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### A STUDY ON SERVICE QUALITY GAP IN PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

*G. Gunaseelan<sup>1</sup>, \*M. Gurusamy<sup>2</sup>, D.Krishna Kumar<sup>3</sup>, Chandrika R<sup>4</sup>,  
Manoj Srivastava<sup>5</sup>, Gaurav Bhattacharya<sup>6</sup>.*

<sup>1,2,3</sup>PG Department of Commerce and Management Studies, Brindavan College, Bangalore,  
India.

<sup>4</sup>Post Graduate Department of Management Studies and Research, P.E.S. College of  
Engineering, Mandya, Karnataka

<sup>5,6</sup>School Of Hotel Management, Manipal University, Jaipur India.

E-Mail: <sup>1</sup>[gunaseelangurujothi@gmail.com](mailto:gunaseelangurujothi@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[gurusamyphd@gmail.com](mailto:gurusamyphd@gmail.com), <sup>3</sup>[drdkkpblr@gmail.com](mailto:drdkkpblr@gmail.com),  
<sup>4</sup>[raghavendra.chandrika@gmail.com](mailto:raghavendra.chandrika@gmail.com), <sup>5</sup>[manoj.srivastava@jaipur.manipal.edu](mailto:manoj.srivastava@jaipur.manipal.edu)  
<sup>6</sup>[gaurav.bhattacharya@jaipur.manipal.edu](mailto:gaurav.bhattacharya@jaipur.manipal.edu)

**G. Gunaseelan, \*M. Gurusamy, D.Krishna Kumar, Chandrika R, Manoj Srivastava, Gaurav Bhattacharya. A Study On Service Quality Gap In Professional Higher Education - Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(4), 1978-1992. ISSN 1567-214x**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The principles of accessibility, quality, and social inclusion have always governed education in India. The plain language means low tuition fees, government accreditation, and caste reservation quotas. With so little higher education in India, the typical student is lost because of the quota system because it is more critical to eliminate qualifications than select them. Industry and services say only a small number of graduates are ready to work, and that the retraining of the young people requires significant spending in acquiring the necessary skills. This study investigates the influence of the institution's locations on the service quality in educational institutions. The study focuses on the quality of service between professional universities. Engineering and Medical Colleges operated by both government and private bodies are categories. The students' evaluations of the quality dimensions of learning, motivation, organization, Group engagement, individual reporting, broadness, and examinations &

assignments were carried out in a total of fifty-nine separate variables and reduced to 12 factors derived from the analysis of the previous studies: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangible and student assessment in this research, the scientist agreed that the sampling system should include Engineering and Medical School, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. The researcher has taken 4 Medical colleges and 77 Engineering colleges as the sample unit. There are 784 participants in the overall study. The study involved the estimation and testing of hypothesis inferences on the significance of unknown population parameters.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The principles of accessibility, quality, and social inclusion have always governed education in India. The plain language means low tuition fees, government accreditation, and caste reservation quotas. With so little higher education in India, the typical student is lost because of the quota system because it is more critical to eliminate qualifications than select them. Industry and services say only a small number of graduates are ready to work, and that the retraining of the young people requires significant spending in acquiring the necessary skills. The industry divide must tackle, and reforms established by the knowledge commission must pursue this liberalist. The Indian Medical Council Act of 1956, amended in 1993, established MCI. To provide recognized medical qualifications for universities and medical facilities in India, the Council may prescribe minimum medical education standards. The Council is also responsible for recommending to the Central Government that new medical colleges. New or higher education courses should establish, and admission capacity should increase in all studies or training courses. The AICTE was established in 1987 to ensure proper planning and coordinated development of technical education and standards (including engineering and management training). The NBA (National Board of Accreditation) Council formed to examine, evaluate, and recommend the recognition or deactivation of technological institutes or programs. Besides, AICTE offers grants to development institutes and new projects.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the quality of service in the SERVQUAL model by Monica Met et al. (2018) in Brand Factory. By extracting the anticipation value of the perceptive score, the gap value for each element is calculated. A negative difference indicated that the actual service (the score received) was lower than anticipated (the expectation score). A difference in quality indicates the quality of their delivery and highlights areas that need to be improved. The study concluded that Brand Factory's service quality was satisfactory.

Anisah Herdiyanti et al. (2017) investigated service providers' perspectives on the quality gap of IT services: DPTSI staff and service consumers - readers and students. A gap analysis based on the creations of Parasura man was used. From the perspective of the service provider, a gap between the service quality standards and the delivery of a service (GAP 3) was found, while the gap between expected and perceived service (GAP 5) was analyzed from the point of a vista of

the consumer of service, using SERVQUAL dimensions. From the analysis, we found that due to the relatively advanced technology and unclear flows of service requests, the most significant gap lies in the domain and service hosting services. Internal DPTSI staff agreed that control systems are the most frequent work problem.

M.Sreerama Raju et al. (2017) focused on the literary body and provided an overview of factors that impact the quality of services in the higher learning system. In the country's socio-economic growth, higher education plays a significant role. The government could play a precautionary role in quality in higher education. The government finds the universities in violation but does not comply with the law. While different regulators monitor the academic facilities of higher education institutions to ensure higher calibre.

However, the quality of higher education is short of achieving world excellence Evans Ojiambo Onditi et al. (2017) assessed service quality in the higher education sector. The study reveals the significant influence on student satisfaction of service quality in higher education. Higher educational institutions should establish procedures to collect feedback from students to determine the quality of their students' service dimensions to make necessary improvements to the relevant dimensions of service quality.

Teo Boon Chui et al. (2015) examined the quality of service provided by a private high school in Malaysia to determine the service variables in the education sector. Using gap analysis, it examined whether there are service gaps in the specific attributes of service quality. Five dimensions were identified: tangible, compassionate, assured, reliable, and responsive to the education institution.

The quality of higher education analysis T. D. Juwaheer et al. (2010) focusing on Mauritius University (UoM) could be quantized. The cultivation of quality of service is aimed at the retention and reduction of errors.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Higher education plays a vital role in deciding the career path of professionals. Professionals are confused while selecting institutions to pursue higher education about the institution's locality, both urban and rural. Professionals at the time of joining the Higher education institutions might have a perceived expectation of the institutions' service. If the institutions fail to fulfil the professionals' expectations, there is a possibility for a service gap. So, it is essential to study the service quality gap in professional higher education institutions.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To study the influence of locations of the institution on the service quality in educational institutions.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study focuses on the quality of service between professional universities. Engineering and Medical Colleges operated by both government and private bodies are categories. The students' evaluations of the quality dimensions of learning, motivation, organization, Group engagement, individual reporting, broadness, and examinations & assignments were carried out in a total of fifty-nine separate variables and reduced to 12 factors derived from the analysis of the previous studies: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangible and student assessments.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The plan for a research study is a research design. The study's nature is descriptive. The characteristics of the population or phenomenon being investigated are identified using descriptive research. A trained student did this research to assess the factors affecting the standard of service at educational establishments. In this research, the scientist agreed that the sampling system should include Engineering and Medical School, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. The researcher has taken 4 Medical colleges and 77 Engineering colleges as the sample unit. There are 784 participants in the overall study. The study involved the estimation and testing of hypothesis inferences on the significance of unknown population parameters. The object of interpretation is to draw information from the facts gathered in an empirical analysis.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### *Percentage analysis – sample profile*

The demographic variable such as gender, year of the studying, family income, type of course, parent's education, parent's occupation, Institution place, Institution experience has been analyzed with the help of percentage analysis.

**TABLE 1** Percentage Analysis On The Age Of The Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
<20 years	529	67.5
20-22 Years	255	32.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1** shows that among the 784 respondents, 67.5%, i.e., 529 are having age below 20 years, 32.5%, i.e., 255 respondents fall in the age group of 20-22 years.

**TABLE 2** Percentage Analyses On The Type Of Course

Type of Course	Frequency	Percent
Medical	363	46.3
Engineering	421	53.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2** demonstrates that among the 784 respondents, 46.3%, i.e., 363 are studying in the Medical college, 53.7%, i.e., 421 are studying in the Engineering college.

**TABLE 3** Respondents Studying Year

Year	Frequency	Percent
First-year	202	25.8
Second-year	266	33.9
Third-year	207	26.4
Fourth-year	109	13.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3** depicts that from the total of 784 respondents, 25.8% means 202 of them from first-year students, 33.9%, i.e., 266 of them from second-year students, 26.4% means 207 respondents from third-year students, rest 13.9%, i.e., from fourth-year students.

**TABLE 4** Exploratory Factor Analyses For Factors Influencing On Experience Service Quality Dimensions

Dimensions and Factors	Factor Loadings	Percentage Variance Explained
<b>Factor 1: Assurance</b>		7.328
1. The Faculties have the required knowledge and qualification	0.722	
2. Students are highly qualified to work in any environment	0.757	
3. Availability of career service for outgoing students is good	0.760	
4. The college campus is safe in all aspects	0.728	
5. The Faculty members are highly knowledgeable about clarifying the doubts of the students	0.736	

6.The campus provides a friendly environment	0.693	
<b>Factor 2:Tangibles</b>		7.231
1.The instituteis fitted with state-of-the-art facilities that can be used to develop students' interest and talent.	0.614	
2.Students were given uniform dresses to be professional and neat	0.602	
3. The institution has the latest equipment's for the significant learning process	0.778	
4. The campus has a hygienic environment	0.715	
5. Library is equipped with up to date learning source materials	0.761	
6. The college Campus cafeteria provides hygienic food at an affordable price	0.723	
7. The availability of computer and internet access is good	0.638	
<b>Factor 3: Reliability</b>		6.833
1.The college Faculty members always give us the right guidance about the course	0.634	
2. Information available in the Notice board is reliable	0.799	
3.The office staffs give us the up to date information about dues	0.693	
4. We get bills for fees and other payments	0.827	
5. Food which we get from the canteen are valued for money	0.803	
6. The institution's website is up to date with correct information.	0.719	
<b>Factor 4: Responsiveness</b>		6.497
1.The institution takes care of student's feedback	0.787	
2. The Institution gives a proper answer to queries	0.745	
3.The institution informs essentialdates well in advance	0.766	
4.When necessary, the institution supports the students	0.704	
5.The teachers make sure that the	0.693	

students understand the subject		
<b>Factor 5: Examinations &amp; Assignments</b>		6.111
1. The evaluation method by the faculty members for the examinations and assignments is fair and appropriate	0.682	
2. The subject and examination are positively related.	0.777	
3. The textbook and assignments referred by the faculty members are highly helpful from an examination point of view.	0.788	
4. The homework given by the faculties contributes to appreciation and understanding of the subject.	0.801	
5. The feedback about the examination are highly valued by the faculty members	0.769	
<b>Factor 6: Learning</b>		5.877
1. The courses provided to the students are challenging and stimulating.	0.825	
2. The students are motivated for innovation	0.866	
3. The interest of the students is increasing from the base level to the core of the subject	0.875	
4. The Students are trained to learn concept and application-oriented	0.856	
<b>Factor 7: Empathy</b>		5.756
1. The Faculty members assign the most relevant and appropriate task for the students	0.670	
2. The availability of a scholarship for students with good achievement	0.613	
3. The course material of the faculty members can be used by the students easily	0.682	
4. The Curriculum related activities are made available easily by the management	0.572	
5. The Institution gives individual attention to each student	0.640	
6. The institution and students have effective communication in all aspects	0.693	
<b>Factor 8: Organization</b>		5.352

1. The explanation by the faculty members are good enough to understand concepts	0.787	
2. Course materials are well prepared and easy to learn	0.762	
3. The course outcomes are well satisfied during the lecture hours	0.776	
4. The faculty members are good at lecturing, which helps the students to take notes simultaneously	0.697	
<b>Factor 9: Individual Rapport</b>		5.111
1. The Faculty members are friendly towards individual students.	0.695	
2. The Faculty members involve in effective mentoring.	0.755	
3. The Faculties shows genuine interest in individual students' performance and problems	0.671	
4. Faculties are easily accessible to students during class hours and after class hours.	0.635	
<b>Factor 10: Breadth</b>		4.395
1. The Faculties can contrast the implications of various theories	0.780	
2. The Faculties are highly knowledgeable to present the background or origin of ideas/concepts is developed.	0.783	
3. The Faculties are exploring the point in an appropriate manner	0.699	
4. The Faculties discussed the recent advancement in the field	0.586	
<b>Factor 11: Group Interaction</b>		4.267
1. Students are invited to participate in the class discussions	0.673	
2. Students are invited with ideas and knowledge in a group discussion	0.781	
3. Students are extremely encouraged to ask questions and to give meaningful answers to the questions.	0.672	
4. The students are motivated to express their views in the discussed areas.	0.629	
<b>Factor12: Enthusiasm</b>		3.787
1.The faculty members are more	0.773	



enthusiastic about teaching courses		
2. The faculty members are dynamic and energetic while conducting class	0.519	
3. The faculties make a compelling presentation with a sense of humor	0.533	
4. The presentation by the faculties attracts the students to listen for the presentation.	0.443	
<b>Total Model</b>		68.544

Factor analysis of the 59 items revealed a twelve-factor structure that explained a 68.54 percentage of the total variance. The criteria for holding on to the 12 factors were Eigen values greater than one and the ability to describe and label each factor. Individual items in the attributes of factors influencing service quality dimensions were retained for further analysis if they had factor loadings more than 0.50 and fell into one of the six interpretable factors. None of the items were removed from the attributes of factors on experience service quality dimensions because all the items were loaded onto an easily identifiable factor.

- Factor one was named assurance, and it consists of six items. It describes a 7.328 percentage of the variance in explaining the service quality dimensions.
- Factor two contained seven items and was termed as Tangibles. It explains that 7.231 percentage of the variance in explaining the service quality dimensions
- Factor three consisted of six items and was named reliability. It explains that 6.833 percentage of the variance in explaining the service quality dimensions.
- Factor four contained five items and was termed as responsiveness. It explains that 6.497 percentage of the variance in explaining the service quality dimensions.
- Factor five contained five items and was termed as Examinations & Assignments. It explains that 6.111 percentage of the variance in explaining the service quality dimensions.
- Factor six consisted of four items and was named learning. It explains that 5.877 percentage of the variance in explaining the service quality dimensions.
- Factor seven consisted of six items and was named empathy. It explains that 5.756 percentage of the variance in explaining the service quality dimensions.
- Factor eight contained four items and was termed as an organization. It explains that 5.352 percentage of the variance explaining the service quality dimensions.
- Factor nine consisted of four items and was named Individual Rapport. It explains that 5.111 percentage of the variance explaining the service quality dimensions.
- Factor ten consisted of four items and was named Breadth. It explains that 4.395 percentage of the variance explaining the service quality dimensions.

- Factor eleven consisted of four items and was named Group Interaction. It explains that 4.267 percentage of the variance explaining service quality dimensions.
- Factor twelve consisted of four items and was named Enthusiasm. It explains that 3.787 Percentage of the variance in explaining the service quality dimensions.

### *Reliability analysis of the instrument*

**TABLE 5** Reliability Coefficients For The Experience Service Quality Dimensions ( $\alpha$  VALUE)

S. No.	Dimensions	Alpha Value
1.	Reliability	0.887
2.	Responsiveness	0.892
3.	Assurance	0.897
4.	Empathy	0.864
5.	Tangibles	0.872
6.	Learning	0.921
7.	Enthusiasm	0.808
8.	Organization	0.851
9.	Group interaction	0.815
10.	Individual rapport	0.816
11	Breadth	0.818
12.	Examinations & assignments	0.865

Overall alpha value ( $\alpha$ ) =0.953

### *Experience service quality dimensions by location of the institutions*

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference across dimensions of Experience service quality by Location of the Institutions.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference across dimensions of Experience service quality by Location of the Institutions.

**TABLE 6** Analysis Of Significant Differences Across Various Dimensions Of Factors Influencing Experience Service Quality By Location Of The Institutions

SI. No.	Dimensions	Mean		SD		F Value	Significance
		Town	Rural	Town	Rural		
1.	Reliability	3.8747	3.8924	0.79868	0.93766	0.082	0.775
2.	Responsiveness	3.8255	3.9557	0.86770	0.96115	3.967	<b>0.047</b>
3.	Assurance	3.6844	3.9118	1.02779	0.88758	10.800	<b>0.001</b>

4.	Empathy	3.8357	4.0282	0.78969	0.71797	12.573	<b>0.000</b>
5.	Tangibles	3.9591	3.9565	0.62132	0.73295	0.003	0.956
6.	Learning	3.8416	3.7715	0.80819	1.05231	1.111	0.292
7.	Enthusiasm	3.9037	3.9861	0.76002	0.77827	2.244	0.135
8.	Organization	3.9486	3.9072	0.66153	0.76109	0.590	0.443
9.	Group interaction	4.0130	4.0360	0.66153	0.76109	0.205	0.651
10.	Individual rapport	3.7713	3.8414	0.75206	0.87159	1.463	0.227
11.	Breadth	3.9799	4.0139	0.67707	0.79308	0.418	0.518
12.	Examinations & assignments	3.9390	4.0510	0.69389	0.80640	4.366	<b>0.037</b>

Significance at 0.05 level

In order to find out the presence of significance among the location of the institute and various dimensions of experience service quality, the total mean scores for each dimension of factors influencing service quality were obtained by combining the actual scores obtained for each respondent for each statement in that attribute and averaging it.

- Table 4.12 represents that reliability was found to be 0.082, which reveals that the calculated value is not more than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As revealed in the table, responsiveness was 3.967, which reveals that the calculated value is greater than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.
- As stated in the table, assurance was 10.800, which reveals that the calculated value is greater than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.
- As exhibited in the table, empathy was 12.573, which reveals that the calculated value is greater than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.
- As depicted in the table, Tangibles was found to be 0.003, which reveals that the calculated value is below the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As revealed in the table, learning was found to be 1.111, which reveals that the calculated value is below the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As exhibited in the table, Enthusiasm was found to be 2.244, which reveals that the calculated value is not more than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As depicted in the table, the organization was 0.590, which reveals that the calculated value is less than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As disclosed in the table, the Group interaction was 0.205, which reveals that the calculated value is less than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.

- As illustrated in the table, the Individual rapport was 1.463, which reveals that the calculated value is less than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As shown in the table, Breadth was 0.418, which reveals that the calculated value is less than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As demonstrated in the table, Examinations & assignments were found to be 4.366, which reveal that the calculated value is higher than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.

This study corroborates that the F Value for analyzing the institute's location against the factors influencing experience service quality dimensions, namely Reliability, Tangibles, Learning, Enthusiasm, Organization, Group interaction, Individual rapport, Breadth, do not have a significant impact at 0.05 levels. However, the F value for analyzing the institute's location against factors affecting experience service quality Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, Examinations & assignments show significant effects at 0.05 levels.

#### *Expectation service quality dimensions by location of the institutions*

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference across dimensions of Expectation service quality by Location of the Institutions.

$H_1$ : There is a significant difference across dimensions of Expectation service quality by Location of the Institutions.

**TABLE 7** Analysis Of Significant Differences Across Various Dimensions Of Factors Influencing expectation Service Quality By Location Of The Institutions

SI. No.	Dimensions	Mean		SD		F Value	Significance
		Town	Rural	Town	Rural		
1.	Reliability	3.8341	4.0180	0.99101	0.90142	7.285	<b>0.007</b>
2.	Responsiveness	3.7811	4.0039	1.01291	0.95690	9.914	<b>0.002</b>
3.	Assurance	3.9180	3.9861	0.77368	0.84608	1.384	0.240
4.	Empathy	3.7924	3.8647	0.96709	1.01658	1.040	0.308
5.	Tangibles	3.9284	3.9070	0.80913	0.93369	0.118	0.731
6.	Learning	3.9108	4.0374	0.96573	0.84079	3.769	0.053
7.	Enthusiasm	3.9409	3.9661	0.80839	0.88881	0.172	0.678
8.	Organization	4.0089	3.9938	0.69512	0.81870	0.078	0.780
9.	Group interaction	3.9746	4.0623	0.86659	0.83744	2.059	0.152
10.	Individual rapport	3.6005	3.8518	1.10910	0.86854	12.168	<b>0.001</b>
11	Breadth	3.9125	4.0789	0.87082	0.82053	7.501	<b>0.006</b>

12.	Examinations & assignments	3.9816	4.1136	0.75410	0.82088	5.501	<b>0.019</b>
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Significance @ 0.05 levels

In order to find out the presence of significance among the location of the institute and various dimensions of expectation service quality, the total mean scores for each dimension of factors influencing service quality were obtained by combining the actual scores obtained for each respondent for each statement in that attribute and averaging it.

- Table 7 represents that reliability was 7.285, which reveals that the calculated value is greater than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.
- As revealed in the table, responsiveness was 9.914, which reveals that the calculated value is greater than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.
- As stated in the table, assurance was found to be 1.384, which reveals that the calculated value is not more than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As exhibited in the table, empathy was found to be 1.040, which reveals that the calculated value is below the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As depicted in the table, Tangibles was 0.118, which reveals that the calculated value is less than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As revealed in the table, learning was 3.769, which reveals that the calculated value is less than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As exhibited in the table, Enthusiasm was 0.172, which reveals that the calculated value is less than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As depicted in the table, the organization was found to be 0.078, which reveals that the calculated value is fewer than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As disclosed in the table, Group interaction was found to be 2.059, which reveals that the calculated value is not more than the table value; therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted.
- As illustrated in the table, Individual rapport was 12.168, which reveals that the calculated value is greater than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.
- As shown in the table, Breadth was 7.501, which reveals that the calculated value is greater than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.
- As demonstrated in the table, Examinations & assignments were found to be 5.501, which reveals that the estimated value is greater than the table value. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.

This study corroborates that the F Value for analyzing the institute's location against the factors influencing Expectation service quality dimensions, namely Tangibles, Assurance, Empathy, Learning, Enthusiasm, Organization, Group interaction, does not have a significant impact at 0.05 levels. However, the F value for analyzing the institute's location against factors affecting Expectation

service quality Reliability, Responsiveness, Individual rapport, Breadth, Examinations & assignments show significant effects at 0.05 levels.

### **FINDINGS**

The location of the institution does not influence the reliability factor. Because whether the institution is in rural or town, reliability depends on the practices carried out by the institution transparently without hiding any information from the students. The study reveals that rural institutions are more responsive to students than institutions in the town. Even though they are in the rural area, the management is ready to make any improvements based on the student's feedback, and the institution is also up to date with the resources. The institutions located in the rural area are friendlier to the students than institutions in the town. This institution assures quality education, quality faculty community, and quality placements to the students. A rural institution plays a vital role in producing graduates with values. Individual attention is given more importance in rural institutions. They developed an effective communication system that ensures communicating relevant information to all the stakeholders. Whether the institutions are located in rural or town, an infrastructure facility should meet the government bodies' standard norms. They should have introductory amenities lab and equipment as per the norms. The institutions should follow the standard curriculum developed by the respective universities since it does not influence the learning process. Application of Information, Communication Technology (ICT) in the classroom helps the teaching and learning process enjoyable. Both rural and town institutions quickly adopt these applications. So, location is not affecting the enthusiasm factor.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

- Professional Higher Education cost is on the rising side. However, the quality of education is in the downturn. The quality of education should be improved, and the cost in private institutions to be controlled. Government Engineering College fees are comparatively low; it can be advised to increase the fees. Moreover, the quality of education in government colleges is to be improved.
- Faculty members of the Engineering and Medical colleges' knowledge are periodically evaluated through standard measurements. Furthermore, based on the performance, the remuneration is to be fixed.
- Project and Internship should be assigned and approved based on a real-time basis. The project should be completed within the minimum duration of three months to six months.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that there is a difference in service quality among rural and urban students. The influence of the educational institution's location plays a predominant role in determining service quality among professional students. So,

the students will prefer professional higher educational institutions based on their location to avail the expected service quality.

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