"Applying Services Marketing Logic to Predict Student Retention in Higher Ed"

(Gillis, Johansen, Vivek, AMS Proceedings, 2018) research appeared to establish a relationship between Customer Engagement (CE), Customer Participation (CP), and Customer Satisfaction (CS) such that customers can engage without participating, but not effectively participate without engaging. Previous research also considered outcomes beyond Customer Satisfaction such as Service Quality (SQ), a construct studied heavily by (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985) and concluded that customers perceived more value when they are engaged, thus service providers can maximize customer participation effectiveness with engagement (Gillis et al., AMS Proceedings, 2018).

This paper leverages this earlier research in Services Marketing Logic (Gillis et al., AMS Proceedings, 2018) and applies it to Higher Education, an arena where both provider (UNIVERSITY) and customer (STUDENT) affect the service outcome (Gillis, Johansen, Vivek, AMTP Pending, 2019). Research suggests that a way for providers to best manage this inseparability between provider (UNIVERSITY) and customer (STUDENT) is to increase value creation (Khalifa, 2009) through student engagement (SE), student participation (SP) (Gillis, et al., AMTP Pending, 2019) and the student co-creation experience (SCE).

Regression estimates of a panel data set of secondary data reflecting explanatory data for several higher education organizations suggests that student engagement, student participation, the co-creation experience, and service quality may exercise a positive and statistically significant impact on retention, ceteris paribus. Evidence is presented to support the notion that if service providers' (UNIVERSITY) goals include retention, customers (STUDENTS) may need to be more than passive consumers (Gillis, et al., AMTP Pending, 2019). In conclusion, Higher Education service providers (UNIVERSITY) who can properly nurture customers (STUDENTS) as co-producers (Gillis, et al., AMTP Pending, 2019) will more successfully accomplish student co-creation experiences, achieve higher service quality, and thus achieve higher retention levels.