

# QUALITY OF SERVICE: AN UNAVOIDABLE STRATEGIC DECISION FOR UNIVERSITIES

Science and current technologies, in the context of the quality of higher education (HE), highlight an unavoidable purpose for their work in the view of the formative processes and the quality of service (QoS) of universities. In this line of analysis, it is feasible to affirm that higher education institutions operate in complex, dynamic and highly demanding environments, a scenario that imposes on them the imperative of persistently reexamining their structures, strategies and institutional processes (Araya-Castillo and Rivera-Arroyo, 2021); adopting paths that allow them to differentiate their academic offerings, offer professional training that responds and adapts to the needs of the labor and social environment, and develop a solid foundation that allows them to achieve high levels of quality, through the creation of value and the continuous improvement of the services they provide.

It is true that the concept of "quality" is complex and difficult to define, given the existence of multiple points of view that emerge from authors and researchers dedicated to these topics; but beyond the polysemic disquisition of the term, it continues to receive increasing attention in the scientific community. Therefore, ignoring the nature and importance of its meaning and attributes is conducive to leaving empty spaces of knowledge in universities, since they are operating in environments that increasingly demand them to understand the role and transcendence of this organizational paradigm.

The previous statement is relevant, because in the university sector all the characteristics of service providers can be observed, since it is intangible and heterogeneous and meets the criterion of inseparability, being produced and consumed at the same time; in addition, it satisfies the precept of perishability.

In this scenario, universities must recognize that educational services are vital in the mechanisms of continuous improvement, which should focus on achieving high standards, and therefore, it is necessary to be concerned not only with the indicators of return on investment and participation in the HE system, but also in understanding the satisfaction and orientation to the various stakeholders, aspects that are crucial in the current perspectives of the so-called governance in universities.

It should be noted that the stakeholders of these educational entities include: students, graduates, administrative staff, teachers, government, families, companies, regulatory bodies, suppliers and society in general. Regarding their roles and participation, all of them are transcendent and vital for an educational organization, however, the students have a substantive importance, since they are one of the main ben-

eficiaries of education, and at that level they are in a position to value it and, although they assume a partial vision, their opinion provides a reference that should be considered as input for the decision-making process.

It is also useful to indicate that (QoS) should be observed by higher education institutions as a core part of strategic decisions, since it makes it possible to satisfy educational demands at the tertiary level, considering heterogeneous factors that favor the achievement of adequate levels of efficiency; at the same time, it generates advantages that can be sustainable and difficult to imitate or replace.

Thus, the evaluation of (QoS) should become an essential feature of HE, guiding the improvement of the different processes and results, urging educational institutions to achieve reputation and recognition not only at the national level, but also at the international level, especially now that they are being monitored by different agencies that are in charge of classifying and delivering information on these institutions (Ganga-Contreras *et al.*, 2021).

This implies recognizing that universities must advance from a traditional, "burocratological" and reactive administration, towards a modern system of university governance, which expands strategic thinking, proactive management and directive cognition. In this framework, it is ineluctable to have management teams with high formative and technical competencies, who have a deep understanding of these phenomena, so that they are able to deploy actions that translate into improvements in academic quality and the services they offer.

In this way, it will be essential to exhibit outstanding performance in the field of institutional management, linkage with the environment, university social responsibility, teaching and especially the generation of new knowledge (research); when this occurs, it is the agents of the local and/or regional communities who are the first to celebrate.

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## Reference

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