

Chapter 8

Business Management Education in Reality

Mohammad Ayub Khan
Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the perception of the quality of business education of different stakeholders in business education is discussed using some real-life stories and opinions. In general, students, professors, business education administrators, and employers look happy with the current business education programs and services provided by business schools. However, these stakeholders would like to do more on developing analytical, quantitative, and operational skills in students because these are the skills they will need immediately after graduation and in the labor market. The chapter suggests that it is useful and advisable for the academic institutions to have an effective information intelligence system in place in order to collect strategic academic information from different stakeholders in education. Such information can and will be used in designing academic programs and services to serve the emerging demands and interests of those stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

It is always helpful and a good strategy to know about your customers and beneficiaries in a business context. Similarly, learning about students, professors, education management and employers, and their experiences with the business education standards and quality can also be a useful source of information for improving the quality and standards of the business education for the future students. In the context of business education, for example, the quality is the satisfaction of the needs of strategic constituencies (policymakers, parents,

school management committee, teachers, students, etc.) or conformance to strategic constituencies' requirements and expectations (Cheng & Tam, 1997). It can be assumed from this definition that once all those various stakeholders in the business education system are satisfied with quality of the education programs and services, consequently their perception, attitude and experience would be positive as well. Of course, defining the term "quality of education" is not that easy since the term "quality" could mean different thing for different evaluators or users of education. However, several writers (i.e., Crosby, 1979; Feigenbaum,

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1983) are of the view that quality education is about excellence in education, value addition in education, fitness of educational outcome and experience for use, conformance of education output to planned goals and specifications and requirements. Obviously it is also imperative for educational institutions to guarantee the provision of the depth and breadth of the knowledge to its students through a variety of teaching and learning mechanisms and sources. For example, the library of the school or university should not only provide the required textbooks but it should also keep a stock of other supplementary and consulting books, journals and other electronic database. Teaching should be supported by lectures, research works, group discussions and oral presentations, for example.

QUALITY EDUCATION SUPPORT

It is critically important for a business school to make sure the minimum support systems and facilities required to provide a quality education to its current as well as future students are in place. These minimum support requirements and facilities include (Douglas, Douglas & Barnes, 2006):

- Facilitating goods such as the lectures and tutorials, presentation slides, supplementary handout documents/materials and the recommended module text.
- The physical facilities such as the lecture theatres and tutorial rooms and their level of furnishing, decoration, lighting and layout as well as ancillary services such as catering and recreational amenities.
- The explicit service includes the knowledge levels of staff, staff teaching ability, the consistency of teaching quality irrespective of personnel, ease of making appointments with staff, the level of difficulty of the subject content and the workload.

- The implicit service includes the treatment of students by staff, including friendliness and approachability, concern shown if the student has a problem, respect for feelings and opinions, availability of staff, capability and competence of staff.
- Also, the ability of the university's environment to make the student feel comfortable, the sense of competence, confidence and professionalism conveyed by the ambience in lectures and tutorials, feeling that the student's best interest is being served and a feeling that rewards are consistent with the effort put into course works and examinations.

Based on another interesting and illuminating study of Price, Matzdorf, Smith and Agahi (2003), on the issue of what do really students take into account when they decide about a particular university/school to pursue their higher studies, it is suggested that the university/school should facilitate the followings:

- Quality academic programs (the right course).
- Availability of information and communication technologies (software and hardware).
- Quality of library facilities (physical and digital).
- Good teaching reputation (academically and professionally qualified faculty).
- Availability of physical spaces to self-study and group works (both for students and faculty).
- Provision of quality transportation and communication services.
- An overall friendly attitude towards students and their families.

Wright's (1996) research identified 8 major service quality factors for higher education: diversity of educational experience (diversity of

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