Diverse Market Segments and Customer Satisfaction: Are We Serving All Clientele Well?

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Abstract

The Florida Cooperative Extension Service measures the quality of its services annually. Even though the overall customer satisfaction in Florida has remained high, it is important to determine if the quality of the experience with Extension is equally high across different market segments, particularly those established by race and gender. Extension has a federal mandate to obtain parity participation and we extend the notion of parity to include quality of the participation experience. This poster’s purpose was to explore if audience diversity has an effect on the perceptions of the clientele regarding the quality of services provided by Extension. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square analyses were conducted using data from customer satisfaction surveys for the years 2003 to 2006. Significant associations were found to exist between race of the respondent and the perception of quality of Extension services, particularly related with the relevance of the information received, the timely delivery of information, and the overall satisfaction with the service. Other dimensions of quality, although not significantly associated with race, exhibited differences consistent with this trend. The opportunity to use the information was also significantly associated with race of the participants. Gender of the respondent was found to be significantly associated with the quality of experience but not for the outcomes of receiving Extension services. The results show that Blacks and other minorities perceived having lower quality experiences with Extension’s services. Three actions can be recommended from the results of this study. First, the use of participatory approaches should be increased. Second, Extension agents need help to gain the required skills for the delivery of information to culturally diverse audiences. And third, the understanding that different market segments require information which can be applied to their particular situation is important for planning and implementing high quality and effective programs.

Key words: Customer satisfaction, Market segments, Diversity, Gender, Race.