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CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOOKS
- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

JOURNAL AND OTHER ARTICLES
- Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

CONFERENCE PAPERS
- Garg Sambhav (2011): "Business Ethics" Paper presented at the Annual International Conference for the All India Management Association, New Delhi, India, 19–22 June.

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- Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

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- Garg, Bhavet (2011): Towards a New Natural Gas Policy, Economic and Political Weekly, Viewed on July 05, 2011 http://epw.in/user/viewabstract.jsp

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EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS IN ENGINEERING EDUCATION - A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The Purpose of this qualitative study is to ascertain the expectations and perceptions of students studying in private engineering colleges. A sample of 175 respondents has been selected for conducting the study. The various dimensions that are considered for the study include placement, infrastructure, extracurricular activities, education, student's development, educational material and college environment. The study reveals that there is a highest gap in education dimension and lowest gap in placement and college environment dimensions. ANOVA technique has been used to compare the mean differences between the perceptions and expectations of students. The study identifies that there is a significant difference in the mean values of perceptions and expectations of students. This study is an attempt to identify the areas where students get dissatisfaction and to offer suggestions necessary to minimize the same.

KEYWORDS

College environment, education, expectations, perceptions, placement.

INTRODUCTION

A large number of students, every year have been going to United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany and Australia to pursue their Engineering education. The trend is increasing year after year because; the quality in education is more superior than compare to its quality in India. Engineering education requires more attention on the innovation and entrepreneurship ability to set success in a constantly changing global environment. Due to liberalization and privatization of Indian economy and its resulting robust growth, a large number of engineering colleges under private management started in India and still the trend is moving in the upward direction. Though the country has large youth with various skills and capabilities and willing to join in these colleges, they are limited by inadequate trained teachers, poor infrastructural facilities, absent of student development and placement related activities etc. As a result, the dissatisfied youth becoming one of the most serious constraints to economic growth. The satisfaction of a student mainly depends on the quality of education he received and the facilities he enjoyed during his course of study. The satisfaction of a student is said to be the combination of various psychological, physiological and other education related factors. It may be defined as "the willingness to express high level of satisfaction towards personal goals". Student satisfaction has been considered as a state where students are induced to develop their skills effectively and efficiently and promote the image of the institute more happily. It focuses on general attitude of students and is an emotion, a feeling and a matter of perception. It arises from the students' appraisal of their experience; requirements and facilities enjoyed as well as needs and want which are internal and external to the students. As educational institutions related to service sector that consider satisfaction of students based on their expectations and perceptions, studies of these kind helpful in identifying the areas of dissatisfaction.

The satisfaction of the student plays an important role in the success of any educational institute. It develops the state of healthy balance in the college in which teachers also make their respective contributions to achieve the goals set by the college management. With the Government policy of liberalization of economy, a large number of Engineering Colleges in private sector were established during the last decade. As a result the competition also started among the managements of these colleges. In a competitive environment each college is interested to improve its position to create a strong base for its survival. The competition was developed in terms of attracting large number of students by providing various student related requirements, such as placements, supply of educational material, conducting various programs and extracurricular activities etc. As management of these colleges plays a dominant role in fulfillment of various needs of students and to achieve the primary aim of students' satisfaction, studies of these kinds are necessary to know the gap between the expectations and perceptions of students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Each educational Institute has its own policies for the accomplishment of objectives. Continuous updating and monitoring of these policies is essential to keep the pace with change in time and to avoid any dissatisfaction of the students. To study the expectations and perceptions of the students, various factors which are directly or indirectly related to students and college environment have been considered. These factors include placement, infrastructure, extracurricular activities, education, student development, educational material supplied, and college environment etc.

The study is based on the students studying in private engineering colleges. The need for the study is to ascertain the expectations and perceptions of the students that lead to the satisfaction. This study will help the managements of the colleges in identifying the gap and to develop more appropriate policies for the better management of educational Institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is a fact that satisfaction is treated as an important factor in determining the demand of goods and services and also considered as an indicator that affects the competitive advantages of firms. The term satisfaction in service sector is different from the term used in the goods market. Since evaluating the satisfaction is more difficult, the measurements are in general made by means of perceptions of consumers. Student's satisfaction is the major indicator of service quality in educational institutions. Many researchers on this issue believe that there is a relation between the perception and their satisfaction (Petersen 1988). Satisfaction of students appears to be a major device in order to take important decisions by the college managements. According to Ibekwe (2006), any higher educational Institute must desire its basic goals and objectives to satisfy students by offering various academic and career oriented programs, providing quality teaching and learning environment and by providing adequate student support services. Therefore, the managements of the colleges, as a matter of fact, take satisfaction of students into account as a main goal of strategies of their colleges. (Bolton & Frederic, 1971). Abbott & Doucouliagos (2003), in their studies also opined to change the attitude of management towards providing relevant, purposeful and meaningful education for the academic community and for the society as a whole.

Most of the service sectors consider that satisfaction of consumers is explained by expectations and perceptions. The expectations are based on one's own and others' experiences. Most of these studies based on the static model suggested by Parasuraman.et al (1985, 1988). The measurement of expectations and perceptions has been a controversial issue in the literature. While it seems to be logical that identifying the gap between the expectations and perceptions for the estimation of the satisfaction, the other researchers (Cronin and Taylor, 1992 and Teas, 1993) questioned the validity of the gap model. The study made by Zeithaml et al.,(1996), suggest that measuring perceptions alone might be a better indicator of satisfaction related to service sector, than measuring the difference between expectations and perceptions. Aldlaigan and Buttle, (2002) are of the view that, it is not always easy to adopt the gap approach , since in real

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life setting it requires to collect the data twice from the same customers and compare their answers. However, from the management perspective it is always necessary to identify the gap between expectations and perceptions of the students, so that effective and suitable strategies can be designed to close the gaps or at least to minimize them (Arun Kumar,2010). In the present study gap approach has been used, with the objective of identifying the gaps and to use these gaps for the prediction of the satisfaction of the students.

Some of the other researchers such as Stanley and Reynolds (1994), Srikanth and Dairymple (2007), Kealy and Rockel(1987), Anderson (2000), Hill et al (2003), in their studies suggested various factors like placement, education, infrastructure, college environment etc., contribute positive perceptions of the students. The essence of these studies is the consideration of various factors that are responsible for the satisfaction of students as well as finding out the relation among them giving least scope to identify the gap between the expectations and perceptions. Hence, the present study may be considered as one among the few studies that bridges the gap.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the present study is aimed to enhance the satisfaction of students studying in private Engineering colleges by indentifying the gap between their expectations and perceptions on various college related factors. The following are the research objectives formulated to guide the study.

1. To measure the gap between expectations and perceptions of the students studying engineering education.
2. To suggest suitable measures, to minimize the gap between expectations and perceptions of the students.

HYPOTHESIS

This study infers that there is no difference in the mean value of students' expectations and perceptions for all dimensions. As against this back ground the following hypothesis has been formulated.

NULL HYPOTHESIS: There is no difference in the mean value of students' expectations and perceptions for all dimensions.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS: There is a difference in the mean value of students' expectations and perceptions for all dimensions.

METHODOLOGY

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

The Instrument used in this study is composed of 2 parts. Satisfaction of the students was measured by a questionnaire consists of 7 dimensions namely

1. Placement
2. Infrastructure
3. Extracurricular activities
4. Education
5. Student Development
6. Educational Material
7. College environment.

The dimensions included in the questionnaire have been taken from the students perceptions and are supported by other researchers like Dalwinder kaur and Gurwinder singh Bhalla (2010), Anderson (2000), Hill et al (2003). Part 1 of the questionnaire includes demographic characteristics such as gender, area of residence, year of study etc, while part 2 has an expectations section and perceptions section with 33 statements Each of these statements was measured on 4 points likert scale in which 1 indicated "strongly disagree", 2 indicated "disagree" 3 indicated agree" and 4 indicated "strongly agree".

DATA COLLECTION:

A survey Instrument in the form of close ended questionnaire was developed for the purpose of collecting the main data for the study. This study was conducted at various private engineering colleges located in Nellore district in Andhra Pradesh. Various factors such as precession, accuracy, time and cost constraints were taken into consideration in selecting the respondents. Using convenient sampling technique 10 colleges were selected. Using non-probability sampling technique, a total of 175 students were selected as a sample of the study. The respondents were selected from private engineering colleges only in order to maintain uniformity and also, proper care has been taken to select the respondents studying different years of engineering, to improve the generalization of the result. The actual field survey was conducted over a period of one month between June 2010 and August 2010, whereby personal interviews were employed to obtain the required information from the selected respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

The primary data collected have been sorted, classified and tabulated in a format and analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS16.0). Appropriate statistical procedures like averages, ANOVA tests have been used for inference.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The table1 reveals that 62.85 percent of respondents were male and the rest 37.15 percent were female students. An analysis of area of residence of the respondents indicates that 26.85 percent were with rural background, 37.15 percent were with semi urban, and the remaining 36 percent were with urban background. Similarly an analysis of the student respondents studying different years of engineering education reveal that 20 percent of respondents were studying first year, 35.42 percent were studying second year, 26.28 percent of the respondents were studying third year and the remaining 18.20 percent with fourth year of their study. With respect to gender, the students are male dominated. With respect to area of residence, most of the students belong to semi urban and with respect to year of study, majority of students belong to second year.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

1.Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage
a) Male	110	62.85
b) Female	65	37.15
Total	175	100
2.Area of residence		
a) Rural	47	26.85
b) Semi urban	65	37.15
c) Urban	63	36.00
Total	175	100
3.Year of study		
a) First year	35	20.00
b) Second year	62	35.42
c) Third year	46	26.28
d) Fourth year	32	18.20
Total	175	100

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TABLE 2: EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT STATEMENTS

	Placement (Statements1-6)	Mean Score		Gap	Average value for Dimension	
		Expectation	Perception		Expectation	Perception
1.	College students appearing in the competitive exams have a good passing rate.	3.080	3.194	-0.114		
2.	Number of on-college placement is high.	2.989	2.994	-0.005		
3.	Students participate actively in the placement activities.	2.960	2.874	0.086		
4.	Students pursuing job - oriented courses get placements earlier than other students.	2.629	2.989	-0.36		
5.	Career counseling sessions are conducted regularly.	3.006	3.126	-0.12		
6.	Placement activities help the students in getting easy admissions in higher education courses.	3.074	3.069	0.005 Total gap = 0.508	2.534	2.606

TABLE 3: EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE

	Infrastructure (Statements 7-11)	Mean Score		Gap	Average value for Dimension	
		Expectation	Perception		Expectation	Perception
7.	Well maintained study rooms, committee rooms and common rooms are there.	2.874	2.977	-0.103		
8.	Lecture halls are fully equipped.	2.897	2.885	0.012		
9.	Enough space for parking is available.	2.908	2.782	0.126		
10	College has sufficient facilities for recreation.	2.983	2.925	0.058		
11	Facilities for fresh drinking water and washrooms nearby.	2.920	2.937	-0.017 Total gap = 0.076	2.083	2.072

TABLE 4: EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

	Extracurricular Activities (Statements 12-16)	Mean Score		Gap	Average value for Dimension	
		Expectation	Perception		Expectation	Perception
12	College lays emphasis on developing sports activities.	2.771	2.880	-0.109		
13	Students are given sufficient scholarships for participation in sports.	2.806	2.914	-0.108		
14	The college encourages its students to take part in extracurricular activities.	2.869	2.994	-0.125		
15	Sufficient playgrounds and sports materials are available	2.874	3.086	-0.212		
16	College pays special attention to extracurricular activities.	2.920	3.074	-0.154 Total gap = -0.708	2.034	2.135

TABLE 5: EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON EDUCATION

	Education (Statements 17-21)	Mean Score		Gap	Average value for Dimension	
		Expectation	Perception		Expectation	Perception
17	Teachers are able to inspire the students for study	2.891	2.651	0.24		
18	Teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching	2.789	3.189	-0.4		
19	Students participate in seminars and conferences actively.	2.863	3.200	-0.34		
20	There is a congenial environment for study.	3.189	3.211	-0.022		
21	Guest lectures are arranged frequently	2.869	3.206	-0.337 Total gap = -0.859	2.085	2.208

TABLE 6: EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

	Student Development (Statements 22-25)	Mean Score		Gap	Average value for Dimension	
		Expectation	Perception		Expectation	Perception
22	Platform for overall personality development is available.	3.177	3.177	0.00		
23	Proper monitoring and evaluation is there to keep education and learning material under review.	3.183	3.183	0.00		
24	Educational or industrial visits are organized regularly.	3.194	3.183	0.011		
25	The college pays considerable attention to students' moral development.	3.143	3.177	-0.034 Total gap = -0.023	1.814	1.817

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TABLE 7: EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

	Educational Material (Statements 26-30)	Mean Score		Gap	Average value for Dimension	
		Expectation	Perception		Expectation	Perception
26	There is always a provision for projects and multimedia facilities to deliver the lecture.	3.149	3.160	-0.011		
27	Students are informed regularly about updated library collection.	3.154	3.160	-0.006		
28	Laboratories have all the essential equipment and requisite material.	3.183	3.154	0.029		
29	Library is rich and updated with material related to students' subjects.	3.171	3.160	0.011		
30	Ratio between number of students and equipment in laboratory is quite satisfactory.	3.175	3.160	0.014 Total gap =0.037	2.261	2.256

TABLE 8: EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

	College Environment (Statements 31-33)	Mean Score		Gap	Average value for Dimension	
		Expectation	Perception		Expectation	Perception
31	Informal/ formal groups of students and teachers are used to the advantage of college	3.149	3.154	-0.005		
32	The students complaints are well handled by the college	3.154	3.160	-0.006		
33	Security and discipline are maintained properly.	3.159	3.143	0.016 Total gap = 0.005	1.352	1.351

TABLE 9: HIGHEST EXPECTATION STATEMENTS

Highest Expectation Statements	Statement Number	Mean Score
Educational or industrial visits are organized regularly.	E-24	3.194
There is a congenial environment for study.	E-20	3.189
Proper monitoring and evaluation is there to keep education and learning material under review.	E-23	3.183
Laboratories have all the essential equipment and requisite material.	E-28	3.183
Platform for overall personality development is available.	E-22	3.177

From the above, three of the highest expectations, E22, E23, E24, are in the student development dimension. The second highest expectation, E20 is in the education dimension and the other one, E28, is from the educational material dimension.

TABLE 10: LOWEST EXPECTATION STATEMENTS

Lowest Expectation Statements	Statement Number	Mean Score
Students pursuing job - oriented courses get placements earlier than other students.	E-4	2.629
College lays emphasis on developing sports activities.	E-12	2.771
Teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching	E-18	2.789
The college encourages its students to take part in extracurricular activities.	E-14	2.869
Guest lectures are arranged frequently	E-21	2.869

The lowest expectation statement is in the placement dimension, E4, two of the lowest expectation statements, E12, E14 are in extracurricular activities dimension and the other lowest expectation statements E18, E21 are in education dimension.

TABLE 11: HIGHEST PERCEPTION STATEMENTS

Highest Perception Statements	Statement Number	Mean Score
There is a congenial environment for study.	P-20	3.211
Students participate in seminars and conferences actively.	P-19	3.200
Guest lectures are arranged frequently	P-21	3.206
College students appearing in the competitive exams have a good passing rate.	P-1	3.194
Teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching	P-18	3.189

From the above, four of the highest perception statements E18, E19, E20, and E21are in the education dimension, the other highest perception statement E1 is in the placement dimension.

TABLE 12: LOWEST PERCEPTION STATEMENTS

Lowest Perception Statements	Statement Number	Mean Score
Teachers are able to inspire the students for study	P-17	2.651
Enough space for parking is available.	P-9	2.782
Students participate actively in the placement activities.	P-3	2.874
College lays emphasis on developing sports activities.	P-12	2.880
Lecture halls are fully equipped.	P-8	2.885

The lowest perception statement, E17, is in the education dimension, the next lowest perception statement; E9 and E8 are in infrastructure dimension. The other two statements, E12 and E3are in the extracurricular activities and placements dimension each. Further, the largest gap between expectation and perception is 0.24, i.e. S17, which is in education dimension and the lowest gap is 0.005, i.e, S6, which is in placement dimension, followed by0.006 in S32, in college environment dimension.

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TABLE 13: PRIORITY FOR EACH DIMENSION

Dimension	Average value for dimension		Gap	Priority
	Expectation	Perception		
Placement	2.534	2.606	-0.072	3
Infrastructure	2.083	2.072	0.011	7
Extracurricular activities	2.034	2.135	-0.101	2
Education	2.085	2.208	-0.123	1
Student development	1.814	1.817	-0.003	4
Educational material	2.261	2.256	0.005	6
College environment	1.352	1.351	0.001	5

From the above table it is clear that students were given first priority to education followed by extracurricular activities and placement. The fourth and fifth priorities were given to student development and college environment followed by educational material and infrastructure.

TABLE 14: RESULT OF COMPARISON OF PLACEMENT STATEMENTS FOR EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION

Statements	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.046	3	2.349	8.828	.000
Within Groups	45.492	171	.266		
Total	52.537	174			

The result of ANOVA between expectations and perceptions for placements is explained in the above table. The calculated F value is 8.828, which is greater than tabular value of $F_{(3,171)} = 2.60$, and falls in the rejection region. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and is significant at 5% level of confidence. Therefore, it is clear that there is a difference in the mean value of students' expectations and perceptions for placement factor.

TABLE 15: RESULT OF COMPARISON OF INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENTS FOR EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION

Statements	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.885	3	1.628	2.868	.038
Within Groups	97.092	171	.568		
Total	101.977	174			

The result of ANOVA between expectations and perceptions for infrastructure is explained in the above table. The calculated F value is 2.868, which is greater than tabular value of $F_{(3,171)} = 2.60$, and falls in the rejection region. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and is significant at 5% level of confidence. Therefore, it is clear that there is a difference in the mean value of students' expectations and perceptions for infrastructure factor.

TABLE 16: RESULT OF COMPARISON OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES STATEMENTS FOR EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION

Statements	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.023	3	.341	.596	.618
Within Groups	97.834	171	.572		
Total	98.857	174			

The result of ANOVA between expectations and perceptions for extracurricular activities is explained in the above table. The calculated F value is 0.596, which is lesser than tabular value of $F_{(3,171)} = 2.60$, and falls in the acceptance region. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted, but is not significant at 5% level of confidence.

Table 17: RESULT OF COMPARISON OF EDUCATION STATEMENTS FOR EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION

Statements	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.289	3	.763	3.125	.027
Within Groups	41.746	171	.244		
Total	44.034	174			

The result of ANOVA between expectations and perceptions for education is explained in the above table. The calculated F value is 3.125, which is greater than tabular value of $F_{(3,171)} = 2.60$, and falls in the rejection region. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and is significant at 5% level of confidence. Therefore, it is clear that there is a difference in the mean value of students' expectations and perceptions for education factor.

TABLE 18: RESULT OF COMPARISON OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT STATEMENTS FOR EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION

Statements	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.602	2	4.301	19.829	.000
Within Groups	37.307	172	.217		
Total	45.909	174			

The result of ANOVA between expectations and perceptions for student development is explained in the above table. The calculated F value is 19.829, which is greater than tabular value of $F_{(2,172)} = 3.0$, and falls in the rejection region. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and is significant at 5% level of confidence. Therefore, it is clear that there is a difference in the mean value of students' expectations and perceptions for student development factor.

TABLE 19: RESULT OF COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL STATEMENTS FOR EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION

Statements	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.686	3	3.895	13.054	.000
Within Groups	51.023	171	.298		
Total	62.709	174			

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The result of ANOVA between expectations and perceptions for educational material is explained in the above table. The calculated F value is 13.054, which is greater than tabular value of $F_{(3,171)} = 2.60$, and falls in the rejection region. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and is significant at 5% level of confidence. Therefore, it is clear that there is a difference in the mean value of students' expectations and perceptions for Educational material factor.

TABLE 20: RESULT OF COMPARISON OF COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT STATEMENTS FOR EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION

Statements	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	44.815	3	14.938	147.472	.000
Within Groups	17.322	171	.101		
Total	62.137	174			

The result of ANOVA between expectations and perceptions for college environment is explained in the above table. The calculated F value is 147.472, which is greater than tabular value of $F_{(3,171)} = 2.60$, and falls in the rejection region. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and is significant at 5% level of confidence. Therefore, it is clear that there is a difference in the mean value of students' expectations and perceptions for college environment factor.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The highest gap between the expectations and perceptions of the students was found in the education dimension. The result of the study reveals that students are not happy about the education they are getting for completion of engineering course. This indicates that students are expecting good education than they are receiving at present. This gap can be bridged by providing good education by way of appointing experienced and dedicated teachers, providing more teaching by practical training and teaching by audio visual aids etc,. The lowest gap in the college environment and placement dimensions show that the students are satisfied with environment prevailed in the college campuses and the placements being offered by the college administration. If the college administration fails to provide congenial environment and placements, students get dissatisfaction. But the present study shows that majority of respondents satisfied with the college environment and placements. The study also reveals that, students have more expectations on student development activities followed by good education. Hence, the managements of the colleges must give proper importance to provide a platform for career development and personality development as well as moral development of the students.

CONCLUSION

The educational institutions started in recent years have been facing heavy competition due to rapidly changing environment for survival. It is the responsibility of college managements to provide various requirements to the satisfaction of students, otherwise, they get dissatisfaction and therefore they will not feel happy studying in these colleges. Hence, the managements of educational institutions must find out the areas where students feel unhappy, and also to investigate factors and understand what makes them to feel happy. The results of the study show various implications for the individual colleges offering engineering education. A study of this kind helps to identify the areas where students get dissatisfaction. The study identifies what the managements of these colleges have to do to minimize the gap between the expectations and perceptions of the students and also to enhance the satisfaction.

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