

**Edu-Tourist's Perception of University Servqual and  
its Impact on Intention to Stay and Continuance  
Intention**

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## **ABSTRACT**

One of the key reasons Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has become an educational hub is due to the quality of university services that they deliver mainly to foreign students which happens to be their primary customers. In order to test those variables that bring about continuance intention of further studies in this region, several variables such as: perceived service quality, level of satisfaction, and student perceived performance were adopted to examine their impact on continuance intention of further study in six universities such as: Cyprus international university, Eastern Mediterranean university, Cyprus west university, Near East university, Girne American university and European university of Lefke. Quantitative approach was used in our study and a total number of (N305) online questionnaires were collected from the aforementioned universities. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using partial-least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, SPSS and ADANCO 2.11 software to test data adequacy. The findings from these universities indicate that there is a connection between service quality, level of satisfaction, student perceived performance and continuance intention of further study. Moreover, continuance intention was seen as a result of student perceived performance and level of satisfaction. The study also proposes that, if those antecedents of service quality are met then, there will be a win-win situation that is; it would give those universities a competitive edge over their competitors. The first chapter includes Introduction, Significance of the study, objectives and priorities of this research project. In addition, information on methodology, data collection and analysis and the research organization are provided.

**Keywords:** Perceived Service Quality, Level of Satisfaction, Student Perceived Performance, Behavioral Intention of Further Study

## ÖZ

Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nin bir eğitim merkezi haline gelmesinin en önemli nedenlerinden biri, yabancı öğrencilere sundukları hizmetlerin kalitesidir. Ek olarak, algılanan hizmet kalitesi, öğrenci memnuniyet düzeyi ve algılanan performans düzeyini, üniversitede devam etme niyeti üzerine olan etkileri incelenmiştir. Buna göre, Uluslararası Kıbrıs Üniversitesi, Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Kıbrıs batı üniversitesi, Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi, Girne Amerikan Üniversitesi ve Lefke Avrupa Üniversitesi'nde öğrenim gören öğrencilerden veri toplanmıştır. Çalışmada, araştırma metodlarından nicel yaklaşım tekniği kullanılmış ve söz konusu üniversitelerden toplam 305 kişiden çevrimiçi anket toplanmıştır. Doğrulayıcı faktör analizleri, veri yeterliliğini test etmek için kısmi-en küçük kare yapısal eşitlik modellemesi (PLS-SEM), SPSS ve ADANCO 2.11 yazılımı kullanılarak analizler yapılmıştır. Bu üniversitelerden elde edilen bulgular, hizmet kalitesi, memnuniyet düzeyi, öğrencinin algıladığı performans ve devam etme niyeti arasında bir bağlantı olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca devam etme niyeti, öğrencinin algıladığı performans ve memnuniyet düzeyinin bir sonucu olarak görülmüştür. Çalışma ayrıca, hizmet kalitesinin bu öncülleri karşılanırsa, bir kazan-kazan durumu olacağını önermektedir; bu üniversitelere rakiplerine göre rekabet üstünlüğü sağlayacaktır. Çalışmanın ilk bölümü; Giriş, Çalışmanın Önemi, hedefleri ve kapsamını içermektedir. Ek olarak, araştırma metodları kısmında, veri toplama, analizler ve araştırma hakkında hakkında bilgi verilmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Algılanan Hizmet Kalitesi, Memnuniyet Seviyesi, Algılanan Öğrenci Performansı, Gelecekte Devam Etme Niyeti

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicated this work to the Almighty God who has been the source of my strength, my parents, siblings and in the memory of my late grandfather Chief Agent Itopa.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the years, university service quality has been described as an essential element of the continuing purpose of further studies. Whereas, continuance intention is the prior experience with the service as a function of antecedent of service quality, perceived performance and amount of satisfaction which eventually leads to positive word of mouth (WOM).

Traditionally, tourists are characterized by the purpose of their trips which often includes leisure, business and religion but not for educational purposes. Nowadays, education has risen to be a pivotal part of global tourism industry as the contribution of edu-tourist (Educational tourists) is fast becoming immense (Eluwole et al., n.d.). With this increasing relevance of the edu-tourism to both the academic institutions and the host community of the foreign students, it is paramount to understand what and how satisfaction is derived and sustained by these students so as to be able to guarantee their attraction and retention.

Unlike the other reasons for traveling abroad where a person spends only a maximum of three months, educational tourism is a long-term tourism which can prevent a person from staying behind after graduation. Educational tourism is a process by which a person leaves home to study abroad in order to experience a new, competitive world. Reference is made to Ritchie et al., (2003) to support the concept, that Edu-tourism is

the act of traveling with learning purposes. Below is the statistical data of all the international students studying in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

## **1.1 Statistics of International Students Studying in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus**

Higher education in North Cyprus dates back to the late 1970s. Currently, North Cyprus is home to 17 universities, with further applications to open new universities pending approval (Mertkan & Famagusta, 2018). The student population, which is predominantly of Turkish and Turkish Cypriot origin, has recently been changing. In the 2016-2017 academic year, over 93,000 students were enrolled at North Cyprus universities, with around 27,500 international students (excluding those from Turkey) from more than 100 different countries representing 30% of the total student population. Turkish students currently enrolled in North Cyprus universities constitute the majority of students but are not regarded as international students. The international students' category consists primarily of students from African, Middle Eastern, and Central Asian countries such as Nigeria (26.7%), Pakistan (8.6%), Iran (7.2%), Syria (6.4%), Jordan (5.2%), Iraq (4.6%), Libya (4.4%), Zimbabwe (4.3%), Palestine (3.7%), Azerbaijan (3.1%), Kazakhstan (2.2%), Turkmenistan (1.7%), Egypt (1.5%), Cameroon (1.4%), Lebanon (1.4%), Congo (1.2%), Kyrgyzstan (1.1%), Russia (1.0%), and Somalia (1.0%) (TCYHB, 2015). On the basis of the above, Nigerian educational tourists constitute far and away the largest group of educational tourists not only at any particular host university but in North Cyprus in general.

## **1.2 Rational**

The current thesis was born out of the desire of the author to see quality education delivered at the zenith of learning. Decades back, education in Nigeria – the home country of the researcher was of decent quality and could even be comparable with the best of the best globally. However, with the passing of time, this quality standard had faded away and serious minded individuals are seeking quality education oversea. Irrespective of the advances in technology and globalization that accompanied it, Nigerian education is on the down trend and such tragedy is evident in the declining allocation of funds in the nation’s budget from year to year.

In the decade starting from 2009 through to 2018, the total sum of 55.19 trillion naira was expended in the nation’s actual budget which allocation for education and related activities being 3.90 trillion naira. This figure represents 7.6% of the budget for the span of time. This also indicated the disposition of Nigerian government towards education. Despite the low budgetary allocation, the systemic corruption in governance also implies that the little fund assigned for this purpose will not be used for the intended objectives.

Given that Africa and other developing nation’s exhibits similar orientation as to education and its importance to life, the current thesis was designed to develop a model that investigates how foreign tertiary institutions are attracting and retaining international students via the mechanism of service quality, perceived performance, and satisfaction with life. The thesis further seek to uncover how these attributes in foreign institute impact of the student’s intention to further study or stay after graduation. The report, however, serves as a guide for managers and policy makers,



and provides suggestions that can be implemented to improve service quality in a competitive educational environment and Nigeria as a nation can also learn from this body of knowledge to re-address the issues of quality services in her educational settings.

### **1.3 Purpose and Aim of Study**

Following the assertions from the rationale of the study, this thesis is aimed at testing a conceptual framework that takes into account both the perception of international students and the perceived standard of services in explaining the intention to obtain advanced degrees from international universities and to pursue further studies and the intention to remain after graduation.

Today, higher education sector in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is at the forefront of quality initiatives to draw more international students and to create a sustainable competitive climate advantage over rivals (Ezel & Arasli, 2019). The research is hence is performed to review the effectiveness of the service dimensions of the university SERVQUAL perception of international students at six TRNC universities, such as the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), Cyprus international University (CIU), Near East University (NEU), European University of Lefke (EUL), Cyprus West University (CWU) and Girne American University (GAU), and their effects on the ongoing plan for further study and the plan to remain after graduation.

The study also examined whether the efficiency of the service was acceptable or not. In the aforementioned universities a cross-sectional study was performed during the academic session (spring) 2019/2020 to test the conceptual model. It is important to

remember that university standard of service should be proclaimed if the student's satisfaction level is well handled and a clear word of mouth is proclaimed. Therefore, if the right programs are introduced they will help the university substantially and improve the marketing profile. To achieve the objectives of this research, a conceptual framework was created to explain the relationship between the dimensions of service quality, satisfaction, and success in behavior.

#### **1.4 Significance and Contribution of Study**

This research is undertaken to acknowledge the factors that could impact foreign students' behavioral intention. Liao et al., (2015);Liao et al., (2015) to mention few have written series of literature on university service quality but their major emphasis has been on the higher institution image, level of satisfaction and expectation but little is known on the connection amid perceived performance, degree of satisfaction, perceived SERVQUAL and a re-visit intention of the services the study is important with the following reasons: the urgent needs of the university to focus more on performance of each unit since this variable is a major determinant factor of retention.

Second, this study provides realistic insights to tertiary-institute administrators. This is important as it will enable the higher education institutions to find out the areas they need to concentrate on in others to meet the demands of the service needs of the edutourist. Finally, it is also a valuable paradigm that provides training for managers and TRNC's Government of higher education and the world in general with the experience required to develop and execute strategies for achieving quality performance that could give the university an advantage over their rivalries.

Integration takes place in three stages: procedures, structure, and principles of quality management. Such three distinct levels are the most important in terms of recognizing the various approaches to quality in higher education, as well as drawing conclusions about the degree of incorporation of quality management within the higher education institutions' overall governance and management structures. According to Higher Education literature (Manatos et al., 2017) at the process level, there are four main dimensions to which each manager must pay attention in order to achieve the highest quality and in return for satisfaction and further study intention: coaching and learning, testing and scholarship, project and support processes. In the same way, Higher Education literature on efficiency (Prisacariu & Shah, 2016) refers to three levels of organization: system level, unit level and institutional level.

Finally, the quality-management literature (Evans & Lindsay, 2013) consensually presents eight principles of quality management: student focus, leadership, involvement of people, process approach, system approach, continual improvement, factual approach to decision-making, and mutually beneficial supplier relationships (Manatos et al., 2017).

## **1.5 Structure and Timeline of Study**

Overall, the thesis is segmented into five (5) chapters which included introduction, analysis of the literature, methods, tests, discussion and conclusion. Obviously, this thesis followed the conventional structure of thesis writing as the first chapter gives precise but informative details about author's conceptualization of constructs, the justification of study and the expected contribution of the study.

This is immediately followed by the second chapter which covers the extant literature on the area of study with acute focus on internationalization of education, education tourism and related issues for highlighting the existing gaps in academic literature and where the current study's proposition will satisfy the need of the identified gap.

Next, it is a universal knowledge that academic research cannot yield result without a strict adherence to specific methods. Hence, the approach of the current study was delineated in chapter 3 which provided full information about the study approach, as well as survey procedures.

Chapter 4 gave results of empirical analysis while the last chapter discussed the implication and relevance of the findings to academic studies and practices.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter focuses on extant literature pertaining to internationalization of education viz-a-viz the impact of host nation's SERVQUAL orientation towards the attraction and retention of foreign students. The research takes into account various hypotheses concerning the decision-making process of students, motivation to study away from home country, popularly known as the push-pull factors that drive students to pursue international education. Nonetheless, several factors that gave rise to this motivation, such as Student perceived performance, perceived SERVQUAL, satisfaction level and continuity purpose of further study are thoroughly clarified in the model, using different literatures to support the claim.

Meanwhile, understanding that the implications of satisfaction level are continuation intention of further study and intention to stay after graduation is paramount. This section, which is the study's main focus, is broken down into four sub-sections representing four key components: perceived student performance, perceived SERVQUAL, satisfaction level and continuing study intention

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.1.1 Expectation Disconfirmation Theory**

The study of consumer behavior, expectancy disconfirmation theory holds that, consumers develop different expectations of service quality from prior experience, word of mouth, advertising and thus consumers apply different standards in forming

their subjective ratings or satisfaction judgments (Cardozo, 1965; Erevelles & Leavitt, 1992; Oliver, 1997). Based on the literature review, several authors have used different theories on university service quality in general but the most appropriate theory used in the study is Expectation Disconfirmation Theory. It is used in this study because it is a cognitive theory that helps to show the relationship between pre and post purchase intention as a function of: satisfaction, perceived performance, expectation and positive word of mouth.

It intertwines together the service quality gap, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions after the experience. Apart from demographic factors, there is evidence that consumers' past experiences with a service, influence their service expectations (Aflaki & Popescu, 2014). To address this aspect of university service offerings, we examined the relationship between perceived performances of the student, perceived service quality, satisfaction level, continuance intention of further study.

Enhancements to these theories should contribute to the development and interpretation of service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions in general. Satisfaction is very significant because in cost-benefit analysis, it indicates that the individual got the value of the money spent and in return attracts better offer in the labor market. The next segment discusses the current literature about foreign student experiences in higher education institutions.

## **2.2 Perceived SERVQUAL**

It is pivotal to know that every HEI is expected to succeed at three different missions: teaching, research and knowledge transfer. The contemporary society today is full of competition most especially in the higher learning institutions while quality services

are used in the system to wow the interest of the customers and also to retain them for survival (Marimon et al., 2019). In addition, universities invest more in equipment that generates a great output in the program and, in exchange, has a good place in the competitive market, which has always been the goal of all education managers.

Recently, students continue to use a specific service if their sense of service quality is met most notably by service that makes learning easy. For example, the university should provide accessible e-services that enable the students to carry out their assignments and any other educational activities at issue. Quality of service is a fundamental indicator of the degree to which the service offered meets the customers' needs (Quintal et al., 2012) whereas satisfaction is a general cognitive reaction to perceived difference between past and current perceptions of success. The definition of the service level has beneficial implications for both customer satisfaction and behavioral intention, as shown by the current (Zhao et al., 2012). In the sense of university SERVQUAL, a growing awareness concerning the antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction in higher education system were also identified by the following authors (Marimon et al., 2019; Alanezi et al., 2012; Sultan & Wong, 2014).

Quality of service is a vital element in higher education environments, attracting a vast number of students alike. Surely a student who is satisfied with the previous encounter will be back to using the facilities.

In response to the above arguments, Tangible higher education programs include university buildings, such as classrooms, dormitories, computer laboratories and a campus library. In the same vein, (Tsinidou, Maria, Gerogiannis, Vassilis Fitsilis,

Panos,. 2010) Identified qualitative determinants within higher education system in Greek' universities as part of the values the foreign students are attached to in hierarchical orders various factors related to the standard of service are listed below:

- i. Academic staff
- ii. Governing Programs
- iii. Library services
- iv. Structural curriculum
- v. Place
- vi. Facilities
- vii. Career view

Quality of service has a certain relation to results because what is in reality and the quality of success each service unit was able to display brings satisfaction to the students. Sequel to those operating systems listed, the services provided will always be adequate and these will ultimately lead to reliability due to ample on-site facilities to offer the right services when necessary.

Reliability denotes the skill to regularly and efficiently deliver the correct service needed. University personnel remained considered being trustworthy if they provide planned services to both the students and the school records in a consistent and correct manner. Responsiveness applies to the obligation to support international students, and offers facilities promptly (Gallifa & Batallé, 2010).

This indicates that staff need to be more sensitive as a fast response would ensure that a student is aware of the student's question and that the assurance defined as employee understanding and courtesy and their ability to promote trust and confidence (Quintal



et al., 2012). Rahman et al., (2017) asserted that assurance is one of the significant dimensions of the standard of service that means that HEIs students are concerned with courtesy, information and the ability to create confidence and trust. The last element is empathy identified as loving, individualized attention provided to its students by the university. Calvo-Porrall et al., (2013) reported that the lecturers and students good rapport both in the classroom and outside the school are considered part of the foreign student satisfaction.

The implementation of the university model SERVQUAL should be deemed to be the correct means for determining quality of service in the sense of education (Yeo & Li, 2014). Trivellas & Santouridis, (2016) asserted that the standard of service is a key predictor of gratification. Some researcher have equally shown that the standard of SERVQUAL have an effect on satisfaction (Jiewanto et al., 2012; Shahijan et al., 2018). In addition, the efficiency of the services offered may be checked by measuring student satisfaction, as the students are the real clients. Whereas the push-pull factor is the key explanation for the migration of foreign students, as the facilities provided abroad are better than my home country this is why the probability of studying abroad will continue to grow as a result of this push-pull factor.

It was also noted that students appear to look for more detail when you purchase a service, for example higher education. Simões and Soares, (2010) a research evaluating the perceived standard of service at HEI found that international students assign a valuable source of knowledge while reconsidering the perception of service quality. Quantitative research involving respondents from six universities with 305, undergraduates and postgraduate students in TRNC on university SERVQUAL reveals that SERVQUAL is viewed by students as having a major effect on satisfaction.

Nevertheless, the product value referred to by the student included: adequate staffing, measurable facilities, a friendly atmosphere and e-services, which have a substantial effect on the student's satisfactory standard. Parasuraman et al., (1988) questionnaire, or SERVQUAL, is given in two steps. The first step assesses the customer's service expectations in the five subscales prior to the experience of the service, where the respondent is asked to report their response to a range of service expectations claims with a hypothetical 'excellent' service provider. And the second step, which is called the performance battery, tests the customer's view of the service experience after the fact and, of course, every comment on this stage indicates that the service provider's performance meets the student's needs.

Moreover, reference is made to Nigerian educational system which has deteriorated due to insufficient funding. Ironically, the actual budget allocation to education was different from the money spent, it was recorded that out of 55.19 trillion naira, only 3.90 trillion naira was used. The question here is that, how do you expect performance in a system where corruption is the other of activities?

### **2.3 Student Perceived Performance**

There is a clear argument about the association amid perceived success and satisfaction that has been found in several studies. It is apparent that success is viewed with the degree of student evaluation and comprehension prior to the type of teaching assistance and the advantageous environment in which the service provider has been able to do so to give at the moment of truth.

Researchers defined three distinct but linked achievement goals in line with the above statement (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996)(Middleton & Midgley, 1997). Students

geared towards mastery or mission goals aim to Gain new skills and develop competencies. In contrast, students focused on success are motivated primarily by a strong desire to outperform others and display superior skills. Research has shown that the success of students is positively affected by the adoption of Mastery and success priorities. In addition to the university's reputation, researchers and practitioners generally agree that a single performance assessment is important. (Decramer et al., 2013). The main question is, is there any disparity in the degree of perceived academic competence?

Therefore, it is important for the university to employ the right skills that will give rise to success and this will also allow the student to perform better in the larger society, and that is also a way to offer the individual a qualitative education that meets the workplace's demands. Quality staffing and e-learning are among the antecedents of perceived performance as the key factors, while teachers are the source of knowledge and thus represent the university's identity. Quality assessment shall be conducted in an attempt to classify expected outcomes defined referring to the quality assessment process includes comparison of the actual output of HEIs with a list of criteria extracted either from the mission statement of universities or from international standards.

However, there must be professional instructors for results, as academic excellence is measured by the university's own quality assurance. However, research indicates that teaching performance can be measured critically using measures such as student assessments, classroom assessments, and administrative evaluations, indicators of learning progress, teaching portfolios, and review of curricula. Üstünlüo\uçglu, (2017) while each approach has its own advantages, the Student evaluations tend to produce

more reliable outcomes because they are direct measures, and the level of standard of instruction can only be precisely measured by input from students. Adding to the view, Sukirno & Siengthai, (2011) also argued that the lecturer was the key determinant of student success.

The fulfillment of the student's standards will occur when perceived performance matches or exceeds. Similarly, the outcome would be unhappiness if expectations are below perceived results (Yusoff et al., 2015). Similarly, good performance provides happiness for individuals but, on the other hand, poor performance reduces individual happiness (Johnson & Sohi, 2014). Significantly, perceived academic success is a huge factor that needs more research intention to proceed as the services provided by the service provider have been adequate, and there is a strong propensity to repetition.

The researchers therefore chose to use the expected output as an independent variable, since higher satisfaction arises when the expected outcome fulfills or meets the international student expectations. Meanwhile, the quality of employee efficiency particularly in higher education environments, is an important factor for education sector. It is therefore necessary for university workers to know how to use the best approach to improve productivity. Several writers pointed out that "happy and productive" places of work will contribute to human capital (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). In that context, both well-being and performance-oriented HR outcomes are of concern, and we include work satisfaction and perceived success of the organization.

We expect the managers launched High Performance Work Program to respond favorably to unit performance demands of employees (employee ratings of product quality, customer service, employer productivity and cleanliness). Finally, multiple

studies have shown that success is a strong indicator of academic achievement (Putwain et al., 2013). Therefore, the question of measurement of the quality assessment should be overemphasized, which includes evaluating the actual results of HEIs. In addition, the university should do some internal exercise by carefully assessing students based on material and non-material use such as e-learning and lecturers. The lecturers' assessment may be achieved by adding the student's assessment form to assess their performance, as the case may be.

The result obtained here shows that the perceived success is the university image (the product) shown in each student and motivating the student to stay back for further study as well. Consequently, this article hypothesizes the correlation amid the perceived output of students and the degree of satisfaction.

## **2.4 Level of Satisfaction**

The degree of customer satisfaction derives from previous knowledge of the student's perceived standard of service. Interestingly, a student who is pleased will certainly announce a good word of mouth and, if not pleased, a negative word of mouth will be uttered.

The word of mouth can be declared online (social media), face to face conversation and by questionnaire. Expectation Disconfirmation Theory shows that happiness is the result of positive emotion derived from the service encounter and ill feelings is the bad moments with in the moment of truth (Ndubisi, 2012). I enrolled at this university because of an affirmative word of mouth through contacts and social media channels, this is exactly what quality service in the university setting does to those whose needs have been met and who have spread the good experience.

In a related research project, Al-Maghrabi et al., (2011) expectation disconfirmation theory also helps to predict customer behavior in terms of goods and services prior to, during and after purchase. Courtesy demands that a student who is not happy with the facilities in the HEIs will certainly announce negative word of mouth and effectively leave this bad reputation which in turn affects marketing. Correcting a single mistake is simpler than to correct collectively which is more difficult task to do. Based on this principle, validation occurs when the purchase result and the application of a service encounters expectations.

Responding to the students need is the most critical strategy that any education manager will concentrate on if they really want success in the program, a good example of a competitive advantage is the higher the degree of satisfaction the higher the number of enrolments and vice versa. In addition, previous student retention research at institutions of higher education has concentrated on academic success as a predictor of retention. It is important to balance the motivation and the academics in this perspective capacity of the student and the ability of the institution to meet the standards of the student. More recently, Govender and Noel, (2012) display the factors to include seven dimensions: input quality, curriculum, academic infrastructure, interaction with business, interaction quality, facility support and non-academic processes.

Expectation disconfirmation theory consists of four structures: anticipation, results and confirmation. Through holistic education, students continue to learn best when all resources are available and operational, they are inspired and still ready to learn more, such as professional staffing, a friendly atmosphere, high-performance work systems and classrooms. The definition of academic motivation implies that students make

extra efforts to achieve their goals if they are inspired to learn, and therefore are more likely to fulfill their objectives and develop a sense of achievement in the pursuit of their education. Knowing why they learn and what to learn is a reference for students (Urda & Schoenfelder, 2006).

Meanwhile, intrinsic motivation is found to be a beneficial influence on learning enjoyment. Consumer satisfaction therefore relates to the customer's evaluation of requirements of actual results. Many foreign students attend school abroad due to an examination of cost benefits. The cost of the services offered by the university must therefore be equal to the amount of the money charged to buy the product. Zeithaml, Valarie, (1988) defines the perceived value as "cumulative estimate of the quality of the product by the consumer, based on the understanding of what is obtained and what is offered". Others interpreted monetary interest and described it as the advantages of getting a better service.

Service providers must therefore do everything in their power to fulfill the needs of students by making available such facilities that will help them succeed in their academic excellence. Similarly, Butt & ur Rehman, (2010). Claimed that HEIs focus on understanding and meeting students' wishes, needs and expectations; these factors are, therefore, educational attainment, departmental performance and facilities. Interestingly, the degree of satisfaction is an eye opener that gives rise to the purpose of further analysis because an individual who is with a specific service, I would certainly be inspired to repeat it.

A research on the intention of e-learning users with various experience rates showed that intention to continue was directly influenced by satisfaction of users with low

experience relative to users with high experience. Lin, Kan.-Min. (2011). Another similar study was done by (Lee, 2010) and results showed that satisfaction has the greatest effect on the intention of users to continue. Kaewkitipong et al., (2016) verified the desire to persevere positively affected satisfaction. There is a substantial connection amid satisfaction and behavioral intention to repeat the service if there is a high-quality staffing, new facilities, encouragement and high-performance work environment, then the intention to continue would be considered positive.

## **2.5 Continuance Intention of Further Study**

Latest research has shown that the students' desire to continue is the product of satisfaction in that particular institution of higher education. The desire to proceed is tantamount to happiness and the student's prior experience. Satisfaction is the positive effect that the student interpreted as a result in an inevitably ongoing purpose, the amount of money paid for the services is equal to the services rendered, and so there is a desire to revisit. In line with the above Argument, Wen.-Shan. Lin, (2012) Says satisfaction is a Positive learning effect that improves productivity and interest obtained through service experience. Satisfaction is key to the interpretation of reuse behavior (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Here, satisfaction refers to the extent to which a user is pleased with using a technology for a particular purpose (Liao et al., 2015).

The result variable in this analysis is the continuing aim of further research, referring to the subjective likelihood of a foreign student continuing with further analysis (Chiu et al., 2007). Continuation purpose is therefore the only instrument that could best interpret what satisfaction is all about among the international students. The continued purpose of further study is used as a dependent variable, as the foreign student will continue to use the same service. The overall effects of satisfaction are expected to



continue, both in higher education institutions and in other industries that offer related services. Satisfaction and loyalty have proven to be a weapon in behavioral intention (Curtis, Ambrose, Sondergeld, & Rai, 2011; Popp & Woratschek, 2017). There are three levels of satisfaction. Pre-stage, student satisfaction starts on the very day of arrival, the physical facilities, information, expectation and student past experience. During, as to do with the service experience it is known also as the moment of reality the way it was perceived and the final stage which is the post stage is the overall experience that actually leads to continuance intention of further study. This last stage is the determinant stage where the behavior of the individual is examined through positive proclamation or negative proclamation word of mouth.

Interestingly, academic performance makes a positive impact to students' post purchase intention of further study. According to Rodriguez-Ardura and Meseguer-Artola, (2017) many international students will continue to patronize a particular institution if there is high performance work system that makes learning enjoyable like well trained staff, comfortable learning environment, effective e-learning library and a litany of them. Moreover, the magnitude of the intention to stay depends on the system itself, if the performance is satisfactory positive word of mouth is proclaimed so a revisit intention is characterized by the level of performance perceived during that is, the moment of truth.

Fortunately, if the inputs of each unit are sufficient then there will be a repeated purpose and a constructive mouth phrase. The study also analyzed the constant operation of e-learning services, finding that success has a substantial effect on consumer satisfaction with continuing higher education intentions (Yu et al., 2005). Performance is therefore a key factor influencing the desire to fulfill and continue.

Another research explored members' participation in the ongoing expansion of knowledge across Virtual society finds that success goals had a positive effect on the desire to start (Chou et al., 2012). Continuance intention is the function of perceived performance noticed during work duration in institutions of higher education, which is also a deciding factor in retention. This research hypothesizes therefore the connection between the perceived output of students and the continuing purpose of further.

## **2.6 Hypotheses**

### **2.6.1 Perceived SERVQUAL, Level of Satisfaction, Perceived Performance and Intention to Further Study**

Following the tenets of expectation disconfirmation theory, a typically customers have knowledge of service with predefined cognitive output requirements of the establishment. So when performance experience matches exactly what customers have expected, then validation is assumed to have happened. Therefore, previous experience is a driving factor that also contributes to favorable word of mouth where pre- and post-purchase is a feature of contentment. Yee et al., (2013) claimed that the standard of service is a critical predictor of the degree of satisfaction. The researchers found that university service efficiency has a favorable effect on satisfaction (Jiewanto et al., 2012; Shahijan et al., 2018).

In a related research conducted to analyze the effect of SERVQUAL on student satisfaction in HEIs in Pakistan Punjab to be precise, found that the dimensions of service quality such as measurable, efficient, reliable, and sensitive and empathy was seen as an important antecedent on satisfaction (Malik et al., 2011). Furthermore, research carried out on the quality of university service at 155 higher institutions in

Indonesia also shows that students perceived quality of service has a positive impact on student satisfaction, so any improvement in student perceived SERVQUAL will lead to increased student satisfaction (Sumaedi et al., 2011). Therefore, the following hypotheses are advanced:

H1a: There is a positive correlation between quality of service and level of satisfaction.

In an effort to prove the impact of the SERVQUAL experience on performance, all units' inputs should be able to complete the task perfectly assigned to it in order to make learning enjoyable. That is why the university must continue to recruit the right employees to handle each subject contents since the university instructors are the true image or a representative, effort must be made to keep the reputation through the frontline line employees like the teaching staff. Yee et al., (2013) also justify that the magnitude of SERVQUAL relates with to the total understanding of performance of the staff.

Molinari, Abratt, and Dion, (2008) stressed that SERVQUAL is empirically affecting performance. Another research conducted by Sukirno & Siengthai, (2011) also stated that the lecturer was the key determinant of student success since education itself is based on human capital in developing the younger generations. The following hypothesis is proposed as well:

H1b: There is a positive relationship between service quality and students' perceived performance.

A customer tends to patronize a particular service if expectations are met. Loyalty is gained in three service encounter such as; pre. Which is the expectation of the customer, during; this is the moment of truth that intertwines with post stage which is

intention to continue further studies whereas, loyalty is retrieved via the service performance during the moment of truth. In other to justify our claim, scholars and practitioners have in the past paid more attention to quality of service because of its significant impact on perceived results (Trivellas & Santouridis, 2016).

H1c: The relationship is positive between quality of service and the intention of students to pursue their studies.

### **2.6.2 Level of Satisfaction and Intention to Further Study**

The theory used in this study stem from this construct customer's satisfaction. For instance, if the customer is satisfied a positive word of mouth is proclaimed and if there is dissatisfaction there is going to be a bad expression of mouth this is the outcome of pre and post purchase intention and this is exactly the summary of expectation disconfirmation theory. To justify my claims above, a research was done by Ndubisi, (2012) to support the claims above that, expectation disconfirmation theory Shows that satisfaction is achieved when expectations are met, resulting in negative disconfirmation of expectations.

However, expectation disconfirmation theory can be encountered in four perspectives: expectation, performance, confirmation and the degree of satisfaction (Chou et al., 2012). And of course these construct help to promote behavioral intention of further study. This advances the next hypothesis:

H2: The degree of satisfaction and the likelihood of further study have a positive relation.

### **2.6.3 Student Perceived Performance and Intention to Further Study**

Based on the proposition of expectation-disconfirmations theory, people tend to attribute performance expectation with level of satisfaction. Nevertheless, when students who are the primary clients examined in the context of higher education

institutes are expected to receive a certain level of satisfaction which is driven by the performance perception of individual with the learning culture in the institute. Performance is a function of how well the services rendered were able to meet the demands of the students (Aldholay et al., 2018). Moreover, each unit is said to operate perfectly in order to wow the interest of the students and a case of underperformance in each unit will definitely lead to student dissatisfaction. However, good performance gives satisfaction to individuals but poor performance decreases individual satisfaction (Evans & Lindsay, 2013).

Notwithstanding, result from Kaewkitipong et al., (2016) emphasized that perceived performance has a positive correlation with intention of further study. Furthermore, student perceived performance is considered as an independent variable because of the degree of satisfaction and continuance behavioral intention of further study was as a result of each unit output performance. Therefore, performance is a key factor affecting satisfaction and continuance intention. Therefore, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H3: There is a positive relationship between students' perceived performance and continuance intention of further study.

#### **2.6.4 Parallel Mediation Effects**

It is pertinent to know that re-visit intention of service is used as an independent variable simply because the outcome of service encounter is enshrined in continuance intention. Moreover, this is the behavior that occurred after the overall service experience if the encounter is productive then there would be a continuance intention which is also seen as a positive word of mouth and vice versa. Expectation disconfirmation theory also lay emphasis on this that reactions come after the service

encounter but if there is positive correlation with the expected services continuance intention would be the case and vice versa.

Moreover, the result of continuance intention is the perceived performance that the customers have experience coupled with the degree of satisfaction respectively. Moreover, higher level of performance will lead to affirmative word of mouth and lower performance will result to a decrease in enrolment. It is therefore, paramount for the universities to know what is required of them and the desire of each student living in campus. Continuance intention is measure as a win-win situation that means, the amount of services rendered is tantamount to the investment made. This is the outcome variable in this study looking at the overall university service quality and the behavioral intention attached to each experience pre, during and post purchase stage. A research was carried out via Ramayah & Lee, (2012) pertaining to e- based learning in Malaysia's public HEI exposed that the efficacy of e-learning in a public university is deemed to be inefficient if users are less satisfied than the target of continuous usage. This advances the next hypothesis:

H4: Student level of satisfaction and perceived performance mediate the relationship between SERVQUAL and continuance intention of further study.

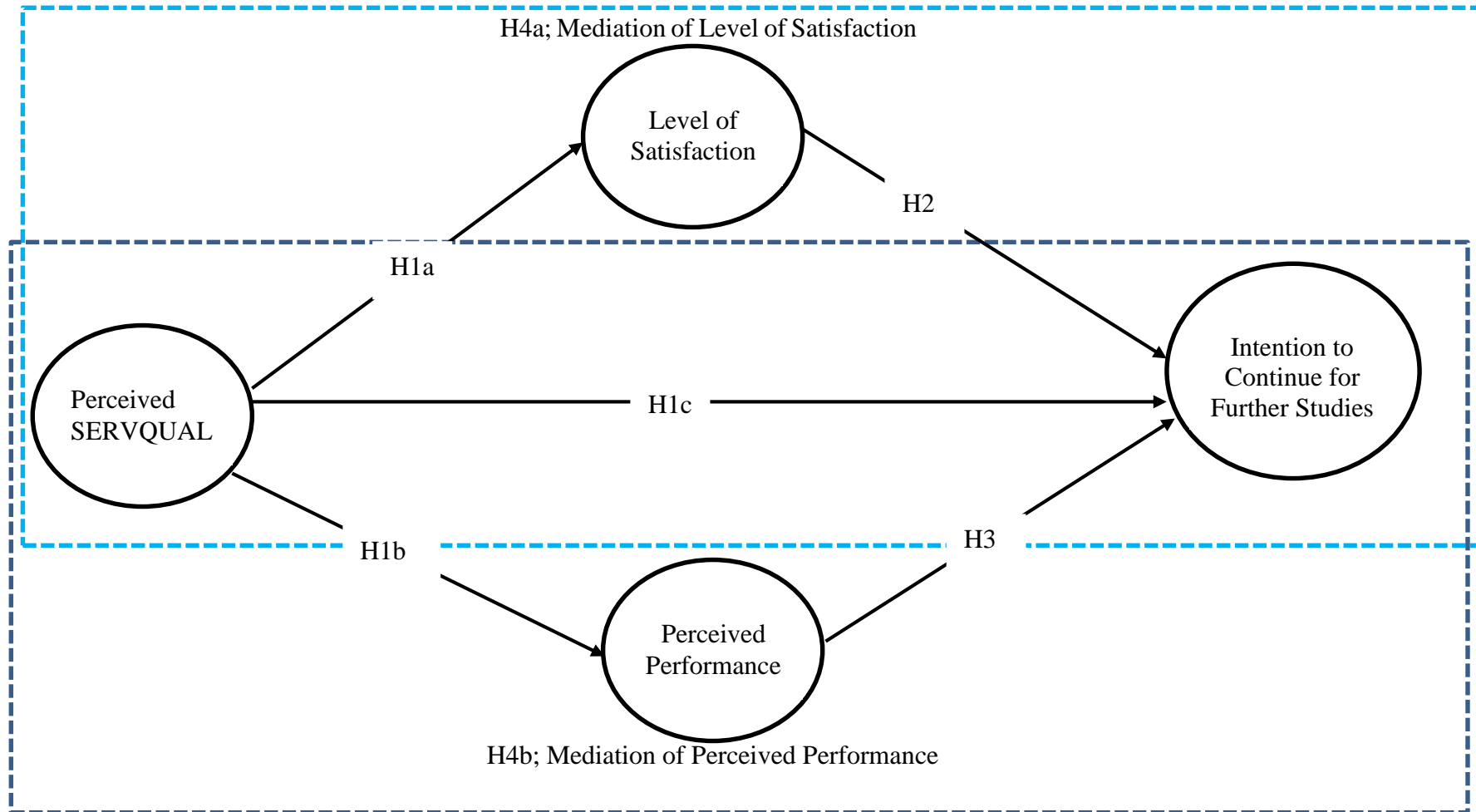


Figure 1: Research model

## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents issues pertaining to the research context, study approach, research philosophy, data collection, questionnaire design and strategy of analyses.

#### 3.1 Study Context

To check the theoretical trend, quantitative research approach was employed in this study and the statistical analysis was carried out by an online questionnaire. For this analysis the population has been classified as foreign students studying in Cyprus international university, Eastern Mediterranean university, Girne American university, Near East university, European university of Lefke and Cyprus West university.

The focus group foreign students living and studying in Northern Cyprus. TRNC strives for long-term educational tourism since the major sources of revenue of Northern Cyprus is Educational tourism. Hence, supplying the international students with excellent facilities is crucial for the higher institutions universities. The researcher collected data from the international student from six universities both private and public to test the amount of service rendered to them. Therefore, the data collected from international undergraduate and postgraduate students at top public university Eastern Mediterranean university and private universities Cyprus international university, Near East university, Girne American university, European university of Lefke and Cyprus West university. Northern Cyprus is the setting of survey ground this is because they have more foreign graduates. To assess the standard of university



service quality, virtual survey has four sections. The measurement scales resulting via preceding study. To measure Student perceived performance five items were adapted from prior studies (Den Hartog Deanne, Boon, Corine, Verburg, Robert , Croon and Marcel., 2013). Seventeen items were carved out to weigh Perceived SERVQUAL (Gallifa & Batallé, (2010;Nadiri et al., (2009); Shekarchizadeh et al., (2011); Udo et al., 2011). To measure level of satisfaction five items were adapted ((King & Grace, 2012; Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013) adapted three items on continuance intention (P.-C. Lin et al., 2013; Bhattacharjee, 2001; Alraimi et al., 2015).

### **3.2 Study Approach**

There are two ways of carrying research study these are: deductive and inductive. However, these two ways of fulfilling research can be identified with the way they begin. Moreover, deductive always start with a hypothesis. Deductively reasoning means checking certain hypotheses. You cannot perform deductive analysis if there is no theory yet (Babbie, 1989). Deductive is a method of research which as a positive relationship with quantitative method. Deductive means reasoning from the particular to the general. If a causal relationship or link seems to be implied by a particular theory or case example, it might be true in many cases. For example, my study is from subset to general that means the focus group represent the entire population of international students studying in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. A deductive design might test to see if this relationship or link did obtain on more general circumstances. Deductive approach can be explained by the means of hypotheses, which can be derived from the propositions of the theory. In other words, deductive approach is concerned with deducting conclusions from premises or propositions. Quantitative analysis requires data collection, so that facts can be quantified and objectively interpreted to support or refute 'alternative statements of expertise" (Creswell &

Creswell, 2017). In addition, this research will make quantitative progress in exploring the effect of the standard of university service on behavioral purpose of foreign students studying in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Thus, data will be obtained and a similar theory will be formed from the data, respectively. Quantitative approach was chosen our research to advance and employ a mathematical model and phenomena-related hypotheses. Some questions and a model have been given in this quantitative survey and data are analyzed in the next step. The resulting data and numeric are impartial and generalizable for a wider population.

### **3.3 Sampling and Procedure**

#### **3.3.1 Purposive Sampling**

A non-sampling was used in this study using judgmental or purposive technique which connotes selecting a particular sample size to represent the entire population meaning from subset to general. The researcher selects units to be sampled using his / her current information. In our study, the focus group is the foreign students studying in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus both undergraduate and postgraduate students irrespective of their tradition, age, sex, country and academic status. The online questionnaires was administered to test how the international students have perceived performance, the university service quality offer to them, degree of satisfaction and their behavioral re-visit intention of further studies. However, from the data gathered about 306 successfully filled the online survey. Furthermore, the format of this questionnaire was carved out from (Shahijan et al., 2018) and a 5-point to 7-point Likert-type scale with 30 items. The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather data regarding to university service quality and its effects on continuance intention of further study.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Online survey was conducted to gather data from six universities in Northern Cyprus via, VOIS Cyprus, social media groups and COVID-19. Although, this was not the initial arrangement of data collection but due to COVID-19 there was no way for the researcher to administer the questionnaire face-to-face. Therefore, data was collected online from a target population of international undergraduate and postgraduate students studying in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus at top public university Eastern Mediterranean university and private universities: Cyprus international university, Near East university, Girne American university, European university of Lefke and Cyprus West university. The online survey was divided into five parts to measure the university service quality. The initial part designed to attain demographic information. perceived SERVQUAL, section two part consist of; Student perceived performance, the third section comprise; level of satisfaction and the fourth section consist of re-visit intention of further studies. A total of 305 respondents completed the online questionnaires.

### **3.5 Measurement**

#### **3.5.1 Measurement of Level of Satisfaction**

To measure level of satisfaction five items were adapted from a prior research (King & Grace, 2012; Goh et al., 2017; Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013) thus, the study was anchored expending 7-point Likert scale beginning with 1 strongly disagree with 7.

#### **3.5.2 Measurement of Continuance Intention to Further Study**

Continuance intention of further study was measured using three items from precious literatures (P.-C. Lin et al., 2013; Bhattacharjee, 2001; Alraimi et al., 2015) which was also anchored using 7-point Likert scale with 1 being strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree.

### **3.5.3 Measurement of Student Perceived Performance**

Measuring Student perceived performance five items have been adapted from previous studies (Den Hartog Deanne, Boon, Corine, Verburg, Robert , Croon & Marcel., 2013; Bowra et al., 2012). However, this construct was anchored using 5-point Likert scale with 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

### **3.5.4 Measurement of Perceived SERVQUAL**

The study adopted the already existing literatures from (Gallifa & Batallé, 2010; Nadiri et al., 2009; Shekarchizadeh et al., 2011; Udo et al., 2011) to measure perceived SERVQUAL the scale include a 17-item of service quality which is bounded into 5-subdimensions. The sub-dimension included tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance. An example of this items is ‘. The scale was anchored on a 5-point Likert rater with 1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree.

## **3.6 Data Analysis**

The analysis followed the conventional approach of a two-stage process as recommended by (Anderson & Gerbing, 1991). SPSS 22 and ADANCO statistical software was used to estimate the data for this thesis. In the initial stage, the demographic profile of respondents was evaluated in SPSS, while both the measurement and structural models were gauged using ADANCO software.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESULTS OF STUDY**

The research findings gathered data from six universities in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on university service quality with the following constructs: student perceived performance, perceived SERVQUAL, degree of satisfaction and behavioral intention of further study data were all gotten from each construct and which is also reported in this chapter. Specifically, the age, class, profile of respondent's educational status, relationship type and name of institution is provided. The psychometric quality of the instrument with regards to both discriminant and convergent validity are also given. Further, correlations and internal consistency reliable of study variables are individually reported using the Cronbach's alpha. Lastly, hypothesized relationships were also reported through multiple regression analysis.

#### **4.1 Profile of the Study's Respondents**

As is obvious in Table 2 below, the demography of the participants of the study were reported. In simple terms, we report details of the participant concerning age, gender, current educational status, current institution of enrolment, and their relationship type.

With respect to age, we unsurprisingly recorded the highest participation among the youngest age group. Specifically, the 18-27 age brackets comprised of about 56.1% of the total cases. In the same vein, the 28-37 age brackets represented the second most group in our study sample with 35.7% participation rate. Together, students that fall between the ages of 18-37 represented an overwhelming 91.8% of our study sample.

This is expected because the sample target students in higher education institutes studying at bachelors, masters and doctoral levels. The remainder of the participants are 38 years or older.

However, in terms of gender, it is expected that male should be more than female gender in the higher education institutions abroad because male seek more to study abroad with the hope of gaining employment opportunity after study. Moreover, the study recorded 158 respondents from the male which is about 51.8% of the total respondents and the female respondents were set at 147 with 48.2% in our survey.

Furthermore, it is very logical to see more undergraduate students compare to post graduates due to the fact that most graduate students prefers to marry and some will equally seek for job opportunities and when they find one they stick to it and then plan later to come back for further study because of this gap, the bachelor/undergraduate will continue to outnumber the postgraduate students in the higher institution. Among the educational status, Bachelor/undergraduates were very responsive with the greatest number of 157 respondents which comprised of 51.5%. In addition to the aforementioned reasons of why the undergraduates are more than the post graduates, it is very clear that the propensity of certainty to stay after graduation is very slim. The master students have 116 responses which is 38.0% of the study this is so because most people that fall into this age bracket are still very young while those for doctoral are expected to be very low because of the age differences with 32 responses which is just 10.5% of the total respondents.

Pertaining to relationship type, it is expected to have a great number of no partners among the undergraduates since most of them are still teenagers and of course

maximum attention is key at this age bracket. Our study recorded about 217 no partner among the undergraduates with 71.1% while most of those that got married to non-Turkish/Cypriot falls under postgraduate level of education with 71 respondents taking 23.3% and for Turkish partner 17 respondents with 5.6% respectively. These analysis above shows that in the nearest future, the undergraduate will go for the foreigners since their propensity to stay after graduation to continue further studies is certain. However, Yi. Lin & Kingminghae, (2018) also asserted that one determinant of the intention of international students to remain in China, is the role of intimate relationships such as marriage or a romantic relationship. We pointed out that romantic relationships are a cross-border pull factor, with their intensity varies according to gender. Similarly, Hooijen et al., (2017) found the confusion surrounding the intention of the international students to remain in Germany. They evaluate common certain students and others uncertain students separately. Comparing the uncertain students with those who are sure to leave, the master students are more likely to be uncertain relative to Bachelor students. That is the same explanation given above to justify our claims that relationship type is also a determinant factor of behavioral intention.

Conclusively, in respect to where the survey was conducted, EMU takes the highest respondents and percentage since the researcher is a product of this institution and moreover because of the fame and integrity this institution has attained at the international scene with a remarkable respondents of 136, which is 44.6%, followed by CIU with 51 which is 15.7%, next is NEU with 50 which is 15.4, GAU with 39 which comprised 12.8%, EUL 22 which is 7.2% and CWU with 7 and 2.3% of the total respondents from the survey conducted in all the aforementioned institutions.

Table 1: Respondent's profile ( $n = 305$ )

	Frequency	%
<b>Age</b>		
18-27	171	56.1
28-37	109	35.7
38-47	22	7.2
48-57	3	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	158	51.8
Female	147	48.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Education</b>		
Bachelor/Undergraduate	157	51.5
Masters	116	38.0
Ph.D.	32	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Relationship Type</b>		
No Partner	217	71.1
Non-Turkish/Cypriot Partner	71	23.3
Turkish/Cypriot Partner	17	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Name of School</b>		
EMU	136	44.6
CIU	51	16.7
NEU	50	16.4
GAU	39	12.8
EUL	22	7.2
CWU	7	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Note: EMU- Eastern Mediterranean University; CIU- Cyprus International University; NEU-Near East University; GAU- Girne American University; EUL-European Leadership University; CWU-Cyprus West University.

## 4.2 Measurement Model

As indicated in the earlier section, this thesis followed the two-stage approach of information exploration. To ascertain the convergent and discriminant validity, confirmatory factor Analyzes is conducted using partial-least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach.



The data of this study was subjected to data adequacy check using ADANCO 2.1.1 PLS-SEM software. The result as shown in Table 3 showed that all items of the four-factor model of this study loaded appropriately under their underlying constructs. Specifically, the items of 15 items of service quality have outer loadings ranging between 0.68 to 0.88. In the same way, the 5 satisfaction items factor loadings ranging from 0.82 to 0.88. Furthermore, the 3 items of continuance intention of further studies ranging from 0.90 to 0.95. Additionally, there are 5 factor loadings under student perceived performance which also ranging from 0.74 to 0.85.

Furthermore, AVE was also reported to give a further understanding of convergent validity. As expected, the AVEs for each constructs were larger than the required threshold value of 0.5. In clear terms, AVE for service quality is 0.66, AVE for level of satisfaction is set at 0.73, AVE for continuance intention of further studies is 0.87 and AVE for student perceived performance is at 0.65. Thus, this showed that our data achieved convergent validity.

To assess the discriminant validity of our study, we adopted the conventional requirement of (Fornell & Lacker, 1981) which requires that the square root of AVEs should be greater than the inter-construct correlation values. As reported in Table 4, the square roots of the AVEs were given in boldface on the diagonal of the table and the values clearly surpass the values of the corresponding inter-construct correlation.

The efficiency of the concepts was also assessed harnessing Cronbach's alpha and Dijkstra-Henseler's  $\rho$  ( $\rho_A$ ) composite reliability score (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). As recommended by Dijkstra & Henseler, (2015) for constructs to be considered reliable, such construct should have  $\rho_A$  worth more than 0.7.

Table 2: Convergent validity and reliability result

Construct/Items	Outer Loadings	Composite Reliability ( $\rho$ )	AVE	$\alpha$
Perceived Service Quality		0.97	0.66	0.97
SQT1	0.74			
SQT2	0.68			
SQT3	0.75			
SQR1	0.88			
SQR2	0.85			
SQR3	0.84			
SQP1	0.78			
SQP2	0.74			
SQP3	0.80			
SQA1	0.88			
SQA2	0.84			
SQA3	0.77			
SQA4	0.82			
SQE1	0.83			
SQE2	0.88			
SQE3	0.88			
SQE4	0.85			
Level of Satisfaction		0.93	0.73	0.91
LS1	0.87			
LS2	0.88			
LS3	0.82			
LS4	0.86			
LS5	0.83			
Continuance Intention of Further Studies		0.95	0.87	0.92
CF1	0.95			
CF2	0.95			
CF3	0.90			
Student Perceived Performance		0.90	0.65	0.87
SPP1	0.81			
SPP2	0.84			
SPP3	0.85			
SPP4	0.74			
SPP5	0.80			

Similarly, the requirement of Cronbach's alpha also demand that the alpha value should be greater than 0.7. As evident in Table 3, the  $\rho_A$  and  $\alpha$  for all the four variables of this study were greater as 0.7. Specifically, the  $\rho_A$  and  $\alpha$  value for service quality is 0.97, for level of satisfaction is 0.93 and 0.91 respectively, for perceived student performance is 0.95 and 0.92 respectively, for continuance intention is 0.90 and 0.83 respectively.

Table 3: Inter-construct correlation and discriminant validity

Construct		1	2	3	4
1.	Perceived Service Quality	<b>.81</b>			
2.	Level of Satisfaction	.78	<b>.85</b>		
3.	Continuance Intention of Further Studies	.78	.83	<b>.93</b>	
4.	Student Perceived Performance	.77	.79	.82	<b>.81</b>

Note. Square root of AVE on the diagonal in bold face.

### 4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The structural model of the current study was analyzed using 9,999 subsamples with bootstrapping techniques. The result of as explained in Table 5 and Table 6 which provided the result of direct effects and indirect effects of the independent variable (that is; perceived service quality) on the dependent variables (perceived student performance, continuance intention, and level of satisfaction).

As proposed in hypothesis 1a, the study posited that student's sensitivity of SERVQUAL consequences is increased satisfaction. The result from hypothesis testing confirmed the hypothesis. This is evident in the positive and significant association of Perceived standard of service and the student satisfaction level ( $\beta = 0.78$ ,  $t = 25.27^{**}$ ). Thus, hypothesis 1a received empirical support. Hypothesis 1b suggests that service quality positively influences the performance of students in school. This hypothesis also received an empirical support with the following statistics ( $\beta = 0.79$ ,  $t = 27.94^{**}$ ). Hypothesis 1c postulated a direct and positive relationship between service quality and student's intention to continue to study. As expected, the hypothesis also received an empirical support ( $\beta = 0.78$ ,  $t = 24.29^{**}$ ). Hence, all the hypothesized direct effects of perceived service quality on the dependent variables were supported.

Table 4: Direct effects and bootstrap analysis results

Effect	Path coefficient	Mean value	Standard bootstrap results			Percentile bootstrap quantiles	
			Standard error	t-value	p-value	0.5%	99.5%
H1a; SQ -> LS	0.78	0.78	0.031	25.27	0.0000	0.6945	0.8541
H1b; SQ -> SPP	0.79	0.80	0.028	27.94	0.0000	0.7168	0.8609
H1c; SQ -> CIF	0.78	0.78	0.032	24.29	0.0000	0.6855	0.8497
H2; LS -> CIF	0.44	0.44	0.078	5.60	0.0000	0.2250	0.6312
H3; SPP -> CIF	0.37	0.38	0.069	5.44	0.0000	0.2037	0.5695

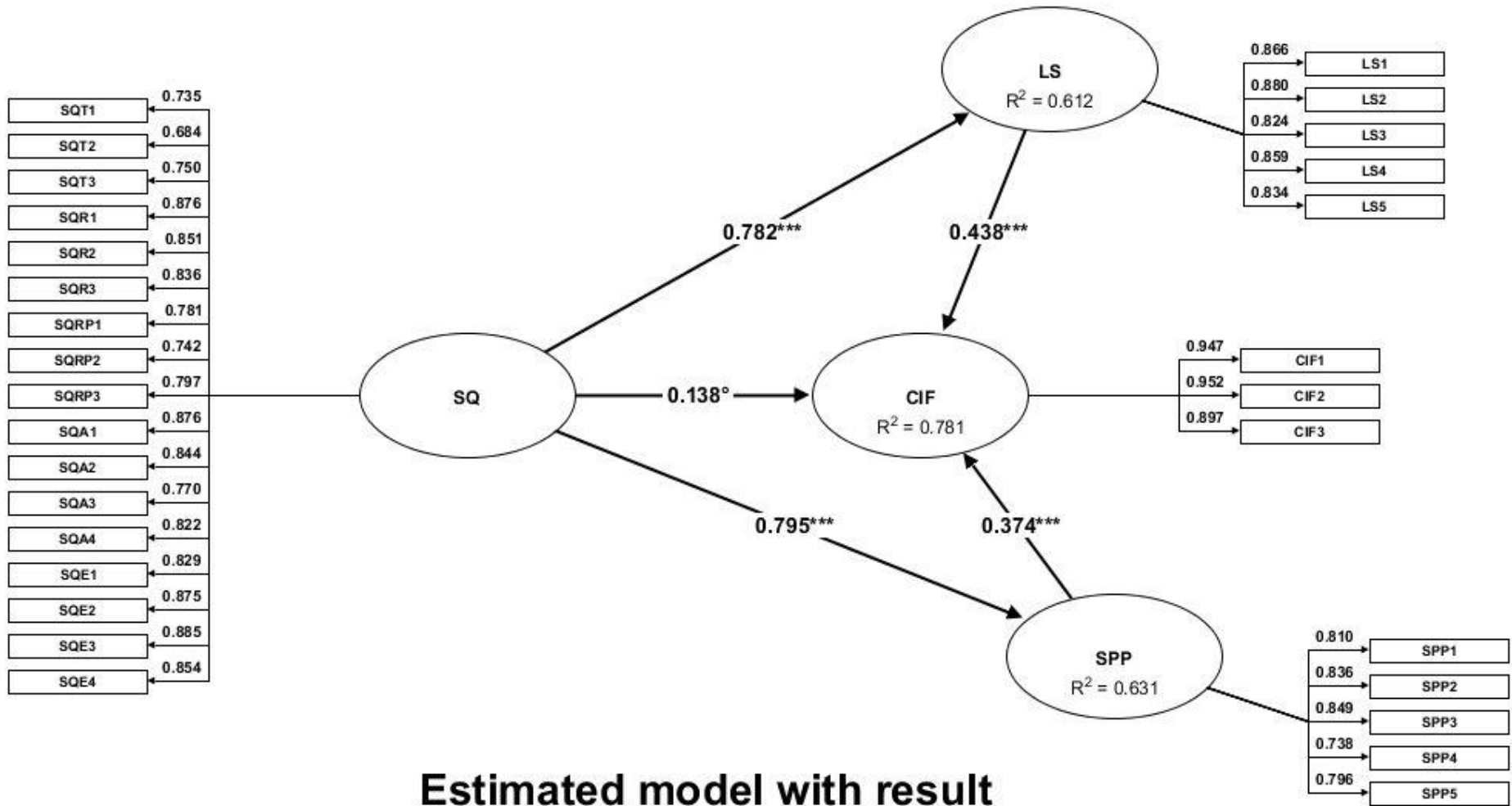
Hypothesis 2 posited that students' level of satisfaction will positively impact on their continuance intentions. Our result showed the outcome of level of satisfaction on student's continuance intent is positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.44, t = 5.60^{**}$ ). Finally, the direct effect of student's performance on their continuance intention was also hypothesized. The results equally gave an empirical justification for the hypothesis ( $\beta = 0.37, t = 5.44^{**}$ ). Hence, all direct effects were significant and hypotheses 1-3 were statistically supported.

The specific indirect effect of SERVQUAL on student's behavioral intention via the mediating role of level of satisfaction was hypothesized in the first part of the fourth hypothesis. With path coefficient of 0.45 and  $t$ -value of 7.53, this hypothesis was also supported. Lastly, the specific indirect effect of service quality on continuance intention through the mechanism of student perceived performance which was hypothesized in the second part of the fourth hypothesis also received empirical significance. The path coefficient of this link was given in Table 6 ( $\beta = 0.79, t = 27.94^{**}$ ).

The graphical representation of the hypothesized relationships and the result of the estimation showing the significance of all the paths and their linkages is provided in Figure 2.

Table 5: Indirect effect and bootstrap analysis result

Effect	Path coefficient	Standard bootstrap results				Percentile bootstrap quantiles	
		Mean value	Standard error	t-value	p-value	0.5%	99.5%
H4a; SQ -> LS-> CIF	0.45	0.46	0.060	7.53	0.0000	0.3134	0.6220
H4b; SQ -> SPP-> CIF	0.79	0.80	0.028	27.94	0.0000	0.7168	0.8609



## Estimated model with result

Figure 2: Estimated model with result

## **Chapter 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This thesis chapter gives the report of the outcome of the analytical findings with the author's interpretation and inferences from the result. The chapter make available for the reader with full evidence about the effects of the significance of the results.

#### **5.1 Discussion of Results**

This thesis was conceived and designed to develop and test an empirical model which seek to uncover how tertiary institution's commitment to service quality lead to student's continuance intentions. Furthermore, the model also examines the indirect impact of the aforementioned relationship via the specific impact of students' perception of their performance and level of satisfaction with the institution.

The data for this study was solicited from international students at all levels of higher education from 6- foremost institutions in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The relationships were based on the tenets of theory used in this research which postulate that post purchase is as a result of prior experience.

The finding from hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c revealed that students' perception of the SERVQUAL is pivotal indicator for emotion and actions. In general terms, students who feel that the management of their institution takes service quality requirements into consideration in their dealings with the students are likely to exhibit better level of satisfaction with the school and in turn display a behavioral intention to continue to



study with the school. This finding is in alignment with those of extant literature. Specifically, Chen et al., (2018) postulate that the degree of performance is the major driven element of behavioral intention of further study. In a related research conducted by Johnson & Sohi, (2014) also claimed that, Effective performance increases satisfaction of individuals, while poor performance decreases individual satisfaction.

The result from hypothesis 2 which is student perceived performance shows why the university must continue to recruit the right employees to handle each subject content since the university instructors are the true image or a representative, effort must be made to keep the reputation through the frontline line employees like the teaching staff. However, HEI should make available the equipment that will aid the teachers to teach the students since high performance work system is characterized by motivation to learn and commitment to work student expectations can easily be met. In a study carried out by Tomic et al.,( 2018); Jaiswal & Dhar, (2016) their findings revealed that, the quality of service is concerned with the overall perception of the performance of the services provided by the service employees.

Furthermore, the findings from hypothesis 3 and 4 posit that the degree of satisfaction is the major antecedent of behavioral intention to repeat the service. From the empirical research, it was observed that satisfaction occurred at three different stages namely pre, during and post and however, each stage of encounter is very crucial. The result from these three stages aforementioned is a key driver of continuance intention which is also the post stage. Notwithstanding, the theory used in this study is, “expectation disconfirmation theory” stems from the theory of satisfaction as a result of prior treatment. The evaluation of level of satisfaction is based on continuance intention. A student who has received a good treatment in a particular institution will definitely

proclaim a positive word of mouth and in turn an added advantage to the university. If Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus will only become a destination for foreign students if a qualitative services are rendered to its customers as perceived before enrolment. A research was carried out by Ramayah & Lee, (2012) pertaining to e-based learning in some of the higher institutions in Malaysia, the result also indicated that the degree of satisfaction will either make an individual to repeat the service or not.

The finding in 4a and 4b revealed that, mediation between level of satisfaction and perceived performance are key predictor of behavioral intention. For instance, in a reputable university like EMU, students are able to study with ease and also do presentation in class conveniently without any stress and then at the end of the session evaluation take place. As stated in hypothesis 3, that there are three stage of service encounter and the most important stage is the last stage which is the post stage if the result at the post stage is positive then retention is attained. Retention occurs following the gap amid level of satisfaction and perceived performance. Although, all the stages are very important but most importantly is the result which is the post stage. The educational managers must establish the fact that if the right services are not given in the university environment the issue of performance and satisfaction will be defeated and as a result this failure, negative word of mouth is proclaimed and vice versa. Conclusively, effort should be made to see that each unit functions well by making sure that there is constant internet, conducive environment for learning and having also qualified employees once all these are in place then the university will naturally increase its profile in the market and more enrolment will be attained.

## **5.2 Contribution to Theory**

There are prior empirical research studies on universities service quality using various theories to achieved their research study but very few of them have taking into cognizance how retention is achieved through, having a superb university service quality. Expectation disconfirmation model is harnessed in this study because it seeks to explain post purchase as a result of prior experience of an individual as a function perceived performance, level of satisfaction and expectation. Northern Cyprus is a small Island which its major sources of revenue come from educational tourism majorly from the international students. Furthermore, the study posit that every educational manager must have a functioning system by making provision for the following; E-library, conducive classrooms, qualified staff and good campus shuttle.

If the needs and expectation of the international students are met by proving the right services for the student, the universities in this region will continue to enjoy parity and the number of enrolments will increase. However, the destination will consistently enjoy sustainable economic growth and positive world of mouth will be proclaimed. Chen et al., (2018) also postulates that, the consistency in the usage of a particular service shows how much effective the services have been.

Pertaining to performance, the university managers must endeavor to always give evaluation form to student to fill in other for them to rate their services in each semester to know if the services rendered to them is adequate or inadequate. However, inadequacy becomes an opportunity for the faculty of the university to work on the areas identified by their primary customers. Sequel to performance, the university can also make a suggestion box for the students if they are not bold to approach the

appropriate authority for any compliant this is another way to get the attention of the students on the services rendered to them.

Furthermore, since service quality is one of the major determinant of retention, element such as: ventilated classrooms, e-library, modern equipment, constant electricity power supply, internet and qualified staff must all be on ground and that the output of each unit must also function accordingly. Nevertheless, there must be a friendly environment between the students and the instructors and the instructors must also be ready and willing to assist the students whenever their attention is needed. All these aforementioned above are very important because these are the total experience of the student and the experience from prior encounter could neither be positive nor negative whereas, negativity can only bring bad word of mouth which can dent the image of the higher education institution while positivity brings about retention and promotion.

Finally, every educational manager should always consider the interest of the students because it is better to keep the old customer than to recruit new ones which is very difficult to do. So, giving the students the right services is very pivotal but not everything to them because when you make provision for facilities the higher education institution must also ensure that the facilities are easily accessed without stressing the students because it is from the functionality of these facilities that satisfaction can only emerge and eventually leads to positive word of mouth. Sequel to positive word of mouth, the new recruits enrolled to confirm what they have heard concerning the prior treatment given to the students and if their assumption tested positive then the higher education institution will continue to enjoy growth and gain popularity among other university in that region and eventually attain a position in the

world at large. This is exactly the effect of service quality, perceived performance and satisfaction on continuance intention of further studies.

### **5.3 Contribution to Practice**

The findings of this thesis offer contribution beyond academic literature to include areas the educational managers should work on most especially the construct like SERVQUAL and performance. Furthermore, this research work is very massive because in most developing nations, service quality in the higher institutions have always been an issue and this is why most talented students leave their country to study where there is quality education. If the government of those developing nations such as Nigeria and the rest can establish a quality service in their educational system the rate of student mobility will be reduce and the quality of education received in the past will definitely be retrieved.

According to expectation disconfirmation theory, prior experience is a major deterrent of retention. In the same vein the university should not just make provision for the services that will continue to wow the experience of the foreign students but that effort should be made to ensure that all the inputs are working perfectly since underperformance will only bring about dissatisfaction. Pertaining to performance, the university managers must endeavor to always give evaluation form to student to fill in other for them to rate their services in each semester to know if the services rendered to them is adequate or inadequate. However, inadequacy becomes an opportunity for the faculty of the university to work on those areas identified by their primary customer. Sequel to performance, the university can also make a suggestion box for the students if they are not bold to approach the appropriate authority for any compliant this is another way to get the attention of the students on the services rendered to them.

## **5.4 Limitation and Future Research Directions**

This empirical research has shared some enlightenment on university SERVQUAL but there are still some limitations to this research. The response rate due to COVID 19 was quite small which can restrict the model's generalizability. The study was carried out in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus based on a particular community (international student) that describes the outcome. The results of a bias-corrected bootstrap, however, suggested that sample size was not an issue. Future work is to be carried out across countries on ‘Does University SERVQUAL influence international students’ Career Decision Process? This future research is pivotal because after a sound education the graduates are subject to re-examination via employability. An individual can only continue to be better if he/she is engaged.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

In summary, this thesis has successfully shown that among other things, perceived qualities of academic services as well as the expected academic performance are significant predictors of student’s intention to further study. The findings likewise showed that the nexus of perceived SERVQUAL, perceived performance, satisfaction with life and continuance intention is a viable model for understanding international student’s pull factor to destination institutions.

Moreover, the university’s staffs need to be motivated to improve and perform well so that they could be able to fulfill the student’s needs, wants and desire. Therefore, the quality of staff performance is significant in the business context such as university and also the students, and in the same way, the international student performance is significant to the universities as well (Quinn et al., 2009). According to expectation disconfirmation theory, prior experience is a major deterrent of retention. In the same

vein the university must make provision for the services that will continue to wow the experience of the students and in doing this, there will be positive word of mouth and more new students are recruited.

If Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus wants to become an higher educational destination, then HE service providers and managers is required to absorb more international students as well as members of the international staff. More importantly, offer them scholarships especially for doctorate international students in order to satisfy them. They also need to establish more educational promotion centers, like those ones established in developed countries since satisfaction is an important driver of continuance intention of further study, which in turn leads to increased revenues and profitability of the university.

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## **APPENDIX**

# Questionnaire

## Section 1

Given your experiences on a daily basis in your university, kindly indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements using the scale below:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Undecided
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	My university has modern looking equipment and technology.					
2	My university's physical facilities are visually appealing.					
3	The staff and lecturers in my university are neat in appearance.					
4	The lecturers in my university consistently provide good lectures					

5	The lecturers in my university are dependable					
6	The lecturer's reliably correct information when needed					
7	The lecturers quickly and efficiently respond to the international student needs					
8	The lecturers are willing to go out of his or her way to help the international students					
9	The lecturers always welcome the international student questions and comments					
10	The teaching capacity, the methodology used, and communication by the lecturers was appropriate					
11	The lecturer had sufficient knowledge and skills					
12	The staff and lecturers at the university were friendly and amiable to the international students					
13	The contents of the subject were suitable					
14	The lecturers are genuinely concerned about the international students					

15	The lecturers understand the individual needs of the international students					
16	The lecturers have the international student's best long-term interests					
17	The lecturers encourage and motivate the international students to do their best					

## Section 2

Given your experiences on a daily basis in your university, kindly indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements using the scale below:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = Undecided

5 = slightly agree

6 = Agree

7 = Strongly Agree

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	I am very satisfied with the service (transportation, accommodation and catering) provided by this university							
19	This university's services does a good job of satisfying my needs							
20	If I had to choose all over again I would not feel differently about choosing this university							
21	I believe that using this university's service is usually a very satisfying experience							



22	I made the right decision when I decided to use this university's service							
23	I intend to continue to study here in this university in the future							
24	I will continue my study here in this university in the future							
25	I will strongly recommend others to further their studies in this university							
26	My performance is better than that of my classmates with similar qualifications							
27	My performance is better than that of international students with similar qualifications in other universities							
28	The performance of my university is better than that of other universities in Cyprus							
29	My university offers opportunities to learn new things							

30	My university offers equal opportunities to international students here regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, or religion							
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### Section 3

From your current point of view, where will you most likely reside after graduating from this university? Kindly indicate the response that mostly describes your opinion:

- 1 = In the same city as my school (Famagusta, Nicosia, Kyrania, Lefke, etc.)
- 2 = In Cyprus (somewhere)
- 3 = In my home country
- 4 = In a third country

### SECTION 4.

Please indicate your answer by placing a (√) in the appropriate alternative.

1. How old are you?

- 18-27 ( )
- 28-37 ( )
- 38-47 ( )
- 48-57 ( )
- 58 and over ( )

2. What is your gender?

- Male ( )
- Female ( )

**3. In what field of study are you enrolled?**

- Engineering ( )  
( )  
Arts and Sciences ( )  
( )  
Economics/Business/Law ( )  
( )  
Tourism ( )  
( )  
Medicine and Health related ( )  
( )  
Others/No information ( )  
( )

**5. What is the type of relationship?  
in?**

- No Partner ( )  
( )  
Non-Turkish/Cypriot Partner ( )  
( )  
Turkish/Cypriot Partner ( )  
( )

**4. In which University are you enrolled?**

- Eastern Mediterranean University  
Near East University  
Cyprus International University  
Girne America University  
European University of Lefke  
Other University

**6. What type of degree are you enrolled**

- Bachelors  
Masters  
Others/No Information