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Satisfaction Factors for a Clothing and Textiles Major: A Modeling
의류학 관련 전공에 대한 학생들의 전공 만족요인: 구조적 모형 분석

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Abstract

본 연구의 목적은 의류학 관련 전공에 대한 학생들의 전공 만족도에 영향을 주는 결정변인을 조사하는 데 있다. 조사대상은 의류학 관련학과를 전공으로 하는 국내 2년제 및 4년제 10개 대학의 재학생으로, 총 690부의 설문자료가 최종 통계분석에 사용되었다. 분석은 Lisrel을 이용하여, 학생들의 전공 만족도의 결정 변인과 구조적 모형을 조사하였다. 그 결과, 학문적 경쟁력과 전공에 대한 적성 및 흥미가 가장 중요한 전공 만족도의 결정 변인으로 밝혀졌으며, 기타 만족도 변인인 시설 및 장비, 취업, 학생활동 관여도, 사회적 유대감등은 전공 만족도에 직접 영향을 미치는 것이 아니라, 학교 만족도를 통해 간접적인 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다.

Key words: Clothing and textiles, major satisfaction, school satisfaction, LISREL;
의류학, 전공 만족도, 학교만족도.

I. Introduction

Quality has evolved from a marginal position to being the foremost concern in higher education. The evolution of quality has been on from vague concept to articulated procedures (Harvey, 1998). Quality is defined in terms of customer satisfaction (Peters, 1987), and a few would argue that these new directions require fundamental rethinking about the purpose and structure of higher education.

The Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy emphasizes organized and methodical processes for better satisfaction in planning and implementing continuous improvements in quality (Lascelles & Dale, 1992). Customer orientation forms a cornerstone of TQM philosophy. In higher education, the term of TQM brings several assumptions of equivalencies: students are customers or consumers, and educational institutions should apply principles of customer service gleaned from businesses.

In spite of the importance of TQM driven implementation in a higher education field, there are very few examples of comprehensive quality frameworks applied to higher education. Higher education is increasingly recognizing that it is a service industry and, as a sector, is placing greater emphasis on meeting the expectations and needs of its participating customers, that is, the students

(Cheng & Tam, 1997). Managing the quality of the service is essential to attract prospects and to bolster the satisfaction of current students. An institution that delivers a better quality education for the tuition it charges is more likely to acquire a competitive advantage.

Previous research has shown that the importance of student satisfaction; not only does it improve retention (Koseke & Koseke, 1991) but also contributes to academic, personal, and professional achievement (Bean & Bradley, 1986; Pike, 1993). Korn, Sweetman, and Nodine (1996) noted that faculty and professional consultants alike consider student satisfaction one of the primary problems facing academic departments. According to their study, student satisfaction is inversely related to student complaints regarding advising, career preparation, and the need for new courses or effectiveness of current courses.

The notion of the service gap (Parsuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) informs much of the work that has been undertaken to assess the satisfaction of service delivery against the expectations of the participating customer. In identifying where such gaps exist one can not only gauge the overall level of customer satisfaction, but can also reveal specific areas where improvements can be made to raise the level of consumer satisfaction and therefore the success of the service offering.

Program evaluation has been a topic of extensive discussion and research in recent years (e.g., Korn, Sweetman, & Nodine, 1996; Morgan & Johnson, 1997). Faculty and administrators have gathered information regarding a variety of student satisfaction to improve the overall quality of their education systems and studied campuswide satisfaction of undergraduate students (e.g., Benjamin & Hollings, 1997). Rodie and Kleine (2000) insisted that a student satisfied with his or her educational institution positively influenced the quality of teaching through active participation and committed behavior.

Clothing and textile programs are scrambling to adapt in the climate of unforeseen changes and external threats in the academic environment. Therefore, unit administrators and executive officers in clothing and textiles seeking better information and justification for their academic programs. In responses to these pressures, institutions are devoting considerable time and resources to enhancing the quality of their courses as perceived by the student (Laughlin & Kean, 1995).

Shim and Morgan (1990) reported that perceived career image and course perceptions were dominant factors in predicting attitudes toward a major and satisfaction with clothing and textiles related majors. In addition, the influences from professors/advisors and positive committed attitudes toward a major were also found to be significant for predicting overall satisfaction with majors.

In this article, we want to extend these previous efforts by drawing in the student satisfaction construct. Student satisfaction is a key objective for many higher education institutions in that customer satisfaction is a key determinant of customer loyalty. For most privately owned universities, tuition fees are the main source of income. Retaining students means developing a solid and predictable financial basis for future university activities. In addition, as relationship marketing theory indicates (e.g., Reichheld, 1996; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990), long-term relationships with students may provide some sort of strategic competitive advantage; gaining new students is generally more cost intensive than maintaining

existing relationships, and cost-reduction effects are generated over the relationship life cycle.

In the subsequent parts of this article, we use a three-step procedure to gain deeper insights into student satisfaction and its influential factors in a higher education context in Korea. First, the existing information available from previous research efforts in the fields of student satisfaction and relationship marketing are used to develop a relationship quality-based model of student satisfaction. Second, the model is tested empirically using structural equation modeling. Finally, the theoretical and empirical results are discussed with regard to the possible managerial implications for providers of educational services.

The purpose of this research was to provide basic information on determinants of student satisfaction with clothing and textiles major. To address student satisfaction issues in clothing and textiles major, we assessed student satisfaction with the major as a whole and the factors that may contribute to it.

II. Method

The survey was conducted using a questionnaire designed to measure six determinants of student satisfaction and two satisfaction factors.

(1) Academic competence; Curriculum, Faculty, Teaching Method, Name of Department, Name of College

(2) Social integration; Perceived Hospitality, Alumni Network

(3) Facilities and equipment; Physical Facilities (Sewing Lab, Computer Lab, Textile Lab, and Department Library), Equipment, and Maintenance

(4) Involvement in activities; Activities (Fashion Shows, Exhibitions, M.T., Department Party and Picnic)

(5) Job placement; Career support, Internship System, Information Provision, Alumni Record

(6) Aptitude for & interest in major; Perception of Fitness in a Clothing and Textiles Study, Interest in the Curriculum

(7) School satisfaction; Enjoyment and Satisfaction of the School Life

(8) Major satisfaction; Enjoyment and Satisfaction of the Major

The participants of the study were 2 year and 4 year college students from ten schools in Korea. The purposive sampling method was used considering geographic diversity and programs including clothing and textiles across the nation. Approximately 1000 questionnaires were distributed out, and 690 usable questionnaires were returned. The variables and scales used in the present study were developed by authors based on an in-depth interview with students. In Table 1, the demographic profile of the sample is summarized. About 65 percent of the sample was attending 4 year university, and almost 90 percent of the sample was female. There was an even distribution of school region (Non-Seoul= 44%; Seoul=54%).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

(n=690)

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percent (%)
School Orientation	2 yr. Junior College	235	34.1
	4 yr. University	455	65.9
School Region	Non Seoul	301	43.6
	Seoul	389	56.4
Sex	Female	550	87.7
	Male	77	12.3
Class Standing	Freshmen	129	19.7
	Sophomore	218	33.3
	Junior	184	28.1
	Senior	124	18.9

Note: Sum of percents may not be equal to 100 due to missing data.

The data were analyzed by ANOVA and t-test using SPSS Ver. 10.0 in order to test differences among various respondent-groups by research variables. In order to investigate the direct and indirects influence of 6 determinants on satisfaction majors, structure equation modeling using LISREL VII (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989) was conducted.

Reliability statistics of eight variables were within the acceptable range (*alpha* = .60 to .80).

III. Results

1. Research Variables by Different Respondent Groups

Overall, male students scored higher in most of the research variables (See Table 2). They showed significantly higher scores in academic competence, social integration, facilities and equipment, involvement in activities and major satisfaction (t=2.67, p< .01; t=3.74, p< .001; t=4.24, p< .001; t=2.19, p< .05; t=3.00, p< .01, respectively). However, there were not significant differences in job placement, aptitude for and interest in major, and school satisfaction between these two sex groups.

Students attending 2-year colleges showed higher scores in most of the research variables (See Table 3). They showed significantly higher scores in academic competence, social integration, facilities and equipment, and job placement (t=2.74, p< .01; t=3.71, p< .001; t=7.54, p< .001; t=5.12, p< .01, respectively). On the contrary, students attending 4-year universities were more interested in their majors (t= -2.25, p< .05). However, interestingly, this did not lead significant differences in students' satisfaction in major or school.

As shown in Table 4, students attending non-Seoul area schools showed significantly higher scores in academic competence, social integration, and aptitude for and interest in major (t=7.02, p<. 001; t=3.39, p< .01; t=2.20, p< .05, respectively). In addition, they were more satisfied with their major (t=2.63, p< .01). On the other hand, students attending Seoul area schools showed significantly higher scores in job placement. Even though students attending non-Seoul schools think that their major is more academically competent, socially integrated, interesting and more satisfactory than those attending Seoul area schools, they were significantly less confident in their job placement after graduation.

The ANOVA results by class standing shown in

Table 2. Research variables by respondents sex

Variables	Male(n=77)		Female(n=550)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Academic competence	37.7	6.8	35.5	6.0	2.67**
Social integration	21.7	5.8	19.1	4.5	3.74***
Facilities & equipments	19.3	5.0	16.7	4.9	4.24***
Involvement in activities	26.6	6.0	25.0	5.9	2.19*
Job placement	10.3	1.6	10.0	1.8	1.67
Aptitude for & interest in major	19.5	4.9	19.5	4.2	.16
School satisfaction	14.9	4.5	15.0	4.1	−.18
Major satisfaction	16.5	4.1	15.0	3.8	3.00**

*p<. 05, **p< .01, ***p< .001

Note: Individual 7-point items were summed to created indices for each variable.

Table 3. Research variables by school orientation

Variables	2 yr College (n=235)		4 yr University (n=455)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Academic competence	36.4	6.7	34.9	6.0	2.74**
Social integration	20.3	5.1	18.8	4.6	3.71***
Facilities & equipments	19.2	4.9	16.2	4.6	7.54***
Involvement in activities	24.7	6.7	25.3	5.7	−1.09
Job placement	10.7	2.0	9.9	1.7	5.12***
Aptitude for & interest in major	18.7	4.7	19.5	4.2	−2.25*
School satisfaction	15.4	3.4	15.1	4.0	1.14
Major satisfaction	14.5	3.9	15.0	4.2	−1.44

*p<. 05, **p<. 01, ***p<. 001

Note: Individual 7-point items were summed to created indices for each variable.

Table 4. Research variables by school region

Variables	Non Seoul (n=301)		Seoul (n=389)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Academic competence	37.3	6.0	33.9	6.1	7.02***
Social integration	20.0	5.0	18.8	4.6	3.39**
Facilities & equipments	17.1	5.2	17.3	4.7	−.36
Involvement in activities	25.0	6.1	25.1	6.0	−.37
Job placement	10.0	1.7	10.4	1.9	−2.80**
Aptitude for & interest in major	19.6	4.4	18.9	4.3	2.20*
School satisfaction	15.2	3.8	15.2	3.7	.00
Major satisfaction	15.3	4.0	14.4	4.1	2.63**

*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001

Note: Individual 7-point items were summed to created indices for each variable.

Table 5. Research variables by class standing

Variables	Freshmen (n=129)	Sophomore (n=218)	Junior (n=184)	Senior (n=124)	F-value (df=3)
Academic competence	37.6	36.4	35.0	33.4	11.96***
Social integration	19.6	19.9	19.3	18.3	3.17*
Facilities & equipments	17.1	17.6	16.8	16.4	1.95
Involvement in activities	23.9	25.2	25.6	25.7	2.52
Job placement	10.3	9.9	10.1	10.1	1.57
Aptitude for & interest in major	19.4	19.9	18.7	19.4	2.57
School satisfaction	14.9	15.2	15.2	15.2	.32
Major satisfaction	15.4	15.5	14.4	14.2	4.13**

*p<. 05, **p<. 01, ***p<. 001

Note: Individual 7-point items were summed to created indices for each variable.

Table 5 indicated that there was strong negative relationship between class standing and academic competence (F=11.96, p< .001). The negative relationships were also detected in social

integration and major satisfaction (F=3.17, p< .05; F=4.13, p< .01, respectively). Overall, students who just entered universities or colleges believe that their major is academically competent and socially integrated thus more satisfied with their majors. However as they move toward higher college grades, this tendency diminishes. As a matter of fact, it was seniors who scored the least in academic competence and major satisfaction.

2. Model Testing

The result of the structural equation modeling using LISREL VI is depicted in Figure 1. The model had an excellent fit to the data. (GFI=99, AGFI=.95). Academic competence and aptitude for and interest in the major had a significant direct influence on major satisfaction (γ=.14, t=4.7; γ=.59, t=20.4, respectively). Other satisfaction determinant variables such as facilities and equipment, job placement, involvement in activities, aptitude for & interest in major and social integration had a significant indirect influence on major satisfaction through the intermediary antecedent, school satisfaction (γ=.18, t=3.5; γ=.10, t=2.7; γ=.18, t=4.7; γ=.19, t=4.8, respectively). Also, school satisfaction had a significant direct influence on major satisfaction (β=.15, t=5.3).

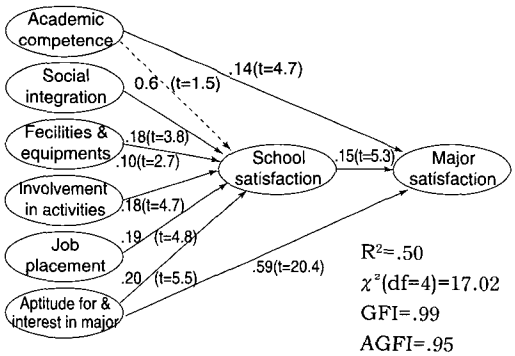

Fig. 1. Result of structural equation modeling of student satisfaction

Note: Standardized path coefficients are indicated; a dotted arrow indicates an insignificant path.

Note: t-values are in parentheses.

IV. Conclusion

The results of the structural equation modeling procedure clearly demonstrate that a close relationship exists between the quality of education and the student satisfaction to their educational institution. Delivering quality service to achieve student satisfaction has become an important goal for most institutions of higher education. This study is an attempt to identify the conceptual model of determinants of student satisfaction. This paper will stimulate more research into the antecedents and consequences of service quality in the higher education market. Specifically, to increase the satisfaction of students majoring in clothing and textiles, academic competence and aptitude for and interest in the major were identified as most important determinants of major satisfaction. Other satisfaction determinant variables such as facilities and equipment, job placement, involvement in activities, and social integration were found to be achieved through school satisfaction. The results of the study will help practitioners of the higher education field set strategies for better service quality management.

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