
Student Support Services and Student's Satisfaction in a University in Vietnam

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Abstract. This study investigates the relationship between student support service and students' satisfaction at Nam Dinh University of Nursing (NDUN), Vietnam. The descriptive method was used through a survey to 400 students, who are studying and using universities' services. The study used a combination of questionnaires and interviews in acquiring information from the respondents to gather the data. The measuring instruments utilized in this research were the frequency, percentage distribution, the weighted means, and regression analysis. The main findings stated that the respondents gave average scores in almost factors of student support services excepting they rated good performance in term of service of employment support. The regression results from this study presented that there was a positively significant relationship between students' satisfaction and six factors of student support services namely dormitory service, canteen service, parking service, service of the training department, service at the office of student affairs. However, the service of employment support had no significant impacts on students' satisfaction. Therefore, the universities should create a better condition to improve their professional knowledge of staffs to meet the requirements. Furthermore, they should improve regulations on the prices of services, working regulations, responsibilities for students when learning to use the training support services.

Key words: student satisfaction, student support service, dormitory, canteen, training department, services at office of student affairs, employment support

Introduction

As we can see from the forums, conferences, government agencies, and disputes of scholars, there is no consensus on whether the university is considered as a service business or not in Vietnam. On the other hand, education is the duty of people and society. The state assured the civil rights of advanced learning, including higher education. The reason is that students studying at the university may bring better services, higher labor productivity, and fewer criminals. Therefore, the government should invest more in education, including school education, higher education. It cannot be considered the university as an agency or a service business, which is affected by market mechanism. The poor don't have a chance to have higher education. This view is common and deeply rooted in agencies' subconscious, including education management agencies, researchers and managers in Vietnam. Therefore, the state budget for education in Vietnam may be the highest in the world (Hoang, 2019; Gronross, 2008). In addition, the education sector is turning from a subsidized entity to become a source for earning money. Therefore, all business concepts and theories can be applied in this sector. With this application in the fast-ever-changing demand in education, the competition among higher education institutions has become fierce. In addition, the expectation of customers toward higher education institutions becomes higher and higher with the increase in the tuition fee and the classification of education as a marketable service (Kwek et al., 2010; Hidalgo & Wang, 2009; Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). There are many stakeholders in service industries, but customers are usually considered the most important stakeholders. In education services, students are considered customers; hence, they should be of the top concern in the operation of any academic institution. Due to this importance, it is necessary to delve into determining factors of student satisfaction. One factor should be considered while studying student satisfaction is service quality. According to Fornell, Rust, and Dekimpe (2007)

and Leisen (2009) service quality is a key performance measure in educational excellence and is a main strategic variable for higher education institutions to increase market share.

Furthermore, it is objected that education, especially higher education, cannot be subsidized by the State since studying at the university is for personal needs and benefits. It is understandable that more and more money is invested in education. Anyone who has lots of money can study at the university (Ludeman, 2009 and Shahin, 2010). Thus, university is considered as a service business. If any university provides good teaching quality, it will attract more people to enroll in the university. As a result, the university will get more money from tuition fees in order to improve the quality and prestige of the university. However, the university has to compete with many other universities. The amounts of enrolled students are limited every year. The solution for this is increasing student's fee, which helps the university avoid being dependent on the annual state budget. The university will take the initiative in enrollment, tuition fee collection, salary paid to teachers and staffs and investment on purchasing equipment for training and research (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007 and Ludeman, 2009). Many countries have applied this idea and it seems to be more effective. It is clear that all universities have to provide training on the required order based on funding from the state budget. However, only financial expenditures are considered as services so universities often do not pay much attention to other activities. Those are the attitude of the staff in many departments. Teachers and students often have to solve administrative procedures, which no departments are responsible for. Many students complained about the quality of services such as lack of space for sports activities, dormitories and poor hygiene, and the quality of the canteen is not good, all of which are not commensurate with the cost they spend. In addition, to provide knowledge to students, the department provides training services under the management and control of the managing board. In which, the revenue department is still subsidized by the school and compensated for losses. This does not stimulate enthusiasm and responsibility in providing services to students. The quality of services is also an important factor contributing to the brand image of the universities (Nam, 2013; Truong, 2013 and Son 2014).

From this analysis, we can see student support services are a type of service that providers are universities and students are direct beneficiaries with a full range of elements. According to Truong (2013), to get the best benefits from the services; there should be a close coordination between the university and its customers. In addition, in student support services, there is an indispensable element, that is extra-curricular activities. Through these activities, students can visit the actual working sites, experience practical skills training to reinforce the knowledge gained at school and improve themselves. In order to provide a better understanding about this issue, this study aimed to determine the relationship between students' satisfaction and student services at Nam Dinh University of Nursing (NDUN), Vietnam which served as basis for management mechanism improvement. Furthermore, the paper provides several recommendations to assist the university in attracting higher number of students.

Research Methods

Research Design

The researcher used the questionnaire as the main instrument for data gathering. The questionnaire was collated in groups and ranked on five-point Likert scales to measure the perception of respondents on the student services of the universities. To develop the questionnaire, researchers sought the opinions of experts who managed the corresponding functional departments, then organize the experiment survey. Finally, the paper is based on their opinions to create a formal survey to collect data. Additionally, the researcher employed a singular questionnaire checklist for all of the respondents. The self-made questionnaire was

tested and validated by experts. This was used as primary data collection device. It consists of two parts:

Part I – Personal information - Elicit the respondent's profile that includes the name, Age, Sex, Academic Program/Course and Year Level/Year graduated.

Part II – Survey information - Contain the questions that were accessed and evaluated by the respondents on the student services and the solutions introduced to management mechanism to improve student services at universities. Additionally, questionnaire checklist was designed as the main data, gathering instrument of the research. The researcher sought the advice and guidance of his adviser and some experts while in the process of designing and developing the questionnaire checklist

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The research population shall be composed of all students, whose are studying Nam Dinh University of Nursing (NDUN), Vietnam. To get the sample size, the researcher utilized the Slovin's formula with a margin for error set at 5% allowance and 95% reliability, thus deriving a sample size was 395 students. The respondents were then chosen by random sampling technique. Using Slovin's formula, a sample size was computed with a percentage error of 5%. To obtain accurate and consistent results, the author increased the sample size to 400 students.

Data Analysis

To determine the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, the length of course and monthly spending percentage distribution was used. Additionally, to determine the significant relationship of the student services to the students' satisfaction, regression models were used. To determine the relationship between student support services to the students' satisfaction, the authors used the multivariate regression model as followed: $SFF = a_0 + a_1LI + a_2DO + a_3CT + a_4PA + a_5SE + a_6TR + a_7AS + U$. Where SFF is the dependent variable as students' satisfaction, the independent variables include LI (Library); DO (Dormitory); CT (Canteen); PA (Parking); SE (Service of employment support or placement of graduates); TR (Service provided by training department); and AS (Service provided by the Office of Student Affairs). In addition, the respondents were asked to rate each item following the five-point scales as following Table 1

Table 1. Interpretation of Ratings and Weighted Mean

Scale	Range Interval	Choice Description	Descriptive Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Full Satisfaction(FS)	Excellent
4	3.40 – 4.19	Pretty Satisfaction (PS)	Good
3	2.60 – 3.39	Neither Satisfaction nor Dissatisfaction (ND)	Average
2	1.80 – 2.59	Dissatisfaction (DS)	Poor
1	1.00– 1.79	Strongly Dissatisfaction (SD)	Very poor

Source: Adapted from Garland (1991)

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Characteristics

Table 2. Frequency distribution of respondents' characteristics

Indicators		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	221	55.25	55.25	55.25
	Female	179	44.75	44.75	100
The length of the course	Fresher	88	21.88	21.88	21.88
	Sophomore	93	23.3	23.3	45.17
	Third year students	105	26.14	26.14	71.31
	Final year students	115	28.69	28.69	100
Monthly spending	2 million and below	65	16.25	16.25	16.25
	2 – 3 million	148	37.0	37	53.25
	3-5 million	122	30.5	30.5	83.75
	5 million and above	65	16.25	16.25	100

Frequency mean distributions and standard deviation were based on the responses for each item regarding to demographic characteristics of respondents. The results of the survey were plainly shown in table 2. Accordingly, the distribution of gender was equal between male and female respondents. Regarding to the length of the course, the majority of respondents have studied at the final year according to nearly 29%, followed by approximately 26% third year students. However, the distribution of students who were fresher and sophomore was equally distributed at around 22%. Additionally, most of students were given from 2 to 5 million Vietnam dong (VND) per month to spend during studying at their university at around 67%, while there were only 16.25% of respondents who were given 2 or under 2 million VND per month to spend.

Assessment of Existing Levels of Student Support Services at the Selected Universities

Table 3 indicates the mean distribution of student support services in NDUN. Overall, respondents rated student support services at average scores from 2.72 to 3.16 scores. Surprisingly, respondents gave good performance in term of service of employment support in both universities at above mean scores of 3.4. Specifically, respondents gave higher mean scores on levels of student support services in most terms of dormitory service, canteen service, parking service, services of training department, services at office of student affairs, library services and service of employment support at NUN. Regarding to dormitory service, students rated mean scores for NDUN at 3.22 and 3.09 respectively. Students want to be equipped with some equipment in the bathroom, toilet. At present, these devices are quite old. They want the university has more trees and put more benches. Especially, environmental sanitation is paid more attention. In addition, respondents gave mean scores for NDUN in terms of canteen service and parking service at 3.18 and 3.10 respectively.

Table 3. Mean distribution of student support services

Indicators	Weighted mean	
	Mean	QI
Dormitory service (DO)	3.16	Average
Canteen service (CT)	3.05	Average
Parking service (PA)	3.00	Average
Services of Training Department (TR)	2.72	Average
Services at Office of Student Affairs (AS)	2.93	Average
Library services (LI)	2.93	Average
Service of employment support (SE)	3.51	Good

Evaluation of Relationship between Factors of Student Support Services and Students' Satisfaction

The study employed a multiple regression analysis to evaluate the significant relationship between factors of student support services and students' satisfaction (Table 4). The empirical results indicated that the effects of seven factors rated to student support services were positive and significant. Additionally, 96,6% of the variation in students' satisfaction were explained by seven factors of student support services named dormitory service, canteen service, services of training department, services at office of student affairs, library services and service of employment support ($R^2 = 0.966$). Furthermore, a regression coefficient from the multiple regression analysis was used to identify the influential levels of student support service on students' satisfaction. The standard for testing the suitability of the model, the partial regression coefficients are highly significant level ($Sig = 0.000$), but Variable SE has no significant levels ($sig. = 0.363 > 0.05$) at 5% level of significance. Service of employment support or placement of graduates has no effect on student satisfaction about service. Standard VIF is less than 10 and the significance level is less than 0.05 ($Sig = 0.000$), suggesting that the independent variables TR to LI in the model are accepted. In addition, based on the normalized beta of the independent variables in the regression model, the coefficients of factors included library; dormitory; canteen; parking; service of employment support or placement of graduates; service provided by training department; and service provided by the office of student affairs had standardized beta coefficients greater than 0. Therefore, these variables were positively correlated with students' satisfaction variables, or when these variables increase, they also increase student satisfaction and opposite. On the other hand, there was no significant relationship between the factors of service of employment support and students' satisfaction at 5% levels of significance ($\beta = 0.011$, $sig = 0.363$).

Table 4. Regression results of the relationship between student support services' factors and students' satisfaction

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Independent variables	(Constant)	1.85E-16	0.01		0.00	1.00		
	TR	0.50	0.01	0.50	42.34	0.00	1.000	1.00
	DO	0.43	0.01	0.43	36.17	0.00	1.000	1.00
	CT	0.17	0.01	0.17	14.84	0.00	1.000	1.00
	AS	0.42	0.01	0.42	35.94	0.00	1.000	1.00
	PA	0.37	0.01	0.37	31.15	0.00	1.000	1.00
	LI	0.40	0.01	0.40	34.11	0.00	1.000	1.00
	SE	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.91	0.36	1.000	1.00
R Square = 0.966								
F = 682.278 and P_value = 0.000								
Dependent Variable: Students' satisfaction								

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study applied the quantitative method in combination with five-points of Likert scales. The main instrument of the paper was the questionnaire, which was used to survey the evaluations of 400 students at NDUN. The respondents gave average scores in almost factors of student support services excepting; they rated good performance in term of service of employment support. However, they gave higher scores in term of student support services in at NDUN excluding service of employment support factor. The regression results from this study presented that there was a positively significant relationship between students' satisfaction and six factors of student support services namely service from the training

department, dormitory service, canteen service, parking service, service of training department, service at office of student affairs. The seventh factor, service of employment support had no significant impacts on students' satisfaction. Therefore, the university should create better conditions including the physical and mental conditions for employees to attend advanced training to improve their professional knowledge of staffs to meet the requirements. Furthermore, the Namdinh University of Nursing needs to consider and improve regulations on the prices of services, working regulations, responsibilities for students when learning to use the training support services.

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