

# Evaluating Hedperf as Predictor of Business Students Satisfaction in the Provision of Quality Education Services

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## Abstract

The pressure for modification of higher education sector can be traced globally. The study aimed to assess service quality provided by University for Development Studies School of Business and Law (UDS-SBL) in the opinion of business students via HEDPERF service quality model. Literature was reviewed to cover: higher education and service quality, higher education performance model (HEDPERF), the relationship between service quality and students' satisfaction, and students' satisfaction. The research approach was quantitative and the design was descriptive. As a quantitative study, a questionnaire with close ended questions was used to elicit the responses. It was found that the association between service quality variables and general business students' satisfaction were vastly significant, with programmes aspects being the strongest. Meanwhile, academic, non-academic, reputation, access and design aspects are equally paramount and should be given special attention. It was concluded that service quality and business students' satisfaction play a key role for universities to become and even maintain fast track race, avenue for attracting prospective business students, business students' repeat enrollment on subsequent programs and increase the general success of the universities.

**Index terms**— hedperf, business students, satisfaction, quality, education, service quality.

## 1 Introduction

The current tertiary education is bedeviled with manifold of challenges, masterminded by global environment of education (Bernhard, 2012). The demand and pressure for reforming higher education sector can be traced far and wide (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009). Higher education sector competitive strategies are developed via quality (Moldovan, 2012). Kettunen (2011) stated that strategic management procedure and quality assurance practices are usually executed for higher educational institutions to achieve their objectives. Service quality dimensions and strategies are implemented in the higher education sector because of the invasion of IT, economic factors, new generation of students, (Kazeroony, 2012), competition, and globalization of education. It is stated that student enrollment has become a difficult issue since students have become more aware, interactive, and selective in respect of their future programmed purchase (Zafropoulos & Vrana, 2008).

As acknowledged in many studies, modern-day higher education sector is changing essentially because they have to compete for student numbers in international environment (Kazeroony, 2012; Sharma, & Kamath, 2006; Stukalina, 2014; Wissema, 2009). Parents and student are considered education customers and the whole process of quality management in higher education sector concentrates on the needs of both internal and external customers (Sharma, & Kamath, 2006; Stukalina, 2014). Management of quality is a key area for stakeholders of higher education (Kettunen, 2008). Making education programmes commodities is changing the nature of higher education sector as it begins to accept business philosophies and its commerce practices (Diamantis & Benos, 2007; Sharma, & Kamath, 2006; Stukalina, 2014). As stated by Diamantis and Benos (2012), inevitability to grantee quality improvement in education has motivated the deployment of various means of assessment of the promised quality. There are small amount of studies on the concept of service quality which can be used

to improve the higher education sector in Ghana. Hence the study aims to assess service quality provided by business students at University for Development Studies School of Business and Law (UDS-SBL) in the opinion of students via HEdPERF service quality model.

## 2 II.

### 3 Literature a) Service Quality

Perceived quality is a base for abstracting the paradigm of quality (Hasan, Ilias, Rahman, & Razak, 2008). Perceived service quality judgment is more cognitive and can be define as "the difference between service perceived and service expected" (Bigné, et al., 2003). Consumer judgment about an entity's overall superiority or experience is perceived quality (Zeithaml, 1987). A study shows the positive significant impact of perceived service quality on the customer satisfaction that affects customer loyalty through mediating role of trust, which leads to positive word of mouth (Ribbink, Riel, Liljander, & Streukens, 2004). EduQUAL scale that was originated from SERVQUAL, was firstly developed by (Mahapatra & Khan, 2007) and used for measuring the quality in technical education institution. Afterwards EduQUAL was adapted and used by (Narang, 2012) for measuring quality in management institution.

### 4 b) HEI customers

Lewis and Smith (2001) reported that HEIs have both internal customers (students, administrator, and faculty members) and external customers such as alumni, regulatory agencies, government, donors, and the general community. Though students are identified as customers, they are considered different from the business customer: HEI customers do not pay full fees for services received; the selection and intake is based on certain standards per the rules of the accreditation agencies; the expenses of HEI customers come from scholarships, state subsidies, student loans, and payment from parents or relatives; good academic standing is required of HEI customers by continuous examination and grading to ensure the quality required of higher institution. Romar (2006) acknowledged that the main customer of a HEI is the student, despite the huge differences made by Lewis and Smith (2001). Supporting this argument, Martensen et al. (1999) advocated that business services for HEIs could not exist without a student to teach (Kelso, 2008).

Kumar and Ali (2010) indicated that students are generally considered the ultimate customers in HEIs. They also added that students' use of the HEI service and employers (like government) are referred to as consumers of students; graduates also are regarded as customers. There are two types of customers in HEIs: External customers, who include employers, students, community at large, taxpayers, and other graduates from other institutions; and internal customers, who include academic and service department staff (Kumar & Ali, 2010). According to Srivancy M. B. (2004), students play quadruple roles in HEI as customers: the product in progress; students for several campus facilities; the labourers of the learning process; and internal customers, for distribution of course material. The education mix proposed by Kumar and Ali (2010) affects the roles of the students in HEI. The education mix elements include the teaching, researching, and extension facilities.

### 5 c) Students' Satisfaction

Several studies stated that student satisfaction is a compound and multifaceted term (Navarro et al., (2005a, b; Richardson, 2005). Wilson (2002) proffered that, the way customer satisfaction is premeditated has been deliberated with regards to the layout of questions and scales used. So, the inputs of students assists ensure the authenticity of the quality assurance system itself and its outcomes (Strahlman, 2012). Higher educational institutions that understand the relevance of client-based principles would have better opportunities of satisfying the requirements of its students more efficiently (Kara & DeShields, 2004). Higher educational institutions are emphasizing the need for recognition and making efforts to enhance student satisfaction given the sudden rise in competition in the subsector. Many researchers have established that, higher educational institutions that develop relationship students will benefit tremendously because it offers competitive advantage to those institutions (Popli, 2005; Rowley, 2003; Tapp et al., 2004; Richardson, 2005). Popli (2005) and Richardson (2005) however warn that, in establishing the relationship certain predictors actually influence student satisfaction. In Postema (2001), students' satisfaction was considered as a significant quality variable in education. Elliot and Shin (2002) stated that "student satisfaction refers to a student's favourable subjective evaluation of the various outcomes and experiences with education and is being shaped continually by the repeated experiences with the campus life; and that student satisfaction can also have a favourable impact on fundraising activities and student motivation" (p. 3). According Bay and Daniel (2001), students' expect contentment from operations process of learning. Lovelock et al. (2007) evidently affirmed that, education is an example of mental-stimulus processing implying that, students as customers are hesitant with and affected by the way in which it is offered as well as what is provided. Students' satisfaction in higher education is a measure of effectiveness to the service provider (Telford & Masson, 2005). Mai (2005) investigated US and UK students and noted that students' satisfaction is the overall satisfaction related with the element of the operations. Student satisfaction is the perception of pleasure and achievement related with the learning atmosphere (Sweeney & Ingram, 2001).

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## 6 d) Higher Education and Service Quality

Many researchers were conventional in nature, focusing their publications on service quality in the commercial sector services (Sultan & Baron, 2010). Therefore, literature about service quality in higher education is still under developed. Oldfield and Baron (2000) posited that, Universities were previously not considered as profit making organizations but now because of the competitive nature of the higher education sector, universities are now trying to gain competitive advantage as against their counterparts making them profit making set-ups. The current economic circumstances, decrease in student enrollment numbers and subversion cuts, higher educational institutions have realized that they are commercial institutions. This climate has compelled universities to compete for both local and international students and resources to survive (Paswan & Ganesh, 2009). Accordingly, universities try to deliver high service quality to satisfy its students (DeShields et al., 2005). Higher educational institutions can be successful if their students are been provided with services that they want to buy, at a quality they feel good enough (Brown & Year 2019

Volume XIX Issue II Version I ( G ) (azhar, 2009). Beaumont (2012) demonstrated that, paying attention to the role of service quality in higher education sector is paramount to gaining competitive advantage. Higher education sector is considered as pure service, hence possessing all the unique characteristics of service (Oldfield & Baron, 2000; Adenuga & Ayodele, 2011). Gruber et al. (2010) stressed that, higher education is a service that is principally variable, intangible, and perishable.

## 7 Higher Education Performance Model (HEdPERF)

In 2006 Abdallah developed a new model called HEdPER to measure service quality in the higher education sector. According to Abdallah (2005), though generic scales such as SERVQUAL and SERPERF have been tested in various industries by many researchers, their applicability in higher education service quality still remain cloudy. In an empirical study, Abdallah (2006a,b) developed and tested specific factors that are used to measure service quality in higher education. These factors are academic aspect, non-academic aspects, program aspects, design, delivery and assessment and reputation. By discussing past literature it is critical for higher education to distinguish amongst the critical factors, which directly shape service quality (Abdallah, 2006b). Abdallah's study discovered that customer-focused behaviour is a significant factor considered for maintaining service quality (Abdallah, 2006b; Wan, et al., 2008). Abdallah's research was rigorous since the scope was 6 schools-680 students, involving personal contact via focal group discussion. Abdallah (200b) stated that "the previous research on the perception of consumers is not covering all aspects" (p. 569).

## 8 III.

The various factors that make up hedperf dimensions are:

## 9 a) Non-academic aspects b) Academic aspects

These relate to the duties performed by academic staff (lectures) to help students achieve their goals (Anil & Icli, 2014). They include teaching and support materials, conducting examination, availability of reference materials and competency of the academic staff. Subsequently, Reputation-HEIs should be professional (Icli and Anil, 2014) with regards to quality of education, recording good performance, obedience to regulations and producing good graduates who do well in industries. Sometimes the number of awards the HEI wins determines good performance. Some of the specific construct are effective communication skills, good posture toward students, students getting enough consultation and advice, regular feedback to students, and teacher capabilities (Abdanllah, 2015). In Malaysian Universities, Ibrahim, Rahman, and Yasin (2012) reported academic aspects as important variable for students' satisfaction and fidelity.

## 10 c) Access

This refers to how stakeholders can get to contact the HEI, approachability, convenience and availability (Icli & Anil, 2014). Place utility counts under this dimension to making education available at places people need them. Again, Program issues-items are important to providing several but reputable academic programmes and specialization with non-rigid arrangement health services (Icli & Anil, 2014). In Sheeja et al. (2014), higher education performance was evaluated in an Indian pharmacy education and access, reputation, academic and non-academic aspects were found as service quality dimensions.

These are factors which suggest the relevance of higher academic institutions in creating professional image (Abdallah, 2006; Osu & Owusu, 2015). Reputation element is a decisive factor for students' satisfaction (Abdallah, 2005). In Saudi Arabia, Randheer (2015) found tangible aspect of reputation projects a direct image of the institution in the minds of students and parents. Dennis (2013) conducted a study on factors predicting HEdPERF, and found that reputation, non-academic quality, and academic quality were strong factors for HEdPERF.

## 16 TABLE 2: COEFFICIENT OF ALL ASPECTS DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE VARIABLES IN THE MODEL

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### 11 e) Programme Issues

This are factors which stress on the relevance of providing wide range of academic programmes and specializations with flexible structure and syllabi (Abdallah, 2006b), and counseling services to students (Brochado, 2009; Osu & Owusu, 2015). Quality enhancement programs should be designed and implemented areas of educational experience and advisory services provided by higher educational institutions (Abdallah, 2006a). This factor deals with services regarding structures, courses, and programmes (Randheer, 2015).

### 12 f) Design, Delivery and Assessment

This requires understanding the expectations and needs of students with regards to counselling, and health services (Icli & Anil, 2014). It concerns with how the higher education programmes are made, mode of delivery and evaluation. It has do with methodology, course content, curriculum, online, distance, IT and physical delivery. These are the roles performed by HEI administrators.

These are important aspects that support standings to fulfil their duty obligation (Icli & Anil, 2014). The non-academic aspects relate to the roles performed by non-teaching staff of higher educational institutions (Abdallah, 2015). Specific constructs relating to non-academic aspects include knowledge of administrative staff, communication with the university students, and how these category of staff treat the students (Brochado, 2009).

### 13 e)

### 14 Dimensions Of Hedperf

### 15 Methods and Materials

To better understand the key service drivers of students in the higher education sector, field research was carried out. The research approach was quantitative and the design was descriptive. As a quantitative study, a questionnaire with close ended questions were used to elicit the responses. Also as a descriptive study SPSS (version-19) was used to carry out complicated data analysis such as correlation, regression and descriptive statistics. The primary data were gathered from the University for Development Studies School of Business and Law (UDS-SBL) in a natural setting. A sample of 350 students comprising both undergraduate and graduate levels was used as respondents of the study. The independent variable was service quality comprising of HEDPERF dimensions (academic aspect, non-academic aspects, program aspects, design, delivery and assessment and reputation), and the dependent variables was student satisfaction.

H 1 : There is significant relationship between academic aspect and general student satisfaction H 2 : There is significant relationship between nonacademic aspect and general student satisfaction H 3 : There is significant relationship between programs aspect and general student satisfaction H 4 : There is significant relationship between access and general student satisfaction H 5 : There is significant relationship between University's reputation aspect and general student satisfaction H 6 : There is significant relationship between design, delivery and assessment aspect and general student satisfaction b) Analysis and Result Reliability of the Findings using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability test implies for consistency; the level at which a research tool will provide equivalent outcome for the similar items at varied times. Obosi (2013) provided the understanding of reliability coefficient in Cronbach's Alpha as in below: The coefficient of reliability was determined via Cronbach's alpha. It was unveiled that all the alpha values exceeded the 0.700 rule of the thumb. This demonstrates that the study variables including the dependent variable in the education sector are internally consistent and efficient. Therefore, the closer the coefficient to 1.0 the power the reliability.

## 16 Table 2: Coefficient of All Aspects Descriptive Statistics of the Variables in the Model

Business students' satisfaction (dependent variable) is made up of six latent variables (items) whereas, service quality (independent variable) is made of six main dimensions of Abdullah's HEDPERF, including academic aspect, non-academic aspects, program aspects, design, delivery and assessment and reputation with 45 items. Table 3 below demonstrates that the highest mean value from the independent variables is "Lecturers are highly educated in their respective fields" (Mean=4.8845; SD=0.067879), trailed by "the non teaching staff value rule of privacy when I divulge information to them" (Mean=4.7626; SD=1.00719) and "the University runs an exceptional counseling service" (4.7524; SD=0.67245). The least latent variable score "the academic program run by the University is reputable" (Mean=3.2670; SD1.36163).

The items for the business students' general satisfaction has the highest for "I am fulfilled with my resolution to come to this University" (Mean=4.3234; SD=0.98134); If have a option to do it all over again, "I will again come to this University" (Mean=3.9397; SD=1.17051); "My decision to come to this University is a prudent choice" (Mean=3.1340; SD=1.04890); "I am content on my choice to come to this University (Mean = 3.3221; SD=1.12123); "I made an accurate choice when I decided to come to this University" (Mean=4.1845; SD=1.08567); and "I am content that I came to this University" (Mean =4.2213; SD=1.09172). Hence, they were generally satisfied with academic aspect, non-academic aspects, program aspects, analysis of design, delivery

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and assessment and reputation. In the research results it showed that male respondents were found to be more satisfied put side by side to their female counterparts with the general service the University provides with less variation in their views.

## 17 c) Inferential Statistics

Pearson correlation technique was used to test the association between the service quality dimensions (academic aspect, non-academic aspects, program aspects, design, delivery and assessment and reputation) and general business students' satisfaction. A presentation in table 6 shows that there is a positive bond amongst service quality dimensions and general business students' satisfaction. Hence, general business students' satisfaction is likely to be influenced more in specific terms, academic aspect (0.663), nonacademic aspects (0.674), program aspects (0.776), access (0.633), design, delivery and assessment (0.564) and reputation (0.676). Regression Coefficient table tested the amount of overall disparity in dependent variable due to independent variables. So a change in 18% in dependent variable due to one unit changes in independent variables. From the results in table 7, it is obvious that programs and academic aspects are constantly more significant than the other HEdPERF service quality dimensions (non-academic aspects, design, delivery and assessment, and reputation). This means that programs and academic aspects are two major factors that contribute significantly to business students' satisfaction in higher education. For programs aspect (UnStandardized coefficients  $B = 0.350$  and  $t = 0.000$ ) and academic aspects (UnStandardized coefficients  $B = 0.322$  and  $t = 0.000$ ). The  $B$  value provides the level at which each independent variable affects the dependent variable if the effects of all other independent variables are held constant (Field, 2005). Meanwhile, beta values indicate the number of standard deviations that the outcome will alter because of one standard deviation change in factor (Field, 2005).

## 18 b) Hypotheses Results

All the hypotheses were accepted, since the value of significance was less than the rule of thumb of 0.01. It can therefore be deduced that, the association between service quality variables and general business students' satisfaction were vastly significant. Examining the service quality mean values, it was found that programs aspect has the highest mean of 4.75, trailed by access of a mean of 3.95, followed by academic aspects with a mean of 3.89, and then reputation with 3.74 mean. Also, non-academic aspect has a mean value of 3.67 and design, delivery and assessment aspect was the least with mean of 3.55. From the mean values, it is can be said business students' are less satisfied with design, delivery and assessment aspects. All the same, the overall mean scores of the various variable exceeded the "agree level" of a theoretical value (Rhee & Rha, 2009). V.

## 19 Discussions and Implication

In examining the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between general business students' satisfaction and HEdPERF service quality dimensions. The respondents agreeing with the variables means they are generally satisfied with the goodness of the variables. The study variables including the dependent variable in the education sector are internally consistent and efficient. Programs and academic aspects are two major factors that contribute significantly to business students' satisfaction in higher education. Meanwhile, every single hypothesis was accepted, since the value of significance was less than the rule of thumb of 0.01. It can therefore be deduced that, the association between service quality variables and general business students' satisfaction were vastly significant. The implication is that managers of higher education should understand that, programmes that are run by the university are very important to students. Universities should develop more proposals to mount attractive academic programmes. After all, if an institution has more programmes, it means it has more "goods" in stock for sale especially now that universities are lamenting over low enrollment due to competition from growing public and private higher educational institutions. However, academic, nonacademic, reputation, access and design aspects are equally paramount and should be given special attention.

## 20 VI. Conclusion

The growth of higher education subsector in Ghana provides new aspect of civilization and high literacy. This can help reduce poverty, increase standard of living and create much more job opportunities. This conceptual study has outlined the fundamental HEdPERF service quality variables which predict business students' satisfaction in a university (design, delivery and assessment, University's reputation aspect, programs aspect, access, non-academic, and academic). As it stands now lecturers and management of universities can make necessary changes in its overall service delivery. High service quality and business students' satisfaction play a key role for universities to become and even maintain fast tract race, avenue for attracting prospective business students', business students' repeat enrollment on subsequent programs and increase the general success of the universities.

Year 2019 <sup>1</sup>

g) The Relationship between Service Quality and  
Students' Satisfaction  
h) Research Model  
b)  
IV.

Reputation

Figure 1:

1

Academic  
Non-Academic  
Programmes  
Access  
Reputation  
Design, delivery  
and assessment

SATISFACTION

Figure 2: Table 1 :

	Research Variable Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
AA	Academic		
AA1	Lecturers are highly educated in their respective fields	4.8845	0.67879
AA2	Lecturers have the knowledge to answer my questions relating to the course content.	4.1300	1.13126
AA3	Lecturers treat with me in a polite way.	4.5345	0.93389
AA4	Lecturers demonstrate positive approach towards business students'	4.0452	1.12698
AA5	The handouts are given sufficiently by the Lecturer.	3.7186	1.17688
AA6	Lecturers speak and write well in Lecture halls	4.0145	1.06322
AA7	The documentations are provided sufficiently by the Lecturer.	3.6780	1.13558
AA8	When I have a difficulty, Lecturer demonstrates genuine concern in resolving it.	4.2345	1.13221
AA9	Lecturers give feedback concerning my progress	3.6767	1.38638
	Total	3.8908	1.11435
NAA	Non-Academic		
NAA1	The non teaching staff value rule of privacy when I divulge information to them	4.7626	1.00719
NAA2	Non teaching staff speak well with business students'	4.1809	1.12348
NAA3	Non teaching staff shows positive work attitude towards business students'	4.1364	1.05893
NAA4	When the non teaching staff pledge to do something by a certain point in time, they do so	4.4622	1.07279
NAA5	When I have a problem, non teaching staff demonstrate a genuine interest in resolving it	4.5900	0.88647
NAA6	University administration maintains correct and retrievable records.	4.6700	0.91269
NAA7	Non teaching staff provide caring attention	4.2727	0.90305
NAA8	Non teaching staff have good knowledge of the systems	4.5367	0.90305
NAA9	Business students' are cared for in the same way by the non teaching staff	4.3267	0.98916
NAA10	Inquiries are dealt with professionally	4.1364	1.05893
	Total	3.6754	0.80305
RA	Reputation		
RA1	The University has a professional image	4.3131	0.94667
RA2	The academic program run by the University is reputable	3.2670	1.36163
RA3	The University's graduates are easily employable	3.3800	0.26269
	Total	3.7454	1.15431
ACC	Access		
ACC1	Lecturer assign enough time for discussion	3.5228	1.27224
ACC2	Lecturers are never excessively busy to answer my demand for help.	3.8882	1.16791
ACC3	The non teaching staff are easy to contact	4.3545	1.06891
	Total	3.9533	1.1432
PA	Program Issues		
PA1	The University runs exceptional quality programs	3.0845	1.06730

4

Age Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
15-24 Years	3.7553	0.7212
32-34 Years	4.2221	0.7234
35 Years and >	3.6674	1.8913
Total	3.8231	0.69722

Figure 4: Table 4 :

5

Sex	Mean	Standard Deviation
Female	3.5676	0.73556
Male	3.8001	0.73289
Total	3.7330	1.33245

Figure 5: Table 5 :

6

Variable		AA	NA	PA	ACC	RA	DDA	SS
AA	Sig.(2-tailed)	1.00						
NA	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.569**	1.00					
PA	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.732**	0.746**	1.00				
ACC	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.612**	0.757**	0.829**	1.00			
RA	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.670**	0.682**	0.582**	0.829**	1.00		
DDA	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.682**	0.670**	0.682**	0.670**	0.682**	1.00	
SS	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.663**	0.674**	0.776**	0.633**	0.676**	0.564**	1.00

Figure 6: Table 6 :



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Model	UnStandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval	
	B	Standard Error	Beta		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	8.483	2.037		4.167 0.000	4.467	12.500
Academic	0.322	0.075	0.432	2.946 0.004	0.073	0.571
Non-Academic	0.243	0.086	0.243	0.967 0.001	0.322	0.164
Program Aspects	0.350	0.079	0.089	1.267 0.000	0.055	0.645
Reputation	0.101	0.080	0.543	1.264 0.004	0.056	0.146
Access	0.222	0.075	0.413	2.946 0.000	0.073	0.371
Design, Delivery and Assessment	0.134	0.080	0.235	4.303 0.000	0.186	0.082
Business students' Satisfaction	0.222	0.075	0.436	1.267 0.000	0.055	0.389
Dependent Variable: Business students' Satisfaction						
Regression Analysis Result						
(HedPERF)	Academic=0.627 Non-Academic =0.443					
	Program Aspects=0.567 Reputation=0.643 Access=0.338 Design, Delivery and Assessment=0.61					
	General Students' Satisfaction=r2= 58.1 %					

Figure 7: Table 7 :

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Hypothesis	Mean	Sig.	r	Remarks
H 1 : There is significant relationship between academic aspect and general business students' satisfaction	3.89	0.004	0.627	Accepted
H 2 : There is significant relationship between non-academic aspect and general business students' satisfaction	3.67	0.001	0.443	Accepted
H 3 : There is significant relationship between programs aspect and general business students' satisfaction	4.75	0.000	0.567	Accepted
H 4 : There is significant relationship between access and general business students' satisfaction	3.95	0.000	0.338	Accepted
H 5 : There is significant relationship between University's reputation aspect and general business students' satisfaction	3.74	0.004	0.643	Accepted
H 6 : There is significant relationship between design, delivery and assessment aspect and general business students' satisfaction	3.55	0.000	0.612	Accepted

Figure 8: Table 8 :

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