

RESEARCH CONNECTION

Influence of online reviews on student satisfaction seen through a service quality model

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Why this research is important

This study was an attempt to fill the gap in the areas of service quality and customer satisfaction within the context of higher education by considering the impact of social media, e-word of mouth (e-WOM), and service quality on student satisfaction, in addition to the relationship between student satisfaction and word of mouth (WOM).

How the research was conducted

This study developed a multifaceted model to recognize the influence of service quality and e-WOM on customer satisfaction and the impact of customer satisfaction on WOM. A survey was developed to assess how respondents approached and applied the quality of services towards their level of satisfaction and how it impacted WOM. All questions pertaining to the hypotheses were set up on a 7-

What you need to know

University or college is a challenging reality leading to a sometimes elusive career path. By consulting social media and reviewing websites, students have more alternatives to consider in their choice determination. The main purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and how it results in more customers through word of mouth (WOM).

point Likert-type scale (1=entirely disagree to 7=entirely agree). After receiving ethical approval from the institution, the survey was placed on the RedCap (Research Electronic Data Capture) website and left active for approximately one month. The study used a convenient non-probability sampling technique to collect primary data from respondents. Data was gathered from a sample of 150 students at a mid-sized Canadian university. Excel, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), and PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) software were applied to treat the collected data and test the seven proposed hypotheses.

What the researchers found

The findings of this research revealed that all service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness) have a positive influence on student satisfaction. Also, the results show that tangibility and reliability have higher impacts on student satisfaction than the other factors.

Moreover, the results demonstrated that social media and e-WOM impact student satisfaction. This shows that student satisfaction is influenced by e-WOM and how social media and online reviews influence student satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings of this research indicated that customer satisfaction has a positive impact on customer WOM intentions. Lastly, the results revealed that respondents most probably would recommend their current university to others.

How this research can be used

This research can help businesses—and particularly universities as the main focus of this research—consider the different factors that impact customer satisfaction and how they can increase customer satisfaction, diminish dissatisfaction, and ensure they can employ the best outcomes of WOM and e-WOM for enhancing consumer retention and satisfaction. This research can also assist institutions in anchoring their strategy based on customers' expectations and how they can manage such demands. This research also recommends that university administration should consider the importance of service quality factors and social media channels to meet and exceed students' expectations in order to bolster the quality of services and boost student satisfaction. Moreover, the research findings can assist decision-makers in adjusting their strategies based on the level of customer satisfaction and respond appropriately to customers' expectations and priorities to ensure their long-term success.

About the researchers

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Keywords

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Publications based on this research

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