How Important Is It?
The Utility of Derived Versus Stated Importance as Indicators for Planning

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Overview

- Why importance matters
- Measuring importance
  - Stated importance
  - Derived importance
- Looking at the data
  - Issues with stated importance
- Use of importance data in planning
  - I-P Analysis and the “priority action grid”
Why Importance Measures Matter – Prioritizing Resources

- Gut instinct
- Ease of implementation
- Politics
- Demonstrated need
Why Importance Measures Matter – Demonstrating Need

- It is an area that is underperforming

AND

- It matters

AND

- It matters more than other areas
Measuring Importance with Surveys - Stated Importance

- **Rankings**

  Rank the following items in terms of their importance. Give the most important item a 1, the second most important item a 2, and so forth.

  1. the campus is safe and secure for all students
  2. the campus staff are caring and helpful
  3. registration processes and procedures are convenient
  4. administrators are available to hear student concerns

- **Ratings**

  On a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being not important at all and 7 being very important, tell us how important it is for your institution to meet each of the following expectations.

  1. the campus is safe and secure for all students
  2. the campus staff are caring and helpful
  3. registration processes and procedures are convenient
  4. administrators are available to hear student concerns
  5. administrators are available to hear student concerns
  6. the campus staff are caring and helpful
  7. the campus is safe and secure for all students
Measuring Importance with Surveys - Stated Importance

Ranking Items & Rating Items

- **Pros:**
  - Face validity

- **Cons:**
  - It may not be an option on vendor supplied surveys
  - Increases survey length
    - Increases cost and respondent burden
  - Data compression toward the top of the scale
Measuring Importance With Surveys – Stated and Derived Importance

Ranking Items vs. Rating Items vs. No Items

- **Ranking**
  - Prioritized list
  - Difficult for respondents
  - No information about position relative to an ideal

- **Rating**
  - Information is based on a continuum
  - Easy for respondents
  - Must be converted into a prioritized list

- **None**
  - Easiest for respondents
  - Prioritized list that adds the element of impact on an outcome
Measuring Importance with Surveys - Derived Importance

- Importance calculated based on the relationship between individual attributes and an outcome
  - Latent/underlying factors driving the outcome

- Origins in marketing research and “Importance-Performance (IP) Analysis”
  - Overall satisfaction is driven by expectations/importance and perceptions of performance/satisfaction of a number of attributes
Measuring Importance with Surveys – Computing Derived Importance

- Data elements
  - Satisfaction ratings on a number of attributes
  - One outcome or global satisfaction rating
    - “All in all, if you had it to do over again, would you enroll here?”

- Pearson correlation
  - Familiar
  - Simple
  - Easily produced in Excel or any stat package
Looking at the Data – Data Collection
Looking at the Data – Issues with Stated Importance Ratings (pt 1)

- Measurement
  - Narrow scales and compression toward the top leads to limited variability

![Graph showing mean and standard deviation of stated importance ratings]

Mean Stated Importance Ratings

M = 6.38
SD = 0.34
Looking at the Data – Issues with Stated Importance Ratings (pt 2)

- Interpretation
  - Can use one-sample t-test or z-test to help distinguish between attributes with varying levels of importance
Looking at the Data – Issues with Stated Importance Ratings (pt 3)

Meaning

- Do the attributes rated by students as “very important” have a substantial impact on satisfaction?

![Bar chart with Derived Importance Ratings](image)

- Mean = 0.32
- SD = 0.09
Using The Data
Using The Data – I-P Analysis

- Both sides of the consumer experience
- Easily interpreted graphic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Performance/Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High Importance – Low Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs Attention / Concentrate Here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Importance</td>
<td>Low Importance – Low Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Priority</td>
<td>Low Priority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Priority Action Grid

Satisfaction

Derived Importance

NOT SATISFIED

VERY SATISFIED
Priority Action Grid – 20 Most Important Attributes

- Students feel welcome
- This college is a good value
- This college is a worthwhile
- Admissions accurately portrays campus
- I seldom get the "run-around"
- Career services are adequate
- Activities fees are used well
- Billing policies are reasonable
- Mentors are available
- Help in applying academic major to career goals
- Learning - leadership
- Learning - confidence in stating views
- Staff are caring/helpful
- Res hall staff are concerned about me as an individual
- Quality of instruction
- *Advisor helps me set goals
- Learning - diversity
- Learning - experimentalism
- Learning - creativity
- Learning - critical thinking
- Learning - diversity
- Learning - experimentalism
- Learning - creativity
- Learning - critical thinking
Communicating Results

- Less familiar to academics than to board members

- Main benefits
  - Contributes to the information base used in decision making
  - Provides a focus for action plans across campus
  - Helps detect changes in organizational effectiveness
References


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