Chapter 62

Investigating the Relationship between Educational Quality and Students’ Satisfaction: A Post Graduate Student Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at investigating the relationship between higher educational quality and students’ satisfaction who are studying in the professional programs (MBA, DBA, and Diploma) offered by Faculty of Commerce, Cairo University. The research depends on stratified random sample of 235 students. The response rate is 83.9% and data is analyzed by different statistical methods. The research ends with the following results: (a) there is positive, strong, and significant relationship between higher educational quality and students’ satisfaction level; (b) there is positive, strong and significant relationship between functional quality, technical quality, college image and the overall higher educational quality; (c) there is positive, strong, and significant relationship between functional quality, technical quality, college image and students’ satisfaction level; (d) technical quality is the strongest determinant of the educational quality followed by college image and finally functional quality. Finally, the research ends with some suggested points for future research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Service quality and customer satisfaction are inarguably the two core concepts that are at the crux of marketing theory and practice. In today’s world of intense competition, the key to achieve sustainable competitive advantage lies in delivering high quality service that will in turn result in satisfied customers (Rahim et.al., 2010). According to Akinboade et.al (2012), traditionally, the concepts of service quality (SQ) and customer satisfaction (CS) have not been a priority among the public services organizations especially those working in the higher education area mainly because public services have a build-in customer base.

Cardona and Bravo (2013) pointed that education is much prestigious and fruitful investment that always rewards in multiple ways. The high
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quality and effective educational system results in greater satisfaction and performance of the students. Over the last few decades, the higher education industry is growing rapidly not only in the western countries but also in the developing ones. This because the quality of higher education is considered fundamental to any country’s development since universities are the ones that prepare the professionals who will work as managers in the companies; teachers in schools; physical doctors in hospitals; researchers and staff members in colleges and institutions. In addition, the higher education quality can be considered the key drive of marketing strategies’ effectiveness in the higher education institutions.

In today’s competition in Egyptian higher education industry, students have to make a choice among various higher educational providers (public, private, foreign, joint, etc.) by making a tradeoff between relationships and economies, trust service, and efficiency. In the present, Egyptian higher education context is characterized by rapid change and increasingly sophisticated quality factors, and it has become very important that colleges in Egypt determine the service quality factors which are pertinent to the students’ selection process. Service quality, students’ satisfaction, and student’s retention are now the major challenges in gripping the higher-education sector in Egypt.

In addition to the educational service diversification, the idea of student’s satisfaction and the formulation of marketing strategies to drag the student towards the universities and its colleges are now the key issues in order to continue and survive. Therefore, student’s satisfaction is becoming the major target of colleges to increase their higher education market share (Damirchili and Tajari, 2011).

Egyptian universities have already taken lot of initiatives in this regard. Further, it has been realized that the Egyptian universities have miles to go to capture the recent trends and to be at par with the western counterpart. Hence, to gain and sustain competitive advantages in the fast changing in the higher education industry in Egypt, it is crucial for colleges to understand in depth what students perceive to be the key dimensions of service quality and what impacts the identified dimensions have on students’ behavioral intentions because the customers retention is an important issue for any service organization.

The current problem for higher education industry in Egypt is to determine the dimensionality of student’s perception of service quality. Once the educational quality dimensions are identified, officials in colleges should be able to improve the delivery of student’s perceptions of higher education quality; thus, keeping in view the significance of higher educational quality and students’ satisfaction.

Accordingly, the main focus of this research will be on,

Investigating the relationship between the higher education quality (functional and technical quality), the faculty image and the post-graduate students’ satisfaction level in Egypt—especially at Faculty of Commerce, Cairo University.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Although substantial work has been done to understand the nature and the dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction across many different service setting, little attention has been paid to the study of service quality in the higher education industry in the developing countries in general, and in Egypt specifically. Thus, in order to address the existing research gap, this research aims at:

A. Identifying the various determinants of higher educational quality from the customers’ (students) perspective.