فصلنامه مدیریت شهری
(ویژه نامه لاتین)
Urban management
No.**43** Summer **2016**
■ 31 - 44 ■

***Received** 12 Oct 2015**; Accepted** 2 Jan 2016*

Identification of dimensions and factors affecting on improvement of the educational quality of graduate students (case study: Master Architecture students of Islamic Azad University of Boshehr City)

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to identify dimensions and dimensions and components of improving the educational quality of graduate students (master). The statistical population included all faculty and students of Islamic Azad University, Science and Research in the city of Bushehr. The sample size in accordance with the Morgan table was estimated about 201 faculties and 351 students, and that number was randomly selected from the population; Data collection instrument was a questionnaire with 93 questions, five-point Likert's scale, and the alpha coefficient of 0/95. The collected data was analyzed using exploratory factor analysis. The obtained results identified 10 dimensions and components of the students economic conditions, student facilities, library services, faculty, students, curriculum, teaching and learning methods, good communication, academic facilities and administrative services as dimensions and components of improving the educational quality of graduate students (Master) Azad University of Bushehr, and the overall impact of these factors was 56%.

Keywords: *quality of education, higher education, Islamic Azad University.*

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Introduction

In the turbulent world of today and in the third millennium which is called the information and digital generation, the university is considered as one of the most important and basic educational institutions and plays a key role because they are the origin and main point of evolution and development in all countries , particularly in the developing countries. Today all over the world, the universities and their quality enjoy special status and are taken as the main center for creating knowledge, learning, and the main source of human consciousness. Therefore, the necessity of attention to the education quality and its productivity is of high importance, and in order for the specialists to be able to improve their performance in the course of their work should pay attention to the quality of education (Hadavand, 2005). The university as a process to preserve its endogenous dynamics needs a prospective planning, continuous quality control, and improvement methods. For example, it is necessary to update curriculum, course content, teaching methods, research, organizing, staffing, service delivery and campus management and constantly expose new experiences (Farasatkhah and Kebriaee, 1998; Islamiyah, 2009).

Because the higher education system is faced with technological development, broad social, economic, and cultural changes and meeting the society needs, it is faced with major issues. Therefore, one of the important tasks of higher education is training efficient manpower to work in various fields required by the community; and the ultimate goal of higher education is knowledge generation, provision of the society needs, training efficient specialists, and offering solutions for social problems in all areas. In other words, meeting the society needs and expectations, taking into account the recent developments, and with respect to fair facilities distribution with regard to equitable distribution of resources, quality fit, and allocation of resources with regard to economic matters, seems necessary (Bazargan, 2008).

The quality and its improvement, according to the market conditions and the world needs which throw their glaze most on the higher education, is necessary because as the demand for further education increases, sensitivity to the educational quality will also increases; the states and nations in exchange for delegating authority to the universities expect them to answer that appropriately (Massey, 2005). Therefore, the higher education institutions are struggling with the issue of quality and its promotion because of issues such as demands' orientation, customer orientation, interaction with the society and work world, fitting with the changing needs and emerging expectations, and diversifying the funding sources. Faculty and students in the universities as well as the academic and professional individuals in the knowledge world have greater expectations of improving educational quality in universities; in other words, all the faculty, students, community, and the changing circumstances in order to improve the education quality and its continuity should go forward together to achieve the required result (Chia, 2003).

The conducted studies suggest that the development of higher education in terms of student population in the past two decades has had remarkable growth while the quality of education and improvement has been ignored and decreased (Sharifi and Islamia, 2012; Movahed Mohammadee and Shams, 2008; Rahimi, 2002; Akareem, 2012). In other words, in contrast to the education quantitative growth, the qualitative factors have been noted, and as a result of this negligence and failure, the educational quality level has gone down over the years in the universities so that the declining quality index has been announced as the major higher education indices (Pezeshkyrad and Mohtasham, 2003). This quality deficiency may be attributed to factors such as mismatching of students and faculty growth, and educational and research facilities (Bazargan, 2008). Accordingly in the present research, the researcher aimed to identify dimensions and components

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and items in improving the educational quality of graduate students (MA) in the University of Bushehr.

Methodology

the present study is applied in terms of purpose and in terms of the type of the data used, it is quantitative and qualitative. The statistical population included 410 of the faculty members and graduate students of Islamic Azad University to the number of 1884 and Science and Research Unit to the number of 2260 individuals and the total size of 4144 individuals. The sample size in accordance with the Morgan table was equal to 201 faculty members and 351 students who were selected using random sampling method. Using the text extracted from the research literature and interview, the questionnaire with 93 questions and five point Likert's scale was prepared to identify factors affecting the educational quality of the students. Validity of the questionnaire, in addition to the opinion of experts in educational administration, was confirmed through factor analysis (Kaiser-Meyer test = 0/818, Bartlett's test = 14900/34, degree of freedom = 4287, significance level = 0.000, variance = 56%). Reliability of the questionnaire calculated by Cronbach's alpha was equal to 0/95. To analyze the data, exploratory factor analysis was used.

Results

The research question: What are the dimensions and components in improving the educational quality of graduate students (Master) in Islamic Azad University of Bushehr?

0/818		Sample adequacy indicator
14900/34	X2	Bartlett's test of sphere city
4278	df	
0/000	sig	

Table 1. KMO measures and Bartlett's test of sphericity

Variance percentage	Density percentage	Factor load	Items	Components
13.769	13.769	0/597	1-Facilitating the terms of using Students' Welfare Fund	Students economic conditions
		0/705	2-Sponsorship of elite students	
		0/689	3. The financial support of poor students	
		0/770	4. Financial support of unemployed students	
		0/843	5. Financial support of students at home with more than two students	
		0/749	6. Considering the long-term interest-free student loans	
		0/487	7- Providing Access to education for students financially at various degrees	
		0/369	8-Considering financial awards for academic research	
		0/391	9-sponsorship of students' theses	

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9.549	23/318	0/783	10- Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on the purchase of books (textbooks and curriculum)	Student facilities
		0/791	11- Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on different classes	
		0/785	12- Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on student health centers	
		0.783	13-Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on cultural venues such as cinema, theater, and ...	
		0/722	14- Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on various cafeterias	
		0/755	15. Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on some restaurants	
		0/8060	16. Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on Internet sharing, and scientific sites.	
		0/856	17.Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on visiting spectacular centers of the city	
		0/854	18- Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on sports clubs	
		0/842	19- Providing the opportunity to use student discounts on tickets for the subway, bus, train, plane, etc.	
7.388	30.507	0/772	20-Update and diverse sources of the library	Library Services
		0/661	21-Creating specialized libraries for departments	
		0/732	22. The library connection to international libraries	
		0/800	23-Access to the full text of articles foreign domestic quarterly electronically	
		0/756	24. Providing the possibility to reserve and extend the book deadline intelligently	
		0/642	25. The possibility of membership in the library and renewals electronically	
		0/623	26-Assisting the users in identifying information needs.	
		0/344	27-The possibility to replicate library resources	
		0/344	28-Appropriate space for study	

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		0/736	29. The special spaces for user relaxing and entertaining	
		0/456	30. The personal lockers to Keep personal items	
		0/702	31- The possibility to directly purchase the books published by the University for library users	
6.019	36.724	0/576	32- The professor's good and tidy appearance	Faculty
		0/648	33- Use of new and updated resources and Leaflets	
		0/682	34-presentation of appropriate study resources, update and accessible to more students	
		0/254	35-Respectful behavior with students and colleagues	
		0/708	36. Appropriate tasks (not high and not low) and related lessons to students	
		0/602	37. Continuous evaluation of students	
		0/662	38. Keeping the student active during the semester	
		0/524	39-Meet the specific needs of students in private	
		0/696	40-Preparing the students for future jobs with theoretical and practical training at university	
		0/625	41-Facilitating discussion on the subject in the classroom by the professor	
		0/647	42. Considering more score (rating) for more effort by the students	
		0/414	43-informing the student of the outcome of the evaluation on their work	
		0/424	44-Availability of the professor (when needed by the student)	
4.995	41.719	0/334	45-The student participation in extra-curricular activities	Students
		0/518	46. Providing specific services to new students	
		0/509	47-Providing professional growth texture for the students	
		0/451	48-Providing the student satisfaction	
		0/479	49-Utilizing the capabilities of students to promote cultural, administrative, service issues and ...	

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		0/618	50-Selection of students based on their interest rate in their studying discipline	
		0/639	51-Providing the student with information in the course of his future job market	
4.104	45.823	0/622	52-Paying more attention to practical courses	Courses
		0/423	53-Offer specialized services needed by the community (labor market)	
		0/583	54. Closing the curriculum to the needs of millennium employers	
		0/489	55. The flexible course structure	
		0/546	56- Extra-curricular programs diversity	
		0/677	57- Reinforcement of courses content	
		0/432	58-curriculum codification based on students' interests	
		0/616	59-Diverse selection of materials for each course	
3.261	49.444	0/462	60- Using active techniques and motivating learners	Teaching and learning methods
		0/544	61-Sharing the students in the teaching process	
		0/556	62-high scientific level of the faculty	
		0/417	63-Rhetoric, teaching skills	
		0/408	64-Creating discussion-oriented atmosphere in the classroom	
		0/439	65-Escalation of students in teaching and learning activities	
		0/576	66-Presenting the materials each session in a regular and correlated form	
		0/649	67- Presenting the materials in a way that is understandable for students	
2.532	51.796	0/628	68- Providing business communication for students with different organizations	Appropriate communication
		0/629	69- Attempting to withdraw the students from pursuing further study	
		0/669	70-Fairness in dealing with students	
		0/555	71- Respect for students by the professor	
		0/602	72-Considering a framework for the respect between teacher and student	
		0/808	73-Limited number of students in the classroom	

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2.068	54.044	0/805	74-Site equipped with high-speed Internet and filter free	University facilities
		0/763	75- Efficiency of new equipment and Materials (internet, library, projector, overhead, etc.)	
		0/862	76-The experts presence in workshops and sites to answer students' questions	
		0/843	77-Attractive appearance of physical facilities (buildings, office, lounge, chapel, etc.)	
		0/743	78-Attractive appearance of the means the professor uses for training	
		0/771	79- Providing qualitative and affordable student accommodation	
		0/873	80-providing Auditorium	
		0/799	81-considering proper and equipped student buffet	
		0/857	82- considering equipped research laboratory	
		0/791	83- considering free student parking	
		0/817	84-considering free service to transport students	
		0/837	85-considering well-equipped gymnasium on campus	
		0/785	86-considering standard playing field on campus	
2.056	56.098	0/803	87-respecting student dignity in the administrative system	Administrative Services
		0/459	88-The students easy access to directorship to reflect comments	
		0/464	89-reducing paperwork in different fields	
		0/468	90-quick return of documents related to students	
		0/492	91- responsible employees to meet clients (students)	
		0/803	92-observance of honesty and avoiding exposure of privacy in the student's file.	
		0/853	93-delivery of student records only to competent persons for the delivery	
56.098	...	...	Total	

Table 2. Percentage of structure matrix and factor load of a 10 Dimension set of measures of the students' educational quality improvement components

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According to Table 1, KMO value is equal to 0/818 that is near 1. The significance level of characteristic of Bartlett's sphere city test is also zero that is less than 0/05 and shows it is statistically significant. Therefore, based on both criteria, it can be concluded that the implementation of factor analysis based on the correlation matrix obtained in the studied sample group, will be explainable.

According to Table 2, 10 elements in 93 items were recognized as components of the educational quality promotion of graduate students (master) in Azad University of Bushehr that the overall impact of this factors was56/ 098. Likewise, this value has been appeared in the first factor as the students economic conditions was (13/769%), in the second factor as student facilities (9/549%), in the third factor as library services (7/388%), in the fourth factor as professors (6/019%), in the fifth factor as students (4/995%), in the sixth factor as courses (4/104%), in the seventh factor as teaching and learning (3/621%), in the eighth factor as having appropriate communicating (2/532%), in the ninth factor as university facilities (2/068%), and in the tenth factor as administrative services (2/054%).

Conclusion

According to the ten elements identified as dimensions and components of the educational quality promotion of graduate students (master) in Azad University of Bushehr, the obtained results regarding the effect of the students economic conditions on their education quality were in line with findings of previous studies based on supporting the students (Tabarsa, 2012), providing the students' peace of mind and well-being (Nili Ahmadabadee, 1992), livelihoods. Several studies including that done by Zare Shahabadi (2008) have found a significant correlation among the students' economic status and employment status (employed and unemployed), and also with academic achievement. These results are endorsing the claim that the students' economic conditions could affect on their education quality. Students who suffer from poor economic conditions are forced to work while studying to fund. But the university support and financial help or support of low income students can partially compensate for this deficiency. Likewise, Emadzadeh (1993) considered environmental, economic, and social conditions and Haworth and Conrad (1997) considered support of the students as the secrets of quality in higher education. Regarding the effect of student facilities on the education quality, the obtained results of the present study were in line with results of the previous studies based on supporting the students (Tabarsa, 2012), space and physical facilities for curriculum implementation (Sharifi and Islamia, 2012), providing the students' peace of mind, well-being and providing facilities (Nili Ahmadabadee, 1992), health, nutrition, and welfare (Mohammadpour, 1995). The facilities provided by the university for the students (eg facilities to buy books, attend different classes, health centers, transport) will lead to the fact that they deal with knowledge acquisition without worrying about issues such as financing the main and side costs of education. One of the achievements of the National Council for Evaluation and Accreditation to maintain and improve the quality of the education system in India is increasing focus on service delivery and support services for the students (Stella and Patil, 2005). Regarding the effect of library services on the educational quality, findings of the present study are consistent with findings of the researches by Tabarsa (2012), Tsinidou (2010), results of Shifeld University (2007); the available library resource (Hudson, 2003). One of the quality measures in universities can be considered as providing the students with books, articles, and documents. Non-use of trained forces in the book and library affairs, a small number of computers in the library, and hard and unsuitable tables and chairs, distracting noises in the library space due to non isolated parts of the library are taken into account as the great problems of libraries. Therefore, providing suitable conditions for students to

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use various library resources and connection to international libraries, providing electronic services to library users, and appropriate physical condition of libraries may enhance the quality of education. Regarding the impact of faculties on the educational quality, findings of the present study are consistent with findings of previous researches based on the desired quality of new faculties, the faculties continuous and professional development, their teaching scrutiny (Lomas, 2004), providing growth and professional development of faculty members (EsmaileeBid Hendee, 1998), features and Professional empowering of the faculty members (Sharifi and Islamia, 2012), the role of the instructor (Emadzadeh, 1993) and faculty members (Tescid, 2010). Axceed University (2011) has provided a model to improve the students' performance and teaching quality of in the classroom and a great emphasis on the faculties' role. Before the start of each educational session, the faculty should specify goals, share the students in teaching process, and through questions and answers familiarize the students with the concepts, and ultimately, assess their own of classes and students.

Regarding the impact of students on educational quality, findings of the present study are consistent with findings of previous researches based on the selection of students (Yaminee dozeesorkhabee et al., 2008), the students' freedom of action in implementing the curriculum (Sharifi and Islamia, 2012), supporting the students (Tabarsa et al., 2012), providing the students with peace of mind and well-being (Nili Ahmadabadee, 1992), student status (Barimani, 2011). Emadzadeh (1372) emphasized on the role of comprehensive innate abilities and talents inclusive (students). Also, one aspect of Walsh model (2014) for improving the education quality at the University of Ireland was student-orientation that is created as the main axis in order to achieve an appropriate response, flexibility, creating trust and confidence in teaching, appropriate learning of learners, qualifying of students and considering their views. Based on the results by Yaminee dozeesorkhabee (2008), there are factors like individual talents match with his field of study, the level of interest and their ability to understand and analyze scientific issues that should be included in the student admission at their arrival to the university so that the most talented come in college as students. These factors can reduce depression, apathy, and lack of motivation among the students in the process of learning and education. Regarding the impact of education courses, findings of the present study are consistent with findings of previous researches based on the organization of educational content (Barimani, 2011; Ymynydvzysrkhaby et al., 2008), subjects offered (Lagrosen et al., 2004), training programs (Tecnid, 2010), educational programs tailored to the needs and expectations of the students community (Hoveyda and Molavee, 2008). One of the most important missions of the universities in the era of globalization is the need to align with global changes and upbringing human appropriate to the today changing conditions. Communities in order to survive and grow need trained and multidimensional individuals that have strong communication skills, the ability to live in variable and unstable conditions, problem-solving skills, and lifelong training (Web, quoting from Islamiyah, 2009). So, if the universities courses and curriculum is designed in a way that have a flexible curriculum structure and prioritizes fostering and developing these abilities and skills of the students, they can offer specialized services required by the society (labor market) so that the students succeed in their chosen careers, then the quality of education will improve.

Regarding the impact of teaching and learning method on the educational quality, findings of the present study are consistent with findings of previous researches based on the teaching method (Barimani et al., 2011; Ymynydvzysrkhaby et al., 2008; Soleymanee Motlaq, 2005), teaching methods improvement (EsmaileeBid Hendee, 1998), the use of different

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teaching methods by the faculty (Ghaedi, 1993), new methods of teaching (Shaibani and Aflakyfard, 2014), using student oriented methods in the process of teaching and attention to the basic needs of the students (Glaser, 2003), activities related to teaching (Lagrvsn, 2004). Higher education quality is adjustment of this system input, process, output, and outcome with the standards defined and developed to improve the system of higher education activities with regard to the mission, goals, and expectations of higher education (Bazargan, 2001). One of the goals of higher education system is expanding the knowledge borders and experts training into enter the labor market. The experts must have the ability to meet the needs of the third millennium employers and this requires that they enjoy the skills like critical thinking, communication skills, decision making skills, team-working skills, creativity, flexibility, and the ability to cope with hard and continuous work. As the scholars and education theorists have acknowledged, creating a discussion-oriented atmosphere in the classroom, using active and stimulating learning methods, and sharing the students in the teaching process can help to achieve these goals. University of Scotland (2012) also considered the quality improvement in universities requires attention to teaching and learning. Glaser et al. (2008) believed that teaching methods in motivating students should be taken into consideration by the faculty members for more scientific activities for understanding the contents. Glaser (2003) noted that the professor should not spare the students' time on useless things like memorizing subjects, but the subjects should have aesthetic and artistic value. University of West Thomas (2013) also in a study entitled "Toward Excellence: promoting teaching and learning" has come to the conclusion that in order to improve the education quality at the University, teaching patterns must be improved. Regarding the impact of appropriate communicating on education quality, findings of the present study are consistent with findings of previous researches regarding the interaction between students and professors (Hoveyda and Emadzadeh, 2004), the faculties' accountability and commitment (Emadzadeh, 1993) communication with the outside world (Raharajo, 2007). Achievement of educational goals and the interaction between students and professors are interdependent. The students in order to resolve their problems and needs should have adequate access to faculty members. The atmosphere of understanding and empathy should be among the students so that they feel they can work together out of the class (Hoveyda and Emadzadeh, 2004). As well, Emadzadeh (1993) considered the professor's accountability and commitment as one of the factors that contribute to the quality of education. Therefore, respecting and honoring the student by the professor, and setting a framework for respect between the professor and student, fairness in dealing with students and providing opportunities for the students working relationship with various organizations are among the areas that can provide more interaction between the students and professor and improve the quality of education. Regarding the impact of university facilities on the education quality, findings of the present study are consistent with findings of previous researches including Sharifee and Islamiyah (2011), Lagrosn et al. (2004), Rharajo (2007), Tecnid (2010), Shaibani (2014); Barimani (2011). Educational facilities are directly and indirectly involved in the achievement of an educational program. The facilities which are planned appropriately will have a positive effect on the educational departments and makes the information correctly transmitted, received, understood, and preserved. Learners need to have a good feeling during learning and are prepared mentally (Shokohee, 1990). Emadzadeh (1993) considered educational facilities as textbooks, educational supplies and infrastructural equipment to improve the quality of education. In addition, support in information technology and communication is among the measures that the absence or lack

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of proper planning and management in keeping that facility leads to disorders in the education process of the students (Mirrazee, 2000). Also, the level of using computer and the optimal use of internet to being kept up to date can be considered a criterion for the separation of strong students from weak students. Therefore, it can be said that the facilities such as the less number of students in the classroom, the effectiveness of new equipment and educational materials (computers, Internet), physical attractiveness of the facilities, as well as providing student accommodation and other facilities for students can all play an important role in improving the education quality. Regarding the impact of administrative services on educational quality, results findings of the present study are consistent with findings of previous researches including Tabarsa (2012), Tecnid (2010), Raharajo (2007). Emadzadeh (1993) put an emphasis on the administrative system support to improve the quality of education. Felee et al. (2009) in prioritizing the dimension of services quality from the perspective of students, has put reliability, compassion or accountability empathy on the first place. On the other hand, the excellent organizations develop the potential power of their employees and exploit that. These organizations regarding their employees, their encouraging and appreciating provide the motivation and commitment in their employees to use their skills and knowledge in order to create organizational interests. In universities and higher education institutions, it is also important that the employees' potential capabilities are identified and activated to contribute to management goals (Beth, 2000). Therefore, according to these findings, it can be concluded that respecting the student dignity in the administrative system, reducing paperwork in different things, the staffs guidance and accountability to the students, staff responsibly, respecting the integrity and privacy of student records and quickly returning all of the documents relating to students should be considered in providing administrative services to the students to ensure their confidence and satisfaction and thus to improve the quality of education.

Suggestion

1.Determining the centers and sources of stress and concerns related to the administrative services helps the university administrators and staff to provide better conditions regarding the dignity of students and other administrative services.

2.Resolving the students concerns about the education costs including financial support of thesis and taking into account financial incentives for their research can help to improve the quality of educational services.

3.Connecting the university library to the International University Library and developing specialized libraries for educational groups in the university provides the students with easy access to internal and external resources and updated articles.

4.Universities should set frameworks for respect between the faculties and students in higher education and provide the students with business linkages with different organizations during and after graduation.

5.Regarding the university facilities, the less number of students in classrooms is among the factors that through increased interaction between students and faculty and more students' participation can have an important role in improving educational quality. In addition, new and efficient equipment and materials (such as the Internet, library, projector, overhead, etc.) will help to facilitate it more.

6.Through reinforcing the teaching and learning methods by creating a discussion oriented atmosphere in the classroom and fostering rhetoric and observing the teaching skills, the teaching materials are presented in an understandable manner to students and improve the quality of education.

7.The students' awareness regarding future and labor market concerned with their field of study could be effective in increasing the students' interest and endeavor during the educa-

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tion and improve the quality of education.

8.The good appearance in class, continuous evaluation of students, and considering higher scores for struggling students, and basing the students' preparation for future career in education are among the activities that teachers can do to improve the quality of education.

9.Closing the curriculum to the employers needs, diversifying the extracurricular school programs, choosing various sources for each course, paying more attention to practical courses to reinforce the content and flexible curriculum structure should be considered in order to improve the quality of education in terms of courses.

10.Attending the student facilities including the possibility to use the student discounts for students tethering, scientific sites, as well as restaurants and health centers can improve the quality of education.

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