ASSESSMENT OF CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY AT HIGHLAND SURVEYORS

BY

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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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A Project Report Submitted to the School of Business in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters in Business Administration (MBA)

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than the United States International University in Nairobi for academic credit.

Signed: [Signature]  
Kennedy Kubasu (ID 3357613)  
Date: 9/6/2003

This project paper has been presented for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

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Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs  
Date: 12/04/03
DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my late mother, Ketry Kubasu, who believed in and taught her children to love hard work, honesty and excellence.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In writing this paper, I received a great deal of help from many people without whose help it would not have been possible to complete the project.

First, I wish to thank Dr. George K’Aol, Associate Dean of the School of Business - USIU, who was the supervisor for this research project. He tirelessly went through, corrected the drafts, and explained the steps to be taken at each stage. Finally he developed in me the capacity to write a good research paper for which I am truly grateful.

My appreciation goes to Mildred Ambani, my competent secretary, who enthusiastically typed and retyped the paper without any sign of fatigue.

Most of all, to my loving wife Stella for continuous encouragement. She is more proud of my postgraduate studies than I am. It is not possible to mention here all those who assisted in one way or another, they are quite a number. To them, I give my thanks.
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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to assess the customer perception of the quality of services offered by Highland Surveyors. The study answered the following research questions:

(i) What are the customer perceptions of the tangible characteristics of services offered by Highland Surveyors?
(ii) What are the customer perceptions of the reliability of services offered by Highland Surveyors?
(iii) What are the customer perceptions of the responsiveness of Highland Surveyors?
(iv) What are the customer perceptions of assurance of services offered by Highland Surveyors?
(v) What are the customer perceptions of the empathy of services offered by Highland Surveyors?

The research design was a survey. The population was all the current customers of Highland Surveyors. The target respondents were the managers who are in charge of property and deal with survey/mapping issues. The study employed probability sampling with the census method. The primary data was collected through questionnaires. Data analysis was done using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The mean, frequency and standard deviation described the data, while the t-distribution test was used to make inference about the difference in population mean ratings of the quality dimensions.

The results of the research indicate that in general most of the respondents perceived the tangible characteristics as good. However, tangibles were the least rated of the quality dimensions. The study showed that the appeal of survey plans and drawings was the highest rated tangible item. Further, the neatness of staff was the least rated of the items used to measure tangible characteristics.

The research further indicated that respondents perceived the reliability of the services as very good. The highest rated item of reliability was the interest shown in solving customers
problems, which was rated as excellent by more than half the respondents. The lowest rated item of reliability was meeting of deadlines.

The study showed that the respondents perceived responsiveness at Highland Surveyors as good. Responsiveness was the second lowest rated dimension of service quality. The highest rated item of responsiveness was willingness of staff to help customers, while the lowest rated item was speed of response to customers.

Assurance was rated as good by the respondents. The study also indicated that about a half of the respondents perceived assurance as excellent. The highest rated item of assurance was consistent courtesy of the staff, while the lowest rated item was confidence instilled in customers.

Empathy was very highly rated by the respondents. More than half the respondents rated individualized attention given to customers work, personal attention given to customers work and understanding specific needs of customers as excellent.

On the basis of the t-distribution test, the study revealed that there was no difference in the mean rating of quality perceptions by the population of customers in Eldoret and Nairobi at the 95% confidence level. Further there was no difference in the mean rating of quality perception by the population of lawyers and corporate customers at the 95% confidence level.

The findings of the study indicate that although service quality is good, there is room for improvement. The study recommends that there should be continuous improvement in all the five dimensions of quality. Special attention should be given to the tangibles in general and neatness of staff in particular. The study further recommends that research should be carried out to find out which dimensions of quality are given greater weight in customer evaluation of quality. Further research should also indicate return on investment of each of the quality dimensions.
CHAPTER I

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In today's highly competitive world, each organization is striving to outperform rivals in order to win market share. According to Porter (1996), a company can outperform rivals only if it can establish a difference that it can preserve. For an asset or skill to be the basis of a sustainable competitive advantage, it should create either a cost advantage over competitors or a point of difference from competitors. This point of difference needs to provide value to the customer that is substantial enough to matter. Aaker (1995) states that customers must realize that the value exists, and the resulting advantage needs to be sustainable. If it appears modest in size or is easily matched or countered, then it is unlikely that an effective sustainable competitive advantage will exist. Many organizations make the mistake of providing a point of difference that is not valued by customers, or at least not valued enough to compensate for the attached premium. Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990) indicate that one of the prime causes of poor performance by service firms is not knowing what their customers expect. Many organizations are keen to provide service quality but fall short simply because they do not have an accurate understanding of what customers expect from the company. A solution to this is to use market research to develop a point of difference from the customers' perspective.

Quality is being seen as an increasingly important element in defining a service offer. It is an important basis which customers use for differentiating between competing services (Palmer, 2001). Collier (1994) states that excelling at service quality is the toughest competitive strategy to implement and most difficult for competitors to duplicate.

According to Ross (1999), quality has taken centre stage as the main issue in both national and corporate strategies. Those organizations that adopt quality, as a differentiation and way of organizational life will over the longer term, pull ahead of competition. When an organization chooses to make quality a major competitive edge, it becomes a central issue in strategic planning – from mission to supporting policies. Ross further states that the rewards
of higher quality are positive, substantial and pervasive. According to Ross, attaining quality superiority produces organizational benefits. These include:

- Greater customer loyalty.
- Market share improvements.
- Higher stock prices.
- Reduced service calls.
- Higher prices.
- Greater productivity.

Studies by Jacobson and Aaker (1987) support Ross’s contention and provide insights into how perceived quality creates profitability.

- Perceived quality affects market share. Products of higher quality are favored and will receive a higher share of the market.
- Perceived quality affects price. Higher perceived quality allows a business to charge a higher price.
- Perceived quality has a direct impact on profitability in addition to its effect on market share and price. Improved perceived quality will on average increase profitability even when price and market share are not affected. Perhaps the cost of retaining existing customers becomes less with higher quality or competitive pressure is reduced when quality is improved.
- Perceived quality does not affect cost negatively.

But just what is quality?

According to Besterfield et al (1999), quality is an intangible based on perception. Quality can be quantified as follows:

\[ Q = \frac{P}{E} \]

\[ Q = \text{Quality} \]
\[ P = \text{Performance} \]
\[ E = \text{Expectations} \]
If Q is greater than 1.0 the customer has a good feeling about the product or service. Of course, determination of P and E will most likely be based on perception with the organization determining P and the customer determining expectations.

Common definitions of quality by different authors and experts can be found in the literature. Juran (1988) defines quality as fitness for purpose or use. According to Crosby (1986), quality is conformance to requirements. Fiegenbaum (1991) states that quality is the total composite product and service characteristics of marketing, engineering, manufacturing and maintenance through which the product and service in use will meet the expectation by the customer.

Hogg and Gabbot (1998) have observed that what all these definitions have in common is an acknowledgement that the quality of a product in some way rates it against a standard, whether it be real or implied. This standard may be defined by the producer, defined by the customer, either explicitly or implicitly or set by other similar products with which it is compared.

Palmer (2001) divides service quality into two principal components i.e. technical and functional quality. Technical quality refers to the relatively quantifiable aspects of a service, which consumers receive in their interactions with a service firm. Because it can easily be measured by both customer and supplier, it forms an important basis for judging service quality. Examples of technical quality include the waiting time at a supermarket checkout and the reliability of train services. Consumers are also influenced by how the technical quality is delivered to them. This is described as functional quality and cannot be measured as objectively as the elements of technical quality. Collier (1994) explains process or functional quality as how the customer receives, pays for, experiences, or uses service. This includes all aspects of how the service was delivered to the customer. It includes procedural steps and styles of service. This notion recognizes the service delivery process is at least as important as the service outcome. Process quality includes how the process worked and how the people in the process interact. Deficiencies in process quality can negate excellent technical (outcome) quality.
According to Evans and Lindsay (1999), quality costs in service organizations depend on employee-customer interaction, which means appraisal costs tend to account for a higher percentage of total quality costs than in manufacturing. In addition, internal failure costs tend to be much lower in manufacturing than for service organization with high customer contact, which have little opportunity to correct an error before it reaches the customer. By that time, the error becomes an external failure. Peters (1987) reports that poor quality can cost about 40% of the personnel and assets in a service firm.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Aaker (1995), the PIMS databases of some 3,000 businesses have been analyzed in hundreds of studies, most trying to find clues to strategic success. Perhaps the most definitive finding from this research is that the most important strategic factor affecting the performance of a business unit is the perceived quality of its products.

Kurtz and Clow (1998) suggest that consumers evaluate five dimensions of service quality. These dimensions include tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. According to Palmer (2001), understanding just what dimensions of quality are of importance to customers in the evaluation process can be difficult. It is not sufficient for companies to set quality standards in accordance with misguided assumptions of customer expectations. Yet, studies by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990) suggest that one of the prime causes of poor performance by service firms is not knowing what their customers expect. According to Parker (2001), the role of management is to provide the environment and resources to support ongoing organization improvement. One of the key aspects of this role identified through the experience of many organizations is that customers should play the central role in the definition of product and service quality. Many organizations are keen to provide service quality but fall short simply because they do not have an accurate understanding of what customers expect from the company.
Palmer (2001) states that quality is clearly a complex concept, which cannot be satisfactorily measured by a series of isolated ad hoc studies. This and the increasing importance of quality as a means of gaining competitive advantage has seen the emergence of comprehensive programs to research customer expectations and perceptions of service quality. This study therefore aimed at providing current information regarding customer perceptions of service delivery to Highland Surveyors management as a first step in establishing measures that Highland Surveyors can take to gain competitive advantage.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the customer perception of the service delivery by Highland Surveyors.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

(i) What are the customer perceptions of the tangible characteristics of services offered by Highland Surveyors?

(ii) What are the customer perceptions of the reliability of services offered by Highland Surveyors?

(iii) What are the customer perceptions of the responsiveness of Highland Surveyors?

(iv) What are the customer perceptions of assurance of services offered by Highland Surveyors?

(v) What are the customer perceptions of the empathy of services offered by Highland Surveyors?
1.5 Research Justification

The findings of this study will be used to formulate and implement quality based differentiation strategies at Highland Surveyors. The specific benefits are:

Firstly, quality services will lead to customer satisfaction. This will not only reduce the defection rate but also increase repeat customers. Secondly, quality services will lead to enhanced company image. This will enable the organization to charge more for its services and still maintain customer loyalty. Thirdly, quality services will lead to increased market share. Word of mouth by satisfied customers and convenient location of services should increase market share. Finally, quality services will lead to increased profitability through increased volume of work, reduction of waste and rework.

Other benefits are that, the findings of this study may be used by other service organizations in improving their service quality. In addition, this study will also serve to enrich the body of existing knowledge regarding service quality. Researchers will also find this study valuable as a spring board for further research.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study included all clients of Highland Surveyors, who were mainly based in Nairobi and Eldoret. Highland Surveyors specializes in Geospatial Information System (GIS), mapping, cadastral and engineering surveys. It also undertakes land title procurement and Conveyancing. The target respondents were senior managers who utilize and evaluate survey and mapping services in the course of their work.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 Service Quality

Collier (1994) defines service quality as a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectation.
1.7.2 Tangibles

1.7.3 Reliability

1.7.4 Responsiveness

1.7.5 Assurance

1.7.6 Empathy
Palmer (2001) defines empathy as easy access, good communications and customer understanding. Nitecki (1997) defines empathy as the caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

1.8 Chapter Summary
Chapter one has considered the background information on quality and the benefits of implementing quality strategies. The issue of quality as a basis for a sustainable competitive advantage has also been explored. The main purpose of the study was to determine the
customer rating of the quality of services offered by highland surveyors. The research questions are:

(i) What are the customer perceptions of the tangible characteristics of services offered by Highland Surveyors?
(ii) What are the customer perceptions of the reliability of services offered by Highland Surveyors?
(iii) What are the customer perceptions of the responsiveness of Highland Surveyors?
(iv) What are the customer perceptions of assurance of services offered by Highland Surveyors?
(v) What are the customer perceptions of the empathy of services offered by Highland Surveyors?

The scope of the research was all the current customers of Highland Surveyors who are mainly based in Eldoret and Nairobi. The target respondents were senior managers who utilize and evaluate survey and mapping services in the course of their work.
CHAPTER II

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers literature review relevant to the study. It is divided into five main areas according to the research questions. The areas are Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy.

2.2 Tangibles in Service Quality

Tangibles are referred to as appearance of physical elements. Nitecki (1997) defines tangibles as appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials. According to Palmer (2001), service marketers are more likely to differentiate their services from the competition by adding tangible features, for example, distinctive designs of brochures, staff uniforms and outlets. Kotler (2000) observes that to reduce uncertainty, buyers will look for signs or evidence of the service quality. They draw inference about quality from the place, people, equipment, communication material, symbols and the price that they see. Studies by Trifa and McQuilken (2000) indicate that contrary to previous findings, customer expectations for service quality do not vary with the level of intangibility of the service.

According to Hogg and Gabbot (1998), information acquisition search qualities are defined as attributes that can be determined prior to purchase. They are generally associated with factual information, which is common to all consumers and verifiable in advance of purchase. These would include location, features of the premises, qualifications of service providers or descriptions about how service will be delivered. In services, there is very little intrinsic information, but there is likely to be a large amount of extrinsic information that can be used to infer product performance such as appearance of the service provider, the premises or quality of equipment. So strong is the need for cues that Hogg and Gabbot suggest that, in the absence of any tangible indications of what a service will be like, consumers establish metaphors for tangibility or cues that help them tangibilise the
intangible. Hogg and Gabbit suggest that consumers are seeking ultimately to simplify or routinise their purchase decision at the same time minimizing the level of risk attached to the outcome by collecting or searching for as much information as possible. They add that tangible cues vary from provider to provider and consumer-to-consumer as such the effectiveness of cues is likely to vary between transactions. Where services are concerned, the actual delivery may take place at a different time, with a different provider, with different tangibles or in a different place to the purchase transaction. As a result tangible cues used to evaluate a service pre-purchase may be different from those used in evaluation during delivery or even after delivery has taken place.

Schostack (1984), advices that services must select and manage products with care to maintain credibility. Consumers often deduce the nature of the service from this type of circumstantial evidence. The design of a service should therefore incorporate the orchestration of tangible evidence. Everything the consumer uses to verify the service effectiveness. The setting including colour schemes, advertising, printed or graphic material and stationery, all proclaim a service style. In the airline industry the interior and exterior décor of the plane, flight attendants uniforms, the appearance of the reservation desk, ticket folders, baggage tags and advertising graphics all tell the customer what kind of service to expect. They either reinforce or contradict personal experience with the airline.

According to Palmer (2001), tangibles often form an important part of a service offered and failure to deliver tangibles reduces the quality of a service or makes it impossible to perform at all.

According to Hogg and Gabbit (1998), the environment in which a service takes place will have a direct impact on the consumers perception. Retail environments have been categorized as encouraging positive approach responses. (enjoyment, returning, attraction, exploration) or negative avoidance responses (not enjoy, not return, not explore etc). service environments can be described in terms of their layout, their ambient conditions and their physical content:
Layout: This factor would include the arrangement of desks, entrance and waiting areas, size and shape of furniture, and obvious process paths (such as those associated with self-service delivery).

Ambiance: This includes physical ambiance such as temperature, humidity, as well as lighting, colour, sound and smell.

Content: This aspect would include whether the space contained complex equipment or not, whether it contained office furniture or trolleys, tools or food, was sterile or dirty etc.

2.3 Reliability in Service Quality

Reliability of a service is associated with dependability and accurate performance. Weinstein and Johnson (1999) define reliability as dependable and accurate performance of promised service. Reliability of a service is a very powerful element in any customers’ decision. According to Nitecki (2002), extensive research has concluded that customers rank reliability as the most important contributor of service quality and tangibles as the least important regardless of service industry.

Reliability needs to be designed into the service processes. According to Evans and Lindsay (1999), services have three basic components: physical facilities, processes and procedures; employee’s behaviors and employees professional judgement. Designing a service essentially involves determining an effective balance of these components. The goal is to provide a service whose elements are internally consistent and directed at meeting the needs of a specific target market segment. The emphasis on quality should be focused on the physical facilities and procedures. Behavior and professional judgement are relatively unimportant.

Otauthia (1996) states that, services are mostly produced and consumed by people, not machines – Therefore to keep service reliability constant is a real challenge. It is also difficult to control quality. A few aspects can be managed to overcome this problem:

- Standardization – give clear guidance and set standards.
• Manage variability by using machines or giving staff as little discretion as possible and no room to make mistakes. Empower service personnel to correct problem on the spot.
• Introduce service quality measurement like servqual, gap models; analyze barrier to service quality in firms.

According to Palmer (1998), “a major difficulty in ensuring service quality is non-conformance of staff to performance guidelines. This so called service performance gap is the result of employees being unable or unwilling to perform the service at the desired level.”

Palmer’s contention implies the need for capable workers. According to Schlesinger and Heskett (1987), capable workers who are well trained and fairly compensated provide better service, need less supervision and are much more likely to stay on the job. As a result, their customers are likely to be more satisfied, return more often and perhaps purchase more than they otherwise would for individual companies. This means enhanced competitiveness. Service companies with well-trained and fairly compensated workers tend to have lower employee turn over. According to Kessler (1995), training needs to be coupled with an accountability system. Kessler observes that many companies spend thousands and sometimes millions of dollars training their employees in quality only to find out they do not follow the precepts when back at their jobs. The problem is accountability. Superficial programs get superficial results. Employees need to have training linked to achieving measurable outcomes and the vision of the organizations. Accountability needs to be threaded through customer needs, company vision, training, improvement efforts and measurement.

Service companies will retain customers only if they continuously improve service reliability. Continuous improvement of service can be achieved only if organizations drive out fear. According to Kivenko (1994), no total quality initiative can succeed if fear is present. Of W. Edwards Demings points, point No.8 – Drive out fear so that everyone can work effectively, is by far the most important. Fear puts upper limits on improvement.
According to Kessler (1995), a total quality service culture conducive to continuous improvement is a starting point to continuous improvement or Kaizen. It looks for positive ways to acknowledge progress not negative ways to punish people for not meeting goals. Kessler advocates for quality champions in any quality improvement initiative, besides quality champions, one needs to form steering committees. According to Kessler, a quality effort in any organization with more than 15 people needs a steering committee. Quality management also requires data and analysis. Kessler states that the data must be relevant, reliable and representative.

Despite the best efforts trying to provide error free services, mistakes do occur. Sasser, Olsen and Wyckoff (1990) observe that in services, often performed in the customers’ presence, errors are inevitable. The fact is that in services no matter how rigorous the procedures and employee training or how advanced the technology, zero defects is an unattainable goal. However, a good recovery can turn angry, frustrated customers into loyal ones. Infact it can create more goodwill than if things had gone smoothly in the first place. Hogg and Gabbott (1998) support this view. They state that the very nature of services means that some things will go wrong either as a result of the delivery system, the actions of the employees or indeed the customers themselves. They suggest that service managers should look on failure as an opportunity and develop recovery strategies. Companies that want to build capability of recovering from service problems should do these things: measure the cost of effective recovery, break customer silence and listen closely for complaints, anticipate needs for recovery, act fast, train employees, empower the frontline and close the customer feedback loop.

2.4 Responsiveness in Service Quality

Responsiveness is associated with promptness and helpfulness. Weinsten and Johnson (1999) define responsiveness as willingness / readiness to provide prompt service. According to Ōtutahi (1996), responsiveness is the second ranked factor behind reliability in terms of importance.
According to Schlessinger and Heskett (1991), recent research on customer loyalty in the service industry indicates that more than two-thirds of the customers who defect, do so because they find service people indifferent and unhelpful. Schlessinger and Heskett observe that the failure to be responsive is the result of human resource policies and practices that follow the industrial logic and effectively treat people as though they were machines. Frontline, customer-contact jobs are designed as simple and narrow as possible so that they can be filled by almost anyone – idiot-proof jobs. Employers ask little of potential employees. They use minimal selection criteria and set abysmally low performance expectations. At the same time, these employees offer little in return. They keep wages as low as possible, typically just above the legal minimum. The training they offer new hires is rudimentary at best. Schlessinger and Heskett are of the view that the front of the house jobs cannot be done by incompetent, uncommitted workers. They require men and women who can take responsibility, manage themselves, and respond well to pressure from customers.

New hires require comprehensive training. According to Kaufman (2002), in responsive organizations, training programs include active listening, creative problem solving and attitude building activities. Training programs need to be well structured and implemented.

An important aspect of service responsiveness is promptness of service, which brings time into the picture. Hogg and Gabbott (1998) state that services as a product class are particularly time sensitive both in their production and consumption and can even be classified by time. They add that individuals may not have a choice about when to consume the service or how long it will take; therefore, it is difficult for a consumer to allocate time to the service. Considerable dissatisfaction with services can be traced to the unpredictability of the time taken to deliver a service. Services, which promise fast cycle services and deliver slow service, are at the greatest risk of time prompted dissatisfaction. Research by Ohaga (1999) showed that the disconfirmation of wait time expectations had the strongest relationship to acceptability of the wait. It could be that customers go to restaurants knowing that they have to wait. More important is that they have in mind a certain duration. Services are also produced in real time. If service fails it is not possible to restore that time. For
example if a teacher does not turn up for a class, that time is lost. Accordingly, some organizations now offer time guarantees.

2.5 Assurance in Service Quality

According to Palmer (2001), assurance is associated with competence, courtesy, credibility and security. Nitecki (1997) defines assurance as knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence. According to Markgraf (2002), one of the keys to small business success is making sure that the customer gets that which he expected when he purchased the product or service and which he paid for. Ensuring that he gets this level of service has three different parts to start with; it has to be clear what level of quality the customer expects. Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990) indicate that one of the prime causes of poor performance by service firms is not knowing what their customers expect. Many organizations are keen to provide service quality but fall short simply because they do not have an accurate understanding of what customers expect from the company. The second part is to make sure the product or service you are selling is living up to what you told your customer. Lastly, you have to find out whether your products and services are doing what you expect and said they would do.

Service organizations will enhance credibility if they offer a consistent level of service. Besterfield et al (1999) state that service organizations need to ensure the same level of quality for all customers, the organization must write down and then communicate to their employees the directions for all tasks. A service quality handbook should be created with the description of each service quality standard communicating the service quality standard for each task can be done by formal training videos, personal coaching or meetings.

In the case of services, loyalty can only be placed with the provider of the services rather than the service itself. Hogg and Gabbot (1998) observe that individual loyalty is built up from a series of successful service encounters with the same provider. Aggregating consumers with successful encounters builds the reputation of the service provider.
Evidently, the continued relationship also produces a sense of ownership over the service with consumers referring to “my surveyor”, “my accountant” or “my doctor”.

Guarantees play an important part in providing customer security. According to Hart (1988), a guarantee is a powerful tool, both for marketing service quality and for achieving it for five reasons. First, it pushes the entire company focus on customer definition of good service not on executive assumptions; Second, it sets clear performance standards which boost employee performance and morale; third, it generates reliable data through payouts when performance is poor; fourth, it forces an organization to examine its entire service delivery system for possible failure points; Lastly, it builds customer loyalty sales and market share.

Greenway, Keller, Kennie, Newnham and Parker (2002), state that a key element of customer service is providing the customer with assurances as to the quality of the products and services supplied. The International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) has developed a series of standards (ISO 9000 series) which contain guidelines to allow the development of an appropriate quality management system, which can do this. The latest ISO 9001 (2000 version) addresses a number of inadequacies in the way quality assurance has been seen in the past. Properly understood, ISO 9001 asks firms to address a number of basic management issues in a manner that is appropriate to the nature of the firm in question. The issues themselves are virtually indisputable in terms of ensuring good service to clients and the image they project to the community.

In a typical surveying practice, ISO 9001 suggests that management should:

- Communicate well with clients and record their requirements;
- Actively manage staff and resources to ensure that deadlines are met;
- Make sure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities within the firm;
- Plan work processes to ensure clients’ technical requirements are satisfied;
- Check and authorize all work prior to release;
- Ensure that staff are adequately trained;
- Confirm that measuring equipment is working within specifications;
- Ensure that subcontractors work to equivalent standards;
- Review procedures to ensure that they are being followed by staff (and are cost effective); and
- Have a well organized and secure records system (including computerised records)

ISO 9001 therefore provides an ideal framework for considering, implementing and monitoring the important management issues of any business, but it does require time and resources to make it happen. It is a most useful tool to use as a framework for a critical evaluation of a firm’s organizational processes.

2.6 Empathy in Service Quality

Nitecki (1997) defines empathy as the caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers. Palmer (2001) defines empathy as easy access, good communications and customer understanding. According to Hogg and Gabbott (1998), service customization is often presented as a positive product attribute although the act of customizing a service presents consumers with a number of challenges. In order to impose customization upon a service product the consumer must have a degree of product knowledge to know how much customization is required to meet their demands.

According to Ward (2002), many customers or prospective customers are not sure of what they should expect and many will not tell you because they expect you to know. According to Kaufman (2002), a company should look at the customer with sincerity, interest and patience and asks the somewhat unlikely question “what do you want to become?” Most customers if given an opportunity to reflect on this open-ended question realize that they are still abit uncertain and will avail themselves of the sincerity and interest the company has shown to enter into a collaborative relationship.
Empathy needs to be designed into the organization. Schostack (1984) states that, at the design stage, the developer must plan and consider every encounter between consumer and provider. The good manners and attentiveness customers associate with good personal service must be made part of the hiring, training and performance standards of the company. Kaufman (2002) states that, in an empathic organization the customer is no longer sold to nor simply and politely served. He is genuinely cared for through a conscientious relationship that builds trust and momentum over time. To be empathic, one requires communication skills.

According to Holder (2002), consultants have found that 75% of verbal communications are misunderstood. It is impossible to be responsive, reassuring and empathic without a clear understanding of what a customer is communicating.

Prospectus Newsletter (March 2000) calls empathic organizations “one to one” organizations. It states that by contrast the “one to one” organization focuses on one customer at a time, attempting to satisfy as many needs as possible for that particular customer. They become a ‘one stop shop’, building a learning relationship with the customer to ensure that when one need is satisfied they are in the best position to satisfy another. They acknowledge that customer loyalty and trust is not earned by short-term rewards and gifts or rebates, but by recognizing that customers value high service levels, reliability and convenience.

According to Prospectus Newsletter (March 2000), becoming a “one to one” organization requires a technological, structural and cultural change. Technologically, the organization must encourage active dialogue with customers and understand the purpose, meaning and quality of customer feedback. As indispensable elements of the customer relationship, dialogue and feedback give the organization competitive advantage through the access to valuable customer information, on which they can change their behaviour and develop customized products and services. In essence, it is critical that the organization, through technology, finds a way to process what they can learn from customers to keep them both interested and loyal.
In a one-to-one organization, each division must be aligned to be aware of every instance of customer contact and present a unified corporate front. Taking an example of a bank, the mortgage division should be aware that a customer recently increased the value of their deposits, received a car loan or applied for a credit card. Each division should be able to tap into a single customer profile and update it according to changes in the bank's relationship with the customer. This ensures that any experience the customer has with the company is seamless and professional.

2.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter two has considered the theory in consumer evaluation of service quality. Under tangibles, the effect of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials like brochure on consumers is discussed. Under reliability, the literature reviews consumer expectations of dependability and accuracy. Under responsiveness, the value of promptness and helpfulness is narrated. The importance of competence, courtesy, credibility and security is narrated under assurance. Finally, the value of easy access, good communications and customer understanding is dealt with under empathy.
CHAPTER III

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methodology. It considers the research design, the population and sample, data collection and data analysis method.

3.2 Research Design

The research design was a survey. Dillon, Madden and Firtle (1994), simply define a survey as a method of gathering information from a number of individuals. Cooper and Schindler (2001) state that the great strength of a survey as a primary data collecting technique is its versatility. It does not require that there be visual or other objective perception of information sought by the researcher. Abstract information of all types can be gathered by questioning others. According to Denscombe (1999), a survey is a detailed inspection of investigation of wide and inclusive coverage with the quest for details of tangible facts.

It has the following characteristics:

- Wide and inclusive coverage.
- Takes into account a specific point in time.
- It involves the idea of empirical research.

The justification for choosing the survey was:

(i) Versatility

The strength of a survey as a data collecting technique was of great value to this research. There was no need for visual or other objective perception of the information sought by the researcher.

(ii) The Coverage

Customers of Highland Surveyors are widely spread throughout Nairobi and Eldoret and their environs. They cut across different industries and vary in size. To obtain comprehensive information, from such a population, one must have wide and inclusive coverage. A survey was thus the right vehicle for this.
(iii) Cross-sectional
A survey enabled a cross-sectional survey of all current customers.

(iv) Empirical Data
The survey enabled gathering of accurate data straight from the respondent and the data was based on real observations.

3.3 Population and Sample

3.3.1 Population
Highland Surveyors provides Geospatial Information System (GIS), mapping, cadastral and engineering surveys. It also undertakes land title procurement and Conveyancing. The population of this research was current customers of Highland Surveyors. They were composed of corporate bodies, individuals and lawyers who give instructions on behalf of their customers. Ross, Westerfield and Jordan (1998) define a corporation as a legal “person” separate and distinct from its owners, and it has many rights, duties and privileges of an actual person. Corporations can borrow money and own property, can sue and be sued, and can enter into contracts.

Customers of Highland Surveyors had the following characteristics:

- They were mainly corporate organizations
- They were mainly in Nairobi and Eldoret where Highland Surveyors has branches
- They were a mixture of parastatals, private companies and individuals.
- The client composition was well mixed and varied. Among the clients we had nine (9) legal firms, four (4) civil engineering firms, seven (7) private land owners, six (6) large agricultural companies, two (2) pension schemes, one (1) university, two (2) local authorities, two (2) property management companies, one (1) regulatory body and several manufacturing concerns. A full list is contained in appendix II.
3.3.2 Sample Design

3.3.2.1 Sample Frame
The sample frame was obtained from Highland Surveyors directory of customers. It consisted of all the current customers of Highland Surveyors (see appendix II). The entire population was surveyed.

3.3.2.2 Sampling Technique
Since the population of current customers of Highland Surveyors was small and variable, the entire population that constituted the current customers was surveyed. A census was therefore carried out. Cooper and Schindler (2001) define a census as a count of all the elements in a population. If 4000 files define a population, a census obtained information from every one of them. According to Cooper and Schindler, two conditions are appropriate for a census study: a census is (1) feasible when the population is small and (2) necessary when the elements are quite different from each other.

3.3.2.3 Sample Size
The population consisted of all forty five (45) current customers of Highland Surveyors. Table 1 shows the distribution of these clients by type of client.

Table 1: Client Distribution by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of client</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Eldoret</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Land Owners</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Data Collection Method

The primary data was collected using a questionnaire (see appendix I). The questionnaire was divided into five parts, each part arising from the research questions. Part 1 contained questions relating to tangibles. Part 2 contained questions relating to reliability. Part 3 contained questions relating to responsiveness. Part 4 contained questions relating to assurance, and finally part 5 contained questions relating to empathy. The questions were close ended.

3.5 Research Procedures

The researcher developed the data collection instrument, which was a questionnaire, in relevance to the research questions. The research questions were divided into more specific questions. The respondents rated the quality functions using a five point likert scale shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data collection instrument was pilot tested in five organizations selected from different industries namely: - East African Tanning and Extract Company, Nyaundi Tuiyott & Co. Advocates, National Cereals and Produce Board, Raiplywoods (K) Limited and Communications Commission of Kenya. According to Cooper and Schindler (2001), a pilot test is conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation. They state that there are three major criteria for evaluating a measurement tool: validity, reliability and practicality.

According to Frankfort-Nachmias (1996), face validity rests on the investigators subjective evaluation of the validity of a measuring instrument. In this study face validity was used. The questionnaire used in this study was the standard servqual methodology questionnaire, which has been used for hundreds of studies regarding customer perception. It was merely adapted to this specific study. Its validity is based on its widespread successful use. Reliability was
estimated using the intraclass correlation. According to Futrell (1995), for ratings made on some type of scale (e.g., 1 to 10), intraclass methods are the correct choice. The reliability test was successful. The intraclass correlation was used to measure reliability. The estimate of the reliability of the customers average rating was 0.74 (see appendix II), which is acceptable. Nought point seven (0.70) is regarded as the lower bound of acceptability. The data collection instrument was then used to collect data from the current customers of Highland Surveyors. Since the respondents maintain cordial relations with the researcher, the researcher individually telephoned them to request them to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was delivered by a messenger and when completed by the respondents collected by the same messenger. In case of delays, the researcher telephoned the respondents to remind them to complete the questionnaire.

3.6 Data Analysis Method

The data collected was statistically analyzed using Excel worksheets and the findings summarized in tables and then depicted using bar graphs. The first step was to create a form in which to capture data of all the 30 respondents as represented in Table 2 below. The second step was to use the In-built statistical formulas in manipulation of the desired measures of estimation (mean, frequency, standard deviation and percentage distributions). The mean was adopted to estimate the measures of central tendency, and the frequency and percentage distribution used to highlight the magnitude of variations between the various observed variables. The analysis was based on each quality dimension in accordance with the research questions. Thus analysis was done for each of the quality dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. According to Mann (1995), the t distribution may be used to make inference about the difference in population means when the population from which the samples are drawn are: (i) normally distributed (ii) small and independent (iii) the standard deviations of the two populations are unknown but they are equal. Accordingly, the t-distribution test was used to make inference about the difference in the mean rating of the quality dimensions by the population of customers in Nairobi and Eldoret. The t-distribution test was also used to make inference about the difference in the
mean rating of the quality dimensions by lawyers and corporate customers who represented the largest groups in the sample.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Corporate</th>
<th>Lawyers</th>
<th>Private landowners</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eldoret</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter three considered the methodology that was used in carrying out the research. It began by specifying the research design that was used. The research design was a survey. The population and sample frame were specified (please see appendix II). The data collection method used was a questionnaire, which was employed to collect primary data. The chapter also outlines the research procedure and data analysis.
CHAPTER IV

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the questionnaire. The results are divided into five broad categories according to the research questions. These are the quality dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and Empathy. The results are presented in tables and graphs.

4.2 Analysis of Tangibles

Four items were used to measure this particular service quality dimension. These items are modernity of equipment, the appeal of physical facilities, the neatness of staff, and the appeal of survey plans and drawings. The overall rating of tangibles by Highland Surveyors' customers was good as shown in Fig 1 and Table 3

| Table 3: Customer Rating of Tangibles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Scale item</th>
<th>Customer Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernity of Equipment</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal of physical facilities</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neatness of staff</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal of survey plans/drawings</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig 1: Distribution of Tangibles

**Modernity of Equipment:** Fig 1 shows that, twenty-three percent of the respondents rated modernity of equipment as excellent while 74 percent of the respondents rated modernity of equipment as good. Three percent of the respondents rated modernity of equipment as fair. The general assessment of the modernity of equipment was good. As shown in Table 3, it is the second highest rated item of tangibles with a mean of 4.2 and standard deviation of 0.5.

**Appeal of Physical Facilities:** Fig 1 further shows that, thirteen percent of the respondents rated appeal of physical facilities as excellent. Sixty percent of the respondents rated appeal of physical facilities as good, while 27 percent of the respondents rated appeal of physical facilities as fair. It can be seen from Table 3 that, this item of the tangibles was generally rated as good with a mean of 3.9 and standard deviation of 0.6 and its rating is third ranked among the four other items measuring tangibles.

**Neatness of Staff:** Fig 1 indicates that, seven percent of the respondents rated the neatness of staff as excellent. Sixty percent of the respondents rated the neatness of staff as good while 33 percent of the respondents rated neatness of staff as fair. Neatness of staff was the lowest rated item of the tangibles with a mean of 3.7 representing good, with a standard deviation of 0.6, as shown by Table 3.
**Appeal of survey plans and drawings:** As shown in Fig 1, sixty percent of the respondents rated the survey plans and drawings as excellent. Thirty-three percent of the respondents rated the plans/drawings as good, whereas 7 percent of the respondents rated the plans and drawings as fair. Table 3 shows that, this was the most highly rated item of the tangibles with a mean of 4.6 or excellent, with a standard deviation of 0.6.

The mean rating of the perceptions of the respondents from Nairobi and Eldoret were used to make inference about the mean rating of the perception of tangibles by the customer populations in Eldoret and Nairobi. A t-distribution test was used for this analysis. As shown in appendix V, at the 95 percent confidence level, no difference could be inferred about the mean rating by the Nairobi and Eldoret customer population regarding perceptions of tangibles. Any difference in the perception of the tangibles by the Nairobi and Eldoret respondents can therefore largely be attributed to sampling error. Further, using the sample means and the t-distribution test, no difference could also be inferred at the 95 percent confidence level between the mean rating of the perception of the population of lawyers and corporate customers regarding tangibles.

**4.3 Analysis of Reliability**

Five items were selected to measure rating of reliability of services provided by Highland surveyors. The items were: the meeting of deadlines as promised, the interest shown by the staff in solving customers' problems, the performance of services correctly the first time by the staff, the provision of services at the promised time, and the insistence on error-free services. The overall customer rating of these items selected for measuring reliability was good as illustrated in Table 4 and Fig 2.
Table 4: Customer Rating of Reliability Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Scale Item</th>
<th>Customer Rating</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Rating</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting deadlines</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest shown in solving customer problems</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance of services correctly the first time</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of services at the promised time</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insistence on error-free services</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Bar Graph for Reliability]

**Fig 2: Distribution of Reliability**

**Meeting deadlines**: Fig 2 shows that, thirty-seven percent of the respondents rated the meeting of deadlines by Highland surveyors staff as excellent. Fifty percent of the respondents rated the meeting of deadlines by highland surveyors staff as good while 13 percent of the respondents rated the meeting of deadlines as fair. In general, Meeting of deadlines was rated as good with a mean of 4.1 with a standard deviation of 0.7, as shown by Table 4

**Interest shown in Solving customers problems**: Fig 2 further shows that, fifty percent of the respondents rated Highland surveyors’ staffs’ interest shown in solving customers problems
as excellent, while 40 percent of the respondents rated Highland surveyors’ staffs’ interest shown in solving customers problems as good. Ten percent of the respondents rated Highland surveyors’ staffs’ interest shown in solving customers problems as fair. As indicated by Table 4, the overall mean rating by all the customers was good with a mean of 4.4 and a standard deviation of 0.7.

**The performance of services correctly the first time:** Fig 2 indicates that, thirty-seven percent of the respondents rated performance of services correctly the first time as excellent, while 47 percent of the respondents rated performance of services correctly the first time as good. Only 16 percent of the respondents rated performance of services correctly the first time as fair. As shown by Table 4, the average rating of performance of services correctly the first time was good with a mean of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 0.7.

**Provision of services at the promised time:** As indicated in Fig 2, forty percent of the respondents rated provision of services at the promised time as excellent. Forty-seven percent of the respondents rated provision of services at the promised time as good. Thirteen percent of the respondents rated provision of services at the promised time as fair. The average rating of provision of services at the promised time was good with a mean of 4.3 with a standard deviation of 0.7, as shown by Table 4.

**Insistence on error-free services:** Fig 2 shows that, thirty-three percent of the respondents rated Highland surveyors staffs’ insistence on error-free services as excellent, while 54 percent of the respondents rated insistence on error-free services as good. Thirteen percent of the respondents rated Highland surveyors staffs’ insistence on error-free services as fair. In general, insistence on error-free services was rated as good with a mean of 4.3 with standard deviation 0.6, as shown by Table 4.

The mean rating of the perceptions of the respondents from Nairobi and Eldoret were used to make inference about the mean rating of the perception of reliability by the customer populations in Eldoret and Nairobi. A t-distribution test was used for this analysis. As shown in appendix V, at the 95 percent confidence level, no difference could be inferred about the
mean rating by the Nairobi and Eldoret customer population regarding perceptions of reliability. Any difference in the perception of the reliability by the Nairobi and Eldoret respondents can therefore largely be attributed to sampling error. Appendix V further shows that using the sample means and the t-distribution test, no difference could also be inferred at the 95 percent confidence level between the mean rating of the perception of the population of lawyers and corporate customers regarding reliability.

4.4 Analysis of Responsiveness

Four items were selected to measure responsiveness of Highland surveyors’ services. The selected items included; the ability of staff to tell customers exactly when services will be performed, the promptness of services given by staff, the willingness of staff to help customers, and the speed of staffs’ response to customers. All the above items were on average rated as good with a mean of 4.2 as shown in Table 5 and Fig 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Scale item</th>
<th>Customer Rating</th>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability tell exactly when services will be performed</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promptness of services by staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness of staff to help customers</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of response to customers</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig 3: Distribution of Responsiveness

*Ability to tell exactly when services will be performed:* Fig 3 shows that, thirty-three percent of the respondents rated the ability of Highland surveyors' staff to tell customers exactly when services will be performed as excellent. Fifty-four percent of the respondents rated the ability of Highland surveyors' staff to tell customers exactly when services will be performed as good. Thirteen percent of the respondents rated the ability of Highland surveyors' staff to tell customers exactly when services will be performed as fair. The overall rating of responsiveness was good with a mean of 4.2 with a standard deviation of 0.7, as shown in Table 5.

*The promptness of service provision:* Fig 3 further shows that, twenty percent of the respondents rated the promptness of service given by staff as excellent. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents rated the promptness of service given by staff as good. Thirteen percent of the respondents rated the promptness of service given by staff as fair. Table 5 shows that, the overall rating of the promptness of service given by staff was good with a mean of 4.1 with a standard deviation of 0.6.

*Willingness to help customers:* As indicated in Fig 3, the willingness of highland surveyors' staff to help customers was rated as excellent by 47 percent of the respondents. Forty percent of the respondents rated the willingness of highland surveyors' staff to help customers as
good, while 13 percent of the respondents rated the willingness of highland surveyors’ staff to help customers as fair. Table 5 shows that, the willingness of highland surveyors’ staff to help customers was the most highly rated among other items measuring responsiveness with a mean of 4.3 with a standard deviation of 0.7.

The speed of response to customers: Fig 3 indicates that, the speed of response by Highland surveyors’ staff to customers was rated as excellent by 30 percent of the respondents, while 50 percent of the respondents rated the speed of response by Highland surveyors’ staff to customers as good, 17 percent of the respondents rated the speed of response by Highland surveyors’ staff to customers as fair. Three percent of the respondents rated the speed of response by Highland surveyors’ staff to customers as poor. This was the lowest rated item of responsiveness with a mean of 4.0 with a standard deviation of 0.8, as indicated by Table 5.

The mean rating of the perceptions of the respondents from Nairobi and Eldoret were used to make inference about the mean rating of the perception of responsiveness by the customer populations in Eldoret and Nairobi. A t-distribution test was used for this analysis. As shown in appendix V, at the 95 percent confidence level, no difference could be inferred about the mean rating by the Nairobi and Eldoret customer population regarding perceptions of responsiveness. Any difference in the perception of the responsiveness by the Nairobi and Eldoret respondents can therefore largely be attributed to sampling error. Appendix V further shows that using the sample means and the t-distribution test, no difference could also be inferred at the 95 percent confidence level between the mean rating of the perception of the population of lawyers and corporate customers regarding responsiveness.

4.5 Analysis of Assurance

Four items were selected to measure the assurance of services provided by highland surveyors. These items were: the confidence instilled in customers by the behaviour of the staff, the safety the customers feel in their transactions, the consistent courtesy staff have
with customers and the knowledge the staff have to answer customers questions. All these items were on average rated as good with a mean of 4.3 as shown by Table 6 and Fig 4.

Table 6: Customer Rating of Assurance Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Scale Item</th>
<th>Customer Rating</th>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence instilled in customers</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety felt in transactions</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent courtesy of staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge to answer questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 4: Distribution of Assurance

Confidence instilled in customers: As shown by Fig 4, thirty-seven percent of the respondents rated the confidence instilled in them by the behaviour of staff at Highland surveyors as excellent. Forty-seven percent of the respondents rated confidence instilled in them by the behaviour of staff as good, whilst 16 percent of the respondents rated confidence instilled in them by the behavior of staff as fair. Table 6 shows that, the overall rating of the confidence instilled in customers by the behavior of staff was the least with a mean of 4.2 with a standard deviation of 0.7.

Safety felt in transactions with highland surveyors staff: Fig 4 further shows that, Fifty-four percent of the respondents rated safety felt in their transactions with Highland surveyors staff
as excellent. Thirty-three percent of the respondents rated safety felt in their transactions with Highland surveyors staff as good, while 13 percent of the respondents rated safety felt in their transactions with Highland surveyors staff as fair. This indicator of service assurance was rated highest among the four indicators of assurance with a mean of 4.4 with a standard deviation of 0.7, as indicated by Table 6.

**Consistent courtesy staff have with customers:** Fig 4 indicates that, fifty-four percent of the respondents rated the consistent courtesy the staff of Highland surveyors have with them as excellent. Thirty percent of the respondents rated the consistent courtesy of the staff as good. Sixteen percent of the respondents rated consistent courtesy staff have with customers as fair. Consistent courtesy the staff have with customers was rated second highest of the items of service assurance with a mean of 4.4 and a standard deviation of 0.8, as shown by Table 6.

**Knowledge to answer customers’ questions:** Fig 4 indicates that, forty percent of the respondents rated highland surveyors staffs’ knowledge to answer customers’ questions as excellent. Fifty percent of the respondents rated the staffs’ knowledge to answer customers’ questions as good while 10 percent of the respondents rated highland surveyors staffs’ knowledge to answer customers’ questions as fair. Table 6 indicates that, Highland surveyors staffs’ knowledge to answer customers’ questions was the second lowest rated item of assurance with a mean of 4.3 with a mean of 0.6.

The mean rating of the perceptions of the respondents from Nairobi and Eldoret were used to make inference about the mean rating of the perception of assurance by the customer populations in Eldoret and Nairobi. A t-distribution test was used for this analysis. As shown in appendix V, at the 95 percent confidence level, no difference could be inferred about the mean rating by the Nairobi and Eldoret customer population regarding perceptions of assurance. Any difference in the perception of the assurance by the Nairobi and Eldoret respondents can therefore largely be attributed to sampling error. Appendix V also shows that using the sample means and the t-distribution test, no difference could also be inferred at the 95 percent confidence level between the mean rating of the perception of the population of lawyers and corporate customers regarding assurance.
4.6 Analysis of Empathy

This dimension had five items selected to measure its rating by the Highland Surveyors Customers. The five items are: The individualized attention given to customers' work, the convenience of opening hours to all customers, the personal attention given to customers' work by staff, the staff's commitment to customer best interest, and the ability of the staff to understand the specific needs of their customers. The rating of empathy was on average good with a weighted mean score of 4.3. Table 7 and Fig 5 show the distribution of the rating for empathy.

Table 7: Customer Rating of Empathy Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Scale item</th>
<th>Customer Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized attention given to customers' work</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience of opening hours</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal attention given to customers' work</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to customers' interests</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand specific needs of customers</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 5: Distribution of Empathy
**Individualized attention given to customers work:** Fig 5 shows that, the individualized attention given to customers’ work was rated as excellent by 53 percent of the respondents. Thirty-three percent of the respondents rated the individualized attention given to customers’ work as good, while 10 percent of the respondents rated the individualized attention given to customers’ work as fair. Three percent of the respondents rated the individualized attention given to customers’ work poor. The customers in general rated the individualized attention given to customers’ work as good with a mean score of 4.4 with a standard deviation of 0.8, as indicated by Table 7.

**Convenience of opening hours:** Fig 5 further shows that, twenty percent of the respondents rated the convenience of opening hour as excellent. Sixty-three percent of the respondents rated the convenience of opening hours to all customers as good. Seventeen percent of the respondents rated the convenience of opening hours to all customers as fair. The convenience of opening hours to all customers was the second least rated item of empathy with a mean score of 4.4 with a standard deviation of 0.6, as indicated by Table 7.

**Personal attention given to customers work:** Fig 5 indicates that, fifty-seven percent of the respondents rated the personal attention given to customers’ work as excellent, 33 percent of the respondents rated the personal attention given to their work as good. Seven percent of the respondents rated the personal attention given to customers’ work as poor. Personal attention given to customers’ work was highly rated with a mean of 4.4 and a standard deviation of 0.8, as shown by Table 7.

**Commitment to customers’ best interests:** Fig 5 shows that, thirty-seven percent of the respondents rated staff’s commitment to customers’ interests as excellent. Sixty percent of the respondents rated the staff’s commitment to customers’ best interest as good while 3 percent of the respondents rated staff’s commitment to customers’ interests as fair. Table 7 indicates that, the staffs’ commitment to customers’ best interests was rated as good with a mean score of 4.3 with a standard deviation of 0.5
Understanding customers specific needs: As shown by Fig 5, fifty percent of the respondents rated the ability of staff to understand their specific needs as excellent. Forty percent of the respondents rated this ability as good. Ten percent of the respondents rated the ability of staff to understand their specific needs as fair. Table 7 indicates that, the mean score for this item was 4.4 which was the highest with a standard deviation of 0.7.

The mean rating of the perceptions of the respondents from Nairobi and Eldoret were used to make inference about the mean rating of the perception of empathy by the customer populations in Eldoret and Nairobi. A t-distribution test was used for this analysis. As shown in appendix V, at the 95 percent confidence level, no difference could be inferred about the mean rating by the Nairobi and Eldoret customer population regarding perceptions of empathy. Any difference in the perception of the empathy by the Nairobi and Eldoret respondents can therefore largely be attributed to sampling error. Appendix V also shows that using the sample means and the t-distribution test, no difference could also be inferred at the 95 percent confidence level between the mean rating of the perception of the population of lawyers and corporate customers regarding empathy.
4.7 Summary

None of the customers rated any of the five dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy as very poor. The majority of the respondents rated the dimensions as good or excellent. More than one third rated the dimensions as excellent. Fig 6 shows the mean rating of the dimensions.

![Mean Rating of Quality Dimensions](image)

**Fig 6: Mean Rating of Quality Dimensions**

Reliability, assurance and empathy were equally rated with a mean rating of 4.2, followed by responsiveness with a mean rating of 4.1. Tangibles were the least rated with a mean of 4.0.

Analysis using the t-distribution test showed no difference in the mean rating of quality perception by the population of customers in Eldoret and Nairobi at the 95 percent confidence level. Further analysis showed no difference in the mean rating of quality perception by the population of lawyers and corporate customers at the 95 percent confidence level.
CHAPTER V

5.0 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the entire report. The discussions that arise from the
data analysis in chapter IV are the core of the chapter. The discussions in this chapter focus
on the five quality dimensions. These are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and
empathy.

5.2 Summary of the Research

The purpose of this study was to determine the customer perception of service quality at
Highland Surveyors. The research was guided by the following research questions:

(i) What are the customer perceptions of the tangible characteristics of
services offered by Highland Surveyors?

(ii) What are the customer perceptions of the reliability of services offered by
Highland Surveyors?

(iii) What are the customer perceptions of the responsiveness of Highland
Surveyors?

(iv) What are the customer perceptions of assurance of services offered by
Highland Surveyors?

(v) What are the customer perceptions of the empathy of services offered by
Highland Surveyors?

The research design was a survey. The population of this research was all the forty five (45)
current customers of Highland Surveyors, who are based in Nairobi and Eldoret. The
researcher developed the data collection instrument, which was a questionnaire, in relevance
to the research questions. The results of the pilot test indicated that the data collection
instrument was reliable.
The likert scale used in the questionnaire produced interval data. This data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were employed to analyze data in terms of the mean percentage and frequency distribution. The t-distribution test was used to make inference about the difference in population mean ratings of the quality dimensions. The data was summarized and presented in tables and bar graphs. Excel spreadsheet was used to analyze the data.

In general, the results of the research indicate that customers perceived the quality of service at Highland Surveyors as good. One third of the respondents perceived the tangible characteristics of Highland Surveyors service as excellent, a half of the respondents perceived the tangible characteristics as good and a fifth of the respondents perceived the tangible characteristics as fair.

The research also indicated that two fifths of the respondents perceived the reliability of services at Highland Surveyors as excellent, a half of the respondents perceived the reliability of services at Highland Surveyors as good and only a tenth of the respondents perceived the reliability of services at Highland Surveyors as fair. Regarding responsiveness, the study indicated that a third of the respondents perceived the responsiveness at Highland Surveyors as excellent, a half of the respondents perceived responsiveness as good and a sixth of the respondents perceived responsiveness as fair.

The study also indicated that a half of the respondents perceived assurance at Highland Surveyors as excellent, two fifths of the respondents perceived assurance at Highland Surveyors as good, and only a tenth of the respondents perceived assurance as fair. The study further indicated that two fifths of the respondents perceived empathy at Highland Surveyors as excellent, a half of the respondents perceived empathy as good. A tenth of the respondents perceived empathy as fair.
5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 Tangibles

The overall rating for tangibles was good. The majority of the respondents perceived the tangibles characteristics as either good or excellent. Although Nitecki (2002) views tangibles as the least important of the five dimensions of quality, Kotler (2000) observes that customers will look for signs or evidence of service quality in order to reduce uncertainty. Tangibles refer to the appearance of physical elements.

Prospective new customers will rely on tangibles as evidence of the quality of services offered. Schostack (1984) states that consumers often deduce the nature of a service from circumstantial evidence. Tangibles were the least rated of the quality dimensions. The design of services at Highland Surveyors should therefore incorporate careful orchestration of tangible evidence to improve the perception of tangibles. Everything the consumer uses to verify the service effectiveness such as modern equipment, physical facilities, neatness of staff and appeal of plans and drawings should be carefully orchestrated.

The appeal of physical facilities was perceived favorably by the respondents. The physical facilities in Eldoret were rated higher than those in Nairobi. The external physical facilities in Eldoret are certainly more appealing than those in Nairobi and this may have contributed to the higher score for Eldoret. However, it is difficult to say for certain how much each of the three attributes that describe a service environment contributes to the overall mean score.

The majority of the respondents perceived the neatness of staff as good. However, this item attracted the lowest score of all the items of tangibles. The score for Eldoret is higher than the score for Nairobi. The slight difference in scores can be explained by the fact that dress standards are usually lower in the smaller towns than in Nairobi. The lower expectations will naturally lead to higher scores in smaller towns for the same dress standards. The reason for the less than excellent scores can be found in the fact that a survey crew consists of a surveyor and about five support staff. The support staff are the junior employees of a survey company and are therefore not very highly paid. Their low pay will naturally be reflected in
their dressing. A casual observer is not able to distinguish between the professional and his subordinates during normal work and they are all usually branded surveyors. Due to this confusion, the dress expectations the casual observer has for subordinate staff working in the field are too high and will lead to low scores due to the inevitable disappointment.

About two-thirds of the respondents perceived the appeal of survey plans and drawings as excellent. The high score is good because survey plans and drawings can be viewed as very important tangible items as they represent the main product of survey. Highland Surveyors appears to have found the formula for delighting clients as far as this item is concerned. The company should continuously improve the quality of its plans and drawings in order to keep up with customer requirements, which are changing all the time and maintain this high score.

5.3.2 Reliability

The study showed that the reliability of services at Highland Surveyors is good. The majority of the respondents perceived reliability of services as either good or excellent. The findings of the research should be good news for Highland Surveyors as they concur with the most current literature on service quality. According to Nitecki (2002), extensive research has concluded that customers rank reliability as the most important contributor to service quality. A lean structure and avoidance of the industrial approach as advocated by Schlesinger and Heskett (1987) is certainly a contributor to the high score on reliability seen in this report.

The relatively good score reported by this study indicates that in line with Hogg and Gabbott’s (1998) observations, Highland Surveyors have kept deadlines promised to clients. This report’s findings indicate further that Highland Surveyors have, as recommended by Ohaga (1999) provided services at the promised time and not made promises they cannot keep.

The study shows that interest shown by Highland Surveyors staff in solving customers problems is the most highly rated item of reliability. According to Kaufman (2002), in order to retain customers a company should look at a customer with sincerity, interest and patience.
According to this report, nearly all of the respondents perceived performance of services correctly the first time as either excellent or good. Further, a fairly large percentage of the respondents perceived the insistence on error free services as either good or excellent. Despite this good score on both items, it is worth noting the observations of Sasser et al (1990). Sasser et al observe that despite the best efforts trying to provide error free services, mistakes occur. They add that in services, often performed in the customer’s presence, errors are inevitable. What matters is that a good recovery strategy should be in place.

5.3.3 Responsiveness

The research findings showed that Highland Surveyors is a responsive organization. The overwhelming percentage of the respondents perceived the responsiveness of Highland Surveyors as either good or excellent. Despite the good score, there is need for Highland Surveyors to achieve excellence in this very important dimension of service quality through continuous improvement by instituting a quality culture as recommended by Kessler (1995).

According to study findings, most of the respondents perceived the ability of staff to tell customers when services will be performed as either good or excellent. Services are produced in real time. If a service fails, it is not possible to restore that time. For instance, failure by a surveyor to turn up on site at a specific time means that time is lost to the client. Clients need to be assured that services will be provided on time. As Hogg and Gabbott (1998) recommend, Highland Surveyors should offer time guarantees in order to re-assure customers.

The score obtained by Highland Surveyors in this study regarding the promptness of services given by staff was either excellent or good. The study also suggests that staff at Highland Surveyors serve clients promptly. Hogg and Gabbott (1998) state that “an important aspect of service responsiveness is promptness of service.” This implies as suggested by Schlesinger and Heskett (1987) that Highland Surveyors staff are well trained.
This report indicates that the willingness of staff to help customers is good. This item was the most highly rated of the items of responsiveness. Willingness to help customers is important if customer loyalty is to be maintained among Highland Surveyors' customers. Schlesinger and Heskett (1991) suggest that more than two-thirds of the customers who defect do so because they find service people indifferent and unhelpful.

In this study, it was found that the speed of response of Highland Surveyors staff to customers is good. Speed of response is determined by the competence and commitment of the front office staff. This score therefore suggests that Highland Surveyors are competent and committed. Schlesinger and Heskett (1991) are of the view that the front of the house jobs cannot be done by incompetent and uncommitted workers. They require men and women who can take responsibility, manage themselves and respond well to pressure from customers.

5.3.4 Assurance

This study found the assurance associated with Highland Surveyors quite good. About a half of the respondents perceived the assurance associated with Highland Surveyors as excellent, a similar proportion of the respondents perceived the assurance associated with Highland Surveyors good. As suggested by Markgraf (2002) one of the keys to small business success is making sure that the customer gets that which he expected when he purchased the service.

In this study, the confidence instilled in customers by the behavior of staff at highland surveyors was perceived as good. The research also found that the knowledge to answer customers questions was good. This score suggests that Highland Surveyors' staff have the ability to solve customers' problems and behave appropriately. In order to enable staff to solve customer problems better and influence staff behavior positively, Kaufman (2002) suggests training programs that include active listening, creative problem solving and attitude building activities.
This report indicates that highland surveyor’s customers have trust in transactions. More than half of the respondents rated safety felt in transactions with highland surveyors to be excellent. Kaufman (2002) suggests that trust should be improved over time by genuinely caring for the customer through a conscientious relationship.

This report indicates that more than a half of the respondents perceived Highland Surveyors’ staff courtesy with them as excellent. A further one third of the respondents perceived Highland Surveyors’ staff courtesy with them as good. Schostack (1984) suggests that in order to improve on this good score, the good manners and attentiveness customers associate with good personal service must be made part of the hiring, training and performance standards of the company.

5.3.5 Empathy

Highland Surveyors scored highly on empathy in this research. Almost all the respondents perceived the empathy of Highland Surveyors as either excellent or good. According to Schostack (1984) Empathy should be designed into the organization, the developer must consider every encounter between consumer and provider. This report further indicates that the individualized attention given to customers is quite good. In line with the recommendations of Treacy and Wiersema (1987), Highland Surveyors needs to pursue a strategy of customer intimacy and improve on the individualized attention given to customers if it is to succeed.

This study also indicates that the commitment to customer’s best interests by highland surveyors’ staff was perceived to be quite good by the customers. Almost all of the respondents perceived the commitment to customers best interests by Highland Surveyors staff to be excellent or good. This high score suggests committed and capable staff. According to Schlesinger and Heskett (1987) capable workers who are well trained will be committed to their work.
This study found the ability of highland surveyors’ staff to understand the specific needs of their customers to be good. Half the respondents perceived the ability of Highland Surveyors staff to understand specific needs of customers to be excellent. A possible reason for this high score is that the requirements of survey and mapping customers are very similar. Customer requirements are also usually communicated in writing in order to give specifications. This avoids the lack of understanding associated with verbal communication. According to Holder (2002), consultants have found that 75 percent of verbal communications are misunderstood.

5.4 Conclusions

Based on the finding of the study, it can be concluded that customers perceive the tangible characteristic of Highland Surveyors’ services to be quite good. All the items, which measured the tangibles dimensions of quality, were rated either good or excellent by the majority of the respondents. More than half of the respondents rated the appeal of survey plans and drawings as excellent. Survey plans and drawings can be viewed as very important tangible items as they represent the product as far as most customers are concerned.

From the research findings, it can be concluded that customers perceive the reliability of services at Highland Surveyors as very good. For each of the items of the reliability dimensions, most of the respondents rated the items as either excellent or good. At the same time, for each of the items, at least one third of the respondents perceived each item as excellent.

The findings in this report lead one to conclude that customers perceive the responsiveness of Highland Surveyors as quite good. The majority of the respondents perceived each of the items of responsiveness as either good or excellent.

Based on the study findings, it can also be concluded that customers perceive the assurance of services offered by Highland Surveyors as very good. Most of the respondents perceived the assurance of Highland Surveyors services to be at least good. More than one half of the
respondents perceived the two items, safety felt in transaction and the consistent courtesy of staff as excellent.

The findings of this research lead to the conclusion that customers perceive the empathy of services at Highland Surveyors as very good. Most of the respondents rated each of the items of empathy as either good or excellent. Of these, in three of the items, over half of the respondents rated the items as excellent

5.5  Recommendations

5.5.1  Recommendations for Practice

The overall customer perception of the quality of highland surveyors’ services is good. However Highland Surveyors should pursue a quality based differentiation strategy, the organization needs to strive for excellence in order to delight customers and increase customer loyalty. In view of the fact that it is difficult, to figure out just what dimension of quality will be given greater weight in the customer evaluation process. It appears prudent to strive to improve all quality dimensions and therefore achieve overall excellence. Accordingly, this report gives recommendations for the improvement of all dimensions.

Improvement in overall quality delivery by Highland Surveyors in order to delight customers will mainly depend on improved employee performance. In order to achieve this, Highland Surveyors needs to have a selection process designed to elicit prospective employees values and attitudes toward responsibility, teamwork and other life themes that have been shown to correlate with successful service work. They also need to make recruitment and training as crucial for field surveyors and support staff as for managers. Training needs to be coupled with an accountability system. In addition, it is necessary to make sure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities within the firm. Compensation should be linked to performance for employees at every level not just for those at the top.
Although tangible characteristics were perceived as good, they received the lowest rating. Less than one third of the respondents viewed tangible characteristics as excellent. This is a small percentage. Highland Surveyors needs to design physical facilities to appeal to the customers more. To improve scores on neatness of staff, Highland Surveyors should provide neat overalls for all subordinate staff; to be sure the staff will always be neat.

In order to delight customers, Highland Surveyors needs to plan work processes to ensure clients technical requirement are satisfied. Management needs to confirm that measuring equipment is working within specifications and review procedures to ensure that they are being followed by staff and are cost effective. All work should be checked and authorized by senior managers prior to release. Highland Surveyors needs to have a well organized, secure records system, and actively manage staff and resources to ensure that deadlines are met.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Further Research

The study revealed that less than one third of the respondents perceived the tangible characteristics of Highland Surveyors as excellent. Tangibles such as physical facilities and survey equipment cost a lot of money. There is room for researchers to find out just how much weight tangible characteristics are given in the customer evaluation process and whether customers are willing to pay more for services when investment is made in tangibles. Further research will indicate the return on investment of each of the quality dimensions.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX I

Letter of Introduction

Dear ......................

We are currently surveying our clients to help us better understand client needs, in order to provide better service. Kindly assist us to serve you better by completing the attached questionnaire and returning it.

Yours faithfully,

Ken Kubasu
For HIGHLAND SURVEYORS
Questionnaire

Name of Organization .................................................................

Location ......................................................................................

Type of Business ..........................................................................

Directions: please complete the following questionnaire pertaining to service quality. Kindly circle the number that corresponds to your rating of attributes of Highland Surveyors’ services.

PART 1 - TANGIBLES

(1) Modernity of equipment at Highland Surveyors. ..............................................

(2) The appeal of physical facilities at Highland Surveyors’ offices. .............

(3) The neatness of staff at Highland Surveyors. ........................................

(4) The appeal of survey plans and drawings provided by Highland Surveyors. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART 2 - RELIABILITY

(5) The meeting of deadlines as promised by Highland Surveyors. ..............

(6) The interest shown by Highland Surveyors’ staff in solving customers’ problems. 

(7) The performance of services correctly the first time by Highland Surveyors’ staff 

(8) The provision of services at the promised time by Highland Surveyors. 

(9) The provision of error-free services by Highland Surveyors. ................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART 3 - RESPONSIVENESS

(10) The ability of Highland Surveyors to tell customers exactly when services will be performed. 

(11) The promptness of services given by staff at Highland Surveyors. 

(12) The willingness of Highland Surveyors’ staff to help customers. 

(13) The speed of response of Highland Surveyors’ staff to customers. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART 4 - ASSURANCE

(14) The confidence instilled in customers by the behaviour of staff at Highland Surveyors.
     Very Poor  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent
     1  2  3  4  5

(15) The trust customers of Highland Surveyors have in transactions.
     Very Poor  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent
     1  2  3  4  5

(16) The courtesy staff of Highland Surveyors have with customers.
     Very Poor  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent
     1  2  3  4  5

(17) The competence Highland Surveyors' staff have to solve customers' problems.
     Very Poor  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent
     1  2  3  4  5

PART 5 - EMPATHY

(18) The individualized attention given to customers' work at Highland Surveyors.
     Very Poor  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent
     1  2  3  4  5

(19) The convenience of opening hours to all customers of Highland Surveyors.
     Very Poor  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent
     1  2  3  4  5

(20) The personal attention given to customers work by Highland Surveyor's staff.
     Very Poor  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent
     1  2  3  4  5

(21) The commitment to customers best interest by Highland Surveyors' staff.
     Very Poor  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent
     1  2  3  4  5

(22) The ability of Highland Surveyor's staff to understand the specific needs of their customers.
     Very Poor  Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent
     1  2  3  4  5
APPENDIX II

Estimating Reliability

Reliability using Intraclass correlation

According to Fittrell (1995), studies indicate that the Intraclass is a better measure when the data are ratings made on some scale. It is preferred when the data can be ordered and when the rating of the distance between the ordered categories is roughly equal. There are actually variations of the Intraclass correlation, but all are set up the same way; they only differ in their treatment of the components of variation. In computation of reliability coefficient; the Highland surveyors customers made independent ratings of the service quality of the five dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy using a 1-to-5 scale in which 1 = very poor and 5 = excellent. The variance components (actually mean squares) were calculated using the sixth form (situation) where the all the respondents were the only customers of interest (i.e. there is not a larger population) and the estimate of the reliability of the customers’ average ratings was 0.74. Interpreting Intraclass correlation: 0.70 is regarded as the lower bound of acceptability, and anything higher than 0.90 is quite good.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean squares</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer rating</td>
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<td>117.9455</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>263182/22-11844.87</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.067085</td>
<td>CMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between items</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.39394</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>355018/30-11844.87</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.066378</td>
<td>BMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>311.1273</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12156-11844.87</td>
<td></td>
<td>659</td>
<td>0.47212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within items</td>
<td></td>
<td>288.7333</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311.1273-22.39394</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>0.45256</td>
<td>WMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td></td>
<td>170.7879</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311.1273-22.39394-117.9455</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>0.28044</td>
<td>EMS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58
Our customers are the only customers of interest (i.e. there is not a larger population). Here is how to estimate the reliability of the customer’s averaged ratings using Intraclass Coefficient Correlation (ICC)

\[
\text{ICC} = \frac{\text{BMS-EMS}}{\text{BMS}} = 0.737016
\]

BMS – Between Mean of Squares
WMS – Within Mean of Squares
EMS – Error Mean of Squares
CMS – Customer’s Mean of Squares
df- Degree of Freedom
APPENDIX III

Sample Frame

1. National Cereals and Produce Board
2. Telposta Pension Scheme
3. Telkom (K) Limited
4. Postal Corporation of Kenya
5. Kenya Pipeline Company
7. KARI (Kenya Agricultural Research Institute)
8. Communications Commission of Kenya
9. Kenya Reinsurance
10. N.S.S.F (National Social Security Fund)
11. Uniliver
12. Sulmac Flower Company
13. Kenya Wildlife Service
14. Raiplywoods Company
15. Timsales Limited
16. Moi University Pension Scheme
17. Gibb (Eastern Africa) Limited
18. Highland Valuers
19. African Latitude
20. Moi University
21. Wareng County Council
22. Eldoret Municipal Council
23. Integer Ltd
24. Lima Limited
25. KARO Farm
26. Kipsenende farm
27. Runji & Partners
28. Cas Consultants
29. Conte Design
30. Field-Marsham & Co. Advocates
31. Kaplan and Stratton Advocates
32. Birech & Company Advocates
33. Kimaru Kiplagat & Company Advocates
34. Sambu and Company Advocates
35. Daly and Figgis Advocates
36. Nyaundi Tuyott Co. Advocates
37. Nyairo & Co. Advocates
38. Kalia & Co. Advocates
39. Mr. Kwambai
40. Howard Makotsi
41. David Worthington
42. Major Wilson Koitaba
43. Lewis Nguyai
44. Mr. Eliud Parsankul
45. Mr. Enock Tuitoek
APPENDIX IV

Implementation Schedule

This study was undertaken over a period of six months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Activities</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Preparation</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>20 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report Writing</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>25 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Money Budget

The basic costs of undertaking this research were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>COST (KSH.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Stationery</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Spiral binding</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub total</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection / analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Postage, Stamps and Envelopes</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Stationery</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Refreshments (during interviews)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Travel</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub total</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Stationery</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Binding</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub total</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>14,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX V

t-DISTRIBUTION TEST TABLE FOR POPULATION OF ELDORET AND NAIROBI CUSTOMERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Dimension</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Sample Mean</th>
<th>Sample Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Difference in Mean Population Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NRB</td>
<td>ELD</td>
<td>NRB</td>
<td>ELD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANGIBLES</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIABILITY</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESPONSIVENESS</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSURANCE</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPATHY</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-distribution test to establish at the 95% confidence level the difference in the mean rating of the perception of quality dimensions by the population of Eldoret and Nairobi.

t-DISTRIBUTION TEST TABLE FOR POPULATION OF CORPORATE AND LAWYERS CUSTOMERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Dimension</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Sample Mean</th>
<th>Sample Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Difference in Mean Population Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CORP</td>
<td>LAWYERS</td>
<td>CORP</td>
<td>LAWYERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANGIBLES</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIABILITY</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESPONSIVENESS</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSURANCE</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPATHY</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-distribution test to determine at the 95% confidence level the in the mean rating of the perception of quality dimensions by the population of Corporate and Lawyers customers.