



Students' Satisfaction with Service Quality of Community Campuses in Gandaki Province, Nepal

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Abstract

This study aims to assess student satisfaction with campus facilities at community campuses in Gandaki Province, Nepal, using the SERVQUAL model. The main objectives are to evaluate students' satisfaction with the provided facilities and to examine the relationship between the dimensions of these facilities and overall student satisfaction. A quantitative research approach along with descriptive and causal research design were employed. Data was collected from 143 bachelor's and master's level students in management, education, and humanities faculties from three campuses. The data collection was done through a well-constructed questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Statistical tools, including multiple regression and Pearson correlation analyses, were used to present and analyze the data. The results indicate a generally positive perception of institutional facilities, with the assurance dimension scoring highest (mean = 3.771) and responsiveness scoring lowest (mean = 3.372). Empathy emerged as the most significant factor influencing student satisfaction ($\beta = 0.282$, $p < 0.05$), followed by reliability ($\beta = 0.277$, $p < 0.05$) and tangibility ($\beta = 0.191$, $p < 0.05$). The findings underscore the importance of personalized attention, consistent service delivery, and well-maintained facilities in enhancing student satisfaction. This study provides valuable insights for campus management to improve facilities, thereby aiding in student retention and attraction.

Keywords: Community campuses, campus facilities, higher education, SERVQUAL model, student satisfaction

Introduction

Since the 1960s and 1970s, Nepal has seen a significant increase in the

number of institutions providing higher education. Currently, there are 533 community campuses in Nepal, which

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account for 29.5 percent of the total number of students enrolled in higher education in the country. Of these, 84 campuses are in Gandaki Province, which covers 8.34 percent of the total enrollment (UGC, 2023). Higher education plays a significant role in the holistic development of the nation, shaping the intellectual capabilities and skills of its people. In recent years, efforts to improve the quality of higher education have increased globally, with a particular focus on student satisfaction as an important measure of institutional effectiveness (Oliso et al., 2024). Community campuses are mostly established through the efforts and ownership of local communities. Financially, these campuses depend on student fees, but they are not profit-oriented (Bhandari, 2024). Sustainability of higher education roots to the academic as well as institutional quality, which demands for the satisfaction of manpower working in the concerned institutions. This study has been conducted in Pokhara Metropolis and attempts to identify the satisfaction status of teachers in accredited and non-accredited campuses with the following objectives: 1. Community campuses in Gandaki province cater to a significant portion of the total student population pursuing higher education. These community campuses play a vital role in providing accessible and affordable higher education to students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

With the increase in the moving of students in search of quality education, in the recent days, the higher educational institutions of Nepal, specially community campuses are facing a great challenge to attract quality students and retain the enrolled students. Analyzing

the recent data, it shows that the rate of student dropouts has increased alarmingly, which has a serious impact on the community campuses of Nepal. According to *OnlineKhabar English News*, (July 18, 2023)

In the financial year 2022/23, more than one lakh students have left Nepal to study. According to the NOC (No Objection Certificate) branch of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 110,217 students obtained their no-objection certificate to study abroad. Most of the students left for Australia with 33,991 NOCs being issued to students going to study there. Similarly, 21,544 students obtained NOCs to go study in Canada, 21,658 to study in Japan and 10,527 to study in the UK. According to the ministry, 3,046 students obtained NOC to study in Korea while 2,389 NOCs were issued to students going to the UAE.

Unless quality education and assurance of employment is available within the country, the trend of students leaving the country to pursue higher education abroad is less likely to abate (UGC Annual Report, 2018/19). To ensure the survival of community campuses, it is necessary to attract and retain potential students and they need to focus on a market-driven program, providing quality services and facilities to ensure student satisfaction. In recent days, community campuses have realized this, and initiated quality improvement efforts to emphasize student satisfaction despite the many challenges. Gurung et al. (2022) found that effective strategies for increasing business student enrollment at community campuses include enhancing

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the college's reputation, offering quality programs, providing affordable tuition, and ensuring graduates' employment opportunities.

University Grants Commission (UGC) Nepal is actively working to improve the quality of higher education through the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive quality assurance and accreditation (QAA) system. This system includes regular evaluations to ensure institutions for meeting quality standards. Through the Higher Education Reform Project (HERP), UGC Nepal has developed criteria for institutional and program accreditation and educational outcomes assessment (Pant, 2019). Additionally, UGC distributes grants to community campuses based on performance indicators and specific needs, encouraging institutions to enhance their instructional standards (Sharma, 2020). Consequently, community campuses are increasingly focused on quality improvement, with student satisfaction being influenced by both the quality of education and the physical and social campus environment (Berkoz & Celik, 2016).

Student satisfaction is the first basis of quality of every institution. The quality of various facilities provided to students indicates student satisfaction. Institutional facilities encompass a wide range of physical and service-oriented aspects, including classrooms, libraries, laboratories, sports facilities, and general campus infrastructure. These facilities directly impact the learning environment and, consequently, student satisfaction (Douglas et al., 2006). Previous studies have shown that well-maintained and adequately equipped facilities are associated with higher levels of student

satisfaction (Kara & DeShields, 2004). Conversely, inadequate or poorly maintained facilities can negatively affect the student experience, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced academic performance (Hill et al., 2003).

In non-academic sectors, satisfaction is a well-researched topic. However, limited research explores student experiences regarding the adequacy and quality of facilities available at these institutions. Student satisfaction may have been considered an important issue in the past, but now, students are recognized as the customers of educational institutions. Anilkumar and Sagi (2012) argued that students are the customers of an educational institution and their satisfaction is essential for their retention.

Since the students are the direct beneficiaries of the community campus, it is necessary to make them satisfied, awaken the existing students, and attract new students to increase enrollment. In the context of community campuses within Gandaki Province, Nepal, ensuring satisfactory facilities is imperative for fostering an environment conducive to learning and personal development. This study aims to assess the level of student satisfaction with institutional facilities and identify areas for improvement in the context of community campuses. This study specifically investigates how tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy impact student satisfaction.

Literature Review

One of the most important factors in determining the overall quality of educational experiences and outcomes is student satisfaction with the facilities provided by the educational institution. It

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includes a broad spectrum of components, such as the physical infrastructure, technology resources, and the provision of both academic and non-academic services. Some models about quality and satisfaction and key findings from previous studies on student happiness in higher education are discussed in this literature overview with an emphasis on community campuses located in Gandaki Province, Nepal.

Kotler describes satisfaction as “a person’s feeling of pleasure that results from comparing a product’s perceived performance to their expectations” (as cited in Khurshid & Arshad, 2012, p. 42). Student satisfaction, defined as “the extent to which students’ expectations and needs are met by their educational experience,” is influenced by a variety of factors, including the quality of institutional facilities (Aldridge & Rowley, 1998; Elliott & Healy, 2001).

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parsuraman et al. (1988) is a widely used framework for measuring service quality across various industries, including education. This model recognizes five key dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. When applied to higher education, these dimensions can be used to assess the quality of institutional services and their impact on student satisfaction.

Student satisfaction is influenced by how well these dimensions of institutional quality meet or exceed student expectations. Below is an analysis of how each SERVQUAL dimension relates to student satisfaction in higher education:

Tangible include the physical appearance of the service: -physical

facilities; -appearance of personnel; -tools or equipment used to provide the service; -physical representations of the service, the physical environment of an educational institution plays a significant role in shaping student perceptions. Modern, well-maintained facilities can enhance the learning experience and contribute to higher student satisfaction (Douglas et al., 2006). Conversely, outdated or poorly maintained facilities can lead to dissatisfaction and negatively affect the overall student experience.

Reliability involves consistent performance and dependability. It means the firm delivers the service correctly the first time and keeps its promises. In education, consistency and dependability are crucial for student satisfaction. Students expect reliable access to courses, consistent academic standards, and dependable administrative support. If institutions fail to meet these expectations, they risk losing student trust and satisfaction (Hill et al., 2003).

The ability of an institution to respond promptly and effectively to student needs and concerns is a key determinant of satisfaction. Responsive institutions address student queries and issues swiftly, providing a supportive and efficient administrative process. This responsiveness fosters a positive student experience and enhances satisfaction (Elliott and Shin, 2002).

Assurance refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees, and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. It includes aspects such as the competence of employee, and their ability to communicate effectively. The competence and credibility of faculty and staff significantly influence student satisfaction. Knowledgeable, skilled, and

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courteous faculty members who inspire confidence in their students contribute to a positive learning environment. Additionally, the overall reputation and accreditation status of the institution play a role in assuring students of the quality of their education (Oldfield and Baron, 2000).

According to Telford and Masson (2005), empathy contains politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of contact personnel providing personalized attention and support to students helps in building a strong relationship between the institution and its students. Institutions that show genuine concern for student well-being, offer tailored support services, and create an inclusive environment are likely to achieve higher levels of student satisfaction.

The SERVQUAL model provides a comprehensive framework for assessing student satisfaction with institutional facilities in community campuses in Gandaki Province, Nepal. By examining the dimensions of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, this study aims to identify areas for improvement in the quality of services and facilities provided to students. Understanding these dimensions and their impact on student satisfaction is essential for community campuses to enhance their educational offerings and ensure student retention in an increasingly competitive higher education landscape.

Recent research has highlighted the significance of student satisfaction as a crucial measure of institutional effectiveness. For instance, a study conducted in Ethiopian public universities demonstrated that the quality of educational services has a significant positive impact on student

satisfaction, which in turn influences academic performance (Oliso et al., 2024). This finding suggests that improving service quality is essential for enhancing educational outcomes. Additionally, research published in the *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship* underscores the importance of utilizing student feedback to improve institutional practices. The study found that understanding and addressing student satisfaction can lead to greater institutional effectiveness, as satisfied students are more likely to excel academically and contribute positively to the institution's reputation (*Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 2024).

The relationship between the SERVQUAL dimensions and student satisfaction has been extensively studied in various educational contexts. This section reviews empirical findings that demonstrate the significance of each SERVQUAL variable in influencing student satisfaction, particularly in areas of higher education institutions.

The physical environment of educational institutions, particularly the aspect of tangibility, significantly influences student satisfaction. Research by Hadimani et al. (2024) indicates that students rated the physical facilities of their university as average, with a notable appreciation for well-maintained instructional farms and laboratories. This finding underscores the importance of tangible elements, such as cleanliness and modern equipment, in enhancing student satisfaction. Similarly, Douglas et al. (2006) emphasized that modern and well-maintained facilities are crucial for creating a positive learning experience, further linking the tangibility dimension of the SERVQUAL model to overall

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student satisfaction.

Reliability, defined as the ability to deliver promised services consistently, is a critical determinant of student satisfaction. Subedi et al. (2019) highlighted that students expect consistent academic standards and reliable access to courses. Their findings indicated that when institutions fail to meet these expectations, student satisfaction declines. This aligns with Hill et al. (2003), who noted that dependable administrative support is essential for fostering trust and satisfaction among students.

Similarly, responsiveness reflects the willingness of staff to assist students and provide prompt service. Omar et al. (2021) found that students who perceived their institutions as responsive to their needs reported higher satisfaction levels. The study emphasized that timely assistance in addressing student concerns significantly enhances the overall educational experience. Elliott and Shin (2002) also confirmed that institutions that address student queries promptly foster a positive environment, leading to increased satisfaction.

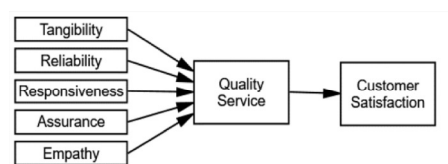
Likewise, assurance encompasses the knowledge and courtesy of staff, which instills confidence in students. Oldfield and Baron (2000) found that competent faculty and staff significantly influence student satisfaction. In the context of community campuses, the assurance dimension emerged as one of the highest-rated factors, with a mean score of 3.771 in the study conducted by Gurung et al. (2022). This finding indicates that students feel more satisfied when they perceive their instructors and administrative staff as knowledgeable and supportive.

Also, empathy involves providing personalized attention and care to students, was identified as the most significant factor influencing student satisfaction in the study by Gurung et al. (2022). The regression analysis revealed a strong positive relationship ($\beta = 0.282$, $p < 0.05$) between empathy and student satisfaction. This finding is supported by Telford and Masson (2005), who argued that institutions demonstrating genuine concern for student well-being achieve higher satisfaction levels.

This study examines student satisfaction with the quality of facilities provided by community campuses in Gandaki province, Nepal using SERVQUAL dimensions. This framework integrates various dimensions of service quality that directly influence student satisfaction, providing a structured approach to understanding the relationship between institutional facilities and student experiences.

Figure 1:

The SERVQUAL Model



Source: Adopted from Parasuraman et al. (1988)p 48

The literature discussed above indicates that student satisfaction is one of the major indicators for assessing institutional quality. It is also a focus that, institutional quality plays a significant role in attracting and retention of students. To study student satisfaction

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in institutional facilities, there have been many researches. However, in the current context of Nepal, the community campuses are facing the challenges of student retention. In this scenario, the study focused on the relationship between the student's expectations and the services provided by community campuses was not found. In the case of Gandaki province, there has not been enough study to understand the opinion of the students about the facility provided by the institution in order to increase the attraction of potential students in the community campus and retain them.

Research Methods

Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used for presenting and analyzing data. Based on the results obtained from multiple regression analysis, the satisfaction of students with the facilities provided by the campuses was measured.

Data Collection Procedure

This study is based on primary data. Primary data were gathered from 143 bachelor's and master's students in the management, education, and humanities faculties at community campuses in Gandaki Province, Nepal. The SERVQUAL-based questionnaire by Oldfield and Baron (2000) was distributed via Google Forms through email and social media, with support from teachers and students. The responses included 110 from Myagdi Multiple Campus, 23 from Gupteshor Multiple Campus, and 10 from Galkot Multiple Campus. Verbal consent was obtained, and participation was voluntary, with all data used solely for this study.

Demographic Information of respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Profile of Respondents

| Respondents Representation | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gender: Male | 54 | 37.8 |
| Female | 89 | 62.2 |
| Age Group: Below 20 Years | 30 | 21.0 |
| 20 to 24 Years | 79 | 55.2 |
| 25 to 29 Years | 29 | 20.3 |
| 30 & Above 30 Years | 5 | 3.5 |
| Level: Bachelor | 119 | 83.2 |
| Master | 24 | 16.8 |
| Faculty: Management | 91 | 63.6 |
| Education | 40 | 28.0 |
| Humanities/Arts | 12 | 8.4 |

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Involvement (Other than Study)

| | | |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Job | 64 | 44.8 |
| Business | 10 | 7.0 |
| Skill Development | 16 | 11.2 |
| No Involvement | 53 | 37.1 |
| Total | 143 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey & SPSS Analysis, 2024

Table 1 presents the profile of respondents. The majority of respondents were females, accounting for 62.2 percent, with males making up 37.8 percent. In terms of age distribution, the largest group of respondents was aged 20-24 years, comprising 55.2 percent, followed by those under 20 years at 21 percent, those aged 25-29 years at 20.3 percent, and those aged 30 and above at 3.5 percent. The majority of participants were Bachelor's level students, accounting for 83.2 percent, with Master's level students making up 16.8 percent. Regarding departmental representation, most of the respondents were from the Management department at 63.3 percent, followed by those from the Education department at 28 percent, and the Humanities department at 8.4 percent. Additionally, 44.8 percent of respondents were engaged in a job alongside their studies, 7 percent were involved in business, 11.2 percent participated in skill development activities, while 37.1 percent had no additional engagements alongside their studies.

Data Analysis tools

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) IBM Statistics version

26 was utilized to analyze the data, employing descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis included calculating means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions to assess student satisfaction with institutional facilities. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationships between service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) and student satisfaction, represented by the equation:

$$SS = \alpha + \beta_1(TAN) + \beta_2(REL) + \beta_3(RES) + \beta_4(ASSU) + \beta_5(EMP) + \epsilon$$

Where:

SS represents student satisfaction.

α is the constant.

β_1 , β_2 , β_3 , β_4 , and β_5 are the slope coefficients of the independent variables.

TAN stands for tangibility.

REL represents reliability.

RES denotes responsiveness.

ASSU signifies assurance.

EMP stands for empathy.

ϵ represents errors in the regression model.

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Reliability Testing

Table 1

Summary of Reliability of Constructs

| Variables | No of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Tangibility | 5 | 0.78 |
| Reliability | 6 | 0.828 |
| Responsiveness | 6 | 0.822 |
| Assurance | 5 | 0.866 |
| Empathy | 6 | 0.851 |
| Students Satisfaction | 2 | 0.893 |
| Overall | 30 | 0.949 |

SPSS Analysis 2024

The reliability of the questionnaire were assessed before data processing to ensure accuracy and dependability. Cronbach's Alpha, used to measure internal consistency, showed that all constructs had values above 0.7, indicating acceptable to excellent consistency. The highest reliability was observed for student satisfaction with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.893, reflecting excellent internal consistency. Although tangibility had the lowest reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.78, it still falls within the acceptable range.

Testing of Regression Assumption

In conducting the multiple regression analysis, it is essential to verify that certain statistical assumptions are met to ensure the validity and reliability of the model. These assumptions include linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, normality of residuals, and the absence of multicollinearity.

Linearity: The linearity assumption was tested by examining scatterplots of the residuals versus the predicted values. The

graph supports the linearity assumption between all independent variables and Student Satisfaction. The moderately high R^2 value, coupled with the close alignment of data points to the regression line, suggests that a linear model is appropriate for these variables.

Normality of Residuals: Based on the histogram and the superimposed normal curve, the residuals appear to be approximately normally distributed, supporting the assumption of normality in the regression model.

Multicollinearity: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values and tolerance values were computed to assess multicollinearity among the predictors. VIF values of all predictors are below 5 and tolerance values of predictors are below one. It indicates that multicollinearity is not a concern in this model. Similarly, a Durbin-Watson value of 1.79 suggests that there is no significant autocorrelation among the residuals. This finding supports the validity of the regression model used to analyze the impact of various service quality dimensions on student satisfaction.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study on student satisfaction with institutional facilities at community campuses in Gandaki Province, Nepal. The results obtained from descriptive and inferential statistics provide insights into the status of student satisfaction and the relationship between service quality dimensions and overall student satisfaction. The analysis reveals key trends and significant factors that influence students' perceptions of the facilities provided by their institutions.

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Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis has conducted to assess the level of student satisfaction. Descriptive statistics fall into two categories: measures of central tendency and measures of variability (spread). The

mean, median, and mode are indicators of central tendency, while the standard deviation reflects the variability in the data. The level of student satisfaction with the institutional facilities among the respondents is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Student Satisfaction

| Variables | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | S.D |
|--|-----|------|------|------|-------|
| Tangibility (The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, materials, and personnel) | | | | | |
| The premises (physical environment) of the campus is clean, safe and well-maintained. (v1) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.76 | .971 |
| The classrooms are clean, comfortable, and well-equipped with adequate and functional equipment. (v2) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.45 | .977 |
| Well-equipped library and lab facility with a peaceful and charming environment (v3) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.52 | .977 |
| Clean and tidy and good hospitality with healthy food in the canteen (v4) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.14 | 1.184 |
| Smartness of teaching faculties and non-teaching staffs (V5) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.46 | 1.033 |
| Reliability (The ability to deliver services dependably and accurately) | | | | | |
| Teaching capability and proficiency of teaching faculties (V6) | 143 | 2 | 5 | 3.75 | .826 |
| The facilities (e.g., library, computer labs, canteen, sports) are safe and available when I need them. (V7) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.35 | .959 |
| Appropriate teaching methods are used by the faculty to achieve the teaching objectives. (V8) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.48 | 1.006 |
| The campus administration maintains all records of students accurately and provides required information on time. (V9) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.78 | 1.017 |
| There is good practice in assignments, homework, internal exams and feedback systems (V10) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.49 | 1.131 |

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Classes, examinations, and other activities are start and end on time as scheduled. (V11)

Responsiveness (The willingness to help students and address their needs)

Teaching faculties provide prompt service to students (V12)

Campus administration provides prompt service to students (V13)

The campus administration is responsive to the student's feedback and suggestions. (V14)

Faculties and administration staffs are always willing to help the students' needs (V15)

The campus provides academic counseling services to students on a regular basis (V16)

The campus acts as a bridge with various employers for ventures or jobs for students along with their studies. (V17)

Assurance (The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence)

The campus faculties are knowledgeable and qualified in their fields. (V18)

Administrative staffs have knowledge to answer your questions. They provide clear information about campus facilities and services. (V19)

The campus has adequate quality faculties and classes are regular and effective (V20)

Faculties and staffs treat students with respect and courtesy. (V21)

The campus environment fosters a sense of trust and security. (V22)

Empathy (The provision of caring, individualized attention to students)

The teaching faculties and non-teaching staffs give individual attention to the students and they understand the specific needs of the students. (V23)

The staffs show genuine interest in solving students' problems (V24)

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| | | | | | |
|--|-----|------|------|-------|-------|
| The campus provides opportunities for students to connect with faculty and staff outside of class. (V25) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.20 | 1.146 |
| The campus provides support services that address the individual needs of students. (V26) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.32 | 1.092 |
| The campus has convenient operating hours for students. (V27) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.59 | .988 |
| The overall appearance of the campus reflects a positive learning environment. (V28) | 143 | 1 | 5 | 3.80 | .900 |
| Overall Student's Satisfaction | | | | | |
| How satisfied are you with the overall campus facilities? (V29) | 143 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.517 | 0.895 |
| How likely are you to recommend this campus to prospective students? (V30) | 143 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.748 | 0.923 |
| Tangibility | 143 | 1.60 | 5.00 | 3.469 | 0.753 |
| Reliability | 143 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 3.618 | 0.728 |
| Responsiveness | 143 | 1.67 | 5.00 | 3.372 | 0.755 |
| Assurance | 143 | 1.60 | 5.00 | 3.771 | 0.760 |
| Empathy | 143 | 1.33 | 5.00 | 3.437 | 0.778 |
| Student Satisfaction | 143 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.633 | 0.864 |

Source: Field Survey & SPSS Analysis, 2024

N: The number of students who responded to the survey question about that facility or service.

Min.: The minimum rating given by students (on a scale of 1 to 5).

Max.: The maximum rating given by students (on a scale of 1 to 5).

Mean: The average rating given by students.

S.D.: The standard deviation of the ratings

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for various aspects of campus facilities based on a survey of 143 respondents. The data is segmented into categories reflecting five dimensions of the service quality (SERVQUAL) model, i.e., tangibility, reliability, responsiveness,

assurance, and empathy.

The tangibility dimension, which assesses the physical appearance and condition of campus facilities and personnel, had a mean score of 3.469 with a standard deviation of 0.753. The highest-rated aspect within this dimension was the cleanliness and maintenance of the campus premises (mean = 3.76), while the lowest was related to the canteen's cleanliness and hospitality (mean = 3.14). This suggests that students are generally satisfied with the physical appearance and maintenance of the campus, though improvements are needed in the canteen services.

Reliability, the ability to deliver services consistently and accurately, had a mean

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score of 3.618 with a standard deviation of 0.728. The highest score was for the time scheduling of activities (mean = 3.86), and the lowest was for the safety and availability of institutional facilities (mean = 3.36). The results indicate that students generally trust the institution's ability to provide reliable services, though there is room for improvement in the safety and availability of facilities.

The responsiveness dimension, which measures the willingness of the campus to help students and address their needs, had a mean score of 3.372. The range of mean scores for variables in this dimension (3.36 to 3.86) indicates a generally positive perception of the campus's responsiveness, although it is the lowest-scoring dimension overall. This suggests a need for the institution to improve its promptness in service, response to feedback, and provision of academic counseling.

Assurance, assessing the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence, had the highest overall mean score of 3.771. This dimension includes variables such as the qualifications of faculties, knowledge of administrative staff, and the sense of trust and security on campus. The high scores suggest that students have a relatively high level of trust and confidence in the

institution's employees.

The empathy dimension, which evaluates the provision of caring, individualized attention to students, had mean scores ranging from 3.20 to 3.59. This indicates that students perceive the institution as generally empathetic, providing personalized support and convenient operating hours.

The mean score for student satisfaction was 3.633, indicating a generally positive perception of the institutional facilities. The average satisfaction with campus facilities (mean = 3.517) and the likelihood of recommending the campus to potential students (mean = 3.748) suggest a moderate level of satisfaction among students

The highest mean score among the service quality dimensions was for assurance (mean = 3.771), highlighting a strong sense of trust and confidence in the institution's employees. Conversely, the lowest mean score was for responsiveness (mean = 3.372), indicating areas where the campus needs to enhance its service promptness, feedback responsiveness, and educational counseling.

Pearson's Correlation Analysis

The following table shows the Pearson's correlation of service quality dimensions and student satisfaction.

Table 3
Pearson's Correlation of Service Quality Dimensions and Student Satisfaction

| Variables | Tangibility | Reliability | Responsiveness | Assurance | Empathy | Student Satisfaction |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|---------|----------------------|
| Tangibility | 1 | | | | | |
| Reliability | .699** | 1 | | | | |
| Responsiveness | .686** | .755** | 1 | | | |

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| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| Assurance | .607** | .754** | .729** | 1 | | |
| Empathy | .470** | .592** | .504** | .502** | 1 | |
| Student Satisfaction | .635** | .714** | .672** | .642** | .613** | 1 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), Sig. 0.000

Note: SPSS Analysis, 2024

Table 4 presents the Pearson's correlation analysis examining the relationship between the independent variable, service quality of institutional facilities, and the dependent variable, student satisfaction. The results show a statistically significant positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Specifically, reliability and student satisfaction exhibit a very strong positive correlation [$r = .714, p < .01$]. Similarly, responsiveness and student satisfaction [$r = .672, p < .01$], assurance and student satisfaction [$r = .642, p < .01$], tangibility and student satisfaction [$r = .657, p < .01$], and empathy and student satisfaction [$r = .613, p$

$< .01$] also demonstrate strong positive correlations. Among these, reliability shows the highest correlation with student satisfaction (0.714**), indicating it as the most influential factor. Although empathy has a comparatively lower correlation with student satisfaction (0.613**), it still maintains a strong positive association.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The regression analysis seeks to determine how overall institutional service quality influences student satisfaction and to construct the regression model accordingly.

Table 4

Coefficient Table of Satisfaction and Independent Variables

| Variables | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|-------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. | |
| Model (Constant) | | -.146 | .264 | | | |
| Tangibility | | .191 | .091 | .166 | 2.110 | .037 |
| Reliability | | .277 | .118 | .233 | 2.341 | .021 |
| Responsiveness | | .196 | .105 | .171 | 1.872 | .063 |
| Assurance | | .128 | .099 | .113 | 1.296 | .197 |
| Empathy | | .282 | .074 | .254 | 3.826 | .000 |

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R = 0.785

R² = 0.616

F value = 43.865

Sin. value= 0.000

Predictors: (Constant), Empathy, Tangibility, Assurance, Responsiveness, Reliability

Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

Note: SPSS Analysis, 2024

Table 5, the multiple regression analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between the service quality dimensions and student satisfaction, with an R value of 0.785 and an R² of 0.616, indicating that 61.6% of the variance in student satisfaction is explained by the predictors. The F value of 43.865 is significant at $p < 0.001$, indicating that the overall model is significant. The results show that empathy is the most significant predictor of student satisfaction, with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.254 and a p-value less than 0.001, suggesting that empathy has a strong positive impact on student satisfaction. Tangibility and reliability also emerge as significant predictors, with standardized coefficients (Beta) of 0.166 and 0.233, respectively, and p-values less than 0.05. Responsiveness shows a positive relationship with student satisfaction, although its effect is not significant at the 0.05 level. Assurance does not show a significant relationship with student satisfaction. The constant term is not significant, indicating that the model is not biased towards a particular value. Overall, the results suggest that institutions should prioritize empathy, tangibility, and reliability to enhance student satisfaction.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into student satisfaction with

institutional facilities at community campuses in Gandaki Province, Nepal. By applying the SERVQUAL model, identified that empathy, reliability, and tangibility are crucial factors influencing student satisfaction. These results are consistent with previous research, but they also reveal unique aspects specific to the Nepali higher education context.

The study was guided by the two research questions: "what is the present level of student satisfaction in community campuses?" and "how do different dimensions of institutional service quality influence student satisfaction on community campuses?" The findings explore that, the level of student satisfaction in community campuses, as indicated by a mean satisfaction score of 3.633, is generally positive, with assurance rated highest and responsiveness identified as an area needing improvement. The results confirm the hypothesis that tangibility, reliability, and empathy are key drivers of student satisfaction. Tangibility, which refers to the physical facilities and campus appearance, significantly impacts student satisfaction, highlighting the importance of maintaining clean, well-equipped, and aesthetically pleasing environments. This finding is consistent with studies by Hadimani et al. (2024) and Douglas et al. (2006), who also underscore the role of physical facilities

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in enhancing the educational experience.

Reliability emerged as the most influential factor in this study, aligning with the work of Subedi et al. (2019) and Hill et al. (2003). Students value consistency and dependability in service delivery, which suggests that institutions need to ensure reliable access to courses and administrative support. The strong correlation between reliability and student satisfaction underlines the importance of trustworthiness in institutional services.

Empathy, which involves providing personalized attention and care to students, was found to be the most critical factor in student satisfaction, with the highest standardized beta coefficient. This is in line with previous research by Gurung et al. (2022) and Telford and Masson (2005), which also highlight the significance of empathetic and supportive environments. The positive impact of empathy on student satisfaction suggests that institutions should cultivate a culture of care and provide personalized support to address the individual needs of students.

On the other hand, responsiveness and assurance, though positively correlated with student satisfaction, did not show statistically significant impacts. Responsiveness, which measures the promptness of institutional responses to student needs, had the lowest mean score among the SERVQUAL dimensions, indicating potential gaps in addressing student concerns promptly. This finding contrasts with Elliott and Shin's (2002) study, which found that timely responses are crucial for student satisfaction. The lack of significance in this study may suggest that while students appreciate prompt service, other factors like

reliability and empathy are more influential in their overall satisfaction.

Similarly, assurance, which pertains to the knowledge, competence, and courtesy of staff, was not a significant determinant of student satisfaction in this context. Although previous studies, such as those by Oldfield and Baron (2000) and Gurung et al. (2022), identified assurance as important, the current study suggests that in the context of community campuses in Gandaki Province, other factors may be more critical. The relatively high mean score for assurance indicates that students generally trust the staff, but this trust alone does not significantly influence their satisfaction.

Conclusion

This study reveals that students at community campuses in Gandaki Province, Nepal, generally view the facilities positively but believe there is area for improvement in responsiveness to their needs. Key factors for student satisfaction include empathy, reliability, and well-maintained facilities. To enhance the student experience, campuses should prioritize improvements in cleanliness, comfort, and equipment, while also increasing responsiveness and fostering an empathetic environment. These measures are important for creating a more supportive campus environment. Findings suggest that campus management and policymakers should focus on maintaining high-quality facilities, providing consistent services, and creating a caring environment to promote student satisfaction, retention, and success. Future research should consider exploring the causal relationships between service quality and student satisfaction, investigating

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specific gaps in responsiveness and assurance, and expanding the study to other regions or types of educational institutions in Nepal to enhance the generalizability of the results.

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