STUDENT CUSTOMER ORIENTATION: A COMPARISON BETWEEN A SELECTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND INDONESIAN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Higher education, like any other business, should embrace a customer-oriented approach within the marketing concept as perquisite for sustainability. This include implementing the marketing concept which may have raised concerns about academic values and integrity. Thus, it is believed that a thorough understanding of guidance on how a customer-oriented concept should be implemented in higher education is crucial. The study addresses the need to study various higher education industry constructs and attempt to identify in which construct(s) the practice of customer-oriented should be applied. A total of 518 students from Southern Africa and Indonesia representing the management faculties in higher education institution (HEI) were selected. The data was processed with SPSS and tested for relationships between each construct as well as to identify which construct influence student satisfaction most. The study contributes in justifying the constructs in which students expect to be served as customers and be approached and identify which constructs they trust the HEI to conduct according to best practices. The study also highlights the construct which effects students' satisfaction. In addition, it also provides insights on how demographics, namely gender and countries contribute to a different emphases of the students' educational experiences. Lastly, the findings give practical implications and insights to HEI management on how to approach the institution from a marketing perspective.

Keywords: Higher Education, Marketing, Customer Oriented Approach, Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Various authors have researched the importance of the marketing concept, as it relates to higher education (Koris, Ortenblad, Kerem, & Ojala, 2015; Hemsley Brown & Oplatka, 2015; Bailey & Dangerfield, 2010). Most of them contend that customer orientation enhances business performance, regardless of the industry in which they are operating, or the size of the organisation. Higher education

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institutions are regarded as businesses, such as various other service-related organisations; and they should, consequently, embrace a customer-orientated approach within the marketing concept – if they want to succeed (Ivy, 2008; Desai, Damewood, & Jones, 2001). This came in the light where higher education is operating – in a highly competitive and dynamic environment.

The challenge is all the more intense, given the host of comparable alternatives (Gbadamosi & de Jager, 2008). Koris et al. (2015) contend that institutions of higher education world-wide, have to compete for funds from both public and private sectors, as well as for potential students. They continue to state that because only a few institutions of higher education can claim that they are different, based on historical heritage or sustainability; and academic excellence or value-creation also no longer provides any differential advantage; since institutions of higher education increasingly position themselves as customer-oriented academic institutions, stressing flexibility and convenience of attendance, in order to attract prospective students.

As higher education starting to implement marketing concepts, there are increased concerns that the academic values and integrity may be eroded (Wong & Chiu, 2017). There is also a concern that lecturers will shift identities as service providers. The reluctance among academics is believed due to misunderstanding of the discipline and lack of consensus and guidance on how customer-oriented concept should be implemented in higher education (Sabando, Lafuente, Forcada, & Zorilla, 2018; Wong & Chiu, 2017). Thus, it is crucial to have in-depth knowledge of student needs and provide a base for the correct implementation of market-orientation in the multi-faceted nature of higher education.

This study aims to investigate the different categories of educational experience and to what extent students expect higher education institutions to be customer-oriented. Moreover, it tries to find out which categories affecting students' satisfaction.

To be representative of different conditions of the higher education industry, the study combines data from Indonesia and Southern Africa, two developing countries. According to World Economic Forum Report 2017-2018 (Schwab, 2018) in Higher Education and Training Global Competitiveness Index, Indonesia rank 64 while South Africa rank 85 out of 137 countries. Both countries represent the middle tier of higher education competitiveness where all the competition and dynamic is currently taking place. Although the study is taking a regional perspective with regards to the sample data, marketization in the education industry is highly relevant with the world issues in higher education industry (Quinlan, 2014).

LITERATURE STUDY

Market Orientation and competitiveness in Higher Education

One of the main challenges for developing countries lies in mobilising and equipping human resources with the necessary knowledge to exploit the advantages of globalisation. The information age has provided the developing world with a unique opportunity to play catch-up in a world where knowledge is the only enduring asset of any society (Michael, 2004). To meet the challenges of providing a labour force with the appropriate knowledge and skills, institutions of higher education fulfil an important role in this endeavour.

In order to meet this need, institutions of higher education are continuously competing with one another, to attract the best students to build their image and reputation amongst others; and also to be recognised by various stakeholders, such as the government or rating agencies in the international domain. South Africa and Indonesia have different approaches regarding the provision of higher education, with the emphasis on their own citizens. However, this is not limited to locals as international

students contribute to the income of the institutions. Different approaches are followed to recruit and retain students; while it is evident that marketing principles are increasingly being utilised to recruit and retain the most appropriate students (Ivy, 2008).

According to Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown (2007), the following three related components of marketing orientation are suggested; and these components are underpinned by shared values and beliefs. This may assist higher education administrators, managers and faculties to understand the higher education institution and its environment. This may also provide them with norms for behaviour. Three dimensions for marketing orientation can be distinguished (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2010; Slater & Nerver, 1994).

First is customer orientation – this comprises the service provider to collect information about the environment in which students operate, as well as their characteristics; and they will consequently adapt their teaching methods to accommodate their customers' needs. By following this approach, institutions of higher education would be innovative; and they would implement future improvements for students, based on their anticipated needs (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2010). Pesch, Calhoun, Schneider and Bristow (2008) contend that university administrators who adopt a customer-oriented approach should endeavour to provide students with challenging and quality education that would enable them to pursue successful, productive careers, and to contribute to the communities in which they work and live. This would contribute to an inter-functional orientation, where qualified students would meet the needs of employers; while the reputation and image of the institutions of higher education would thereby be enhanced.

The second, the adoption of a customer-oriented approach in an educational setting implies that the university looks at the educational experience from the student's perspective. Pesch et al. (2008) conclude by stating that a successful implementation of the marketing concept, while adopting a customer-oriented approach in academia implies the need to access the students' perception of the institution's commitment to understanding and meeting students' needs. Ikeda, Campomar, Veludo-de-Oliveira (2009), however, warn that quality education should not only be customer-driven; as it is when the marketing orientation is applied alone; it is not able to properly sustain the complexity of studies concerning the educational reality. It is stressed that more important – than merely recognizing student satisfaction – is to consider the value that has been created in the society (marketing orientation versus societal marketing orientation).

The third perspective is adopting competitor orientation – Institutions of higher education that would like to assess the strengths, weaknesses, capabilities and potential of competing institutions seem to internalise this element of marketing orientation. Awareness and analyses of competitive activity can have a positive impact on decision-making through the development of initiatives, such as additional services for students. Pesch et al. (2008) contend that various universities in the USA have joined a growing list of schools that build competitive advantage by viewing the relationship between students and universities from the perspective of a marketing exchange.

One of the marketing exchange perspective involves Inter-functional co-ordination (Obermiller, Fleenor & Peter, 2005) – this implies that creating superior value for target customers is significant for institutions of higher educations' success in a competitive marketplace; and it may be achieved through the integration and co-ordination of the higher educational institution's resources. Attracting student-customers is the responsibility of all within the university community. Full information about competition, the market environment and the community is important to achieve this goal. This is, according to Ikeda et al. (2009), known as a societal-marketing orientation. This approach enlarges the scope of the manager's actions because the public interest and sustainability are considered; and they are

highlighted by managing the activities according to this philosophy. This can correctly serve the educational institutions and society. Pesch et al. (2008) contend that the adoption of a customer orientation in academia implies that the needs of multiple stakeholders, such as the university, the students, as well as the employers are being recognised and addressed.

According to Pesch at al. (2008), an important component of this marketing perspective is the adoption of the marketing concept, which is based on a simple underlying business philosophy; and that is: to best achieve organisational objectives and goals and to ensure organisations long-term success, the organisation should focus on the identification and satisfaction of customers, as well as the needs of the organisations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015).

To add to the debate of the impact of competitiveness, Saginova and Belyansky (2008) contend that merging economies are characterised by high levels of complexity, significant reforms in almost all industrial sectors, massive restructuring and increased competition. In an effort to maintain a competitive advantage, the service-quality concept (interwoven in the marketing concept and marketing orientation) in higher education is inextricably linked to the competitive service and the success of participants in the industry (Abouchedid & Nasser, 2002). Service quality can be implemented to meet the basic objective of the retention and enrolment of students in higher education institutions. This mindset confirms the value of offering acceptable services to students, in order to maintain the stature and academic reputation of an institution (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2010). Consequently, the management process should focus on students as customers, in addition to traditional areas like accreditation and performance indicators of teaching and research. The increasing competition in higher education, has led many organisations to focus on their internal (students) and external customers (potential employers); as there are often no actual products involved (Yeo, 2008).

Higher education's primary focus is to provide a quality-learning experience to students; and its secondary purpose is to meet the industry's needs for skills and knowledge. Due to the effect that is brought about by internationalisation, higher educational institutions worldwide are under pressure to provide unique learning experiences to students; so that they can obtain a competitive advantage to enrich the educational market. Educational services are often intangible and difficult to measure; as the outcome is reflected in the transformation of individuals, as regards their knowledge, their characteristics and their behaviour (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis, & Fitsilis, 2010). Consequently, there is no commonly accepted definition of quality that applies specifically to the higher education sector. Yeo (2008) contends that service quality in higher education is a complex concept; and it concerns not only the student-lecturer relationship; but it is also concerned with the physical, institutional and psychological aspects of higher education.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Different views of marketing approach adoption into the practice of Higher Education Institutions as a business arrives at the conclusion that customer orientation is an important practice but currently lack guidance in conducting the discipline (Sabando, Lafuente, Forcada, & Zorilla, 2018; Wong & Chiu, 2017). It is also suggested that HEI contains of multi-faceted experiences which result in a different approach of each of the categories (Koris & Nokelainen, 2015). Therefore, the primary research objective is to measure the perceptions of students regarding various categories of student's experiences in HEI. The second objective is to investigated which categories effect students' satisfaction overall. The third objective is to give insight on how different demographics can affect the practice of student as customer-orientation.

The study takes a starting point by referring to explorative study conducted by Koris and Nokelainen (2015) on Student-Customer Orientation. The study focus on 14 constructs on educational experience in higher education industry. These constructs are divided into two categories of experience. The first part is the experiences related to the Institutional Network and the second part, is the experience related to the Learning Situation Network.

The Institutional Network comprise of constructs related to the administrative process of a higher education institution. The first construct in this category is admission to an institution, which is defined as the level of selectivity which students expect from a higher education institution to apply during the admission period. The construct includes the importance of the admission interview, the achievement of academic capabilities as the basis for admission; and whether difficult admission requirements would be preferable. The next construct is student feedback. This construct measures the importance of collecting and acting on the feedback of students. The third construct is Graduation, which is defined as the level of strictness that students expect a higher education institution to employ during student graduation. Next is the curriculum design which assesses whether students think their opinion, the opinions of alumni's, and that of the employers should be taken into consideration in the curriculum and in the subjects they study. Furthermore, it also measures the nature of the curriculum: whether it needs to lean towards a practical approach, rather than a theoretical approach. The SCOQ also measures communication. There are two separate constructs measuring communication with staff; while another one measures communication with the lecturer. The communication with the staff measures the expectations of students towards the study consultants, and other bodies responsible for the study-related activities in accommodating the student's requests. This construct excludes the classroom activities. Last is the Rigor or the lenience or strictness with which students expect the higher education institutions to follow the established rules and regulations.

The second category is the Learning Situation Network which comprise into sub parts of Rigour, Student teacher relationship, formal learning and pedagogy. Rigour includes grading and classroom behaviour. Classroom behaviour is defined as the lenience or strictness with which students expect the lecturer to approach students' good or bad behaviour in the class. The behaviour includes cheating, being late in class, as well as deadlines related to assignments. Relationship measure relationship level and communication. The communication with the lecturer construct measures the approachability and convenience that students expect from lecturers outside class hours. Formal learning includes classroom and individual studies. Lastly, pedagogy involves teaching methods and course design. The measure includes students' expectations regarding who is designing the course, as well as the nature of the course (practical vs theoretical).

The hypotheses that are to be tested fall into the following:

1. There is a high level of agreement within the 14 categories of student-customer orientation
2. There is a significant and positive relationship between satisfaction and the 14 categories of student-customer orientation.
3. There are differences between gender (male and female students) and countries (Southern Africa and Indonesia) in the 14 categories of student-customer orientation

To achieve the objectives and test the hypotheses, the study employed quantitative methodology as explained in the next section.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design is a cross-sectional study, in which a group of respondents is studied once only (Malhotra, 2004). The unit of analysis of the study is students of higher education institutions, currently studying at such institutions, or who have just graduated less than a year period. A convenience sampling method has been applied with a paper-based survey, as well as an online survey. A total of 518 students, 279 students from Southern Africa, and 239 from Indonesia, were selected. All these students were represented from the management faculties of the respective higher education institutions.

A survey questionnaire was constructed and contains multiple choice questions with 1 to 6 Likert scale measures. The even scales intended to avoid middle range result which can result inconclusiveness of the result. Before distributed a back to back translation was conducted to ensure the same understanding with the original version. A 90-item questionnaire on student-customer orientation, as well as a set of demographic questions to clarify the profile of respondents were finalised based on the study of Koris and Nokelainen (2015). Certain adjustments were done to suit the respective environments involved.

The result was then processed using SPSS software and analysed. The analysis starts with the respondent profile and continued with the reliability of the measurement for each categories of higher education institution experience which is investigated. It will also provide the descriptive statistic and the regression to conclude the effect of satisfaction to each categories.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profiles

A total of 518 questionnaires were collected from the respondents in Southern Africa (54%) and Indonesia (46%). Overall, they consisted of 47% males and 53% females. Most of the respondents were in their third year at an institution of higher education (44%). Regarding the source of payment for their study, 43% of the students relied on their parents to pay; while 16% of the respondents' fees were covered by government grants/loans. While studying, 81% of the respondents were not working.

Table 1: Summary of Respondents' Profiles by Country

By Country		Southern Africa	Indonesia	Total	% Total
Gender	Male	141	101	242	47%
	Female	137	139	276	53%
Year	1	12	14	26	5%
	2	56	44	100	20%
	3	132	92	224	44%
	4	69	63	132	26%
	5	0	6	6	1%
	6	0	21	21	4%
Financing	I pay	90	11	101	19%
	The State pays	79	3	82	16%
	Full Scholarship	73	5	78	15%
	Partial Scholarship	10	20	30	6%

		Males	Females	Total	% Total
	Others/Parents	26	196	222	43%
	Others	0	5	5	1%
Working	Work	60	37	97	19%
	Do Not Work	218	203	421	81%

Table 2: Summary of Respondents' Profile by Gender

By Gender		Males	Females	Total	% Total
Country	Southern Africa	141	137	278	54%
	Indonesia	101	139	240	46%
Year	1	8	18	26	5%
	2	50	50	100	20%
	3	107	117	224	44%
	4	62	70	132	26%
	5	3	3	6	1%
	6	6	15	21	4%
Financing	I pay	57	44	101	19%
	The State pays Full	40	42	82	16%
	Scholarship Partial	40	38	78	15%
	Scholarship	9	21	30	6%
	Others/Parents	95	127	222	43%
	Others	1	4	5	1%
Working	Work	58	39	97	19%
	Do Not Work	184	237	421	81%

Instruments' Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

The 14 constructs were tested for the reliability of the instrument using the Cronbach Alpha measures. The constructs are admission, student feedback, graduation, curriculum and course design, communication with service staff and communication with lecturer, rigour, grading and classroom behaviour relational level, classroom study and individual study and teaching methods. This study employed Cronbach's Alpha criteria of 0.5 to 0.75 to be a moderately reliable scale (Hinton, McMurray, Brownlow, & Cozens, 2004). From the 14 constructs, there were 12 that were beyond 0.5 (rounded value). Thus, except for *mission* and *graduation*, all variables may be considered to be moderately reliable. Table 7 in the appendix provides the Cronbach Alpha and the inter-correlation as a sign of reliability and the convergent validity of the measures.

Next, the study provides a descriptive statistic measures by the Means and Standard Deviation in table 3. From the result, it can be inferred from the descriptive statistics in Table 3, overall, variables that have the strongest agreement of expectations are: Class Study (M=4.97, SD=1.00); Student Feedback (M=4.91, SD=0.91); and Relational Level (M=4.83, SD=1.08).

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of study variables

		Mean	SD
1	Admission	3.35	1.31
2	Student Feedback	4.91	0.91
3	Graduation	4.11	0.82
4	Curriculum Design	4.34	0.79
5	Communication with Service Staff	3.70	1.15
6	Rigour	4.10	0.72
7	Grading	4.19	0.94
8	Class Behaviour	4.18	0.83
9	Relational Level	4.83	1.08
10	Communication with Teacher	4.48	1.09
11	Class Study	4.97	1.00
12	Individual Study	2.99	1.30
13	Teaching Method	4.53	0.80
14	Course Design	4.30	0.92
15	Satisfaction	3.48	0.90

Satisfaction and SCOQ constructs

The study conducted a multiple-regression analysis to find satisfaction outcome from the SCOQ variables. The analysis was conducted using the combined data of Indonesia and Southern Africa. The results found that there are two variables that statistically predicted significant satisfaction: $F_{(14,502)} = 1.823$, $p < .003$, $R^2 = .048$.

- o The first variable is Classroom Behaviour. This variable had a positive and significant relationship with satisfaction. This result implied that the students feel more satisfied when the class teacher imposes a stricter rule to approach students' bad behaviour in the classroom (e.g. regarding cheating, deadlines and plagiarism).

- o The second variable is Course Design. The regression analysis resulted in a significant and negative relationship between Course Design and Satisfaction. The Course Design variable is measuring the expectation of who designs the course, as well as the nature of the course (practical vs theoretical). The result implies that the more practical the course design, the greater the degree of satisfaction. The result, in any case, should be interpreted with caution, because of the complexity of the data which consist of two different sets merged into one. It would be advisable to conduct a separate analysis for each set (the Southern African and the Indonesian set).

A longitudinal study conducted by Burgess, Senior & Moores (2018) resulted in 'Teaching Quality' and 'Organisation & Management' as the predictors of satisfaction. The current study put the elements of quality by heightened the importance of conducive class behaviour in the teaching experience, which may then significantly increase satisfaction. Interestingly, the result seemed to support a more theoretical Course Design versus the practical one. With many universities, the curricula are designed more towards the practical approach. This result provides evidence that there is still a demand for a solid theoretical basis in the curriculum. Furthermore, it is important to integrate theoretical

framework into every practice-based learning experience, thereby providing theory in practice, instead of theory versus practical (Rotthoff, Schneider, Ritz-Timme, & Windolf, 2015).

Table 4: Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig.
Constant	3.376	0.338		-
Admission	-0.460	0.048	-0.047	0.334
Student Feedback	0.037	0.068	0.029	0.589
Graduation	0.076	0.058	0.069	0.186
Curriculum Design	-0.059	0.069	-0.047	0.393
Communication with Service Staff	0.074	0.048	0.079	0.120
Rigour	-0.026	0.071	-0.021	0.711
Grading	-0.055	0.055	-0.057	0.319
Class Behaviour	**0.210**	**0.067**	**0.169**	**0.002**
Relational Level	-0.044	0.062	-0.039	0.479
Communication with Teacher	-0.085	0.055	-0.084	0.120
Class Study	0.052	0.051	0.057	0.306
Individual Study	-0.036	0.058	-0.033	0.540
Teaching Method	0.024	0.066	0.022	0.711
Course Design	**-0.106**	**0.051**	**-0.112**	**0.039**

Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Gender Differences

This section reports on the findings related to gender differences between the respondents surveyed. An independent t-test was conducted to examine gender differences across study constructs, as well as the individual variables. Significant gender differences were found within the following constructs: Student Feedback, Communication with Service Staff and Class Behaviour.

The result validated that Student Feedback is significantly more important to females than it is to males. Communication with service staff, on the other hand, is significantly more important to the males compared to the females. With regard to in class behaviour, females, more than males, significantly agree that it is important to be controlled.

The independent t test also found that there were no significant differences in terms of satisfaction between male and female students. This implies that both gender perceptions on satisfaction fall within a similar level.

Table 5: Independent Sample test (gender differences*)***

	Male		Female		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for equality of means		
	Mn	SD	Mn	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Admission	3.41	1.34	3.30	1.29	0.56	0.46	0.91	514	0.37
Student Feedback	**4.80**	**0.99**	**5.00**	**0.82**	**8.91**	**0.00**	**-2.51**	**466**	**0.01**
Graduation	4.05	0.82	4.17	0.82	0.03	0.87	-1.66	514	0.10
Curriculum Design	4.36	0.77	4.33	0.82	1.27	0.26	0.33	514	0.74
Communication with Service Staff	**3.83**	**1.10**	**3.57**	**1.17**	**0.63**	**0.43**	**2.64**	**514**	**0.01**
Rigour	4.08	0.73	4.12	0.72	2.10	0.15	-0.64	514	0.52
Grading	4.15	0.91	4.22	0.96	1.76	0.19	-0.85	514	0.39
Class Behaviour	**4.03**	**0.86**	**4.32**	**0.76**	**2.88**	**0.09**	**-4.00**	**514**	**0.00**
Relational Level	4.81	1.09	4.85	1.07	0.01	0.91	-0.38	514	0.71
Communication with Teacher	4.42	1.12	4.53	1.08	0.09	0.76	-1.15	514	0.25
Class Study	4.92	1.01	5.00	1.00	0.04	0.84	-0.92	514	0.36
Individual Study	3.06	1.27	2.94	1.32	0.17	0.68	1.06	514	0.29
Teaching Method	4.51	0.82	4.55	0.79	0.28	0.60	-0.65	514	0.52
Course Design	4.30	0.93	4.30	0.93	0.24	0.62	-0.02	514	0.99
Satisfaction	3.42	0.92	3.53	0.89	0.94	0.33	-1.43	513	0.15

Country Differences

An independent t-test was conducted to investigate the regional differences within the student-customer oriented constructs. The result showed that within the 14 constructs, there were five constructs that proved to have significant differences between Southern Africa and Indonesia. These variables are: curriculum design, grading, communication with the lecturer, class study and individual study.

Table 6: Independent Sample test (country differences)

	Southern Africa		Indonesia		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for equality of means		
	Mn	SD	Mn	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Admission	3.35	1.445	3.36	1.14	14.96	0.00	-0.09	513	0.93
Student Feedback	4.94	0.928	4.86	0.883	0.04	0.84	1.00	517	0.32

Graduation	4.16	0.803	4.06	0.835	0.36	0.55	1.47	517	0.14
Curriculum Design	4.41	0.785	4.26	0.794	0.00	0.96	2.16	517	0.03
Communication with Service Staff	3.72	1.201	3.67	1.086	4.19	0.04	0.55	516	0.58
Rigour	4.07	0.705	4.15	0.742	3.00	0.08	-1.22	517	0.23
Grading	3.88	0.924	4.54	0.828	2.23	0.14	-8.45	517	0.00
Class Behaviour	4.14	0.847	4.23	0.801	1.74	0.19	-1.21	517	0.23
Relational Level	4.86	1.135	4.8	1.01	4.12	0.04	0.70	516	0.48
Communication with Teacher	4.82	1.086	4.08	0.965	5.60	0.02	8.20	516	0.00
Class Study	5.18	1.007	4.73	0.943	0.11	0.74	5.23	517	0.00
Individual Study	2.68	1.266	3.35	1.241	0.45	0.50	-6.03	517	0.00
Teaching Method	4.53	0.801	4.54	0.798	0.07	0.79	-0.27	517	0.79
Course Design	4.29	0.942	4.31	0.906	0.31	0.58	-0.25	516	0.80
Satisfaction	3.44	0.982	3.53	0.797	12.45	0.00	-1.13	513	0.26

Table 7: Cronbach's Alpha and inter-correlation among study variables

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results reveal that Curriculum Design is significantly more important to Southern African students than it is to Indonesian students. The same applies to communication with the lecturer, which is significantly more important to the Southern African students compared to the Indonesian Students. It seems as if Southern African students expect that lecturers' communication should be available through various channels, including after-class hours. In terms of study, Southern African students have more expectations of class study compared to Indonesian students. On the contrary, Indonesian students assigned greater importance to individual study. Lastly, Indonesian students also regard Grading as very important, which differs significantly from Southern African students. The study also tested for differences in satisfaction between Southern African and Indonesian students. The results found no significant evidence of differences between the two regions, in terms of satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Education has always been evaluated in terms of its practical value; and in many parts of the world, university education is highly regarded and treasured because it has always been, and may still be for a long time, only available to very few people (de Jager & Gbadamosi, 2008). This study aims to address the issue of contributing to practical implementation of the marketing concept to the higher educational experience. It has achieved its objective by three means. First by identifying categories or construct where customer-orientation are needed. Second by validating constructs related to satisfaction of the students and third by giving insights on demographic differences of the students using data from two regions/ countries, namely, Indonesia and Southern Africa. The study has also contributed to literature by adding evidence from the Asian and African higher education industry, as well as strengthening similar studies from Estonia on educational experience of HEI (Koris, Ortenblad, & Ojala, 2015).

The study found that students expect that classroom study, relational level and student feedback to be attended and well addressed. Regarding satisfaction, there are two elements that education managers should be paying attention to in any situation. Firstly, there is the classroom behaviour. A conducive classroom situation of other students determines the students' overall satisfaction for the HEI. Secondly is the course design which has the right balance of theory and practice is found also affecting overall satisfaction of the students.

In addition, the findings confirm that there are significant differences within gender (female's vs males) in three of the student-customer orientation constructs. The first difference is in the student feedback. Most of the past literature studying student feedback discusses feedback to students' work or lecturers/lecturer as an object of student's evaluation. The contribution of this study is by giving a different perspective on the topic, which is to explore the action taken by the HEI management, after feedback to them had been given by the students. Females were found more attentive to the feedback; and the university's action was based on the feedback given, compared to the male students. This implies that the university should communicate all actions taken based on feedback; and alert the students that they are acting proactively in addressing issues through regular evaluation.

Communication with service staff was also found to be a factor that is differentiated by gender. Male students demand more than female students, that service staff actively communicate changes to them. This finding might imply that direct communication is preferred by males; while female students might prefer mediated communication by technology. Past study shows that the females compared to the males, are using mediated technology more (Kimbrough, Guadagno, Muscanell, & Dill, 2013).

In addition, male students regard clarity and timely communication with service staff as more important than do the female students. However, the study indicates that female students place more importance on the information provided than do their male counterparts (Joseph & Joseph, 2000). Thus, females might be more focused on the content of communication; whereas the males are more focused on how the information was communicated to them.

On class behaviour, the study revealed that female students take class discipline more seriously than do their male counterparts. The finding is in line with recent literature reported that females are indeed more critical regarding the behaviour of laddism in the learning environment, which includes arriving late and being disrespectful to lecturers (Jackson, Dempster, & Pollard, 2015) compared to their male counterparts. The implications of the findings might result in a clear set of rules on the class discipline of learners, in order to create a supporting learning experience.

The study also found that there are, indeed, differences between students' expectations related to higher education institutions in Southern Africa and Indonesia. The variables that differ most between the

two regions are the students' expectations on curriculum design, grading, communication with the lecturer, class study and individual study.

From a management perspective, the study has given valuable information. First, in order to deliver satisfaction is to control the behaviour of students in the class and designing a course that is answering todays' challenges in the industry. In other hand, regarding different demographic areas, such as gender expectations, the study found that should a higher education institution have a majority of a specific gender e.g. males, they should be able to concentrate on specific issues, as the results from the study indicated that this applies more to the specific gender group (e.g. males). Another managerial implication also applies, especially to the variables that are proved to be different in Southern Africa and the Indonesian region. Thus, if a university has the intention to expand in the two countries, they need to realise the differences and adjust their approach accordingly. This may, for example, apply to an Australian university that has branches in, for example, Johannesburg as well as Jakarta.

Although the current study, attempts to contribute in the practical and theoretical aspect of education experience in HEI, limitation exists. The study did not focus on the different sources of financing, which may affect the expectations of students within the two regions. Other have also focussed on the increasing tuition issue and its effect on student's satisfaction (Burgess, Senior & Moores, 2003). It is also important for future elaboration in the industry specific issues which might contribute to the dynamics of universities and to some extent, motivation to compete in satisfaction. This include aspects such as HEI funding that is now shifting trends from state funding to private or independent funding sources and the move towards performance-based funding (Jongbloed & Vossensteyn, 2016).

A further study on education is important and could be explored further in terms of cultural aspects affecting both the Southern African region and Indonesia representing the Asian region. Furthermore, an interesting avenue can also be investigated in the study of private vs public (state-owned) university students' expectations in each region. Furthermore, the study did not differentiate between the various disciplines or the type of institution e.g. public versus private institution. More granularity of the data in terms of respondent's characteristics and combination of perspectives (from student's and lecturer's or academic staff's) may provide more depth in future studies.

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