

Conference Paper

Students' Consumerism Attitude to Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Modern society argues that society depends on the ideology of consumption. Consumption is not only a marker of the social status of a person or group. Status consumption is a mechanism used by consumers to gain social status or prestige by buying and consuming goods that customers and their significant other consider high status. but also a way of solving problems, constructing meaning for the environment around us, and even forming personal identities. The increasing reach of the ideology of consumerism has expanded the traditional definition of what is called a "commodity" to an intangible service. When service becomes a commodity, the institutions that provide it tend to focus more on activities that are consumer service, with the aim of attracting and retaining customers who are influenced by market ideology. This model has been used by higher education institutions, namely universities, so that consumerism occurs by students who need educational service products, therefore this study wants to know the consumerism behavior of students. This study uses a quantitative approach, with a sample of 500 respondents. The survey shows that students tend to act as consumers in the education provided by the university. Consumerism is correlated with expectations of lecturers, job preparation, and grades, but not with student responsibilities.

Keywords: Student consumerism, consumer value, higher education

Introduction

Modern society argues that society depends on the ideology of consumption. Consumption is not only a marker of social status of a person or group, as described by Dubois and Ordabayeva (2015) Status consumption is a mechanism used by consumers to gain social status or prestige by buying and consuming goods that customers and their significant other consider high status. but also a way of solving problems, constructing meaning for the environment around us, and even forming personal identities. The increasing reach of consumerism ideology has expanded the traditional definition of what is called a "commodity" to an intangible service. When service becomes a commodity, the institutions that provide it tend to focus more on activities that are consumer service, with the aim of attracting and retaining customers who are influenced by market ideology.

Higher education institutions or universities are not resistant to market ideology, this is due to the high market demand for education and science, where it is very necessary for someone to enter and develop an industry, it creates competition in providing the latest science and research, which is appropriate with industrial needs, in other words, university operations and development are strongly influenced by market mechanisms (Weisbrod et al., 2008). In its journey to meet market demands, universities need huge funds to provide quality educators, supporting

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infrastructure, and continuously conduct research in developing the latest knowledge, so universities need external funding, which shows the product of market power (McClure, 2014). Where the proportion of university funding sources is more than high school students who hope to continue on to college, and the high rate of privatization of universities that were initially non-profit, more competitive and directly influenced by capitalist forces (McClure, 2014).

With that reality, we find ourselves the evolution of education, especially public education which leads us to ask a question about the consumerism attitude of students. Education has shifted from being public in nature concerned with developing democratic citizens and preparing them for roles in employment structures to being a tool for the advancement of the business industry, and, as a result, school and school policies are increasingly focused on education as a credential (McClure, 2017).

Credentials are a proxy for the skills and knowledge required by workers and a symbol of social status. In this way, they are useful tools for social and industrial organizations. However, as a requirement for such social mobility in a competitive social context, they become competency constructs that are not always related to what happens in social class (Fairchild & Crage, 2014). This focus on credentials raises the question of one aspect of the growing application of consumerism metaphors to higher education, namely what do students perceive as the goal of their educational experience, and do they think about their relationship with universities in economic terms?

In an increasingly diverse higher education market, students are "shopping" for the schools and classes they find most attractive and schools must react to these pressures. Documentaries have suggested there is a competition for existing facilities within universities, as a visible "weapon" in university efforts to attract new students (McClure, 2017). In this context, some have argued that aspects of the college experience that prospective students can "see", such as student centers, become more important for making decisions about which school to attend than the less visible characteristics of academic rigor and distinguished faculty (Fairchild & Crage, 2014). Universities also behave in providing educational credentials that attract prospective students and closing unattractive education, determining the number of students that can be taught (McClure, 2017), so that with this behavioral model it can be concluded that universities are seen as educational business institutions rather than public education models, where universities see students as their consumers.

With this organizational model run by the university or higher education, it has influenced the form of student relations with the campus and affected the existing educational process. It was shown that by paying, students have the right to high grades and academic credentials demonstrating a passive educational model. If viewed as an economic transaction, students as customers may be more likely to see themselves as outside the learning process—having consumer identities than as learning identities. In other words, they are 'recipients' of services, not co-creators of teaching and learning communities.

This situation shows that the university applies a consumerism model to its students. This is indicated by research conducted by the Delucchi and Korgen Survey (2002) of 195 undergraduate students enrolled in a sociology course reflecting the consumerism concerns of students. Most students (73%) in the state university sample reported a desire for high grades even if they had studied nothing, while nearly a quarter (24%) expected faculty to consider non-academic criteria when awarding grades (such as financial aid or graduation). School application requirements). Furthermore, more than half (53%) agree that it is the instructor's responsibility to keep students' attention in class while only a third (36%) disagree with the statement "If I pay for my college education, I'm 'entitled to a degree. Greenberger et al., (2008) constructed a 15-item "Academic Rights" scale, which differs from other egotistical psychological constructs such as narcissism and general self-possession. This study provides preliminary evidence that student attitudes towards education deserve scientific attention as a unique phenomenon. More recently, Bossick (2009) approached the problem of developing a more nuanced definition of consumerism that describes

the various dimensions of the perspective—academic enthusiasm, academic behavior, desire for goods and services, and demands for job training. Several indexes of student consumerism, based on theoretical justification, are a step in the right direction.

There is a logical connection between the customer-seller view of university education and this attitude. However, previous studies did not tell us whether this association existed or not clearly. So that universities get less input in policy making and in carrying out the Education process, in other words applying a market ideology, in which case students may have the view that they are buying educational products without also holding any particular beliefs about the product that this attitude might suggest.

It is this complexity that we discuss here. We push the empirical agenda further by exploring rather than considering how the various attitudes that have been linked to consumerism are related. Our survey reflects components of the conceptualization of consumerism present in higher education, including specific issues and ideologies involving customer-seller relationships. Extensive instruments allowed us to examine how items cluster together, and, more specifically, how students' attitudes about explicit market ideologies relate to attitudes about other issues raised in consumerism discussions.

A large, randomly selected campus sample of undergraduate students at the Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jawa Timur allowed us to construct a "consumerism" scale that could be implemented in a variety of educational settings, as well as a set of four additional scales, which makes use of other issues involved in the debate. Our findings suggest that there is a student-as-customer attitude, but that it differs from many of the frequently noted faculty-specific concerns. These results provide information about students' perspectives on the rights and obligations of students, faculties, and institutions. This can form the basis for a rich discussion of how to better achieve institutional missions in a culture increasingly guided by market ideologies.

Literature Review

Consumerism is a social and economic order that encourages the acquisition of goods and services in ever-increasing quantities. Since the Industrial Revolution, especially in the 20th century, mass production has led to overproduction and the supply of goods will grow beyond consumer demand, so manufacturers use planned advertising to manipulate consumer spending (Czarnecka & Schivinski, 2019).

The term consumerism has several definitions. Existing definitions may not be related to each other. One understanding of the term consumerism is related to efforts to support consumer interests. This definition was used early in the 1970s it has become the accepted term (Swagler, 1994).

Another definition of the term consumerism is high level consumption. This definition has been gaining popularity since the late 1970s. In this case consumerism is the selfish and reckless purchase of products, or economic materialism. In the sense of consumerism this is negative and goes against the positive lifestyle of anti-consumerism and simple living. Consumerism is the force of the market that destroys individuality and harms society. The negative impact of consumerism is associated with globalization and this has led to protests against consumerism by anti-globalization movement groups.

In 1955, John Bugas of the Ford Motor Company coined the term consumerism as a substitute for capitalism to describe the American economy (Eriksson & Vogt, 2013). Bugas's definition aligns with the Austrian Economist Carl Menger (in his 1871 book *Principles of Economics*) on consumer sovereignty, in which consumer preferences, judgments, and choices control the economy completely (a concept that directly contradicts the Marxian perception of a capitalist economy as a system of economics). exploitation). In the 21st century global economy, consumerism has become a real part of culture (James & Scerri, 2012).

Higher education is a level of education after secondary education which includes diploma, bachelor, master, specialist and specialist education programs organized by universities (Law No.

20 concerning the National Education System, 2003). In the government regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 30 of 1990 concerning tertiary institutions, it is stated that higher education is education at a higher level than secondary education in the school education path. Higher education consists of all post-secondary education, training and research guidance in educational institutions such as universities that are legalized as institutions of higher education by state authorities (McClure, 2017). It includes all activities considered by a country to be higher education - not only those that take place in ordinary universities and graduate schools, but short-term educational and training courses (polytechnics, junior high schools, and various forms of specialized technical schools) of 2-3 duration. years, and even correspondence courses that utilize information technology and are targeted at a broad student population. Higher education institutions - most notably universities - have three functions in total. Apart from education, it is research and contribution to society.

Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Higher education business model with an emphasis on attracting and involving knowledge seekers, where the approach is with an approach to business principles and instruments, where the strategies and policies made are strongly influenced by the market mechanism approach, while according to McClure (2017) business model Higher education applies the ideology of capitalism in running its organization, where universities make a profit by selling education services, and the education model is built by taking into account market mechanisms, and business principles, with the aim of making profits as an external source of funds. McClure (2017) also emphasizes that in this business model approach, universities see students as consumers of their service products.

Consumerism is an organized social movement intended to strengthen the rights and power of consumers relative to sellers. Alert marketers see it as an opportunity to better serve consumers by providing more information, education, and consumer protection.

Material and Methods

The research method used is a survey method. Survey instruments adopt instruments (Fairchild & Crage, 2014). Consumerism is measured based on 5 dimensions, including: consumerism attitudes, expectations, work preparation, coursework, and student responsibilities. Question items in the survey instrument are measured on a scale of 1-10. Initial testing of the instrument was conducted on 40 respondents. Research respondents were students of the Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Jawa Timur from all undergraduate study programs. The criteria for respondents are students who have undergone the educational process for at least 1 semester. Sample selection was done randomly.

This study uses a quantitative approach using a descriptive approach, where the research analysis uses correlation analysis techniques. The collection of research information and data is carried out through field surveys and with structured questionnaires.

To collect the data needed in this study through the following methods: Types and Sources of Data In this study using two data sources, namely primary data. Judging from the research data using primary data from consumer questionnaire reports selected as a sample where this study will use respondents' perceptions of the items given. Where the primary data source is used to determine the values of the predictive variables and the values of the observation variables from each sample unit used in this study. Data Collection Procedure The sampling technique used is convenience sampling, namely sampling of population elements that can work together and are easily accessible. The survey will be conducted on undergraduate students, in conducting the survey the researcher will provide question questionnaires and provide brochures of the brands that are the object of research. In order not to produce a minimum number, the projected number of research samples is 100 samples because a large number can help increase the accuracy of the estimated calculation. To reach the number of research samples, 100 questionnaires were

distributed, because it was feared that some questionnaires would not be returned/completely filled out.

Results and Discussion

Characteristics of respondents

From the distributed questionnaires, it was successful to collect data from 500 respondents. The characteristics of the respondents based on are shown in Table 1. The sex composition of the respondents is balanced between men and women.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents by gender

Gender	Number
Male	250
Female	250

Table 2 shows the origin of the respondent's city. The data shows that most of the students come from outside the city of Surabaya. The cities outside Surabaya include Gresik, Sidoarjo, Bangkalan and other areas.

Table 2. Characteristics of respondents based on the origin of respondents

City origin	Number
Surabaya	128
Outside Surabaya	372

Instrument validity test results

The results of testing the validity of the research instrument are shown in Table 3. All questions have a correlation coefficient greater than 0.3, then the item is declared valid.

Table 3: The results of testing the validity of the instrument

Statement item	Coef. correlation	Meaning
1. 1Student Consumerism towards Higher Education		
Item 1.1	0,564	Valid
Item 1.2	0,650	Valid
Item 1.3	0,653	Valid
Item 1.4	0,845	Valid
Item 1.5	0,851	Valid
2. . Expectations of the lecturer		
Item 2.1	0,691	Valid
Item 2.2	0,742	Valid
Item 2.3	0,828	Valid
Item 2.4	0,691	Valid
3. Job preparation		
Item 3.1	0,640	Valid
Item 3.2	0,736	Valid
Item 3.3	0,733	Valid
Item 3.4	0,660	Valid
4. Emphasis on grades		
Item 4.1	0,823	Valid
Item 4.2	0,731	Valid

Item 4.3	0,748	Valid
Item 4.4	0,777	Valid
Item 4.5	0,846	Valid
5. 5Student Responsibilities		
Item 5.1	0,734	Valid
Item 5.2	0,915	Valid
Item 5.3	0,816	Valid

Instrument reliability test results

The results of the instrument reliability test in Table 4 show that all alpha coefficients are greater than 0.6, then the research instrument is declared valid.

Table 4. Results of instrument reliability testing

Variable	Alpha Cronbach	meaning
Student Consumerism towards Higher Education	0,784	Reliable
Expectations of the lecturer	0,791	Reliable
Job preparation	0,765	Reliable
Emphasis on grades	0,802	Reliable
Student Responsibilities	0,831	Reliable

Student consumerism towards higher education

Statements related to the measure of student consumerism attitudes towards education show that the average score is quite high above the median value of the measurement scale. These results indicate that the consumerism attitude of students towards higher education is quite high. Students position themselves as consumers by assuming that the education they undergo in college is the product they buy.

Table 5. Average score of consumerism attitudes towards education

Statement	Average score
I think education is the product I bought	3,63
My relationship with the University is like a customer and seller relationship	3,56
I believe that most students think that education is the product they buy	3,69
Students should get a tuition refund if it is considered that there is nothing to be learned from the class	3,25
I believe students should think that education is the product they buy	3,50
Average overall score	3,53

The consumerism attitude of these students shapes their expectations of universities such as the relationship between sellers and buyers. As well as consumers who have expectations of the products purchased.

Expectations of educators

Table 6 shows students' attitudes towards lecturers. The average score is high, all above 4 on a scale of 5. The data shows high expectations of teaching lecturers.

Table 6: Average score of expectations for educators

Statement	Average score
Lecturers should ensure that lectures are interesting for students	4,75
Lecturers must relate lecture material to real life	4,38
Lecturers must have good interpersonal relationships with students	4,56
Lecturers must communicate the lecture contract clearly	4,75
Average overall score	4,61

Job preparation

Table 7 shows the assessment of attitudes towards job preparation by universities. On average, the overall score is still high, above 4. The statement "A good job is the result of a university education" gets the lowest score even though it is still above the median score.

Table 7. Average score of expectations on job preparation

Statement	Average score
A good job is the result of a university education	3,13
There is counseling from the university to guide students in the process of looking for work	4,38
The university is responsible for providing job placement services	4,13
Universities must provide education that prepares students to enter the workforce	4,75
Average overall score of the questions	4,09

Emphasis on grades

The average score for all statements in this section is 3.20 slightly above the mean. These results indicate that students still expect to get grades easily.

Table 8. Emphasis on school grades

Statement	Average score
Students don't have to work hard to get good grades	2,50
Lecturers should try not to give bad grades so as not to damage the student's GPA	4,06
Students are justified in choosing a class or course in which they are most likely to receive an A, even if they study little or nothing	3,25
Students must do whatever it takes to get good grades, even if they do things that are dishonest	2,50
Universities should offer several classes or courses that can easily score A's	3,69
Average overall score	3,20

Student responsibilities

Table 9 displays the scores of students' attitudes towards their responsibilities as students. A high average score above 4 indicates a responsible student attitude.

Table 9: Student responsibilities

Statement	Average score
Students have to work hard in class to get good grades	4,69
Students have to study a lot of material outside of class hours.	4,06
Students should pay attention to the material during lectures, even if they think the material is boring.	4,25
Average overall score	4,33

The relationship of student consumerism attitudes with students' attitudes towards educators, jobs, values and responsibilities

Is there a correlation between consumerism and how students respond to lecturers, work, values and responsibilities? Table 10 displays the statistical test. It turns out that the attitude of student consumerism is positively related to expectations of educators, attitudes towards work, and values. While the attitude of consumerism in education is not correlated with responsibility. The findings at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Jawa Timur are the same as those of Fairchild and Crage (2014). Students with high consumerism attitudes correlate with high expectations of lecturers, preparation for work by universities, and high grades.

Table 10: Coefficients between student attitude variables

Attitude variable correlation coefficient	Student Consumerism	sig	Conclusion
Expectations of educators	0,587	0,017	Significant
work preparation	0,594	0,015	Significant
Score	0,624	0,01	Significant
Responsibility	0,246	0,359	Not Significant

Conclusion

This study aims to measure student attitudes towards consumerism education. This study also examines how the consumerism attitude correlates with expectations of lecturers, job preparation, grades, and responsibilities. From the data collected, it shows how the attitude of UPN Veteran East Java students is. Students tend to act as consumers in the education provided by the university and also believe that this attitude is also owned and should be owned by all students.

Students' attitudes towards lecturers show high expectations of lecturer performance. Likewise, students' attitudes towards work preparation provided by the university. Students' attitudes towards college grades show a tendency for high grade expectations. Students' attitude towards responsibility shows a high level of responsibility. The correlation test found a positive relationship between consumer attitudes and expectations of lecturers, job preparation and grades, but not with responsibility.

Suggestions to universities are to shape the mindset of students not only as consumers but also play a role in education itself. This means that students are not only inputs but also involved in the educational process which also plays a role in determining the output and outcomes of higher education.

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