

Introduction

When addressing the effects of higher education, Astin (1977) has long noted the high priority of school satisfaction compared with any other educational outcomes. Presently, with higher education moving quickly towards marketization (Jongbloed, 2003), school satisfaction has emerged as a primary indicator of university accountability for institutions and students by providing internal information to enhance student experiences and external information to improve institutional competitiveness (Brooks, 2005; Harvey, 2003). Reviews of the school satisfaction literature reveal that school satisfaction is a growing area of study across America (Baker, Dilly, Aupperlee, & Patil, 2003), Europe (Wiers-Jenssen, Stensaker, & Grøgaard, 2002), and Asia (Tian & Gilman, 2009). However, there is not yet sufficient empirical research on school satisfaction (Benjamin & Hollings, 1997; Huebner & McCullough, 2000), particularly for higher education institutions.

Recently, higher education institutions in Taiwan have encountered severe competition due to an expanded scale of higher education accompanied by a reduced population of students. The Ministry of Education of Taiwan calculated that in the 2009 school year, of the 336,000 students required to supply all Taiwanese higher education institutions, only 267,000 students actually enrolled, leaving an enrollment shortage of 69,000 students (Ministry of Education, 2010a). If the enrollment shortage continues, in ten years, one third of presently operating higher education institutions in Taiwan may have to close down (United Daily News, 2009). Among different types of higher education institutions in Taiwan, private and technical universities that have not yet established exemplary reputations faced the immediate risk of closing (Ministry of Education, 2010a). Public and general universities that have experienced a dilution of governmental funding (Mok, 2002) also strived to improve their school satisfaction to increase rate of student enrollment. Taiwanese universities across different types were all in desperate need of empirical information about school satisfaction and its associated factors.

Previous research on school satisfaction was mostly conducted with few institutions

and within a Western context (Baker, 1998; Dawson, 1985; Karatzias, Power, Flemming, Lennan, & Swanson, 2002). Scholars have been calling for school satisfaction research that analyzes large samples of institutions to address cross-institutional comparisons (Benjamin & Hollings, 1997; Palacio, Meneses, & Pérez, 2002) or explores issues related to different cultural contexts to extend knowledge about school satisfaction (Brooks, 2005). The current study draws a nationally representative sample of 156 higher education institutions in Taiwan to analyze the associations between university reputation, service quality, and school satisfaction at different types of universities. This cross-institutional analysis conducted in Taiwan responds to the needs of scholars and adds to the knowledge regarding school satisfaction. The study asks two research questions: (a) Do school satisfaction, university reputation, and university service differ between different types of Taiwanese universities? and (b) How is school satisfaction associated with university reputation and university service at different types of Taiwanese universities?

Literature Review

Characteristic and Importance of School Satisfaction

School satisfaction comprises the characteristics of subjectivity and evolvement. School satisfaction is a subjective construct (Baker, 1998) composed of student perceptions regarding several aspects of school life, including curriculum, co-curriculum, and administration qualities (Baker et al., 2003; Huebner, 1994; Knox, Lindsay, & Kolb, 1992). Karatzias et al. (2002) synthesized the literature and defined school satisfaction as students' general perception of their school experiences and outcomes. Upon entering school, students' school satisfaction may change from time to time and gradually stabilize as school experiences are accumulated.

School satisfaction presents important information to both institutions and students. For institutions, high levels of school satisfaction reflect the schools' determination and responsiveness to providing students with quality educational experiences and administration services. School satisfaction has thereby functioned as a critical indicator of institutional accountability and vitality (Anderson, 1981; Thomas & Galambos, 2004;