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Comparing the Current Status with Optimal Situation of Educational and Cultural Services Provided for Families Covered by the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The current study aimed to investigate the current status with optimal situation of educational and cultural services provided for families covered by the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee.

Methods: According to the purpose, this research is an applied study and in term of method is comparative descriptive research. The strategy used for the qualitative part of the foundation data theory (grounded theory) and classification of information collected from research experts.

Results: The results revealed that the model of excellence in the quality of educational-cultural services provided for families covered by the Imam Khomeini (RA) Relief Committee has the main categories of executive policies, executive solutions, management departments, supervisory and control activities, educational and cultural quality improvement, factors that was related to employees, equipment and educational environment and educational and cultural processes. Based on structural-interpretive modeling calculations, it has been determined that "Equipment and educational environment and staff-related factors" is considered as an independent variable that no variable in the model has an effect on.

Conclusions: The variables of factors related to employees are endogenous independent variables and the variables of “educational and cultural quality improvement” are dependent variables. Also, the "executive policies and strategies" play a mediating role.

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Introduction

The characteristic of a set of elements in the input, process, and staff of an educational system that provides services that completely satisfy both internal and external managers is what defines the quality of educational services. It is crucial to evaluate the educational quality in order to continually enhance these services. Neglecting this evaluation would render concerns about costs and accessibility to education futile (Sabhani Fard et al., 2014). Service quality plays a pivotal role in determining the success of an organization in today's competitive environment. It refers to the extent to which the services provided align with the expected expectations. Understanding and measuring the perceptions and expectations of stakeholders is an essential component that can be utilized to enhance the quality of service provider organizations.

The concept of quality has become a major preoccupation for numerous organizations. In the fiercely competitive world of today, organizations must create conditions that maximize customer satisfaction in order to survive and enhance their standing. The definition of services has always been challenging due to their diverse nature. Moreover, the intangibility of most data further complicates the understanding and identification of ways to perform and deliver services. According to Kotler (2003), a service is an intangible activity or benefit provided by an organization that does not involve the ownership of any physical goods. In other words, service production may or may not be dependent on physical goods. Goods and services that fail to meet expectations always lead to reduced credibility and trust in the suppliers and providers of those goods and services.

According to Grunros (2001), service quality is the gap between the customer's perception of the service and their expectations. Zafiroflos (2007) asserts that service quality is crucial for the survival and profitability of the higher education system. Gathering feedback from customers is a fundamental step in ensuring and improving quality. This feedback helps identify areas that require continuous improvement (Ramazanian et al., 2013). However, there is often a discrepancy between the management's understanding of service recipients' perceptions and expectations and their actual perceptions and expectations. This discrepancy detrimentally impacts the quality of services.

Educational quality is the outcome of a series of specific actions and operations that address specific societal needs in a particular time and place (Bazargan, 2010). The theory of brain-

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centered or brain-based learning seeks to validate and acknowledge its role in the process of teaching and learning by affirming and emphasizing the significance of the brain in students' learning. Within this framework, by relying on the neurocognitive and biological foundations of human behavior, the nature and functions of the nervous system, the cerebral cortex and its various characteristics and functions, it is highlighted that the learning environment, in its broadest sense, is structured in a manner that stimulates the development of brain capacities in students. This theory of learning is grounded in the structure and function of the brain. Learning does not occur as long as the brain adheres to its normal processes (Kane and Rint, 2017).

Certain specialists and experts in the field of brain-based learning, recognizing the attributes of brain-based learning and instruction, particularly emphasize the utilization of integrated education and curriculum within this approach. In this regard, Jensen posits that the human brain learns more effectively when multidimensional information activates the brain's pathways. Hence, learning in the brain takes place in a multidimensional manner, and as a result, integrated teaching and programs can create enhanced learning opportunities for students. These programs should be designed in such a way that they encompass all cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor learning objectives simultaneously.

Every organization necessitates trained and proficient individuals who represent one of the most influential factors in the economic, social, and cultural development of any nation (Sabar Kash et al., 2012). Simultaneously, the achievement of an organization's goals relies on the employees' capacity to carry out assigned tasks and adapt to the evolving environment (Jalil Vand, 2008). Therefore, recognizing the significance of education, the World Bank declares that education stands as one of the most potent instruments to alleviate poverty and inequality (Gil, 2012). Additionally, the vitality of organizations heavily hinges on the knowledge and skills of employees, particularly in management, as the timelier and more apt the context, the greater the organization's ability to adapt to the changing environment (Sejasi Khedari et al., 2019).

Inchuan (2015) elucidates the vision for global education in the forthcoming 15 years and advocates for nations to offer students with comprehensive and equitable educational opportunities, as well as quality education and lifelong learning. Education, being a pivotal element for worldwide tranquility and sustainable development, compels countries under the

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Education Action Plan to establish national-level targets for financial disbursements and augment official development assistance for low-income nations. Quality education, as an inherent entitlement, is imperative to eradicate poverty and accomplish prosperity and contentment for all. Moreover, the caliber of education fosters the cultivation of creativity and knowledge, as well as the attainment of rudimentary skills such as literacy, writing, and arithmetic, in addition to analytical knowledge, problem-solving abilities, and other advanced levels of knowledge. It also ensures the acquisition of social and individual skills (Al Haq Hosseini, 2014).

Hoyda and Molvi (2007), in their study on the process of enhancing the educational quality of universities, reached the conclusion that to confront challenges and issues, educational management within universities necessitates educational strategies and programs that align with societal and student needs and expectations. Rather than excessively emphasizing quantitative aspects, focus should be placed on indicators of educational quality improvement (Tabarsa et al., 2013). Furthermore, research conducted by Lomas (2004) at the Royal College of London demonstrated that to bolster the quality of education, fostering a culture of quality, recognizing the significance of education, ensuring the high caliber of new teachers through their continuous professional development, carefully evaluating professors' teaching methods, and cultivating transformational leaders equipped with effective management strategies for change are imperative (Lomas, 2004). Effectively, the quality of education provided by educational institutions is collective responsibility shared by students, staff, faculty members, organizations, parents, and society at large (Khosravizadeh and Zohrevandian, 2016). Consequently, the quality of education is assessed in terms of the following objectives: excellence in education, added value in education, appropriateness of educational experiences and outcomes for utilization, alignment of educational products with planned goals, specifications, and requirements, non-negligence in the education process, and meeting or surpassing customer expectations in education (Hemtinejad, 2014).

Nikolas (2015), in a research paper entitled "The quality of the educational process through classroom leadership," commences the study by defining the classroom as a miniature educational community that, through the implementation of rules and simple behaviors, serves as an ideal platform for the cultivation of leadership among educational constituents. These strategies are formulated as leadership skills training, encompassing the organization of the learning environment, setting goals for time management, effective communication and the development

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of communication networks, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and the enhancement of self-confidence, among other skills. Elga et al. (2015), in a study titled "e-learning as a means to enhance the quality of education for international students," observed that the utilization of e-learning in the educational process enriches the quality of practical education and facilitates a comprehensive grasp of the course material.

Zamil (2014) conducted a study on the topic of "Enhancing the caliber of technical education in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of self-evaluation". The administration of technical education is overseen by technical and professional institutes. Zamil conducted his own investigation with the intention of proposing self-assessment standards to aid these technical institutes. Through the utilization of the brainstorming technique, Zamil determined that brainstorming is an exceptionally effective tool for enhancing the performance of institutions.

In a study titled "Components of Quality Assurance in Higher Education", Harman (2012) concluded that the fundamental components of quality assurance in higher education encompass the subject of evaluation, information sources, criteria, references and external factors, frameworks and guidelines, evaluation objectives, reporting procedures, follow-up mechanisms, and outcomes. By assessing the quality of services, it becomes feasible to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the provided services. Consequently, programs can be implemented to enhance the quality and increase audience satisfaction. Research has revealed a correlation between audience satisfaction, retention, and profitability. The Imam Khomeini (RA) Relief Committee has, for many years, included the teaching of life skills as a crucial cultural program in order to eradicate cultural poverty within the supported families and mitigate the cultural impacts of poverty within the supported society. This program encompasses the provision of necessary training in religious matters and rulings, health concerns, mental well-being, literacy, and cultural and social issues. In light of the primary mission and responsibilities of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) regarding the provision of educational and cultural services to the families under its care, an examination and comparison of the current and desirable state of the educational and cultural services provided to these families has been undertaken.

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Materials and Methods

The descriptive and comparative method has been employed in the current research. To examine the current situation of the Imam Khomeini (RA) Relief Committee in terms of the model components, the statistical population consisted of all the families covered by the Imam Khomeini (RA) Relief Committee in the country in 2020, a total of 384 households were randomly selected as a statistical sample based on Cochran's formula. The random cluster selection process was used, where different cities of the province were considered as clusters and families covered by the Imam Khomeini (RA) Relief Committee were randomly chosen within these clusters. The reason for using the random cluster method was to reduce the high variance between groups, which was evident in the statistical population. A Likert spectrum closed questionnaire was utilized to collect the data, and the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by calculating Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of 0.78. The collected data was then analyzed using SPSS software. Initially, the coded data were entered into the software and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage, as well as mean and variance distribution tables, were employed in the first and second parts to describe the opinions of the statistical sample regarding the questions. This analysis was conducted at a significance level of 0.05. Subsequently, in the third part, inferential statistics were used, specifically the T-test, to quantitatively assess the current situation of the Imam Khomeini (RA) Relief Committee in terms of model components. The data obtained from the questionnaire underwent quantitative testing.

Results

According to the findings, women made up the sample with 66% and men with 34%, and women accounted for the largest sample volume. Also, people with a coverage period of less than 10 years with 33.8%, 10 to 20 years with 39.7% and more than 20 years with 26.5% have formed the sample. People with a covered period of 10 to 20 years have the largest sample volume. In Tables 1 and 2, the descriptive statistics of the main variables in the current and favorable conditions are presented.

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the main variables in the current situation

Variable	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Executive policies	2.86	0.46	1.25	3.75
Executive solutions	3.14	0.43	1.23	4
Administrative departments	2.61	0.41	1.14	3.57
Supervisory and control activities	3.01	0.45	1.17	3.83
Improving educational and cultural quality	3.41	0.51	1.20	4.40
Factors related to employees	2.93	0.52	1	4
Educational equipment and environment	2.73	0.42	1.5	4
Educational and cultural processes	2.73	0.41	1.40	3.80

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of main variables in favorable condition

Variable	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Executive policies	4.65	0.34	3.5	5
Executive solutions	4.79	0.24	4	5
Administrative departments	4.76	0.27	4	5
Supervisory and control activities	4.73	0.29	4	5
Improving educational and cultural quality	4.83	0.27	4	5
Factors related to employees	4.71	0.31	3.71	5
Educational equipment and environment	4.71	0.27	3.75	5
Educational and cultural processes	4.60	0.36	4	5

What is the current status of educational and cultural services for the families covered by the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee? To answer this question, the favorable situation and the availability of educational and cultural service components were compared with T- test. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparing the current and favorable conditions

Variable	Mean Difference	T value	p
Executive policies	-0.14	-5.95	0.001
Executive solutions	.143	6.41	0.001
Administrative departments	-0.395	-18.84	0.001
Supervisory and control activities	0.06	0.24	0.89
Improving educational and cultural quality	0.414	15.99	0.001
Factors related to employees	-0.051	-1.91	0.057
Educational equipment and environment	-0.263	-11.98	0.001
Educational and cultural processes	-0.263	-12.63	0.001

According to Table 3, the status of cultural education services is higher than average in some components, lower than average in some components, and average in some components.

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Discussion

The findings indicated that in the current circumstance, the status of executive policies, factors pertaining to employees, educational equipment and environment, educational and cultural processes, and management departments were below the mean, while the status of executive strategies and enhancement of educational and cultural quality surpassed the average. The present state of monitoring and control activities was on par with the mean. At present, the concept of quality is a primary concern for numerous organizations. In reality, in today's competitive world, organizations must offer conditions that yield maximum satisfaction to their customers in order to survive and advance their position. Defining services has always been challenging due to the range of services. Adding to the complexity is the fact that because the majority of data is intangible, comprehending and identifying methods for executing and delivering services is often not straightforward.

Kotler (2003) contends that a service is an intangible activity or benefit that an organization furnishes without involving the ownership of any tangible entity; in other words, service provision may or may not rely on physical goods. Inferior-quality goods and services that fall short of expectations always lead to reduced credibility and trust among customers and users towards the suppliers and providers of said goods and services. There are several reasons why organizations should strive to deliver superior-quality services to their customers, including increasing customer expectations, competitive endeavors, environmental factors, the nature of services, internal organizational factors, and the advantages of service quality (Ebrahimzadeh and Kamasi, 2013). In the meantime, the key to effectively delivering services to customers lies in accurately ascertaining their needs and desires and subsequently addressing them appropriately (Karana, 2003).

To ensure the quality of educational and cultural services, two primary factors hold significance: the educational process and the performance of learners. This assurance necessitates access to accurate, comprehensive, and adequate information to facilitate appropriate decision-making. Consequently, enhancing the quality of education is intrinsically linked to improving the decision-making process within the educational system, which, in turn, necessitates the establishment of a management information system. As a result, decision-making at the school level becomes crucial,

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encompassing collective agreement on policies, educational objectives, educational requirements, labor market demands, societal needs, resource mobilization, and investment in education, all of which contribute indispensably to the improvement of educational quality (Fatih Rad et al., 2021). According to Zafiroflos (2007), service quality is paramount for the survival and profitability of higher education institutions. Acquiring feedback from customers constitutes a fundamental step in ensuring and enhancing quality. The feedback obtained from customers plays a pivotal role in identifying areas that require continuous improvement (Ramazanian et al., 2013).

However, there often exists a discrepancy between management's understanding of service recipients' perceptions and expectations and the actual perceptions and expectations held by these recipients. This disparity detrimentally affects service quality, primarily in organizations that fail to prioritize the recognition and fulfillment of customer needs and expectations. Consequently, decision makers and planners encounter difficulties in accurately determining priority matters, resulting in a quality gap (Bakhshi et al., 2019). The initial step in addressing this gap involves ascertaining service recipients' perception of the current situation and their expectations for the desired situation. The extent of the quality gap in the services provided can be determined by considering the viewpoints of service recipients, thereby providing a foundation for their satisfaction (Salamati, 2019). One of the noteworthy limitations of the present study pertains to the utilization of self-report questionnaires for data collection and the focus on a sample from the city of Qom. Consequently, these limitations ought to be taken into consideration when generalizing the findings.

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Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by ethics committee of Islamic Azad University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

M.O, G.V and J.R contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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