



Assessment of Satisfaction of Students studying in the University based on their Choice

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ABSTRACT

The research paper examines the choice based students' satisfaction pertaining to higher education in Indian Universities. With the growing competition in the higher education, the universities, especially the private ones, are attempting various approaches to enhance students' satisfaction at the university and to attract more students. Students have several options to decide the universities as there are more universities offering higher education. A number of factors are taken into consideration before they make a decision such as the faculty their qualifications and experience, infrastructure, placements, reputation of the university, accommodation etc.

The study intended to examine the distinction in derived contentment of students' studying in the university which has been their first choice and others. Primary data being collected from the students' of diverse universities at and in vicinity of Dehradun (Uttarakhand). A total of 539 complete questionnaires were received. The questionnaire covered the student satisfaction measured using Likert scale (5-point). The demographic and other attributes of the students like gender, age, course, university and their choice of the university etc. have also been measured. Variance was analysed (one way) to study the satisfaction polarity levels of the students who have got the university which was their first choice and others. The results indicated that the satisfaction levels between the two student groups had significant distinction. To be in the first choice of prospective students helps a University to have a bigger pool of contented students. The policy makers in the University should therefore deliberate to be among the preferred choice institution.

Key words: First Choice University, Analysis of Variance, Students' Satisfaction, Policy makers, Universities, Higher Education

1. INTRODUCTION

The Satisfaction of the university students' is in general construed as the cognitive state of contentment arising in a student on aspirations attainment. With the growing competition in the higher education, the universities are depending on various marketing techniques to commit to this aspirations attainment and reap the benefits of attracting more students to their brand.

Education services are a conspicuous contributor to the economic development of the country. The dependence of economies on services sector is clear and discernible and education services are a consequential element of it. Globalization has created its own provocations and paradoxes that need to be replied aptly and opportunely. A passionate and competent human force is required for creating an apt and befitting reply to these provocations and paradoxes. Universities are being looked upon by the industry for providing such adroit and passionate resource pool. Students although have several options to decide the universities as there are a number of universities offering higher education, their choice is influenced by a University's above mentioned capability. Several factors therefore go into consideration before they make a decision, such as the reputation of the university, faculty their qualifications and experience, infrastructure, placements, accommodation and a few more [1]. Alumni of the university also play a role sometimes because their opinions are also solicited. Once the potential student reaches a decision to join the first choice university, the options of other university are kept open as well, in case admission in the university of their first choice is a distant dream.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Satisfaction has been an assiduously discussed subject in the area of consumer and marketing research. Students being viewed as consuming services of HEIs (higher education institutions), hence evaluating their satisfaction towards the services offered has become crucial. Researchers have defined student satisfaction depending on the research approach and the focus. Student satisfaction is examined from the educational perspective in this paper.

Satisfaction is a function of perceived performance relative to expectations [2]. It is the outcome of the coherent performance of the institution's administrative as well as educational system [3]. Students will be more satisfied if they complete their studies where the institution provides and facilitates learning environment such as proper infrastructure and other facilities for professional

and academic development. Another view is a perception of happiness fulfillment of the service [4].

The ‘favorability of students’ evaluation of the outcomes and experience he or she gets associated with the education, is another view of satisfaction [5]. Numerous studies on customer satisfaction do exist but there is a need for its proper theoretical conceptualization customer satisfaction to arrive at what constitutes student satisfaction.

The factors that contribute to the students’ satisfaction at the universities are highly diverse and extraordinarily variable. It was suggested decades ago that student satisfaction could not be attributed clearly to any specific service in the university [6] be it teaching quality, infrastructure etc. and subsequent studies have only confirmed the enormous complexity of the phenomenon and the difficulty of attributing the satisfaction to a particular factor. Several studies have yielded different definitions of the factors that determine the level of student satisfaction. The satisfaction is continually shaped by the diverse experiences of life on the campus both in the class room and outside the classroom and strongly depends on the contextual factors that articulate their expectations.

STUDENT SATISFACTION- THE DETERMINANTS

Student Satisfaction is influenced by several different factors. Two pertinent groups - personal and institutional - have been found to sway university student satisfaction [7]. The personal factors span age, gender, style (learning), employment, average grades (GPA) etc. and the institutional factors span quality (teaching), feedback (from teachers), expectation lucidity and the style (teaching) etc.. The quality of faculty members, infrastructure and technology usage are spotted as key satisfaction determiners [8]. It is influenced greatly by the quality of classrooms, feedback quality, relationship of faculty and students, fellow interactions, contents (of course) and the learning paraphernalia. Besides, teaching ability, flexibility in curriculum, reputation, student progress, campus climate, institutional potency and social conditions are the major satisfaction influencers [9].

Overall impression - institution and education quality; faculty- experience, expertise, subject interest; IT facilities and accessibility; and employment prospects are among strong predictors of higher education student satisfaction [10].

Application of satisfaction models for satisfaction determinants examination with education, yielded classes and faculty performance in the classes as the key to satisfaction [11].

This study focuses on finding the satisfaction distinction in students' who are studying in University of first choice and the students for whom the University where they are studying is not their first choice. The study hypothesizes satisfaction distinction in students who are studying in University of first choice as compared to other students.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is aimed at examining the satisfaction distinction in the two students' groups- those studying in the University of First Choice and others who are not. Towards this, primary data has been collected from the students' of diverse universities, at and in vicinity of Dehradun (Uttarakhand). A total of 539 complete questionnaires were received. The first section of questionnaire covered the student satisfaction measured using Likert scale (5point; with Strongly Disagree → 1; Disagree → 2; Neutral → 3; Agree → 4; and Strongly Agree → 5). The second section covered demographic and other attributes of the students like gender, age, course, university and their choice of the university etc. The judgmental convenience was followed in sampling for this research. The students were explained the purpose of the study with instructions given to them in order to get the questionnaire filled correctly by the students. The respondents' characteristics (demographic) are given in (Table I).

Table I. Respondents' Characteristics

Characteristics	Details	Frequency	Percentage
Universities	Private	467	87%
	Public	72	13%
Gender	Boys	380	71%
	Girls	159	29%
Course Enrolled	B.Tech	208	39%
	MBA	331	61%
University in which you are studying is your first choice	Yes	326	60%
	No	213	40%

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study intended to examine the distinction in contentment derived by group of students' studying in the university which has been their first choice and the others for whom it is not the first choice. Variance analysis (one way) was carried out to see whether there are any differences among the students who have got the university as their first choice than the others (Table II).

Table II. Variance Analysis (one way)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.202	1	28.202	35.869	0.000
Within Groups	422.209	537	0.786		
Total	450.410	538	-		

The results from the above table indicate that the difference between the students who have got the university as first choice and others are significant with F-value=35.869 (1.537 df.) at P=0.000. After corroborating variances equality assumptions, presence of any relevant differences in satisfaction between the 'First Choice' students group (those studying in the university of their first choice) and the 'Others' group (not in University that was their first choice) was tested. This was assessed through t-test application (Table III).

Table III: Level of Satisfaction between Students in 'First Choice' University and 'Others'

	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig.
Level of Satisfaction	First Choice	3.681	.850	5.989	.000
	Others	3.213	.939		
	Average	3.447			

The results of t-test show significant response difference between the two groups (P<0.000). The mean value of the students who have got the university as first choice is greater than the students who are studying in the university but not their first choice i.e., 3.681 as against the students studying in the university which is not their first choice i.e., 3.213.

There are 206 students out of 326 students (63%) who are satisfied overall who have got first choice as the university in which they are studying and 94 students out of 213 students (44%) are satisfied overall which confirms the observations made by the Student Research Foundation (September 2019, New York)[12]. The numbers of students satisfied are the ones whose satisfaction levels were above the average satisfaction of 3.447.

5. CONCLUSION

In India both public and private institutions operate simultaneously in the Higher education sector, while public sector has historically bestrode Higher Education, the dilution is visible over the last decade with 63% of the total institutions being privately owned and run, catering to 52% of the students enrolled in the Higher Education sector [13].

The competition among the universities is growing year after year with the introduction of new institutions. This study explored existence of significant distinction in satisfaction of the students' groups- 'First Choice' group, who have got the university which was their first choice and the 'Others' group. The results indicate significant differences in the satisfaction levels between the two students' group. About 63% of the students are satisfied in 'First Choice' group as compared to only 44% of satisfied students in 'Others' group, whose University of study was not their first choice. The results indicated differences in the satisfaction levels as significant, between the two student groups. A University therefore to enhance satisfaction should work on becoming the preferred choice brand for its target students group. To be in the first choice of prospective students helps a University to have a bigger pool of contented students. The policy makers in the University should therefore deliberate to be among the preferred choice institution. This may have a bearing on the behavioral outcomes of the students as well, which maybe an aspect of further study, as this empirical research is limited to the study of assessment of satisfaction studying from their first choice perspective.

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