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Students' Perspectives about Quality Education: A Case Study of Army Burn Hall College, Abbottabad

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Abstract

This case study aimed to analyze the quality of education and related services (including infrastructure, facilities, and resources) offered by Army Burn Hall College Abbottabad. For this purpose, an explanatory mixed-method research design (Quantitative + Qualitative) was used. A sample of 152 students from the SSC level (Matriculation), studying for the last five years in the college was selected by using a convenience sampling technique. For collecting quantitative data, a SERVQUAL questionnaire was administered, while two open-ended questions were added to this questionnaire for collecting qualitative data. For analyzing quantitative data, the mean score of satisfaction (Perception -Expectation) was calculated, while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The analyzed data revealed that Army Burn Hall College was imparting quality education to the students' high satisfaction level concerning infra-structure, space, educational facilities, services for personality development, and classroom teaching. However, the analysis of qualitative data revealed some areas in the college that need improvement for the quality of education in the college.

Keywords: Personality Development, Physical Facilities, Quality Education, Students' Satisfaction.

Introduction

Quality education is one of the basic instruments that enable individuals to serve the nation, country, and society for socio-economic development. Developments in culture, living styles of people, prompt advancement in inventions and technologies are the indications of certain standards of quality education that have been met to equip the graduates with knowledge and skills (Thangeda, Baratiseng & Mompati, 2016). According to Power (2015), irrespective of gender and age, the prime goal of education is to equip the people with the knowledge skills, and values that are necessary to make them talented for active participation in the work and life of their society. For this purpose, education of high quality is imperative. Quality education is an empowering education i.e. an education that develops human resources, makes them productive, creative, problem-solver, and enables them to live with integrity, peace, and harmony. When such education is accessible to all people of a nation, it becomes an engine of sustainable development (Romlah & Latief, 2021).

In the provision of quality education, educational institutions play a key role. Suskie has defined quality as the provision of five dimensions: relevance, community, focus and aspirations, evidence, and betterment, concerning the educational setting. Nikel and Lowe (2010) have described seven dimensions of quality: effectiveness, equity, responsiveness, relevance, reflexivity, and sustainability. Effectiveness is concerned with the level to which the described goals of education have been achieved; efficiency is the best rate of return; equity is concerned with justice education setting and responsiveness in an educational setting is concerned with the recognition of individuals from diverse backgrounds. The job market needs persons equipped with knowledge and skills that are linked with the world of work. Hence the modern job market requires quality education. Furthermore, the parents the developing countries have high aspirations about the future of their children, and these aspirations can be fulfilled through quality education. Quality education also accelerates the economic growth of the countries; therefore, governments of developing countries have great concentration on

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the quality of the education system of the nation (Suresh, 2017). Barro and Lee (2013) have also acknowledged the importance of quality education as it influences the various sectors of the economy. Developing countries are continuously focusing on the improvement of their education systems to enhance the quality of education of their institutions (Suresh, 2017). The researchers are in search of quality education that different institutions are imparting at different levels.

Literature Review

According to Griffin (2016), strict discipline to set the culture of learning and respect in the school, teacher's motivation and setting high expectations, and students' deep sense of affiliation with the school play an active role in providing quality education in the school. Salah, Elmadhoun, Abdalla, Khalid, and Saeed (2015) indicated that lack of provision of modern lab equipment, library facility, and quality services for personal development has greater importance in promoting quality education in the school. The other factors included the assurances dimension related to the behavior of staff that is required to instill confidence; care from faculty about the teaching methods according to the student's needs; sufficient knowledge and competence of faculty to answer the student's questions; responsiveness i.e. helping students; and, handing out promises on time on the part of teaching staff.

According to Thangeda, Baratiseng, and Mompati (2016), excellent learning materials, quality facilities along with co-curricular activities for the students' development are important factors for providing quality education. Abu Rashed Osman, Sarkar, and Islam (2017) conducted a study to investigate students' satisfaction from the quality of private universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh, using SERVQUAL tool of quality measures. Data collected from 117 students were analyzed and it was found that private universities in Dhaka were imparting quality education up to a satisfactory level. Regarding the quality of teaching, it was found that courses were completed according to the course outlines; and the number of classes were according to the set standards. The quality of teaching faculty in these universities is a very high level of academic, achievement which s was above average whereas the quality of the students for admission to the university was at an average level. According to Chisti, Tahirkhaeli, Raja, and Khan (2011), the Government of Pakistan considers it important to provide quality education at the School and college level. Because quality education is a very effective tool for socio-economic developments. For more, the school education provider s pathway to higher education which develops leadership and high-quality managers for the nation.

According to UNDP (2020), Pakistan is a country that is co-signatory of the United Nations Convention on sustainable development goals. Therefore, Pakistan has to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all by 2030 and promote lifelong learning. This commitment as well as the requirements of socio-economic development necessitates for the whole nation to focus on quality education at all levels. As Suresh (2017) has reported developing countries have invited the private sector to share the burden of education with the government. Pakistan has also focused on the private sector to play its role in the field of education. However, overall Pakistan is lacking in capacity, financing, governance, and political will that has been translated into 39 million out of school children with 5-16 years' age, poor facilities in schools, insufficient number of schools, low participation, and high dropout rates, and high population growth adding 2 million children per year in the educational stream (UNDP, 2020). Despite this situation, some institutions are playing a very important role in imparting quality education. Among these institutions, the Cadet College managed by Pak Army is playing a significant role in providing quality education. Some of these institutions have a long history and are working with an acceleration/retardation that needs exploration for identifying new benchmarks and set targets to sustain in the competitive field of quality education. Army Burn Hall College Abbottabad (ABHC) is of one these institutions that are striving to serve the nation by providing education from pre-school to higher secondary education.

The literature shows that most studies conducted on quality education have focused on the comparison of public and private sector institutions, while institution or groups of institutions have rarely been focused. The studies at the national level (Imran, 2008; Bashir, Majoka, & Mahmood, 2011; Awan,2018; Mirza, & Manzoor, 2018) that have been conducted on comparison of public and private sector schools while schools or colleges as single case have been rarely investigated for quality education. To fill this knowledge gap, a study was conducted to investigate the situation of quality education at Army Burn Hall College (ABHC), Abbottabad Pakistan. The current study is significant as a case study to enhance institutions individually by strengthening a bond between school, society, and students. The objectives of this study were:

1.   To study students' level of satisfaction about the different indicators of quality education at ABHC.
2.   To explore students' views and concerns about the quality of services and academics at ABHC.

Research Methodology

For conducting this research, a case study research design was followed by mixed-method (Quantitative + Qualitative) research. This method was considered suitable for this study because a single institution was under investigation. Furthermore, the study explored students' views about deficient aspects of quality education that needed improvement. A mixed-methods case study design was 'used to provide in-depth evidence for a case(s) (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2018, p. 116).

The overall population of students in the college was 2382 out of these; only 152 students were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The criteria for drawing this sample was that only those students (250) from classes 7th to 12th were selected who had more than five years of experience of learning at Army Burn Hall College. The purpose was to select mature and experienced respondents. This sample size is sufficient for a single case study involving a mixed-method (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). For collecting data, the SERVOUAL survey was adopted from a version customized by Đonlagic and Fazlic (2015). For measuring quality, this survey has been used by various organizations with modifications subject to the functions and workplace. The researchers embedded different indicators of quality education and validated them through experts' opinions. A pilot study was conducted to find its usability and reliability. The value of the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.733, and the survey tool was reliable. This survey covered 9 indicators of quality education and it had overall 42 items: 5 items for the visual appeal of the infrastructure; 4 items for co-curricular and recreational facilities; 4 items for academic facilities; 3 items regarding administrative facilities; 7 items for students 'development services; 8 items for services for parents and students; 4 items for services in terms of responsiveness for students; 4 items regarding responsiveness for parents; and 3 items for quality of principal's leadership. This tool measured respondents' expectations (E) and perception (P) about the quality education of the institution. For calculating respondents' satisfaction, P-E was calculated. P-E less than 1 indicates a high level of satisfaction while the value of P-E between 1 and 2 shows a moderate level of satisfaction while P-E equal to or greater than 2 shows a low level of satisfaction.

Furthermore, this survey had open-ended questions at the end with the purpose to explore students' stance about the deficient areas of quality and their views about improvement measures. For analyzing quantitative data, mean scores, the standard deviation of the P-E score, were used as statistical tools. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2012). The triangulation of results from qualitative data and quantitative data, and unbiased interpretation of qualitative data made the research findings valid and reliable.

Results

Table 1: Students' satisfaction from the visual appeal of the ABHC infrastructure

Sr. No	Statement / Aspect	Service Quality (Mean P-E)	SD	Level
1	Visual Appeal of Purpose-Built Infrastructure with Easy Approach	.2624	1.11	High
2	Internal / External Decorations	.3121	1.08	High
3	Professional Appearance of Teachers	-.0993	1.03	High
4	Dress, Manners, and Smartness of Students, Faculty, and Staff	-.3191	1.11	High
5	Visual Appeal of Uniform and Stationery	.1915	1.19	High

In table No. 1, mean values of P-E, SD indicate that students had high satisfaction about the visual appeal of purpose-built infrastructure, internal/external decoration, professional appearance of teachers, and staff. They were also satisfied with the appearance of students as well as the visual appeal of their uniform and stationary.

Table 2: Students' satisfaction from co/extra-curricular activities and facilities at ABHC

Sr. No	Statement / Aspect	Service Quality (Mean P-E)	SD	Level
1	Hostel Facilities	-.1135	1.06	High
2	Recreational Facilities	-.0142	1.13	High

| 3 | Cafeteria | -.0638 | 1.28 | High |
| 4 | Physical Facilities i.e., Offices, Staff Rooms, Auditorium and Examination Halls | .1277 | 1.03 | High |

In table No. 2, the mean values of P-E and SD indicate that students were highly satisfied with hosted facilities, recreational facilities, cafeteria, and other physical facilities (offices, staff room, auditorium, and examination halls).

Table 3: Students' satisfaction from academic facilities at ABHC

Sr. No	Statement / Aspect	Service Quality (Mean P-E)	SD	Level
1	Well Equipped Science Laboratories	-.3333	1.02	High
2	Well-stocked College Library	-.2270	1.30	High
3	Layout of Classrooms	-.0851	1.02	High
4	Computers Laboratories	-.4113	1.36	High

In table No 3. Statistical values i.e. mean scores of P-E and SD indicate a high level of student satisfaction with academic facilities like well-equipped science laboratory well-stocked college library, the layout of the classroom, and computer laborites.

Table 4: Students' satisfaction from administrative facilities at ABHC

Sr. No	Statement / Aspect	Service Quality (Mean P-E)	SD	Level
1	Availability of Sufficient Parking Space	.1560	1.55	High
2	Adequate Quiet Places to Study Alone or in Small Groups	-.1418	1.29	High
3	Space and Physical Arrangements to Conduct the Kinds of Programs Students Need	.0426	1.17	High

In table No 4, values of P-E and SD indicate that students of ABHC had high satisfaction regarding the availability of sufficient proving space; adequate quiet places to study alone or in small groups; and space and physical arrangements to conduct different programs for students.

Table 5: Students' satisfaction from students' development and learning services of ABHC

Sr. No	Statement / Aspect	Service Quality (Mean P-E)	SD	Level
1	Participation of 100% Students in Sports and Co/Extracurricular Activities	-.5674	1.40	High
2	Instilling Life Skills	-.3191	1.46	High
3	Challenging Academic Standards	-.2979	1.32	High
4	Students' Appointment System	-.0496	1.21	High
5	Well-Designed Examination System and Continuous Assessment	-.2057	1.30	High
6	Character Building	-.1773	1.20	High
7	Well-Defined Learning Expectations for all Students	-.3121	1.12	High

The statistical values, (mean scores of P-E and SD) in table no 5 indicate the high satisfaction level of students regarding students 100% participation in sports and extra-curricular activities; instilling life skills; challenging academic standards; students' admissions system; well design examination system and continuous assessment; character building; and well-defined learning expectations for all students.

Table 6: Students' satisfaction from the quality of services for parents and students in ABHC

Sr. No	Statement / Aspect	Service Quality (Mean P-E)	SD	Level
1	General Reliability of Faculty	-.0638	.99	High
2	Providing Services at a Promised Time	-.1135	.99	High
3	Easy Accessibility of Administration, Faculty, and Staff to Students / Parents	-.0426	1.15	High
4	Staff's Conduct	-.0993	.98	High
5	Teachers and Staff's Capacity to Solve Problems	-.2128	1.22	High
6	Availability of Basic Health Services	.3546	1.30	High
7	Security Measures	.0922	.87	High
8	Excellent Education at a Reasonable Cost	-.4397	1.49	High

In table No. 6 mean values P-E and SD of P-E indicate a high level of students' satisfaction regarding generation reliability of faculty, provision of services at the promised time, easy

associability of administration and staff, staff conduct, staff capability to resolve problems, availability of basic health services, security measures, and provision of excellent education at a reasonable cost.

Table 7: Students' satisfaction from the quality of services for students in ABHC

Sr. No	Statement / Aspect	Service Quality (Mean P-E)	SD	Level
1	Timely Communication of Admission, Exams, and Other Activities Schedules	-.0142	.87	High
2	Teachers' Availability to Assist Students	-.1844	.88	High
3	Prompt Response	-.6241	1.56	High
4	Availability of Channels to Students for Expressing Complaints	-.0284	1.159	High

In table No. 7, values of mean scores and SD of P-E indicate that students in ABHC were highly satisfied with the timely combination of different activities (admission, exams, sports, etc.), availability of teachers to assist students, prompt response to queries, and request, availability of channels for complaints and regular feedback on students' progress.

Table 8: Students' satisfaction from the quality of services for their parents in ABHC

Sr. No	Statement / Aspect	Service Quality (Mean P-E)	SD	Level
1	Close Collaboration of Teachers with Families	-.5248	1.14	High
2	Prompt Dealing of Queries/Complaints	-.2624	1.24	High
3	Regular Feedback on Students' Progress	-.1560	1.15	High
4	Community involvement in planning and programme development	-.6525	1.63	High

In table No.8, the statistical values (Mean score and SD) indicate that students were highly satisfied with the close collaboration of teachers with families, prompt dealing with quarries/complaints, regular feedback on students' progress, and close collaboration of teachers with families. Values also indicate high satisfaction of students about community involvement in planning and program development.

Table 9: Students' satisfaction from the quality of principal's leadership role in ABHC

Sr. No	Statement / Aspect	Service Quality (Mean P-E)	SD	Level
1	Principal's Leading New and Challenging Innovations to Inspire	.0284	1.01	High
2	Principal's running the College with a Firm Hand	.0709	1.03	High
3	The Principal's Fairness	.1560	.94	High

In table no.9, the statistical values (mean score and SD) of P-E indicate that students had a high level of satisfaction about the behavior of faculty instilling confidence among students, teachers' respect on the part of students, positive reinforcement, teacher's qualification, and capability, use of students centered methods of teaching; communication skills of the teachers, and feeling safe while communicating with faculty, staffs, students, /junior/senior.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

The analysis of qualitative data reflected four main themes: ABHC as an exemplary institution; ABHC as an institution with high-quality infrastructure; however, there were students' concerns that need to be catered to; and ABHC needs modifications and improvements at some levels. These themes have been explained and interpreted as under:

ABHC as an exemplary institution

Army Burn Hall College is considered as one of the institutions with high standards. The students considered it a good place for learning. This institution is regarded as a space and service for the teaching and learning process. The institution is situated at a panoramic location and a beautiful place. Army Burn Hall College is considered an institution with a glorious history. It was established before the partition of the sub-continent, and since that it has been considered as one of the best institutions in the countries. Expressing this aspect of the college, a respondent (R 11) said,

> *"I heard from my uncle, who had been Hallian, about ABHC. He used to count eminent personalities of the country who had been students of this college. He used to tell it history and glory from British rule. Being students, I have really found it glorious" (R11)*

This institution is such prestigious that students feel the pride of being Hallian and they introduce themselves in academic circles as Hallian. Everywhere they express their affiliation with ABHC. For example, one of the respondents (R7) said,

> *"Most of my family members i.e. my father, elder brothers, and some of the relatives have been the students of Army Burn Hall College. They all introduce themselves as Hallian. I also feel pride as being a student of this college."*

Traditionally, this institution was a boarding institution, where the overall focus of the fathers/teachers was on personality development. Even today Army Burn Hall College is known for its services and focus on the personality development of the youth.

ABHC as an institution with high-quality infrastructure

Army Burn Hall College has a very spacious building and excellent infra-structure with various facilities. These facilities and setup of the unit has been explained in four aspects: i) spaces and halls for academic activities, ii) facilities for co-curricular activities, iii) beautiful location, iv) Excellent place for boarding and living.

Army Burn Hall College is a very spacious building having places/multipurpose halls for different academic activities. These spaces are sufficient for conducting different academic activities and events. One of the respondents (R15) explained this fact as,

> *"Our college has a very spacious and beautiful building which has 2 halls i.e. Scanlon hall and Hettinga hall. These halls add much to the purpose of education in the college as these are used for different purposes."*

This college has different facilities that cater to co-curricular activities. It has a swimming pool, riding points, playground, gym, and court for different games/sports. It also has facilities/instruments for indoor games. A respondent (R13) reported:

> *"The specialty of our college is that has much more recreational resources than the other institutions. It has a swimming pool, different playgrounds, and equipped courts and places for indoor games. All these things are amusing for the boarders."*

Army Burn Hall College is located at the center of a valley surrounded by green hills and gives a panoramic view. At different places and angels, a new beautiful scene appears, while walking through the ABHC. A person staying within the boundary of ABHC cannot feel boredom or stress. One of the respondents (R17) described this aspect of the college as:

> *"ABHC has very scenic beauty when someone walks through its grounds, and a small hill (called Johnson-Hill within its boundary. While sitting on its hill one feels pleasure from the view of Sarban hill and mountains of Thandyani."*

Factors affecting ABHC as a good institution

Although, ABHC is a good institution with strict discipline and strict regulations; yet, there are some rules and routines that are the cause of disgruntlement among students. The respondents depicted their concerns regarding bullying due to the tradition of seniors and juniors in the college, forced discipline for boarders, favoritism among boarders and day-scholars, an unequal chance for participation in sports and other events, frustration among students due to strict ban on using social media.

These factors have been expressed by respondents in different words. For example, one of the respondents (R2) said,

> *"One thing that I feel stressed about is the attitude of seniors towards juniors that we are bound to respect and follow them, but many times they make jokes out of it and fun which I feel insulting."*

Similarly, another respondent (R13) stated about rigid discipline:

> *"The students in the boarding have to follow strict rules and observe discipline. A very tedious timetable has been set up and all are bound to follow. In case of any lethargy, severe punishment may be the outcome. We should be treated as human beings, not as machines."*

Likewise, one of the other respondents R16) described in the following words:

> *"Mostly the students living at the campus are given priority to take part in different events and activities while day scholars are deprived of equal opportunities."*

Respondents also depict their deep concern about the ban of social media. One of the respondents (R20) stated):

"There is a complete ban on the use of social media at the campus. Being boarders, we feel ourselves as cut off from the remaining world. Due to this ban, my fellows and I feel frustration and ....).

Suggestions for ABHC modifications and improvements

The respondents suggested different modifications and improvements for ABHC to be a highly satisfying place where all learners grow and flourish by having equal opportunities. These improvements and modifications emerged in terms of including further programs for students at college, more experienced and capable/highly qualified teachers be appointed, different programs for personality development and inculcating life skills among students, and a strong need to develop friendly and firm collaboration among different stakeholders.

These views were expressed by respondents in different words and ways. For example, one of the respondents (R4) reported his views to introduce more disciplines in the college:

"Army Burn Hall College offers education only for science groups at the secondary and higher secondary level. Such a prestigious college should not be bound to only a few disciplines. It should expand its offering for other subjects that may provide the basis for emerging careers in the world."

Another respondent (R6) suggested appointing well-trained teachers for enhancing the teaching-learning process.

"Newly appointed teachers are not well experienced and possess enough knowledge to deliver information effectively in a variety of modes. They do not fulfill the teaching criteria for an institution for which masses have much more expectations. Therefore, it is requested to appoint highly educated and trained teachers as faculty for this institution."

One of the respondents (R10) suggested introducing innovative ways to inculcate leadership skills.

"Our college arranges several events and programs for skills development, for leadership skills, and personality development. All these programs are arranged in the traditional way in which only selected students can participate even though we all want to participate. Therefore, college administration should cover more range of life skills and provide more opportunities to participate and contribute."

Similarly, another respondent (R13), suggested coordination among different departments of the college with parents and society.

"Many a times parents and guardians want to meet administration, but they do not get chance or have to wait for a long. Secondly, the parents and guardians feel hesitant to meet with the administration because of their authoritarian attitude. In this way, there remains a gap and lack of coordination among all stakeholders of the college. There is a need to develop more cooperative links between admin and parents."

Discussion

The analyzed data revealed the high satisfaction level of the students about Army Burn Hall College with the visual appeal of infrastructure, co-curricular and recreational facilities, and academic facilities, (well-equipped labs, library, classroom, computer labs, etc.). They were also highly satisfied with space and physical arrangements for different needs and programs, students' development and learning services, quality of services or parents and students' responsiveness for serving students and parents, and quality of Principal leadership. these findings are in line with the findings of a study conducted by Pierson (2012) at the college level and a study conducted by Griffin (2016) which was conducted at P.W. Moore High School in North Carolina. Both the institution had a glorious history and had been famous for quality like Army Burn Hall College in the case of Pakistan. However, these findings of the curvet study were contradictory to the findings of studies by Salah, Elmadhoun, Abdalla, Khalid, and Saeed (2015) in Sudan, by Yousapronpaiboon (2013) in higher education services in Thailand, and by Abu Hasan, Ilias, Rehman, and Abd Razak (2008) on private institutions in Malaysia. These differences in findings and quality of education may be due to the type of institutions as some institutions traditionally strive to provide quality education.

The qualitative data of the current study also revealed that students highly acknowledged the quality infrastructure, beautiful location, facilities, and activities arranged for personality development. However, some of the students showed concerns about bullying by seniors due to the tradition that juniors are supposed to respect and obey the seniors at college. While this respect was being misused by some of the seniors. Furthermore, students showed concerns about very strict

discipline at Army Burn Hall College, low level of coordination among school administration and parents, lack of equal opportunities to participate in different programs and activities necessary for personality and skill development. Such issues have rarely been reflected in research about the quality of education. Perhaps it is due to the nature of the institution as Army Burn Hall is administratively governed by the Pak Army which believes in strict discipline, the obedience of institutional rules, and the authority of the seniors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Army Burn Hall College is providing quality education up to the high satisfaction of the students. However, there are some concerns of the students about the quality of newly appointed teachers, strict discipline, less coordination between parents and administration, lack of equity in opportunities for students to take part in different activities in the college. Some students also face bullying due to the tradition of senior and junior. Some of these problems are rooted in administrative policies while others are part of every institution, as hidden curriculum (like policies and discipline) sometimes produce unexpected and unwanted results. Hence, it is recommended that the administration may revisit its policies regarding discipline, coordination with parents, and use of social media at the campus. However, there is a dire need to provide equal chances to students to participate in different activities and events organized by the college. Administration may increase the range of activities and events to provide more opportunities to the students. Similarly, the quality of a teacher cannot be compromised; the administration may follow high standards and strict policy to appoint the teachers of high quality. Further studies may be conducted to resolve the problems of discipline, bullying, and students' concern at different institutions.

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