

# Educational services an overview

[Education](#)



Development of an Instrument to Assess Student Perceptions of the Quality of Tertiary Education in INDIAN Context Suparswa Chakraborty Educational services can be categorized into five parts: (a) primary education services; (b) secondary education services; (c) higher education services (i. e. , education beyond secondary education includes all tertiary education); (d) adult education; and (e) other education services (e. g. , liberal arts, business, professional).

Such education and training encompass degree courses taken for college or university credits or non-degree courses taken for personal edification or pleasure or to upgrade work-related skills. Such education and training services can be provided in traditional institutional settings, such as universities or schools and in specialized institutions. Higher (tertiary) education, adult education, and training services are expanding rapidly.

These services include academic and training courses on information technology; languages; executive, management and leadership training and hotel and tourism education. They also include educational testing services and corporate training services. Many of these are practical courses for use on the job. Some can be used as credits toward degrees; and some are non-degree courses. Increasingly, educational institutions and publishers are teaming up with information technology companies and other experts to design courses of instruction on a variety of subjects.

Large companies also are developing education and training courses to improve the skills of their employees and to keep them up to date on their

latest products. Such services constitute a growing, international business, supplementing the public education system and contributing to global spread of the modern “ knowledge” economy. Availability of these education and training services can help to develop a more efficient workforce, leading countries to an improved competitive position in the world economy.

Education is at present one of the least committed of services sectors, due to recognition of its “ public good” element and the high degree of government involvement in its provision. The benefits associated with liberalising education services and facilitating greater and stronger public and private education services can co-existing which would benefit students and education service providers would get improved in the following manner:

Facilitating access to education and training courses that in qualitative and quantitative terms which are not otherwise available in the public sector; and

- Providing a competitive stimulus to institutions with flow-on benefits to all students.
- The education services negotiations should aim to give consumers (students) access to the best education services wherever they are provided and through whatever mode of supply they are provided.

Ensuring measures that consumers (learners) are not damaged by services of low quality, and a safety-net in such areas.

There are cases, for example, where the quality of a service supplied by a “ university” in one state is not necessarily of the same level as that supplied by a university of another state, due to the difference in higher education system of the two states. It has also emerged that the quality of education services fails to be correctly judged, in cases where the service is supplied by a “ degree mill” of one university by means of Distance-Learning. It is

<https://assignbuster.com/educational-services-an-overview/>

difficult to arrive at a universally acceptable articulation of what quality in education means.

At the same time, such articulation is critical since it plays an important role in shaping the practice of education. It has often been possible to bring about such quality in education at a small scale with intensive utilization of resources. However, the provision/distribution of quality education by a large-scale system is a daunting challenge. 'Quality' as a term refers to 'how well' certain objects and processes achieve their given aims. It is validating as well as comparative. Its most immediate connotation is 'better'. 'Better' as differentiated from 'good', and implying the existence of at least two objects or processes, between which a comparison across a decided set of parameters can be established. Understanding quality in education requires an appreciation of the aims of education; the social and philosophical roots of these aims as well as determining the nature of the organisation and system that is best oriented to achieve them. Educational quality concerns typically encompass topics such as teacher training, textbooks and materials, evaluation and physical infrastructure especially institution buildings.

However the quality of these processes/topics can only be understood with reference to the objective of the education system of which they are but a part. Educational objectives in turn are influenced by societal notions of a child, human learning and schooling. The most common worldly application of the term and concept of quality is in the context of products and services. To define quality in the field of education, it may be instructive to examine the more widely practiced usage of quality, and explore its appropriateness or applicability for education.

<https://assignbuster.com/educational-services-an-overview/>

Quality: A Conceptual Exploration Owlia and Aspinwall (1996) interpreted the quality for higher education in terms of the quality dimension by using Garvin's quality framework (Garvin, 1987), service quality dimension (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; 1988), and software quality dimension (Watts, 1987). However, the dimension identification frameworks focuses mainly on defining the quality aspect of the product features (Garvin, 1987) and service features (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; 1988).

We adopted a more comprehensive approach to classify the quality attributes of education. The framework we proposed is derived from West, Noden and Gosling (2000)'s viewpoint of quality in higher education. We called it the Input-Process-Output (IPO) framework in which 'Input' refers to the entry requirements, 'Process' refers to the teaching and learning process, and 'Output' refers to the employability and academic standings (as shown in Figure 1 below).

This classification of quality attributes is in accordance with the organization's operation system of converting the inputs (e. g. raw materials) into outputs (e. g. products and services) via the process (e. g. procedures). In this way, one can associate the quality improvements with the operating system of any organization, including those from the education sector. Some of the quality dimensions identified in Owlia and Aspinwall's (1996) study are partially covered in the IPO framework.

Current understanding and interpretations of the word 'quality' owe much to their roots in the evaluation of manufactured products. Pioneering

management techniques and concepts related to quality and quality management have become common place, and many applications to the field of education can be sought while cautiously keeping in mind the large differences between the commercial world and education. In fact, quality in education has increasingly been understood through the framework of users and in terms of its value formoney.

To the extent that the service of education and the provision of commercial services are similar, that is both have 'end-users' and an expectation of 'value-for-money', parallels are feasible. However, such parallels often regard the provision of education as similar to a marketable service such as getting a haircut. In such cases, (as the market understands it), the individual seeking the service is generally aware of the outcome that the service will provide her with—a haircut usually results in kempt hair for instance. In other words, the user has the means to evaluate the quality of the service.

In the case of education, except for very specific skill-oriented training that has readily identifiable outcomes in the short term, it is not very easy to determine what the rather long term process of 'being educated' will lead to. This is largely because the 'aims' of education that is the pressing reasons for educating members of a population in any society or country, emanate from the need to create a social and intellectual environment as members of which individuals will be capable of making and acting on rational decisions concerning themselves and their society rather than building people with a specific set of skills.

Most users—parents or children—in the case of education, do not have the means in terms of either understanding and/or experience to evaluate quality—whether the child is receiving an education (given the stated aims or those which a parent understands), except in very rudimentary ways—and how it could be better (i. e. through comparing it to some sort of ideal). In other words, the information asymmetry between the service provider and the user, especially poor users, is an important characteristic of education that must be taken into explicit account.

In addition to the lack of a shared understanding of quality between consumers and providers, the field of education is also characterized by the absence of a consensus on the notion of quality. For instance, most consumers and the providers of a service, for example telephones, not only agree on what is meant broadly by 'high quality' in their domain, but, until new technological innovation comes about, this notion remains largely constant.

On the other hand, education like many other systems or endeavours (such as good health, reform or democracy) has a continuously evolving discourse as well as vibrant debates on what constitutes quality, how can it be achieved and provided in the most optimal way to a large number of children<sup>14</sup>, making it difficult for such a constant notion to exist.

Additionally, inherent in the concept of a desirable social and intellectual environment (to be evolved through educating the population), are ideas concerning values which individuals should possess as this is in the interests of society, even though all individuals themselves may not want to imbibe

these (take for example, religious or racist tolerance, or fairness in the face of 'self-interest'). Many such values would not be pertinent as an outcome, were the individual's education being carried out from a purely market oriented (i. e. employability) perspective, but they are the founding principles of systems of governance such as democracy. This further jeopardizes the application of market or management-derived concepts of quality to education, since the good/commodity being examined for quality, i. e. education, contains many features not demanded explicitly and in some cases actually even shunned by its customers. Therefore, 'quality' as applied to the provision of commercial services or products cannot be directly applied to the provision of education due to the nature of education, and the inherent 'aims' in its provision.

A Framework for Quality in Education As discussed above, the notion of quality in education is not one, which can be simply transcribed from the predominant concept of quality that has evolved from the commercial world. It needs to be unique to the field of education and based on a deeply contextual, need-based view incorporating pedagogic principles and educational aims rather than a fixed prescription or set of guidelines.

A viable framework for quality in education could be envisaged as consisting of the following main components: Aims of education, curriculum, pedagogy and material, school organization and relationships, evaluation and assessment, and the nature of provision. The relationship between the design and constitution of these various components would have to be carefully conceptualized to ensure coherence in the experience of education



by children. For instance, design of a curricular document needs to be based on the aims of education and epistemological concerns.

Similarly, assessment needs to be understood as a means to strengthen and constantly improve children's education in the context of the stated curricular objectives through appropriate pedagogic practice, rather than as a tool for classifying children as 'failed' or 'passed' and thus deciding whether their education will continue. Each of these aspects of education and its quality are discussed in more detail in the following sections. Aims of Education The 'aims of education' refer to a broad set of principles that provide direction to the practice of education.

They play an important role in determining the institutions, curriculum, and pedagogy and assessment system for providing education. What aims are worth pursuing in education is therefore an important question and the answer is often complex, especially in the context of a diverse socio-cultural milieu. In general, the aim of education could be articulated as building capabilities and instilling values in individuals considered necessary for leading personally and socially fulfilling lives.

The form and nature of education in any society is deeply influenced by the notion of a human being predominant in that society, and is closely linked to the understanding of what is 'good' for people which in turn is based on views regarding human nature, needs and potential. It is therefore not surprising and somewhat inevitable that different societies, and even different groups of people in the same society, propound different notions of education making it a contested concept.

Other concepts that influence the process of formulating the aims of education include the understanding of human learning and the notion of a child in society. In education, learning is understood as ' . . . having acquired ability to do something on the basis of experience and effecting a change in the learners' understanding' and while learning, thus defined, is an inevitable outcome of living for most, ensuring that the aims of education become part of learning requires active teaching.

What these aims actually comprise of, and more importantly translate into through the working of a system of education depends on the nature of governance in a specific nation. For example, France and Prussia historically implemented education systems designed by the elite aimed at developing their respective countries into industrial powers. Given that India is a democracy, the educational aims in the country implicitly imbibe the special characteristics of such a governance system.

These include equal participation of all members, an interest in social relations and their control, the potential to make amendments without disorder, and institutions that are flexible to readjustment. As Dewey explains, even a superficial examination of a democratic government's (such as India's) interest in the education of its citizens yields that since a democracy dismisses the idea of external authority, education is a must to ensure that popular suffrage leads to an appropriately chosen government.

Further, the author suggests that since democracy represents almost a way of life (since it requires understanding the effect of one's action on others and thereby communicating and accommodating continuously on an

individual, societal or communal level) rather than just a governance system, it is only through education that these capacities can be built and such behavior brought about.

Further, given that education has been discerned as a means towards progress for not only social and economic prosperity but also for facilitating equitable access to commonly provided, individually appropriated experience, it is important that the distribution of education should be characterized by the ideal of equality of educational opportunity. This is particularly in the case of India where the social order represents pervasive inequalities of wealth and opportunity, and can often lead to social position in terms of wealth and opportunity being correlated with future access to, and experience of, education.

This is where the public system of education provided by the state assumes importance as the large majority of India's poor can afford to access education only through the government system since it is free, and this is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is important to realize that in the context of India, the state has an active interest in shaping each citizen—indeed, the idea or concept of 'state' itself virtually depends for its existence on education, since it is only education that can effectively transmit the ideal of a democratic state to the next generation, thereby ensuring its perpetual continuity.

Following the 86th Constitutional amendment, free and compulsory education in the age group of 6 to 14 is now a fundamental right in India under Article 21 (A). Thus, the aims of a system of education reflect the

underlying values on which it is built, which in turn are contextual to human society, with individuals viewed both as atomistic constituents of that society as well as a collective. In practice, the aims of education are often stated in somewhat indeterminate terms. For instance, an oft-stated aim is 'the all round development of children'.

This statement clearly requires clarification if it is to provide any direction for the content or the process of education. There is a need to specify what defines such all round development and once a list is drawn it has to be determined whether to include all or select on the basis of relative importance. On the other hand, examples of very specific aims include the focus on producing skilled labour for the economy. While such an aim certainly provides some direction to the educational context, it is too narrow and can impede excellence in other worthwhile aspects of life.

Formulating aims that refer to general abilities such as rationality, critical thinking, creativity and others as an end, do avoid being too narrow on the one hand, but are also relatively more specifically definable on the other; and therefore, may work better for school systems. By virtue of being better-definable they help educators translate educational aims into classroom processes. For instance, teaching the concept of numbers and other mathematical operations maybe one of the accepted means of inducing rational thinking in a child, and therefore worthy of inclusion in the curriculum.

Further, it is important to ensure that the content and process of teaching mathematics to children actually does translate into rational thinking

and does not get restricted to the narrow objective of passing examinations. Other common classroom processes prevalent in many schools include repetition of words and poems after the teacher without adequate comprehension and copying. A picture (such as a flower) drawn on the blackboard without error. It is questionable whether such practices provide meaningful stimulation for expression or creativity.

Meaningful decisions about content and method in education require consciousness of the aims of education as articulated by an education system. The above illustrations are indicative of the absence of such an awareness governing the practice of teaching. In order to ensure that classroom strategies actually emerge from the professed aims of education it is important to include teachers in the discourse on the aims of education and not restrict this dialogue to a few educationists.

The agreed-upon aims of education should broadly constitute a 'philosophically and historically informed set' whose rationale is 'fully stated, public, and revisable'. Indian scenarios The professional education sector in INDIA comprises various types of providers. The largest group is made up of Universities and Affiliated colleges, which are large institutions offering a broad range of vocational and academic subjects at various levels, and are attended by both young people (17-28 year olds) and adults.

Deemed Institutions and Autonomous colleges are another substantial group and have traditionally catered for 17-15 year olds taking Advanced level courses. More recently, however, they have broadened both their course offering and their student profile. Specialist Colleges concentrate on specific

areas of the curriculum such as management , engineering and professional or land based subjects. They often have well developed links with employers and industry because of the specialist nature of the subjects taught.

Finally, Specialist Designated institutions cater mainly for adults, as do External Institutions. The latter, however, also cater to the needs of educationally disadvantaged students through Distance Learning Mode. The purpose of this study is to explore the professional education classroom and its effects on student persistence and satisfaction. In order to face the challenges of student retention, the classroom must be explored to determine how these experiences affect the student attrition process.

The classroom is a part of the curricular structure that links different disciplines around a common theme. Understanding the elements of the classroom experience will provide students, faculty, staff, and administrators with a vital sense of shared inquiry. The classroom experience must be designed to provide positive experiences through the adoption of various learning strategies. The article seeks to ascertain to what degree the classroom experience enhances student learning and persistence and, if so, how it does so.

Beyond its obvious policy implications, the study purports to provide the context for a series of reflections on the ways in which current theories of student persistence might be modified to account more directly for the role of classroom experience in the process of both student learning and persistence. The study identifies variables associated with student integration or lack thereof, into the educational environment and whether or

not these variables have an effect on student persistence. Lastly, the study purports to provide the aspects of student satisfaction and student perceptions of their learning experiences.

**The Problem** As a result of low retention rates, administrators are seeking strategies to create a positive atmosphere that is supportive in meeting student needs in order to ensure student persistence. There is a critical linkage that exists between student involvement in classrooms, student learning, and student persistence. Research studies have identified factors that contribute to and influence student decisions to persist, or leave college before accomplishing their intended educational goals (Astin, 1987, 1993; Bean, 1983; Braxton, 1995, Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993).

In particular, Tinto's attrition model (1975, 1987, & 1993) is among those strategies that have been used in an attempt to describe and categorize the student attrition process. Although persistence in college is important, students' overall satisfaction with their educational experiences and their interactions on the college campus are the most important factors (Tinto, 1993). Collectively, the educational environment and organizational culture is important in determining student satisfaction and their motivation to persist.

#### Statement of the Problem

Research studies in the past have analyzed student retention, particularly among traditional university student populations (Anderson, 2001; Astin, 1993; Braxton, 2000; Cope & Hannah, 1975; NCES, 1997, 1998, 1999; Noel et. al. , 1985; Tinto, 1975, 1987, & 1993). As McLeod and Young (2005) have

proposed, it is necessary to investigate the factors that influence a student's decision to remain or not to remain enrolled at a minority institution. The most important factor in predicting a student's eventual departure from college is absence of sufficient contact with others (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979).

Ostrow, Paul, Dark, and Berhman (1986) found that supportive relationships enable students to better cope with the demands of the college environment. Few studies exist which focus on the higher education classroom and the manner in which it can effects student persistence and satisfaction of students enrolled on traditional university campuses. Evident in previous studies is the recognition that institutional variables do influence a student's decision to persist in attaining their educational goals. There is a critical linkage that exists between student involvement in classrooms, student learning, and student persistence.

The classroom plays an important role in the student learning and persistence process. According to McKeachie (1970, 1994) and Smith (1980, 1983), it is evident that multiple relationships exist between teacher behaviors and student participation in classroom discussions and learning. Student participation in the higher education classroom is relatively passive (Smith, 1983; Karp & Yoels, 1976; Nunn, 1996), and lecturing is dominant (Fischer & Grant, 1983). The author Nunn (1996) found that classroom traits, specifically a supportive atmosphere, are as important to student participation as are student and faculty traits.



The recognition of the importance of classroom environment is part of another area of inquiry, namely the role of classroom context, its educational activities and normative orientations, in student learning. Instead of focusing on the behaviors of faculty, a number of researchers have focused on the role of pedagogy (Karplus, 1974; Lawson & Snitgen, 1982; McMillan, 1987) and, in turn, curriculum (Dressel & Mayhew, 1954; Forrest, 1982) and classroom activities (Volkwein, King, & Terenzini, 1986) as predictors of student learning.

Generally speaking, these have led to a growing recognition that student learning is enhanced when students are actively involved in learning and when they are placed in situations in which they have to share learning in some positive, connected manner (Astin, 1987). As numerous researchers have suggested (Astin, 1984; Mallette & Cabrera, 1991; Nora, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1977), the greater students are academically integrated in the life of the institution, the greater the likelihood that they will persist.

Students who feel they do not fit academically in the environment of the institution possess lower levels of satisfaction than those who feel they belong (Bean & Bradley, 1986; Pervin & Rubin, 1967). Astin (1993), Friedlander (1980), Parker and Schmidt (1982), Ory and Braskamp (1988), and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), all suggested that student involvement in the classroom influences learning.

When students are actively involved in the life of the college, especially academically, they will possess greater acquisitions of knowledge and skill

development. Juillerat (1995) determined students who participate actively in their learning experience possess higher satisfaction rates than less involved students. According to Endo and Harpel (1982) and Astin (1993) student and faculty engagement, both inside and outside the classroom, are important to the student development process.

Endo and Harpel (1982) suggested further those students who persisted which were reported to have had higher levels of contact with peers and faculty and also demonstrated higher levels of learning gain over the course of their stay in college. High levels of involvement prove to be an independent predictor of learning. The more time students invest in their own learning, the higher their level of effort, the more students learn.

Braxton, Milem, and Sullivan (2000) wrote that research studies left social integration unexplained.

Institutional type (Chapman & Pascarella, 1983), organizational attributes (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Braxton & Brier, 1989), motivations for attending college (Stage, 1989), financial aid (Cabrera, Nora, & Castaneda, 1992), fulfillment of expectations for college (Braxton, Vesper, & Hossler, 1995), sense of community in residence halls (Berger, 1997), student involvement (Milem & Berger, 1997), life task predominance (Brower, 1992), and self-efficacy (Peterson, 1993) are among the concepts given to understand both academic and social integration and their effects on student departure decisions.

Various constructs may also be derived from the role of the institutional classroom in the student departure process and the identification of forces

that influence academic integration and social integration. Tinto (1997) suggested that if social integration was to occur, it must occur in the classroom, because the classroom functioned as a gateway for student involvement in the academic and social communities of a college. Thus, the college classroom constitutes one possible source of influence on academic and social integration. Student Satisfaction and Perceptions of the Classroom Experience The authors, Bean and Bradley suggest student satisfaction is defined as “ a pleasurable emotional state resulting from a person’s enactment of the role of being a student” (1986, p. 398). Overall life realization includes fulfillment with specific domains, such as student satisfaction (Coffman & Gilligan, 2000). Therefore, it is assumed that a students’ overall satisfaction with the learning experience is an indicator of college persistence.

In addition, Coffman and Gilligan (2000) further found that those students who withdraw from college prior to graduation are less likely to be able to identify someone on campus with whom they had developed a significant relationship. These students report low satisfaction with their personal interactions, social isolation, and absence of opportunities for academic contact. Most of these students report academic difficulties which occur in the classroom highly influenced their departure from college. According to Juillerat (1995), a student related variable that has been found to be connected to student satisfaction is institutional fit.

The more acquainted a student is with the environment of the institution, the more he/she will fit into the culture of the institution. Students who feel as if they do not fit into the culture of the institution possess lower levels of

<https://assignbuster.com/educational-services-an-overview/>

satisfaction than those who feel that they belong. According to Juillerat (1995), student satisfaction is the extent to which a students' perceived educational experience meets or exceeds his/her expectations. Student satisfaction can be defined by the positive and negative gaps in the expectation level and perceived reality.

If a students' expectation is matching or exceeds his/her evaluation of reality then seemingly the student is satisfied. On the other hand, if a students' expectation is higher than his/her evaluation of reality then seemingly the student is dissatisfied. This approach to defining student satisfaction assists institutions in determining satisfaction levels and closes the gap between reality and expectations. Bean and Bradley (1986) determined that the number of friends a student has, along with his/her confidence in his/her social life, has a significant effect on satisfaction levels.

Weir and Okun (1989) found similar results in the amount of contact a student has with peers, faculty, staff and administrators was positively correlated with academic satisfaction. The availability and formal and informal interaction with faculty, staff and administrators for interaction with students is related to student satisfaction and persistence. Endo and Harpel (1982) further suggest that a student expectation for peer involvement academically is a contributor to student satisfaction and persistence.

Another important factor of a students' overall satisfaction with the learning experience is their perceptions of their academic programs of study. The authors Bean and Bradley (1986) suggest if a student is academically integrated and interested in their course of study, motivated to study, and

likes the faculty teaching the course will possess high satisfaction. Juillerat (1995) suggests, stimulating coursework and high teaching ability of professors is related to academic satisfaction. The purpose of this study is to explore the higher education classroom and its effects on student persistence and satisfaction.

In order to face the challenges of student retention, the classroom must be explored to determine how these experiences affect the student attrition process and ultimately the BRANDING of the Institution by minimizing the GAPS in the service delivery. The classroom is a part of the curricular structure that links different disciplines around a common theme.

Understanding the elements of the learning experience will provide students, faculty, staff, and administrators with a vital sense of shared inquiry.

The classroom experience must be designed to provide positive experiences through the adoption of collaborative learning strategies. The article seeks to ascertain to what degree such strategies enhance student learning and persistence and, if so, how they do so. In conclusion, administrators in higher education should embrace an understanding of strategies for minority student retention. Administrators have continuously overlooked the essentially educational and developmental character of persistence as it occurs in most institutional settings.

There is a rich line of inquiry of the linkage between learning and persistence that has yet to be pursued. Administrators must continue to fully explore the complex ways in which the experiences in the classroom shape both student learning and persistence. The author Braxton (1995) questioned the role of

faculty teaching in student satisfaction and persistence. Administrators must be equipped to face the challenges of minority student retention and be proactive in their approaches retain minority students.

A students' ability to be connected to the institutional environment and their ability to adapt to the organizational culture are related to vocational and educational stability, student satisfaction, and student success. The institutional environment and the organizational culture mediate student academic and social experiences in college. Educational stability, student satisfaction, and student success are the building blocks of the retention process this service quality delivery only reinforces the EDUCATIONAL BRAND. [pic]