Modernizing Higher Education in India: Quality Dimensions for Sustainable and Impactful Education

Rahmiaty[1]✉, Kamarullah[2], Fadhlur Rahman[3], Muhammad Haekal[4], Windia Hadi[5]
[1]Faculty of Education and Teachers Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe, Lhokseumawe, Indonesia
[2]SMA Negeri 16 Banda Aceh, Banda Aceh, Indonesia
[3]Faculty of Education and Teachers Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe, Lhokseumawe, Indonesia
[4]School of Curriculum, Teaching and Inclusive Education, Monash University, Australia
[5]Doctoral School of Education, University of Szeged, Hungary

Abstract

The perspectives of international students on higher education institutions in India, especially in comparison to those in other developing countries, remain a critical concern, particularly when considering the highly competitive climate of studying abroad. This study seeks to examine the quality dimensions and facilities offered at a public university in Hyderabad, India, from the viewpoint of international students. This research fills an important gap by exploring what international students experience and expect during an increasingly competitive global academic system. A descriptive qualitative design was employed, to investigate the experiences of 120 international students from diverse academic disciplines and degree programs. Data were collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews, with responses analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Findings suggest that while international students generally view the institution's quality services and facilities as comparable to global standards, they also express significant concerns, particularly with the ICT infrastructure, accessibility to laboratory practicums, and hygiene standards. Despite these challenges, the positive assessment of the institution's quality services indicates areas for potential improvement, especially in instructional quality, teaching-learning processes, and examination mechanisms. Nonetheless, the study's limitations include the potential for bias in self-reported data and limited generalizability outside similar socio-cultural and educational contexts. Future research should expand the sample size, employ longitudinal designs, and explore additional contextual factors to deepen understanding of international student satisfaction and develop sustainable improvement strategies for higher education quality.

Keywords: education system, enhancing learning, holistic educational, learning environments, learning landscape, learning outcome, modern educational, progressive education

✉*Corresponding Author:*
Rahmiaty, Faculty of Education and Teachers Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe, Indonesia
Email: rahmiaty2021@iainlhokseumawe.ac.id

1. Introduction

In the era of increasing global academic mobility, international students play a significant role in shaping higher education worldwide. With the rising demand for quality educational services, students are looking for higher education institutions that not only have strong academic programs but also offer quality support services, modern facilities, and a welcoming environment. As a consequence, universities are under mounting pressure to enhance their educational standards to

attract and retain international students. India has emerged as one significant destination for international students due to its diverse academic programs and affordable tuition costs.

Despite previous studies indicating that education in South Asia, in particular, India, has often been overlooked or undervalued (Tilak, 2015), this narrative is rapidly changing. India is projected to become the world's third-largest economy by 2034, with revenues exceeding 10 trillion USD, and this growth is expected to be generated primarily by human capital (Chakraborty, 2021). This shows that investing in education is no longer just a developmental goal, but a strategic necessity for the country. As the Indian educational system has progressed, the proportion of overseas students enrolling in Indian universities has increased to 0.135% from 0.103% in 2011 (OECD, 2021). Some studies explained that the enrollment at various institutions demonstrates the globalization competitiveness of the nation's education system, this includes the state's ability to attract foreign scholars in particular (Buckner & Stein, 2020; Campbell & Neff, 2020). However, it did not explicitly address the exposure of stable quality service for international students' demands.

While there is a growing body of literature on the economic contributions and enrollment trends of international students in India, there is a significant gap in understanding these students' perceptions of the actual quality of educational services provided. Previous research, such as the studies by Kobzev Kotásková et al. (2018), Meshram et al. (2024), and Tilak (2018), has primarily focused on quantitative metrics of enrollment and economic impact. These studies highlight India's role as a significant global hub for higher education and the economic contributions of Indian students abroad, respectively, but do not delve into the subjective quality assessments of infrastructure, academic resources, and instructional quality from the students' perspectives. This study aims to fill this gap by examining these qualitative dimensions and how they align with international students' expectations.

Given India's vast student population and the growing interest of international students in its education system, it is crucial to investigate the challenges they face. As a developing country undergoing significant advancements in higher education, India must address these issues to remain a competitive and attractive destination for international students (Pilot Report, 2011). Equally important, several institutions in India also stand for numerous qualifications of education, training, and programs that efforts to be competitive in a changing world (Agarwal, 2009; Aithal & Aithal, 2019; Gholap, 2019).

Several factors influence international students' decisions when choosing a country to study at a university. According to Fakunle (2021), these decisions are driven by four key motivations: academic, experiential, aspirational, and financial. Beyond personal benefits, international students also contribute to the advancement of the educational system, offering significant benefits to host universities. Nevertheless, many higher education institutions mistakenly view students as captive consumers, assuming that demand for their services remains inelastic (Guilbault, 2018; Kelso & Dellow, 2008). This flawed perspective undermines the significance of valuing international student experiences and feedback.

Thus, to realize high-quality educational services, it is important to recognize and accommodate the perspectives of international students. If the universities undertake this initiative, they will enhance the academic programs, augment the support services, and cultivate a more inclusive environment for all

students. In the long run, appreciating the feedback of international students elevates institutional standards and furthers the broader goal of India's academic reputation and economic growth.

The prior literature examined international students' experiences to evaluate the quality control that would be required to provide the 'reliability' of higher education. Years of research on international students' psychological adjustment and educational success in Australia and worldwide have shown challenges across all aspects (Arkoudis et al., 2019). The associations between study level and the motivating factors are also highly innovative, which broad accessibility in publishing papers, infrastructure, and enabling the commercialization of study results (Jonek-Kowalska et al., 2021). Several studies have also examined the factors motivating students to study abroad (Mok et al., 2021). Culture, gender, state citizenship status, age, demand aid criteria, area of study, and registration status (entire- or substantial portion) were significant predictors of study overseas enrollment (Whatley, 2021). To this extent, the term quality in higher institutions should be debated to measure how a product or service is supported through the perspective of the user or consumer.

Investigation of the Quality Management framework outlined contains three components, quality of design (QD), quality of conformance (QC), and quality of performance (QP) (Widrick et al., 2002). Regardless of whether the customer is internal or external, performance measurement is always performed by the organization to maintain a high quality of education (Mergen et al., 2000). Quality is not merely a subjective concept but is best understood as 'fitness for purpose', ensuring that educational institutions effectively meet their objectives. Meanwhile, standardi-

zation serves as a structured approach to achieving this quality by incorporating systems, techniques, and practices that support performance evaluation and continuous improvement (Minta & Dia, 2021).

The widespread review is expected to ensure the efficiency and quality of the university education system from an international perspective. Some argue that academics are similar to business within the education industry at the end crucial (Lomer, 2018). This possibly leads to an improvement in worldwide education and, ultimately, its economic growth. International students' perspective matters for the host institution to maintain the whole progress of academics and management. As a result, it offers a complete standard for quality management and ensures quality while facilitating innovation and growth (Becket & Brookes, 2008). In line with the enormous ideas to develop a progressive education, consideration of students with difficulties in higher education is also vital to help institutions address and respond to all its constituents' changing needs and expectations. It is essential to develop more appropriate instructional approaches (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the increasing product on academic quality, administrative service quality, library service quality, employment opportunities, and support services are important factors (Manan et al., 2020; Whatley, 2021). As a result, overall quality must remain at the forefront of future studies' priorities when pursuing international evaluation and certification in higher education (Whatley, 2021).

This is to develop higher-quality evaluations and institutional management. Prior research that has already evaluated different countries or areas of origin has discovered disparities between national groups in perso-

nal, emotional, and social adjustment components of course overall performance, facilities provided, and instructional standards (Longtin, 2013; Volkova & Kolesov, 2022).

Furthermore, it is critical to have a learning landscape that includes the physical, formal, and informal relationships, the process of teaching, learning, and evaluation, the use of technology, and other variables that define the nature of students experiences in higher education (Latif et al., 2019).

Therefore, to properly assess and enhance the quality of higher education institution's service, it is crucial to first understand the needs and expectations of international students. This study focuses on two fundamental research problems (a) what are the perceptions of international students regarding the quality of university facilities at a public state university in India; (b) how do international students perceive the quality of instruction, specifically regarding the teaching-learning process and examination mechanisms, at the same university (c) what improvements are necessary according to these students to enhance their educational experiences?

By exploring these dimensions facilities and instructional quality the study seeks to provide valuable insights into how support for international students can be enhanced throughout their academic experiences.

2. Method

The research was designed as a descriptive qualitative study while drawing the study from Oleksiyenko et al., (2021) to explore the international students' perception depth of their experiences during their period taking the course overseas. This approach was opted for since it presents an adequate description of situations in the context of students' academic and cultural adjustment, and at the same time captures the complexities and focuses on student's living without putting any logical views (Sandelowski, 2000).

The population for this research was international students from one of the public state universities in Hyderabad, India. The authors chose participants through convenience sampling as it is more available to be investigated, and this study came from second-semester international students (Lewis, 2015). Convenience sampling allows the authors to select participants conveniently within all levels, ensuring that data collected is representative of specified subgroups (e.g., gender, nationality, and course level), and, avoiding overestimation of straightforward groups by keeping the practicality of convenient sampling (Etikan, 2016).

Table 1 displays the pool of participants involved in this study. It showcases descriptive statistics, such as the course of study and funding sources of the students who completed the questionnaire. Most students are pursuing master's degrees, but fewer are pursuing doctoral degrees. Additionally, students want to continue their education through scholarship programs.

Tabel 1. Demographic Information

Demographic Factor	Total	Percentage
Course		
• Undergraduate degree	39	32.5%
• Master degree	63	52.5%
• Doctoral degree	18	15%
Source of Finance		
• Self-finance	41	34.2%
• Scholarship program	79	65.8%
Total	**120**	**100%**

To answer the first and second research questions, the study utilized a direct questionnaire to accumulate the information and was constructed by using a 4-point Likert scale (Creemers et al., 2010; Watson, 2015). The authors modified the instrument for international perspective into the academic qualities dimension covering three parts (A, B, and C). Parts A and B were modified from the study of Longtin (2013) detailing the elements of the distinctive characteristics of buildings, centers, and facilities available at numerous universities that can be utilized more efficiently to meet these students' requirements, including the rationale for studying in India. Also, Part B discovered how students perceived the facilities used for higher education classes. Part C which consists of course perception quality in higher education was adopted from the element of quality of conformance and quality of performance aspect from total quality performance theory (Mergen et al., 2000; Whelan & Mcguinness, 2020; Widrick et al., 2002). Questions for students' references were 7 items asking students preferences, 25 items for facilities and qualities perceptions, and 8 questions were taken from the questionnaire to deepen the analysis in interviews. Moreover, from all parts of the items, there were also some changes to wordiness, the use of language, the study setting, and objects to adjust the relevance of the study. Table 2 is the result of validated instruments.

Table 2. Result of Validated Instrument for Facilities Items

Number of Items													
Facilities	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
Pearson Correlation	.291**	.433**	.425**	.312**	.199*	.214*	.350**	.533**	.491**	.260**	.215*	.256**	.235**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.030	0.019	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.018	0.005	0.010
	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).	

Based on Table 2, all values from the item calculations are evaluated using the Pearson product-moment to determine validity. If the sig value (two-tailed) < 0.05 and the score on Pearson correlation is positive, the question item is valid. All scores in items Q1 until Q13 have a positive number and at the same time < 0,05 Sig. (2-tailed). As an example, consider how Q1 scored .291 is a positive result with Sig. (2-tailed) less than 0.05, indicating that the item is valid, and so all items in the table are valid. Furthermore, Table 3 presents the validated items for quality instruction.

In Table 3, the validated tool was administered, and the coefficient of correlation technique was used to compare both trials. Moreover, the result for 13 items for facilities employed 0,2852 Cronbach's Alpha. Further, standardized items were measured as 0,3514 Cronbach's Alpha from 12 quality items. Both variables were selected, which is more significant than 0,1793 r-table on 0,05 sig. Hence, it is evident that the tool constructed possesses validity and reliability. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics considering percentages results for the ease of data analysis (Kothari & Garg, 2014).

Table 3. Result of Validated Instrument for Qualities Items

Qualities	Number of Items											
	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25
Pearson Correlation	.229*	.305**	.407**	.189*	.358**	.309**	.411**	.466**	.289**	.524**	.317**	.358**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.012	0.001	0.000	0.039	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).												
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).												

To answer the third research question, the authors conducted online interviews with four alumni as informants who were chosen using purposive sampling (see Table 4), and at the same time willing to participate in the online interviews (Etikan, 2016). They were selected purposively from the participants who had previously responded to the questionnaire.

In terms of data analysis, the data of descriptive statistics to answer the first and second research questions were analyzed by using statistical software (SPSS) version (25). Pearson correlation coefficient is employed to determine internal consistency, and Cronbach alpha and retest for verifying the reliability of the study tool. Moreover, descriptive statistics in the form of frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations were derived from the questionnaire for data analysis (Kothari & Garg, 2014).

Then, to integrate the interview data into the thematic analysis for the third research question, the process began with a thorough reading of the interview transcripts to ensure a deep understanding of the content.

Table 4. Interviewee Background

Interviewee Identifier	Gender	Academic Qualification	Years of Study	Course of Degree	Country
Informant 1 (I1)	F	Master degree	1	Linguistics	Kyrgyzstan
Informant 2 (I2)	F	PhD	2	Linguistics	Iraq
Informant 3 (I3)	M	Master's degree	2	Literature and Art	Indonesia
Informant 4 (I4)	M	Graduate	2	Sciences and Chemistry	Indonesia

Relevant data points were then coded based on their alignment with the research questions. These codes were grouped into preliminary themes, which were refined to ensure they represented coherent patterns across the data. The developed themes were then compared with the findings from the quantitative analysis to validate and deepen the understanding of the results. Finally, the thematic analysis was summarized in the report, highlighting key themes and supporting them with illustrative quotes from the interviews. This approach provided a systematic way to integrate qualitative insights with quantitative findings, offering a comprehensive view of the students' perceptions.

3. Result and Discussion

a. Perceptions of International Students Regarding the Quality of the University Facilities

In searching the knowledge, many perceptions appear due to the different kinds of people gathered in the same place and controlled by one institution with the same systems and policies. Before discussing their perception towards the facilities, Table 5 shows students' preferences to choose India as the

selected country to continue their higher degree. One hundred twenty participants in total gave their responses through the questionnaire.

Table 5. International Students Preference to Study at Public University

Item	Total	Percentage
Reason to Study in India		
Better education	47	39.2 %
Well-known for its quality	23	19.2 %
Career opportunity	10	8.3 %
A safe place to study	21	17.5 %
Other	19	15.8 %
Difficulties in Getting Admission		
Very difficult	9	7.5 %
Difficult	41	34.2 %
Easy	64	53.3 %
Very easy	6	5%
Procedure to Get Admission		
Very complicated	10	8.3 %
Complicated	38	31.7 %
Not complicated	55	45.8 %
Not complicated at all	15	12.5 %
Other	2	1.7%
Cost of Living in Hyderabad		
Highly expensive	0	0%
Expensive	45	37.5 %
Cheap	69	57.5 %
Very cheap	6	5%
Tuition Fee		
Very expensive	0	0%
Expensive	50	41.7 %
Cheap	61	50.8 %
Very cheap	9	7.5 %
Preference to Stay in an International Hostel Provided by the University		
Yes	13	10.8 %
No	107	89.2 %
International Students Respect Roles by International Office		
Very good	0	0%
Good	48	40%
Moderate	72	60%
Poor	0	0%
Very poor	0	0%

As shown in Table 5, better education was the reason why international students selected India to continue their studies. Even though some other reasons, such as India was well-known for quality and several participants claimed that India was a good country to create professional opportunities, students considered learning outside of their home country would benefit them more.

Moreover, most of the students opted to continue their study with all academic degrees as their course of study as the admission process is easy, specifically 53.3%. Another thing, other participants stated that India was a safe place to study, devoid of war and conflict.

From the perspective of the procedure to get admission, international students reviewed the process onto the smooth step, since the proportion of data shows the highest answer is 45.8% in not complicated procedure.

Furthermore, the cost of living in Hyderabad was mostly described as low by international students, which prompted many students to begin their studies at public universities. Moreover, the cost of living in Hyderabad was high, while five percent of the students agreed that the cost of living in the region was meager. Related to the perception of tuition at a public university, it was found that students considered it to be inexpensive. This perhaps made students also rent a house, since it was discovered that 89.2% did not stay in foreign hostels.

In Table 6, the total mean of undergraduates, master's degrees, and doctoral degrees demonstrated the value of the average score. It can be proved that the infrastructure gained a mean score of 3 (satisfied) from a 4-point rating scale. Moreover, a low standard deviation indicates that there is less variation in the data as it tends to converge closer to the mean value. On the other hand, a high standard deviation indicates significant variances in the data since it indicates that the data tend to be distributed more widely than the mean value. Hence the data can be said homogenous.

Tabel 6. Perception of Students Towards Facilities of the Institution

Items wise related to facilities (Infrastructures)	Undergraduates (N=39)		Masters (N=63)		Doctoral (N=18)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Roles of the Foreign office	3.21	0.951	3.41	0.586	3.56	0.511
College building	3.15	0.745	3.21	0.699	3.56	0.511
Quality of classroom	3.31	0.614	3.13	0.635	3.5	0.514
Sports room and activities	2.54	0.6	2.59	0.663	2.5	0.618
Library	3.54	0.6	3.44	0.562	3.39	0.608
Drinking water	3.36	0.537	3.48	0.592	3.22	0.647
WiFi or internet access	2.15	0.812	2.68	0.779	2.56	0.922
Laboratory for practicum	3.28	0.759	3.02	0.684	3.39	0.698
Computer lab	3.36	0.537	3.06	0.644	3.39	0.698
Teaching aids and media	3.15	0.63	3.03	0.879	3.33	0.485
Locker desk	3.23	0.583	2.78	0.706	3	0.686
Washroom	2.87	0.656	2.59	0.663	2.67	0.485
Canteen	3.13	1.031	3.19	0.737	2.67	0.485
Highly satisfied (4), Satisfied (3), Dissatisfied (2), Highly Dissatisfied (1)						

From the data on the undergraduate degree, only the availability of books in the library stands out (3.54). It could be seen that the availability of books in the library, four items, remains relatively low. Among master students, two elements are decent – water availability (3.48) and library (3.44), and three are poor in terms of sports room and activities (2.59), washroom (2.59), and locker desk (2.78). Lastly, a doctoral degree has one the lowest item voted, which is identical to the master's degree students, namely sports room and activities (2.5).

Further, international students illustrated that there are not enough sports rooms, and no maintenance of the restrooms, and canteen. In fact, those infrastructures are also important things to support students. Additionally, there are no cafeterias or comfortable study spaces in the college that can give contented vibes for

students to sit with friends and discuss things related to their work.

b. Perceptions of International Students towards the Quality of Instruction

The result of retrieving the international students' perceptions of the quality of instruction on their campus is depicted in Table 7.

Table 7. Perception of Students Towards Qualities of Institution

Item Wise Related to Qualities of College Performance	Undergraduates N=39)		Masters (N=63)		Doctoral (N=18)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Quality of teaching as per specialization	2.72	0.826	2.87	0.707	2.94	0.725
Classroom interaction	3.36	0.707	3.41	0.663	3.78	0.428
The use of ICT	1.82	0.756	2.76	0.734	2.39	1.037
Teaching resources	2.9	0.641	3.06	0.644	2.89	0.758
Integrated teaching-learning materials	3.05	0.56	3.06	0.821	3.33	0.594
Teaching learning process	3.31	0.468	3.24	0.588	3.5	0.514
The following teaching learning process	3.1	0.68	3.08	0.809	3.33	0.84
Quality of language instruction	2.97	0.537	3.29	0.682	3	0.594
Difficulties in communicating	1.21	0.409	1.46	0.668	1.11	0.323
Influences of different culture	2.08	0.957	2.98	0.793	3.11	0.832
Availability of books in the library	3.18	0.721	3.27	0.653	3.28	0.575
Systems of examination	2.33	0.662	2.68	0.858	2.61	0.608
Highly satisfied (4), Satisfied (3), Dissatisfied (2), Highly Dissatisfied (1)						

The result of standard deviation from means on undergraduate degree, masters, and doctoral deviation shows a low number or less in variation. It implies that the data is also homogeneous. Additionally, the mean value from most items shows that students have different perceptions of the university's quality of instruction. The data might vary in mean number among those three degrees, but the overall number shows the rates are satisfied from a point scale.

Nevertheless, to qualities of the institution in providing classroom interaction and the aspects of integrated teaching and learning resources have shown good teaching and learning support. The pattern showed data for students at every grade level, beginning with graduate, master's, and doctoral programs.

Further, the most obvious item was the difficulties in communicating. This was simultaneously felt by all students in different degree programs, who mentioned being highly dissatisfied with this point. The table also showed that the utilization of ICT in terms of quality performances is suboptimal from those three degrees. Additionally, students of all levels expressed satisfaction with the books' accessibility. It demonstrates the

number of satisfied results from the standard deviation outcome.

c. Improvements Needed to Enhance Educational Experiences

To explore what improvements are essential to enhance international students' educational experiences as labeled as the third research problem, the authors utilized a set of eight questions extracted from the questionnaire employing the quality performance theory (Mergen et al., 2000; Whelan & Mcguinness, 2020; Widrick et al., 2002).

Questions cover dimensions such as how students perceive the facilities used for higher education classes, course perception quality in higher education, the element of quality of conformance, and the quality of performance aspect from the total quality performance theory. Items are standardized but adaptable and can be tailored for a particular information. The following are the 'statement' (S) from the additional question given in interview section:

S1. Preference, and factors for pursuing education in another country

S2. Whether or not facilities and equipment as part of the college's infrastructure in each program are up to students' expectations

S3. If the academic resources, such as libraries and research materials, sufficient for students needs

S4. Perception towards the availability and maintenance of campus facilities, such as study spaces, cafeterias, and recreational areas

S5. If students must rate the quality of teaching and faculty expertise in their program

S6. Any support service available in your institution such as language support services for non-native English speakers

S7. Whether or not institutions provide support for students' academic growth and success

S8. The biggest strength of this institution in serving international students

The results from S1 on interviews with students mentioned that they preferred to go to other countries because of the scholarship program (see E1).

The results from S1 on interview with students mentioned that they preferred to go to other country because of the scholarship program (see E1).

Excerpt (E1): "The first attempt I got accepted at one university in India, but I didn't get any sponsorship, the second attempt, I tried again, and chose other institutions, and consulted with my friend, fortunately, the scholarship from ICCR."(I1)

E1 reflects the factors that influence the decision. Scholarship programs currently attract most international students. The government indeed needs to maintain such programs and attempt to provide more scholarship grants for more international students. The offer, of course, should meet the needs and expectations of the student candidates considering higher education is a service organization for the educational sector, specifically when it comes to the support for foreign students.

In interview section, one student from Iraq said that he and his friend thought that learning in India was quite safe, especially for those who came from war countries such as Syria, Yemen, Palestine, and others. Above all, other students stated there was a need for new experiences in which many of them are from Indonesia, Thailand, and China. Notably, there were many motives and expectations of international students towards the higher education they are pursuing. One student claimed that no matter what, the fact the living cost is not expensive. That is the reason

why the point supports the answer from Table 5 that fewer international students wanted to reside in hostels, and had their own flats or rental houses, as proved by I4 in E2.

> *E2: "... during my study, I rented a house with 2 Indonesian friends, after a while, I moved alone, and it's quite affordable with my scholarship money for living."(I4)*

Moreover, informants additionally claimed that they were reasonably unsatisfied with the hostel's facilities, which were related to the health issues in the neighborhood around the hostel and the variety of food, which was hardly changed. Nonetheless, the preference of foreign scholars to study abroad and their expectation of the standard the university offered was probably very high. However, the actual situation did not meet their expectation.

Moreover, related to S2 from the interview list, the institution was lack of infrastructure, such as the availability of Infocus, not to mention using smart TV, the campus was still trying to use old stuff such as chalks to write and projectors for presentations in many classes, as revealed by I2 in E3.

> *E3: "... what can I say, actually we were using chalk, may be expected some other thing, it's very conventional, but maybe that's their style, to keep the old style, old building, maybe they kept the heritage in my degree."(I2)*

Furthermore, related to S3 and S4, the students expressed their opinions about the most frustrating thing related to the laboratory and computer lab. That is because the officials put a limit and access to the lab as it followed the working hours of staff. Another thing, some of the lab equipment was still not enough as admitted by I1, who also worked

on the lab. She claimed that they did the practicum manually without enough lab equipment (see E4).

> *E4: "... in my experience working in the lab at that time, we ever used straws and suck the material, what I saw, was my friend ever sucked one liquid substance and suddenly he swallowed that stuff, next day he missed the class because he was sick, basically the stuff is not expensive especially in India since they can produce it."(I1)*

Contrarily, I3 who undertaking a master's degree mentioned that the lab facilities contributed to the par result during practicum (see E5).

> *E5: "... the lab, including the manual, helps me to carefully utilize particular instruments. I think lab visitors need to prepare themselves before using any tools in it. If the help is absent, you just can use the internet there for more information."(I3)*

It contradicts with students taking graduate courses, as in E4. The interview results show that international students gave a good perception of several facilities provided by colleges. However, others such as the activity rooms should have been provided with decent internet access. Meanwhile, during the interview section, it was also found that the accessible for the availability of the library resulted in the outstanding point. Students thought the college library had prepared enough books and journals, without spending time in the main library. Each college provide their library instead of the main library on the main campus. Also, other facilities such as drinking water are good as they can drink the water directly from the tap. However, international students said they often brought their water, and only took water tap when they did not bring their mineral water.

Moreover, the identical result from S5 among the interview question list also existed.

The result explained that students were satisfied during their study. From the side of doctoral and master's degrees (see E6), they enjoyed and had an enormous discussion with lecturers, and easily found the professors in their office to share any information.

> E6: "... we had many experienced professors, many of them are visiting professors, like UK, Australia, and other countries, yes, it is like lecturing, but as we do higher education, there is room for discussion there. As I remember, only one lecture did one-way teaching, and most of them treated us like an adult who could discuss many things, perhaps I major in literature and interpretation, I don't know other major...."(I3)

Another thing, one answer pointed out was that the informant and her classmate were directly invited by the psychology lecturer to her office to serve *chai*, an Indian authentic tea milk, for one by one while discussing the developmental theory in psychology class. Similarly, students with master's degrees also mentioned that they freely joined any seminar in their college, including attending the viva conference from PhD candidates. Meanwhile, this perception was not the same as felt by undergraduates, as voiced by I1 in E7.

> E7: "... Indian academy is like more teacher-oriented, when we have exams, we should write as many as possible, we just listen, we were passive like we didn't expand our curiousity, critical thinking,...."(I1)

However, one thing that I1 appreciated from that lecturer was they had a good technique to make science students construct a good foundation in remembering the theory, which surprisingly inspired him to continue his doctoral degree in the USA, after completing his master's degree in China. Nevertheless, I1 also claimed that it would be beneficial if lecturers also change the varieties of teaching methods, to make students not feel bored in the class.

On another side, related to S6, I4, as displayed in E8, admitted that the language course was available, but it is not free, students have to pay independently.

> E8: "... I remember that I took a Germany course, not an English course, and you took France right, but there was no option to take English course, and we had to pay, that time was winter, and we often walked early morning."(I4)

The data based on S7 and S8 illustrated that institutions have supported them in different ways, although it depends on the students. I3 in E9 claimed that his experiences pursuing his degree have given him communication skills.

> E9: "... for me like my job for example, every phase in education brought impact, of course institution gave impact, my experience to have different friends during my course, many students were foreigners, from many different countries with different cultures. Now, I work in a US company in which workers also coming from Taiwan, the Middle East countries, and so on, with most of them foreigners, we have a certain approach to understanding easily the character of workers, with no preassumption of conversation. Then, it helped me in my workplace."(I3)

Similarly, as presented in E10, I1 thought that institutions contributed through its teaching method, which somehow has helped him memorize well.

> E10: "... that the Indian education, they train us as good as possible, and fast, in the exam, we have to write fast, in my master degree in China, I had a fundamental theory already, and theoretical part is so deep in the Indian education, so it helpful in my academic degree."(I1).

E10 reflects that experiences the students have from their lecturers' teaching method

reinforced their prior knowledge in practical contexts.

d. Interpreting the Enhancements: Discussion on Improving International Student Experiences

Based on the findings above, the students gained the benefits from pursuing their degree internationally is true. The research corresponds to the study of Mergen et al. (2000), which covers the idea of the quality of design, conformity, and performance, and consequently provides a framework for identifying educational, research, and organizational enhancement potential. Furthermore, the entire exposure to aspects from the interview is provided in terms of thematic analysis to deepen the investigation of international students' perspectives in higher education.

1) Aspect 1: The Facilities are Adequate but Categorized as Outdated Infrastructure

TThe facilities as part of the college's infrastructure are good enough. However, international students thought that the building and classroom were old enough with no updated facilities. There is nothing wrong with maintaining the heritage, but it would be better if the college facilities could be upgraded since it can make Indian institutions more famous at the international level. International scholarships affect higher education systems by introducing excluded perspectives to university campuses in host countries, with the notion that a varied student population from several nations will provide unique experiences, expertise, and opinions (Campbell & Neff, 2020)

The data found that many of them could survive in India. The belief brings positive clues in the data, as illustrated in Table 5. Moreover, this should be considered while improving the higher education institution.

Since international students struggle to gain admission to pursue their future careers, all components of the course have rapidly improved.

2) Aspect 2: Several facilities need more maintenance for students' convenience

The result of the interview section underlined several things. The initial one was about the safety of the building since most of the building is old, then international students claimed that there should be further maintenance to keep the building safe. Another thing, the university has several affiliated institutions, and different institutions must have different leaders, but the data portrayed similar results which means that the roles and regulations are similar in the aspect of facilities. This is proof when the authors asked questions about the quality of the sports room, restroom, and canteens, each informant provided a similar point. Other than that, PhD students deliberated on the maintenance of the lab and other important stuff.

Nevertheless, all students during the interview session expressed their hope for hygiene in India's institutions. Washrooms should be repaired to ensure good service. Additionally, there are no cafeterias or any comfortable study spaces in the college that can give the space for students to sit with friends and discuss things related to their work. They said Indian students took a rest on the lawn during the break hour, but it is not enough in their perception.

3) Aspect 3: Engancing Lecturers in Teaching Learning Process

Previously, Table 7 depicts the elements for integrated teaching-learning materials, teaching-learning process, or supportive stuff for teaching good points. In addition, none of the international students thought highly satisfied on qualities performance. Related to

the teaching-learning process, collaborative teaching-learning was good to be conducted (Dai & Hardy, 2023; Rajiani et al., 2023).

Nonetheless, the quality of teaching concerning specialization, classroom interaction, information and communication technologies, and teaching resources need to be upgraded as they fall below the excellent level (Manan et al., 2020). For this reason, the government and the service's authorities should prioritize maintaining the system as a whole, not just for a certain component.

4) Aspect 4: Language Center is Crucial for International Students

The international students realized that if they want to pursue education overseas, they must speak English. That is not the case at all since there will be an adaptation phase. Informants consider students should be ready. Yet, other students thought differently from the interview section. Students thought that the university might provide an international language language center in their institution to help them improve their English language. It related to English instruction is not correctly used in a particular class. When the environment is dominated by many people from the same cultures, then sometimes the minority will be forgotten (Arkoudis et al., 2019; Malik & Paswan, 2023).

International students expected not only improved knowledge about their degree but also their fluency in all aspects of the English language. Even another language after coming back to their home country. One study mentioned that the campus writing center contributed to helping undergraduate students develop academic writing (Solmaz, 2021). With the aids of technology in language learning, particularly writing skills (Kamarullah, et al., 2024a; Kamarullah, et al., 2024b), the mastery of the English language is achievable,

which is also supported by the routine evaluation of the facilities (Manan et al., 2020).

However, the authors discovered that the informant also got support from local friends in the context of supportive learning environments. Even if there were some communication difficulties, the strain has been reduced as international students adapt fast. According to one study, Chinese students prefer to communicate with English language native speakers, and they form better cultural relationships with students of non-Anglo-Saxon nations (Cheng & Yu, 2023). Moreover, international students claimed that India has English language is the official language. However, when it came to the fact that few international students enrolled, sometimes the Indian language or their mother tongue language was more applicable at the university.

5) Aspect 5: Institution has Supported Academic Growth from Learning Experiences

After graduating from the institution, no matter the obstacles that students had, and no matter the quality of instruction that they got, students considered that the institution had given them a good living.

The data proved that students cultivated their previous knowledge to a further degree after facing several obstacles. This is in line with students with scholarship programs from other countries which explained that the mobility for pursuing a degree in another country prepared students to have a certain strategy to encounter several academic constraints, and stress in their experiences (Natalia et al., 2023).

6) Aspect 6: Overall Satisfaction with The Facilities and Qualities of the Course

Initial results related to the public university's quality assurance efforts were satisfactory. There is nothing wrong with the systems

or the weakness of the university in supplying trained lecturers. Upon the level of satisfaction with study, students in the various courses at college admitted that the overall quality was good and suggested other international students enroll at this public university. Regardless of the findings, minor is recognized about international students' wants and emotional contracts (Bordia et al., 2019). In the author's eyes, it is up to the person to decide whether or not he wants to improve the quality of instruction. As long as the quality of teaching is good, then the other circumstance is not affecting the standard of the courses. Lecturers and staff should also receive sufficient training or orientation on dealing with concerns with foreign scholars and students.

Additionally, some international students were also disappointed with the examination system at public universities. Despite making significant contributions to the learning process throughout the semester, some students felt that the model of writing on many pages was not an efficient way to determine whether an examinee passed or not. Another point related to that issue was about the influence of local students on the other students.

Furthermore, based on the data, most local students were absent from the regular class. Even though international students may benefit from the complete notes from local students, this culture probably makes the international students lazy to come to class too. As mentioned by the respondent in the interview the local students do not go to college, but they freely follow the examination as long as they write as many as possible in the paper, they would finally pass the exam easily. Nevertheless, International students also added that even though the quality was good, some improvements in the teaching methods are needed. Students thought that most of the tea-

ching processes focused on teacher center approach, and some also thought it was boring to listen all the time.

International students compete and present their best efforts to improve the quality of the future, not only for their lives but also for the institutions. Institutions must examine the perspectives of learners for involvement in the execution of several institutions' inter-nationalization vision, as well as a reframe of objectives and approaches to close the gap between prestigious discourse and international education reality (Qu & Forsey, 2024).

Moreover, as service organizations, higher education institutions faced a situation in which meeting the needs and expectations of their users came first. Since few students were enrolled in PhD programs and technical professional courses, the institution should endeavor to boost the number of students in those fields. Scholarship programs attracted most international students. As a consequence, providing high-quality service has become a key priority for most higher education institutions to differentiate themselves from others (Mastoi et al., 2019). Hence, the government should maintain these programs and attempt to recruit more international students.

Conversely, related to the facilities, international students lower their expectations. Even though most students mentioned the library was outstanding, convenient, and well-stocked with helpful literature and databases. Some of them suggested that the library's operating hours be extended. The time allocation for using the library is limited only until the afternoon, and the limited access to the Internet colleges disappointed some students who must work on their projects. Other issues like the cleanliness of the college and toilet, canteen, and food menus still existed, making the international students challenging to adapt.

As the university's website is the primary information source, the authorities should constantly update the website and try to make everything available online to make it accessible to everyone. Furthermore, Table 5 shows that the students were moderately satisfied with the service offered by the University Foreign Relation Office, striving to develop links between institutions and overseas students while facilitating staff, institution, and student exchange programs. Since this study aimed to measure international students' perceptions of higher education courses at public universities, the actual data from the results emphasize the optimistic view and expresses some criticism towards the quality of the courses.

The choice to pursue higher education abroad is mainly motivated by push factors, whereas the selection of nation, region, and institution is primarily influenced by pull factors. They may include poor professional prospects, unfavorable social or political situations, inadequate educational development, and a lack of program options in the native country. As international students have difficulty getting accepted into universities abroad or in their own country, the officials must address the need for immediate improvements to all dimensions of the educational institution. That is because some actions of local culture would lead to negative stereotypes for international students. That is why institutions should take steps to enhance all quality-related areas in this matter.

The conceptual framework, as showcased in Figure 1, represents a novel approach to enhancing the educational experiences of international students. Six key areas identified for improvement, each contributing to a holistic educational environment tailored to the needs of international students, are essential to enhance their educational experiences. The first area, infrastructure modernization, highlights the urgent need to upgrade educational facilities to meet international standards. Modernizing infrastructure is crucial not only for enhancing learning and safety but also for attracting international students who evaluate physical facilities in their decision-making process. Studies such as those by Mergen et al. (2000) have emphasized the importance of quality infrastructure in educational performance, suggesting that a well-equipped environment enhances learning outcomes and student satisfaction.

The second area, teaching quality enhancement, focuses on improving the pedagogical skills of faculty and integrating modern educational technologies into the curriculum. This aligns with the findings from Whelan and Mcguinness (2020) that robust teaching frameworks significantly impact student engagement and learning effectiveness, thereby improving overall academic performance.

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Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of International Students' Educational Experiences

Next, the necessity for extensive support services, particularly language assistance for non-native speakers, is well-documented. Such services are pivotal for effective integration and academic success of international students. For example, Andrade (2006) emphasizes the critical role of support services in international student adaptation and success in higher education settings.

Furthermore, the importance of safety and hygiene in educational institutions cannot be overstated, as they directly impact student well-being and perceptions of the institution. Braxton et al. (2000) discuss how the physical and psychological safety of students is crucial for their retention and success.

Too, cultural integration programs are essential for fostering an inclusive environment that enriches the student body's cultural diversity. Zhou et al. (2008) support the idea that diverse educational environments enhance learning and prepare students for global citizenship.

Last, financial barriers significantly influence the educational choices of international students. Wei (2013) highlights that scholarships and financial aids are crucial factors considered by students when selecting an international study destination. Thus, increasing the availability of both aspects is essential to remove economic barriers and enhance the diversity of the student body.

This framework's interconnected approach, where improvements in one area can positively influence outcomes in another, offers a blueprint for systematic change. It recognizes that the educational experience is multifaceted and that enhancements must be comprehensive to meet the diverse needs of international students effectively. This integrated approach sets this research apart, offering a nuanced understanding of how institutional changes can enhance the global educational landscape.

4. Conclusion

This study has elucidated key aspects of the quality dimensions in higher education from the perspective of international students. The findings reveal a mixed reception of facilities, with concerns highlighted about the maintenance and availability of infrastructure. Despite these challenges, international students generally perceive the quality of services more positively, emphasizing the need for ongoing enhancements in specific areas.

The research underscores the importance of upgrading ICT facilities, enhancing instructional quality in the teaching-learning process, and refining evaluation and examination practices. These improvements are crucial for

aligning the educational services with the expectations of international students and ensuring their continued enrollment and satisfaction.

From a practical standpoint, institutions, particularly the public university studied, which encompasses multiple affiliate colleges, should commit to concerted efforts to address these issues. Ensuring robust orientation for incoming and outgoing international students and upgrading infrastructure are essential steps toward enhancing service quality.

However, this study is not without its limitations. The sample size and the singular focus on one institution may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should therefore expand to include more diverse educational settings and a larger sample to better understand the long-term impacts of service quality improvements. Further studies could also explore various service encounters within higher education, such as service failures and recovery processes, and assess the relationships between service quality measures and instructional quality.

Expanding the scope of research to include both public and private higher education institutions within a broader geographic area would also provide valuable insights into competitive benchmarks, monitor student defections due to poor service delivery, and support the advocacy for a statewide service quality measurement and provision.

These conclusions and recommendations aim to contribute to a better understanding of how higher education institutions can effectively meet the needs of their international student populations, fostering an environment that supports their academic and personal success.

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