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A RESEARCH FOR THE DETERMINATION OF EDUCATIONAL SATISFACTION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF THE STUDENTS HAVING TOURISM EDUCATION*

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Abstract

The fact that the employees constituting the basic staff of tourism businesses walk up the steps one by one will increase their opportunities of building a career in tourism sector. Therefore, successful working terms have been increasing the students' desire to stay in the sector and plans to build a career accordingly. In career planning, the knowledge and experience of the students obtained within internship during school life have seemed to be considerably effective on getting a start in business. Working is important in terms of measuring the attitudes and perceptions aimed at setting career objectives of the students having tourism education. From the research methods, questionnaire technique has been used in the study. As a result of the study, it has become evident that while planning their career, the students consider the appropriateness of tourism to their abilities and personal characteristics and they are conscious of the necessity of having the knowledge level and capacity that tourism as an occupation requires.

Keywords: Tourism Sector, Students, Business Life, Career Objectives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies related to quality in education have increased with the importance given to the quality of service. Hence, England and the USA are among the leading countries on this subject after 1980s. When education and service quality are thought together, what comes to mind is total quality management.

The fact that the importance given to education increases within total quality management by using it so as to be able to present human for the best is the field that education and total quality management intersect. "Good quality product" in the businesses is substituted by "good quality individual" in education and in this regard, the case of quality in higher education becomes the most significant topic concerning to bring forth good quality individuals for the country's economy Karahan and Kuzu (2014).

The concept of "psychological counseling and guidance" which has been taking place since 1938, has begun to attract more attention after 1950s significantly. It can be seen that psychological counseling and guidance services have taken part in the schools' education programmes as a separate assistance and specialization activity which is carried out by "specialists" especially since 1970 Hatunoğlu and Hatunoğlu (2006).

Almost in all the education programmes of the Departments of Psychological Counseling and Guidance/Psychological Services in Education in our country, at least one vocational guidance or occupation guidance lesson is taught either as a compulsory course or as a selective course. In the 8th item of Psychological Counseling and Guidance Regulation which was issued by Ministry of National Education in 2001, it is stated about vocational guidance that "psychological counseling and guidance service is given to every student which is necessary to make occupational preferences, to be able to tend towards the suitable occupation and to be prepared for professional life and occupation". When the role of the psychological counsellors at schools is considered historically, it can be seen that it has evolved from giving occupational information and providing guidance to meet the individual, social, educational and vocational necessities of the students Korkut (2007). For this aspect, the student who makes his university preference with support is able to put his preferences in an order being aware of on what field he would like to improve himself.

If education is thought as a capital, it is an important factor in the development of the individual Marimuthu, Arokiasamy and Ismail (2009). The aim of education is, by harmonizing the individuals with their environment, to provide them to be able to be efficient and productive. Within the process of globalization, such features are expected from the individual as to be able to take responsibilities, think creative, adjust changes, solve problems, communicate easily, work within a group, be prone to

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collaboration, and acknowledge complex technological systems Binici and Arı (2004). Today, especially in industrialized societies, education is evaluated as; effectively and sufficiently preparation of human resources and work power in accordance with social necessities. Not only does education provide production socially, but it also contributes the individuals to be able to gain various roles and skills, and therefore, to public welfare by using them İçli (2001). Countries compare the work power necessity that the industry needs, by benefiting from international experiences, with vocational technical education methods that they have developed according to their own dynamics, and thus, our country is in a lucky position because of the fact that it has a young population Binici and Arı (2004). The increase in the education of the individuals mean to ensure the improvement of the society's economic, social and political issues in the meantime Selim (2009).

In industrial and information societies, organization managements accept staying within high competition environment as their fundamental objective. They realize that not only does the perception of "the business sells what it produces" prevent the organization from being able to find buyers for its products and services only with its own standards and identifications within the competition environment, but it also causes ineffectiveness and such a perception jeopardizes the sustainability of the organization. That's why, organizations withdraw from traditional approaches so as to be permanent and provide development and future guarantee, and put forward the concepts of "quality" and "efficiency" as indispensable strategic concepts Şahin (2009). While quality is known to be the appropriateness to standards and contracts, it is gradually defined as appropriateness to use. The concept of quality, which is generally perceived as "the best, the most beautiful, the most accurate" by the public, is seen to be converted by the science of business and economics as to present the best, the most beautiful and the most accurate goods or services. With the concept of total, it is aimed to express that it includes all the individuals that the customers, suppliers and employees related to work form before during and after the manufacturing process, and organizational functions as a whole Erkiliç (2007). Technological advances affect professional life and together with the fact that information and technology walk in every field, changes and improvements are experienced also in the field of employment. In developed countries, the share of service and information sector has gradually been increasing in the field of employment. Especially in developing countries, harmonizing with technological advances is relatively harder when compared to developed countries. As developing countries lack the necessary substructure and qualified work power, this causes an intensive use of cheap work power İçli (2001). This situations prevents quality from reaching the desired level and make the sector experience problems about development. In short, being able to stay in competition environment today will only be possible to provide quality at every stage. At this point, what comes to forefront is the employees being well-educated.

As the need for qualified work power has been increasing in terms of the use of advanced technology, it is beneficial that policies to be developed with regard to harmonizing new employment areas should be handled together with education policies İçli (2001). With the diversification in the services presented for the customers, in other words with the increase in customer choices, customer satisfaction and competition, enhancement in the quality of service has come into prominence Olgun (2013). Education and employment constitute an integrity within a reciprocal interaction. One of the indicators of the quality of work power is the level of education. It is necessary to make work power more qualified via vocational education and to develop new educational programmes compatible with developing technology İçli (2001).

It is possible to define vocational education as the studies made so as to prepare unspecialized or semi-specialized work power to duties which require specialty and which is of special quality Olcay (2008). The main foundation purpose of Vocational Schools is to educate intermediate manpower who has the knowledge and skills in occupation that the industry wants, who can communicate easily and accurately with colleagues, who knows a foreign language at basic level, who is a computer literate and knows the related software, and who can directly or indirectly contribute to social and cultural activities Görmüş and Bektaş (2002). Vocational School graduate is the occupational intermediate staff who has a duty between chief executive manager and headworker/qualified worker, who has more knowledge than a headworker/qualified worker, and who has more practice skills than a graduate with a bachelor's degree. These higher education institutions are shortly defined in the 3rd item of the law numbered 2547 as:

Vocational School: A higher education institution performing a four-semester education activity which aims to educate intermediate staff power for certain types of occupations.

Quality in education is the application of service quality in education; and studies on this subject has improved after 1980s especially in England and the USA Ensari (2000). There are plenty of definitions of service quality in literature. However, the common point in these definitions is expressed as the difference between the actual and perceived service quality level Arora and Stones (1996). In the widest sense, service quality is to give the outstanding and perfect service so as to be able to meet the expectations of the

customers. By perceiving various factors, the customer evaluates quality in terms of himself and compares the service he is presented and that he expects. The important point here is the service perceived by the customer to be high. According to a research done, it can be understood that if there is a negative difference between expected quality and perceived quality, the customer judges service quality as negative. If the difference is positive, it is possible to say that the customer evaluates services quality as positive Okumuş (2008). As the success of quality studies are seen in manufacture industry, a necessity has arisen to interiorize and apply total quality management, just like in lots of other sectors, in education sector, too Altaş (2006). According to customer-oriented factor which is one of the fundamental principles of quality standards, the investigation of quality perceptions, expectations and pleasures of the students who are the most important customers of higher education service appears to be one of the most significant topics so as to be able to increase quality in higher education İçli and Vural (2010). Being consumer-oriented is to try to understand the needs, desires and expectations of the consumers in order to meet the factors continuously that will enable them to be pleased Narver and Slater (1990). Being consumer-oriented in education is a suitable method that can be helpful to meet and overcome the changes and developments which happen around education institutions Akonkwa (2009). Such issues as educational status, experience status, internship achievements and interest towards work of the students that businesses trying to take competition advantage over staff are employing has gained importance. Creating customer satisfaction by producing quality service perception and making the customers be loyal to the business can only be possible with employing staff who are relatively educated, successful in improving themselves, talented, loyal to their businesses and highly motivated Sarıışık (2007).

As there is a need for quality staff for quality production, vocational education and the quality of vocational education has become more important. It is obvious that in order to increase the service quality of education, it is necessary to give enough importance to physical assets, activate as student-oriented and show special sensitivity to the quality of education. Employing quality trainers who are the backbones of education and training them when necessary, making empathies so as to be able to understand educational problems of the students, always being respectful to them, keeping physical settings of education clean and tidy, providing the teaching process to be punctual and appropriate to the curriculum by making the organization of the education in the best way can be regarded among the activities that can increase the quality of service. Besides, it is necessary for the employees to have enough knowledge and experience in order to be able to meet the expectations of the students. All these will increase the quality of education service and the satisfaction of the students Okumuş (2008). According to Ağaoğlu (2002), Council of Higher Education take into account the enhancement of the quality of teacher training institutions' programmes continuously, providing quality assurance related to teacher training and assuring the satisfaction of the receivers (students, parents) of the education service that these programmes present as accreditation criterions in the studies that the council make with regard to the accreditation of education faculties Şahin (2009). Evaluation of education service by the customers expresses the satisfaction level Olgun and Özdemir (2013). The perspectives towards education and satisfaction level from this service is an expected difference for higher education students as they are the individuals grown up in different cultures and environments and having reached to different social and cultural opportunities. Together with this, not only the perspectives but also the expectations of freshmen students and senior students from the institution will be different. The degree of meeting these expectations of the students is thought to put forth their satisfaction or dissatisfaction from the school and increase their school satisfaction as much as these expectations are met Aydın et al. (2014). The student's satisfaction towards his education institution is multi-dimensional. While trying to measure satisfaction, education quality can be analyzed by an approach including such different dimensions as physical settings, practice opportunities presented, social, cultural and sportive facilities, and individual features of the student Uzgören (2007). The focus point of the institutions is consumers and the fundamental objective of the institutions is to satisfy their consumers. The most significant goal of higher education institutions is to satisfy the students and meet their desires and needs Olgun and Özdemir (2013). In education, a product with high quality should be able to produce such results as knowledge, skill and talent which are pressed into service later in life. Student satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be based on meeting the expectations in this field Cronin and Taylor (1992).

Since the concept of quality which became an important criterion for the competition going on in many fields began to be defined as "quality is what the customer desires", universities have started to pay more attention to groups that are the customers or benefiteres of their services and products Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2002). That an education institution is preferred primarily shows the quality of the institution. When considered that most of the students make their university and department preferences consciously, it can be said that their expectancies from the institution is high. The degree to what extent these expectations are met when they have begun their education shows their satisfaction. When department satisfaction is

measured, the courses of the students, internship opportunities that the department provides and training with regard to practice should be taken into consideration. The satisfaction of the student from the department increases the level of achievement in the field the student will work in the future Altaş (2006).

2. Method

From the quantitative research techniques, survey technique is used in the study. In the analysis of the data, frequency analysis, standard deviation, arithmetic mean, correlation and independent t-test analyses are used. The data of the research is analyzed and evaluated by using "SPSS 22" package programme. The universe of the research is composed of the students at Muğla University Ortaca Vocational School. In spite of the fact that the number of students enrolled in the system is 954, the number of students actively having education at school is 498. As a result of the survey inquiry made on these students, survey forms of 361 students were included within the scope of evaluation. Hence, the results of the research constitute 72,49% of the universe.

3. Analysis and Evaluation

In the research, a reliability test is made on the questions of the scale and as a result of the test, Cronbach Alpha ratio is calculated as 95,2%. This result shows that the scale is highly reliable. 39 items of the scale is divided into sub dimensions. These dimensions are totally 5 dimensions as; academic setting-facilities supporting learning, services provided for the students, education programmes-teaching, test and assessment, and academic counseling-guidance. In the second section, the students are asked a total of 10 questions under the name of demographic features.

When sex distribution of the students is considered, it is realized that they are very close to each other. This can be thought as an indicator that the questions are answered almost equally. It is seen that the students are mostly between the ages of 20-22, approximately 60%, and they are primarily students of hotel management and travel departments, followed by guidance and cookery programmes.

When class distribution of the students is considered, the students are most intensively freshmen, with a rate of 58,4%, followed by the students of second year, with a rate of 38,2%. When analyzed in terms of the high school they graduated from, general high school leads with a rate of 42,7%, followed by Anatolian Hotel Management and Tourism Vocational High School with a rate of 17,5%, and Industrial Vocational High School with a rate of 8,3%, respectively. When the order of university preference is considered, the first three in ranking is first preference with a rate of 23,8%, fourth preference with a rate of 9,4%, and second preference with a rate of 8,3%, respectively.

So as to be able to see that there is no difference between the students' sex and dimensions, independent t-test is used. When the mean scores of the answers that the students have given to the items are considered, it stands out that means scores of all the dimensions except from test and assessment dimension are close to one another. It is noticed that in test and assessment dimension, there are differences in the mean scores of the students, and thus, H_1 hypothesis is accepted. This shows that the answers that female students give to test and assessment items are more positive when compared to male students.

When the relationship between the students' knowledge about their departments and the answers they have given to the items is considered, there are differences in terms of mean scores. It can be said that, in the dimensions except from "academic" dimension and "service" dimension, there is a relationship between the students' knowledge about their departments and the answers they have given with regard to their satisfaction levels. By having knowledge about the departments in which they will have education, it is understood that the students develop a more positive perspective towards the education they will have, test and assessment of the courses, and guidance and counseling services when they first come to school, and as a result of this, as they act with this consciousness, a more satisfied group of students come into the picture.

It is possible to mention that when the relationship between the students' knowledge about their school and the dimensions are analyzed, there is a positive relationship ($p < 0,05$) in all the dimensions (Table 2-3). It is understood that during their university preference process, the students get knowledge about schools in advance. The fact that the students make their university preferences consciously is reflected during their education life. When the students, making their planning about the future, have their university education in the departments related to the work they really want to do, they become happier during their university lives. For example, 31% of the students have stated that they made a random preference, and 26% have stated that they preferred the school/department because they love tourism as an occupation. However, the results of the research show that the students seem as if they are not in a department they really want but they study at university only to be able to graduate from a department.

As can be seen in Table 4, the students have shown their participation to the items by expressing that they have chosen the school/department intentionally, by marking "no" to the alternative "because my family wanted to", the most intensive item in the students' school/department preferences, with a rate of

92%; secondly, they have come "without searching the web page", with a rate of 88,1%; and thirdly, they have preferred without getting to know the region in advance, with a rate of 87,8%.

When satisfaction levels of the students are considered, it is seen that the highest level is "education" dimension, followed by "guidance" dimension and "testing" dimension, respectively. According to Likert scale, "1" comes up to "Totally Disagree" and "5" comes up to "Totally Agree" criterions. In this case, towards the students' evaluations in the courses and examinations, they seem to behave in accordance with the alternative of "I agree reasonably/I disagree reasonably". Towards the services, academic setting and supportive facilities presented for the students, they do not seem to be satisfied. When evaluated generally, it can be said that the students experience insufficiencies in terms of academic services and physical facilities and because of this, they are not satisfied but still, among the criterions, they are partly satisfied with the education programmes and training, academic counseling-guidance services, and assessments in the courses/exams.

It can be said that education satisfaction of the students and their future thoughts are positive and their relationship with each other is at medium at high level. It is seen that the highest relationship level is between testing and education (74%) dimensions. The fact that Pearson correlation coefficient is between 0,70-0,89 statistically shows that there is a high relationship Sungur (2005). The students state that they are highly satisfied with the education they have and the education is supportive in their success. That "testing" and "guidance" dimensions have a medium level relationship can be thought as an indicator that academic staff are effective on determining the students' future perspectives. The fact that Pearson correlation coefficient is between 0,50-0,69 statistically shows that there is a medium level relationship (Sungur, 2005: 116). It is remarkable that the relationship between "education" and "service" dimensions is low. The result gathered seems to support the point of view that the students have. Hence, it is reminded that physical in-class and extracurricular opportunities of the students highly affect their satisfaction levels.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Today, especially in industrialized societies, education is evaluated as; effectively and sufficiently preparation of human resources and work power in accordance with social necessities. Not only does education provide production socially, but it also contributes the individuals to be able to gain various roles and skills, and therefore, to public welfare by using them İçli (2001). The increase in the education of the individuals mean to ensure the improvement of the society's economic, social and political issues in the meantime Selim (2009). The student's satisfaction towards his education institution is multi-dimensional. While trying to measure satisfaction, education quality can be analyzed by an approach including such different dimensions as physical settings, practice opportunities presented, social, cultural and sportive facilities, and individual features of the student Uzgören (2007).

That an education institution is preferred primarily shows the quality of the institution. When considered that most of the students make their university and department preferences consciously, it can be said that their expectancies from the institution is high. The degree to what extent these expectations are met when they have begun their education shows their satisfaction. When department satisfaction is measured, the courses of the students, internship opportunities that the department provides and training with regard to practice should be taken into consideration. The satisfaction of the student from the department increases the level of achievement in the field the student will work in the future Altaş (2006).

The outcomes gathered as a result of the research done can be summarized as follows:

By having knowledge about the departments in which they will have education, it is understood that the students develop a more positive perspective towards the education they will have, test and assessment of the courses, and guidance and counseling services when they first come to school, and as a result of this, as they act with this consciousness, a more satisfied group of students come into the picture.

It is understood that during their university preference process, the students get knowledge about schools in advance. The fact that the students make their university preferences consciously is reflected during their education life. When the students, making their planning about the future, have their university education in the departments related to the work they really want to do, they become happier during their university lives. Thinking that the students consciously have their education in the departments they want to, limited opportunities from socio-cultural point of view and the inefficacy of physical opportunities significantly affect the students' satisfaction levels.

Towards the services, academic setting and supportive facilities presented for the students, they do not seem to be satisfied. When evaluated generally, it can be said that the students experience insufficiencies in terms of academic services and physical facilities and because of this, they are not satisfied but still, among the criterions, they are partly satisfied with the education programmes and training, academic counseling-guidance services, and assessments in the courses/exams.

Together with the results statistically detected in the light of the data gathered from the students, the impressions while filling the surveys in show that the students' future perspectives haven't been clarified yet and they experience future anxiety. That the students do not make a career planning about what they are going to do when they graduate from vocational school are among the results observed.

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