

The Impact of Strategic Planning Factors on Service Quality: An Empirical Study of Private Universities in Oman

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Abstract

The study investigates the impact of strategic planning (SP) factors on service quality (SQ) in private universities (PUs) in Oman and how they fit together in the development of higher education institutions (HEIs). The reports of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in Oman revealed that the service quality in private universities is unsatisfactory. This study employs a quantitative method. Data were collected from a sample of 730 academics and administrators. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on AMOS software was applied for data analysis. The results of the structural paths showed that, among the strategic planning factors, only environmental scanning and leadership had a direct significant impact on service quality. However, mission statement and participation had insignificant direct impact on service quality. The findings suggest that environmental scanning and leadership are critical factors in predicting service quality dimensions of private universities. The findings add to the body of knowledge particularly in the Omani context, which can be useful in the neighboring countries as well. The study combines two different popular models in addressing service quality. The study also clarified the importance of each factor of the strategic planning process, which give a comprehensive picture of the university.

Keywords: Higher Education, Service Quality, Strategic Planning, Oman, Private Universities

JEL Classification Code: I23, L15, P41

1. Introduction

Higher education (HE) is a key pillar of any economy in the modern world. Higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Sultanate of Oman are committed to provide quality education and services to the community in accordance with the long-term vision of Oman's economy in 2040 (Albusaidi, 2021; Azeem, Baskar, Moosa, Salalah, & Al Katheeri, 2019; Al-Mahdy, Emam, & Hallinger, 2018). In most organizations, economic development planning is

directed toward growth (Widarni & Bawono, 2021). This expanding growth in HEIs is in line with the need to produce Omani nationals qualified to participate in the continuous development of the country (Mustafa & Alzubi, 2021; Al Riyami & Al-Issa, 2018).

Private universities (PUs) are one of the most important institutions that attract large numbers of students. Every year thousands of Omani students join HEIs to continue their first degrees (Al Riyami & Al-Issa, 2018; Connor, 2018). Consequently, PUs should play an essential role of changing environment shifts from influencing particular applications for changes to leading changes in the quality of institutions. Therefore, there is a need for a strategic tool for the interactive nature of service for faculty members. Private universities find it difficult to improve their quality, productivity and competitiveness compared to other universities and businesses (Geisler, Berthelsen, & Muhonen, 2019; Isaac, Aldholay, Abdullah, & Ramayah, 2019; Mustafa, Ali, Bing, & Rahman, 2016). However, PUs are more valuable than industrial or commercial organizations because they train and provide employees to these industries (Al-Jubari, Hassan, & Liñán, 2019; Mustafa & Alzubi, 2021). In fact, quality can become a driving force in terms of developing

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the organization to drive the strategic objective of the organization (Almeyali & Al Mousawi, 2021; Dhar, 2015; Indianapolis, 2010). Since the overall quality of PUs is losing its competitive advantage, while foreign education systems and the Middle East face the risk of closure, modernizing innovation performance and improving overall quality performance is a necessity (Mustafa & Alzubi, 2021; Belwal, Al Balushi, & Belwal, 2015; Al-Jubari et al., 2019; Chen & Chen, 2011). According to Yavas, Karatepe, and Babakus (2018), the empirical results revealed that SQ has a significant effect on an organizational outcomes and placement among its competitors.

In Oman, according to Yarahmadi and Magd (2016), there are major obstacles to SQ in PUs. The obstacles are the lack of qualified human resources, the lack of institutional development plans, the lack of quality training, increased administrative and academic workloads, the lack of physical facilities (buildings, sport complexes, open field etc.), and ineffective academic partnerships with foreign HEIs. According to MoHE (2017), due to the problem with SQ in PUs, a sharp drop in the employment rates of graduates of PUs from 47.7% in 2015 to 24.8%. In addition, the percentage of quality of the services (facilities and community activities) was generally low at 60%, 53% respectively out of 75%. Thus, this paper focuses on the discussion above to examine the impact of strategic planning (SP) as a key factor on SQ of PUs in Oman to improve the productivity of HE.

1.1. Current Status of Higher Education Sector in Oman

The educational history of the Sultanate of Oman has undergone rapid development. In the 1970s, there were three primary schools in the country with less than 1,000 students

and no college or university. Nowadays, universities and colleges enroll large numbers of students from different educational backgrounds and levels of achievement. The number of students in private HEIs is 16,124 males and females. However, the number of students in public HEIs is 16,528 males and females in 2020. Moreover, the number of academics and administrators in PUs in the Sultanate of Oman is 2,446 as shown in Table 1.

Moreover, the number of academic qualifications for Omani academics in PUs in the year 2020 is 963 PhD holders (34.74%); 1354 Masters (48.85%); and 455 Bachelors (16.41%) (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020). The above indicates a low percentage of PhDs among academics. While the largest number hold a master's degree. There are still quite a few holders of bachelor's degrees teaching in the universities and colleges in Oman. The decline in the number of PhDs from academics in PUs and colleges may indicate a decline in the output of education and, thus, a decline in the quality of services in the universities. According to Albusaidi (2021) and Alhajri (2013), Omanis are prepared to participate positively in national strategy and to meet the challenges of the 21st century based on a high degree of quality production. Furthermore, PUs stress that, in order to create and achieve the need for a sustainable and competitive academic development, it is necessary to prepare a progressive and ambitious long-term plan based among HE. While PUs has increased rapidly in Oman, the system has issues in HE, especially in PUs. Challenges associated with the development include issues around academic excellence, a high population growth rate, labor market requirements for highly qualified staff, and the correspondence level between the capacity of its institutions and those of the production and service sectors in the field of scientific research and technical development (Mustafa &

Table 1: Number of Academics and Administrators in Private Universities According to the Type of Job

Name of Institution	Academics	Administrative	Academics and Administrative	Total
A'sharqiyah University	91	78	6	175
Arab Open University	79	29	1	109
Dhofar University	199	134	4	337
German University of Technology	80	72	1	153
Muscat University	65	30	3	98
Nizwa University	333	227	35	595
Sohar University	219	132	–	351
University of Buraimi	113	46	–	159
National University of Science and Technology	278	181	10	469
	1457	929	60	2446

Alzubi, 2021; Teguh et al., 2021; Alhadabi et al., 2019; Al-Jubari, 2019; Issan & Gomaa, 2010; Mohammed, Rahman, & Al-Yaaqoubi, 2015).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Service Quality

Since the 1980s, service quality (SQ) has been associated with increased profits and has provided a great advantage in competitive conditions through the creation of repeat sales, positive word-of-mouth feedback, and staff loyalty (Kaushal & Goyal, 2021; Ogbonnaya, 2019). The concept of SQ in HE can reflect many indications. Service quality in HE is a very important service in the twenty-first century. It has contributed distinctly in the areas of personal communication, health, education, politics, economics, globalization, and even in supporting the traditional identities of societies (Turgutogullari & Saner, 2021; Almeyali & Al Mousawi, 2021; Belwal & Amireh, 2018). In the literature, educational SQ has been given different definitions depending on who interprets the concept, as well as depending on the context in which the concept is interpreted (Kaushal & Goyal, 2021; ElRashidy, 2018). Although SQ is seen as a requirement for all successful organizations to remain competitive and to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Basheer Abbas Al-allak & Hussain Ali Bekhet, 2011), there is no consistency in the definition of the term (Ogbonnaya, 2019). This study uses a definition of SQ, which is a basic indicator of performance, an essential component of social work services directly linked to customer outcomes (Almeyali & Al Mousawi, 2021; Almeyali & Al Mousawi, 2021; Ivanović & Antić, 2011).

The original SQ model was developed by Grönroos (1982). The most popular SQ models are SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, which consist of a scale that is designed to measure five dimensions. However, the two models (SERVQUAL and SERVPERF) have not been successfully supported or adapted in all service industries. Many researchers have tried testing these models and adapting them to suit their particular service sectors (Almeyali & Al Mousawi, 2021; Chaipoopiruttana, 2018). Prakash and Phadtare (2018) revealed that there are some quality determinants of service that are mainly satisfying, and others that are mostly misunderstood from the main sources of satisfaction are attention, responsiveness, care and affection. The main sources of dissatisfaction are integrity, reliability, responsiveness, availability and function. While, Parasuraman et al. (1985) indicated a list of ten dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, efficiency, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, customer understanding, intangibles) of SQ as a result of their focused studies with service providers and customers. Which later developed the SERVQUAL tool with these ten distribution features into five comprehensive

dimensions of SQ. According to Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Prakash and Phadtare (2018), the five dimensions of SERVQUAL include:

- (1) Tangibles, which relate to physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communications materials.
- (2) Reliability, which refers to the ability to perform the promised services reliably and accurately.
- (3) Responsiveness, which refers to the willingness of service providers to help customers and provide prompt service.
- (4) Assurance, which relates to knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to transfer trust and confidence.
- (5) Empathy, which refers to providing care and individual attention to customers. Quality of service has been identified as a critical success factor for organizations to build their competitive advantage and increase their competitiveness.

2.2. SERVQUAL Model

Parasuraman et al. (1988, 1994) were the first to formulate the concept of quality of service measurement, commonly referred to as the SERVQUAL model. The authors have derived a specific measure of quality designed specifically for the service industry rather than referring to the quality of the manufactured goods industry. In addition, SQ measurement discussion is suggesting that SQ is building both for position and related, but not equivalent, to consumer satisfaction. Thus, they suggested that SQ should be activated as a comparison between consumer expectations of service providers and performance of organizations on specific positions related to quality assessment. After reviewing the quality-measurement literature, they concluded that SQ is more difficult to assess than the quality of goods. Service quality results from the actual service performance comparison and the expected level of service; SQ perception encompasses the procedure of service delivery as well as the outcomes. They started the unending journey of conceptualizing the measurement of SQ in 1985 with ten SQ dimensions. Later the number was reduced to five major quality dimensions, namely, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Kaushal & Goyal, 2021; Chaipoopiruttana, 2018). The scales are measured through a questionnaire, which identifies the perceptions and expectations of customers regarding this different aspect of SQ construct. The total score is derived from the difference between perceptions and expectations scores. Although it is widely used, the SERVQUAL model has been criticized on several grounds, namely:

- The unsustainability of SERVQUAL dimensions across different cultures, countries and ethnicities (Furrer, Liu, & Sudharshan, 2000).

- The inability of expectations to remain constant over time (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).
- The SERVQUAL model cannot be applied to all service sectors. In fact, many researchers used different models of the SERVQUAL model (Almeyali & Al Mousawi, 2021; Prakash & Phadtare, 2018; Albadry 2016; Micuda & Crucern, 2010; Maditinos & Theodoridis, 2010) to assess SQ. However, these studies did not entirely rely on the SERVQUAL model).

Although criticism has been abundant, SERVQUAL is still used in many contexts including private utilities, banks, travel agencies, universities, police services, and hospitals (Alam, Mishra, & Shahjamal, 2014; Albadry, 2016).

2.3. SERVPERF Model

As a consequence of SERVQUAL model, Cronin and Taylor (1992) developed a new model to overcome some of the limitations of the SERVQUAL (Cronin, Ryan, Page, Hunter, & Taylor, 2019; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Moreover, SERVPERF instrument uses performance measures only scales to measure SQ perceptions, in the belief that SQ must be defined in terms of perception alone. In addition, many researchers have provided evidence that the performance related measures are superior to difference-score measures (Sohail & Hasan, 2021; Giswandhani & Hilmi, 2019).

Furthermore, Cronin and Taylor (1992) used 22 questions with respondents' perceptions only to measure SQ instead of SERVQUAL's disconfirmation scores. Thus, the SERVPERF instrument is therefore identical to SERVQUAL, with the exception that SERVQUAL has 44 items (22 items for expectation and 22 items for performance of SQ), while SERVPERF has 22 items addressing only actual performance. The practical evidence collected by Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Albadry (2016) showed that SERVQUAL is superior to SERVPERF in four industries: pest control, fast food, banking, and dry cleaning. The SERVPERF model was criticized for being psychometric and systematic in weighing (Sohail & Hasan, 2021; Karwati, Sukardi, & Syafruddin, 2019). Therefore, SERVPERF model is not widely used.

2.4. SERVQUAL vs SERVPERF

Usually, most researchers acknowledge that the performance of an organization is evaluated through consumer expectations, as they act as a point of reference to measure performance against. Among mentioned above methods, the most commonly applied is SERVQUAL and SERVPERF (Sohail & Hasan, 2021; Gulc, 2017). However, there is no agreement on whether forecasts can be used as a specific factor in SQ, meaning there are two opposing measurement models. SERVQUAL, which compares service

perceptions with expectations, and SERVPERF, a perception model, which deals only with SQ perceptions.

Customers assess SQ according to five dimensions of service (Almeyali & Al Mousawi, 2021; Gulc, 2017). The quality of HE was measured using a comparison of alternative instruments (Brochado, 2009). Five measures were examined for their performance relating to SQ, namely, SQ (SERVQUAL), service performance (SERVPERF), importance-weighted SERVQUAL, importance-weighted SERVPERF, and HE performance (HEdPERF). The measures showing the best capability were SERVPERF and HEdPERF, however, it was not clear which of the two performed better (Pitriantini & Permana, 2021; Sohail & Hasan, 2021). However, in spite of the above literature, the intangibility of services has made it problematic for performance criteria to be set, monitored and measured (Karanjekar, Lakhe, & Deshpande, 2019). The SERVPERF model is used on a very limited scale, unlike the SERVQUAL model. In contrast, Albadry (2016) states that consumer perception of quality is best found in performance and that expectation does not play a role in this concept. Thus, this study is consistent with SERVQUAL model.

2.5. Strategic Planning

Strategic planning began as an instrument of development in the institution as it was known today in the mid-fifties. It was mainly used in private business while the concept of public administration and the culture of its performance was fully developed on the basis of national constitutions and laws (Al-Ghrairee, 2021; Nartisa, Putans, & Muravska, 2012). Strategic planning is described by various scholars in different and integrated ways, and there is no generally-accepted definition of SP. Furthermore, SP has been explained by many writers and researchers in different, but complementary ways. Some scholars have defined SP in terms of military forces, economics, and education. This study uses a definition that refers to the process that leads to a plan that indicates how organizational goals and direction change over time or adapt to changes in the environment of successful organizations in order to improve the performance of the organization, and hence its competitiveness in the market (Aponte, 2011; Sandada, 2015). Sandada (2015) states that SP is a complex and participative management technique of scanning the environment and the formulation of mission and strategies in order to improve the performance of the organization, and hence its competitiveness in the market.

According to Al-Ghrairee (2021) and Baker (2007), SP is the process of linking the organization and its employees to their changing environment, opportunities and threats in the internal and external environment. It is a process in which mission, participation of employees and stakeholders,

programs of action are developed, implemented, monitored, evaluated, and reviewed. They are particularly interested in predicting and responding to environmental factors, taking responsibility for change, and providing unity and direction for the activities of the organization, a tool for arranging one's perceptions of future environments where one's decisions can be made. Bryson (2018) determined that SP is one key to help institutions and communities deal with their changing circumstances. Strategic planning aims to enhance the institution's ability to act, think, and learn strategically. It is clear that SP is innovation in leadership and management, and this leads to the nature of the decision-making process (KIM, 2021). Aponte (2011) emphasized that SP is to ensure the interest of the organization and focus on maintaining optimum alignment with the environment. Moreover, SP has become commonplace for many managers who testify to its benefits. Additionally, various studies attest that SP is a tool that can promote systemic change, improve SQ of academics and managers, thereby enhancing the results of both employees and promote UCs climate. According to Augustyniak (2015), SP defines organizational purpose, determines the competitive scope and clarity of the organization's objectives provide a coherent, unified and integrated plan for the organization that provides the organization in response to external opportunities and threats, as well as internal strengths and weaknesses and provide the organization with a means to achieve engagement with stakeholders. While Martin (2014) argues that strategic plans are all similar in nature and usually have three main parts. The first is mission statement, which sets a noble and relatively ambitious goal. The second is the list of initiatives that the foundation will take to achieve its future objectives. This part of SP tends to be very organized but also very long. The overall length of the list is limited only by affordability. The third element is the conversion of initiatives into financial statements. In this way, plan is well in line with the annual budget. Moreover, SP become the budgetary front-end of the budget, often displaying five years of financial data to show a strategy.

2.6. Strategic Planning and Service Quality

Evidence from the literature suggests that SP is one of the key factors that can improve the organization's results and that it can drive the organization to achieve greater SQ (Al-Ghrairee, 2021; Dirpal, 2015; Sosiawani, Ramli, Mustafa, & Yusoff, 2015; Cronley & Kim, 2014). Demirkaya (2019) and White (2000) believe that one potentially potent way to improve SQ may be through SP, which is a process that facilitates inter-organizational change. In the meantime, Azahari Ramli, Mustafa, and Yusoff (2017) argue that having the environment threat assessment during the process of SP can contribute a positive effect on SP and eventually brings

a significant impact on SQ of the university. Moreover, SP and SQ both are common methods for improving services, and often occur concurrently. Examples include revised mission statements, leadership, employee participation, and environmental scanning of SP processes. Moreover, still limited empirical evidence documents the relationship between SQ and SP within human services (Listyaningsih, Syahila, Murniawaty, & Mustofa, 2021; Bryson, 2018). According to Bryson (2018), SP is a management tool that can help to set the direction of an organization. Furthermore, one of the major assumptions of SP research is that SP should lead to improved organizational quality (Pitriantini & Permana, 2021; Al-Ghrairee, 2021; Edwards, 2011). Meanwhile, Kohtamaki et al. (2012) stated that SP could effect staffs' commitment positively in implementing strategies that have been designed to enhance SQ of institute. Although, the relationship between SP and SQ in the private sector has not been very strong, research interest in this filed is not discouraged (Pollanen, Abdel-Maksoud, Elbanna, & Mahama, 2017). However, there are some studies in different sectors that do not support SQ.

A study conducted by Belwal and Amireh (2018) concluded that not all dimensions of SQ influence loyalty in attitudes to Oman's telecom customers. Only reliability and assurance have had a positive impact on customer loyalty collectively and the presumed effect of tangible materials, responsiveness and empathy on loyalty in attitudes. The results indicated that, by focusing on the reliability and security dimensions of the SERVQUAL model while locating its services, telecom operators in Oman can develop greater loyalty and profitability in long-term situations. Nevertheless, Poister and Streib (2005) and Azahari Ramli et al. (2017) claimed that SP process has led to a better performance in terms of delivering high-quality services. Based on this, there is a relationship between SP factors and SQ on PUs.

3. Methods

The study employs a quantitative method. Data were collected from a sample of 730 academics and administrators from PUs in Oman. Through the management of self-administered questionnaires, the researchers have the advantage of collecting completed questionnaires within a short period of time and opportunities to clarify any doubts that respondents may face. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on AMOS software was used for data analysis. This study attempts to investigate the impact of SP factors (mission statement, leadership, participation, and environmental scanning) on SQ dimensions, namely, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The SERVQUAL Model by Parasuraman et al. (1985) is applied. In addition, all measurements have already been tested and published

in previous research and journals. Strategic planning has four factors (Mission Statement with 5 items, Leadership with 3 items, Participation with 4 items, and Environmental Scanning with 5 items) as independent variables, and the scale contains 17 items to define data describing the university's current best practices and procedures in SP. The study has also applied SQ as a dependent variable perspective for academics and administrators. Service quality has five dimensions (Reliability with 2 items, Assurance with 2 items, Tangibility with 2 items, Empathy with 4 items, and Responsiveness with 2 items) in HE. Moreover, 12 SERVQUAL items (perception only) were modified from the original SERVQUAL scale of Parasuraman et al. (1991) and modified to suit the context of HE used to measure the perception of academic and administrative staff.

4. The Linkage Between Strategic Planning Factors and Service Quality

In order to achieve the research objectives in this study, hypotheses are applied based on the conceptual framework. Evidence for the linkage between SP factors and SQ, is available in the literature. The first factor of SP is mission statement and its impact on SQ. Previous studies (e.g., Pitriantini & Permana, 2021; Macedo et al., 2016; Aithal, 2016; Edwards, 2011) have provided evidence that there is a positive relationship between mission statements and provides SQ. In addition, Williams Jr, Morrell, and Mullane (2014) found that there is a relationship between mission statement and SQ. The previous findings provide the following hypothesis.

H1: *Mission statement has a direct positive impact on service quality.*

Leadership is the second factor and its impact on SQ. There have been number of studies (e.g., Turgutogullari & Saner, 2021; Chen et al., 2015; Kwan and Isa, 2016; Djordjevic et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2017) have found that leadership positively contributes to SQ in the organization. Therefore, based on the above results, this study presents the following hypothesis.

H2: *Leadership has a direct positive impact on service quality.*

The third factor is participation and its impact on SQ. Many previous studies (Listyaningsih et al., 2021; Cheng & Xue, 2013; Elliott, 2015; De Baerdemaeker & Bruggeman, 2015; Waitman, 2014) found that participation of employees has a positive impact on SQ. Therefore, based on the previous literature, this study introduces the following hypothesis.

H3: *Participation has a direct positive impact on service quality.*

Environmental scanning is the fourth factor and its impact on SQ. Several researchers (e.g., Ikebujo, 2020; Macedo et al., 2016; Pryor et al., 2019; Zaabi, 2014; Tang, 2016) have found evidence that there is a positive impact of environmental scanning on SQ. Some studies (e.g., Pryor et al., 2019) found that environmental scanning has a positive direct impact on performance. The studies have provided a platform for the following hypothesis.

H4: *Environmental scanning has a direct positive impact on service quality.*

5. Results

The final measurement model was tested with 29 items relating to the five variables. The normed chi-square is 3.242, which is less than 5, CFI is 0.916, which is above 0.9 and RMSEA is 0.055, which is lesser than 0.08. Hence, the final measurement model results demonstrated correctness is acceptable as a best-fit indices and no further MI is necessary for the model. The normality of the final measurement model of this study with univariate normality test was completed. The skewness and the kurtosis are between ± 2 , ± 7 respectively. Thus, the model correctness is acceptable. The composite reliability and AVE for the final measurement model construct are more than 0.7 and 0.5 respectively as shown in Table 2. Hair et al. (2010) explained that AVE exists when the AVE value is greater than 0.5 and the CR value is greater than AVE.

The correlations among the constructs test the discriminant validity. There is no correlation between constructs higher than 0.85. Thus, it is assumed that the discriminant validity is achieved. After conducting CFA for measurement model in each construct in the conceptual framework, SEM is performed to test the fit between the theoretical framework and the obtained hypotheses. The model fitting criteria of the structural regression model is shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted Values for the Final Measurement Model

Constructs	CR	AVE
Environmental Scanning	0.831	0.538
Mission Statement	0.830	0.514
Leadership	0.757	0.507
Participation	0.814	0.510
Service Quality	0.883	0.500

Table 3: Model Fit of the Structural Model

Fit Indices	Accept Value	Obtained Value	Comments
Chi square	≥ 0.05	≤ 1137.951	The required level is achieved
Chi square /df	≤ 5	≤ 3.242	The required level is achieved
AGFI or CFI or GFI or TLI	≥ 0.9	CFI ≥ 0.916	The required level is achieved
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	≤ 0.055	The required level is achieved

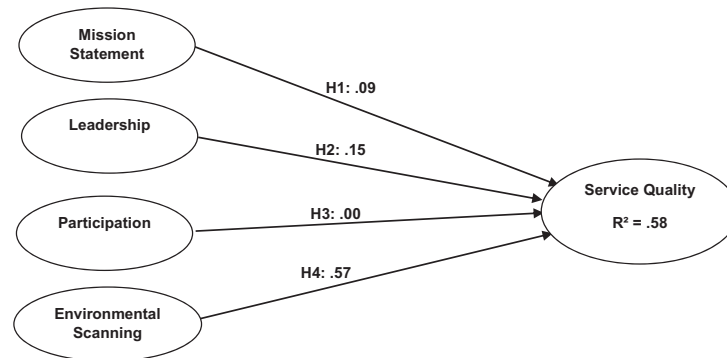


Figure 1: Structural Model

Table 4: Statistics of Structural Regression Model

Exogenous Variables	Endogenous Variables	Unstd. Estimates (B)	S.E	Std. Estimates (Beata)	C.R.	P
Mission Statement	Service Quality	0.122	0.073	0.089	1.668	0.095
Leadership	Service Quality	0.157	0.079	0.150	1.975	0.048
Participation	Service Quality	0.000	0.041	0.000	-0.003	0.997
Environmental scanning	Service Quality	0.554	0.069	0.566	7.014	0.000

Hence, the model fit indicators of the structural regression model within the acceptable threshold and no further modification is necessary for this model. Structural model is constructed as in Figure 1.

Table 4 presents the statistics of structural regression model. Moreover, it was hypothesized that mission statement has a direct positive impact on SQ H1. Statistically, the impact of mission statement on SQ is not significant ($B = 0.122$, $P > 0.05$), and therefore, H1 is not supported. Similarly, H2 hypothesized that leadership has a direct positive impact on SQ. The Table 4 shows that the impact of leadership on SQ is significant ($B = 0.157$, $P \leq 0.05$), and, thus, H2 is supported. Additionally, it was hypothesized that participation has a direct positive impact on SQ. As shown in Table 4, the impact of participation on SQ is not significant ($B = 0.000$, $P > 0.05$), hence, H3 is not supported.

Moreover, the H4 hypothesized that environmental scanning has a direct positive impact on SQ. Statistically,

there is a significant impact of environmental scanning on SQ ($B = 0.554$, $P \leq 0.05$), thus, H4 is supported (Table 4). Table 5 illustrates a summary of the hypotheses.

6. Discussion

The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of SP factors (mission statement, leadership, participation, and environmental scanning) on SQ. Before testing the hypotheses, the researchers examined the reliability and validity of the study model. Mission statement is the first factor. Contrary to the hypothesis, mission statement does not have a significant impact on SQ of Omani PUs. Accordingly, H1 showed that mission statement has a direct positive impact on SQ. As highlighted in the theoretical sections, the following studies have found established impact of mission statement on SQ (e.g., Al-Ghrairee, 2021; Macedo et al., 2016; Kirk & Nolan, 2010;

Table 5: Summary of Hypotheses

Path	Estimates	Critical Ratio	P-value	Decision
Mission Statement → Service Quality	0.09	1.668	>0.05	Rejected
Leadership → Service Quality	0.15	1.975	<0.05	Supported
Participation → Service Quality	0.00	−0.003	>0.05	Rejected
Environmental scanning → Service Quality	0.57	7.014	<0.05	Supported

King et al., 2010; Bartkus & Glassman, 2008; Kosmützky & Krücken, 2015; Brown & Iverson, 2004). However, the result of the current study has not been as hypothesized. In the non-profit healthcare arena, Vandijck, Desmidt, and Buelens (2007) found that no significant relationship between mission statement and desired employee performance. Likewise, a study of Sri Lankan companies by Dharmadasa, Maduraapourma, and Herath (2012) revealed no impact on firm SQ in companies that had a mission statement versus those that did not. Similarly, with Tuhin (2014) who conducted a study of all listed banks operating in Bangladesh with regard to mission statement and the quality, found that most listed banks achieve an average level of points and focus more on customers, products, and services compared to mission statement, markets, and employee interest. Mission statement should be a clearly written statement that communicates about mission of the organization to many parties related to that particular organization. The parties include employees, strategists, customers, investors and others who have any relationship with the affairs of the organization. Furthermore, a clear mission statement and understanding are necessary to define effective goals and formulate strategies (Akter & Ahmed, 2019, Hossain, 2004).

The second factor is leadership. The finding of this study shows leadership has a significant impact on SQ of Omani PUs. Therefore, H2 illustrated that leadership has a direct positive impact on SQ. As provided in the theoretical sections, the following studies have found established impact of leadership on SQ (e.g., Turgutogullari & Saner, 2021; Kim, 2021; Macedo et al., 2016; Edwards, 2011; Aithal, 2016). However, according to Schaubroeck, Lam, and Peng (2016), in a theory of two different types of leadership, transformational leaders encourage subordinates to focus on shared goals, missions and visions rather than personal interests; this often leads to effective employee performance. Transformational leadership can improve group cohesion, commitment, motivation, and performance. Hence, the work culture and different leadership styles play an important role in SQ. Furthermore, the result in the current study does not come as a surprised.

Participation is the third factor. Consequently, H3 showed that participation has a direct positive impact on SQ. Opposite to the study hypothesis; participation does not

have significant impact on SQ. As illustrated in theoretical sections, the following studies have found the consistent effect of participation on SQ (e.g., Listyaningsih et al., 2021; Cheng & Xue, 2013; Elliott, 2015; De Baerdemaeker & Bruggeman, 2015; Waitman, 2014). However, the result of the current study has not been as hypothesized. Consistent with findings by Oehmichen, Wolff, and Zschoche (2018), it was revealed that universities should provide training to enhance employee behavior while SQ delivery, they should also recognize and encourage staff behavior as a way to increase employee engagement. In line with the results of Wu and Mursid (2019) found that customer participation insignificantly effect on tourism services. The findings also concluded that employee participation refers to the level of employee participation in effort, performance, and knowledge as well as other contributions to service delivery. Oehmichen et al. (2018) examined hypotheses related to the direct effects of weak institutions and employees participation and additionally provide support for a complementary relationship between weak institutions and participation. Because of the low level of experience and the level of employee culture, this can affect employee participation.

The fourth factor is environmental scanning. The finding of the current study shows that environmental scanning has a statistically positive significant impact on SQ of Omani PUs. Accordingly, H4 illustrated that environmental scanning has a direct positive impact on SQ of PUs. In this study, environmental scanning has a statistically positive significant impact on SQ. The finding is consistent with findings of previous studies by Zaabi (2014), which found that the significance of the internal and external environment on the effectiveness of university performance. A recent study by Ikebujo (2020) and Pryor et al. (2019) showed that environmental scanning is positively linked to quality of firm performance, and understanding how senior executives form this activity has important theoretical and practical implications. Moreover, senior executives make decisions about how much environmental scanning they want universities to undertake, and implement the decisions across the university in at least three ways. First, they directed a mission and strategic objectives that alert other employees

to the breadth and depth of the environmental scanning required. Second, they identify the problems their universities face, and draw other employees' attention to environmental scanning. Third, they choose subordinates willing to engage in the required levels of environmental scanning and who are committed to recruiting additional subordinates to do the same (Teguh et al., 2021; Al-Jubari, 2019; Pryor et al., 2019; Hanaysha, 2016).

7. Conclusion

This study concluded that most PUs faced many problems regarding SQ including Oman. Although much efforts are made by private institutions to establish quality departments such as many educational institutions try to overcome the problems in understanding the obstacles toward SQ success. In order to overcome the problems that have been indicated and for the readiness of HEIs environment for implementing SP as a main factor can increase SQ in PUs. The current paper took great in-depth measures to identify the factors that influence SQ of PUs in Oman. The study applied a model consisting of five constructs. The paper helps to highlight the gaps identified in the literature review; that there are very few existing empirical studies exploring the impact of SP factors on SQ. An in-depth research is carried in relation to SP factors and SQ in PUs. The study attempts to understand empirically and theoretically SQ and SP in PUs in Oman. The analysis of the literature indicated that SP has a relationship with SQ in PUs. Therefore, continuous improvement, clear mission statement, academics and administrators focus, the concern of leadership, and understanding the environmental scanning seems to be indicators for the organization to apply structured approach methods and provide impact on the organization's SQ for the implementation of SP, whereas a more empirical study is needed for future endorsement. The study gives birth to a comprehensive model in the analysis of SP factors toward SQ from academics and administrators in Omani's PUs. Apart from being a reference for PUs service providers and MoHE to guide universities to achieve a desirable educational future and meet the expectations of Oman's strategic Vision 2040 of HE plan.

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