The Impact of Service Quality Provided by Admission and Registration Deanships at Jordanian Private Universities on Student Satisfaction

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Abstract:

The study aimed at measuring the impact of service quality provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on students' satisfaction. To collect information for the study, a questionnaire was developed and distributed on a random sample (n=258) of students who regularly visit the admission and registration deanship and finalize their registration traditionally. After conducting the relevant statistical analysis and testing hypotheses, the study reached the following conclusions:

Students are moderately satisfied with all dimensions of the service quality provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities; namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and courtesy. It was also found that there is a statistically significant impact for the above-mentioned dimensions of service quality on students' satisfaction with the services provided by the deanship.

The study presented a number of recommendations including: holding relevant training courses about the art of dealing with the public, encouraging cooperative work and promoting the concept of synergy, educating students about the role of the admission and registration deanship at the university.

Keywords: service quality; customer satisfaction; admission and registration deanship; Jordanian private universities.

Introduction

Education is one of Jordan's most important and critical sectors; the Kingdom has been working hard to provide high-quality services in order to gain a competitive edge among neighboring countries and earn a good reputation despite the crowdedness in the marketplace. There are 30 universities in Jordan, of which 10 are public and 20 private. Competition between these universities does not only revolve about the introduction of new specializations, but also the manner in which universities should provide their services to attract the highest number of students. To achieve this, the best way is to earn the loyalty and love of students in return for the care they receive from their universities. An ideal approach would be to provide services whose positive impacts would sustain from admission until graduation. This issue becomes more critical with the presence of foreign students whom we consider to be ambassadors for their countries, and we hope that they return to their homes with positive impressions about Jordan and its educational institutions that demonstrate Jordanian people's culture and values; i.e. their capital.

Service quality is quite difficult to attain due to characteristics that make it too delicate to control; it is intangible, concurrent, asymmetric, and cannot be stored. In addition, for the purposes of this study, the "customer" is the undergraduate student who has become difficult to satisfy in light of fierce competition and the technological revolution, hence admission deanships need to double their efforts to ensure comfort that exceeds expectations and attempt to track and solve the problems of students without affecting their academic progress in order to satisfy them. Therefore, the gap between actual (perceived) and anticipated service needs to be bridged.

When students enjoy comfort and safety at the university, their satisfaction and loyalty will improve and they will leave the institution with good memories of the best years of their life. This would clear the way for later generations to renew knowledge and re-live the experience.

Study Problems

Service provision at admission and registration deanships in universities is witnessing noticeable confusion as students often complain from services at more than one university. Having suffered from the same as a lecturer and through interaction with students, there is a consensus that the service levels are quite low, and this becomes even worse at the beginning of each semester when the admission and registration deanship witnesses massive pressure, which requires utilizing different mechanisms to perform the work accurately and skillfully to satisfy beneficiaries. Undoubtedly, the provision of high quality services requires collaboration of all personnel to fulfill the goals for which the deanship was created; therefore the problem of the study can be outlined as follows:

 Measuring the impact of service quality provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction

Questions of the Study

1- What is the impact of service quality provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on students' satisfaction? This entails the following questions:

- What is the impact of tangibles on students' satisfaction with the services provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities?

- What is the impact of reliability on students' satisfaction with the services provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities?

- What is the impact of responsiveness on students' satisfaction with the services provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities?

- What is the impact of assurance on students' satisfaction with the services provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities?

- What is the impact of empathy on students' satisfaction with the services provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities?

- What is the impact of courtesy on students' satisfaction with the services provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities?

2- What is the level of students' satisfaction with the services provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is represented in these two aspects:

-Theoretical (academic) significance: The study highlights the role played by universities as a services sector in Jordan, and draws the attention of researchers to an existing issue which peaks during the registration period as communicated by student.

-Applied (practical) significance: The study seeks to support admission and registration department employees in identifying some of their weaknesses according to the findings, help such departments to enhance their human capabilities and level of services, present recommendations to improve services, and to provide a benchmarking framework for similar departments at other universities.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims at identifying the following:

- The impact of service quality dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and courtesy) on students' satisfaction with the services provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities.

- The impact of tangibles provided by admission and registration deanships on students' satisfaction at Jordanian private universities.

- The impact of reliability provided by admission and registration deanships on students' satisfaction at Jordanian private universities.

- The impact of responsiveness provided by admission and registration deanships on students' satisfaction at Jordanian private universities.

- The impact of assurance provided by admission and registration deanships on students' satisfaction at Jordanian private universities.

- The impact of empathy provided by admission and registration deanships on students' satisfaction at Jordanian private universities.

- The impact of courtesy provided by admission and registration deanships on students' satisfaction at Jordanian private universities.

Study Hypotheses:

The researcher formulated the hypotheses of the study as follows:

First Main Null Hypothesis (H$_0$1): There is no statistically significant impact (at the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and assurance) of the service quality provided by admission and registration deanships on students' satisfaction at Jordanian private universities. The following sub-hypotheses are derived from the main null hypothesis:

- First sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the tangibles of services provided by admission and registration deanships on the satisfaction of students at Jordanian private universities.
- Second sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the reliability of services provided by admission and registration deanships on the satisfaction of students at Jordanian private universities.
- Third sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the responsiveness of services provided by admission and registration deanships on the satisfaction of students at Jordanian private universities.
- Fourth sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the assurance of services provided by admission and registration deanships on the satisfaction of students at Jordanian private universities.
- Fifth sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the empathy of services provided by admission and registration deanships on the satisfaction of students at Jordanian private universities.
- Sixth sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the courtesy of services provided by admission and registration deanships on the satisfaction of students at Jordanian private universities.

Study Model
In light of the study problem and literature review, the variables of the model have been determined in line with Parasuraman et al.
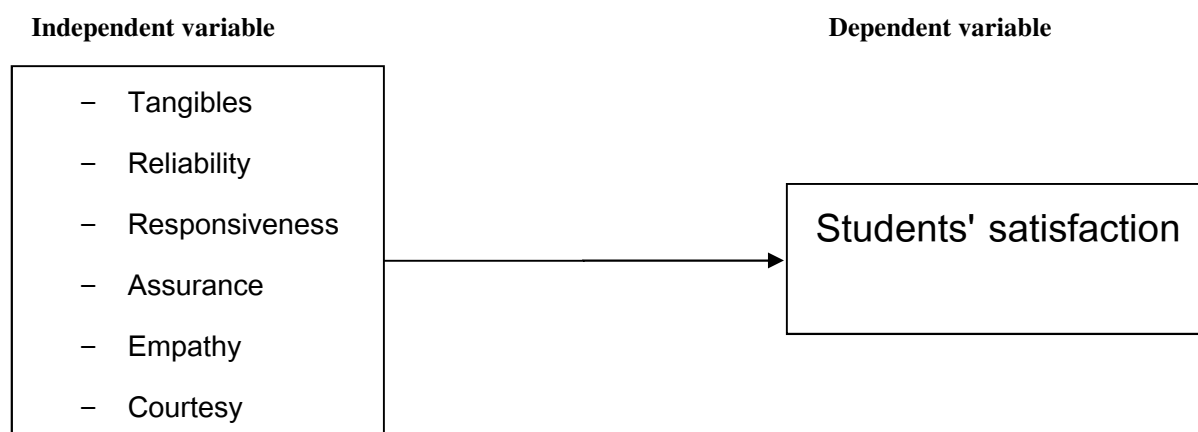

Figure (1) shows the independent variables and their impacts on the dependent variable as follows:

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Services
The term "services" has been difficult to define because it cannot be completely separated from "product"; when a certain product is purchased, this process involves an accompanying service factor, and the same happens when a service is purchased as it needs to be served through a related tangible object. For example, a car is purchased as a "product "accompanied by a set of intangible services such as warranties, credit facilities or after-sale services.
Researchers proposed the following definitions for services:
Gronroos (1994) defined services as exchangeable things perceived by senses provided by firms or institutions generally involved in the provision of services or consider themselves to be service organizations. Zeithmal and Bitner (1996) defined services as an intangible work or performance provided by one party to another without resulting in ownership, e.g. when airlines sell services excluding airplane seats. On the other hand, Shostack believes that the difference between "core service" and elements surrounding the core is a basis for defining service. Core represents the essential outcomes for the service organization which aim to provide intangible benefits anticipated by beneficiaries, whereas elements surrounding the core service are vital and critical for the performance of the core service.
Al-Ali (2008, 287) defined service as "a set of economic activities that provide time, place, form, mental and emotional benefits". The gas station provides a full range of services to customers including washing, cleaning, maintenance, etc. Further, Al-Ali distinguished services from goods by indicating that goods are tangible, and they can be produced and sold at a later time, whereas services are intangible and are produced and consumed at the same time.

Al-Hmoud (2007) outlined three stages of services which he considered the ideal structure of customer services as follows: Firstly: pre-sale services, which focus on communicating with consumers to identify their desires, needs and preferences; secondly: on-sale services focus on familiarizing consumers with the product's properties and usage; and thirdly: after-sale services which focus on the repair, maintenance or replacement of the product or any part thereof that becomes damaged as a result of usage.

Service Characteristics

Al-Taei and Al-Allaq (2009, 39) specified the features and characteristics of services, which are generally agreed to by many researchers and specialists:

1- **Intangibility:** It has no material existence as it is used when needed (production and consumption both occur at the same time), so it is difficult to examine or try out before purchasing. This characteristic results in storage difficulties, inability to compare services to choose better ones, distribution is confined to agents and brokers, and speculation methods cannot be applied (buying the product when supply is high and selling it when supply is low).

2- **Concurrence:** Refers to the degree of correlation between the service itself and the service provider; this implies that services have a higher concurrence that services, so the service requester needs to go to certain locations to receive the service such as medical services or hairdressing services. Concurrence results in the following: 1- A direct relationship needs to be formed between the service organization and the beneficiary; 2- The customer must take part in the production of the service; and 3- The loyalty of the customer is significantly higher as he/ she insists on receiving the service from a certain person.

3- **Asymmetry** (Variability): Refers to the inability to standardize services, particularly those which rely on the performance of individuals, i.e. the service provider cannot undertake to provide similar and consistent services each time the service is produced.

4- **Fluctuation of demand**: Demand on services fluctuates not only between seasons but also from one day to another and from hour to hour within the same day. Whereby less people travel to tourism resorts in winter, movie theaters are full on weekends.

Core and supplementary services

Al-Allaq and Al-Taei (2009) stated that knowing the true meaning of services is essential for service marketing people, in addition to being aware of supplementary services which support the core. Accordingly, they defined service as "all activities, actions and reactions that beneficiaries realize they have purchased." This shows that the service product is in essence a set of activities composed of a core service and supplementary services. Therefore, all organizations need to concentrate their efforts in the field that allows them to identify benefits arising from the service for which the beneficiary realizes he/ she is paying a price. One method for identifying and locating supplementary services is to draw a flowchart for service delivery. Further, the authors pointed out that goods become the core products of both service and production industries when competition grows and the industry matures, hence the competitive advantage becomes reliant on supplementary service elements. For this reason, any organization that fails to be creative in its core element will inevitably fail. A good example for this is the air transport industry, where the core service is the safe and timely transport of passengers from one destination to another. In this case, service failure occurs when the plane does not reach its original destination, arrives in another airport, or arrives late. When this type of errors occurs frequently, passengers will look for other service providers and this airline will fail. Accordingly, reaching the desired airport is not the main criteria for selecting airlines; rather, the selection of service providers is based on other (supplementary) standards such as easiness of booking, accessibility to tributary stations, luggage clearance facilities, safe arrivals, and the quality of food on planes. Such supplementary services are what grants excellence to the organizations through its supplementary services supporting the core, which are the only guarantee for the growth of many service organizations under growing competition.

Common Classifications of Supplementary Services

Although there are many classifications for supplementary services, most researchers use the "service flower" model which contains eight main groups, whereby the core service is placed at the center of the flower and it is surrounded by leaves, each carrying a supplementary service. It should be noted here that a flower with fresh leaves refers to robust service providers, whereas wilted leaves refer to weak service providers which would not survive the fierce competition. This model illustrates that the core is a matter of fact, while unique supplementary services are the vital element in service delivery. These eight groups are: (Lovelock, et, al., 2009). Information, order taking, safekeeping, billing, consultation, hospitality, exceptions, and payment. For the

purpose of this study, the researcher made some amendments to the service flower by Lovelock et al. (2009) as shown in Figure (2) below:
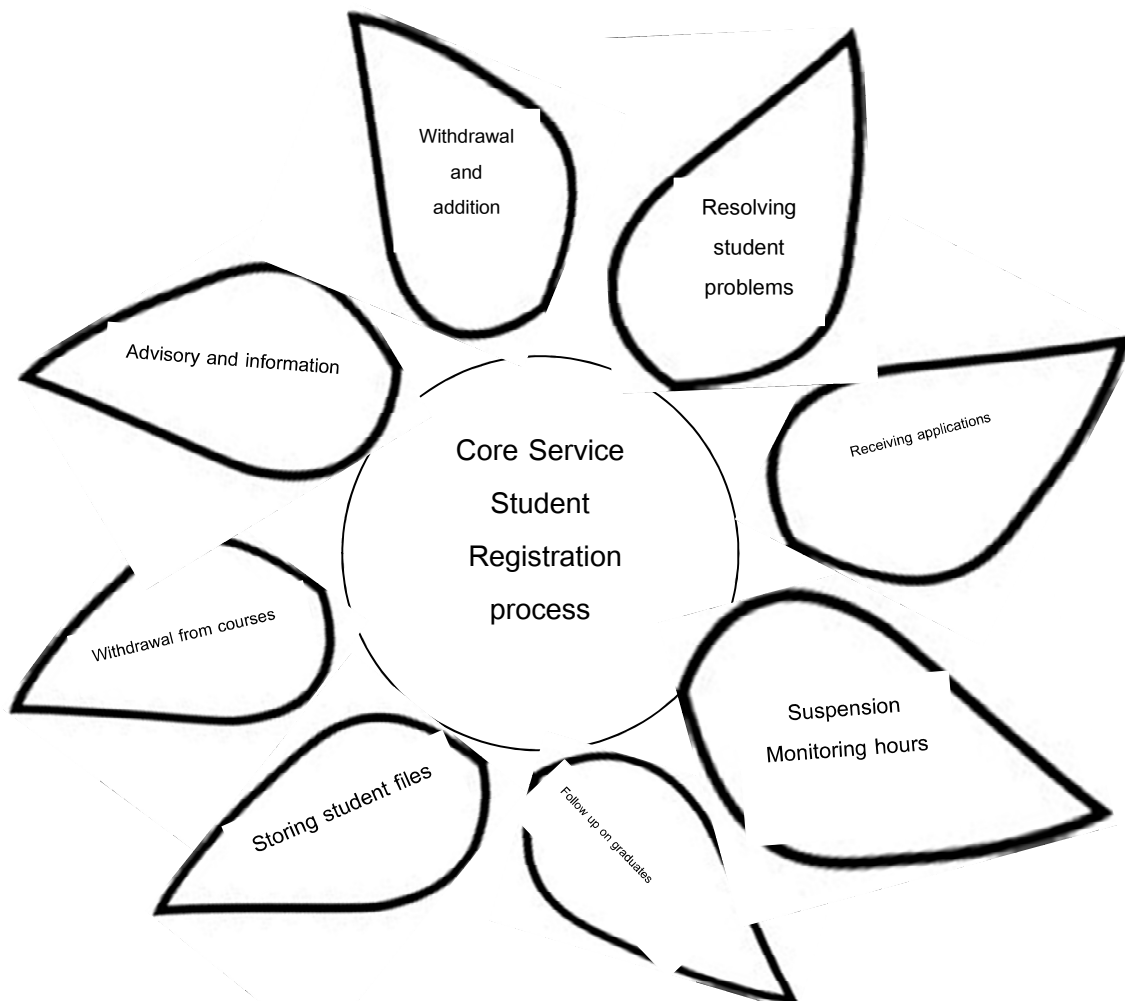

Figure (2) developed by the researcher according to Lovelock et al. (2009)

Service quality:

The quality concept is as old as humanity itself. Since their creation, humans have been always looking for the better service or product. Services are very essential in demonstrating the cultures of nations. It is evident that the global services sector has registered strong growth in terms of size and workforce worldwide (Al-Barwari, 2011) which can be attributed to many factors including: increasing numbers of working women, increasing products that require services, and growing technology and applications, which has led to increasing leisure and entertainment time, rising incomes, complexity of the work of organizations, profitability of the services sector. In addition, many executives at the production sector are now moving to work in the services sector. Many researchers have defined service quality as follows:

Zeithmal (1987) defined it as the customer's judgment on the excellence of service. This implies that service quality equals the customer's expectations and perceptions of the service performed thereto.

Al-Barwari (2011) affirmed that what determines the success of organizations nowadays is how interactions and relationships with clients are managed.

Shostack's scale demonstrated that most products involve intangible elements, whereas many services involve tangible elements. The scale confirms that most products fall between these two extremes (tangible vs.

intangible), i.e. it is difficult to distinguish completely between an abstract service or an abstract product as a combination of services and products.

Parasuramaan et al. (1988) identified five dimensions of service quality (tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, safety and empathy), and added that the credibility dimension relates to service outcomes which connect the dimensions of instantiation, responsiveness, safety and empathy to the service process itself. Further, most studies agreed that the credibility dimension is far more important than other dimensions (Barwari, 2011).

In fact, researchers provided various definitions of quality, each according to their background and perceptions. Lovelock et al. (2009, 368) specified quality according to several perspectives including:

1- The cognitive perspective: It refers to distinguished and effective performance. Individuals realize quality according to their experiences generated from frequent exposure thereto.

2- The perspective based on the product itself. This is related to people working in the field of production who view quality from an operational perspective, and concentrate on standard criteria and product properties that increase productivity and reduce costs.

3- The perspective of the user: Quality here is in the eye of the beholder. Those users (beholders) have their own desires and needs; therefore quality differs with different clients.

4- The value perspective: This perspective addresses the issues of value and pricing when comparing the benefit obtained by the customer with the prices paid.

Types of Quality:
There are five types of quality (Parasuraman, 1985 p 41) shown below:
1- Quality expected by clients, which is perceived to be essential by clients.
2- The quality perceived and deemed adequate by the organization's management.
3- Standard quality: It is determined by the quality specifications of the service.
4- Actual quality, in which the service is performed.
5- Quality promoted to clients: The quality promised to clients through promotional campaigns.
Al-Barwari (2011) noted on (Al-Allaq and Al-Taei, 1999, 256) that service quality has two components:
1- Technical quality, an outcome of service processes
2- Functional (professional) quality; the procedural dimension in the terms of customer's interaction with the service provider.

Measuring service quality
Al-Ofaishat (2001, 80) noted that the evaluation of service quality consists of ten standards used by the customer in the valuation process as follows: Credibility, security, ease of access, communications, knowing and understanding clients, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, adequacy and courtesy. Those dimensions were later merged into five dimensions. Customers assess each dimension as follows:

1- Reliability: Refers to timely delivery, and also means the ability to deliver service promises accurately and reliably. The use of modern communications has made reliability more applicable.

2 Responsiveness refers to the will to help customers and provide them with the service immediately. This dimension revolves around compliments and grace, and addresses the inquiries, complaints and issues raised by customers. The customer receives the response as they wait for help. Requests need to be addressed from the perspective of the customer rather than that of the organization.

3- Assurance refers to the organization's ability to create and earn confidence among customers. It is evident that knowledge and information have a clear impact on utilizing and affirming the assurance dimension.

4- Empathy refers to treating customers on an individual basis, whereby the core of emotional interaction is reaching out to the customer through a personal relationship and making the customer feel like he/ she is one of a kind. Although modern means of telecommunication made it possible for customers to finalize transactions without visiting service providers, the quality of service can be determined by the accuracy and credibility of work between the two parties, similar to the situation prior to the telecommunications revolution.

5- Tangibles, material illustration of services: It refers to the outer appearance which provides equipment, people and communication materials

 Parasuraman,et al. (1985, 1988, 1991) noted that there are two methods for measuring service quality; the first one uses customer expectations as an entry to measure the level of actual service, followed by determining the gap (or match) between expectations and perceptions using the aforementioned dimensions (tangibles, reliability, empathy, responsiveness, assurance). This method is also known as (SERVQUAL). The main standard for the service quality evaluation model is the gap between the customer's perception of the actual level of performance

and the customer's expectations regarding service quality. However, this gap depends on the nature of the five gaps related to the design, marketing and presentation of services as shown below:

- The first gap: Results from the difference between clients' expectations of the level of services and management's perception of the expectations of clients; i.e. management's failure to identify the expected needs and desires of clients. This is also known as the "research gap".

- The second gap: Results from the difference between management's perception of customers' expectations and the design capabilities of the service delivery system. It is called the "design gap"

- The third gap: Results from the difference between the designed service and what is delivered to customers. It is also called the "delivery gap", and it is often attributed to behavioral reasons due to its connection with the interaction between service providers and beneficiaries.

- The fourth gap: Refers to the difference between the services delivered to the customer and those promised by the service provider. It is also called the "communication gap".

- The fifth gap: This gap refers to the comparison between customers' expectations already formed about the service and their perception of the service they received. It is the difference between expected and perceived quality by customers. It occurs as a result of some or all of the four other gaps. It is called the "reality gap".

The second method for measuring service quality emerged as a result of criticism to the gap model which focused on measuring the actual performance of the service rendered to the customer, hence service quality is expressed as a trend. It is called the actual performance scale. It is noteworthy that this method is not different from the other in terms of the dimensions used in measuring the quality of service (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy). Supporters of this scale believe it is simple, easy to use, more credible and realistic because it averts the comparison between customer expectations and perceptions of service quality.

Customer (student) satisfaction:

Satisfaction is defined as one's feeling of happiness or disappointment as a result of comparing the perceived performance of the product after consumption with one's expectations before consumption (Kotler and Keller, 2006, 144). Quality service is a prerequisite for customer satisfaction (Zeithmal and Bitner, 1996). Kotler and Keller (2006, 146)add that customer satisfaction is often based on service quality.

Factors affecting customer satisfaction
As stated by Zeithmal et al. (2006, 110-116)
- Service features and properties: Customers' awareness of the features of the services rendered, whereby the standards and dimensions of service quality are compared with prices.
- Customer's emotions: The customer may undergo various emotions and feelings; he/ she might be happy or unhappy. Further, events accompanying service delivery may impact satisfaction. Unexpected surprises accompanying the outcomes of the service - for better or for worse - may have positive or negative impacts on the satisfaction of the customer.
- Perceived equality and fairness: The customer asks himself/ herself whether they were treated like other customers.
- Quality: Customers perceive the dimensions of services presented thereto, which are determinants of satisfaction.
- Situational factors: The properties of the service provider such as the size of the organization, number of employees, or geographical location.
- People close to the client: The client is influenced by the opinions of family members, colleagues and friends.

Measurement of satisfaction
Kotler and Keller (2006, 145) affirmed that client satisfaction can be measured using the below:
- Personal interview with the customer: conducted by salesmen; questions about satisfaction can be asked directly.
- Periodic surveys: using direct or online questionnaires.
- Undercover customer: hiring a person or any management official to pretend to be a customer and ask customers about their satisfaction while service is being requested.

Admission and Registration Department:

The admission and registration department at private universities is a vital and critical utility within the campus; it is the place where the students begin and end their academic journeys. It is critical because, according to the manner it treats students, it can provide comfort and confidence to students so that they prefer one university to

others. Accordingly, this department is the link between the student and all regulations at the university. It is mandated to apply the rules and provisions of the academic regulation applied by the university, as well as the regulations for granting bachelors, masters and PhD degrees to control the academic path of students in collaboration with deanships, faculty and academic counselors. The core service at this department is registration at the university, with subsequent sub-services shown in Figure (2).

Responsibilities and tasks of admission and registration departments at private universities:

1. Handing enrollment application forms and recording information in special registers for admission purposes.

2. Announcing the named of students enrolled at the university's faculties, and preparing files containing the supporting documents for each student.

3. Preparing, distributing and communicating weekly lecture schedules prior to the beginning of each semester.

4. Finalizing the registration of students in academic courses, and handling the withdrawal and addition procedures at the beginning of each semester.

5. Preparing statistics about students and developing final exam schedules at the end of each semester.

6. Receiving and distributing grade lists on faculty registers.

7. Monitoring the grades of students and calculating their scores.

8. Creating lists of students (outstanding students, graduates, warning lists, suspensions, etc.)

9. Reviewing the study plans of students.

10. Providing embassies with the results of scholarship students.

11. Issuing grades, certificates and any other documents required by students.

12. Participation in the preparation for the annual graduation ceremony.

13. Providing the computer center with necessary information and data for the purposes of admission, registration, exams and programs.

14. Applying the regulations for granting bachelors, masters and PhD degrees at the university.

Literature Review

Arabic Studies:

- Mohammad Ali (2014) study entitled: "Proposed Model for Illustrating the Impact of Loyalty Programs, Service Quality and Price on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty at the Services Sector"

The study aimed at developing a proposed model for illustrating the impact of loyalty programs, service quality and price on client satisfaction and loyalty within the services sector. A questionnaire was distributed on 600 customers of Jordanian hotels and telecommunications companies.

The study reached several findings including: There is a significant impact (for non-financial loyalty programs, service quality and service price) on the satisfaction and loyalty of customers at the service sector; there are significant differences in service quality and service price in favor of the telecommunications sector; and there are no differences in customer satisfaction and loyalty attributable to different sectors.

The study recommended that more focus should be placed on financial and non-financial loyalty programs in the hotels and telecommunications sectors, in addition to presenting services above the expectations of customers and reconsidering service prices at the hotels and telecommunications sectors.

- Al-Awajeen (2013) study entitled "Impact of Internal Service Quality on Employee Satisfaction at the Orphans Funds Development Corporation in Jordan"

The study aimed at identifying the impact of the dimensions of internal service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, professionalism, confidentiality) on employee satisfaction at the Orphans Funds Development Corporation. For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed and distributed on 254 people (214 questionnaires were retrieved) at all directorates and branches of the Orphans Funds Development Corporation. The study reached a number of findings, including the impact of the internal service quality on employee satisfaction at the Orphans Funds Development Corporation. The study made the following recommendations:

It is necessary to improve internal services for their impact on employee satisfaction which inevitably leads to customer satisfaction; developing programs for developing and training employees; linking promotion with competence through developing clear and specific basis for promotions.

- Al Kasasbeh (2012) study entitled "Impact of service quality dimensions on customer loyalty at beauty salons in Jordan"

This study aimed at examining the impact of service quality provided by beauty salons in Jordan on customer satisfaction and whether satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. For

this purpose, a questionnaire was developed for a sample of 988 customers. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, security) were used.

The main findings were: All dimensions have positive impacts on customer satisfaction, which in turn has positive impacts on customer loyalty. A number of recommendations were presented: Paying attention to and trying to resolve customers' issues; building personal relationships with customers to benefit from the positive impacts of such relationship (empathy) and realize customer satisfaction and loyalty.

- Tailakh (2010) study entitled "Impact of Health Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction at Private and Public Hospitals in Jordan - A Comparative Study"

The study aimed at measuring the impact of health service quality on patient satisfaction at private and public hospitals in Jordan. For this purpose, a questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 450 students. The SERVQUAL scale was used. The study reached several conclusions and recommendations including: There is an impact for health service quality on patient satisfaction at private and public hospitals; there are significant differences between the impact of health service quality on patient satisfaction at private hospitals compared with public hospitals in favor of private hospitals; the dimensions of assurance and responsiveness had significant effects on patient satisfaction. The main recommendations were to continue working on improving the services of public hospitals; develop the capabilities of human resources to raise the competence of public hospital workers; create a reward system for employees to adhere to the dimensions of responsiveness and assurance which had the most positive impacts on patient satisfaction.

English Studies:

- The study of (Chowdhury, 2010) entitled "A Study of Service Quality Determinants of Private Universities in Bangladesh using SERVQUAL"

The study aimed at exploring the service quality determinants in the private universities in Bangladesh using the SERVQUAL model. It also aimed to extract the crucial factors affecting the service quality at those universities. The study sample consisted of 304 students at private universities in Bangladesh. The study concluded that the university environment is a critical factor affecting the quality of the educational services at those universities.

- The study of Chent el al. (2010) entitled "Service Quality, Trust, Commitment and Service Differentiation in Business Relationships"

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of service differentiation in business-to-business relationships considering that differentiation relates to client-perceived value, competitive advantage, and a target market focus. For this purpose, a questionnaire was distributed on 10 companies and collected from 360 clients of those companies. The study found that trust drives service differentiation, which in turn drives commitment which ultimately had an impact on both satisfaction and word-of-mouth. Importantly, it was found that service differentiation is a full mediator of the impact that service quality and trust have on client commitment towards the firm.

Procedural Definitions:

- Service quality: An intangible performance presented from one party to another without the occurrence of ownership (holding) but it can be felt. It is a service that the customer cannot see or evaluate until after consumption.

- Tangibles: The appearance of tangible objects for students, such as tools, computers, reception hall, chairs, instructions and regulations, special places for filling out forms. These will be measured in items (1-6).

- Reliability: Employees' ability to perform the promised service to students. It will be measured through compliance with deadlines, provision of the correct service from the first time, paying attention to students' issues. This will be measured through items (7-10).

- Responsiveness: Employees' willingness to help students, provide prompt answers to student inquiries and requests. This will be measured by communicating service hours, employees' responses to students' needs, and employees' willingness to help students promptly. It will be measured through items (11-15).

- Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. This will be measured through the extent to which students feel secure as they receive service; adequate treatment of students, and employees' possession of suitable information. It will be measured through items (16-19).

- Empathy: Caring and individualized attention that the department provides to students. It will be measured through the individual attention for students and the suitability of the service work hours to students' time. It will be measured through items (20-23).

- Courtesy reflects the grace, respect, transparency and love with which employees treat students. It will be measured through items (24-28).

Study Population

The study population consists of Jordanian private universities which amount to 20 universities according to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research www.mohe.gov.jo. The study sample consisted of five universities (Petra University, Al-Zaytoonah University, Princess Sumaya University, Amman Arab University, and Jerash Private University). A simple random sample (n=300) consisted of students who use the traditional method for registration and follow-up on their academic affairs, which requires them to visit the Admission and Registration Deanship to complete their procedures. The questionnaires were distributed to the sample individuals and 270 questionnaires (90%) were retrieved, and 258 remained in suitable conditions for analysis (86% of total questionnaires distributed and 95.5% of questionnaires retrieved). The demographic characteristics of the study sample are shown in Table (1)

Table (1) Demographic variables of the study sample individuals

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	181	70.2
	Female	77	29.8
Age	Less than 19 years	7	2.7
	19-21 years	105	40.7
	22 - 25 years	126	48.8
	Over 25 years	20	7.8
Academic year	First	24	9.3
	Second	47	18.2
	Third	50	19.4
	Fourth and above	137	53.1

Study Information Resources

The researcher relied on two resources of information:

Primary Resources: The data obtained through the questionnaire that was developed by the researcher

Secondary Resources: Desk resources and previous studies were reviewed to develop the theoretical framework of this study.

Reliability of the Study Instrument

In order to demonstrate that the questionnaire measures the factors it was designed to measure, the researcher conducted an internal consistency test on the scale items, whereby the structure of the scale was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. This method relies on the consistency of the individual's performance from one item to another; it refers to the strength of correlation and coherence between items. Furthermore, the Alpha coefficient provides a good estimate of reliability. In order to verify the reliability of the study instrument, Cronbach's Alpha equation was applied to the grades of the reliability sample individuals. Although there are no standard rules for Alpha, from the applied perspective, (Alpha ≥ 0.60) is reasonable for research in the management and humanities field. as shown in Table (2)

Table (2) Internal consistency reliability coefficient for the questionnaire dimensions (Chronbach's Alpha)

Dimension	No. of items	Chronbach's Alpha
Tangibles	6	0.802
Reliability	4	0.780
Responsiveness	4	0.797
Assurance	4	0.801
Empathy	5	0.812
Courtesy	5	0.850

These reliability coefficients show that the instrument generally enjoys a high reliability for the instrument's ability to achieve the purposes of the study.

Study Results

To illustrate results, the researcher used arithmetic means, standard deviations, simple regression tests and multiple regression tests.

The weighted average was determined according to the following scale:

Category length = (maximum alternative - minimum alternative) / number of levels

Category length = (5 - 1) / 3 = 1.33

Accordingly, the low weighted average is between 1-2.33

Medium weighted average 2.34 - 3.67

High weighted average 3.68 - 5

For the tangibles dimension of service quality, the arithmetic means and standard deviations are shown in Table (3)

Table (3) Arithmetic means and standard deviations for Tangibles

Item no.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Average
1	The department uses cutting edge devices and equipment to perform its duties	3.445	1.132	Moderate
2	Offices are equipped in a manner that facilitates service delivery	3.220	1.200	Moderate
3	The setup of offices (interior design, decorations, office supplies) corresponds with the type of services delivered	3.372	1.116	Moderate
4	Waiting areas are available until service is received	3.224	1.498	Moderate
5	The office contains publications with guidelines for completing the steps of the service from A to Z.	3.174	1.252	Moderate
6	The appearance of employees during the performance of service is suitable	3.511	1.164	Moderate
Tangibles		**3.478**	**0.896**	**Moderate**

Table (3) shows that the intangibles dimension among respondents had a moderate arithmetic mean of (3.478) and a standard deviation of (0.896)

As for the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the reliability dimension of service delivery, the results are shown in Table (4)

Table (4) Arithmetic means and standard deviations for Reliability

Item no.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Average
7	Service is delivered in a timely manner.	3.034	1.120	Moderate
8	Service is provided correctly from the first time.	3.182	1.187	Moderate
9	Student problems are addressed with seriousness.	3.135	1.287	Moderate
10	The employee contacts relevant bodies to help me.	2.941	1.278	Moderate
Reliability		**2.988**	**1.016**	**Moderate**

Table (4) shows that the reliability dimension among respondents had a moderate arithmetic mean of (2.988) and a standard deviation of (1.016)

As for the responsiveness dimension, the results are shown in Table (5)

Table (5) Arithmetic means and standard deviations for Responsiveness

Item no.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Average
11	Employees are completely dedicated for us during service delivery.	2.934	1.193	Moderate
12	Complaints raised by students are followed up with attention.	2.976	1.069	Moderate
13	Employees respond to the inquiries of students immediately (face to face)	3.461	1.069	Moderate
14	I feel that employees are willing to provide services.	3.182	1.120	Moderate
Responsiveness		**3.058**	**1.018**	**Moderate**

Table (5) shows that the responsiveness dimension among respondents had a moderate arithmetic mean of (3.058) and a standard deviation of (1.018)

As for the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the assurance dimension of service delivery, the results are shown in Table (6)

Table (6) Arithmetic means and standard deviations for Assurance

Item no.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Average
15	Students trust the employees who provide services to them.	3.310	1.148	Moderate
16	Employees' behavior during service delivery inspires trust among students.	3.205	1.190	Moderate
17	Employees display politeness and good manners during service delivery.	3.790	.995	High
18	Employees' responses are usually correct.	3.550	1.028	Moderate
Assurance		**3.430**	**0.950**	**Moderate**

Table (6) shows that the assurance dimension among respondents had a moderate arithmetic mean of (3.430) and a standard deviation of (0.950)

For the empathy dimension of service quality, the arithmetic means and standard deviations are shown in Table (7)

Table (7) Arithmetic means and standard deviations for Empathy

Item no.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Average
19	Each student has the individual attention of personnel.	3.224	1.045	Moderate
20	Employees render services to students in emergencies.	3.120	1.053	Moderate
21	Employees receive students with patience (no nervousness)	3.003	1.252	Moderate
22	Employees demonstrate the spirit of friendship to students during service delivery.	3.205	1.133	Moderate
23	The office's work hours correspond with the time of students.	3.488	1.164	Moderate
Empathy		**3.356**	**0.907**	**Moderate**

Table (7) shows that the empathy dimension among respondents had a moderate arithmetic mean of (3.356) and a standard deviation of (0.907)

Finally, the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the courtesy dimension are shown in Table (8)

Table (8) Arithmetic means and standard deviations for Courtesy

Item no.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Average
24	Students sense enthusiasm with employees when answering queries.	2.934	1.072	Moderate
25	Employees great students by saying "Welcome" "How can I serve you?"	2.872	1.276	Moderate
26	Employees attract students with their smile during service delivery.	2.779	1.194	Moderate
27	Employees exert their best efforts to complete the service on spot (without referring me to another building or employee)	2.577	1.276	Moderate
28	The optimism that I get from employees encourages me to inquire about all matters before leaving the office.	2.751	1.129	Moderate
Courtesy		**2.843**	**0.975**	**Moderate**

Table (8) shows that the courtesy dimension among respondents had a moderate arithmetic mean of (2.843) and a standard deviation of (0.975)

Testing hypotheses

To ensure that there is no high correlation between independent variables, (Multicollinearity), the researcher conducted the variance inflation factor (VIF) and the tolerance tests for each dimension of the independent variable, so that if VIF equals less than 5 and the value of tolerance equals more than 0.05 then there is no high correlation between the independent variable dimensions.

Results in Table (9) show that VIF values for independent variables were smaller than 5, as the highest value thereof reached (2.281), whereas the value of tolerance was higher than 0.05 and the lowest value was 0.438 so it can be concluded that there is no high correlation between independent variables.

Table (9) VIF and tolerance tests

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Tangibles	1.674	0.598
Reliability	1.926	0.519
Responsiveness	2.281	0.438
Assurance	2.170	0.461
Empathy	1.851	0.540
Courtesy	2.099	0.476

Testing of First Null Hypothesis

There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the dimensions of the service quality provided by admission and registration deanships at private universities on student satisfaction.

Multiple aggression testing was used to test this hypothesis. As shown in Table (10), the results indicate that there is a significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the dimensions of service quality on students' satisfaction with the services provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities. $R = (0.679)$ when ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). $R^2 = (0.462)$, which means that service quality explains (46.2%) of students' satisfaction with the services presented by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities. The significance of this impact is further affirmed by the value of F = (58.84) which is significant at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). This confirms the incorrectness of the first main hypothesis; therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that:

There is a significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the dimensions of the service quality provided by admission and registration deanships at private universities on student satisfaction.

Table (10): Results of the multiple regression analysis testing for the impact of the dimensions of the quality of service provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Dependent variable	(R)	(R^2)	F calculated	DF		Sig	B Regression coefficient		T calculated	Sig
Students' satisfaction	0.679	0.462	35.858	Regression	6	0.00	Tangibles	0.143	1.706	0.089
							Reliability	-0.063	-0.791	0.430
				Remainders	251		Responsiveness	0.331	3.846	0.000
							Assurance	0.040	0.450	0.653
							Empathy	0.331	3.812	0.000
				Total	257		Courtesy	0.291	3.372	0.001

* at the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$

18.2 First Sub-hypothesis

There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the tangibles provided by the admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Simple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis. As shown in Table (11)There is a significant impact for the tangibles provided by the admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction, whereby R= 0.447 when ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). Determination coefficient R2 equaled (0.200), which

means that the tangibles dimension explains (20%) of student satisfaction, and the influence degree equaled (0.624). This is further affirmed by the value of calculated t = (7.998) which is significant at (α ≤ 0.05). This affirms the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which states that:
There is significant impact (α ≤ 0.05) for the tangibles provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Table (11): Simple regression analysis for the impact of tangibles on student satisfaction

Impact of tangibles on student satisfaction	(R)	(R^2)	Significance level	Regression coefficient B	T calculated
	0.447	0.200	0.000	0.624	7.998

* at the significance level α ≤ 0.05

Second sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact (α ≤ 0.05) for the reliability provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.
Simple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis. As shown in Table (12)There is a significant impact for the reliability provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction, whereby R= 0.425 when (α ≤ 0.05). Determination coefficient R2 equaled (0.181), which means that the reliability dimension explains (18.8 %) of student satisfaction, and the influence degree equaled (0.524). This is further affirmed by the value of calculated t = (7.512) which is significant at (α ≤ 0.05). This affirms the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which states that:
There is a significant impact (α ≤ 0.05) for the reliability provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Table (12): Simple regression analysis for the impact of reliability on student satisfaction

Impact of reliability on student satisfaction	(R)	(R^2)	Significance level	Regression coefficient B	T calculated
	0.425	0.181	0.000	0.524	7.512

* at the significance level α ≤ 0.05

Third sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact (α ≤ 0.05) for the responsiveness provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.
Simple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis. As shown in Table (13)There is a significant impact for the responsiveness provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction, whereby R= 0.590 when (α ≤ 0.05). Determination coefficient R2 equaled (0.348), which means that the responsiveness dimension explains (34.8%) of student satisfaction, and the influence degree equaled (0.726). This is further affirmed by the value of calculated t = (11.696) which is significant at (α ≤ 0.05). This affirms the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which states that:
There is a significant impact (α ≤ 0.05) for the responsiveness provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Table (13): Simple regression analysis for the impact of responsiveness on student satisfaction

Impact of responsiveness on student satisfaction	(R)	(R^2)	Significance level	Regression coefficient B	T calculated
	0.590	0.348	0.000	0.726	11.696

* at the significance level α ≤ 0.05

Fourth sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact (α ≤ 0.05) for the assurance provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.
Simple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis. As shown in Table (14)There is a significant impact for the assurance provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction, whereby R= 0.495 when (α ≤ 0.05). Determination coefficient R2 equaled (0.245), which means that the assurance dimension explains (24.5%) of student satisfaction, and the influence degree equaled (0.653).

This is further affirmed by the value of calculated t = (9.126) which is significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). This affirms the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which states that:

There is a significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the assurance provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Table (14): Simple regression analysis for the impact of assurance on student satisfaction

Impact of assurance on student satisfaction	(R)	(R^2)	Significance level	Regression coefficient B	T calculated
	0.495	0.245	0.000	0.653	9.126

* at the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Fifth sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the empathy provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Simple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis. As shown in Table (15)There is a significant impact for the empathy provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction, whereby R= 0.553 when ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). Determination coefficient R2 equaled (0.306), which means that the empathy dimension explains (30.6 %) of student satisfaction, and the influence degree equaled (0.764). This is further affirmed by the value of calculated t = (10.631) which is significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). This affirms the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which states that:

There is a significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the empathy provided by the admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Table (15): Simple regression analysis for the impact of empathy on student satisfaction

Impact of empathy on student satisfaction	(R)	(R^2)	Significance level	Regression coefficient B	T calculated
	0.553	0.306	0.000	0.764	10.631

* at the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Sixth sub-hypothesis: There is no significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the courtesy provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Simple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis. As shown in Table (16)There is a significant impact for the courtesy provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction, whereby R= 0.577 when ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). Determination coefficient R2 equaled (0.333), which means that the courtesy dimension explains (33.3%) of student satisfaction, and the influence degree equaled (0.331). This is further affirmed by the value of calculated t = (11.311) which is significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). This affirms the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which states that:

There is a significant impact ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the courtesy provided by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction.

Table (16): Simple regression analysis for the impact of courtesy on student satisfaction

Impact of courtesy on student satisfaction	(R)	(R^2)	Significance level	Regression coefficient B	T calculated
	0.577	0.333	0.000	0.331	11.311

* at the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Findings and Recommendations

19.1 Findings

- The study findings showed that students are satisfied with the tangibles of the deanships of admission and registration at Jordanian private universities. This finding is affirmed by the arithmetic mean of intangibles which was moderate (3.478). This indicates that most admission and registration deanships at subject universities are interested in providing equipment to be used by students and their families to facilitate services.

- The study also showed that students are satisfied with the reliability of the deanships of admission and registration at Jordanian private universities. This finding is affirmed by the arithmetic mean of reliability which was moderate (2.988). This indicates employees' lack of full compliance with duties by employees, in addition to the obscurity of roles and tasks assigned to employees, the lack of clear chain of service delivery, as well the different personality of service providers and their willingness to accomplish the task which plays a role in delivering the service.

- The study also showed that students are satisfied with the responsiveness of the deanships of admission and registration at Jordanian private universities. This finding is affirmed by the arithmetic mean of responsiveness which was moderate (3.058). This can be attributed to the fact that the peak season might hinder the employee's enthusiasm to deliver services at the anticipated precision and speed. Also, the lack of special rewards for the season leads employees to delivering services at the same degree of enthusiasm, regardless of season.

- The study also showed that students are satisfied with the assurance of the deanships of admission and registration at Jordanian private universities. This finding is affirmed by the arithmetic mean of assurance which was moderate (3.430). This is a logical result due to the availability of registration systems which provide correct answers and mitigate errors.

- The study also showed that students are satisfied with the empathy of the deanships of admission and registration at Jordanian private universities. This finding is affirmed by the arithmetic mean of empathy which was moderate (3.356). This can be attributed to the application of standard working hours across most universities; such working hours are fit for students and match their own timetables.

- The study also showed that students are satisfied with the courtesy of the deanships of admission and registration at Jordanian private universities. This finding is affirmed by the arithmetic mean of courtesy which was moderate (2.843), which is the lowest mean observed. The reason is that admission and registration deanship employees, in spite of their critical roles, had not received any training in the art of dealing with the public.

- The study showed that there is a significant impact for the dimensions of service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, courtesy) delivered by admission and registration deanships at Jordanian private universities on student satisfaction .

19.2 Recommendations:

- It is recommended to hold training courses related to the art of dealing with the public.
- Paying attention to new employees, and allocating tasks and authorities to help accomplish goals.
- Promoting collaborative work and the concept of synergy.
- Providing special incentives for employees and the admission and registration deanship due to the importance of their roles as they represent the face of the university.
- Educating students about the roles carried out by the deanship of admission and registration.
- Coordination between faculties and the deanship of admission and registration to avoid confusing students between the university departments.
- Adopting electronic registration systems to take on routine tasks such as registration (except for new students) and withdrawal and addition in order to decrease crowdedness at the deanship and gives the university more space to address urgent and irregular issues and follow up on academically under-performing students.

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