Evaluation of the Value System of Payam University in Tehran, Iran

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Abstract: *This study aims to evaluate the value system of University of Payam according to opinions of the students. The study is a descriptive and survey-based research in which certain aspects of university's value system are examined according to learners' perception. The project is an applied study in its nature and method, while being a descriptive and survey-based. The statistical population of this study included 3790560 students at the academic year of 2010-11. Sampling method is a random sampling method on the sample of 369 students from different section of the university. The instrument used in the study is proved its validity. The reliability of the instrument is also tested by Cronbach's α. And data analysis is carried out using SPSS.*

Keywords: Value chain, Perception & Evaluation, learners' satisfaction.

1. Problem Statement

Nowadays many studies have been made towards improvement of quality management tools and spread of customer focus approach as an indicator of importance of customer satisfaction role in determination of organization success. Any action regarding customers will definitely affect their perception towards organization and educational institution as well. In recent decades with an increase in global competition, many organizations have understood the importance of customer has gained more important role. Universities as well should point an emphasis on evaluation of their customers which in case would be learners to whom their service is provided. This study aims to determine learners' satisfaction to the core value system of Payam-e Noor University.

2. Introduction

Higher education is one of most important institution for education, development and providing human resources in any country in which occurs at universities, academies, colleges, seminaries, and institutes of technology. Higher education is very important to national economies, both as a source of trained and educated personnel for the rest of the economy. For the purpose of keeping their dynamic role they require planning and development strategies to improve their processes and make a continuous monitoring on their quality. One way to see to what extent an institution of higher education is being efficient and fulfilling its role, is through the analysis of students' perception analyses. In this way, the analysis of learners' satisfaction and perception in higher education becomes fundamental. University students' satisfaction with their institution has individual, institutional and social implications. From an institutional point of view, satisfied students are more likely to continue in their studies (retention) and are more likely to succeed academically and this is likely to enhance the financial position and reputation of the institution. Satisfied students also make effective public relations agents. High student satisfaction helps in attracting and retaining high achievers who in turn increase the reputation and standing of the university.

2.1 About PNU

Payam-e Noor University (PNU) is one of the largest universities in Iran with the headquarters based in Tehran, 30 provincial centers, 485 local study centers and campuses all around the country and one International Study Center located in the headquarters. Established in 1988, PNU is a legal body under the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. Presently, the university has 3,500 academic members and 4,101,182 national and international students. Payam-e Noor University (PNU) has the objectives of higher education for everyone, everywhere, and every time.

Distance learning opens new directions of opportunities to obtain higher education without the constraints of location and time. Payam-e Noor University is trying to create a significant learning system to be accompanied by the appropriate means for being sustainable, accessible, and equitable of high quality. PNU as the largest public university of Iran succeeded to meet the promotion of higher education among different social groups of the country in general, and in the international and Islamic world, in particular. PNU represents different high quality programs for working adults, physically disabled persons and many other people to play a greater role in the development of our own country by creating, sharing and mobilizing knowledge.

3. Review of Literature

Assessing student perception provides a way that universities can focus directly on issues of quality development in order to ensure that educational standards are high (Wiers-Jenssen, Stensaker, & Grogaard, 2002). University student satisfaction surveys are being used today in more ways than ever before (Kulik, 2001). Many teachers approve of the increased use of evaluation surveys in universities. Teaching staff view these surveys as reliable and valid measures that bring methodical precision to the evaluation of teaching.

However, some teachers view students' satisfaction surveys as meaningless quantification. Teaching staff fear that students too often abuse this anonymous power to get even or get back at teaching staff and warn that satisfaction surveys may turn the evaluation of effective teaching into a personality contest (Kulik, 2001).Thomas and Galambos (2004) argue that students are regarded as consumers of higher education. University students' satisfaction is important to institutional success in that effective institutions have satisfied 'customers'.

Alireza Mansourian accomplished a research on the quality service and students' satisfaction of Gonabad University in Iran (2009) which showed that the most important factor for defining the learners' satisfaction is regarding to the quality of the training procedures and course materials (83%) and the least important factor is related to the accommodation facilities (16%). Sidat Shams Iran (2008) accomplished on Medical University of Isfahan that showed almost 71% of students were not satisfied with the trainers' performance and universities' facilities. Rostami Nejad had showed in his research on the students of Tehran University (2010) that 78% of students are satisfied with the quality of given service. E. Pfeifer; David J. Reibstein (2010) point outs that the expectations are a key factor behind satisfaction. When customers have high expectations and the reality falls short, they will be disappointed and will likely rate their experience as less than satisfying.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was restricted to the central Payam-e Noor University, Tehran, Iran, where the most of the students of are university resides. Payam-e Noor University (PNU) has 3,500 academic members and 4,101,182 national students across the country. **Trainers' performance, Service variety and Evaluation system of Payam-e Noor University** and those principals which compose Payam-e Noor University's value system and were examined in this research.

4.2 Period of the Study

This study has been conducted during 2009-2013 in Payam-e Noor University, in Tehran, Iran.

4.3 Research Questions

- How do students evaluate Trainers' Performance and which factor plays the most important role in this criteria?
- How do students evaluate Service varieties provided by Payam University and which factor plays the most important role in this criteria?
- How do students evaluate Evaluation System of Payam University and which factor plays the most important role in this criteria?

4.4 Research Objectives:

- To evaluate learners' perception over the value system provided by Payam-e Noor University in Tehran, Iran,

according to the university's standards.
- To understand the problems that Payam-e Noor University's learners interface.
- To assess trainers' performance in Payam-e Noor University and factors and its important factors.

4.5 Sampling Technique

The number of sample is determined as 369, (through means of sample size calculations) out of population of 3790560 learners of Central Branch in Tehran with the help of systematic sampling method. The confidence level was selected on 95% with the interval of 5. For more confidence 430 questionnaires were distributed out of which 395 were qualified.

5. Results regarding hypotheses using T test

Examination of hypothesis 1:
H_0: There is no significant association between the trainers' Performance and learner' satisfaction.
For investigation this hypothesis following formula can be used:
Learner' satisfaction= f (Trainers' Performance) + e (error)

Table 2: learners' satisfaction and trainers' performance - T-test

Dimensions	F statistics	Significance level of F	T statistic	Significance level of T
Trainers' Performance and Learners' satisfaction	57.773	0	10.246	0

Source: survey data, Compiled in SPSS

According to the results, the association between the trainers' Performance and learners' satisfaction is confirmed. The significant value is less than 0.05 Thus, this performance affects the satisfaction of consumers which in this case are Payam-e Noor University's students; The H_1 is confirmed and H_0 is rejected. Trainers' performance has influence over the learners' satisfaction.

Examination of hypothesis 2:
H_0: There is no significant association between the trainers' capabilities and trainers' responsiveness to learners' enquiry. For investigation this hypothesis following formula can be used:
Responsiveness to learners' enquiry = f (trainers' capabilities) + e (error)

Table 3: trainers' capabilities and responsiveness to learners' enquiry - T-test

Dimensions	F statistics	Significance level of F	T statistic	Significance level of T
trainers' capabilities to learners' enquiry	42.166	0	19.914	0

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Results

According to results, it is confirmed that there is an association between trainers' capabilities and their responsiveness to learners' problems. In another word, the significant value is less than 0.05 thus the trainers' capabilities affect the quality and manner of responsiveness to learners' problems, thus H_1 is confirmed and H_0 is rejected.

Examination of hypothesis 3:

H_0: There is no significant association between the university's goodwill and learners' loyalty.

Table 4: university's goodwill and the learners' loyalty- T test

Dimensions	F statistics	Significance level of F	T statistic	Significance level of T
university's goodwill and learners' loyalty	35.552	0	18.214	0

Results confirm the relation between university's goodwill and learners' loyalty. Payam-e Noor University's goodwill affects the loyalty of learners; the significant value is less than 0.05. The H_1 is confirmed and H_0 is rejected. It can be concluded that Payam-e Noor University's goodwill affect the learners' loyalty.

Examination of hypothesis 4:

H_0: There is no significant association between provisions of new facilities and quality service given to learners.

For investigation this hypothesis following formula can be used:

Service quality = f (provisions of new facilities) + e (error)

Table 5: provisions of new facilities and quality service given to learners- T test

Dimensions	F statistics	Significance level of F	T statistic	Significance level of T
provisions of new facilities and quality service given to learners	29.354	0	16.652	0

Results:

It is confirmed that there is an association between provisions of new facilities and service quality offered to students. The significant value is less than 0.05. As a result; provisions of new facilities affect the service quality to students, thus H_1 is confirmed and H_0 is rejected. Provision of modern facilities influences the quality service given to the learners.

Examination of sub hypothesis 5:

H_0: There is no significant association between the service varieties from the university to learners and learners' satisfaction. The following formula can be used for investigation this hypothesis:
Learners' satisfaction= f (service varieties) + e (error)

Table 15 examines these dimensions;

Table 6: service varieties from university to learners and learners' satisfaction- T test

Dimensions	F statistics	Significance level of F	T statistic	Significance level of T
Service varieties and learners satisfaction	36.884	0	23.658	0

Results:

Results confirm the relation between the university's service varieties and learners' satisfaction. Payam-e Noor service varieties affect the satisfaction of learners; the significant value is less than 0.05. As a result The H_1 is confirmed and H_0 is rejected.

Examination of hypothesis 6:

H_0: There is no significant association between the evaluation system of university to learners and the learners' satisfaction. For investigation this hypothesis following formula can be used:
Learners' satisfaction= f (University's evaluation system) + e (error)
Table 18 examines the situation of these variables;

Table 7: University's evaluation system to learners and learners' satisfaction - T-test

Dimensions	F statistics	Significance level of F	T statistic	Significance level of T
University's evaluation system and learners' satisfaction	30.524	0	16.728	0

Results

As the results show, it is confirmed that there is an association between the proper evaluation system of the learners and the learners' satisfaction. In another word, the provisions of the effective evaluation system affect satisfaction of learners, the significant value is less than 0.05 H_1 is confirmed and H_0 is rejected.

6. Results and Conclusions

According to The results, and to answer **research question one,** it is understood that **the most important factors in the value system of the university is the Service varieties** with the mean of 3.50 with the assumed mean of 3. Factors analysis reveals that particular service provided at a particular service-scape is a leading factor comparing to other factors such as existence of particular modern service and objectivity of service varieties.

Secondly, results confirm that **Evaluation System** of university is on second mean ranking; 3.38. According to factor analysis, the most important factor in the evaluation system is that it should be **helpful in the progress of learners**. Other influencing factor is structured and organized evaluation system.

Finally, **Trainers' Performance** is the least important factors for students, with the mean of 3.25. Existence of **complementary jobs between trainers** is an influencing factor with community of 0.946 and after that, factors such as maintaining good relationship with learners and being supportive are important according to the students.

7. Limitations of the Study

- Many times learners were not really informed about the topics.
- The numbers of researchers to explain the questionnaires to learners were not adequate as they would have helped in explaining the concepts to the participants.
- A limitation of the current study was also the small sample of learners. The size, convenience, and homogeneity of the sample limit the generalizability of this study.
- This study only used the views of learners. Considering that Payam-e Noor University as one of the biggest training organization in Iran, the views of different stakeholders and partners could be useful as it would have helped to examine the value system more properly.
- Establishing contacts with learners was difficult as most of them were part time or on-line students

8. Direction for Future Studies

Since the study has been performed with a small sample size, further studies can be conducted using a larger sample. This study only used the views of learners, considering Payam-e Noor as an organization with different stakeholders; it is also recommended that further researches be carried out using the views of other individuals who are interfering in the education system as well. It is also recommended to study other components of university value chain as in this study the focus was on more delivery system to the consumers which are learners.

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