

An Assessment of International Student Satisfaction Levels With Student Support Services at Universities: Substantiation from Africa and Asia

¹Mohammed Musa Waziri Kirfi (PhD) & ²Nura Abubakar Allumi (PhD)

¹Department of Accounting and Business, Administration, Federal University Kashere

²Department of Public Administration, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto

Email: lawalikf@gmail.com; nallumi@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The go wrong of Africa's education system to meet up with the growing demands of the institutions and citizens, warrants the international movement of those citizens who can afford to travel abroad to acquire education and even become expatriates afterwards. This movement according to UIS (2012) led to the number of African and Asian students abroad grew up to 71% from 2007 and 2010. More so, British council (2012) released that the number in United Kingdom rose from 11, 785 in 2008 to 17,620 in 2012. Albeit the current exchange rate crisis appears to be a cog in the wheel of such intentions, the possibility of such movements cannot be ruled out. Using a population of 1128 with distributed 500 questionnaires, predictive relevance of concerned variables was represented via the Partial Least Square. The study found that International Student Satisfaction is influenced by the push and pull factors hence, the hypothesized relationship between PSF; PLF and SSL was tested and the findings of this study support the relationship that PSF; PLF are related to SSL. The study recommends that universities must develop and/or consolidate best practices in the area of student support services in order to attract and retain students.

Keywords: International students, support services, push and pull, universities, attraction and retention.

INTRODUCTION

The exodus of apprentices from developing to developed countries for studies is not new-fangled, however, the enormity of the issue in Africa and Nigeria is increasing at a very alarming rate. Borrowing the argument of Clark (2013), amidst the soaring push factors (unsatisfactory living conditions; lack of research facilities; social and

civil unrest; lack of freedom and etc) and pull factors (high standard of living; substantial amount for research; political stability; institutions' calendar stability; intellectual freedom etc.) that trigger this movement and how the same manifest in especially affecting not only the statistics in the said direction but also in other related concerns notably, knowledge transfer and sustainable cultural exchange, the focus of this chapter centers on the student support services (S^3) taking into cognizance how the services foster confidence building (exhausting all avenues and incentives) and consolidation (in the case of an existing confidence) with a view to amplifying analyzed responses to ascertain the significance or otherwise of the responses based on which students satisfaction with S^3 is measured. The go wrong of Africa's education system to meet up with the growing demands of the institutions and citizens, warrants the international movement of those citizens who can afford to travel abroad to acquire education and even become expatriates afterwards. This movement according to UIS (2012) led to the number of African and Asian students abroad grew up to 71% from 2007 and 2010. More so, British council (2012) released that the number in United Kingdom rose from 11, 785 in 2008 to 17,620 in 2012.

S^3 programs are intended to provide entitled students with the required support (financial and non financial) to accomplish their higher education. Furthermore, S^3 programs offer the much desired counseling for students to be retained in their various schools and pursue their academic objectives. Again, S^3 programs have been linked by scholars to have emerged as issues from two (2) different outlooks. First, from the perspective of student pulling out from Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) usually induced by the push factors indicated above, particularly the universities and second, from the point of view of rising student diversity on students' know-how in HEI's. In each of the cases, allowing either or a combination of the elements presented in the preceding sentence, presents yet a platform conducive enough to endorse or

discourage both attitudinal and institutional adjustments in the context of global best practices. The fact that the discourse on S^3 is laced with correspondences of dissimilar flavors, this chapter will in the first instance pull together diverse insights and points of view, relate these insights in order to advance the understanding of the S^3 programs, the global standards as well as look beyond regions and appreciate the elements of comparative variations. This perhaps is so because the stipulation of S^3 programs and the escalating miscellany of students inflowing HEIs warranted and the importance in tackling the gaps in theme knowing and understanding and in raising the excellence of the students' learning knowledge among others, is making the S^3 programs grow and become further complex to manage.

Varied cohort of scholars and environmental theorists such as the open system perspective was developed by Katz et al in the 60's and the contingency theory from another dimension proffered by Burns et al, Mintzberg and of course Jones and George (2006) among others are of the belief that environmental elements play a very paramount role in expressing the uniqueness of organizations and the success or otherwise of their pursued objectives. If these assertions are things to go by, then this chapter will in the following sections be able to showcase evidences of distinct environmental and students' background elements that would explain the extent of students' satisfaction with the S^3 programs in their respective institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This subsection attempts a review of related literature by parading submissions of authorities in the area of this research interest with a view to understanding the gap that exist while situating this work in the context of same as a gap bridging input as appropriate.

Relationships among Satisfaction; Institutional Performance; Clients Expectation and Service Quality

According to Luca Petruzzellis *et.al* (2006), in the service economy especially, satisfaction, quality and performance prove to be key factors reciprocally interrelated in a causal, cyclical relationship, even though they are often used as synonymous due to the similarity in their meaning (Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Bitner & Hubert, 1994). The higher the service quality, the more satisfied the customers, thus, satisfaction is based on customer expectations and perception of service quality (Johnston & Lyth, 1991; Ekinci, 2004; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Christou & Sigala, 2002; Sigala, 2004a, b). Dealing with a dynamic issue, namely the relationship with the customer, service quality and consequently satisfaction as attitude, need to be measured on three levels: cognitive, affective and behavioural (Oliver, 1997; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985).

Satisfaction has a more evident transactional dimension linked to perception and thus to emotional aspects (Iacobucci *et al.*, 1994), instead service quality results from a cognitive process, being more relational and so referred to sensations and evaluation of the external stimuli (Bitner, 1990; Anderson & Fornell, 1994; Christou, 2001). Indeed, they are both subjective appraisal of the service experience, based on the comparison between a standard and perceived performance (Groenroos, 1993); however satisfaction is more an experiential issue, while quality assessment does not necessarily imply a personal experience (Orsingher, 2003). The interrelation is given by the customer involvement in the production process that the service marketing literature has widely investigated from the service operation point of view (Chase, 1978; Schmenner, 1986; Orsingher, 1999). Moreover, on the supply side this involvement strongly affects the service evaluation, characterizing the experience created.

The marketing concept which emphasizes the satisfaction both of consumer and organizational needs has been applied in university issues in various studies (Amyx & Bristow, 1999; Bristow, 1998; Zafropoulos *et al.*, 2005). More and more universities have gradually adopted a marketing approach as they compete to attract and retain top quality students. As higher education meets all the classical features of services (Cherubini, 1996; Pellicelli, 1997; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2002), the concepts of service quality and customer satisfaction are directly applicable, moving the universities closer to their market needs. Since new generation students have more Influence and greater awareness as consumers, becoming more interactive and selective as regards their future, it becomes even more difficult to attract them (Sigala & Baum, 2003). Therefore, the constant changes in student demands are shifting from a traditional system like the educational one into a totally consumer-led market, where tools such as e-learning have to be used (Sigala, 2002, 2004a, b; Sigala & Sakellaris, 2004). In fact, quality in higher education is a relative concept, given the number of the various stakeholders involved (Tam, 2001), which ranges from the single student as the primary consumer (Hill, 1995), to the whole of society (students, parents, staff, employers, business and legislators) (Rowley, 1997).

Moreover, the higher education experience has two overlapping areas (Rowley, 1997): the evaluation of quality of teaching and learning (Cuthbert, 1996; Soutar & McNeil, 1996) and the evaluation of the quality of the total student experience (Hill, 1995). Even though the evaluation of quality of teaching and learning is the more analysed issue, it depends on each single student's approach to learning. Instead, the student experience is much more than just teaching and learning. The other services provided by universities, such as accommodation, alumni associations, etc., have become crucial for course choice and successful course completion

The impact of Family Support and Commitments on Students' Satisfaction with S³

The professional condition of the students, who are likely to study conscientiously, is relevant for those who temporarily work. In fact, working students showed a good evaluation of the Universities, since they are mainly interested in the basic services and not in the additional ones, i.e. international relationships and placement, or in those closely linked to university life, such as lecture halls and infrastructures. Most of the interviewees come from a middle-to-low income family, where the father's condition (i.e. unemployed, unskilled worker, clerk) affects the retention rate, while the choice to re-enroll seems to be indifferent for those students whose fathers hold an executive position. On the contrary, the decision is not influenced by the sector where the father works. The correlation between satisfaction and the variable "type of high school" depends on the coherence with the faculty chosen, as an ideal continuation of the high school. Such coherence could have reduced the gap between the expectations and the reality and, together with the high school mark, underlines the deeper evaluation capacity of the students who had high marks and are consistent with their choices. While student` expectations are formed prior to arrival at university (Hill, 1995), student perception of service depends on the experience and, thus, it is not stable over time (O'Neill, 2003; Darlaston-Jones *et al.*, 2003). In fact, both new entrants and more mature students may become increasingly discerning over time and their perceptions of the service provided are likely to change during the course of their studies, without such change meaning necessarily actual changes in service quality.

Obviously there was a difference between the students enrolled in the first year and those nearing graduation: the former are more satisfied and are more enthusiastic for the new experience while, proportionally to the time spent at university, the unsatisfied and the undecided increase. This can be due to many reasons: tiredness, limited opportunities for

foreign experiences and a total lack of placement. In fact, it should be noted that for most of the students in Southern Italy, a university degree represents one more chance to secure a job so that great expectations are placed in the role of the university as a link with the job market through internships.

Ensuring Service Quality Control of S³

One of the most important aspects of quality control is perhaps the environment. This point finds support in OCSA (2012) who submits that in order to achieve high levels of student success within this important student population a robust student support environment must be developed. OCSA recommends that Ontario universities focus their efforts on five critical student support areas.

Health and Wellness: Ensure the availability of on-campus student health services, including both physical and mental health care, and develop a culturally sensitive strategy for handling instances of sexual assault involving international students.

Student Living: Enhance campus eating places to make them more attentive to international students, especially with regard to dietary restrictions which students may have for religious or cultural reasons; provide residence opportunities that meet the needs of specific international communities and married students, and support students throughout the break and summer periods; increase involvement of international students in on- and off-campus activities and in initiatives that will result in international students making friends with Canadian students early in their student experience; and provide appropriate faith-based and spiritual support.

Academic Support: Provide professional and culturally sensitive academic advice for international students; enhance academic

acculturation initiatives; provide support for verbal and written English communications; and increase connectivity between career services and international student support departments.

Transition: Develop in-semester, first semester orientation programs; increase awareness efforts to ensure that international students learn about their rights and responsibilities in Canada, especially for students from different countries who may have unique circumstances and different requirements; and provide transition support to spouses, children and family members.

Cultural Sensitivity: Provide intercultural competency training to all support staff, faculty and students.

These measures are significant because, firstly, they indicate ways in which HEI's take responsibility for student completion and early withdrawal, and seek complete change to encourage the former and considerably reduce the latter. Again, the measures do proffer possible solutions for curbing student's failure.

Factors influencing Student Retention in Higher Education

Many students who endeavor to earn a college degree fail to persist until graduation. Although institutions have responded to student retention issues by implementing programs and services, retention rates have not improved (Seidman, 2005a). Low retention rates not only impact students and institutions that must bear the economic burden connected to premature departures, but also the ability of a nation to "compete in a global economy" (Friedman, 2005; Seidman, 2005). Now more than ever, higher education administrators must be cognizant of the reasons why students depart from institutions of higher learning prematurely and what can be done to help students overcome these barriers so they can achieve their academic and career goals.

Roberts and Styron, Jr. (2009) summarized and concluded that student's satisfaction manifests in the following manner hence encourage retention thus:

- i. **Academic Advice** - Perhaps the most crucial aspect of a student's interaction and engagement with an institution of higher learning is the relationship with his/her advisor. Academic advising should be a process in which faculty and staff interacts with students as they develop, allowing and helping them realize what decisions should be made and subsequent actions needed to be taken to achieve their educational and career goals. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) purport that academic advising plays a role in students' decisions to persist and also affects their chances of graduating.
- ii. **Social Connectedness** - One important factor which affects college students' persistence is that of being socially integrated and connected with others, especially other students. College, for most students, is not only a place of academic pursuits but also an opportunity to explore or enhance themselves as social beings. Colleges should not present a barrier to this process. In fact, while some students desire to finish college, they do not consider themselves to be ultra-academic beings and instead want to partake in endeavors that develop them socially (Moxley, Najor-Durack, & Dumbriague, 2001).
- iii. **Involvement and Engagement** - Students feel marginalized when they believe they do not fit in, which leads to negative outcomes such as "self-consciousness, irritability, and depression" (Evans, Forney & Guido DiBrito, 1998, p. 27). This feeling of marginalization causes students to wonder if they matter. Addressing this issue is important to student retention as it is an antecedent to student involvement in college activities and programs (Schlossberg, 1989).

- iv. **Faculty and Staff Approachability** - Most scholars agree that the relationships between students and faculty are vital to student success in college (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005) and one of the principal aspects of facilitating these relationships includes faculty approachability. The latter involves being available and accessible both inside and outside class, especially at key junctures when students need them (Kuh *et al.*, 2005).
- v. **Business Procedures** - Another factor that impacts persistence is what is known as business procedures or bureaucratic factors. It can best be defined as the interaction that occurs between the student and the service providers at the institution (Bean, 2005). For instance, common patterns of exchanges occur between the student and various offices such as the business office, residence life, financial aid, departmental offices that define major requirements, social/athletic events, parking management, etc. Usually, students bring the appropriate forms and/or money and exchange them for access to resources and services.
- vi. **Learning Experiences** - One of the most important missions for institutions of higher learning is to provide meaningful learning experiences for their students. These learning experiences are determined by the collective effort of faculty, staff and students. At the same time, students enter higher education with their own expectations of learning experiences. These expectations impact how students respond to their environments and also act as precursors to their retention as they make academic decisions, such as choice of major (Pike, 2006). Expectations can also influence how students respond to their academic surroundings and impact their decisions of whether or not to remain in certain fields of study, or college in

- general (Bosch, Hester, MacEntee, MacKenzie, Morey & Nichols, 2008; Kuh, Gonyea & Williams, 2005; Pike, 2006)
- vii. **Student Support Services** - A number of colleges and universities offer students a wide variety of services and resources intended to promote persistence by providing academic assistance (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Both Miller (2005) and Seidman (2005) contend that if students are admitted to a college, then they should have expectations for that college to provide services that will help them succeed. It is important for institutions of higher learning to implement and maintain various academic resources that promote student success and increase student persistence because these resources are needed by a significant number of students who are not adequately prepared for the academic challenges they will face at the university.

There is at present much concern on not just access to higher education, but student success too, this raises the important question: what prevents these students from leaving before the completion of their course of study? The factors itemized above should give institutions and students alike a glimpse of what needs to be; where, when and how in understanding of the ways in which the values and practices of a HEI's impact on student retention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The preceding section talked about extant literature on the research variables and this section discusses research methodology and measures undertaken by this research. Particularly, this section wraps the temperament and philosophy of the research, hypothetical framework, conceptual definitions, hypotheses, population and sampling technique, method of data collection and techniques of data analysis.

Nature and Philosophy of this Study

Generally, researchers' opinions divide on what their views portray about their specific and collective views concerning a given phenomenon, about the nature of meticulous social veracity, or facts based on their own thoughtful pattern, thus, connecting research and theoretical point of reference helps to clarify issues researcher's intend to tackle. Put differently Creswell (1994) argues that whether positivism, post positivism, subjectivism or realism represents the perspective a researchers advocate their study, the aim remains to unearth the truth about a given situation or confirm an existing reality.

Scholars such as Neuman (2003); Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005) any research effort governed by empirical facts of cause and effect exist independent of personal emotions; analyzing facts statistically additive knowledge among others; such researchers are better patterned along positivist philosophy. In line with the foregoing arguments; and the fact this study is a quantitative one, the philosophy is positivism. Thus, this study is quantitative because it engaged the use of a measurement instrument to appreciate interactions among variables.

Population and Sample of the study

This study focused mainly on student support services of four higher educational institutions two each from Africa and Asia. They are Ahmadu Bello University Zaria; Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto (from Africa), Universiti Utara Malaysia and Universiti Putra Malaysia (Asia). The population tuned to 1128 international students 224 from Africa and 904 from Asia. The requisite sample size for this study was determined using a probability sampling strategy thus, about 291 students were chosen which were determined based on the guideline provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for sample size decisions. The probability sampling method was used in this study because it accords

equal chance of choosing the elements in the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010; Zikmund et al., 2010).

Data Description

As mentioned in Section 3, 1128 international students that cut across four universities from Africa and Asia formed the population of the study. For the purpose of data collection, 500 questionnaires were distributed personally and others were sent via colleagues studying in the selected universities starting from 28 September 2014. After five months, a total of 322 questionnaires were duly filled and returned. This led to a response rate of 64.4 percent. Out of this, nine questionnaires were rejected from the analysis for one fault or the other.

Table.I: *Response Rate*

Response	Frequency/Rate
Number of distributed questionnaires	500
Returned questionnaires	322
Returned and usable questionnaires	313
Returned and excluded questionnaires	9
Not returned questionnaires	178
Response rate	62.6%
Usable response rate	39.4%

Table 2: Loadings

Construct	Item	Loading	Composite reliability	AVE
<i>Student satisfaction level</i>	SSL1	0.9464	0.835	0.667
	SSL2	0.9027		
	SSL3	0.8022		
	SSL4	0.9208		
	SSL5	0.9619		
	SSL6	0.9250		
	SSL7	0.7765		
	SSL8	0.8071		
	SSL9	0.7593		
	SSL10	0.9861		
	SSL11	0.9861		
<i>Push factors</i>	PSF1	0.8289	0.879	0.615
	PSF2	0.8064		
	PSF3	0.8774		
	PSF4	0.9772		
	PSF5	0.9752		
	PSF6	0.8064		
	PSF7	0.8774		
<i>Pull Factors</i>	PLF1	0.8774	0.835	0.679
	PLF2	0.9772		
	PLF3	0.9752		
	PLF4	0.8064		
	PLF5	0.8774		
	PLF6	0.8774		
	PLF7	0.9772		

Table 2 displays results of the AVE computations with resulting coefficients that range from 0.61 to 0.79, demonstrating that convergence validity has been recognized for all the constructs. Again, item loadings, composite reliability were all satisfactory. This implies that the items represent separate latent constructs. Discriminant validity, as shown on Table 3, checks whether measures that ought not to be related are actually not related (Fornell, & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

	SSL	PSF	PLF
SSL	0.742		
PSF	0.567	0.822	
PLF	0.407	0.434	0.819

Note. The bolded values represent the average variance extracted while the entries not bolded represent the squared correlations

In Table 3 above, the square roots of AVE coefficients are offered. It is argued that the squared AVE should be greater than the squared correlation estimates to attain sound discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

Proposed Model of Effective Student Satisfaction

Before the structural model is presented it should be noted here that the theoretical model has been modified via confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) that was conducted. The CFA in PLS at times undertakes deletion of some items. For instance the initial theoretical dashboard/model has two exogenous constructs – push factors; pull factors – and one endogenous construct – student satisfaction level. The endogenous construct retained 11 items after deletion whilst the two exogenous constructs retained seven items each. Figure 1 depicts the proposed model.

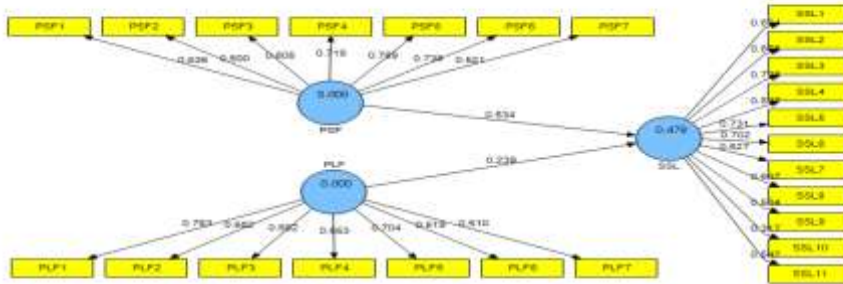


Figure 1:

Results of Hypotheses Testing

Utilizing the outcome of the path coefficients, t- values, and standard error at which the hypotheses were accepted or not. The t-values were calculated using a 5000 re sampling iterations in repetitive bootstrapping.

Table 4: *Results of Hypotheses testing*

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Standard Error (STERR)	T Statistics (O/STERR)
PL				
F-				
>				
SS				
L	0.239291	0.102018	0.102018	2.345581
PS				
F-				
>	0.53381	0.099708	0.099708	5.353732

SS L

The Table 4 explains that the two hypotheses were accepted as alternative hypotheses and they all possess a t-value that is greater than 1.28. In the figure 2, it indicated the t-values obtained from the bootstrapped data.

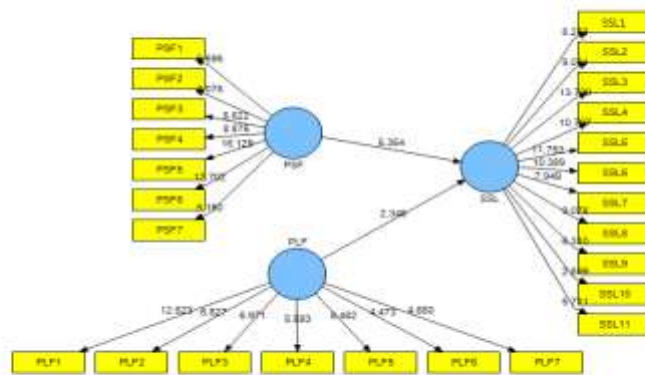


Figure 2:

Determining the Predictive power of the Model

To ascertain whether the model is capable of predicting the relationships between the endogenous and the exogenous variables, this chapter further applied a test for predictive relevance of the model. Predictive relevance is represented by Q^2 . Cross validated redundancy is extracted from the PLS output. The cross validated redundancy determines the ability of the model to predict the endogenous variables and hence demonstrates the quality of the model. It is argued that Q^2 should rise above zero to determine the predictive relevance of the model. Figure 3 below displays the Q^2 values.

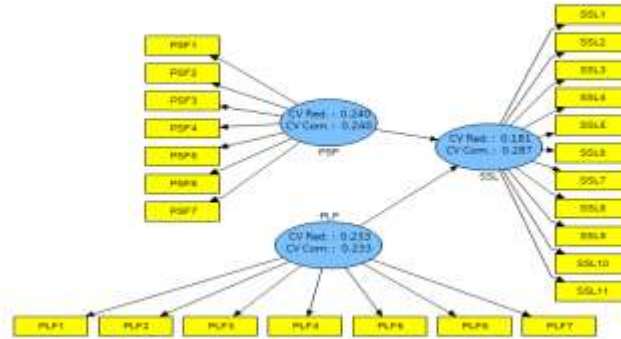


Figure 3:

Table 5: Predictive relevance

	I-SSE/SSO
PLF	0.233303
PSF	0.239731
SSL	0.180715

The Table 5 above further consolidates the values in Figure 3 which indicates Q^2 shows an outstanding relevance of 0.23 for the PLF, 0.24 for PSF and 0.2 for SSL. Going by what Hair *et al.* (2013) pointed out that if $Q^2 > 0$, the model has predictive relevance.

DISCUSSIONS

As shown in the analytical findings of this study, International Student Satisfaction Levels with Student Support Services at Universities is influenced by the push and pull factors.

At first, the hypothesized relationship between PSF; PLF and SSL was tested and the findings of this study support the relationship that PSF; PLF are related to SSL. This study would want to further argue that

approachability; social connections academic advice, engagement and business procedures among others in the context of African universities need to be strengthened and fortified to curtail the exodus of African students to abroad as well as magnetize foreign nationals to attend Nigerian universities.

CONCLUSIONS

To the government and other concerned Agencies, this research will further establish the importance of making SSL effective and that could be efficiently used by universities to effectively manage attract and retain student from Africa and beyond. Again, the study will serve as a source of respite to the authorities concern such as the Nigerian University Commission (NUC), the Ministry of Education and even the legislative arm in terms of supportive policies than can reap better outcomes and productivity in higher educational institutions in Nigeria.

REFERENCE

- Amyx, D. and Bristow, D.N. (1999). The marketing concept in an academic setting: assessing and comparing the needs of Asian/Pacific Islander and Anglo consumers of the educational product. *Journal of Customer Service in Marketing and Management*, Vol. 5 No. 4, pp. 65-80.
- Anderson, E.W. and Fornell, C. (1994). A customer satisfaction research prospectus. in Rust, R. and Oliver, R.J. (Eds), *Service Quality: New Direction in Theory and Practice*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 241-68.
- Bean, J. P. (2005). Nine themes of college student retention. In A. Seidman (Ed.), *College student retention* (pp. 215-243). Westport: Praeger Publishers.

- Bitner, M.J. (1990). Evaluating service encounters: the effect of physical surroundings and employee responses. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 54, pp. 69-82.
- Bitner, M.J. and Hubert, A.R. (1994). Encounter satisfaction versus overall satisfaction versus quality, in Rust, R.T. and Oliver, R.L. (Eds), *Service Quality: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 72-94.
- Bosch, W. C., Hester, J. L., MacEntee, V. M., MacKenzie, J. A., Morey, T. M., Nichols, J. T. (2008). *Beyond lip service: An operational definition of "learning-centered college."* *Innovative Higher Education*, 33(2), 83-98.
- Cermak, D., File, K. and Prince, R. (1994). Customer participation in service specification and delivery, *Journal of Applied Business Research*, Vol. 2 No. 10, pp. 90-7.
- Chase, R. (1978). Where does the customer fit in a service operation *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 2 No. 56, pp. 137-42.
- Cherubini, S. (1996). *Marketing dei servizi*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Christou, E. (2001). Exploring the definitions of service quality in tourism: a conceptual approach, *The Tourism Review*, Vol. 56 No. 2, pp. 120-35.
- Christou, E. and Sigala, M. (2002). Conceptualising the measurement of service quality and TQM performance for hotels: the HOSTQUAL model. *Acta Touristica*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 140-69.

- Cronin, J. and Taylor, S. (1992). Measuring service quality: a re-examination and extension, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 No. 3, pp. 55-88.
- Cronin, J., Brady, M. and Hult, T. (2000). Assessing the effects of quality, value and customer satisfaction on consumer behavioral intentions in service environments. *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 76 No. 2, pp. 193-218.
- Cuthbert, P. (1996). Managing service quality in HE: is SERVQUAL the answer? Part 1, *Managing Service Quality*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 11-16.
- Darlaston-Jones, D., Pike, L., Cohen, L., Young, A., Haunold, S. and Drew, N. (2003). Are they being served? Student expectations of higher education, *Issues in Educational Research*, Vol. 13, pp. 31-52.
- Eiglier, P. and Langeard, E. (1987). *Servuction. Le Marketing des Services*, McGraw-Hill, Paris.
- Ekinci, Y. (2004). An investigation of the determinants of customer satisfaction, *Tourism Analysis*, Vol. 8, pp. 197-203.
- Evans, N.J., Forney, D.S., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Friedman, T.H. (2005). *The world is flat*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

- Hill, F.M. (1995). Managing service quality in higher education: the role of the student as primary consumer, *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 10-21.
- Johnston, R. and Lyth, D. (1991). Implementing the integration of customer expectations and operational capabilities, in Brown, S., Gummesson, E., Edvardsson, B. and Gustavsson, B. (Eds), *Service Quality: Multidisciplinary and Multinational Perspectives*, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD, pp. 179-90.
- Kelley, S., Donnelly, J. and Skinner, S. (1990). Customer participation in service production and delivery, *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 66, pp. 315-35.
- Kelley, S., Skinner, S. and Donnelly, J. (1992). Organizational socialization of service customers, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 25, pp. 197-214
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., Whitt, E. J., & Associates. (2005). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G. D., Gonyea, R. M., & Williams, J. M. (2005). What students expect from college and what they get. In T. Miller, B. Bender, J. Schuh, and Associates (Eds.), *Promoting reasonable expectations: Aligning student and institutional views of the college experience* (pp. 34-64). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, T. E. (2005). Student Persistence and Degree Attainment. In T. Miller, B. Bender, J. Schuh, and Associates (Eds.), *Promoting reasonable expectations: Aligning student and institutional views of the college experience* (pp. 122-139). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Moxley, D., Najor-Durack, A., & Dumbrigue, C. (2001). Keeping students in higher education: Successful practices and strategies for retention. London: Kogan Page Limited.
- O'Neill, M. (2003). The Influence of time on student perceptions of service quality: the need for longitudinal measures, *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 310-25.
- Oliver, R.L. (1997). Satisfaction. A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
- Orsingher, C. (1999). Il servizio dalla parte del cliente. Un approccio cognitivo all'esperienza di consumo, Carocci, Roma.
- Orsingher, C. (2003). Un'analisi della soddisfazione del cliente nei servizi ad alta partecipazione, *Micro & Macro Marketing*, Vol. XII No. 1, pp. 3-20.
- OSCA (2012). Providing Student Support for International Students A submission to the Council on Ontario Universities, Ontario Committee on Student Affairs, Ontario University, Press
- Parasuraman, A., Berry, L. and Zeithaml, V. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 49, pp. 41-50.
- Pellicelli, G. (1997). Marketing dei servizi, Utet, Torino.
- Petruzzellis, L. D'Uggento, A. M. and Romanazz, S. (2006). Student` satisfaction and quality of service in Italian universities, *Managing Service Quality* Vol. 16 No. 4, 2006 pp. 349-364

- Roberts, J. and Styron, Jr, R. (2009). Student satisfaction and persistence: factors vital to student retention, *Research in Higher Education Journal* Vol. 1 No.1 pp 1-18 retrieved from <http://www.aabri.org/rjhe.pdf>
- Rowley, J. (1997). Beyond service quality dimensions in higher education and towards a service contract, *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 7-14.
- Schmenner, R. (1986). How can service business survive and prosper, *Sloan Management Review*, Spring, pp. 21-32.
- Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P.T. (2005). How college affects students: Vol. 2 A decade of research. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Pike, G. R. (2006). Students' personality types, intended majors, and college expectations: Further evidence concerning psychological and sociological interpretations of Holland's theory. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(7), 801-822.
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1989). Marginality and mattering: Key issues in building community. *New Directions for Student Services*, 48, 5-15.
- Seidman, A. (2005a). Introduction In Seidman, A. (Ed.), *College student retention* (pp. xi-xiv). Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- Seidman, A. (2005b). Where we go from here: A retention formula for student success, In Seidman A. (Ed.), *College student retention* (pp. 295-316). Westport: Praeger Publishers

- Sigala, M. (2002). The evolution of internet pedagogy: Benefits for tourism and hospitality education, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 29-45.
- Sigala, M. (2004a). Investigating the factors determining e-learning effectiveness in tourism and hospitality education, *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, Vol.16No.2, pp.11-21.
- Sigala, M. (2004b). The ASP-Qual model: measuring ASP service quality in Greece, *Managing Service Quality*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 103-114.
- Sigala, M. (2005). Enhancing the service quality of mobile phone services through mass customisation, *Proceedings of the International Conference. Managing Global Trends and Challenges in a Turbulent Economy*”, Chios, Greece, 13-15 October.
- Sigala, M. and Baum, T. (2003). Trends and issues in tourism and hospitality higher education: visioning the future, *Tourism and Hospitality Research. The Surrey Quarterly Review*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 367-76.
- Sigala, M. and Sakellaris, O. (2004). Web users' cultural profiles and e-service quality: internationalization implications for tourism websites, *Information Technology and Tourism*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 13-22.
- Soutar, G. and McNeil, M. (1996). Measuring service quality in a tertiary institution, *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 72-82.

- Tam, M. (2001). Measuring quality and performance in higher education", *Quality in Higher Education*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 47-54.
- Zeithaml, V.A. and Bitner, M.J. (2002). *Il marketing dei servizi*, McGraw Hill, Milano.