

Analysis Of The Perception Of Students As Customers In Selected Universities In Ghana

¹Dominic Osei-Boakye

Accra Institute of Technology, P.O Box AN-19782, Ghana, Accra

²Isaac Boakye

Accra Institute of Technology, P.O Box AN-19782, Ghana, Accra

ABSTRACT

The study sought to determine the perception of students as customers from the perspective of students. Besides, the study ascertained the marketing orientation attitude of selected private and public Universities in Ghana. Quantitative Data was collected using questionnaires from 350 respondents who were selected using the convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Data was analyzed using the SPSS software where mean counts were used. The findings of the study revealed that students feel that once they pay fees then they ought to be given an equitable good service (Mean= 4.3810, S.D = 1.20421). On the other hand, students also perceived themselves as customers of school services which is in line with their responses (Mean= 4.4793, S.D = 1.14481). Interestingly, the data is also indicative of the fact that students perceived themselves to be customers of the school as they asserted that the degree certificate was for sale (Mean= 4.5093, S.D = 1.11333). The University officials on the other hand did not perceive students as customers, however, on the other hand they did not employ the marketing orientation strategy to its fullest.

Keywords: *Students, Customers, Market Orientation*

Background of the study

Customers are considered as the main drivers of the success of every organization without whom firms will fail to survive. Furthermore, organizations exist to serve their customers who also in turn reward these firms with their funds. Due to increase in informational reachability, customers are not short of alternatives and this has also given rise to competition (Finney & Finney, 2014). Due to this fact, organizations have developed several modules in ensuring better delivery of service to enhance better customer satisfaction. According to Drucker (2014) the sole aim for the existence of an organization is to serve and satisfy customers. Drucker (2016) also added that marketing is "the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the customer's point of view" (p. 39). Firms that are market-oriented are well aware of their existence. The focus of market driven orientation is to satisfy the needs of customers (Kotler, 2017). The well-established way of marketing higher education clearly shows that there is an existence of customer focus.

In the field of education, students serve as the component within the educational function that assume the characteristics of customers. Thus, educational establishments ride on the fees paid by these students to run their businesses, without which they would immediately run out of business. What this implies is that, students are supposed to be satisfied, pleased and served. Nonetheless, there seem to be never ending argument on who the customer is in the higher educational environment since there is no common agreement regarding students as customers in the higher educational circle.

Actually, most people see this particular issues or question controversial and in most cases see it to be emotional. For instance, if university and faculty members are asked whether students should be seen and treated as customers, you are likely to get varied answers depending who is responding and most are likely to say students cannot be classified as customers based on a mere definition of the word. In spite, of all the controversies on whether or not students are customers or should be treated as customers, it is absolutely

clear students would love to be treated and seen as customers. Much of the controversies maybe as a result of what being a customer mean and the seeming inconsistent between the provision of high level customer service as well as academic integrity (Passam, 2015).

However, the term customer as defined in several circles due to what they represent has gained the attention of researchers in the field of education. The underlining argument is that; students are not to be perceived as students in the strictest sense of the word in that they assume a different type of customers not exhibiting all the characteristics of a typical customer. Thus, others have maintained that to classify students as “customers” could bring about several discrepancies especially when the term is to be taken to the latter such as the customer always been right (May, 2014).

In lieu, researchers have argued that when students are perceived as customers in the very strict sense of the word, this will actually go against these same students who must rather understand that they are not customers who are naïve but customers in a professional world who owe to its firm some responsibilities (Eagle & Brennan, 2017). On the other hand, others have also upheld that students are customers because they are made to fulfil some financial duties to these educational institutions without which these firms cannot run.

Owing to this, several program have been developed by these educational institutions in order to attract as many students as possible. The field of customer satisfaction and relationship management have become a major discussion in research for a very long time now. Extant researchers have established that satisfied customers are as a results of a quality service experienced. Despite this assertion, there is much to be known in this field. In the case of educational institutions, all over the world, there is a debate as to whether students ought to be perceived as customers or as just students since they belong to the educational sector (May, 2014). The current study argues out that students are customers since they share the very basic and in-depth characteristics of customers to firms such as payment for service and a continuous relationship, ability to spread negative news and also ability to abrogate service relationship. Service quality as it has been linked with several positive student outcomes. However, a cursory look at the studies also reveals that there seems to be a lack in terms of a development of a model that spells out how service quality can be achieved in an educational setting especially in Africa and Ghana for that matter.

Thus, one cannot also advice that models that have been used in foreign countries will fit into the Ghanaian culture due to the change in cultural variables. Furthermore, a theoretical paper by Eagle and Brennan (2015) proposed that student characteristics is very key in determining what satisfies them. Although this sounds laudable, it lacks empirical backing.

Higher educational institutions just like other service based industries like banking do also depend on the positive word of mouth spread by its students. What this implies is that, satisfied students have the tendency to speak positively about the institution to other prospective students. Hence, when students' expected service is met by the institution, they are satisfied and hence will want to have a repeated feeling through either enrolment in other courses run by the institution or t talk to others about it.

Gruber (2013) iterated that the overall perception of students about an institution rests in the experience they have with the staff members of the institution. In other words, the staff of every institution represent the institution and so far as students' experience are concerned they measure the institution by looking at its staff. This implies that the human element in delivering quality education service is very key in ascertaining its success.

Against this backdrop, it stands to reason that there is the need for higher educational institutions to develop state of the art faculty members coupled with improved facilities such as libraries, computer related facilities among others. However, the student-centric nature of the educational institutions mean that the human resource aspect also needs to be beefed up in order to relate with these students well who are the face of the institution to the outside world (Niece, 2014).

Organizational researchers have opined that customer service is the tool through which corporations maintain a positive relationship with their customers which can result in several affirmative progress. This has been supported with several empirical studies in the field of customer service and relationship management. Nevertheless, studies that have enquired about organizational differences and customer service have highlighted that there is no universal modality for managing customers (Bello, 2016; Northouse, 2014).

Coupled with this, observational researchers have expressed that banks have been, to a large extent, conscious of customer service and the way they manage their customers, this

however has not been the case in some sectors such as the educational sector. Students studying at universities have been defined as customers by some researchers since the introduction of student tuition fees. This however has some theoretical implications (Bello, 2016).

The study seeks to analytically critique the consumer expectancy theory. Expectancy theory holds that people are motivated to behave in ways that produce desired combinations of expected outcomes. Perception plays a central role in expectancy theory because it emphasizes cognitive ability to anticipate likely consequences of behavior (Moore, 2015). Thus the study argues that, if students have the perception that they are customers, then does it necessarily translate into changed behaviors, furthermore, does this perception also influence management delivery of service towards these students. Also, the study will also analyze from the perspective of the management, the customer orientation theory. Thus, what is the attitude of these institutions in relation to their students and how does that affect their overall delivery of service towards them.

Some studies over the years have however supported the notion that effective customer satisfaction linked with a well-informed customer service delivery produces an enormous impact on student behavior (Carter & Yeo, 2016; Bello, 2016). However, very few have gone further to develop a model for customer service delivery especially in the educational sector. When it comes to the African terrain, there is almost a lost in models for students' service delivery in the tertiary sector. The inability to regard students as customers by most tertiary institution could be as a result of inefficiency of customer orientation. This lack of customer orientation exhibited by most faculty staffs have a major implication which needed to be explored. Also, the idea that students should not be seen as customers is very essential since "how the consumer of the service is defined partly determines the view the university takes of the consumer and thus the service they provide them" (Pitman, 2000, p. 166). In this case, the customer or who the customer is, is of prime interest and matters.

This study therefore seeks to contend that students are customers with professional backgrounds and not customers in the strictest sense of the word as used in the field of marketing. The study tends to fill the context gap by assessing the notion of students as customers in within the Ghanaian perspective. Furthermore, a pool of studies employed the

use of quantitative tools without digging deeper into assessing the perception of stakeholders in student service delivery and satisfaction, this study therefore fills this methodological gap by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods to this enquiry. In detailing this concept, this paper would examine the argument by using framework such as market orientation, customer orientation and service, relationship marketing, with the sole aim of digesting and clarifying the debate in the context of Africa especially in Ghana.

Objectives of the study

- To determine the extent to which students perceive themselves as customers of the selected public and private tertiary institutions.
- To analyze the customer orientation attitude of selected public and private tertiary institutions.

Research Hypothesis

1. **H₀**: There is no significance relationship between how students are perceived by public and private universities.
2. **H_A**: There is a significance relationship between how students are perceived by public and private universities.

Literature Review

Expectancy Theory

Kombo, (2006) defines a theoretical framework as a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories. It attempts to clarify specific phenomena. Among many theories adopted for this study is “The Expectancy Theory” which was formulated by Victor Vroom (1964).

According to Orodho (2010), the expectancy theory posits that motivation is a force or drive within a person and that this force varies according to one’s expectations. For a person to be motivated to perform a certain task, he/she must expect that completion of the task will lead to the achievement of the expected goal. In this study, the acquisition of tertiary education and certificate is the expected goal.

According to Orodho, (2010), Vroom hypothesizes that for a person to be motivated, effort, performance and motivation must be linked. He proposed three variables which he refers to as valence, expectancy and instrumentality. Valence is the importance the individual places upon the expected outcome. Expectancy is the belief that increased effort will lead to increased performance and instrumentality is the belief that if one performs well, a valued outcome will be received. Based on the expectancy theory, the attitude and poor relation with student by some staffs of tertiary institution creates a psychological drive in both faculty members and education managers to look for ways of reversing the situation. The need for better performance and individual growth has led to the organization and administration of many in-service training and education for staffs and faculty members to acquire the right competence to deliver the expected services to students in the tertiary institution. According to Okumbe, (2002), the development of lecturer's competence cannot be an aim in itself. The relevance and usefulness of the competence can only be demonstrated in a work situation by achieving certain practical results or a certain level of performance. The expectancy theory provides educational managers with a strategy for incorporating lecturer's and administrator's needs, desires and goals with those of the educational organization (Okumbe, 1998).

2.2 Market Orientation Theory

Market orientation literature has coalesced into an organized knowledge system, replete with theory and a body of empirically derived generalizations. Although scholars have documented the proposed benefits, the intricacies of the adoption of a market orientation have received limited attention (e.g., Deshpandé 1999; Jaworski and Kohli 1996; Webster 1994), and cultural change has emerged as a central focus (Homburg and Pflesser 2000; Narver, Slater, and Tietje 1998). From this perspective, I draw on Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster's (1993, p. 27) definition of customer orientation as "the set of beliefs that puts the customer's interest first, while not excluding those of all other stakeholders in order to develop a long-term profitable or viable enterprise."

A crucial element in the marketing of higher education institutions is based on a relationship marketing approach, which is characterized as helping to develop and foster interactions between the organization and its customers (Brown et al., 1994). This approach

emphasizes the importance of developing a customer- i.e. student-driven organizational culture, and focuses on the quality of the service (Narver & Slater, 1990).

Above all, however, the relationship marketing approach commences with a commitment to marketing orientation, which is a set of beliefs that puts customers' students' interests first, in order to gain a competitive edge in the highly competitive global environment. Marketing orientation frequently underpins the development and implementation of successful relationship marketing strategies in any organization (Helfert, Ritter, & Walter, 2002). If a higher education institution can develop or improve its degree of marketing orientation, then it should also be able to achieve improved levels of relationship management. For instance, data analysis from an international study that compared the degree of marketing orientation in two universities, one in Israel and one in England, two countries that have experienced different higher education policies in recent years. Thus, England has established international markets in higher education although marketization is at a relatively early stage (with undergraduate fees currently capped); in Israel there is no national Quality Assurance Agency and every institution of higher education has its own declared policy aims, and is therefore still largely autonomous. A published paper (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2007) previously presented the Marketing Orientation Inventory for use in educational institutions, and the pilot study findings (based on data from two countries) were later presented at the Academy of Marketing Conference, Budapest, (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2007). Data and findings from a study with a larger sample are presented in this paper.

As there is already some empirical evidence for the positive impact of MO on industrial and service organizations (e.g. Cervera, Molla, & Sanchez, 2001; Guo, 2002), it seems of high value to examine the degree of marketing orientation in higher education institutions in general and in different national higher education systems, in particular because this kind of comparison could provide some clues about the relationship between market-oriented higher education policies and the incorporation of marketing orientation in academic settings. Besides, whereas past research on marketing orientation found that it is positively correlated with innovation, excellence, employees' high levels of satisfaction and commitment, customers' satisfaction, and brand loyalty (Pulendran, Speed, & Widing,

2003), higher education institutions have long been accused of neglecting these important issues. Understanding the context of marketing orientation within higher education institutions is, therefore, the first stage in attempting to increase this orientation in higher education systems.

Based on an instrument developed by the authors to measure perceptions of marketing orientation in universities, distributed by email to faculties in both universities, the reported study tested whether there are significant differences between the two countries, in terms of perceptions of marketing orientation in higher education, which marketing orientation dimensions (student; competition; intrafunctional) indicate more positive attitudes and whether the differences are significant; and the reliability of the instrument for using a larger sample of respondents internationally.

2.2.1 Market Orientation: A Key Element in Marketing the Higher Education institution

Many managers today recognize that the ability to succeed in the marketplace requires more than just sales techniques customers rarely respond to sales pitch, but rather they want their circumstances to be acknowledged and their needs to be satisfied.

Hence, business and service organizations seek to achieve a competitive advantage in their dynamic environments, at least in part, by being market-driven, i.e., by anticipating, understanding and responding to the preferences and behaviors of customers (Jaworski & Kohli, & Sahay, 2000).

The marketing literature is replete with definitions and perspectives of marketing orientation, yet there is much agreement about the key concepts (Helfert et al., 2002; Narver & Slater, 1990). At the core of this concept is the significance of customer orientation.

Accordingly, customers' needs, desires and particular circumstances e.g. lifestyles ought to be the main focus of the market-oriented organization. In this sense, marketing orientation is the degree to which an organization generates and uses intelligence about the current and future needs of customers; develops a strategy to satisfy these needs; and implements that strategy to meet those needs and wants.

Marketing orientation takes into account the influence of competitors and incorporates inter-functional coordination. It encourages the generation of intelligence or the use of data about competitors, and integrated cross-functional processes, in addition to the execution of a strategic organizational response to market opportunities. All these activities are directed towards creating and satisfying customers through continuous needs assessment.

Marketing orientation is a set of beliefs that puts customers' interests first, but at the same time raises the higher education institutions awareness of the need to obtain information about competitors and establish cross-departmental activities to satisfy customers' needs, in order to gain a competitive edge in the turbulent, competitive environment. Based on the works of Narver and Slater (1994) and Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown (2007) the following three related components of MO are suggested, and are underpinned by shared values and beliefs, which may help HEIs administrators, managers and faculties to understand the HEI and its environment, and may also provide them with norms for behavior. The present study focuses on marketing orientation at a faculty level and comprises three dimensions:

(a) Customer orientation: Faculties are assumed to understand the higher education institutions targets market thoroughly, and be capable of creating and providing superior value, over time. A faculty that subscribes to this approach in practice would collect information about the environment which students inhabit (e.g. lifestyle factors); would adapt teaching methods to accommodate students' particular needs; and would be attentive and responsive to their interests and points of view. Through this approach, it would then be possible to be more innovative and implement improvements for future students based on their anticipated needs.

(b) Competitor orientation: The higher education institutions and Faculty managers who aim to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the capabilities and potential, of competing higher education institutions, seem to internalize this element of marketing orientation. Awareness of the importance of competitor activity and the monitoring of developments in competing higher education institutions can have a positive impact on decision-making, particularly through the development of initiatives: the development of additional services for students.

Inter-functional coordination: The core belief which needs to be shared by all members of the higher education institution is that creating superior value for target customers is very significant for the success of a higher education institution in a competitive marketplace. This can only be achieved, however, through the integration and coordination of the higher education institution's resources. Attracting student-customers and sustaining recruitment should not be solely the responsibility of faculty management, but is the responsibility of everyone in the university community. Faculties should have full access to information about the competition: the market environment, the community and so forth in order to achieve this. The first two elements of marketing orientation indicate a relative emphasis on collecting and processing information pertaining to customer preferences and competitor capabilities, respectively. The third element encompasses the coordinated and integrated application of organizational resources to synthesize and disseminate market intelligence, in order to put processes in place to build and maintain strong relationships with customers.

Methodology

Research Design

This current study employs the mixed method, while the following sections provides justification for its use and how the method was applied in the study.

Population of the study

The research population for this study was defined as all the private and public tertiary schools in Ghana. Malhotra (1999) stated that the required sample size depends on factors such as the proposed data analysis techniques, and the financial and access to sample frame.

Sample Size

Hair et al (2010) recommendation is that the sample size should be 15-20 observations per variable for generalization purposes; they add that large sample makes the significance of the test sensitive and yield significant relationships with low values of R^2 . In the study, the structural equation modeling method of analysis was employed which is very sensitive to sample size, the number of part and less stable when estimated from small samples (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The sample size for this research was determined by using

Godden (2015) sample size formula for an infinite population (where the population size is greater than 50,000) for each of the geographical zones.

$$\text{i.e. } SS = \frac{Z^2 \cdot (P) \cdot (1-P)}{C^2}$$

Where SS = Sample size

Z = two-sided normal variant at 95% confidence level (1.96)

P = Percentage of population picking a choice, expressed as decimal

C = Confidence Interval, expressed as decimal (e.g. 0.04 = +/- 4 percent points)

Z-values (cumulative Normal probability table) represent the probability that a sample will fall within a certain distribution.

The Z-values for confidence levels are

1.645 = 90 percent confidence level

1.96 = 95 percent confidence level

2.576 = 99 percent confidence level

Let us consider this example from Obiniyi et al. (2012); $SS = (3.8416 \times 0.5 \times 0.5) / 0.0016$

SS = 600 thus the minimum sample size would suffice.

Data Collection

This research employed questionnaire as the main data collection instrument as well as interview as supplementary. Questionnaire is a process by which researchers collect the information needed to answer the research problem. Questionnaire was employed as it is relatively quick, simple, cost effective and can be administered to large number of respondents in wider geographic coverage with a limited time. Data based on the three variables in the study was collected through self-administered questionnaires. The researcher used measures that were similar to those used in other studies (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Kalshoven, 2012; Asma, 2013).

Data Analysis Method

The aim of this study is to investigate the perception of students as customers and further ascertain the effect of customer service on student satisfaction. The endogenous construct in the model had been represented by service quality. Five dimensions of service quality were included in the exogenous constructs in the model tested. The five dimensions included were tangibility, empathy, responsiveness, reliability and assurance.

All these variables are latent variables which cannot be measured directly. In order to operationalize these variables, multiple scale items were generated to measure these variables in quantitative terms. All these research measures were developed based on the review of extant literature and have been found to be reliable and valid based on the pilot study results. Data analysis were conducted using various inferential statistical methods including test of internal consistency, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and most importantly the structural equation modelling technique. These various inferential methods are further discussed and conclude with the summary of how they were applied to address the research questions.

Analysis and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

From the data collected, it was evident that two hundred (200) of the respondent representing fifty-seven (57%) percent were males while one hundred and Fifty (150) of respondents representing forty-three (43%) were females. It was obvious from this analysis that males were more than the female. But the difference between the ratio of male to female workers was not so great in percentage. Again, It was found that a summation of the frequency of the respondents whose age range falls within the youthful workforce (18–49) was three hundred (300). This represents eighty-six (86%) percent of the total age range of the respondents, who are perceived to be the very young and active group full of exuberant energy and more years to work for their organizations. Fifty (50) respondents representing fourteen (14%) percent were also within the age bracket of fifty to fifty-nine (50-59). These age groups were very close to retiring. This means that they have contributed their quota to the development of their institution. The data shown that shown that greater number of respondents were highly educated as 150 of the respondents representing 43% were first degree holders. Twenty of the respondents representing 3%

hold doctorate degrees whereas 48 of the respondents representing 9% hold master’s degree. Seventy (70) of the respondents representing 20% hold higher national diploma.

Test of Normality

The test of normality was conducted to check whether the data was normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk (SW) test was adopted in favor of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Lilliefors tests, the reason being that, Shapiro-Wilk test is recommended for small and medium samples up to $n = 2000$ as posited by Garson (2012). Therefore, Shapiro-Wilk test is appropriate for this study due to the sample utilized.

Table 4.14: Normality Test of Perception of students as Customers (PSC)

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
I pay my fees, equivalent service	0.983	169	0.036
Demand for Quality Service	0.995	169	0.889
Customer of the School	0.994	169	0.707
Purchase school services	0.992	169	0.424
Degree has a price	0.993	169	0.558
Degree is on sale	0.994	169	0.684
Best interest of my lecturer and staff of the University	0.995	169	0.867
Delay to Class is a choice of the customer	0.991	169	0.360

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
 *. This is a lower bound of the true significance

Source: Field data 2019

Table 4.14 above shows the normality analysis of PSC which revealed that only item one (I pay my fees, equivalent service) was not normally distributed with a value of whiles $P > 0.05$ the rest were normally distributed which have met the threshold as indicated by Garson (2012).

Table 4.15: Normality Test of Normality of Market Orientation

	Shapiro-Wilk
--	--------------

	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Students should always be the first to guide University Plan	0.991	169	0.396
University Policy must be entirely student centered	0.988	169	0.175
The student body is the market and University efforts must reach them as customers	0.992	169	0.490
Lecturer and staff of the University demands	0.994	169	0.758
Care of lecturer and staff of the University	0.991	169	0.377
Watch what I get	0.996	169	0.951
Authority relationship	0.984	169	0.053

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Source: Field data, 2020

The Extent to which Students Perceive themselves as Students

The table 4.1 below shows the mean and standard deviation under the perception of students as customers.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Analysis of Perception of Students as Customers

Perception of Students as Customers	Mean	Std. Deviation
I pay my fees, equivalent service	4.3810	1.20421
Demand for Quality Service	4.0774	1.26301
Customer of the School	4.4970	1.12268
Purchase school services	4.4793	1.14481
Degree has a price	4.6946	1.01014
Degree is on sale	4.5093	1.11333
Best interest of my lecturer and staff of the University	4.4286	1.07776
Delay to Class is a choice of the customer	4.7560	1.06064
Overall average	4.4779	

Source: field data 2020

This was assessed from the student perspective. It is evident from the data collected that students feel that once they pay fees then they ought to be given an equitable good service (Mean= 4.3810, S.D = 1.20421). On the other hand, students also perceived themselves as Purchase school services which is in line with their earlier responses (Mean= 4.4793, S.D = 1.14481). Interestingly, the data is also indicative of the fact that students perceived themselves to be customers of the school as they asserted that the degree was for sale (Mean= 4.5093, S.D = 1.11333). The overall average was 4.4779 indicating that to a very large extent students see themselves as customers of the University who ought to be related with as such since they pay their own fees and that should be seen as the price for its equivalent service.

Market Orientation of Selected Universities

Table 4.3: Descriptive Analysis of Market Orientation

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students should always be the first to guide University Plan	3.4556	1.11781
University Policy must be entirely student centered	2.9882	1.24875
The student body is the market and University efforts must reach them as customers	3.0355	1.31789
Lecturer and staff of the University demands	2.9641	1.35792
Care of lecturer and staff of the University	2.9821	1.23671
Watch what I get	3.2485	2.52937
Authority relationship	3.1361	1.22928
Formal role	3.3077	1.21008
Overall average	3.1264	

Source: Field data 2019

Table 4.8 above, shows the mean and standard deviation under market orientation of the Institutions. A mean value of 3.45 was obtained on the question; the most accurate ways to describe my relationship with my lecturer and University officials is that do what I am told to do, meaning averagely, respondents were undecided on the question, 3.00 mean value was calculated on the question; my relationship with my lecturer and University officials is impersonal, indicating that averagely the sampled respondents were undecided. The mean score of 3.44 was calculated on the question; I will only want to put in extra effort for my lecturer when I know in advance how he or she will repay me, meaning that majority of the respondents were undecided. The question; I do what my lecturer demands from me mainly because he or she is my formal boss, obtained a mean value of 2.96 revealing that average respondents were undecided.

The next question; I do not care what my lecturer does for me in the long run, if only what he or she does is right, had a mean value of 2.98 indicating that, they were undecided. An average score of 3.13 calculated on the question; my relationship with my lecturer and staff of the University is mainly based on authority, he or she has the right to make decisions on my behalf and I do what I am told to do, meaning the respondents were undecided. Finally, all I really expect from my lecturer and staff of the University is that he or she fulfills his or her formal role as a supervisor with a mean score of 3.30 revealing that averagely the respondents were undecided. In all, it is observed that the mean score 2.7 meaning that most of the respondents averagely were undecided on the questions pertaining to the market orientation attitude of the Universities, hence there was not significant grounds to conclude that the Universities had a high market orientation culture. That is to say, Universities in Ghana do not have a customer orientation attitude towards their students/. The inference that could be made is the fact that students are not perceived to be customers from the stand point of the University staff and hence they are treated as such.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Universities are observed as institutions that are responsible for raising leaders for tomorrow, this has is evidenced in the numerous world leaders raided by universities all over the world. This perception however, tends to place these institutions in a situation where students are rather perceived to be people receiving aids rather than as customers who need to be served. Oldfield and Baron (2015) advices that there is a need for top level management of various educational institutions to assess and implement good student service from data collected from the students that will indicate what they perceive as good service rather than the institution itself perceiving what they think students would want and giving that to them. In their words, the traditional mode of identifying quality customer service rests in the assessment of what management thinks rather than what is the reality in the minds of students who are the customers of schools. Thus, the students are the primary markets of the institutions and ought to be given direct input into the marketing efforts of the organization. It is recommended that University officials ought to have a more strategic approach towards the management of students within their institutions. Students should be perceived as academic customers who deserve quality service in areas such as tuition. However, students are not supposed to perceive themselves as customers who buy

University degrees because these degrees are awarded and not purchased.

References

- Boonlert Watjatrakul. 2014. Factors affecting students' intentions to study at universities adopting the "student-as-customer" concept. *International Journal of Educational Management* 28:6, 676-693. [Abstract] [Full Text] [PDF]
- Bok, D. (2003), *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Driscoll, C. and Wicks, D. (1998), "The customer-driven approach in business education: a possible danger?", *Journal of Education for Business*, Vol. 74 No. 1, pp. 58-61.
- East, J. (2001), "International students identified as customers: their expectations and perceptions", *Proceedings of Changing Identities Language and Academic Skills Conference*, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, 29-30 November, available at: www.learning.uow.edu.au/LAS2001/unrefereed/east.pdf (accessed 2 September 2005).
- Pitman, T. (2000), "Perceptions of academics and students as customers: a survey of administrative staff in higher education", *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 165-75.
- Redding, P. (2005), "The evolving interpretations of customers in higher education", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 29 No. 5, pp. 409-17.
- Shields, P.M. (1999), "Zen and the art of higher education maintenance: bridging classic and romantic notions of quality", *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 165-72.
- Tim Pitman. 2016. The evolution of the student as a customer in Australian higher education: a policy perspective. *The Australian Educational Researcher* 43:3, 345-359. [Crossref]
- Riina Koris, Petri Nokelainen. 2015. The student-customer orientation questionnaire (SCOQ). *International Journal of Educational Management* 29:1, 115-138. [Abstract] [Full Text] [PDF]

IJSER