 pandemic, some issues have emerged in the matter of providing and supporting the quality of university education in all countries, including educational programs' relevance to the demands of the labor market, expectations of students and their families, digital transformation of the educational process, and economic stability of institution networks. The purpose of the research was to evaluate the quality of educational services in the higher education systems of Indonesia and Russia. The study systematized several essential factors for achieving educational service quality in the current higher education systems, given the limitations imposed by Covid-19. Following this objective, the study utilized a quantitative approach, adopting the *SERVQUAL* model that measures the service quality across five service dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The model aided the development of the questionnaire to assess the quality of the educational services of Indonesian and Russian universities. The questionnaire included 25 close-ended questions on two scales: one to measure the students' expectations regarding the quality of educational services and the other to measure the students' current perceptions. A snowball technique was used to recruit students from Indonesian and Russian universities as participants in the study. The students were asked to assess the educational services of their universities based on their initial expectations and current perceptions. Overall, the students of both countries revealed that they had high expectations from the educational services of their universities. However, the current perceptions of the Russian students regarding the quality of educational services provided by their universities are higher and more positive than the perceptions of the Indonesian students regarding the quality of educational services being delivered to them. The findings of the study have implications for education practitioners.

Keywords:

Educational Service;
Higher Education System Service Quality;
Development;
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1- Introduction

The higher education system is a fundamental player in developing and growing societies and economies. Therefore, the educational system must be in coherence with students' satisfaction and provide efficient and committed educational information to support the needs of individuals [1]. A sustainable education system provides such

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coherence, and it is a dynamic component that maintains the balance between the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of education [2]. Sustainability in education can be achieved through improving the quality of educational services, and evaluating the quality of education can enhance the better provision of these services [2]. Evaluation can be done by several approaches, such as understanding students' views about the educational provision and analyzing the pedagogical skills of educational service providers.

Recent trends reported that higher education had been significantly revolutionized and affected large proportions of communities in a global context. From the late 20th century, different countries called for mass access to higher education, and some countries, such as the USA and Canada, even implied the mass transfer of educational services to the population [3]. Empirical insights into the higher education system revealed that it is a potential contributor to the future growth of scientific education. The system educates individuals and prepares them to be the pioneers of present and future sciences and technology [4]. Therefore, it is essential to consider the quality of higher education throughout the provision of educational services.

Many countries are forced to assess the quality of higher education and identify opportunities and challenges that benefit the formulation of educational policies. There are two important countries with educational reforms by state and economy, namely Russia (Europe) and Indonesia (Asia). The rationale behind choosing these regions is the geographical and cultural differences that impact the educational system. There are also heterogeneous challenges. Russia has undergone several structural and contextual changes since the 1990s [5]. The Russian Higher Education System is centralized with built-in economic values. The system holds independence and autonomy and is more stable to be collapsed by the crisis [5]. Russia's education is the topmost in scientific research, and despite the several crises, the government is highly invested in making it an internationally leading platform in learning and education [6].

On the other hand, Indonesia covers a vast area and quality of higher education. The system also sought several changes in congruence with the issues. It has been directed towards significant internationalization, with the global acknowledgment indicator giving a 60% ratio for socialization [7]. Therefore, government efforts seem to be flourishing within these countries.

Despite such educational stability, the system faced accumulated challenges in the rise of the global economic crisis. In Russia, contemporary didactics have been focused on introducing effective learning. The contemporary didactics can be developed through e-learning introduction into the higher education system. However, Ashmarina et al. studied the gaps in the digitalization of higher education. The gap is inclusively present between the strategic plan and execution. The lack of realistic planning poses significant challenges and the need for studying the system effectively [8]. One major problem faced by the country is the outflow of qualified personnel. Because most highly professionalized people leave the country for their ultimate goals, there is a shortage of qualified individuals to provide timely educational services. Secondly, a motivation factor is lacking in youth for practical working [9]. Most importantly, the country faced a massive higher education shift to an online system in the rapid emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic [10, 11]. In addition, lack of research funding and brain drain changes the motivation of academic staff in higher education institutes, and the development of this system is uneven and small.

The gaps are also present in Indonesia's higher education system sector. The educational system has seen new trends of internalizing higher education and attracting international students to generate revenue. However, the financial constraints have discouraged the new local institutes from competing internationally. The organizational growth underpinned the academic democracy declining the decision-making capacity. However, the sufficient gap prevails since only a little investigation over this aspect. Also, the effects of such compromised educational reforms have not been a student on the people affected by these reforms. Furthermore, the research and case study approach has only focused on government state universities, projecting the need for researching other institutes and their contribution [12].

Other significant challenges that limit the strength of the educational system to achieve anticipated goals are challenges of equity and capacity. The inequality of education by gender, socioeconomic position, and government spending are found. The gap between men and women in availing of higher education is prominent. The SE position is such that income inequality may also impose challenges [13]. The influence of social and economic variables is very significant in Indonesia's higher education reform, producing the need to explore this dimension of reality. Besides, the participation rate is low in the higher education system, and the enrolment rate is also poor for tertiary (higher) education compared to other developing nations. The rural population faces barriers in enrolling in private universities, and some high-quality institutions are only located in urban regions [14]. Besides, uncertainties prevail while financing the higher education system, and cross-border education programs also have pros and cons. It was highlighted that the educational curriculum is not in coherence with the needs of society [12]. In the research and development fields in universities, it was observed that the lack of English-written publications limited the growth of the country in scientific

innovations [13, 15]. One of the principal reasons is the lack of collaboration between educational institutes, which affected the progress in the field of student research [16].

Based on the challenges in the higher education systems present in both territories, the present research aims to explore the in-depth knowledge about the status and challenges of the higher education system using semi-structured interviews. Evaluating the quality of higher education in Russia and Indonesia is useful to understand how much the system is achieving the students' satisfaction and projected goals. Furthermore, it can assist in the future growth and development of educational policies and reforms

2- Literature Review

2-1-The Global Trends of Higher Educational Services and Factors Affecting the Quality of Education in the Higher Education System

The quality of higher education can be assessed in terms of their expenses, educational services, physical aspects, and functional quality of infrastructure of educational institutions. In a higher education system, the provision of knowledge and high-impact research defines the system's quality. This system is pronounced as a tertiary education, where students are highly encouraged to practice their knowledge [17]. Universities and other institutes focus on filling the gaps in students' skills in the professional or labor market. Apart from this, students are the primary consumers of educational services, and their satisfaction with services is a tangible aspect of measuring the quality of education. Their perceived learning experiences rely upon the instruction and support provided by the system.

Furthermore, educational institutes must have better operational quality. The quality of the institute is therefore greatly influenced by the employability rate. A good employability rate nurtures students to function efficiently in a workplace setting [18]. Such factors improve the strength of service providers to guide their students for better career opportunities in the future. The quality scale of higher education focuses on key dimensions of administrative services, library service qualities, and student support services. Access to services and investment are other important measures of assessing the qualitative strength of higher education [19]. All defined characteristics of qualified higher education and factors influencing such quality showed the importance of this system in the development of economies.

The global higher education system statistics showed that India is leading in numbers of higher educational institutes with 5288 universities, followed by the USA and Indonesia with 3216 and 2595 universities, respectively [20]. Other countries such as China, Brazil, Russia, Mexico, and Japan are present at the downscale [20]. The statistics describe the importance of these higher education systems in different regions worldwide. Besides, global trends in the quality of education demonstrated the inherent significance of the higher education system in the provision of educational services. Education has always been considered a societal priority that must be distributed equally to achieve a wide range of objectives and satisfaction. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated the importance of education and the principal rights of individuals for getting educational services [21]. It was observed in the literature that the gross enrolment ratio for higher education exceeded 50% in different countries around the globe. It is reported that the demand may arise for the saturation of higher education in countries such as the USA, UK, other European countries, and China that have significant characteristic enrolment ratios [22]. The internalization of the Higher Education System globally showed the system to be an effective growth environment but still prevailing complex forms and approaches in education.

The gap in the quality of education between the leading universities, which were able to switch to distance learning without a significant decrease in the quality of education, and other higher education institutions has increased in the context of the pandemic. In addition, the process of universities' differentiation in terms of resources and technological equipment has accelerated. The discussion about quality is also intensifying due to increased competition in the higher education market, and an increase in the share of employers focused on information technologies [23].

There are active discussions in the literature and practice about the factors for providing quality assurance in higher education. However, these discussions need sufficient empirical material and a theoretical framework for comprehension. An analysis of Russian and international experience [24] made it possible to identify the following factors critical to achieving Quality Educational Services in the Current Higher Education Systems (see Figure 1).

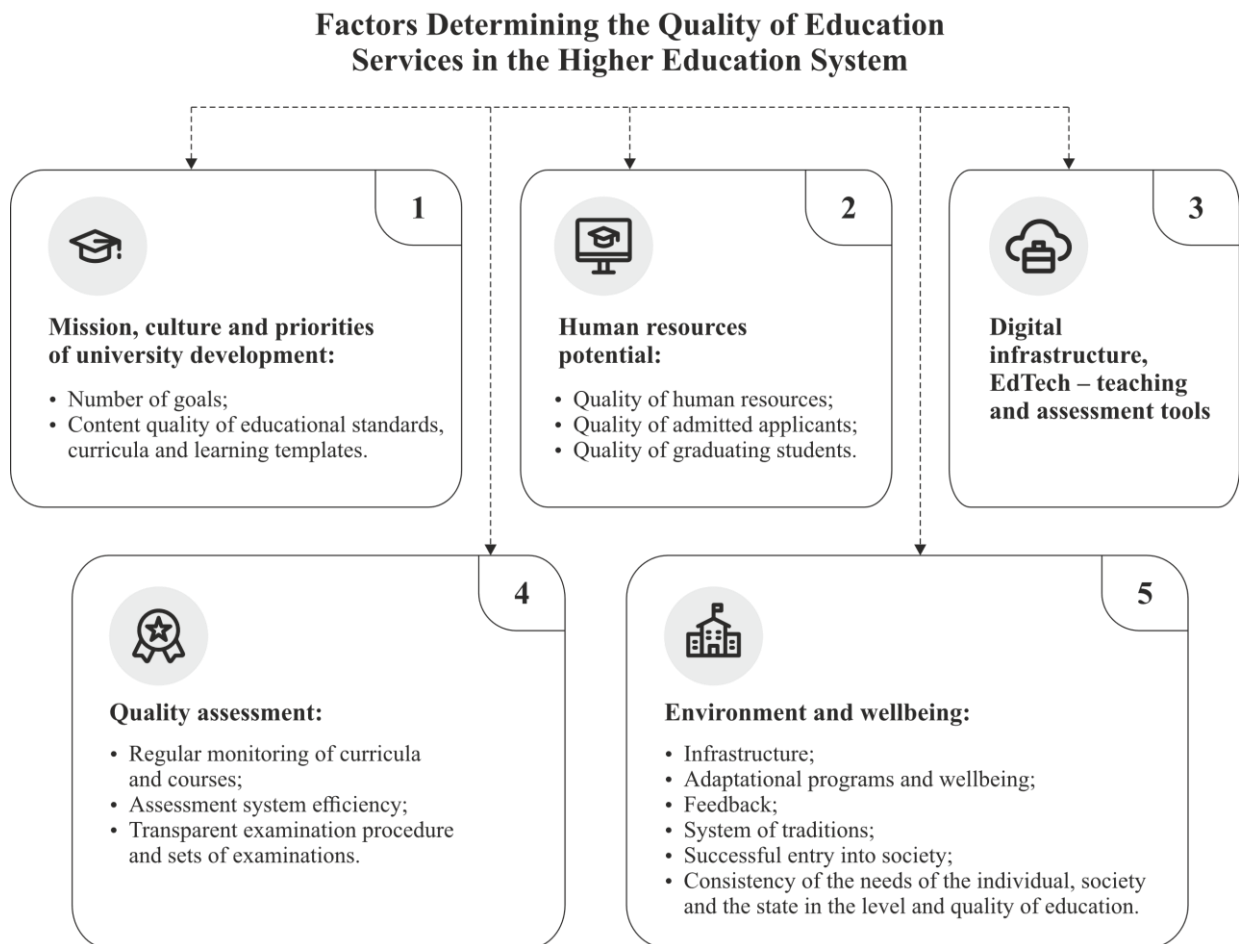


Figure 1. Factors Determining the Quality of Educational Services in Russia's Higher Education System

Description of each factor in details:

- University's mission, culture, and development priorities designate the main directions of the university's development and its core values. The culture and specificity of training, which largely depends on the university's main ideas, affect the students' attitude towards learning and achieving high academic results. The corporate community of students and faculty members also sets the overall educational performance and quality level. In addition, the alignment of university policy with the stated mission creates a unified corporate sense of community and predictability [23]. The educational goals of the curricula suggest a description of the expected learning outcomes. The quality of educational results is influenced by the conscious perception of learning targets and competencies acquired by students upon graduation. Currently, there is no generally accepted tool for measuring students' competencies. Determining the framework of graduates' competency contributes to the intelligent design of educational curricula and courses, strongly impacting students' educational outcomes. The results of courses and training events and the assessment of the learned material are perceived as the main guideline for improving the educational process.
- Developing the university's human resources potential is the most significant element of quality improvement. During the pandemic, universities were forced to urgently fill in the shortfalls in digital competencies. Therefore, the potential for quality growth is associated with developing deep digital competencies, including the ability to design digital programs and events, engage and motivate students in digital environments, build and conduct assessments and collect feedback.
- Cutting-edge technologies make it possible to organize and include hybrid and online courses in the curriculum that are not inferior in quality to classroom offline work. Course design becomes more flexible due to technologies, which help achieve the maximum positive effect on student academic performance. Many universities use e-learning tools and educational management systems that encourage student users to work independently.
- The entire system of education quality monitoring should be a permanent process. Therefore, monitoring programs and courses implies constant organized observation of the educational process to compare the current state with the expected results. Monitoring determines the rationality of the teaching aids and methods

implemented in the educational process, allows the analysis of the discrepancies between the declared results within educational programs or courses, and suggests finding solutions for eliminating the identified problems to assure the quality of the educational process and improve academic performance. Monitoring conditions include consistency, duration over time; comparability and objectivity of results; relevance of methods to monitoring objects [25].

- Effective assessment systems positively influence self-regulation and student learning outcomes. Thus, qualitative assessment models allow peer assessment, including without the involvement of a teacher. Acting as markers, students learn to give a formative assessment of other students' work and their own. This training helps the students avoid common mistakes in the learning process and quickly cope with complex tasks.
- The examination frequency, structure, and procedure strongly influence academic performance. Examinations must be academically honest and predictable for the students. The examination procedure's high efficiency and clarity can be ensured using online technologies. There has been a growing focus on objective, external, standardized examinations that enable students to compare their performance across professors and universities in recent years.
- Comfortable infrastructural conditions can influence current academic performance, completing tests, and overall satisfaction with the educational process. According to [26], students studying and living on modern, comfortable campuses show higher academic outcomes. Campuses become a favorable environment for expanding students' educational and extracurricular experiences. Moreover, a modern university is not only an offline environment but also a convenient digital space. The accessible Learning Management System provides high frequency and convenient access to educational materials, assessments, and an environment for communication with teachers and fellow students. That, in turn, increases the likelihood of achieving high academic results [27].

The increased training effectiveness and high academic results are achieved by providing students' well-being. Students with general health and well-being problems note that academic performance is secondary [28]. The majority of first-year students have problems adapting to the university environment. Student well-being at the beginning of studies is lower than in subsequent years. Successful passing of the first examination tests usually improves students' perception of their well-being. Flexible support programs and mentoring services can help students adapt quickly and increase academic performance.

Analysis of students' satisfaction with the conditions of the educational environment makes it possible to detect structural problems and deficiencies at the level of mechanisms for organizing the educational process [29]. In universities with a developed feedback system, students perceive feedback as part of a dialogue rather than a control measure. Moreover, in such universities, student feedback is positively received by tutors and greatly impacts the design and formats of training courses. Two-way feedback provides transparency and predictability, positively influencing students' academic performance and increasing the quality of the educational process.

2-2- Quality of Higher Education Services in Russia

The Quality of Higher Education Services in Russia is a comprehensive characteristic of educational activities and students' training. It expresses the degree of their compliance with Federal State Educational Standards, educational standards, federal-state requirements, and the needs of an individual or legal entity whose interests in educational activities are carried out, including the degree of achievement of the planned results of the educational program.

The need to ensure the Quality of Higher Education Services in Russia is stipulated by Article 95.2 of the Federal Law dated December 29, 2012, No. 273-FZ "On Education in the Russian Federation". Federal and local regulations establish criteria and indicators of the quality of education. Quality control of education in Russia is ensured by monitoring the implementation of educational programs, internal and external inspection of the quality of educational activities, and the development of measures (plans, roadmaps) to improve and develop strategies for educational programs.

The perception of the Quality of Higher Education Services by students and employers, parents, and public figures has become the most important aspect of this issue.

An economic aspect is another important facet of the problem. Since the first months of the educational process under Covid-19 restrictions, the question of the cost of education has been acute in the public discussion. Supporters of cost reduction (students, their parents, public figures, and mass media) turned to two interrelated arguments: reduced intensity and quality of education and reduced university costs. Also, an increase in the intensity of work of many faculty members was recorded during the pandemic. Moreover, the monitoring, repeatedly carried out by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science, showed that universities that sought to maintain the quality of education were forced to increase both specific and total costs. However, the issue has not been completely resolved and requires

constant attention. Against the backdrop of discussions about quality, additional material costs for households to solve technical problems associated with online learning are significant factors that create social tension. These costs are often associated with speeding up work of home Internet, equipping home workplace, and purchasing an additional computer.

The Russian Academic Excellence Project (Project 5-100) is implemented in the universities to ensure the competitive position of a group of leading Russian universities in the global market of educational services and research programs. The rankings to aim for are determined by the task of the project itself. These are the three most reputable and authoritative rankings of universities in the world – Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), Times Higher Education (THE), and Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU or Shanghai ranking):

- Times Higher Education included 400 Russian universities in 2015 and more than 1000 by 2020.
- ARWU more than doubled the number of participants: from 500 in 2016 to 1000 in 2019.
- QS contained 800 universities in 2014 and 1000 in 2020.

It can be noted that the dynamics of Russian universities are mostly positive, as evidenced by the charts compiled according to the rankings. For example, the new issue of the annual British QS World University Rankings in 2022 includes 1,300 world universities. In this ranking, Russia is represented by 47 leading universities. The QS World University Rankings are published annually by the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), a UK company. Universities are ranked according to six indicators that directly characterize the quality of education: 1. Academic reputation (40%). 2. Employer reputation (10%). 3. Faculty/student ratio (20%). 4. International Faculty Ratio (5%). 5. International Student Ratio (5%). 6. Citations per faculty (20%).

Russia is represented by 48 universities (32 in 2021). The list of Russian universities was headed by Lomonosov Moscow State University (78th position), St. Petersburg State University (242nd position), Novosibirsk State University (246th position), Tomsk State University (272nd position), and Bauman Moscow State Technical University (281st position).

Compared to the last year's rating, 12 Russian universities improved their positions, 11 universities lowered them, 9 remained in the same positions, and 16 Russian universities entered the ranking for the first time (Table 1). Among the Rating “newcomers”, Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University and Sechenov University have the best results, both in the 651-700 group.

Table 1. Positions of Russian universities in 2017-2022 QS WUR rankings

University	2022 Ranking	2021 Ranking	2020 Ranking	2019 Ranking	2018 Ranking	2017 Ranking
Lomonosov Moscow State University	78(↓)	74(↑)	84(↑)	90(↑)	=95(↑)	108
Saint Petersburg State University	=242(↓)	225(↑)	=234(↑)	235(↑)	=240(↑)	258
Novosibirsk State University	=246(↓)	=228(↑)	=231(↑)	=244(↑)	=250(↑)	=291
Tomsk State University	=272(↓)	=250(↑)	=268(↑)	=277(↑)	=323(↑)	=377
Bauman Moscow State Technical University	=281(↑)	=282(↑)	284(↑)	90(↑)	291(↑)	=306
Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (MIPT / Moscow Phystech)	=290(↓)	281(↑)	=302(↑)	312(↑)	=355(↓)	=350
HSE University	=305(↓)	=298(↑)	=322(↑)	=343(↑)	=382(↑)	411-420
RUDN University	=317(↑)	=326(↑)	=392(↑)	=446 (↑)	501-550(↑)	601-650
National Research Nuclear University MEPhI (Moscow Engineering Physics Institute)	=319(↓)	=314(↑)	=329(=)	=329(↑)	=373(↑)	401-410
Kazan (Volga region) Federal University	=347(↑)	=370(↑)	=392(↑)	=439(↑)	441-450(↑)	501-550
Ural Federal University - UrFU	=351(↓)	=331(↑)	=364(↑)	=412(↑)	491-500(↑)	601-650
MGIMO University	=362(↓)	=348(↑)	366(↓)	=355(↑)	=373(↓)	=350
ITMO University	=365(↑)	=360(↑)	=436(↑)	511-520(↑)	601-650	-
Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University	=393(↑)	=401(↑)	=439(↓)	404(=)	401-410(↑)	411-420
National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University	=395(↑)	=401(↓)	=387(↓)	=373(↑)	=386(↑)	=400
Far Eastern Federal University	=461(↑)	=493(↑)	531-540(↑)	541-550(↑)	601-650(↓)	551-600
The National University of Science and Technology MISIS	=487(↓)	=428(↑)	=451(↑)	=476(↑)	501-550(↑)	601-650
National Research Saratov State University	531-540(↑)	521-530(=)	521-530(↓)	501-510(↑)	551-600(=)	551-600
Southern Federal University	531-540(↑)	591-600(↓)	541-550(↓)	531-540(↑)	551-600(=)	551-600
Altai State University	561-570(↑)	571-580	-	601-650	-	-
Samara National Research University (Samara University)	581-590(↑)	591-600(↑)	651-700(↑)	701-750(↑)	801-1000	-

Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University	651-700	-	-	-	-	-
Lobachevsky University	651-700(↓)	601-650(=)	601-650(=)	601-650(↑)	701-750	701+
Sechenov University	651-700	-	-	-	-	-
Plekhanov Russian University of Economics	701-750(↑)	751-800(=)	751-800(↑)	801-1000(=)	801-1000	701+
Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University ETU-LETI	701-750(=)	701-750	-	-	-	-
Ufa State Aviation Technical University	701-750	-	-	-	-	-
Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation	801-1000	-	-	-	-	-
Kazan National Research Technological University	801-1000	-	-	-	-	-
Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology	801-1000	-	-	-	-	-
Novosibirsk State Technical University	801-1000(=)	801-1000(=)	801-1000(=)	801-1000(=)	801-1000	701+
Perm State National Research University	801-1000(=)	801-1000	-	-	-	-
Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration	801-1000(=)	801-1000	-	-	-	-
South Ural State University (National Research University)	801-1000(=)	801-1000(=)	801-1000(=)	801-1000	-	-
University of Tyumen	801-1000	-	-	-	-	-
Irkutsk State University	1001-1200	-	-	-	-	-
Russian State University for the Humanities	1001-1200(=)	1001+	-	-	-	-
Saint-Petersburg Mining University	1001-1200(=)	1001+	-	-	-	-
Siberian Federal University, SibFU	1001-1200(=)	1001+	-	801-1000	-	-
The Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia	1001-1200	-	-	-	-	-
The National Research University "Belgorod State University"	1001-1200	-	-	-	-	-
Voronezh State University	1001-1200(=)	1001+(↓)	801-1000(=)	801-1000(=)	801-1000	701+
Don State Technical University	1201+	-	-	-	-	-
MIREA - Russian Technological University	1201+	-	-	-	-	-
Moscow City University	1201+	-	-	-	-	-
Moscow Pedagogical State University	1201+	-	-	-	-	-
National Research University Moscow Power Engineering Institute (MPEI)	1201+	-	-	-	-	-
Russian State Agrarian University - Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy	1201+	-	-	-	-	-

Source: <https://academia.interfax.ru/ru/analytics/research/6665>

2-3- Quality of Higher Education Services of Indonesia

As shown by the statistical information, Indonesia is the 3rd leading country with significant numbers of higher education institutions which means the quality of educational services in this country has practical importance from the research perspective [20]. In a quality survey of education, Indonesia ranked 12th on the list of Asian countries. The quality of educational services is affected by the level of human resources, study curriculum, learning process, and research and development activities [30, 31]. Some of the leading universities in Indonesia have introduced competency-based curricula in their higher education system, which can support higher education and develop a framework for core competencies that must be acquired by the students [32].

Educational quality, on the other hand, is quite impaired in Indonesia. The country's major challenge is to tackle the problems associated with quality rather than access to education. The research by Alamsyah highlighted that graduate student-produced in the universities of Indonesia comparatively lack professional skills than those in other geographical territories [33]. Moreover, Indonesia is less competent in the higher education system than other regions of Asia. Only 55% of students receive their tertiary education [33]. That can be impacted by various underlying factors relevant to students or institutional resources. At present, 58 higher educational institutes are operated in Indonesia, among which most are Islamic State Institutes [20]. Options for current learning modes are face-to-face, blended learning, and a fully online learning process. Both educational service providers and students experience different trends in the current learning process. The Lecturer's level of educational delivery and students' level of understanding has become inefficient in online higher education learning [34]. Hence, Indonesia is agreed to be at the lag phase of development in its educational system. The best university in Indonesia ranks 401 out of 500 educational institutes worldwide (Table 2). The situation is remarkably challenging and requires attention from research and professional practices.

In addition, Indonesia is leading toward educational development by introducing professional development programs. These programs can provide open educational resources (website content for educational learning). These resources are available for all stakeholders (teachers, students, researchers) of higher education. Furthermore,

collaborative activities between universities have been identified for open educational resource programs. However, there is still a dearth of higher educational institutes in Indonesia, causing the weak implementation of such programs [35]. Apart from these, different learning models are implied in the learning curriculum of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) in Indonesia. These programs, such as HOTS assessment-based learning, student-book learning, and project-based learning, were all found to become the source of effective STEM education in Indonesia [14]. However, implementation of these programs is limited with less than a 5% ratio of implication at the university level, and they are more frequently applied to junior and secondary school education [33]. In addition, universities have growing concerns about providing quality education and trustworthiness to education consumers. Therefore, consumers (students) retention and satisfaction with education is also an important aspect of studying the quality of services being given to them.

Table 2. Ranking of the two biggest universities of Indonesia in ratings for 2015-2022

Name of the ranking	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
QS World University Rankings	University of Indonesia (310)	University of Indonesia (358)	University of Indonesia (325)	University of Indonesia (277)	University of Indonesia (292)	University of Indonesia (296)	University of Indonesia (305)	University of Indonesia
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	Institute of Technology, Bandung (461-470)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (431-440)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (401-410)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (401-410)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (359)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (331)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (313)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (303)
Academic Ranking of World Universities	University of Indonesia (-)	University of Indonesia (601-800)	University of Indonesia (801+)	University of Indonesia (801-1000)	University of Indonesia (601-800)	University of Indonesia (601-800)	University of Indonesia (801-1000)	University of Indonesia (801-1000)
	Institute of Technology, Bandung (-)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (-)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (801+)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (801-1000)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (801-1000)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (1001+)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (1001+)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (1001-1200)
	University of Indonesia (-)	University of Indonesia (-)	University of Indonesia (-)	University of Indonesia (-)	University of Indonesia (-)	University of Indonesia (-)	University of Indonesia (-)	Not applicable
	Institute of Technology, Bandung (-)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (-)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (-)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (-)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (-)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (-)	Institute of Technology, Bandung (-)	

Source: <https://www.topuniversities.com/universities/universitas-indonesia>; <https://www.mastersportal.com/rankings/2/academic-ranking-of-world-universities-shanghai-jiao-tong-university.html>; <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings>

One of the considerable challenges in the educational quality is associated with the Covid-19 outbreak. It has been widely reported that Covid-19 has affected the learning process in the education system in almost all countries worldwide. Indonesia similarly faced a shock due to the fast shift to digital learning from face-to-face customs. According to Murad et al., the pandemic changed the staff's satisfaction with education and the quality of educational services. The respondents shared in the questionnaire that even though the online system quality is good, the satisfaction and service quality shows a significant gap, which depicts decreased readiness of teachers and learners to adapt to the current system of education [36]. Other studies proposed that students tend to possess pessimistic concepts about online learning. One reason could be the time change patterns, making students adjust to their times. Similarly, the lack of resources, such as inadequate laptops and smartphones, is not owned by every student. Therefore, most students do not get the usual benefits from the services, inducing reduced satisfaction [37].

The quality of educational services in Indonesia and Russia depicts several challenges the countries face. Various trends in both geographical regions point toward emerging opportunities. Educational resources, teaching staff, motivation, and implementation of different programs are all responsible for the innovative and qualitative development of educational reforms and services. Therefore, it is compulsory better to understand the quality of educational services in both countries and generate an empirical insight into the needs of the educational system. It can further promote the new emergence of productive and evidence-based educational reforms that reflect the potential strength of the educational system.

3- Materials and Methods

3-1- Research Approach and Design

In order to collect empirical data on the quality of the educational services delivered to the students in the higher education system of Indonesia and Russia, the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al. was adopted [38]. With the SERVQUAL model, a quantitative research approach was employed whereby the empirical data was collected in numerical form. Using this approach, the researcher intended to collect a vast amount of data on different aspects of

educational service quality in Indonesian and Russian universities and conduct a comparative analysis. Moreover, incorporating the SERVQUAL model also enabled the researcher to determine the expectations and current perceptions of the educational service quality in both the countries and measure the gap between their original expectations and perceptions. Therefore, it is asserted that the service quality results from the comparative analysis of their initial expectations from the service providers and their current perceptions regarding the service provider [38].

3-2- Measures

In particular, the SERVQUAL instrument measures the service quality across five service dimensions or aspects; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy [37]. Thus, the instrument allowed for a comprehensive and holistic measurement of the service quality, taking into account all the essential quality aspects of the service [39]. Table 3 presents the service quality dimensions covered in the SERVQUAL model.

Table 3. SERVQUAL dimensions [40]

Service Quality Dimensions	Description
Tangibility	The clear conditions of the physical facilities and equipment, key personnel and staff, and availability of the communication material.
Reliability	The ability of the service organizations to deliver the promised service in a dependable and accurate manner.
Responsiveness	The ability of the service providers to give prompt responses and help the customers.
Assurance	The knowledgeability and courtesy of the service providers (or staff) and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
Empathy	The ability to understand the customers and offer care and individualized attention to the customers

3-3- Data Collection Instrument

A survey method has been incorporated for collecting the empirical data, whereby a questionnaire was floated/distributed to collect the responses. The rationale for the incorporation of the survey method is embedded in the fact that it allows for collecting data from a large audience base [40]. Hence, with data collection from a considerable number of subjects from Indonesia and Russia, the researcher intended to generalize the findings to both countries' entire higher education sectors. In particular, a self-administered questionnaire was developed by modifying the original generic SERVQUAL survey taking into account the service expectations and the characteristics of the higher education sector. Furthermore, the self-administered questionnaire is an efficient method for collecting data from a large audience as it does not require the continuous intervention of the researcher during the data collection [41].

The questionnaire included 25 close-ended questions on two scales: expectations and perceptions. The expectation scale was developed to measure the expectations of students regarding the quality of educational services in their university. The perception scale aimed to measure the students' current perceptions about the quality of educational services being delivered to them in their respective universities (see Appendix II for questionnaire). In the questionnaire, constructs 1 to 5 are designed to measure the tangible aspects of services for analyzing the visible assets and resources. Constructs 6 to 10 were designed to assess the reliability of the educational services. Constructs 11 to 13 were created for analyzing the responsiveness in terms of guidance, prompt service, and assistance delivered by the academic staff to the students. Constructs 14 to 19 were designed to assess the university staff's expertise and knowledge that instill trust and confidence among the students. Lastly, constructs 20 to 25 assessed the empathy dimensions analyzing the ability of the university staff to understand and resonate with the students' individual needs. The responses could be marked across a five-point Likert scale for both the expectations and the perception scale. The scale was defined, and the response points were pre-coded so that strongly disagree was coded as 1 and strongly agree coded as 5. It was assumed that the scale with this range could provide sufficient choice to the respondent to mark their responses.

Unlike the original approach, the SERVQUAL survey was conducted before and after the service delivery. For the present study, a survey was conducted only one time. The questionnaire was developed to record the initial expectations that the students had from their universities and how they perceived the delivered service quality.

3-4- Research Population and Sampling

As the present study intended to conduct an empirical evaluation of the quality of the educational services in the higher education system of Indonesia and Russia, the appropriate target population for the study included the students in the Indonesian and Russian Universities. However, the researchers recognized that this was such a large population, and thus, it was virtually impossible to include all the population elements in the study. In this recognition, the role of sampling came into play. Thus, the researcher recruited a small representative group from the study population that could be included. At the same time, the findings could be generalized to the entire population (for all students and universities of both countries) [42-45]. However, as the population of this study was very specific, it could be

extremely difficult to reach out to them and identify a sufficient number of population elements for the study. Therefore, the research incorporated a snowball sampling technique whereby the identified subjects can be asked to nominate other subjects for the study [46]. Thus, the researcher used LinkedIn and Facebook to reach out to a few Indonesian and Russian university students, sent them online questionnaires, and then asked them to forward the questionnaire to their friends, classmates, and university fellows. Thus, incorporating this approach, the researcher collected responses from 118 Indonesian, and 118 Russian students enrolled in undergraduate, postgraduate, and diploma programs across various levels in the universities of both countries.

3-5-Data Analysis

Since the survey generated numerical data, numerical and statistical analysis techniques and tools were needed to analyze the findings. In this regard, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the survey results. The responses were pre-coded due to the Likert scale, and the data was manually entered into the SPSS software. The validity and reliability of each of the items of all 5 constructs were assessed using the reliability test and qualification of the Cronbach's Alpha scores. Furthermore, descriptive stats were used to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistical analysis for both the scales (expectations and perceptions) was conducted for both; Indonesian and Russian universities to assess the students' expectations and perceptions about the quality of the educational services delivered to them in their educational institutes (see Figure 2).

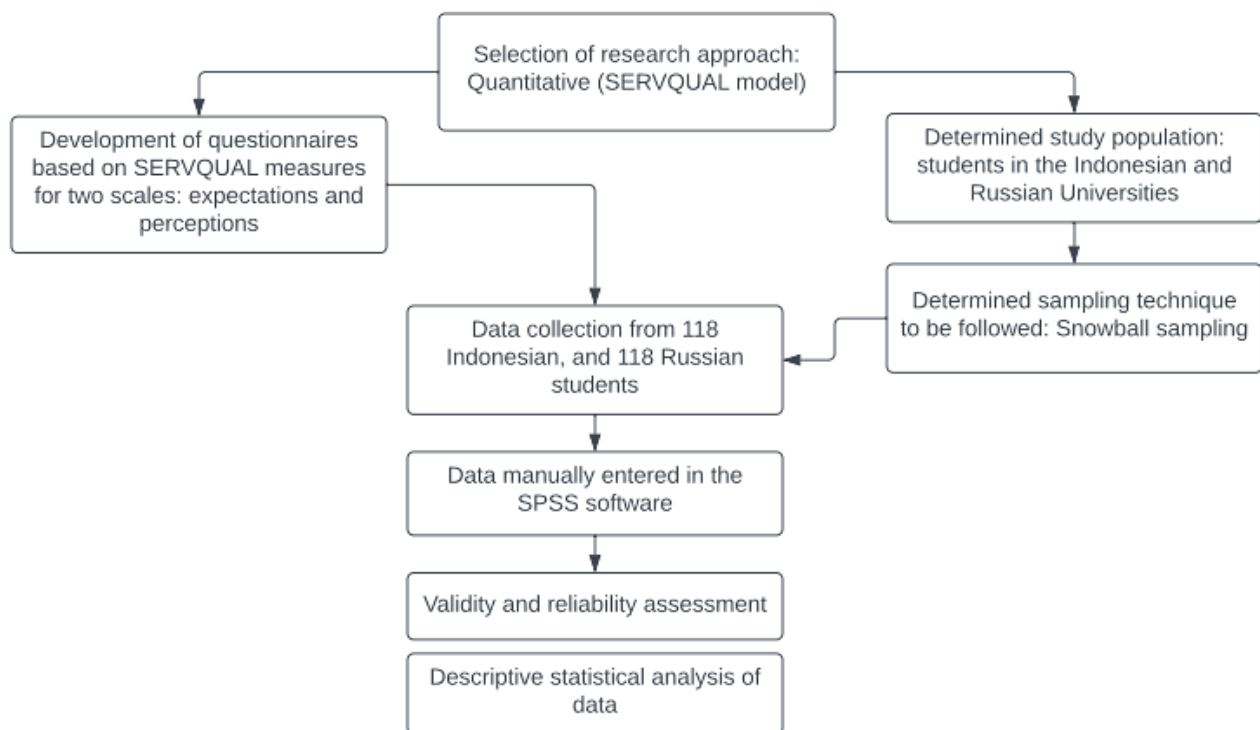


Figure 2. Research Methodology

4- Survey Results

4-1-Case Study: Indonesia

4-1-1- Demographic Statistics

According to the collected demographic data (Figure 3), the majority of the participating students from Indonesian universities were aged between 21 and 25 (55.93 percent), followed by those aged 20 and under (29.66 percent). Moreover, as per Figure 4, the majority of the respondents in the study were enrolled in a graduate (bachelor's degree) (45.76 percent) or some postgraduate program (37.28 percent), with a few enrolled in some diploma/certifications/short course (16.94 percent) at their university. Considering the proportion of males and females participating in the study (see Figure 5), it can be deduced that the majority of the participants were male, with a 59.7 percent participation rate. Nonetheless, the researcher collected data from a sufficient number of female students, and 39.5 percent of participants in the study were female.

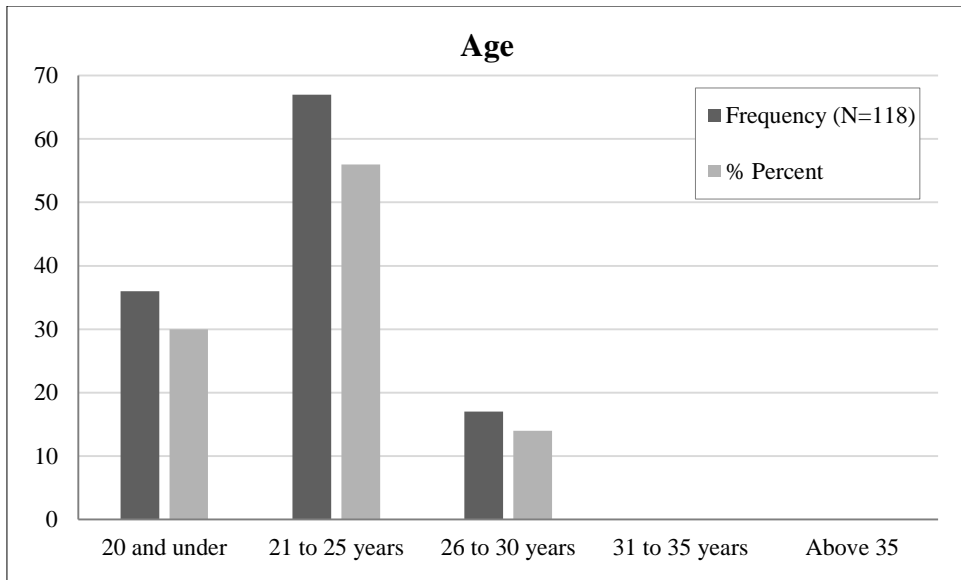


Figure 3. Age of the participants

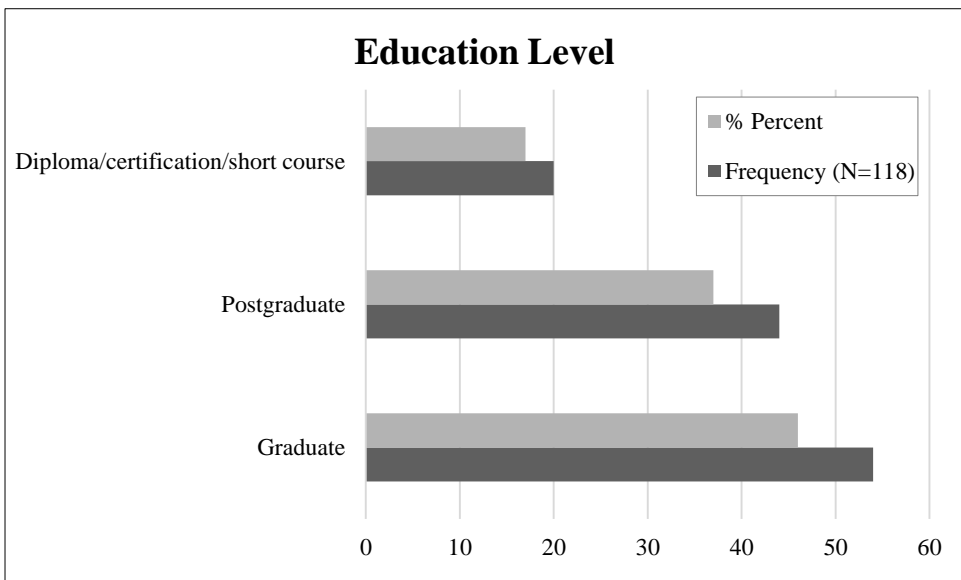


Figure 4. Educational level of the participants

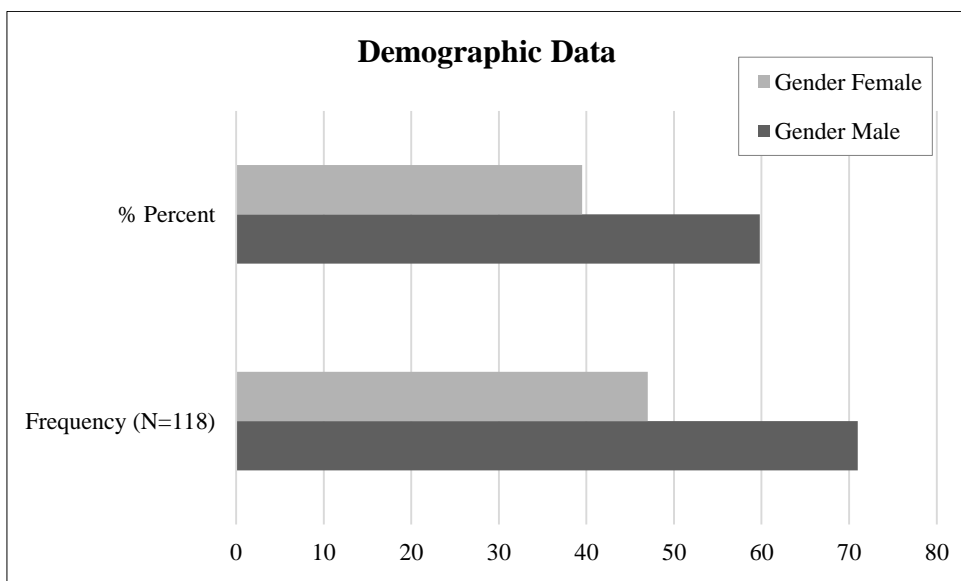


Figure 5. Gender of the participants

4-1-2- Descriptive Statistics

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the expectations scale of the students indicating the expectations that they had from the service quality of the educational services before the provision of the services (before getting enrolled in the university). As demonstrated by the results of the descriptive statistics, the value of the standard deviation of the items is lower than their respective means. As the mean is considered the central tendency of the data, the lower standard deviation value indicates that all the data points are located close to the central point (mean). Thus, the responses are consistent and free from any significant variation. The minimum value of almost all the observations is 1, while the maximum value is 5. The arithmetic means of most of the items were recorded between 3 and 4.5, showing the data is skewed on the right side of the scale. Hence, the majority of the students have a rating point above 3, signifying that the students had considerably high expectations from the educational services of their university.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for service quality expectations of the students in Indonesia

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Classrooms are equipped with all the essential and contemporary equipment (LCDs, projectors, PCs, and smart devices)	1.00	5.00	4.0424	1.15021
Facilities, buildings, and classrooms are modern and visually appealing	1.00	5.00	3.9407	1.15686
Staff and the faculty member appear to be professionals	2.00	5.00	4.5000	0.80331
The up-to-date course route is provided, and the students' teaching materials (such as course programs, notes, books, study guides, handouts, etc.) are updated.	1.00	5.00	3.8898	1.16049
Classes are held following the schedule provided to the students without any kind of delay	1.00	5.00	3.9831	1.12457
The operating hours of the academic office for student affairs are sufficient to fulfill the needs of the students.	1.00	5.00	4.2373	0.99295
The academic staff offers support and guidance to all the students.	1.00	5.00	4.1017	1.17226
The academic staff maintains a record of the activities and the processes of the students (attendance in the scheduled lectures, results, scores, grades, etc.).	1.00	5.00	3.5763	1.28872
The university's management has incorporated a consistent grading standard for all the students.	1.00	5.00	3.7712	1.20831
All the information regarding the essential activities and news are timely provided to the students (such as exams, presentations, ceremonies, etc.).	1.00	5.00	3.9915	1.15836
The management and the academic staff efficiently and promptly handle and address the queries, complaints, requests, and issues of the students	2.00	5.00	4.3559	0.92935
The management and the academic staff conduct in the best interests of all the students.	1.00	5.00	3.7712	1.22238
The management and the academic staff ensure to pay special attention to the students' problems and issues and attempt to resolve them.	1.00	5.00	3.9831	1.15458
The academic staff of the university is primed with an adequate level of knowledge and expertise and has good communication skills	1.00	5.00	4.1610	1.05385
The university faculty has implemented academic programs with clear aims that are aligned with the needs of the students	1.00	5.00	3.8220	1.31156
The educational process has a high quality.	1.00	5.00	3.8644	1.23285
The responsible management of the academic staff enhances the students' confidence in the university's services.	1.00	5.00	4.1271	1.05852
The faculty of the university holds a high reputation in the education sector.	1.00	5.00	4.0254	1.18005
The management and the academic staff offer professional support to the students.	1.00	5.00	3.8983	1.24989
The management and the academic staff demonstrate a high level of understanding of the needs of the students	1.00	5.00	4.1695	1.06462
The management and the academic staff demonstrate positive attitudes towards all the students.	1.00	5.00	4.0847	1.20948
The management and the academic staff ensure equal treatment and respect for the students.	1.00	5.00	3.9746	1.12061
The management and the academic staff remained available for consultations and guidance.	1.00	5.00	4.0000	1.21247
The university faculty welcomes and shows the high value for the feedback from students and incorporates it to improve the educational services.	1.00	5.00	3.9831	1.21235
The management, academic staff, and the faculty are very polite and professional in interacting with the students.	1.00	5.00	4.0593	1.11165

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for the scale of current perceptions of Indonesian students about the quality of the educational services of the universities. The descriptive statistical analysis of the collected data shows that data is consistent and free from variation, with the value of standard deviation being lower than the mean values. The mean values are found to be around 3 and lesser than 4. Thus, most of the students marked midpoints on the scale as their responses.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for service quality perceptions of the students in Indonesia

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Classrooms are equipped with all the essential and contemporary equipment (LCDs, projectors, PCs, and smart devices)	1.00	5.00	3.2712	1.07545
Facilities, buildings, and classrooms are modern and visually appealing	1.00	5.00	3.0847	1.00916
Staff and the faculty member appear to be professionals	1.00	5.00	3.5254	1.09163
The up-to-date course route is provided, and the students' teaching materials (such as course programs, notes, books, study guides, handouts, etc.) are updated.	1.00	5.00	3.0254	0.95597
Classes are held following the schedule provided to the students without any kind of delay	1.00	5.00	3.9407	0.89912
The operating hours of the academic office for student affairs are sufficient to fulfill the needs of the students.	1.00	5.00	3.6356	0.98419
The academic staff offers support and guidance to all the students.	1.00	5.00	3.5847	0.97250
The academic staff maintains a record of the activities and the processes of the students (attendance in the scheduled lectures, results, scores, grades, etc.).	1.00	5.00	3.3983	1.14085
The university's management has incorporated a consistent grading standard for all the students.	1.00	5.00	3.0847	1.00916
All the information regarding the essential activities and news are timely provided to the students (such as exams, presentations, ceremonies, etc.).	1.00	5.00	3.3729	1.07653
The management and the academic staff efficiently and promptly handle and address the queries, complaints, requests, and issues of the students	1.00	5.00	3.0847	0.91124
The management and the academic staff conduct in the best interests of all the students.	1.00	5.00	3.4492	1.03443
The management and the academic staff ensure to pay special attention to the students' problems and issues and attempt to resolve them.	1.00	5.00	3.1780	0.95748
The academic staff of the university is primed with an adequate level of knowledge and expertise and has good communication skills	1.00	5.00	3.1864	1.06978
The university faculty has implemented academic programs with clear aims that are aligned with the needs of the students	1.00	5.00	3.2712	0.91204
The educational process has a high quality.	1.00	5.00	2.9915	0.97398
The responsible management of the academic staff enhances the students' confidence in the university's services.	1.00	5.00	2.8644	1.01202
The faculty of the university holds a high reputation in the education sector.	1.00	5.00	3.0593	1.06452
The management and the academic staff offer professional support to the students.	1.00	5.00	3.1102	1.05234
The management and the academic staff demonstrate a high level of understanding of the needs of the students	1.00	5.00	3.2034	0.99193
The management and the academic staff demonstrate positive attitudes towards all the students.	1.00	5.00	3.2288	1.03289
The management and the academic staff ensure equal treatment and respect for the students.	1.00	5.00	3.1864	0.97795
The management and the academic staff remained available for consultations and guidance.	1.00	5.00	3.4746	0.98460
The university faculty welcomes and shows the high value for the feedback from students and incorporates it to improve the educational services.	1.00	5.00	3.1949	0.97190
The management, academic staff, and the faculty are very polite and professional in interacting with the students.	1.00	5.00	3.1017	0.99047

While analyzing the difference in the students' expectations and perceptions of the quality of the educational services in Indonesian universities, it can be deduced that there exists a gap between the initial expectations and the service delivered to them. That is evident because the mean values of all the responses on the perception scale are lower than the mean value of the responses on the expectations scale. Hence, the delivered service falls below their expectation levels.

4-2- Case Study: Russia

4-2-1- Demographic Statistics

In the case of Russian universities, most of the participants were aged between 21 to 25 (50%), followed by those aged 20 and younger (33%) (Figure 6). A balanced proportion of male and female students were included in the study (Figure 7). Figure 8 shows that the majority of the respondents in the study were either enrolled in a graduate (bachelor's degree) (57.6%) or some postgraduate program (34.7%), with only 7.6% of them enrolled in some diploma/certifications/short course.

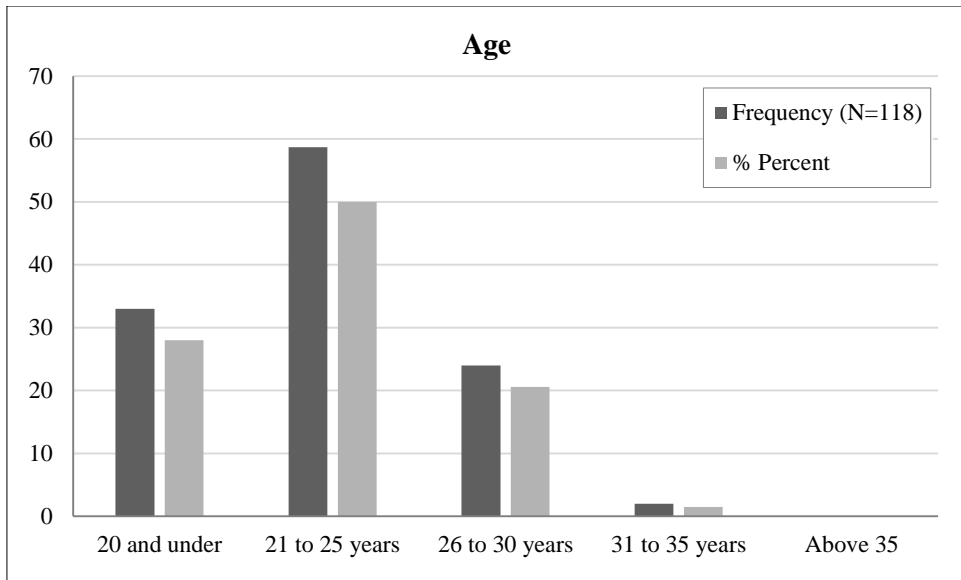


Figure 6. Age of the participants

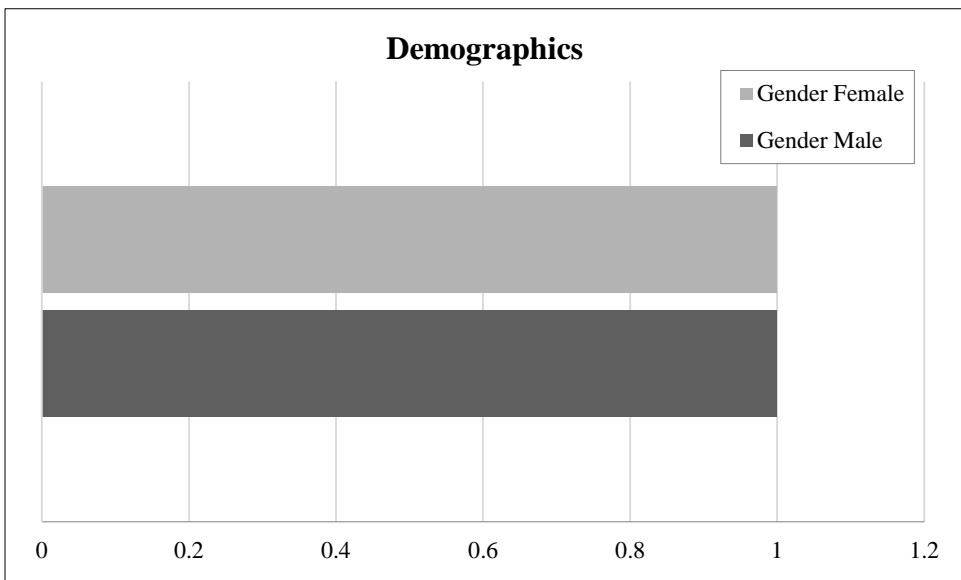


Figure 7. Gender of the participants

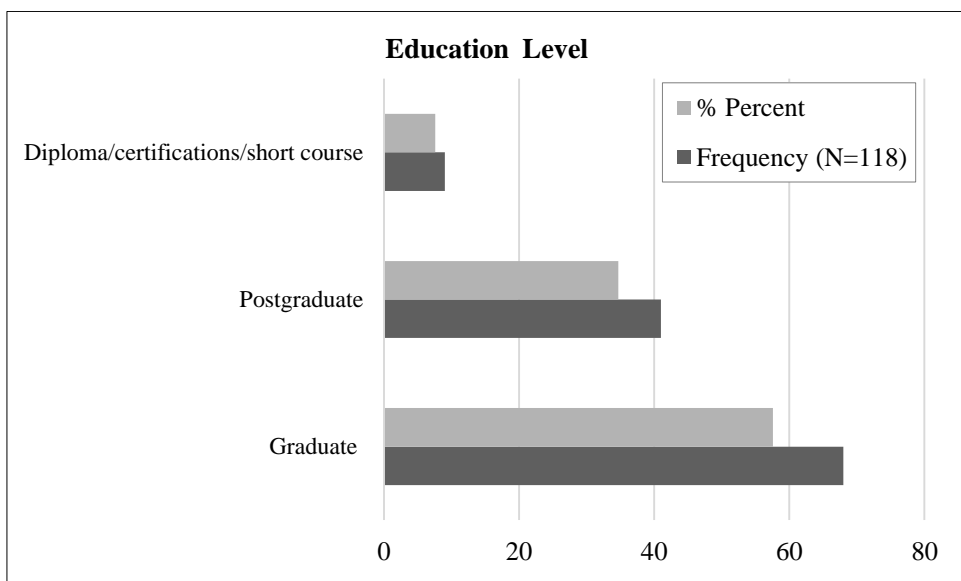


Figure 8. Educational level of the participants

4-2-2- Descriptive Statistics

Similar to Indonesian universities, for all the responses of the Russian students, the mean values are greater than the values of the standard deviation (Table 6), indicating that the responses are consistent and free from any kind of significant variation. The results of the descriptive statistics arithmetic mean that the value of almost all the items is recorded between 4 and 5, showing that the data is skewed at the right side of the scale. That shows that almost all the participants marked rating points above 4 which means that the Russian students had extremely high expectations from their universities. The mean values of the expected scale of the Russian students are notably higher than that of the Indonesian students.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics for service quality expectations of the students in Russia

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Classrooms are equipped with all the essential and contemporary equipment (LCDs, projectors, PCs, and smart devices)	2.00	5.00	4.6949	0.66033
Facilities, buildings, and classrooms are modern and visually appealing	1.00	5.00	4.6695	0.65444
Staff and the faculty member appear to be professionals	1.00	5.00	4.3390	0.90790
The up-to-date course route is provided, and teaching material (such as course programs, notes, books, study guides, handouts etc.) provided to the students are updated.	2.00	5.00	4.2627	0.85162
Classes are held following the schedule provided to the students without any kind of delay	2.00	5.00	4.2881	0.80704
The operating hours of the academic office for student affairs are sufficient to fulfill the needs of the students.	2.00	5.00	4.3983	0.83860
The academic staff offers support and guidance to all the students.	1.00	5.00	3.9661	1.13929
The academic staff maintains a record of the activities and the processes of the students (attendance in the scheduled lectures, results, scores, grades, etc.).	1.00	5.00	4.2712	0.92136
The university's management has incorporated a consistent grading standard for all the students.	2.00	5.00	4.2712	0.85396
All the information regarding the essential activities and news are timely provided to the students (such as exams, presentations, ceremonies, etc.).	2.00	5.00	4.3305	0.79588
The management and the academic staff efficiently and promptly handle and address the queries, complaints, requests, and issues of the students	1.00	5.00	4.7203	0.61165
The management and the academic staff conduct in the best interests of all the students.	2.00	5.00	4.6949	0.60635
The management and the academic staff ensure to pay special attention to the students' problems and issues and attempt to resolve them.	1.00	5.00	4.6695	0.70475
The academic staff of the university is primed with an adequate level of knowledge and expertise and has good communication skills	2.00	5.00	4.7034	0.71980
The university faculty has implemented academic programs with clear aims that are aligned with the needs of the students	1.00	5.00	4.6695	0.76298
The educational process has a high quality.	2.00	5.00	4.7797	0.64232
The responsible management of the academic staff enhances the students' confidence in the university's services.	1.00	5.00	4.6186	0.83635
The faculty of the university holds a high reputation in the education sector.	2.00	5.00	4.7627	0.68784
The management and the academic staff offer professional support to the students.	2.00	5.00	4.7627	0.66253
The management and the academic staff demonstrate a high level of understanding of the needs of the students	1.00	5.00	4.6356	0.83375
The management and the academic staff demonstrate positive attitudes towards all the students.	2.00	5.00	4.7797	0.66840
The management and the academic staff ensure equal treatment and respect for the students.	1.00	5.00	4.6695	0.70475
The management and the academic staff remained available for consultations and guidance.	2.00	5.00	4.7034	0.71980
The university faculty welcomes and shows the high value for the feedback from students and incorporates it to improve the educational services.	2.00	5.00	4.7034	0.71980
The management, academic staff, and the faculty are very polite and professional in interacting with the students.	1.00	5.00	4.6695	0.76298

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics for the scale of current perceptions of Russian students about the quality of the educational services of the universities. The descriptive statistical analysis of the collected data shows that data is consistent and free from variation. Furthermore, the data analysis shows that the mean values of all the responses are higher than 4 on all of the service dimensions. It shows that most of the students marked high rating points; 4 and 5 (agree or strongly agree) as their responses. There is a very small gap between the expectations and perceptions of the students regarding the quality of the educational services of the Russian universities. The collected data shows that compared to the Indonesian universities, the students in the Russian universities hold more positive perceptions of the educational services.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics for service quality perceptions of the students in Russia

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Classrooms are equipped with all the essential and contemporary equipment (LCDs, projectors, PCs, and smart devices)	1.00	5.00	4.5234	0.66033
Facilities, buildings, and classrooms are modern and visually appealing	1.00	5.00	4.6754	0.65444
Staff and the faculty member appear to be professionals	2.00	5.00	4.5000	0.90790
The up-to-date course route is provided, and teaching material (such as course programs, notes, books, study guides, handouts etc.) provided to the students are updated.	1.00	5.00	4.3456	0.85162
Classes are held following the schedule provided to the students without any kind of delay	1.00	5.00	4.0067	0.80704
The operating hours of the academic office for student affairs are sufficient to fulfill the needs of the students.	1.00	5.00	4.0076	0.83860
The academic staff offers support and guidance to all the students.	1.00	5.00	4.1017	1.13929
The academic staff maintains a record of the activities and the processes of the students (attendance in the scheduled lectures, results, scores, grades, etc.).	1.00	5.00	3.9897	0.92136
The university's management has incorporated a consistent grading standard for all the students.	1.00	5.00	4.9563	0.85396
All the information regarding the essential activities and news are timely provided to the students (such as exams, presentations, ceremonies, etc.).	1.00	5.00	3.9915	0.79588
The management and the academic staff efficiently and promptly handle and address the queries, complaints, requests, and issues of the students	2.00	5.00	4.3559	0.61165
The management and the academic staff conduct in the best interests of all the students.	1.00	5.00	4.7797	0.60635
The management and the academic staff ensure to pay special attention to the students' problems and issues and attempt to resolve them.	1.00	5.00	4.6186	0.70475
The academic staff of the university is primed with an adequate level of knowledge and expertise and has good communication skills	1.00	5.00	4.7627	0.71980
The university faculty has implemented academic programs with clear aims that are aligned with the needs of the students	1.00	5.00	4.7633	0.76298
The educational process has a high quality.	1.00	5.00	4.7689	0.64232
The responsible management of the academic staff enhances the students' confidence in the university's services.	1.00	5.00	4.1271	0.83635
The faculty of the university holds a high reputation in the education sector.	1.00	5.00	4.0254	0.68784
The management and the academic staff offer professional support to the students.	1.00	5.00	3.9978	0.66253
The management and the academic staff demonstrate a high level of understanding of the needs of the students	1.00	5.00	4.1695	0.83375
The management and the academic staff demonstrate positive attitudes towards all the students.	1.00	5.00	4.0847	0.66840
The management and the academic staff ensure equal treatment and respect for the students.	1.00	5.00	4.0098	0.70475
The management and the academic staff remained available for consultations and guidance.	1.00	5.00	4.0340	0.71980
The university faculty welcomes and shows the high value for the feedback from students and incorporates it to improve the educational services.	1.00	5.00	4.5691	0.71980
The management, academic staff, and the faculty are very polite and professional in interacting with the students.	1.00	5.00	4.4579	0.76298

5- Discussion

5-1- Main Findings of the Present Study

To understand the perception and the expectation, we need to go deep down into the ideas behind both. Expectations of students are basically what they believe about their education system and a little bit of the motivation behind their willingness to enroll in the national institutions. On the other hand, perception is what they can perceive without things being written or seen physically, because perceptions are evident in the mind and not in the eyes. The national education system of any country is the basic root of its most nourishing asset, called the youth. As we see in Russia, the higher educational system appears to be outstanding. Therefore, students' perceptions are not disappointing in terms of comparing their expectations and perceptions based on general opinions in the survey. Because in the survey results, it is found that students in Russian universities hold positive perceptions regarding the educational services offered by their universities that match their expectations. Considering the case of Indonesia, the situation appears to be slightly different, as the results of the survey revealed that the students had higher expectations of the quality of the educational services provided by the universities. However, the current perceptions of the quality of educational services fall below their expectations. It shows that the students, before enrollment, were very optimistic about their education and degrees, but after getting enrolled, they did not get what they expected. Thus, there exists a sense of dissatisfaction in individuals towards their education system.

5-2-Comparison with Other Studies

The study results are found to be in line with the literature and industry findings. It is evident from the research that Russia stands among the top countries for higher education. Russia is ranked 26th among the top 50 countries for higher education. The ranking is awarded based on the quality of education and services offered by the universities [47,48]. The Russian education system is more focused on quality than provision because there is already a huge qualified population and there are tons of good-quality educational institutions that further enhance everyday practice. That gives the youth a sense of security and reliability in their educational degrees. The Russian government has a very diverse education system as they have around 23 federal boards throughout the country. The boarding system has a key role in the education system because all the boards might resemble each other a lot, but they are not the same. The different controlling bodies of the different boards have their own ways of approaching educational methods and practices.

As a general survey, Russia's education system is satisfactory for the people because it is evergreen and improving day by day. The students, before enrollment, seemed very motivated and had high expectations. After their enrolment, they show satisfactory responses in terms of positive perceptions of the educational services of the Russian universities. The survey findings are in line with the literature findings as per which higher education is highly prevalent in the Russian economy. In contrast, higher educational institutions are engaged in providing multidisciplinary programs and research-based activities [8, 49-52]. That supports the present survey results, which demonstrated the high satisfaction of the students with the quality of the educational services offered by their universities.

In the case of Indonesia, the results are also found to be in line with the findings of the literature, as it was revealed that the participation rate in the higher education system in the country remains low compared to the participation level in other developing countries [14, 53-57]. After combining these literature findings with the survey results, it can be deduced that the low participation of students in the country's higher education system might be due to the negative perceptions regarding the quality of the educational services offered by the universities in Indonesia. Moreover, the results showed low perceptions of the educational programs of the faculty, which is in line with the finding of Digdowiseiso that there exists an incoherence in the educational curriculum of Indonesian universities that is not aligned with the needs of society [12]. As a result, the quality of the educational services offered in the Indonesian universities falls below the students' expectations.

5-3-Implications of Findings

The study's findings presented valuable findings for the higher education sectors of both countries. Particularly for the educational practitioners and policymakers in Indonesia, the study highlighted the low satisfaction of students with the quality of the educational services of the country's higher education system. If we compare both countries, the students and the individuals are very motivated to gain good quality education and degrees. It is evident from their expectation levels that they are very eager to join the educational journey with thousands of other fellow nationals. In the case of Russia, the findings revealed that the students successfully reached the optimum potential they were prepared for, while in Indonesia, students are still struggling and unhappy with their expectations. In this regard, the educational policymakers of the country are suggested to analyze and point out the factors acting as a hurdle in the higher education of students and should try to alter them.

Moreover, they should also consider what is promoting education to be maximized. The government, educational policymakers, and the university's administration should reevaluate the syllabus and practices to compare them with what is presently the best in the world. That will help them see what is working and what is not working. The Russian education system is all over good. However, there is always room for improvement. They can improve this by giving students good opportunities to implement the knowledge in their hometowns, so they do not have to go out anywhere.

6- Strengths and Limitations

Overall, the research proved to be quite helpful in generating empirical findings and insights pertinent to the effectiveness of the service quality of the higher education system in Indonesia and Russia. The collection of primary data enabled the study to generate up-to-date insights into the students' satisfaction with the service quality of higher education systems in Indonesia and Russia. Nonetheless, the research is also characterized by some limitations that entail factors beyond the researcher's control and that impact the results of the study. One of the major limitations that the researcher faces is pertinent to the collection of data due to the amount of time available to collect the relevant data and the limited reach of the researcher due to which the researcher cannot collect data from a wide number of universities in Indonesia and Russia. Rather, the study incorporated a snowball approach, which led to the recruitment of students from a few universities. Thus, this may impact the accuracy of the results.

7- Conclusion

The study attempted to conduct a comparative evaluation of the quality of the higher education services in Indonesia and Russia. The study is focused on the universities of Indonesia and Russia. For a comparative evaluation of the quality of the higher education services of Russian and Indonesian universities, the study incorporates the SERVQUAL instrument that measures the service quality across five service dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. By incorporating the SERVQUAL model, a questionnaire was designed comprising 25 close-ended questions. Items for each of the service dimensions were included in the study. The questionnaire was developed for two scales; one to measure the expectations of the students regarding the quality of educational services and the other to measure the students' current perceptions. Thus, the students were asked to assess the educational services of their universities based on the expectations they had before getting enrolled in the universities and then based on their current perceptions of the educational services being delivered to them.

The study's survey revealed that in both countries, students had considerably higher expectations of the quality of educational services before getting enrolled in their respective universities. Thus, the students appear interested and geared up for higher education. However, the results of the perception scale are significantly different for Russian and Indonesian universities. In the case of Russia, students were found to hold high perceptions of the quality of the educational services provided by their universities, indicating high expectations of the educational services being delivered by their universities. However, in the case of Indonesian universities, a gap exists between the expectations and perceptions of students regarding the quality of educational services. Students held low perceptions of the quality of the educational services provided by their universities, indicating a sense of dissatisfaction among them. Thus, the government needs to work to improve the higher education sector in Indonesia to improve students' perceptions of the quality of the educational services and increase student participation in higher education in the country.

Lastly, it has been established that due to the limited availability of time, the researcher cannot collect data from many universities in Indonesia and Russia and incorporate a snowball approach. In this regard, it is recommended that future researchers conduct more comprehensive research incorporating a qualitative approach and include more universities in the study.

8- Declarations

8-1- Author Contributions

Conceptualization, L.R.; methodology, I.R. and A.K.; software, V.P.; validation, O.D.; formal analysis, O.A.; investigation, D.N.; resources, V.P.; data curation, I.R.; writing—original draft preparation, G.M.; writing—review and editing, M.K.; visualization, O.D.; supervision, L.R.; project administration, M.B.A.; funding acquisition, not applicable. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

8-2- Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available in the article.

8-3- Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

8-4- Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

8-5- Informed Consent Statement

The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

8-6- Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

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Appendix I – Informed Consent

You are requested to fill out the two questionnaires used to collect data for my research. The purpose of my study is to evaluate the educational service quality of the current higher education system in Indonesia and Russia. In this regard, your assistance would be highly appreciated. I would like to inform you that your participation in this survey is completely voluntary, and you can leave the survey at any point without completing it if you wish to. Moreover, please be informed that the study carries no risk or harm for you. Your response will be recorded as anonymous and will be discarded once the study is completed. You are requested to fill the following section to confirm that you have voluntarily consented to participate in this study.

I am aware of the fact that participation in this survey is completely voluntary, and I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. It is also in my clear understanding that this study has no potential risks.

Signature,

Appendix II– Questionnaire

Please select the option that best describes your gender:

- Male
- Female

Please select the option that best describes your age

- 15 and under
- 16 to 20 years
- 21 to 25 years
- 26 to 30 years
- 31 to 35 years
- Above 35

Please select the option that best describes the degree you are pursuing at your university

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- Diploma/certifications/short course
- Doctorate

Codes

1-SD - Strongly Disagree

2-D - Disagree

3-N - Neutral

4-A - Agree

5-SA - Strongly Agree

Table A-1. The statements and scores depending on the responses

	Tangibility	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Classrooms are equipped with all the essential and contemporary equipment (LCDs, projectors, PCs, and smart devices)	1	2	3	4	5
2	Facilities, buildings, and classrooms are modern and visually appealing	1	2	3	4	5
3	Staff and the faculty member appear to be professionals	1	2	3	4	5
4	Up to date course route is provided, and teaching material (such as course programs, notes, books, study guides, handouts etc.) provided to the students are updated.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Classes are held following the schedule provided to the students without any kind of delay	1	2	3	4	5

Reliability		SD	D	N	A	SA
6	The operating hours of the academic office for student affairs are sufficient to fulfill the needs of the students.	1	2	3	4	5
7	The academic staff offers support and guidance to all the students.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The academic staff maintains a record of the activities and the processes of the students (attendance in the scheduled lectures, results, scores, grades, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
9	The university's management has incorporated a consistent grading standard for all the students.	1	2	3	4	5
10	All the information regarding the essential activities and news are timely provided to the students (such as exams, presentations, ceremonies, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness		SD	D	N	A	SA
11	The management and the academic staff efficiently and promptly handle and address the queries, complaints, requests, and issues of the students	1	2	3	4	5
12	The management and the academic staff conduct in the best interests of all the students.	1	2	3	4	5
13	The management and the academic staff ensure to pay special attention to the students' problems and issues and attempt to resolve them.	1	2	3	4	5
Assurance		SD	D	N	A	SA
14	The academic staff of the university is primed with an adequate level of knowledge and expertise and has good communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
15	The university faculty has implemented academic programs with clear aims that are aligned with the needs of the students	1	2	3	4	5
16	The educational process has a high quality.	1	2	3	4	5
17	The responsible management of the academic staff enhances the students' confidence in the university's services.	1	2	3	4	5
18	The faculty of the university holds a high reputation in the education sector.	1	2	3	4	5
19	The management and the academic staff offer professional support to the students.	1	2	3	4	5
Empathy		SD	D	N	A	SA
20	The management and the academic staff demonstrate a high level of understanding of the needs of the students	1	2	3	4	5
21	The management and the academic staff demonstrate positive attitudes towards all the students.					
22	The management and the academic staff ensure equal treatment and respect for the students.	1	2	3	4	5
23	The management and the academic staff remained available for consultations and guidance.	1	2	3	4	5
24	The university faculty welcomes and shows the high value for the feedback from students and incorporates it to improve the educational services.	1	2	3	4	5
25	The management, academic staff, and the faculty are very polite and professional in interacting with the students.	1	2	3	4	5