

Research Article

The Students' Satisfaction in Higher Education and its Important Factors: A Comparative Study between Punjab and AJ&K, Pakistan

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Abstract: This study comprises students' satisfaction in the higher education-a comparative study between Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan. The comparison is made eight aspects of facilities provided by universities and concepts were used to examine differences in the satisfaction level of students about these facilities and the main factor affecting that perception, between students in the Punjab and the AJ&K universities. Seven out of fourteen general universities were used, in which five out of ten from Punjab and two out of four from AJ&K were asked about their satisfaction with respect to various facilities. It is found that universities of Punjab region excel from the universities of AJ&K region in all aspects of study.

Keywords: AJ&K, higher education, Pakistan, Punjab, students satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The nation is furnished for the industry, Commerce, Science, Art and every other disciplines of life in university which is the highest institution of learning. This institution carries an enormous responsibility on its shoulders that can only be delivered by fostering and cultivating young men with the best of the available human, material and time resources. So satisfaction of students with university is very important.

Evaluation taking place in universities are of various kinds. One of the most commonly used procedures is to obtain perception of students of their study program, facilities and their satisfaction with universities. The quality of university can be evaluated by reputation, faculty research and students experiences. The satisfaction of students is divided again into four categories that are program effectiveness, program characteristics, students' satisfaction and their outcomes. Satisfaction of students is focused in our study.

The satisfaction survey provides real image, perceived by the students, to the universities and colleges about their services and programs. Satisfaction levels provide a more obvious picture of facilities and university environment provided to students and university environment. So the satisfaction of students

with their educational experience is an important tool to assess the quality of teaching and institutional effectiveness.

Satisfaction levels of students contribute to quality of services and effectiveness of these services to administration of universities. There has always been a reason of paying attention to quality of educational environment, so that educational institution enables them to provide quality education to students as one of their basic purpose. Fast economic and technological changes mean that educational institutions need to change their program, structure and process according to need of students. In literature, it is suggested that students' satisfaction with educational experience is an important tool to assess the institutional effectiveness and quality of teaching and services. Student evaluations help the institutions to provide quality teaching and these evaluations are direct measures of students' satisfaction with overall university experience.

In increasing competition of providing quality higher education in universities, there is a need to identify the factors that affect the satisfaction of students in universities. Satisfaction of students is very important because satisfaction is related with students' performance and it enhances the factors that play important role in quality education. Higher education has significant role in supporting macroeconomic

growth and effect on the economy of country. The purpose of higher education in universities is to educate the young people for developing societies and country. Young people are able to achieve their goals and contribute in the development of country through higher education, so quality of education is necessary for any country. In literature, it has been observed that satisfaction of students with the university increases with the increase of interaction between the students and faculty. Educational experience of students and teaching are directly related. There have been a lot of studies on student-faculty interaction. These studies confirm that student-faculty interaction positively affect the students' satisfaction. In these studies it is recommended that faculty plays a major role in satisfaction of students. The students are almost satisfied with overall university experience if they are satisfied with faculty. Therefore the objective of this study is to assess the level of students' satisfaction to different services provided by the universities in Punjab as well as in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted for measuring the satisfaction of students at higher level in developed as well as in developing parts of the world. Various factors have been identified that can possibly affect the satisfaction of students towards the education services provided by higher education institutes. Faculty monitoring programs to be positively correlated with academic performance and lower dropout rates (Campbell and Campbell, 1997). The student's satisfaction had a strong relation with the faculty especially with the first year of student life (Lee *et al.*, 1997). Financial aid, academics, resources and experience of university are the factors that affect students' satisfaction (Patitu, 1998).

Williams (2002) conducted a study on students' satisfaction in central university of England, concluded that there were clear problems with resources that produce dissatisfaction among the students. The study also concluded that the faculty of the university is an important factor that affects the satisfaction of students.

The faculty performance and classes were the important factors which determine the satisfaction of the students with education and their attachment to the institution (Desheids Jr *et al.*, 2005). Sapri *et al.* (2009) conducted a study to examine the factors that affect the satisfaction level of the students regarding the higher educational facilities service. The study included the accommodation and social facilities, supports service facilities, teaching and learning facilities and service environmental factors. That results of the study concluded that the factors concerning teaching-learning were most significant factors that affect level of the students' satisfaction. Butt and Rehman (2010) conducted a study to examine the satisfaction of the

students regarding the higher education in Pakistan. The results of the study show that teachers' proficiency is the most influential factor among all the variables.

Mai (2010) conducted a comparative study on student satisfaction in higher education and its influential factors between UK and US. The results indicate that there are significant differences between British and American education perceived by students, also found that the 'overall impression of the school' and 'overall impression of the quality of education' are two significant predictors for the 'overall satisfaction of the education', more than other more specific service dimensions. These two variables are most influential in predicting students' satisfaction although one is always reminded not to assume a causal relationship when discussing correlation.

METHODOLOGY

On the basis of above referred literature this study has identified some important educational services like teachers' expertise, transport facility, library facility, exam system, learning environment, hostel facility and medical facility which can affect the student satisfaction with the quality of education offered by Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The sample is selected by using Cochran (1977) method of sample selection, optimum sample size of 150 from each selected university, including 50 of each subject. We distributed 165 questionnaires, 55 for each subject in all universities to get optimum sample size. The total sample size is finally considered as 1050 out of 1155 distributed questionnaires. The remaining 105 questionnaires are missing or of highly irrelevant responses.

A simple random sample of 5 out of 10 and 2 out of 4 general universities of Punjab and AJ&K selected, respectively. Selected universities: PU, UOG, BZU, IUB, AAUR, AJKU and MUST.

A questionnaire used to collect the information from the respondents by using a 5-point Likert scale, factor analysis techniques of data reduction and selection of final questionnaire and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for reliability of data is used before final data analysis. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients is greater than 0.70 in all sections, which considered to be relatively high and internally consistent (Hair *et al.*, 1998).

For statistical analysis, the descriptive characteristics (mean, standard deviation and graphs) and non-parametric test (Mann Whitney and Kruskal Wallis test) applied to check the significant differences by using SPSS 16.0.

From the Fig. 1, it is shown that the satisfaction of students with transport, hostel and medical facilities in PU Lahore, BZU Multan and IUB Bahawalpur is

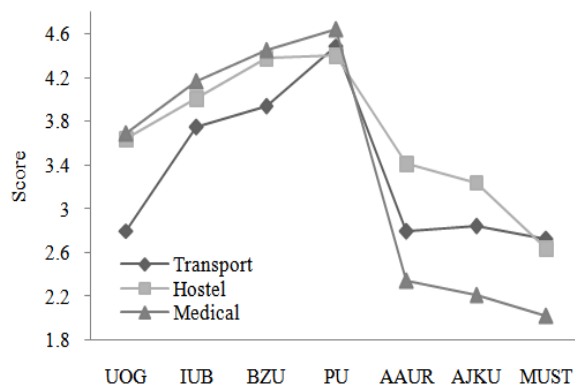


Fig. 1: Non academic facilities

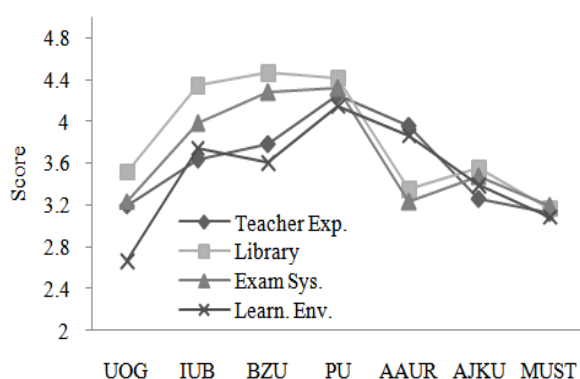


Fig. 2: Natural sciences

higher than that of the students of other universities, whereas the medical facility in UOG is not good than the other facilities.

From Fig. 2 to 4, it is clear those students of natural, social and bio sciences of all the universities in

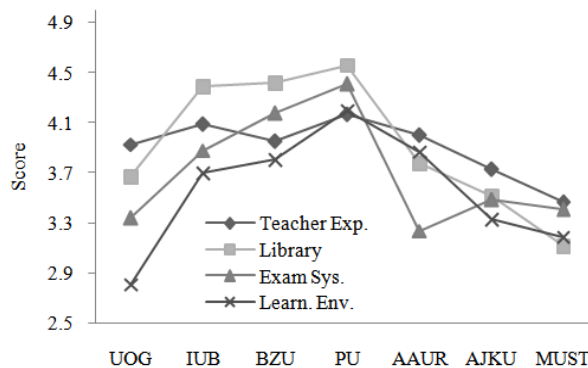


Fig. 3: Social sciences

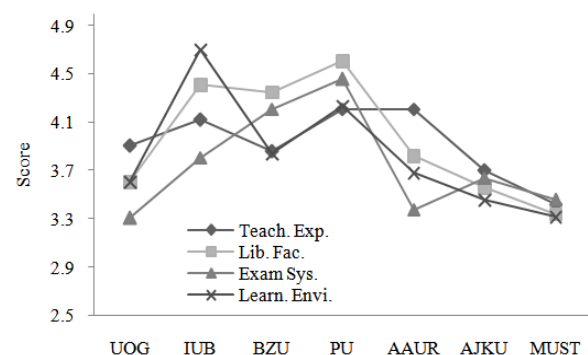


Fig. 4: Bio sciences

both regions are satisfied but satisfaction level of students in the PU Lahore, BZU Multan and in IUB Bahawalpur are higher than other universities, whereas less satisfaction about learning environment in UOG.

From the Table 1, it is clear that all non-academic facilities are statistically significantly different in all

Table 1: Universities wise comparison by Kruskal Wallis test

Facilities	Natural sciences		Social sciences		Bio sciences	
	χ^2	p-value	χ^2	p-value	χ^2	p-value
Teacher expertise	26.612	0.011	4.691	0.164	5.5730	0.067
Library facility	113.895	0.000	106.050	0.000	88.360	0.000
Exam system	7.902	0.081	8.091	0.084	7.234	0.087
Learning environment	98.590	0.000	82.670	0.000	64.370	0.000
Non academic	χ^2		p-value			
Transport facility	66.428		0.000			
Hostel facility	52.044		0.000			
Medical facility	60.644		0.000			

Table 2: Area wise comparison by Mann Whitney test

Facility	Natural sciences		Social sciences		Bio sciences	
	Z	p-value	Z	p-value	Z	p-value
Teacher expertise	32.870	0.000	7.980	0.063	5.97	0.074
Library facility	29.150	0.000	46.080	0.000	52.47	0.000
Exam system	11.170	0.071	9.034	0.067	4.67	0.086
Learning environment	10.020	0.082	7.710	0.096	59.34	0.000
Non academics	Z		p-value			
Transport facility	84.031		0.000			
Hostel facility	96.642		0.000			
Medical facility	72.364		0.000			

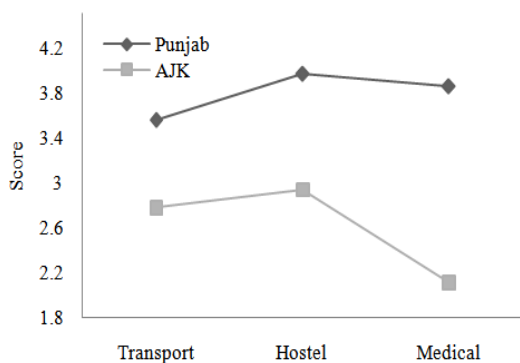


Fig. 5: Non academic

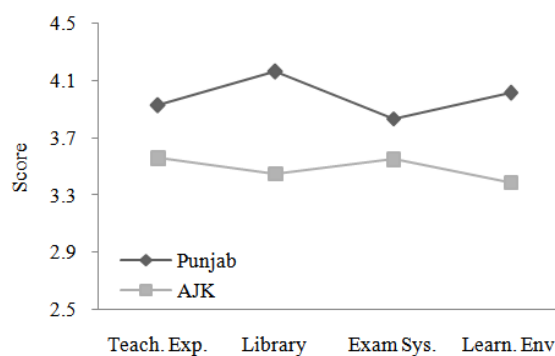


Fig. 8: Bio sciences

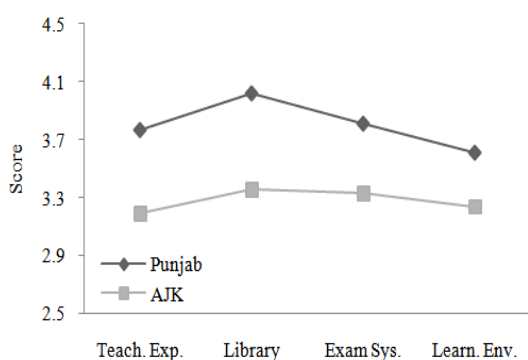


Fig. 6: Natural sciences

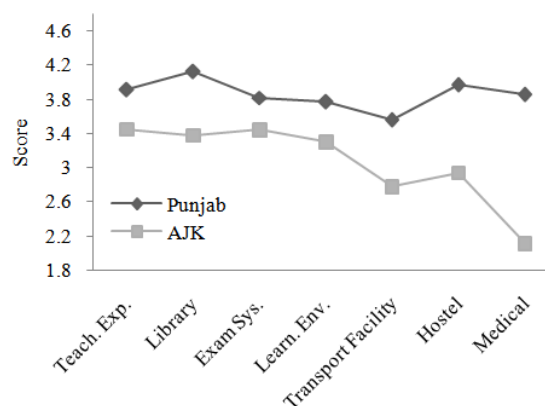


Fig. 9: Overall

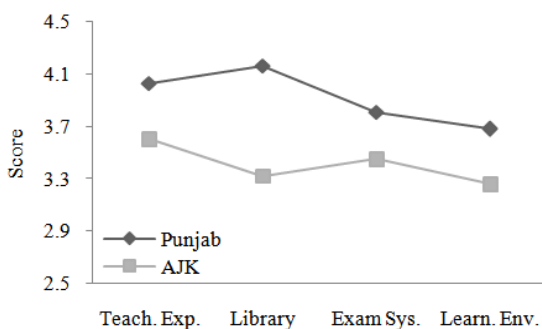


Fig. 7: Social sciences

universities, where as in natural sciences examination system is non-significant and all other are significant. In social sciences, teachers' expertise and Examination system are non-significant and all other facilities are significant. In bio sciences only examination system is non-significant, all other facilities are significant.

In the Table 2, it is clear that non-academic facilities are not same in both the areas of interest, as the p-values in all non-academic facilities is less than 0.05. It is also shown that examination system in both the areas for all three faculties is similar. Teachers' expertise is similar in both areas according to the students of social and bio sciences, but it is different according to the students of natural sciences. Library

facility is significantly different in both the areas of interest for all three faculties. Learning environment in both areas with respect to natural sciences and social sciences is same but different according to the students of bio sciences.

Figure 5 shows that students of universities in AJ&K are not satisfied with non-academic facilities (Transport facility, Hostel facility and Medical facility) while the students of the universities in Punjab are satisfied with these non-academic facilities.

From the Fig. 6, it is shown that students of natural sciences of universities in AJ&K are not satisfied with academic facilities while the students of the universities in Punjab are satisfied with these academic facilities.

Figure 7 shows that students of social sciences of universities in AJ&K are not much satisfied with library facility and learning environment but they are satisfied with teachers' expertise and examination system, while the students of the universities in Punjab are satisfied with all the academic facilities. Hence we conclude that library facility and learning environment are significantly different in both the areas of interest.

Figure 8 shows that students of bio sciences of universities in AJ&K are not much satisfied with library facility and learning environment but they are satisfied with teachers' expertise and examination system, while the students of the universities in Punjab are satisfied

with all the academic facilities. Hence we conclude that library facility and learning environment are significantly different in both the areas of interest.

Figure 9 shows that students of universities in AJ &K are not satisfied with library facility, transport facility, hostel facility and medical facility, but only satisfied with teachers' expertise and examination system while the students of the universities in Punjab are satisfied with all academic and non-academic facilities. Hence it is concluded that except the teachers' expertise and exam system, all the facilities are significantly different in both the areas.

CONCLUSION

From the obtained results, it is shown that as a whole, students studying in the universities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir are not satisfied with both academic and non-academic facilities as compared to the students in different universities of Punjab. Comparison between two areas has also been made for the faculties of Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Bio sciences in such a way that teachers' expertise in the faculty of natural sciences are significant in both areas but teachers expertise in the faculty of social sciences as well as bio sciences are non-significant. Library facility is one that is significant for both areas in the faculties of natural sciences, social sciences and bio sciences. Examination system is non-significant for both areas in all the three faculties. Learning environment is non-significant for both areas in the faculties of Natural and social sciences, but it is significant the faculty of bio sciences.

University wise comparison: It was clearly observed that satisfaction level of students in the universities: PU, BZU and IUB are higher than the satisfaction level of students in other universities.

Non-academic facilities:

- Satisfaction of students about transport facility is similar and high in IUB, BZU and PU, whereas low and similar in UOG, AAUR, AJKU and MUST.
- Satisfaction of students about medical facility is also high in UOG, IUB, BZU and PU, whereas low and similar in AAUR, AJKU and MUST.

Facilities of natural sciences:

- According to respondents, Examination system is same in all universities.
- Satisfaction of students about teachers' expertise, library facility and learning environment is different in all these but higher in IUB, BZU and PU.

Facilities of social sciences:

- Students' satisfaction level is same about teachers' expertise and examination system in all universities.
- Satisfaction of students about library facility and learning environment is not same in all universities.

Facilities of bio sciences:

- Students' satisfaction is same about teachers' expertise and examination system in all universities.
- Library facility and learning environment is not same in all universities.

Although the students of AAUR and UOG are less satisfied than that of other universities of Punjab and have similar results with AJKU and MUST about most of facilities but as a whole, we observed that in general, facilities provided in universities of Punjab are better than that in the universities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on the importance of the higher education and factors affecting higher education in Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Due to limited resources and cost of survey, we have considered only two regions, further study could be made and that may include more regions or more number of factors.

From these results, it is concluded that if the administration of the universities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir will more focus on the above said factors, then students may satisfied with these facilities and universities are able to provide best quality of higher education to students.

Also there is high demand about hostel facilities, medical facilities and transport facilities as well as teacher expertise, library facilities and learning environment.

ABBREVIATIONS

PU	: Punjab University, Lahore
IUB	: Islamia University, Bahawalpur
AAUR	: Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi
UE	: University of Education, Lahore
UAF	: University of Faisalabad
GCU	: Govt. College University, Faisalabad
GCU	: Govt. College University, Lahore
BZU	: Bahauddin Zakriya University, Multan
UOG	: University of Gujrat
UOS	: University of Sargodha

Public universities in AJ&K:

- AJKU : Azad Jammu and Kashmir University, Muzaffarabad
UPR : University of Poonch, Rawalakot
MUST : Mirpur University of Science and Technology, Mirpur
WUAJ&K : Women University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Bagh

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