

Analysis of customer satisfaction of the quality and price of services

El análisis de la satisfacción del consumidor con la calidad y precio de los servicios

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ABSTRACT:

The article considers the problem of assessing the satisfaction of consumers with the quality and price of the service. The author analyzes the concepts of «customer satisfaction», «service quality», «service price», «price perception», discloses the specifics of these terms in relation to the market of educational services. The author describes the key aspects of the analysis of students' satisfaction with the quality and price of the educational service.

Keywords: satisfaction of consumers, satisfaction assessment, quality and price of services, perception of quality and price of services.

RESUMEN:

El artículo aborda el problema de evaluar la calidad de la satisfacción del cliente y los costos del servicio. El autor analiza el concepto de «satisfacción del cliente», «calidad de servicio», «precio del servicio», «percepción de precio», revela los detalles específicos de estos términos en relación con el mercado de la educación. El autor describe los aspectos fundamentales del análisis de satisfacción con la calidad de los estudiantes y el costo de los servicios educativos.

Palabras clave: la satisfacción del cliente, puntuación de satisfacción, la calidad y el precio del servicio, la calidad percibida y el precio de los servicios.

1. Introduction

The rendering the expected value in competitive business sphere in concentration of quality of service is an important element for business success, and experts concur that the most powerful competitive tool currently reshaping marketing and business strategy is service quality (Eraghi, Atharinejad 2012).

The modern concept of marketing means formation of strong and lasting relationships with customers. This condition is the basis of successful activity of the company in the market. To attract maximum number of buyers is necessary to enhance the level of customer satisfaction,

which is formed by the corresponding values (benefits) and price of goods or services. Today, the evaluation of customer satisfaction has become a mandatory attribute of the systems of customer relationship management (Volkova 2014). Customer satisfaction is considered as one of the indicators of the effectiveness of the quality management system.

Note that to date, relevant customer-centric approach in managing organizations of various spheres of activity. According to this approach, increasing the level of customer satisfaction is an important strategic goal of management.

The author of the article analyzed the draft International standard ISO 9002-2016, point 9.1.2 entirely devoted to the concept of customer satisfaction. The author pointed out that according to this document, the term «customer satisfaction» is the degree of human perception of the products and services of the organization. Also, the term «satisfaction» refers to the justified expectations of the consumer. In the draft International standard ISO 9002-2016 describes methods for the collection of information that helps to assess customer satisfaction. We list these methods: sociological research; analysis of commendations and complaints; gathering information from consumers about the quality of the delivered products and services; information exchange with the consumer (according to ISO 9001:2015, section 8.2.1); analysis of market share; analysis of requests for warranty service; the organization of «feedback» in the social networking websites and forums; analyses published in newspapers or magazines of information and reports received from dealers (ISO/TS 9002:2016).

Scientists P. Farris, N. Bendle, P. Pfeifer, D. Reibstein in his study «Marketing metrics: the definitive guide to measuring marketing performance» note the following: «Marketers must quantify the value of products, customers and distribution channels – all under various pricing and promotional scenarios». Scientists interpreted «satisfaction» as an absolute or relative number of satisfied customers (Farris, Bendle, Pfeifer, Reibstein 2010). Customer satisfaction is an abstract concept. The state of satisfaction of the consumer depends not only on physical but also from psychological state. Many psychological factors determine consumer behavior (emotional cause, repeat purchase, consumer recommendations, etc.).

In a general term, the concept of «satisfaction» is a psychological human condition, which appears after attainment of the desired results and goals. On the other hand satisfaction is examined from the point of view of conformity to customers' expectations. Sometimes satisfaction is considered as the assessment of customer quality and properties of goods, services, service. Thus, on the basis of the evaluation of satisfaction the company can determine what its activities should be improved.

Through the study of satisfaction can determine the level of customer loyalty. This is due to the situation that the high level of customer satisfaction promotes repeat purchases, recommendations of the company's services to other buyers. A high level of satisfaction is especially important in the early stages of cooperation of the enterprise and the consumer. If in the early stages of interaction the customer is not satisfied, then the relationship will not last long.

Sometimes there are situation exceptions. Sometimes with a low level of satisfaction customers remain loyal to the company. This is due to the inertia, a high level of past costs, lack of choice, lack of information and experience of using a product or service. That is, customers remain loyal even when not completely satisfied with your products (services) of the company.

Thus, satisfaction is based on a complex of influencing factors. Customer satisfaction is associated with feelings of pleasure that arise from the client. These feelings and experiences based on the comparison of prior expectations and the actual quality of the service purchased (item).

Customer satisfaction consists of three complementary components. First component is the key benefits. Second component is the service and the quality of the service delivery process. Third component is the perceived value of the service purchased.

The author considers particularly important to list the key benefits for the client which affect its

satisfaction. First it`s the quality of the services (goods). Second it`s reasonable price. Thirdly it`s compliance services (products) the customer's expectations (any individually perceived qualitative characteristics of relevance to the individual consumer). Fourth it`s convenient place of purchase of services (goods) or vendor location.

Features service can have a greater impact on customer satisfaction than the presence of the key benefits of the use of the services (goods). It depends on the scope of the company. In particular, the service sector is particularly important as the customer interaction with the staff of the organization. It is quite difficult to determine the quality of the services. That is why the quality of the service delivery process for the client is paramount. This assertion is legitimate to use and market of educational services. Student satisfaction with the process of provision of educational services is a key problem in the sphere of higher education.

Review of literature highlights that there is lack of consensus on the definition of satisfaction as a concept with service quality and generally there are no clear accepted instrument for customer satisfaction in higher education institutions (Danjuma, Rasli 2012).

It is crucial to clearly understand the service quality factors that enable education institution to attract, retain students and also to expect prospective students (Vatta, Bhatara 2013). Any higher education institutions would want to gain competitive edge in their current business and in future, may need to search for effective and creative ways to attract, retain and develop stronger relationships with students and parents particularly (Santhi Raghavan, Ganesh 2015).

All of the above determines the relevance of the research problem and its significance for modern science.

2. Methodology and methods.

Evaluation of customer satisfaction – it`s a systematic and regular comprehensive procedure focused on the solution of the main task of the organization to ensure and improve the quality of products and services through a system of interaction between organization with the consumers. The article reviews some existing methods for the evaluation of customer satisfaction.

Theoretical aspects of diagnosis of customer satisfaction devoted a lot of works of foreign authors. The study of students' satisfaction with educational services is insufficiently studied issue (including in Russia).

Key areas in the sphere of theoretical study of the problem of satisfaction associated with the quality of educational services. However, many issues that are associated with the perception of price and value of educational services, remain outside the framework of the research.

The perception of price and value of the service (product) is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include social factors (recommendations of friends, situational factors, personal characteristics), and the correspondence of expenses to obtained results.

For the evaluation of service quality in the world practice often used methodology «SERVQUAL», which was developed by A. Parasuraman, V. A. Zeithaml, L. L. Berry. This methodology is based on the concept of service quality and suggests an algorithm «Expectation minus Perception» (Expectation – Perception). The authors of this techniques to characterize perception as measured consumer attitude towards the services rendered. Methodology «SERVQUAL» involves a specially designed form. The basis of this questionnaire is five sets of questions on various parameters of service quality. Each unit consists of 22 pairs of Likert questions (Likert scale). For example, the first set of questions focuses on the diagnosis of the consumer's expectations regarding a particular service. The second set of questions is designed to measure the level of service for each parameter in a particular organization. The present system is not universal (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988).

Another instrument in the assessment of customer satisfaction is the customer satisfaction Index Customer Satisfaction Index (abbreviated as CSI). In the United States and Western

European countries applied their national indices of customer satisfaction. In particular, in America developed by the American index of customer satisfaction American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI abbreviated). And in Europe, use the index of satisfaction of the Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer (SCSB) and the European customer satisfaction index, European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI). The coefficient of loyalty NPS allows you to define the loyalty and willingness of customers to recommend their friends and acquaintances. Another instrument in the assessment of customer satisfaction is the procedure of mapping the perception of Needs & Gaps, which is based on the results of the assessment of importance and satisfaction attributes (on a 10-point scale). Map of perception allows us to identify bottlenecks in the company's activities, determine basic and secondary benefits, to identify the main directions for development.

Thanks to these indexes, and indexes can estimate the buying mood, to measure the attitude of consumers to the services (goods) for individual sectors. Thus, indices of customer satisfaction is an important socio-economic indicator. Russia's national satisfaction index is still not developed and is not calculated. Although the need is there. Especially in the field of higher education services. Universities need to know and constantly measure the mood of students in order to improve the quality of services and attract new customers. In fact, one of the main objectives of universities is to meet the aspirations of students. One of the key performance indicators to achieve a high quality of educational services is the service quality of the University. Quality of service provides a distinctive image and a positive image for universities in a competitive industry of higher education.

Feature of the market of educational services is its complex structure. The market of educational services is a complex system that consists of numerous interconnected, interacting, interacting economic agents (the state; society; enterprises that pay the training of their employees; students and their parents) (Peptan, Bajan, Cretu 2010).

To assess consumer satisfaction in higher education the authors H. Alves, and M. Raposo used the index of student satisfaction (Student Satisfaction Index) and describe the model of formation of students ' opinion (Alves, and Raposo 2007).

Since there is a common opinion that the quality of services is directly dependent on the satisfaction and affection (Danjuma, Rasli 2012), University administration should give due attention to the quality of the services offered. In particular, all the parameters of quality of service, financial security, reliability, responsiveness, authenticity and compassion should be evaluated and continuously improved. The improving areas of weakness has a positive effect on the satisfaction and the possibility of continuous learning throughout life («repeat purchases»), thereby helping universities to create and maintain reputation and image.

In scientific work Munteanu C., Ceobanu C., C. Bobalca, Anton O. «An analysis of customer satisfaction in a higher education context» with the aim of measuring the satisfaction of students describes an approach which involves two stages. In the first phase, scientists form the focus groups and identify key indicators of satisfaction. The second stage involves the univariate and multivariate analysis of results obtained using the Likert scale (Likert scale) (Munteanu, Ceobanu, Bobalca, Anton 2010).

As a methodological basis of research by the author was chosen and supplemented by the following methodology of evaluation of customer satisfaction: «Customer Satisfaction Index» (CSI), the Coefficient of loyalty to the NPS, the procedure of mapping the perception of Needs & Gaps.

As the objectives of the study the author considers the assessment of student satisfaction with the quality and price of educational services; analysis of interpretations of such concepts as «customer satisfaction», «quality of service», «price», «perception of price», etc.; a conceptual model of student satisfaction with the quality and price of educational services.

3. The results of the study

The main problem of this study is to conduct customer satisfaction surveys by the quality and price of educational services.

Today the Russian higher education has a low competitiveness on the world market of educational services. It's including is no reliable information about the attributes and factors of the educational organization and the educational service itself (as learning, social support, overall educational sphere, etc.).

This study focused on the ability to show the consistency of the parameter «customer satisfaction with the quality and price of educational services» as one of the factors influencing the competitiveness of educational organizations.

Makers of educational services and products are educational organizations that form the product offering, as well as individual producers of educational services. The consumers of educational services is isolated students, businesses and organizations, the state and the authorities. Intermediaries in the market of educational services are employment services, labor exchanges, recruitment agencies, educational foundations, associations, educational institutions, contributing to the promotion of educational services on the market.

It's all important to understand that the market of educational services (especially where services are of public structure) has multiple characteristics: educational services do not always buy (or sometimes get them free); the agent who acquires the service is not always the consumer, but it needs to be a beneficiary of the service.

If education is financed by the state budget (through direct funding or subsidies), then the state acts as the agent of the seller and buyer at the same time.

If funding comes through taxes, the buyer of educational services is the citizen who pays taxes, but he does not receive this service (Macris, Marcis 2011).

Conducted by the author in the historical analysis has shown that the world market of services in the field of higher education began to develop around the mid 1970s. Introduced new types of courses and training programs were used to generate alternative ways of learning. It's based on the development of information and communication technologies since the mid-1990s, actively developed commercial distance learning. A huge contribution to the development of the market of educational services has made the ubiquity of the Internet has changed the process of organization of the educational process. Internet technologies have allowed to receive educational services in any location at a convenient time. At this time began to develop «virtual universities», which have become major partners of world-renowned organizations. In such universities the students are offered to study disciplines related to specific global companies.

Institutional and political changes in some countries have led to the restructuring of educational organizations, their reduction. The market of educational services in Russia in the period from 1990 to 2010 was characterized by an increase in educational institutions doubled. The demand for educational services met as a proposal from the state and from private investment (private educational institutions).

It is important to note that since 2011, the structure of enrollment in higher education establishments has changed due to the Russian education sector's transition to a new system of academic degrees with the introduction of bachelor and master programs. This process began in 2007, when a new higher education law was brought into force (Russia, 2007) (Filatova, Abankina, Abankina, T., Nikolayenko 2012).

At the beginning of the 2011/2012 academic year, the number of universities in Russia amounted to 1080 (634 state universities and 446 private universities). In Russia at the beginning of the 2012/2013 year universities, there were 1046 (609 state universities and 437 private universities) and at the beginning of the 2013/2014 academic year were 969 universities. In the 2014/2015 academic year the number of universities was reduced to 950, and in 2015/2016, up to 896. To the 2018/2019 academic year, Russia is expected to

experience a minimum number of educational institutions of higher education. By this time will be only 877 of universities, which 238 fewer than in 2010/2011 academic year. The number of universities in Russia in 2029/2030 academic year is expected to be 1058 universities that would still be less than in the 2010/2011 academic year.

The restructuring of higher education in Russia is aimed at improving quality and competitiveness. Currently, in the best position are educational organizations that use an interdisciplinary approach and diversified strategy. They are able to recruit strong students and provide enrollment as a state-subsidized and fee-paying students. Independence and competent management it`s resources to enable these institutions to maintain their competitiveness in the market. Today, more and more organizations of secondary professional education join universities to develop comprehensive training programs.

The definition of educational services is quite complex question. So, in marketing literature there are many approaches to the definition of consumers of educational services. First, the consumers of educational services are students (students) – persons receiving educational services. Second, consumers of educational services are enterprise entities, using the results of intellectual work (a university graduates). Thirdly, the consumers of educational services are the government, local and central government – political institutions that support the integrity of the society by increasing the general level of education. Fourth, the consumers of educational services are the parents of the person providing educational services to the student for education. Fifth, consumers of educational services are sponsors face in financing the education of talented students without the purpose of obtaining any benefit.

Talking about the competitiveness of universities, recently is possible to notice that the interpretation of the concept «competitiveness» is replaced by the concept of «the location of the University in the rankings». Today in the international arena, Russia has not presented its own world university ranking (although talking about it being done all the time). But at the same time, there are many national rankings (in particular, the official monitoring of the Ministry of education and science of Russia).

There noted that each service have a defined (unique) characteristics, which affect (directly or indirectly) on its competitiveness. At the same time, by purchasing a product or service, customers have certain expectations associated with, for example, quality, reliability, functionality. Realization of customer expectations has an impact on perceived quality that in turn says about customer satisfaction. The result of customer satisfaction is his reaction to the purchase, which can manifest as a negative attitude (complaints) and positive (re-purchase, loyalty, etc.).

The structure developed by the author of the conceptual model of «student satisfaction with the quality and price of educational services» include the following components: the reputation of the university, the expectations of consumers, technological and functional perceived quality, level of prices of educational services, perceived value of educational services, student satisfaction, higher education, student loyalty, the comfort situation in the educational institution, the relationship between teachers and students, relationship between students, the organization of extracurricular time.

The study was determined by the summary index rating of student satisfaction. There selected attributes were demonstrated to representatives of administration of educational institutions, teachers and students in a number of interviews and checked for consistency and relevance.

In an interview attended by 834 students of the universities of Chelyabinsk (Russia) (bachelors and masters), 17 teachers, 4 members of the university administration. According to the interview results, the number of attributes was reduced to 20. In this case, all the attributes were combined into 5 groups: quality of education (combines the attributes that define the performance of education (meeting the needs and expectations of)); price and value (reflecting the attributes associated with material costs or benefits of students); infrastructure (attributes that serve the educational process, providing a framework for its functioning); the atmosphere

(the set of attributes characterizing the environment, the internal environment of the university); extracurricular activities (the attributes that characterize the social side of student life at the university).

Based on the theoretical and practical experience into the model, the author added the connection between the behavioural reactions of consumers and factors of «Quality of education» and «Price and value», «Infrastructure». Data connection, the author checked for consistency in the empirical research. As behavioral reactions of consumers were identified the following elements: loyalty (commitment to the students of the university); the yield (efficiency of investment in the student learning); recommendations (the willingness of the student to advise the university as area for training); re-purchase (the desire of the student, if possible, to improve their level of education at the university). Tips for improving services (action by students aimed at changing existing conditions in the university); complaints (requirements of students related to the violation of their rights and interests); care of the client (the loss of a student, as a person receiving educational services, non-refundable); short-term cooperation (the reluctance of a student to continue any interaction with the university).

For the study of student satisfaction with the author developed and tested the questionnaire «students' satisfaction with the quality and price of educational services». The questionnaire in its composition included three blocks of questions. The first block assumed socio-demographic questions, the second block questions associated with the educational experience of students (the place the training, course, specialty, etc.). The third block covers the most important part to study satisfaction. Within this block presents questions to assess the relevance and importance of each of the attributes of educational services, satisfaction with the attributes, overall satisfaction and behavioral reactions of consumers.

The distribution of a questionnaire within the framework of the quantitative research was carried out by the author over the Internet by method of «snowball». Conducting online survey allowed us to involve students from different universities. Also, this method was most convenient for the respondents. For the study the author interviewed students from different types of universities - classic universities, national research universities, state universities.

To determine the level of satisfaction and confirm the hypothesis based on the data analysis, the author used three methods. Satisfaction index CSI allowed the author to compare the satisfaction, not only within the educational services, but also between different industries. The coefficient of loyalty NPS helped to identify loyalty to the university and the students' readiness to recommend it. The procedure of mapping the perception of Needs & Gaps helped to assess satisfaction with the attributes of services, to identify bottlenecks in the activities of universities, to determine the basic and secondary benefits, to identify the main directions for development.

As a result of research the author revealed that the highest satisfaction of students is characterized by such attribute as «Quality educational services». In turn, the lowest satisfaction among students is inherent in «the price policy of the university.»

For a more detailed definition of reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction among students was constructed the maps of perception Needs & Gaps. To build the data cards were used the data about satisfaction with attributes of the university and the importance of attributes to respondents.

The use of such cards perception allowed the universities to not only find their basic advantages and disadvantages, but also to search for the best practices in each area of the attributes among other universities.

4. Conclusion

Summing up, the author notes that the study involved 834 respondents from the universities of Chelyabinsk (Russia) (bachelors and masters). The respondents represented different socio-demographic groups, and educational preferences. The sample respondents were trained in

classic universities, national research universities and state universities. Including in the survey involved 136 people planning to go to university.

In summary, the authors can draw the following conclusion.

The authors believe that marketing research of prices for educational services must be carried out a science-based, periodically by the universities. They are recommended to be organized in the form of monitoring. It's based on this monitoring, the authors recommend to develop and regularly update a database of prices for educational services in the competitive activities of the university.

Constant monitoring of student satisfaction will help universities to improve the quality of educational services, adjust pricing to attract new consumers of educational services, to establish long-term effective cooperation.

Work in this direction will allow to ensure the effectiveness of the pricing process in universities and the competitiveness of subjects of the market of educational services.

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