

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF REWARDS, PROFESSIONALISM, MARKET ORIENTATION, AND JOB SATISFACTION ON SERVICE QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

A model is proposed that considers the relationship of rewards, professionalism, market orientation, and job satisfaction of professors and student assessments of service quality. Pearson correlations are used to examine data collected from professional employees (college professors) and customers (students) in colleges and universities. Overall, the findings indicate the following significant relationships: professionalism and rewards are positively related to job satisfaction; rewards are positively related to professionalism; professionalism is negatively related to market orientation; and market orientation is positively related to service quality.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of providing service quality and, more importantly, studying the antecedents of delivering service quality in a professional service context has become crucial [2]. Job satisfaction, for example, has been shown to influence customers' perceptions of service quality [9]. However, the factors leading to job satisfaction might be very different for professional service providers than other service providers [2]. Specifically, the reward structure may be different within professional service organizations. In addition, marketing thinking and practice have been suggested as useful tools for a number of professional service industries, including higher education [5]. Nevertheless, marketing and the marketing concept has not been readily embraced by professionals for it challenges directly the concept of professionalism, especially job autonomy [12]. The purpose of this study is to propose and test a conceptual framework that considers the relationship of rewards, professionalism, market orientation, job satisfaction, and service quality in higher education. Drawing on research from a variety of disciplines, Table 1 presents the hypothesized relationships for professors and students within a university setting.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The sampling units consisted of two groups of respondents: university professors and students from two large southwestern universities. A questionnaire was developed to assess professors' professionalism, rewards, market orientation and job satisfaction. In addition, a student service quality questionnaire was developed and administered to students in their classes. Across both universities, a total of 48 completed professor questionnaires and 1,184 usable student questionnaires were collected. The scales measuring professionalism and professional reward elements were taken from previous research [1] [3] [7] [10]. Market orientation was measured using an adapted version of the MARKOR scale [6]. Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) Short Form [11]. Service quality for students was measured using the SERVQUAL scale [8].

RESULTS

In order to properly analyze the data from the professor sample ($n = 48$) and the student sample ($n = 1,184$) simultaneously, the student sample was reduced to 48 by obtaining the mean scores of student responses across professors [4]. Table 1 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients along with whether the hypothesized relationships were supported.

TABLE 1

Hypothesis (+/-)	Related Constructs	R	Supported
H1 (+)	Professionalism & Job Satisfaction	.646*	Yes
H2 (+)	Rewards & Professionalism	.293*	Yes
H3 (+)	Rewards & Job Satisfaction	.527*	Yes
H4 (-)	Professionalism & Market Orientation	-.318*	Yes
H5 (-)	Rewards & Market Orientation	-.214	No
H6 (+)	Market Orientation & Service Quality	.316*	Yes
H7 (-)	Marketing Orientation & Job Satisfaction	-.200	No
H8 (+)	Job Satisfaction & Service Quality	.027	No

* p -value < .05

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