

ELEMENTS OF IMPORTANCE IN THE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE: A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY OF DUTCH AND AMERICAN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study compares the perceived importance of elements in the educational experience between university students from the Netherlands and the United States. These elements include: quality of education, recognition, social life, compensation, and working conditions.

Cross-regional and cross-national studies in education are more important than ever before. Using new distance education technologies, institutions are now competing for students across the nation and around the globe. While most studies lack measures of educational importance attributes in cross-national scope, this study attempts to fill this gap. The focus of the study is to examine cross-national comparisons between Dutch and American students' perceived importance of components of the educational experience.

The sample was 883 usable responses from undergraduate students. The Dutch sample included 273 respondents, which were compared against 2 U.S. samples of 610 respondents.

The authors develop five multi-item scales to measure the constructs of interest in this study. Twenty-two items were factor analyzed to make up the five hypothesized constructs.

A MANOVA analysis shows that, although there are no differences between the 2 American samples across the 5 constructs, there are significant differences between American and Dutch students on every dimension. American students valued quality of education, recognition, and compensation more, whereas social life and working conditions were more important to Dutch students.

The authors demonstrate that differences in perceived importance of elements in the educational experience exist between university students from the Netherlands and the United States. The implications of this research are that schools delivering distance education around the globe should be aware of how different cultures perceive education in terms of what is important to students.