

Students Expectations of Higher Education at Indonesian Public and Private Universities

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Abstract

Memahami ekspektasi mahasiswa tentang pengalaman belajar terbaik dalam institusi pendidikan terbaik sangat krusial untuk bisnis dalam bidang pendidikan dan pengajaran. Oleh karena itu, metode manajemen yang berorientasi pada konsumen banyak digunakan di institusi pendidikan tinggi. Pendekatan berorientasi konsumen terhadap mahasiswa sebagai konsumen telah banyak dikaji secara akademis dalam beberapa penelitian terkemuka menggunakan berbagai perspektif. Namun demikian, kajian yang membandingkan ekspektasi mahasiswa (sebagai konsumen) dari perguruan tinggi swasta dan perguruan tinggi negeri tidak banyak di bahas. Guna memperkaya khazanah dan wacana akademis mengenai isu ini, penelitian ini berusaha mengevaluasi perbedaan ekspektasi mahasiswa terhadap pengalaman belajar mereka di perguruan tinggi negeri dan swasta. Data dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan menggunakan student-customer orientation questionnaire (SCOQ). Penelitian ini menggunakan sampel mahasiswa sebanyak 238 mahasiswa jenjang sarjana dari universitas-universitas di Indonesia. Melalui analisis kuantitatif, penelitian ini mengungkapkan perbedaan yang menarik antara jenis-jenis ekspektasi mahasiswa dalam hal kelulusan, desain kurikulum, komunikasi dengan staf layanan, pembelajaran klasikal, studi individual, dan desain pembelajaran.

Keyword: *Perguruan Tinggi Berorientasi Laba; Pendidikan Tinggi; Universitas Swasta; Universitas Negeri*

Abstract

Understanding student expectations about offering the best educational experience is crucial in the education business. As a result, customer-oriented methods to management are widely used at higher education institutions (HEI). The customer-oriented approach to students as customers has been examined from several perspectives in academic literature. However, it has rarely been addressed in terms of comparing public and private universities. The current study attempted to evaluate disparities in student expectations of their educational experience at public and private colleges using a student-customer orientation questionnaire (SCOQ). The sample comprised of 238 undergraduate students from Indonesian universities. The study discovered intriguing distinctions between university kinds in terms of graduation, curriculum design, communication with service staff, classroom studies, individual studies, and course design.

Keywords: For-Profit College, Higher Education, Private Universities, Public Universities

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutes (HEI) are currently operating in a competitive environment. In reaction to competition, some argue that HEI should take a customer-focused approach from the marketing discipline. Customer orientation is described as having a sufficient grasp of one's target consumers to be able to provide them with consistently higher value (Narver & Slater, 1990). The term also includes the proclivity of individuals inside a company to meet the demands of customers in their employment circumstance (Brown et al., 2002). A customer-oriented institution will aim to understand and assess the student's opinion of the educational experience in order to suit their educational needs. This effort necessitates a significant commitment from higher education institutions, as well as the use of marketing concepts and procedures. Nonetheless, the marketing technique is regarded as essential for the success of higher education institution management (Amiri et al., 2015). Higher education institutions, as business organizations, are said to benefit from the customer orientation strategy. Thus, the difficulty is to use this

notion while maintaining academic integrity (Guilbault, 2017), especially in the increasingly competitive HEI business.

It has been extensively discussed how to position a higher education institution as a student-centered institution. However, there are relatively few research comparing public and private higher education institutions in the context of university kinds. The distinction between the two is significant since state support for public colleges is decreasing in many parts of the world, particularly in Asia (UNESCO, 2014). The circumstance has compelled public institutions to adapt and, in certain cases, transform their status to that of private universities. As a result, the competition landscape is becoming more fierce, and success in the market requires a solid understanding of students' expectations of the educational experience.

In this light, the current study attempts to comprehend disparities in student demand across public and private HEIs. As a result, the primary goals are translated into two particular questions. To begin, in which categories (or variables) do students expect a HEI to be student-centered? Second, is there any variation in the category of expectation between university types (public and private HEI)?

There are three schools of thought in the literature on the implementation of market orientation in the higher education industry. Because of the declining demand for education from prospective students, the first focuses on the customers. In the face of declining demand for education, this study implies that concentrating on students as customers is essential (Pesch et al., 2008; Svensson & Wood, 2007). The second stream is a firm belief that employing marketing to solve HEI problems is not a viable option, even if it does contribute to new obstacles (Argenti, 2000; Eagle & Brennan, 2007). According to this stream, marketing metaphors are improper for describing the student-university interaction. Traditional marketing relationships, such as customer-supplier or buyer-seller, have no resemblance with the student-university relationship. The first two streams are at opposite ends of the spectrum. This predicament could arise as a result of a lack of understanding of modern marketing. Marketing has evolved from a sales orientation to a marketing orientation, from selling items to creating value. Higher education institutions should shift from marketization to marketing (Judson & Taylor, 2016). The last stream consists of a discussion of the student's experience as a foundation for market orientation. According to Muncy (2008), HEI comprises several educational experiences such as curriculum, pedagogy, and feedback (Koris & Nokelainen, 2015). present a valuable conceptual framework for educational experience, which divides educational experiences in higher education institutions into two parts: the Institutional Network and the Learning Situation Network.

There are at least three scientific literatures that discuss students' perceptions and expectations of educational services in higher education, both private and state universities. The first is Gorgodze et al. (2020) research, which revealed that there was a mismatch between university administrators and students' expectations regarding educational services. Each party has their own version of an opinion regarding the best form and type of educational service for students.

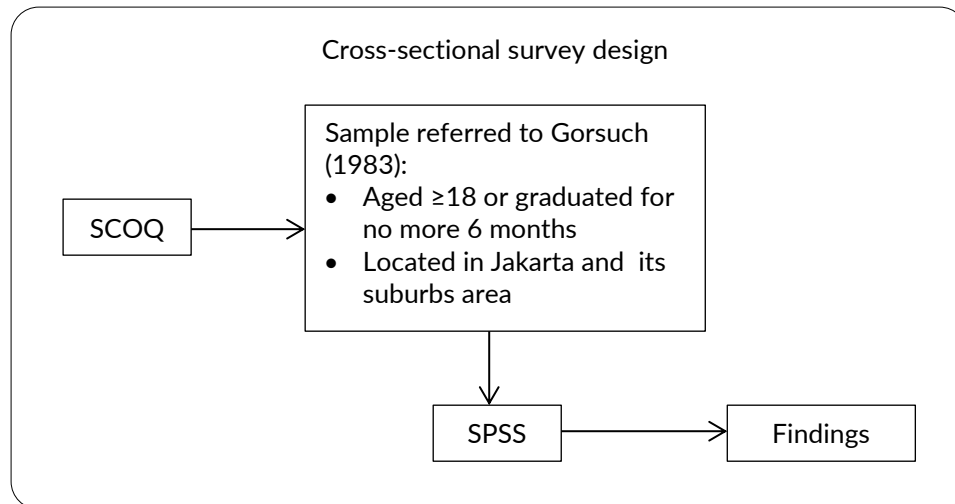
Almost the same as the literature above, two other pieces of literature reveal more clearly the differences in student expectations regarding educational services at private universities and state universities. In a research by Singh & Singla (2018) and a research by Darlaston-jones et al. (2003), they revealed student perceptions and expectations using the SERVQUAL instrument. This research differs from the three literatures above in terms of the use of research instruments and research locus.

In this research, the instrument used was the student-customer orientation questionnaire (SCOQ). By using this instrument, this research can overcome the weaknesses and limitations of research in previous literature, namely revealing students' perceptions as customers of educational institutions. This research is ultimately aimed at uncovering differences in student expectations at private universities and state universities in Indonesia.

METHOD

The study can be classified as quantitative-descriptive research because it demonstrates relationships between variables (Churchill, 2020) as well as ascertaining and characterizing the properties of variables under study (Sekaran, 2010). It is a single cross-sectional design in which a single sample of respondents from the target population is recruited and information is acquired from the same sample

(Malhotra, 2010). The study's unit of analysis is students at higher education institutions (HEI) in Jakarta and its surrounding suburbs, as many prestigious universities are located in these locations. The sample size for this study was determined by Gorsuch (1983), who proposed a 5:1 ratio of the number of observations to the number of indicators. The sample included students aged 18 and up who were either in the process of completing their undergraduate degree or had recently graduated within the previous 6 months. SPSS was used to process the data. In general, the steps of this research follow the framework below.



Reliability of instrument

Cronbach's alpha was employed in the study to assess the reliability or internal consistency of the variables. Cronbach Alpha of 0.7 was deemed adequate for measuring the appropriate reliability level for measures (Nunnally, 1978). The findings revealed that categories with adequate internal consistency within the institutional network are student feedback, communication with service workers, and discipline. Teaching methods and course design have the best internal consistency inside the Learning Situation Network.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 238 valid questionnaires were processed from the 250 gathered. The profiles of the responders are shown in the table by university type and gender. The majority of responders, 57.9%, are female, while 42.1% are male. Students in their third (38.3%) and fourth (26.3%) years of study make up a sizable proportion of the sample. The majority of respondents' funding comes from their parents (81.7%). 84.6% of respondents said they are not currently working, while the remaining students are working and studying at the same time. Almost 70% (69.2) of those polled are students at privately owned HEIs, with the remainder (32.5%) attending public HEIs.

This study's findings validate student feedback as a critical category ($M = 4.866$; $SD = 0.158$). The Cronbach Alpha of 0.826 indicates that the construct is reliable. Students agree that the HEI should collect input, follow up, and convey changes to the students based on the feedback. It incorporates teacher feedback and addresses student unhappiness. Many research have demonstrated the relevance of student input (Hussey & Smith, 2010; Koris, 2014; Muncy, 2008).

Table 1. Categories of student-customer orientation

Category number	Category	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Institutional Network</i>				
1	Admission	3.358	0.613	0.490
2	Student feedback	4.866	0.158	0.826
3	Graduation	4.056	0.701	0.600
4	Curriculum design	4.239	0.442	0.672

5	Communication with service staff	3.71	0.42	0.806
6	Discipline	4.404	0.927	0.817
<i>Learning Situation Network</i>				
7	Grading	4.538	0.386	0.773
8	Classroom behaviour	4.227	0.386	0.756
9	Student-teacher relationship	4.663	0.927	0.713
10	Communication with teacher	4.617	0.424	0.592
11	Classroom studies	4.667	0.436	0.793
12	Individual studies	3.615	0.44	0.683
13	Teaching methods	4.565	0.255	0.830
14	Course design	4.219	0.29	0.809

The level of strictness that the students expect the HEI to apply is defined as discipline. The results show that, on average, the students agree to obey the HEI's rules and regulations ($M = 4.404$; $SD = 0.927$). They believe that the HEI should be strict in having the students meet deadlines, that rule-breaking should be punished, and that the same rules should apply to all students.

Communication with service personnel produced intriguing results. Students expect to be treated as customers, according to the responses ($M = 3.71$; $SD = 0.420$). They believe it is the obligation of the service personnel to notify them of any changes as soon as possible so that they can alter their schedule in a way that best serves the students and assist them in solving deadline concerns. With a Cronbach Alpha of 0.806, the construct demonstrated internal consistency.

Students want instructional approaches to be enjoyable and interactive ($M = 4.565$; $SD = 0.255$). This is supported by research, which shows that students want learning to be fun and engaging, with as many interactive ways as feasible (Koris, 2012). This build has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.830. Regarding the course design construct, students agree that the teacher chooses the topics ($M = 4.219$; $SD = 0.290$). Nonetheless, the students prefer that the subject be practical rather than theoretical. They also believe that professors should be involved in their field of expertise outside of the school. This build was likewise very reliable, with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.809.

Expectations in public and private universities

An independent t-test was used to see whether there were any differences in perceptions of the HEI experience based on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The survey also calculated the size of the gap between public and private university students' assessments of each of the categories studied. Cohen's d , Gates delta, and Hedges' g were used to calculate the size. Cohen (1998) and Sawilowsky (2009) then referenced to the effect's size level to provide a value reference ranging from very little ($d=0.01$) to big ($d=2.00$).

Some of the categories of both the institutional network and the learning scenario network reveal a variation in the results. Graduation, curriculum design, and communication with service staff are the categories that showed significant differences in the perceptions of public and private university students in the institutional network, whereas classroom studies, individual studies, and course design are the categories in the learning situation network.

The test on the graduation construct suggests that public university students have different perspectives of graduation than private university students, $t(238) = 0.02$, $p.05$. In comparison to private university students, public university students agree slightly less with the propositions in the graduation construct (mean=3.87). According to Cohen's d effect size ($d=0.33$), the difference is minor. The test in the curriculum design construct demonstrates that public university students have different opinions of graduation than private university students, $t(238) = 0.03$, $p.05$. Private university students, on average, agree slightly more with the propositions in the curriculum design construct (mean=4.31) than public university students (mean=4.08). However, according to Cohen's d effect size ($d=0.31$), the difference is minor.

The test on the communication with staff construct suggests that public university students have different perspectives of communication with staff than private university students, $t(238) = 0.02$, $p.05$.

Private university students, on average, agree slightly more with the statements in the communication with staff construct (mean=3.81) than public university students (mean=3.46). However, according to Cohen's d effect size ($d=0.31$), the difference is minor. In terms of the classroom studies construct, the test results demonstrate that public university students have different opinions of classroom studies than private university students, $t(238) = 0.04$, $p.05$. Private university students, on average, agree slightly more with the assertions in the classroom studies category (mean=4.75) than public university students (mean=4.48). However, according to Cohen's d effect size ($d= 0.29$), the difference is minor.

Table 2. Independence Sample t-Test

Type	Public Univ.		Private Univ.		Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2 Tailed
ADM	3.47	1.12	3.31	1.15	0.10	0.75	0.98	238	0.33
STUFED	4.71	0.86	4.93	0.89	0.01	0.94	-1.79	238	0.08
GRAD	3.87	0.78	4.14	0.85	1.44	0.23	-2.35	238	0.02
CURR	4.08	0.68	4.31	0.77	1.73	0.19	-2.15	238	0.03
COMM	3.46	1.05	3.81	1.05	0.00	0.99	-2.35	238	0.02
RIGR	4.29	0.89	4.45	0.90	0.19	0.67	-1.23	238	0.22
GRDI	4.42	0.86	4.59	0.81	0.20	0.66	-1.46	238	0.15
CLASB	4.36	0.76	4.17	0.81	0.56	0.45	1.68	238	0.09
STREL	4.64	0.92	4.67	0.96	1.26	0.26	-0.25	238	0.80
COMT	4.55	1.02	4.64	1.06	0.32	0.57	-0.62	238	0.54
CLASTU	4.48	0.92	4.75	0.89	0.17	0.68	-2.10	238	0.04
INSTU	3.43	0.92	3.70	0.92	0.23	0.63	-2.09	238	0.04
TEACM	4.43	0.80	4.63	0.86	0.84	0.36	-1.69	238	0.09
COURD	3.98	0.86	4.32	0.88	0.71	0.40	-2.80	238	0.01
SAT	3.65	0.73	3.47	0.82	3.09	0.08	1.61	238	0.11

The test on the individual study construct suggests that public university students have different perspectives of individual studies than private university students, $t(238) = 0.04$, $p.05$. Private university students, on average, agree slightly more with the assertions in the individual studies construct (mean=3.70) than public university students (mean=3.43). However, according to Cohen's d effect size ($d= 0.29$), the difference is minor.

The test on the course design construct shows that public university students have different perceptions of course design than private university students, $t(238) = 0.01$, $p.05$. Private university students, on average, agree slightly more with the propositions in the course design construct (mean=4.32) than public university students (mean=3.98). However, according to Cohen's d effect size ($d= 0.39$), the difference is minor.

The study's goal was to look into the categories in which students anticipate a HEI to be customer centric. It also looked into the differences between public and private higher education institutions. The investigation yields intriguing discoveries as well as solutions to the research topic. The findings suggest that among the top five constructions with the greatest reliability measures, there are constructs indicating that students expect to be treated as consumers and so seek control and decision power. These constructs are student feedback, staff communication, and instructional approach. However, there are constructions demonstrating that in a higher education institution, control and decision authority are expected, and students accept the rule. The latter pertains to the discipline constructs and course design. As a result, being customer-oriented does not imply giving students complete decision-making power in all aspects of higher education, but rather finding a balance between students and HEI based on the expectations of each element.

Concerning student input, students expect the HEI to gather feedback, follow up, and explain changes based on student feedback. It involves comments from professors as well as resolving student dissatisfaction. Students also expect interactions with service professionals to be helpful in meeting their

academic needs. This is especially true for students at private universities, as opposed to students at public universities. In terms of teaching styles, all students favor lecturers who are entertaining and engaging while delivering relevant material.

Students rely on the HEI to choose the course design for the course design construct. They would want more practical information than a theoretical approach. This is more prevalent at private universities than in public universities. Contrary to popular belief, students still appreciate rigorous HEI-imposed rules as well as a sense of fairness in the learning environment when it comes to rule-breakers. The research also revealed that there are considerable variations between students studying in public and private HEIs in numerous domains (graduation, curriculum design, communication with service staff, classroom and individual studies, and course design). Looking at the higher mean score, private university students are more demanding in terms of the stated constructs than public university students.

CONCLUSIONS

The study shed light on the adoption of customer orientation in the education business. First, an education institution should have an efficient feedback-follow-up system in place to guarantee that students' voices are heard and that efforts toward improvement are taken based on the input. Second, clear and constant communication between students and HEIs is required. Service professionals should be trained to increase service quality as a link between students and lecturers. Third, course design should emphasize practical application and industry relevance. Students should be actively engaged in their learning. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in activities outside of HEI (practice) or activities relevant to industry.

Furthermore, the findings confirmed that public university students differ only marginally from private university students. It can be deduced that private university students in general are slightly more demanding than public university students. Nonetheless, in order to meet the needs of their consumers, both public and private higher education institutions should provide the same customer-oriented services in many sectors of education.

Although the researchers attempted to provide the necessary rigour to the project, there were still limitations to it. The sample was selected from students in the Jakarta area (in Indonesia), and thus it might not be representative of the total population of HEI students. A wider sample should be investigated to improve the possibility of generalization of the results. Secondly, although SCOQ provided a tool to investigate the issue of education, the population might have culture-specific attributes in a country context that may affect the findings. It might thus be worth further investigating in future.

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