THE IMPACT OF QUALITY SERVICES ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR: A CASE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

BY

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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY - AFRICA

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A Research Project Submitted to the Chandaria School of Business in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the award of a Master of Science in Management and Organizational Development (MOD)

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY - AFRICA

SPRING 2017
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_________________________ Date____________________________

OGENDI MARK RACHUONYO (614939)

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

Signed_________________________ Date____________________________

Dr. Peter Kiriri

Signed: ______________________ Date: ______________

Dean, Chandaria School of Business
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my loving family for their support, patience and encouragement during the entire period of the study and their continued prayers towards the successful completion of this course. May the Almighty God grant you His Blessings! Amen.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost I give my gratitude and humble appreciation to the Almighty God for the gift of life, good health, a sound mind and divine providence that enabled me to come up with this research proposal.

Secondly, I wish to accord my Supervisor Dr. Peter Kiriri, a special acknowledgement, for equipping me with the knowledge and skills on proposal great insight, encouragement and guidance throughout the research proposal through document reading and corrections making.

Special appreciation to my family for the encouragement and moral support they gave me throughout the study. God Bless You all.
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<td>Commission of Higher Education</td>
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<td>CUE</td>
<td>Commission for University Education</td>
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<td>EFQM</td>
<td>European Foundation for Quality Management</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>HEdPER</td>
<td>Higher Education Performance</td>
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<td>SERVQUAL</td>
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ABSTRACT

Most developing countries are facing challenges in keeping to the required standards of education. In Kenya especially, the Commission for University Education (CUE), had once and several times closed campuses and stopped accreditation of some universities. This study focused on determining the factors that influenced students’ perception on service quality. In specific the study sought to establish how assurance dimension affected students’ perception to service quality, how responsiveness dimension impacted students’ perception on service quality, how reliability dimension affected perception of students on service quality, how tangibility dimension played a role in determining students’ perception on universities’ service quality, and how empathy dimension affected the students’ perception on service quality.

The study adopted a descriptive design and employed a stratified approach in grouping private universities based in Nairobi region in order to obtain responses randomly from different strata identified covering a sample size of 300 respondents. Data was obtained through the use of structured questionnaires and was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) based on descriptive techniques, and results were presented on tables and figures to enhance easy interpretation.

The study found out that assurance is one of the major dimensions that determine the perceptions of students with regard to service delivery. About 67% of the respondents had indicated that their institutions were always involved in giving surety of delivering quality services, however most of the institutions did not live up to their commitments in practice. About 43% of the students thought that university lecturers and faculty members had above minimum qualifications that are required to teach in higher institutions of learning.

Based on responsiveness, the research established that students were of the opinion that universities were not responsive to the students’ expectations, since about 60% of the respondents were for the opinion that universities were rarely committed to provide prompt services to students. It was indicated that management and faculty members’ willingness to have students’ needs was not to the expectations, a fact that should be further investigated to establish why services were not willingly provided to satisfaction since private universities were generally believed to be sensitive to student needs in order to attract and retain more clients as they were actually operated with profit objectives.
On empathy, the study established that the most important factor on empathy is the ability to understand such student needs separately and provide unique assistance to each group meant to provide attention to each person. Such a move enhances satisfaction and self-esteem among the helped students provided higher levels of confidence are maintained in order to minimize chances of embarrassments to students.

Reliability was however closely linked to assurance dimension as well as empathy dimension in which students’ confidence was sought to be won by universities especially in terms of service quality delivery. Factors considered in this case were the attractiveness and promising nature of university vision statements; the level of dependability by the students on their universities; the capacity of universities to offer quality education; ability of the universities to help students realign academic and professional goals; ability of university management and faculty to win student loyalty; as well students’ opinion on the overall performance of respective universities management.

The study concluded that responsiveness dimension is as important as assurance dimension on service quality in private universities. It was established that responsiveness creates a sense of appreciation and postive regard on university efforts to deliver quality services by the students. Management of private universities are always expected to responsibly manage student affairs in a manner that promotes confidence and hence winning trust of students.

Based on the research findings and conclusions, recommendations to enhance service quality and improvement of nature of education services are given. Recommendation is given to university management to ensure that students needs are given priority by addressing their needs and being treated as customers to universities. Further, an indepth study to establish the factors that makes faculty members not to perform to students’ expectations despite them being highly qualified was given under the study’s recommendations.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Customer satisfaction largely depends on the quality of services provided by any organization (Zhou, 2011). Fundamentally, concerns on service quality have increasingly become common due to the fact that most consumers (customers) continue to be well informed on their sovereignty and right to receive better and quality services. This is widely enhanced due to availability of information on products and services quality. Irrespective of the sector in question, globally the consumers expect to be served well and have their concerns and needs satisfied to their expectations (Daniel, 2012). This has been seen both in the developed and developing countries, in almost all sectors including the education sector which is seen as the vehicle behind economic and social development.

In a broader perspective, education institutions play a very significant role in developing and training management experts for different industries by integrating their programs and benchmarking with best institutions in the world to enable students become suitable in various industries (Zeithemal, 2014). In Kenya, private institutions in higher learning have come up to help bridge the gap between the students’ needs and the capacities of public institutions. However, quality service by universities can be said to be one of the issues which affects satisfaction in the industry and therefore worthy an exploration in this study.

Universities are important vehicles in promoting educational goals in many countries all over the world. They supplement service delivery especially where the public universities would not have managed to cater for the academic needs due to overwhelming numbers of students seeking higher education services (Uden, 2013). Alternatively, these institutions are seen as forms of investments, in which case the owners of such institutions benefit economically, as well as create more job opportunities not only to the faculty members, but also to many other professions such as accountants, human resource managers, administrators, planners, medical practitioners, and many other people who are employed in the support staff to help promote service delivery in such institutions. In this regard, the presence of such institutions is not only a positive contribution to a country’s education sector, but also to the country’s economy in terms of improved gross domestic product (GDP), employment opportunities, and even tax revenues to the government.
Fundamentally, education sector is one of the most important sectors of an economy (Zhou, 2011). Most of the countries are now shifting their economies from manufacturing to services sector (Jayanth, 2015). Education sector is one of the most important service sectors. Education sector is now considered as important as other sectors of the economy. Competition is now increasing within the industries in service sector (Paul, 2014). This is why the researchers and academicians are emphasizing their attention towards educational sector. Today, organizations are facing new challenges set by the stakeholders and the competitive business environment due to globalization (Nejati, 2013). Organizations require highly skilled, knowledgeable and experienced managers that are able to deal with these issues and finding the best suitable ways to accelerate their organizations both at local as well as at international level (Zhou, 2011). Due to the expansion and growth in the service sector, education institutions in Kenya especially in private sector are facing mounting pressures from their stakeholders and their competitors from public sectors. It is need of the hour that private sector institutions had to make strategies and continuously monitor their education quality to make their customers, and stakeholders happy and gain strategic advantage over their competitors.

On the global context, quality service delivery in higher education is increasingly becoming very important to many nations. In the recent past, efforts have been put up to develop suitable models which are aimed at helping in measuring the quality of services in the higher education sector. One of the most important models is the SERVQUAL instrument (Ghulam et. al., 2014). The SERVQUAL instrument helps in measuring quality service delivery by focusing on service quality to customer satisfaction based on the models five dimensions which include; assurance, responsiveness, reliability, tangibles and empathy (Ghulam et. al., 2014). Ideally, this approach gives a detailed mechanism of examining if a system of education in higher learning focuses on the key factors that promote satisfaction by considering the nature of services offered and the quality as well (Nejati, 2013). Primarily, the use of this model can be applicable in examining different universities and therefore offering rankings in terms of how universities perform globally. For instance, a study by Daniel Beaumont of Manchester University School of Business in 2012 revealed that three of the top fifteen universities globally were based in the UK, whereas the other twelve were from US and Japan. According to this study, UK generally houses the best universities in the world, a fact that
emanates from the quality of their services to students that has made UK to be recognized internationally (Daniel, 2012).

One of the leading factors that affect the quality of service delivery on the global scale is the introduction of tuition fee by most of the states. Historically, university experience and education came at no direct financial implication or cost to students studying in many countries such as those in the UK. However, in 1998 the UK government decided to introduce tuition fees for the first time, capping them at £1,000 to aid the growth and competitive position of universities (Daniel, 2012). From then onwards, fees have climbed slowly in line with inflation up to £3,375 for 2011/2012. Apart from the UK scenario, many counties and states worldwide have had their legislations concerning tuition fees enacted to aid in service delivery. This is one of the factors that have reduced the difference between government sponsored universities and the private universities in the recent past (CUE, 2015).

Despite the introduction of tuition fee levies in most states, many states as well have been reported to cut university funding so as to reduce government expenditures, such as the UK government. Due to these moves, university education whether in the private or public sector has greatly been seen as an expensive endeavor, given that the poor and needy students are not able to access the services so as to enhance their academic goals (Hernon and Whitman, 2011). However, despite the challenges resulting from financial implications, the numbers of students seeking university education have been increasing greatly over the years, making the private universities very helpful in promoting education goals in many countries (Faizan et. al., 2016). Alternatively, the increasing of university fee in most public universities has rendered private university better option to many people. This has seen an emergency of many private universities such as Regent’s University, University of Law, University of Buckingham, Richmond University and Glasgow University in UK, among others.

In Africa, service delivery in higher education has also been of a great concern to students in many African countries. On the same note, the increasing competition among higher education institutions to attract highly qualified students toward achieving high academic profiles is forcing them to pay more attention to service quality issues (Pang, 2016). This makes it prudent to examine whether the quality process has produced the enhancement of core outputs especially on the African Continent (Paul, 2014). Higher education sector across Africa is booming. The number of students enrolled in tertiary education has
increased from fewer than 200,000 in 1970 to around 10 million today. Universities in Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda are leading lights from the continent according to the 2016 Times Higher Education rankings. Despite the achievements in the education sector, many nations still face a lot of challenges in the education sector which include poor service delivery. According to many incidences in the past, students have reported that poor services result from the understaffed faculty, poor infrastructural development, and many other issues which are related to the nature of facilities. Studies have also shown that students in Africa pay more for the services than their counterparts in developed countries and yet they receive less than them in terms of service quality (Paul, 2014).

Many African countries have really struggled towards embracing the importance of education as echoed by some of its leaders, who are the founder fathers such as Nelson Mandela who said that, “Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world” (Paul, 2014). Unfortunately, the efforts to create an education system that is promoting such philosophies have been curtailed by the bad economic conditions, poor governance, political instabilities, corruption, and leadership wrinkles in many countries. The most affected institutions in the region however are the public universities, making the private universities preferred by many students in order to assist them in achieving their education goals (Paul, 2014).

The higher education sector is one of the fastest growing industries in Kenya with private universities coming up so fast to compete with the public funded institutions (Economic Survey 2012). This rapid growth is attributed by the high number of student enrolment, reduced government funding heightened expectation of service quality by the students and other stakeholders and emergence of very competitive private institutions and the acquisition of middle level colleges by public universities and changing them to constituent colleges. In Kenya, there is a view that every county must have a university. Service quality is therefore gaining a greater prominence with the main stay remaining high service quality to enhance customer satisfaction (Sarah et. al., 2011).

Most developing countries are facing challenges in keeping to the required quality standards of education. In Kenya especially, the Commission for University Education (CUE), had once and several times closed campuses and stopped accreditation of some universities. This comes as a result of some universities offering programs that have not been approved by CUE. Higher education in Kenya is facing pressure to improve value
and quality in its activities (Caleb et. al., 2011). The Commission for University Education in Kenya has in the past done a lot of inspections in order to review the status of various institutions of higher learning so that the students may have ample and the best environments to study. The present tenet is for enhancing educational value and to expend effort on continuous improvement, to focus on stakeholders’ interests, and to increase students’ satisfaction. In today’s competitive academic environment where students have many options available to them, factors that enable educational institutions to attract and retain students should be seriously studied. All higher education institutions which wants to have competitive edge in the future may need to begin searching for effective and creative ways to attract, retain and foster stronger relationships with students (Zeithaml, 2014). As private institutions of higher learning, they must try to depend on the interaction and mechanisms of the market. As a result, competition to woo as many students as possible or so-called “potential customers” may become more and more intense. To make the matter harder, as private institutions, they do not have the “privilege” to receive any subsidies or financial assistance from the government (Sarah et. al., 2011).

It is clear that all customers are looking for quality service in higher education and therefore the greater need for the private institutions to expedite the same (Hoffman and Bateson, 2016). Higher education institutions should ensure that all service encounters are managed to enhance consumer perceived quality. While there is a consensus on the importance of service quality issues in higher education, the identification and implementation of the right measurement instrument is a challenge that practitioners who aim to gain a better understanding of the quality issues with an impact on student experiences face. The use of appropriate measurement tool would help managers assess service quality provided by their institutions. A review of literature reveals that the most popular scales used to measure service quality are SERVQUAL-Service Quality (Ghulam et. al., 2014) and SERVPERF – Service Performance (Daniel, 2012). However, additional dimensions that emanate from the higher education could be included, as in the case of HEdPERP- Higher Education Performance scale (Hayan and Mokhles, 2013).

Higher education in Kenya has tremendously changed after the introduction of 8-4-4 system where students spend eight years in primary, four years in secondary and four years in university. This has brought so many issues unlike other education systems where students go for advanced level of education; this has raised quality issues over the
years. The 8-4-4 system has been critiqued as negatively affecting the quality of Kenyan education system. In 1961 the Royal College, Nairobi was elevated to university status and named the University of East Africa. It enrolled 571 students in its debut intake, making it the first university in Kenya (Caleb et. al., 2011). Since then, the higher education system in Kenya has expanded and today Kenya has 70 universities (CUE, 2015). The mounting demand for higher education led the government to establish the Commission for University Education (CHE) in 1985 through an Act of Parliament (The University Act Cap 210B), to regulate growth and quality in higher education in Kenya. CHE had been reduced to a body that was considered to charter and issue letters of interim authority but had little control over the quality of service offered in universities thereafter. With these in mind and other reasons, the Commission for University Education (CUE) was enacted to replace CHE in 2013. In this regard, the education system in Kenya has over the years undergone many changes which are aimed at improving the quality of its services to the students (customers) in the country.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most developing countries are facing challenges in keeping to the required high standards of education (Hasan et. al., 2011). In Kenya especially, the Commission for University Education (CUE), had once and several times closed campuses and stopped accreditation of some universities. This comes as a result of some universities offering programs that have not been approved by CUE (Caleb et. al., 2011). Learning in some universities has been seriously challenged due to insufficient facilities and quality of the needed infrastructure and luck of lecturers in some faculties to handle the tasks and failure to attain the required curriculum standard set up by various regulating bodies (Sarah et. al., 2011). The government for example may not compromise on the quality of education given to its citizens and they require all public and private universities to observe the set standards. This of course synchronizes with the world over education offered which must be of the highest quality. Students may be forced to champion for quality service in higher education as this makes them better members of the society (Raphael, 2014).

The subject of service quality has in the recent past sparked lots of concerns from different quarters in the bid of trying to foster an appropriate system that can align Kenyan youths and learners to the global demands in the professional environments, which are entirely dependent on academic achievements (Rodrigues, 2013). Nevertheless, it is more complex to conceptualize the quality of service as opposed to that of goods.
Given the fact education is purely a service provided to the publics; its measurement can only be measured against some indicators that are different from those used in goods. Some of the approaches include the use of SERVQUAL model, which expounds on the five service dimensions (Jayanth, 2015). Ideally, the dimensions can be measured based on the perceptions of the customers who receive the service, and in this case the students (Raphael, 2014). The first aim of this study therefore was to identify how the students’ perceptions are affected by the nature and quality of services offered in private universities in Kenya, taking into consideration the challenges faced by private universities in the country such as lack of funding among others. It is against this background that this study wanted to find out the impact of service quality in student satisfaction on the context of private universities in the Kenyan higher education sector.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the factors affecting students’ satisfaction in private universities in Kenya.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives based on the five service quality dimensions;

1.4.1 To assess how assurance affect students’ perception on quality service.

1.4.2 To establish how responsiveness affect students’ perception on quality service.

1.4.3 To determine how reliability affects students’ perception on quality service.

1.4.4 To establish how tangibility impacts students’ perception on quality service.

1.4.5 To determine how empathy affect students’ perception on quality service.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the academicians’ perspectives by providing new knowledge in the field of service marketing theory on dimensions of service quality in universities not manifest in prevailing service quality models. It is also very important to various stakeholders as indicated below:

1.5.1 Private Universities in Kenya

The importance of service quality as an indicator of customer satisfaction and organizational performance is widely acknowledged. The study will be very important to
private Universities in order to learn that corporate image and service quality are interlinked and therefore stakeholders need excellent service at all levels.

1.5.2 Academia

Major researchers will gather more information on measurement instruments such as SERVQUAL and whether it might be improved to help deliver more suggestions on service quality. In this case, this study will be useful to the subsequent researchers who might be interested in carrying out further studies on the factors that affect quality service delivery and the effectiveness of the measurement instruments.

1.5.3 Kenyan Government

The findings will also provide useful information to policy makers and legislatures which will be significant in providing direction on quality service in higher education sector in Kenya. The information will specifically be significant for government in coming up with suitable quality requirements in education sector through Commission for University Education (CUE).

1.5.4 Parents and Students

The findings of this study are envisaged to be very significant to the higher education sector in Kenya as it will supply insights into how service excellence can improve the corporate image of an organization and allow for retention of customers and building a brand loyalty. This study will also be significant to the academic field as it will form the basis for further studies in the research areas. It will also be valuable to the students to learn what to expect when receiving service.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on organizations’ competitive advantage and corporate image through service excellence and customer loyalty in higher education in Kenya specifically on students. The focus was put on students’ perception and if there are any efforts towards offering quality service in private universities in Kenya. The study’s scope was on undergraduate students of private universities specifically in Nairobi region, between September to December 2016. The study was focusing on undergraduate students, who could fear to provide genuine information concerning the nature of service delivery. To overcome the limitation, the research assured the students of their privacy and as a result did not ask them to indicate their names on the questionnaire.
1.7 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 Service

The action of rendering educational needs to the public, or the ability to administer and meet educational requirements to the people especially by application of professionalism and integrity (Jayanth, 2015).

1.7.2 Quality

The standard of services as measured against other services of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of higher education services (Nejati, 2013).

1.7.3 Higher education

These are the institutions of higher learning; in this case university (Jayanth, 2015).

1.7.4 Customer satisfaction: - This is the experience from the stakeholders who seek educational services from the institutions of higher learning (Nejati, 2013).

1.7.5 Service Excellence

Service excellence refers to the provision of excellent service quality through a management system, exceeding a customer’s expectations, to result in not only customer satisfaction but also customer delight and therefore increased customer loyalty (Raphael, 2014).

1.7.6 Excellence

European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) defines excellence as ‘outstanding practice in managing the organization and achieving results - all based on a set of nine fundamental concepts, results orientation, customer focus, leadership and consistency of purpose, management by process and facts, people development and involvement, continuous learning, innovation and improvement, partnership development (Paul, 2014).

1.7.7 Loyalty

Loyalty is something that consumers may exhibit towards brands, services, products. Loyalty is a feature of people rather than something inherent in brands (Paul, 2014).


1.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter highlights how organizations can enhance corporate image through quality and excellent service. The chapter has given the background information of the study then the statement of the problem. This has been followed by the purpose of the study, which is whether organizations can enhance their corporate image and competitive advantage through service excellence; it was then followed by research objectives and research questions which the researcher aimed to answer. It covers the importance of research to various stakeholders. The subsequent chapter covers literature review on service quality in private universities in Kenya, chapter three describes the research methodology used in the study. Chapter four analyses the data collected and report the findings, and chapter five discusses the findings of the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on improvement to service quality to enhance customers’ (students) satisfaction based on the SERVQUAL model, specifically in higher education sector. A review of previous studies on how the use of SERVQUAL model dimensions (assurance, responsiveness, reliability, empathy and tangibles) enhances the measurement of service quality, corporate image and customer satisfaction is also undertaken. Consequently, a proposed conceptual framework followed by the identification of research gaps is documented and finally a summary of the chapter also given.

2.2 The Effects of Assurance on Perception of Service Quality

2.2.1 Confidence and Trust

According to a study that was conducted by Ghulam, Khan and Affaq in 2014 on “the impacts of service quality on customer satisfaction in higher education institutions”, it is clearly presented that there is a close relationship between the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model with the satisfaction of students in terms of service delivery. One of the main components of the model is the assurance dimension (Ghulam et al., 2014). According to the authors’ definition and operationalization of the variables, assurance is deemed to be the “knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to promote confidence and trust” in service delivery (Ghulam et al., 2014). Ideally, service delivery in university education must be based on trust in different aspects such as the application of technological advancements and approaches to enhance education goals and even on the side of faculty members’ skills and abilities to deliver with much dedication and professionalism (Bidgoli, 2010).

2.2.2 Propagating Ethical Standards

In higher education, the main objective of education goals is not only to transmit knowledge, but also to propagate ethical standards which are important in society at large and this can only be possible if the different parties involved in transmitting knowledge can be able to convey trust to the learners as well (Paul, 2014). It is through universities that leaders are prepared and academic researches and further studies enhanced. These
efforts should be characterized by ethical practices which are fundamentally founded on grounds of trust. Trust enhances assurance to various stakeholders who have interest in higher education services. In another study by Sarah, Elias and Lydia in 2011 on “comparative analysis of business students’ perceptions of service quality offered in Kenyan universities” it is revealed that assurance creates confidence in students with regard to their faculty when services are offered professionally (Sarah et. al., 2011). As a matter of fact, confidence from service seekers can be enhanced through many ways such as displaying a professional approach in handling issues, presentation of certifications and other professional documents to parties that might be interested so as to dispel any fears and doubts, and above all acting ethically at all times in discharging duties (Sarah et. al., 2011).

Several authors have discussed the unique importance of quality to service firms like universities and have demonstrated its positive relationship with profits, increased market share, return on investment, customer satisfaction, and future purchase intentions (Rust and Oliver, 1994). One obvious conclusion of these studies is that firms with superior quality products outperform those marketing inferior quality products (Caleb and Ibrahim, 2011).

2.2.3 Organisational Success

Service quality can be concisely defined as the personal experience of the customer with the service provider. Service quality is playing an increasingly important role in the present environment where there is no further scope for the companies to differentiate themselves other than the quality of the service provided by them. Delivering superior service quality than the competitors is the key for the success of any organization. Because unlike measuring the quality of goods, the measurement of the quality of services offered by the organizations is difficult due to the three unique features of services viz. intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability. Hence the only way of measuring the quality of services offered by the service provider is the measurement of the customer’s perception of the quality of service they are experiencing from their service providers (Faranak and Behnaz, 2011). Quality has been defined differently by various authors. Some prominent definitions include ‘conformance to requirements, fitness for use, or one that satisfies the customer’. According to production philosophy of Japan, quality has been defined as ‘zero defects’ in the firm’s offerings. Being inherently and essentially intangible, heterogeneous, perishable and entailing simultaneity and
inseparability of production and consumption, services require a distinct framework for quality explication and measurement.

2.2.4 Services and Quality Measurement

As against the goods sector where tangible cues exist to enable consumers to evaluate product quality, quality in the service context is explicated in terms of parameters that largely come under the domain of ‘experience’ and ‘credence’ properties and are as such difficult to measure and evaluate. According to Hernon and Whitman (2011), service quality means relating the superiority of the service with the global judgement of a person about it and explicated it as involving evaluations of the outcome (i.e., what the customer actually receives from service) and process of service act (i.e., the manner in which service is delivered).

In line with the propositions put forward by Jayanth (2015), posited and operationalized service quality as a difference between consumer expectations of ‘what they want’ and their perceptions of ‘what they get.’ Based on this conceptualization and operationalization, they proposed a service quality measurement scale called ‘SERVQUAL’. Quality has become a strategic tool in obtaining efficiency in operations and improved performance in business. This is true for both the goods and services sectors. However, the problem with management of service quality in service firms is that quality is not easily identifiable and measurable due to inherent characteristics of services which make them different from goods. In the past two decades, general interests into service quality in research fields showed a wide research about service quality has taken place in the last two decades manifested centrifugal relation among quality of customer services, performance improvement and organizational competitiveness. This relation clearly showed that the improvement of customer service will lead in its turn to an improvement in the performance and competitiveness. Certain standards and indicators of customer satisfaction and service quality are used by service units' administrators to value customers' needs by the institution. Service organizations consider service quality as substantial tool to keep their competitiveness in the marketplace. In other words, customers can be attracted by high quality services that banks offer (Jalal et. al., 2011).

2.2.5 Need for Service Quality in Education Sector

As opposed to other sectors, education sector is primarily not for purposes of profit making. However, due to ineptitudes in service provision especially by the government
institutions, a business niche was noticed by private investors and consequently attracted to this sector as a form of business venture or investment. Nevertheless, despite these evident opportunities, the obvious truth is that the beneficiaries or the main customers end up in the same job market, irrespective of whether one is trained in private or public institutions, for competition of jobs and other business opportunities. As a result therefore, there emerged a need to establish that private universities and public universities should be committed towards ensuring that their services are within the set standards and government framework in a country, and more importantly in conformance to global standards (Raphael, 2014).

Nevertheless, service quality is a matter of concern especially in the context where the efforts are not able to portray the fruits in society due to the many challenges that are in the society which specifically emanate from the youthful age of people such as corruption and other vices. Education quality is an issue that should be given more weight and concern since it is best suited to handle many of the society problems by ensuring early molding of individuals before they are integrated to the entire society set-up. Practically for the context of Kenya, indicators of measuring service quality should be applied across the board, both to the private and public institutions of higher learning where leaders and great business men are basically made (Rodrigues, 2013).

In this vision, the service demands an autonomous framework for measuring and explaining quality. Service quality model developed by (Parasuraman et. al., 1985, 1988) is the most popular model and is widely practiced to measure the quality of service in service sectors. In addition, wide research has taken place on service quality and customer satisfaction. Conversely, there are no recent researches on higher institutions of learning in Kenya setting to look into the impact of the performance of service features on customer (students) satisfaction in complete model and specifically on assurance dimension. In this regard, Quality assurance means developing operational controls to ensure that the results match the desired outcomes. Customer service operations are designed to keep customers satisfied while protecting the organization. To make sure customer service achieves these goals in higher education institutions, the person responsible for quality assurance must define the quality functions as they apply to how to serve customers. Once such definitions are in place, it will be easy to define the resources required to fulfill the defined mandate and make sure the customers (students in this case) experience quality service (Rodrigues, 2013).
2.3 The Effects of Responsiveness on Perception of Service Quality

2.3.1 Prompt Responses in Service Delivery

According to Raphael (2014)’s research on the “service quality measurements in tertiary colleges in Kenya, a case study of Zetech College, he emphasizes that among the most important factors in the SERVQUAL model is the responsiveness dimension. He defines responsiveness as “the willingness to help customers and provide prompt services” (Raphael, 2014). In this case, the most fundamental aspects to ensure that responsiveness is assured in delivery of services in any set-up includes aspects such as; ensuring that services are provided promptly, issues and any other concerns responded quickly, ensuring that there is instant responses which are provided rapidly and immediately (Raphael, 2014). Further, studies indicate that the responsiveness dimension helps to assure the service seekers of the fact that their concerns and needs are catered for at any given time. In this regard, it is of paramount importance that service providers and players in higher education sectors do not only focus on output, but rather on the need to be able to make their services attractive (Raphael, 2014). Many at times, when ethics is spoken of especially in the business world, there are chances of neglecting universities and colleges as business entities. But on reality, most of the private institutions especially on higher education sector are ideally concerned with profit making (output), in the course of their operations (Senakham, 2010). As a result of the profit motive, an emergency of strong competition among private universities across the globe becomes rampart, forcing institutions to concentrate on areas that will attract customers (students) such as infrastructural development, reduction in university fees, provision of scholarships, and many others neglecting service quality especially in the side of the faculty members (Daniel, 2012).

2.3.2 Availability of Facilities to Enhance Quality

Based on this understanding, it is factual to admit that most of the areas concentrated on by the universities are very instrumental in the provision of education services and betterment of the learners’ lives, but ideally they cannot be of great importance in isolation without inclusivity of other factors such as the quality of services provided. For instance, by attracting many students to an institution, it is also important to increase the number of lecturers in a proportion that can fit the demands. More often, institutions do not mind about how their faculties can be able to provide services to large numbers,
without compromising quality (Caleb, Maureen and Ibrahim, 2011). Nevertheless, the truth behind such a scenario is clear that quality is undermined when lecturers are left to handle students in lecture halls, whose numbers are actually overwhelming. Basically, the responsiveness and student contact is lost, making the faculty not able to provide services that are quick, prompt, rapid, instant and immediate. In most cases, the ones left to suffer most are the students, who may not be having alternative options in ensuring that service provision is standardized in accordance with the provisions of higher education globally, or even nationally.

2.3.3 The Case in Tertiary Institutions

Essentially, the study by Raphael (2014) established that the role of service quality in tertiary education institutions has received increasing attention during the last two decades. Tertiary education institutions should ensure that all services encounters are managed to enhance students’ perceived service quality. While there is consensus on the importance of service quality, its measurement is a challenge that tertiary education providers who aim to gain a better understanding of the quality issues of students’ experiences face (Sarah et. al., 2011). In fact, the use of the most appropriate measurement tools would help managers to assess service quality provided by their institution, thus having the ability to use the results to better design service delivery. In an effort to increase students’ satisfaction, it is imperative that tertiary education institutions measure the quality of services they provide to be able to improve on them. Students’ perceptions of the quality of services experiences against actual service received should be assessed. In a competitive higher education market place, the quality of services delivered separates an institution from its competitors (Raphael, 2014).

Therefore the results from service quality measurement can be used to position a tertiary education institution strategically in the market. Zetech College is one of the leading private tertiary education providers in Kenya. There has been an urgent need to measure service quality recently due to increased students’ complaints on service delivery even with the existence of a very nicely articulated customer service charter. The aim of this study was to measure service quality in tertiary education institutions in Kenya. A case study of Zetech College was conducted. The study highlighted the students’ expectations about the quality of tertiary education services they are receiving at Zetech College (Raphael, 2014). It also examined the current service quality levels and determined the size and direction of the gap between students’ perceived service quality and service
expectations. The information from this study is expected to be very useful to all tertiary education providers in Kenya. The study was carried out on the basis that the sampled students were able and willing to make an evaluation and assessment of services received. The study was a case study of Zetech College. The ex-post facto research design was used. Stratified random sampling was used to select one hundred and twenty two (122) students out of five thousand one hundred and twenty four (5124) Zetech college students taking course for seven (7) examination bodies. Descriptive statistics was used for final analysis and results. The researcher found out that there was an 85.5% students’ expectations’ on service quality, with 62.5% of services offered being below what students expected in terms of service quality. There was negative 2.41/7 deviation in service quality from the students’ service quality expectations (Raphael, 2014).

2.3.4 Understanding Students Expectations

Knowing what the customer expects is the first and most critical step in delivering quality service. Nejati asserts that being wrong about what customers want can mean losing a customer business when another company hits the target exactly (Nejati, 2013). Being wrong can also mean spending resources, money and time on things that don’t matter to customers. Uden (2013) investigated the key factors in guest satisfaction in the hotel industry focusing on complaints and compliments. They found out that there are service quality feature which they labelled “dissatisfies” which earn complaints if present, but no compliments if absent and “satisfiers” which earn compliment if present but no complaints if absent. They believe that it is vital for organizations to identify elements of service which are potential satisfiers and or dissatisfies. A study by Parasuraman et. al.,(1985) suggest that customers do not perceive service quality in un dimensional way but rather they judge service quality on multiple factors relevant to the service context. They have offered the most widely reported set of service quality dimensions that are important in molding customers, expectations and perceptions of delivered services (Raphael, 2014).

2.3.5 Universities’ Management Responsibilities

More often, issues such as complaints on service delivery are widely experienced all over the country by students and to some extent other stakeholders such as faculty members, government, parents or guardians, employers and other agencies. It therefore implies that there is basically a lot that needs to be streamlined in the education sector especially by
the management to respective universities in ensuring that the stakeholders are satisfied with their nature of work which should be reflected in the final output (Senakham, 2010).

Firstly, failure to ensure that the teaching staff is well motivated in delivering teaching in institutions will definitely mean that the students will not get good services and hence will not be satisfied. Secondly, service in education does not only depend on the delivery of lecturers, but rather on many combinations such as quality of libraries, communication equipments, appropriate structures and buildings, availability of basic needs such as water in institutions, and the motivation of non-teaching members who either directly or indirectly contribute to the overall service delivery. Finally, the nature of leadership provided in institutions can also motivate other service providers to ensure that they responsibly undertake their duties with an aim of rendering the best services within their abilities. This includes adequate human resources recruited through the appropriate and laid down structures with merit on qualification and suitability to provide instructional services in institutions of higher learning (Hayan and Mokhles, 2011).

In addition to the already mentioned strategies, management has the responsibility of ensuring that its human resources are committed to their duties by establishing performance management strategies which should be used to evaluate performance from time to time. Good and exemplary performance should receive appropriate rewards while poor performers are punished appropriately with the bid of encouraging and discouraging good and worse performances respectively in our Kenyan private institutions of higher learning (Faranak and Behnaz, 2011).

2.4 The Effects of Reliability on Perception of Service Quality

2.4.1 Actualization of Service Philosophies

According to a survey study by Paul in 2014 on “measuring service quality in higher education in south Africa”, one of the most emphasized factors in the SERVQUAL model is the reliability dimension. Paul defines reliability as the “ability to dependably and accurately perform the promised service” (Paul, 2014). In this case, many private universities just as the public universities in Kenya have very glamorous and promising service philosophies, mission and vision statements as well. Unfortunately, very few of them that actualize those promises in terms of the kind of services they give. Despite the fact that in some cases private universities have actually been ranked as better than public universities in Kenya (Sarah et. al., 2011), the main issue is the capacity of the private
universities to offer quality services based on issues such as qualified and experienced faculty, infrastructure, and financial soundness (Daniel, 2012).

For example, Mt. Kenya University’s vision statement is “to be a Global Centre of Excellence in Education, Research and Innovation in Science and Technology”; that of the Catholic University of East Africa is “To be a world class University producing transformative leaders for Church and Society”; on the other hand that of United States University is “To be a premier institution of academic excellence with a global perspective”; and finally the Daystar University has her vision statement which says that, “Daystar University aspires to be a distinguished, Christ-centered African institution of higher learning for the transformation of church and society”. These are just but a few examples of very promising vision statements of private universities in Kenya. Ideally, the main responsibilities of these universities is to live up to their promises by ensuring that the students they serve are satisfied with their services, in this regard ensuring that the dimension of reliability is enhanced to foster a dependency on the institutions (Paul, 2014).

2.4.2 Living up to the Promises

According to Fares et. al., (2013), it is imperative that organizations and institutions as well can do whatever they say they will do in the course of their operations. Winning the loyalty of customers is basically a matter of living up to the promise. Just like any businesses, private universities ought to impress the clients in order to achieve a repeat purchase of the services, and more importantly enhance the goals of higher learning especially in Kenya. As it is emphasized by Fares and the team, service quality is a fundamental and critical factor that helps to develop and sustain relationships with customers (Fares et. al., 2013), more importantly, when it comes to service firms (businesses), in which category universities fall under given that they entirely offer services.

2.4.3 Principles of Marketing on Service Quality

A consideration on the principles and the theories of marketing also shows that service quality is not only important to both service providers and service seekers, but also a very significant tool of promoting and marketing the services of an institution, irrespective of the nature of services provided (Fares et. al., 2013). A critical consideration in this regard is the need for the universities to attract learners into their institutions without violation of
standards on quality by absorbing the numbers that they can comfortably accommodate and handle based on their resources. Marketing principles or philosophies basically concentrate on four main theories which include product, place, price and people. In this sense, the universities should develop products or services (faculties or courses) which are relevant to the market demands especially in the current 21st century. Many at times universities have offered programs to students who upon graduation find themselves irrelevant and cannot be absorbed in any places of work or positions. This trend purely reduces the reliability such students can have on those universities hence causing dissatisfaction among service seekers (Hernon and Whitman, 2011).

Secondly, the place theory or philosophy is basically a consideration of the physical properties and structures such as lecture halls, offices, serenity of the environment, strategic location of the environment away from noise pollution and other environmental degradation, which is aimed at providing a suitable location for studies to take place. Such implementations will definitely attract customers without necessarily compromising on quality such as fake grades and certificates in order to attract students. Thirdly, the concept of price is ideally an issue of concern in which case some universities have been reported as charging extremely low fees in order to compete with others, while others charge extremely higher rates hence making it difficult for other service seekers to access education. Standards should be followed in order to curb fee escalation or reduction beyond certain limits in order to harmonize the market and restore sanity and quality services. Fourthly, the concept of people is basically to lay more emphasis on the welfare of the target customers, who in this case are students. By doing so, proper mechanisms and strategies will be formulated that are aimed at ensuring customers are delighted by providing them with the deserved services (Hoffman and Bateson, 2016).

Ideally, customer service means helping customers solve problems in such they reliably depend on your services that you offer in any industry. To carry out this function effectively, customer service has to be easily accessible, knowledgeable, and reliable to deliver results. Quality assurance identifies these requirements and measures how well customer service performs with respect to each one. You can define quality assurance in customer service as a means to evaluate the characteristics that make customer service effective (Raphael, 2014).
2.4.4 Quality Assurance System

The quality assurance system can compare what you promise the customer to what the customer expects and what your customer service delivers. If the delivered service matches customer expectations and what you promised to deliver, quality with respect to this customer service element is high. If there are gaps, you can use the quality assurance system to track improvements. The quality assurance system must survey customers regularly to determine their expectations so the system can match against promises and deliveries. Small businesses usually implement such surveys in-house by asking customers to rate their service when they call or when they complete a purchase. Email or web-based forms that customers fill out when visiting the company website are alternatives. For use as a gauge of reliability, the survey must specifically ask how well the company service met the customer's expectations (Uden, 2013).

Customer satisfaction is a collective outcome of perception, evaluation, and psychological reaction to the Service quality. Due to the increasing competition of business and the high demand of the customers, service quality is the fundamental factor to measure customer’s satisfaction within such business especially on the service industry. Customers expect competent delivery of their services, and the definition of quality assurance includes tracking competence. Quality assurance systems evaluate competence by training and results (Zhou, 2011).

The employee delivering customer service has to have the training that allows competent delivery, and he actually has to supply competent service. The quality assurance system keeps records of training and surveys customers to evaluate the competence of the delivery. It assigns scores for completed training and for the degree of competence in service delivery compared to benchmarks based on industry standards. It adds these scores to obtain an overall competency evaluation. A low score means your employees have less training or apply their training less competently than the rest of your industry. You can address such a problem through additional training (Raphael, 2014).

2.4.5 Regaining and Retaining Reliability

In business, many mistakes are usually made. What matters most is how the mistakes are transformed from being weaknesses into being strengths in order to ensure successful operations. Many at times, university managements becomes insensitive to student and public complains on issues that may have been committed in the past with possible
impact on the current and future position of service delivery (Hoffman and Whitman, 2016). The surest way of ensuring that past failures do not hinder future performances is by struggling to regain the lost loyalty and finally retaining it. Regaining refers to any efforts and strategies aimed at making the customer share a new look of the institution by promising deliverables that are realistic and achievable. Secondly the management then gets involved in corporate social responsibilities activities with an aim of identifying their institution with the community in order to receive their support. On the other hand, retaining will involve constant improvements and ensuring that new strategies are being implemented truthfully as promised, while using attractive strategies such as offering of scholarships and promoting talents among the young people (learners). Once reliability restoration process has been achieved, the main focus then is to ensure that current trends in education sector and compliance to established rules and regulations are followed to the letter. These efforts will definitely make the students to develop unconditional positive regard to the institution and hence start perceiving the services not only as genuine but also satisfactory. However, these achievements will always require honest and dedicated efforts from many stakeholders especially management team with a conscious mind on what is necessary to be attained (Paul, 2014).

2.5 The Effects of Tangibles on Perception of Service Quality

2.5.1 Physical Appearance of Facilities

According to a study by Faranak and Behnaz in 2011 on “service quality in higher education”, they too found out that SERVQUAL model is very applicable to university students’ satisfaction in terms of services received. The authors review the tangibility dimension and define it as “the appearance of physical facilities, equipments, personnel and communication materials” (Faranak and Behnaz, 2011). According to them, tangibles can be improved or can be made available according to the measurements and establishment of the expectations of the students. In this regard, while promoting the nature of services in higher education sector, it is clearly demonstrated that students (customers) also have a responsibility in showing what they desire so that it can be availed. However, Malik et al, 2010 maintain that universities have a responsibility of guiding the students of what they should expect in terms of tangibles as well as from their lecturers. Based on the assertions by Malik and colleagues, universities should be well prepared before receiving students in terms of facilities because these are the tangibles which enable them to deliver their promised brands or services. For example, before
admitting students, it is important that structures such as buildings for lecture halls and offices among others are made available for use (Hayan and Mokhles, 2013).

Nevertheless, Faranak and Behnaz are also relevant in their claims given that incase the numbers of students increase; the universities will be forced to adjust their facilities to accommodate the rising numbers. For instance, if the normal capacity of a class in an institution of higher learning has been about 50 students across the years, and at some point the capacities increase tremendously to say 300 students, then it becomes inevitable for the university to acquire communication materials so as to enable the lecturers to deliver services to all the clients. This is one of the options that can be pursued among many others that may include increasing the classes (facilities), hiring more lecturers (personnel), and increasing the equipments for use as well (Hasan et. al., 2011).

2.5.2 Fostering Quality Services

Although tangibility can be seen as one of the least important dimensions, it still plays an integral role in fostering quality service delivery, especially by improving the appearance (Hasan et. al., 2011). Appearance is improved in terms of making the environment serene and attractive, enhancing professionalism, and ethical practices among staff members, and promoting diversity in terms of equipments and facilities (Raphael, 2014). Moreover, while striving to promote tangibles, universities should not compromise reliability and responsiveness which are very critical in this case (Paul, 2014).

Even though this is the least important dimension, appearance matters although just not as much as the other dimensions. Service providers will still want to make certain their employees appearance, uniforms, equipment, and work areas on-site (closets, service offices, etc.) look good. The danger is for providers to make everything look sharp, and then fall short on reliability or responsiveness. At any given time, customers’ assessments include expectations and perceptions across all five SERVQUAL dimensions. Service providers need to work on all five, but emphasize them in order of importance. Also, providers can use SERVQUAL dimensions in determining specific customer and site needs. By asking questions around these dimensions, providers can learn how they play out at a particular location or bid opportunity (Raphael, 2014).

Essentially, quality teaching is the use of pedagogical techniques to produce learning outcomes for students. It involves several dimensions, including the effective design of curriculum and course content, a variety of learning contexts (including guided
independent study, project-based learning, collaborative learning, experimentation, etc.), soliciting and using feedback, and effective assessment of learning outcomes. It also involves well-adapted learning environments and student support services (Raphael, 2014).

2.5.3 Creating First Hand Impressions

As a matter of fact, the tangible Service Quality Dimension refers to the appearance of the physical surroundings and facilities, equipment, personnel and the way of communication. In other words, the tangible dimension is about creating first hand impressions. An organization should want all their customers to get a unique positive and never forgetting first hand impression, this would make them more likely to return in the future. Since services are intangible, customers derive their perception of service quality by comparing the tangible associated with these services provided. As already mentioned, this includes the appearance of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials (Paul, 2014).

According to Paul (2014), university education, and the mode of learning whilst at university, will need to prepare students for entry to such an environment and equip them with appropriate skills, knowledge, values and attributes to thrive in it. There is a strong drive to build and create knowledge together with an understanding of working life and reformulate the concept of knowledge in learning situations. Tighter connections with working life through different academic projects provide authentic opportunities to learn both generic and professional competencies as well as to build networks and pathways for employment after graduation (Paul, 2014).

With this view of learning, the role of higher education teachers is therefore changing. In addition to being, first and foremost, a subject expert acquainted with ways to transmit knowledge, higher education teachers are now required to have effective pedagogical skills for delivering student learning outcomes. They also need to co-operate with students, colleagues from other departments, and with external stakeholders as members of a dynamic learning community (Paul, 2014).

2.5.4 Competition in Service Industry

In the literature about service quality and customer satisfaction exist many empirical research in different service industries, including tourism industry, presenting this relationship and which dimensions of service quality has direct impact on customer
satisfaction. Over the years, this topic has been considered relevant for professional and institutions and little research has been conducted about the relationship between service quality based in customers’ perceptions of performance and customer satisfaction related institutions of higher learning, but not research focusing private institutions, and therefore it indicates that there is a relevant space to be filled with this research (Hayan and Mokhles, 2013).

Strong competition in the service industry especially in the academic and hospitality industry leads the competitors to direct efforts to reach customer satisfaction based in the quality of service offered and this quality is related to the level of perception of service offered by customer. Apart from the service quality, there are other factors, such as cost of education or services, and this can determine customer satisfaction as well. Customers expect reliable and competent service delivery in an easily accessible form. Customer service delivery is typically over the phone or other means of electronic communication. Wait times, busy signals, noise, call quality and call cost reduce the quality of delivery. The definition of quality assurance includes tracking these parameters, defining reasonable levels and ensuring that those levels are maintained over time (Fares et. al., 2013).

Idealy, when customers select a specific firm or institution for services, the selection process amounts to a tradeoff among three categories of service attributes: (1) the price; (2) the waiting time standard; (3) all other attributes. In the second chapter of this dissertation entitled 'Competition in Service Industries', we analyze a general market for an industry of competing service providers (Hayan and Mokhles, 2013). Other than through intrinsic and unalterable service characteristics, firms differentiate themselves in the market in terms of their price levels and the waiting time their customers experience. We first characterize the equilibrium behavior in three competition models: Simultaneous Competition, where firms select their prices and service levels simultaneously, Price First, where firms first select their prices, and then their service levels (after observing the pricing decisions made by the rest of the firms), and Service Level First, where the order of the decisions is reversed. We then rank and compare the resulting prices and service levels generated by each of the three competition models (Fares et al., 2013).
2.5.5 Providing Solutions to Students Problems

Customers are mainly interested in solutions to their problems. Quality assurance includes documenting customer complaints, tracking the actions taken to resolve them and surveying customers on their satisfaction with the result. The quality assurance system compares high levels of reliability, competence and delivery quality with the level of customer satisfaction. The system checks for discrepancies and revise evaluations to make sure that it is functioning cohesively and giving correct results. Customer satisfaction can result in a positive word of mouth based in a customer experience, decrease price sensitivity and, finally, leading to better business performance and some research arguments indicate that it is more expensive to win new customers than to keep existing ones based in replacement costs, including advertising, promotion and sales expenses (Raphael, 2014).

The service quality is considered essential for the success and survival in a competitive environment and this influence the consumer behaviour in a decision making process, and also the level of relationship between customer and organization and can impact customer’s loyalty. In Kenya for instance, there exists a very competitive environment in the sector of higher education especially after the mushrooming of the private universities, many universities have resorted in using different competitive methods such as lowering their tuition fee charges and other alternatives which also not only affect performance but also compromise the quality of education (Sarah et. al., 2011).

2.6 The Effects of Empathy on Perception of Service Quality

2.6.1 Individualized Attention to Students

According to Faranak and Behnaz (2011); Ghulam et. al. (2014); and Daniel (2012), empathy is “the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers”. This concept or dimension therefore provides that for satisfaction to be achieved by customers, they do not only need to be provided with services which are tailored to meet their specifications, but they too want to feel that their service providers do care about them (Malik et. al., 2010). For example, a university may be having magnificent buildings (facilities and equipments), wonderful faculty and staff (personnel), best modes of communication channels and materials, very promising vision statements, fair fees structures, and many more important factors in service delivery, but they may fail to provide opportunities for the students to air their grievances or at least ask them to give
opinions on how best they want the services to be provided. Such a failure will automatically affect the students’ assessment of the university and therefore the quality service provision or delivery will be affected (Ghulam et al., 2014).

Additionally, individualized attention refers to the ability for the management of a university to appreciate the fact that students hail from different background with their unique needs and challenges. As such, students are perhaps classified into different categories depending on their specific and unique needs, and services provided as the demands. For instance, not all students are in positions of affording to pay for their school fees (Zhou, 2011). So instead of the university just basing scholarships awards on performances, they can alternatively evaluate awarding of such assistance in terms of scholarships on financial needs assessment on the grounds of economic backgrounds. In such, both economic status and academic performance can be used as indicators of awarding scholarships which is a form of individualized and caring attention to different groups of students (Nejati, 2013).

In essence, the empathy Service Quality Dimension refers to how the company cares and gives individualized attention to their customers, to make the customers feeling extra valued and special. The fifth dimension are actually combining the second, third and fourth dimension to a higher level, even though the really cannot be compared as individuals. If the customers feel they get individualized and quality attention there is a very big chance that they will return to the company and do business there again (Paul, 2014).

2.6.2 Giving Students Opportunities to Express Themselves

Fundamentally, the application of empathy dimension enables private universities to be in the positions of understanding the students (Jalal et al., 2011). This include gathering information about the nature of services given, finding out the implications of some regulations or rules, asking the students to share their own experiences in terms of university leadership and facilities, involving the students in establishing strategic goals, and above all seeking to understand the financial challenges and needs of the students who might be highly affected (Hayan and Mokhles, 2013). By so doing, institutions of higher learning are able to provide caring and individualized services to their students (Faizan et al., 2016). However, it is also important for the recognition of diversity of needs and goals of the learners given that students do come from different backgrounds.
and hence their needs should be expected to vary (Menon, Terkla and Gibbs, 2014). For instance, students come from different ethnic environments, different religions, and different economic conditions. Such differences ideally may make people to behave differently or even develop different aspirations and needs while pursuing their academic goals (Hayan and Mokhles, 2013).

In considering the modern society, many groups including the young people have greatly become assertive of their needs and rights. It is of paramount importance if university leadership will appreciate this fact and hence provide avenues for students to communicate their concerns, with an aim of addressing issues before going out of hand. Despite this fact, some students out influence of peer pressure and drugs and alcohol abuse may take such an advantage and make the university strain so much in trying to manage and provide them with opportunities or struggle to meet demands that are not valuable. In such a case, it is important for the university management to earnestly and honestly assess the nature of demands and establish if they are value adding or not. Fortunately, in moist cases the few students who might be championing for unreasonable demands end up not receiving the support of other students, a fact that make it easier for the university leadership to single out such groups and impose disciplinary actions against them to correct and discourage such behaviors (Raphael, 2014).

Students who actively engage with what they are studying tend to understand more, learn more, remember more, enjoy it more and be more able to appreciate the relevance of what they have learned, than students who passively receive what they are taught. Teachers are therefore presented with a huge challenge, which is how to encourage and enable students to engage in the learning process. Interest has grown in recent years in what is sometimes referred to as the Learning-Centred Paradigm (Raphael, 2014), because it situates learners at the centre of the experience, empowers and motivates them to assume responsibility for their own learning, and adopts teaching and learning strategies designed to encourage students to see themselves as active thinkers and problem-solvers. As Raphael (2014) puts it, in conventional teaching–learning situations too often we pressure students to “defend their knowledge rather than exhibit their thinking”. Paul (2014) argues that students need to learn how to think critically by continually questioning everything around them.
2.6.3 Good Customer Relations Skills

Services can be performed completely to specifications. Yet customers may not feel provided employees care about them during delivery. And this hurts customers’ assessments of providers’ service quality. For example, a day porter efficiently cleans up a spill in a lobby. However, during the clean-up doesn’t smile, make eye contact, or ask the customer if there is anything else they could do for them. In this hypothetical the provider’s service was performed fully. But the customer didn’t feel the provider employee cared. And it’s not necessarily the employees fault. They may not know how they’re being judged. They may be overwhelmed, inadequately trained, or disinterested. Providers’ service delivery can be as important as how it was done. Provider employees should be trained how to interact with customers and their end-users. Even a brief session during initial orientation helps. Anything to help them understand their impact on customers’ assessment of service quality is of great value for the purpose of business success (Rodrigues, 2013).

Ideally customer relations in a broader perspective include the manner in which students are received or handled by the support staff. For instance, if a student seeks inquiry services from administrative offices, such a student should be handled and be served with much enthusiasm and considerations just like any other potential customer. The worse scenario happens where most university employees treat new students with decorum and dignity, but upon receiving and registering such a student into the university then, the treatment mechanisms automatically changes and subsequent services are not rendered with care. This could be due to the fact that such a client has already been attracted and therefore there is no need to continue minding or caring about them because focus should be on receiving new students. As a result, the perception of these students end up changing to the worse and making the overall quality service perception changing to that of dissatisfaction (Hayan and Mokhles, 2013).

The quality of service has been recognized as being the key strategic value for organizations and can impact in satisfaction and retention of customers, opportunity for cross selling, reduction of cost and increase profit margin and business performance, and also, development of customer relationship-life time value. Customer satisfaction is the level of customer felt state resulting from comparing a perceived performance of service or product in relation to customers’ expectations, it means, if the perceived performance
is less than expected, can result in a dissatisfaction by customer, and if the perceived performance exceeds expectations, can result in satisfaction by customer (Pang, 2014).

2.6.4 Empathy as an Antecedent of Satisfaction

The measurement of service quality has been identified as a crucial factor responsible for influence customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, being considered the most critical determinant of satisfaction and had been pointed with strong positive correlation between those constructs, and also can result in a positive word of mouth and loyalty intention, it means, the service quality and customer satisfaction has direct positive effect on customer retention intentions and has been recognized as strong predictor for retention. According to the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, researchers have found empirical evidences that customer satisfaction is a result of service quality and specifically on empathy dimension, being an antecedent of satisfaction. Definitely, the service quality and customer satisfaction have present relationship in many empirical studies and its constructs are somewhat correlated, in terms of cause and effect (Malik et. al., 2010).

Various other service quality models can be found in the literature (for the critical analysis of 19 different service quality models. Although SERVQUAL still remains a very popular approach in assessing service quality for researchers and practitioners (Malik et. al., 2010,), which can be attributed to its practical diagnostic application for improving service quality, it has also received a lot of criticism. There have been numerous disagreements regarding the measurement of service quality. Although both rely on the conceptual definition that service quality is an attitude toward the service offered, resulting from a comparison of expectations with perceptions, SERVQUAL directly measures expectations as well as perceptions, while in the SERVPERF model service quality is evaluated by perceptions of the service delivered only. SERVPERF assumes that respondents provide their ratings by automatically comparing performance perceptions with performance expectations and that measuring expectations directly is unnecessary. Numerous authors have supported the view that SERVPERF is a better alternative for measuring service quality but recent developments show that SERVQUAL approach is the most appropriate model to measure service quality (Paul, 2014).
2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a review of previous studies on the topic and the formulation of a conceptual framework to aid the study. The previous chapter provided background information and the objectives of the study as well. The subsequent chapter will cover the proposed study methodology that will be used to carry out this study.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The section presents the data collection procedure as well as the methods that were used in gathering of data. The formula that was applied in collecting the data is also discussed in the section. In this regard, the chapter is organized to cover sections on research design, objects of the study and sampling techniques, data gathering instruments, pilot test, data processing and analysis, data reliability and suitability. Each of these sections is discussed in relation to research specific objectives.

3.2 Research Design

The research adopted a descriptive research design. Research design is the plan or structure of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance (Wiersma and Jurs, 2009). Sekaran (2003) argues that a research design can either be exploratory, descriptive, experimental or hypothesis testing, a position that is supported by Creswell (2013). According to Bryman and Bell (2003), research design is also defined as a framework for the collection and analysis of data that is suited to the research questions. Orodho (2003) defines research design as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. Jacobs (2009) and Creswell (2013) indicate that a descriptive research answers research questions who, what, where, when and how. The purpose of employing this method was to describe the nature of the situation as it existed at the time of the study and to explore the cause(s) of a particular phenomenon (Leary, 2001). In this regard, this design was to help in establishing how students satisfaction was affected by the five service dimensions namely; assurance, responsiveness, reliability, tangibles and empathy.

3.3 Population and Sampling Design

3.3.1 Population

Castillo (2009), Hydman (2008) and Agarwal (2009) defined population as a large collection of individuals or objects that are the main focus of a study and has similar characteristics. The population of interest in this research was the students of Private Universities in Kenya. According to CUE (2016), there were 70 universities with 33 public and 37 private universities. The unit of the study was the registered students
undertaking undergraduate studies in these universities. The undergraduate students were preferred because they were the universities’ immediate customers who experienced the services provided by the institution and were therefore best placed to answer questions on their perceived service experience at the university, a position also supported by Ghulam et. al. (2014). The target population comprised of undergraduate students in private universities in Kenya. The private universities considered for this study included Mount Kenya University, Catholic University, Strathmore University, Riara University, KCA University, and United States International University. These Universities were selected since they had the most visible image and had large number of students. These universities were therefore, more likely to address the variables of interest to the study in terms of service quality, university corporate image and customer satisfaction.

Table 3.1: Population Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Kenya University</td>
<td>9850</td>
<td>26.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic University</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>21.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathmore University</td>
<td>4,829</td>
<td>13.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riara University</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCA University</td>
<td>4,890</td>
<td>13.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USIU</td>
<td>6398</td>
<td>17.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36,967</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CUE (2016)

3.3.2 Sampling Design

According to Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2010), sampling is described as a selection of a subset of individuals from within a population of making predictions based on statistical inference. A sample is a true representative of the entire population to be studied (Leary, 2001). Kothari (2004) and Dattalo (2013) advocates that good sample should be truly representative of the population, result in a small sampling error, viable,
economical and systematic. Ader, Mellenbergh and Hand (2008) also state that the advantage of sampling is cost, speed, accuracy and quality of data.

3.3.2.1 Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is a list of population from which a sample will be drawn (Leary, 2001). Bailey (2008) argues that the sampling frame facilitate formation of a sampling unit that refers to one member of a set of entities being studied which is the material source of the random variable. The study’s sampling frame was undergraduate students in private universities in Nairobi region (CUE, 2016).

3.3.2.2 Sampling Technique

Sampling technique can either be probabilistic or non-probabilistic (Gall et. al., 2007). In probabilistic sampling every unit in the population has a chance of being selected in the sample and this probability can accurately be determined. The method can be; simple random, systematic, and stratified and multi stage sampling. Non-probabilistic sampling is where some elements of the population have no chance of selection or their probability of selection cannot be adequately determined. Gall et. al. (2007) highlights that stratified sampling is used when the population has different characteristics thus to ensure that all get equal chances, the population is sub-divided into strata before using simple random sampling to get a sample from each stratum. For this study, a stratification technique was employed in which members (students) of every stratum were randomly selected in identifying the respondents. This was considered appropriate as the numbers of students would be randomly obtained in respective universities.

3.3.2.3 Sample Size

According to Dattalo (2013), a sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. In practice, the sample size used in a study is determined based on the expense of data collection, and the need to have sufficient statistical power. Kothari (2004) further described sample size as the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample. Different authorities give different parameters on the sample size for example Schewarz and Sudman (1995) recommends a minimum of 100 in survey research, Gall et. al., (2007) recommends a minimum of 15 in experimental research and 30 in correlation research.
In line with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), statistical technique for selecting a sample will be adopted as a model for a sample in this study. The model for selecting a sample from a population of more than ten thousand is derived as follows:

\[ n = \frac{(z^2pq)}{d^2} \]

Where:

- \( n \) is the desired sample size when the population is more than 10,000
- \( z \) is standardized normal deviations at a confidence level of 95% which is 1.96
- \( p \) is the proportion in the target population that assumes the characteristics being sought.
- In this study, a 50:50-basis is assumed which is a probability of 50% (0.5).
- \( q \) is the balance from \( p \) to add up to 100%. That is 1-\( p \), which in our case will be 1-0.5, hence (0.5).
- \( d \) is significance level of the measure, that is at 95% confidence level the significance level is 0.05.

As such the sample size for this study can be derived as follows:

\[ n = \frac{(1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384 \]

Target population in this study is more than 10,000, thus the sample of 384 was used (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The study’s distribution criterion to various universities was based on the total number of students in a university presented as a proportion of the target sample.
Table 3.2 Sample Size Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Kenya University</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>26.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic University</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>21.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathmore University</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riara University</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCA University</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USIU</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>17.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>384</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods refer to the approaches and instruments used to obtain the required data in a study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The study specifically focused in quantitative data and therefore, the research employed primary data sources. A structured questionnaire that was directed to the identified strata had both closed and open ended questions. The questionnaire adopted Likert scale that employed a range of 1 to 5 in which respondents were to indicate strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree from 1 to 5 respectively so that variables can be measured on how they relate to each other. The questionnaire aimed at collecting data on the dimensions of service quality delivery which include assurance, responsiveness, reliability, tangibility and empathy. This helped in carrying out a focused study that lead to the conclusions on the topic of study.

3.5 Research Procedures

The measurement of reliability in this study provided consistency in the measurement of variables using Cronbach’s alpha, as advocated by Manuelli and Kemibaro (2012), as the basic formula for determining the reliability based on the internal consistency. The standard minimum value of alpha is 0.7 which is recommended by Nunnally (2014). Constructs that were used in this research were tested for internal consistency in which
case values greater than 0.7 indicated presence of a strong internal consistency of the measurement as presented using Cronbach’s alpha table.

To ensure there was reliability of the instruments that were used, a pre-test of sample was carried out on 20 members of the target population and the instrument tested on its accuracy to collect the anticipated data. The pilot test or study was carried because it is very necessary according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) to pre-determine the effectiveness of the data collection tool to yield the anticipated results. The pre-test results were screened and the responses checked against relevance to the questions to determine whether the questions are well understood by the respondents. After a pilot study, the actual data was collected by distributing questionnaires to students in other remaining universities so as to ensure the participants in a pre-test were not considered for the final data collection. Respondents were assured of anonymity and then questions were kept at minimum to ensure high response rate was obtained.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

Data collected was cleaned, screened, and coded in preparation for analysis. A descriptive data analysis technique was adopted in averages were computed and presented in percentages, and data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software of data analysis. This assisted in distinguishing correlations among variables and determining how each variable affects one another (Saunders and Lewis, 2011). Data findings were presented by the use of tables and figures.

3.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter has presented the research methodology to be adopted in the research, clearly explaining each of the sections such as the research design, the target population, sampling design, sampling frame, sampling technique, sampling size, data collection methods, research procedures and data analysis methods. The previous chapter discussed the literature review and the next chapter will discuss the study findings.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses research findings for the data obtained from the respondents using the data collection method proposed on the study’s methodology. It is divided into sections covering response rate, data reliability, background information or bio-data, dependent variable students’ satisfaction, and the independent variables which include the dimensions of assurance, responsiveness, reliability, tangibility and empathy.

4.2 Response Rate

Questionnaire response rate was over 78% as shown in Table 4.1. The overall response rate was 78.13%, which is higher than the recommended average rate of response of 30%, as asserted by Saunders and Lewis (2009).

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Response Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Returned Questionnaires</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Kenya University</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>21.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic University</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>17.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathmore University</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riara University</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>06.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCA University</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USIU</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Data Reliability

Reliability is the level at which the data gathering methods used in the study compare to the expected results. Measurement of reliability essentially provides a measure on the
consistency of the variables under consideration. Reliability of consistency measured internally is one of the widely applied indicators or the psychometrics measures that help in assessing survey instruments and balance (Saunders and Lewis, 2009). The variables under this study were, therefore, measured against reliability using Cronbach’s alpha as shown in the table below and revealed that an alpha which is above the recommended scale of 0.7 was obtained in each variable that was measured (Nunnally, 1978), as shown in table 4.2. Thus, the value of 0.805, 0.916, 0.895, 0.802, and 0.900 in assurance dimension, responsiveness, reliability, tangibility and empathy respectively is sufficient confirmation of data reliability for the independent variables under study.

**Table 4.2: Cronbach’s alpha test for independent variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assurance Dimension</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness Dimension</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability Dimension</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangibility Dimension</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy Dimension</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.4 Background Information**

The questionnaire was designed so as to indicate the following information on the respondents’ bio-data; gender, age bracket, level of education being studied, year of study, Course, school, department, specialization, mode of financing and factors that influenced students to select current courses they are studying. The quantitative data collected was presented in tables as shown below;

**4.4.1 Respondents’ Gender**

From the collected data, 60.0% of the respondents were found to be male while 40.0% were female as shown in the table below. This was not the actual case of populations in universities as data collection process did not stratify students based on their gender but rather university location.
Table 4.3 Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2 Respondents’ Age

The findings of the research show that many participants in the study were in the age bracket of 18-23 years, while the second largest age bracket was found to be between 24-29 years, followed by above 30 years, and finally below 18 years; represented by 86%, 10%, 3.33%, and 0.67% respectively. The figure below shows the distribution of the respondents’ age.

Table 4.4: Respondents’ Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Bracket</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>86.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.3 Level of Education

The project also aimed at finding out the level of education that the participants were currently studying. From the results, majority of the respondents were found to be studying bachelor’s degree which was represented by 66.67%, followed by Diploma level represented by 22.67%, and finally masters level that was represented by 10.66% in different areas of specialization. The table below summarizes the data obtained.
Table 4.5 Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>66.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.4 Year of Study

Respondents were needed to indicate the years of study they were in, such as first, second, third or fourth year. The responses showed that majority of the respondents represented by 34.0% were in their first year, followed by second year represented by 29.67%, third and fourth respectively represented by 19.67% and 16.66%. The year of study was a good basis to determine the experience the students had already attained in terms of the way the schools’ management handles them with regard to customer satisfaction dimensions.

Table 4.6: Year of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Study</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>29.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.5 Departments of the Interviewees

The respondents were randomly drawn from various departments in the sampled universities. Most of the students whoever were from business department, followed by education department, environmental department, science department, and law
departments which were represented by 42%, 31%, 16%, 5% and 4% while few others such as engineering and journalism comprised the remaining 3%.

4.4.6 Factors which Influenced Students to Select their Respective Universities

The respondents were also asked to cite the reasons why they chose to pursue studies in their respective schools or universities. Most of the students cited factors such as reputation, decisions by parents, academic excellence, geographical location of the universities, availability of financial aid/scholarships, marketing of the universities, influence by peers, and others as shown in the table below.

Table 4.7: Influencing Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>26.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>09.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>07.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>04.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>03.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.7 Sources of Funding Studies

The respondents were also needed to indicate the main sources of funding their studies. Out of the 300 respondents, the main source of funding was found to be parents/guardians represented by 49%, HELB represented by 23%, University bursaries represented by 17%, CDF bursaries represented by 6% , while the remaining 5% indicating others which included self-sources such as employment and business as shown in the table.
Table 4.8: Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELB</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Bursary</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5 Assurance Dimension on Service Quality

The first aim of the study was to find out how assurance dimension impacted the students’ perception about service quality in their universities. The respondents were asked several questions pertaining assurance dimension, in which case various responses were obtained. The study targeted students to assess assurance dimension because they were better placed to give their honest opinions based on the way they are being handled in the universities. The responses obtained are analysed and presented in the sections below.

4.5.1 University Commitment towards Assuring Students on Service Commitment

The students were asked to indicate in their opinion how often the universities were committed to assure them on service delivery and commitment especially by the management. They were required to indicate whether very frequently, frequently, rarely, or not all. The responses obtained are represented in figure 4.2 below. From the findings, the responses indicated that universities are actually involved in assuring students that they will be committed to ensure quality service delivery. However, the findings does not indicate that actually the commitment is effected, hence need to substantiate university management claims with actual service delivery. Those who indicated that universities were very frequently assuring students accounted for 25%, while 42% said frequently, 21% rarely, and 12% said never at all. This therefore implies that 67% of private
universities constantly keep telling their students that they will ensure there is quality service delivery.

![Figure 4.1: University Commitment to Service Delivery](image)

4.5.2 Perception about the Qualifications of the Faculty Members

Students were asked to give their opinion regarding to the qualifications of the faculty members. This was basically targeting to establish whether the students were for the opinion that the university faculty members were fully qualified to teach them as far as their interactions concerned. The results obtained are presented below.

![Figure 4.2: Qualification of Faculty Members](image)
From the above, 25% of the respondents thought that the lecturers did not have appropriate qualifications to teach in the universities, 22% said that the faculty had minimum qualifications, 28% said they were moderately qualified, 15% thought they are very qualified, while 10% could not be able to tell. On average, 43% of the respondents cited that the faculty was qualified, while 25% indicated lack of qualification, as 22% were indifferent on qualifications as they said the lecturers had minimum qualifications. Based on these perceptions, the research found out that over 65% of the respondents agreed that the faculty had the minimum requirements to teach in a university.

**4.5.3 Education and Goals Achievement**

The respondents were asked whether or not they thought education they were getting from their various universities was helping them to achieve their goals in life. The respondents obtained are represented below.

**Table 4.9: Education and Life Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement of Goals</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>54.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>46.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table, 54.0% of the respondents agreed that indeed education is helping them to achieve their goals in life, while 46.0% disputed the fact that education was actually helping them to achieve their goals in life. Some of those who were for the contrary opinion indicated that education was just expensive and the fruits are not immediately paying-off and they also indicated that the system of education is centered on books as opposed to personal growth. Those who accepted that education is important indicated that it was helping them to realize their full potentials, opening them to more opportunities, and enabling them to network with like-minded people.

**4.5.4 Faculty Members’ Dedication to University’s Vision**

Students were also asked to give their views concerning the dedication of the faculty members to their respective university vision statements. The responses obtained showed that majority of the faculty members represented by 66% present themselves sin ways
suggesting that they are not committed to university visions while 34% indicated that they
through the faculty members were dedicated to their university visions as shown below.

#### Table 4.10: Faculty Dedication to University Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>66.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.5.5 Confidence in the Faculty Members

The respondents were also asked to indicate if they indeed had confidence in the faculty
teams in their university. 70% said they did have confidence in their faculty members
while 30% indicated they had no confidence in the faculty members and the table below
summarizes responses obtained.

#### Table 4.11: Confidence in Faculty Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.5.6 Selecting the Current University of Study

The study also sought to establish from the respondents if they will still make the same
university choices or return to study in their current university if given an opportunity to
choose. The findings showed that 67% of the respondents were most likely to return to
their current universities while 33% would not select their current universities. Those who
indicated that they would select their universities again cited some of the reasons as good
infrastructural facilities, reputation, and convenience. On the other hand, those who
indicated otherwise gave reasons such as lack of satisfaction, poor teaching
methodologies, lack of commitment from the university management to take care of their concerns among other reasons. The findings are represented in the table below.

Table 4.12: Choosing Current University Again

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Selection</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>67.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>33.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.7 Professionalism among Faculty Members

The study also sought to determine if the students perceived their faculty teams as professionals while they undertake their duties. The findings indicated that, 27% agreed while 73% said that the faculty carried themselves unprofessionally while during their operations in universities. The results are tabulated below.

Table 4.13: Faculty’s Professionalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionalism</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>27.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>73.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.8 Level of Agreement to Statements on Assurance Dimension

Further, the study sought to establish how students would agree to some statements which were basically concerned with the assurance dimensions with regard to quality service delivery. The respondents were required to indicate strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree to various statements. On the statement “my university is committed to satisfy students’ needs” 78% strongly disagreed, and 22% disagreed. This therefore implies that despite the fact that universities were found to be giving the students assurance that they are committed to ensure quality services, they actually do not reciprocate it in actions as shown below;
Figure 4.3: Student Satisfaction

On the statement that “our lecturers conduct themselves with courtesy all the time” 42% strongly disagreed, 31% disagreed, 7% were neutral, and 20% agreed. This therefore implies that there are some lecturers who are actually courteous though majority are not, based on the study’s findings represented below.

Figure 4.4 Lecturers’ Courtesy

On the statement of “assurance promotes confidence and trust in service delivery”, 69% of the students agreed, 21% strongly agreed, while 10% were neutral as shown below.
On the statement that, “I have confidence in my university, the faculty and the services provided in my university”, 71% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 15% disagreed, 10% agreed while 4% were neutral as shown below.

On the statement that, “a private university is better than a public university in terms of service delivery” 36% of the respondents strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 1% were neutral, 20% disagreed, while 9% strongly disagreed. This demonstrated that in as much as the students may not have been fully satisfied with the nature of services and assurance to quality, they still preferred their universities as compared to public universities. The results are presented below.
The study’s second objective was to find out how responsiveness dimension affected service quality in private universities. Respondents were asked a series of questions that were meant to evaluate their perceptions as far as responsiveness is concerned. The findings and responses are presented in the sections that follow.

4.6.1 Universities’ Willingness to Help Students and Provide them Prompt Services

Students were asked to indicate whether they thought their universities were willing to offer help to students by providing them with prompt services.

Table 4.14: Willingness to Help Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willingness to Help</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table, the study’s findings is that in overall 40% of the respondents were for the opinion that universities are willing to offer prompt services while 60% were for the contrary opinion.
4.6.2 Level of Agreement to Statements on Responsiveness Dimension

The respondents were also asked to indicate their level of agreement to a set of statements, concerning how responsiveness affects students’ perception on quality service delivery. The students were supposed to indicate strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. The findings on the statement “services are provided promptly in my university” showed that 45% strongly disagreed, 30% disagreed, 10% agreed, 7% strongly agreed, and 3% were neutral as presented below.

![Figure 4.8: Prompt Services](image)

On the statement that “services are provided rapidly in my university”, the responses obtained indicated that 43% strongly disagreed, 32% disagreed, 10% agreed, 6% strongly agreed, while 14% were neutral as presented below.

![Figure 4.9: Rapid Services](image)
On the statement that, “responses on issues raised are given instantly as they arise”, the responses obtained indicated that 40% strongly disagreed, 35% disagreed, 7% agreed, 8% strongly agreed, while 10% were neutral as presented below.

![Figure 4.10: Instant Responses](image1)

On the statement that, “the university management solves cases quickly as and when they arise”, the responses obtained indicated that, 50% strongly disagreed, 30% disagreed, 6% agreed, 6% strongly agreed, while 8% were neutral as presented below.

![Figure 4.11: Solving Cases Quickly](image2)

On the statement that “the university’s teaching staff, management and supportive staff respond to issues ethically” responses obtained indicated that, 35% strongly disagreed,
35% disagreed, 2% were neutral, 18% agreed, while 10% strongly agreed as presented below.

![Figure 4.12: Ethical Responses](image)

4.6.3: University Providing Scholarships to Students

The study also sought to determine whether universities frequently provided scholarships to their students. The respondents were required to indicate whether very frequently, frequently, rarely or not at all. The responses obtained showed that 17% said it is very frequently, 43% said it is frequently, 31% claimed it is rarely, while 9% said never at all as analyzed and presented in figure 4.15 below.

![Figure 4.13: Frequency of Scholarships](image)
4.6.4: Scholarships Merit Criteria

The study also wanted the respondents who admitted that the universities at least offer scholarships to give their views whether the universities were giving scholarships fairly. The results obtained shows that 71% are for the opinion that the scholarships are not fair while only 29% agreed that there is fairness in their various universities while giving scholarships as shown in the table below.

Table 4.15: Fairness in Scholarships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merit Criteria</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>29.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>71.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.5: Factors Considered in Determining Scholarships Beneficiaries

Further, the respondents were required to indicate from a set of factors which they thought were basically used to determine who gets scholarships in their universities. The students were basically needed to choose from academic performance, financial backgrounds, ethnic backgrounds, religion or others. The responses obtained indicated that 23% thought their respective universities used academic performance, 38% said it was financial/economic backgrounds, 21% indicated ethnic backgrounds, 8% said it was religion, while 10% indicated other considerations. These results show that most private universities base their decisions to give scholarships on financial constraints of the students. However, the results also indicate that even in the private universities ethnicity is still one of the factors considered in giving students scholarships by a margin of 21% of the 300 respondents. This comes third after academic performance which is was claimed to be one of the main pillars by 23% of the students interviewed. The results are presented below.
4.7 Tangibility Dimension on Quality Service

The third objective of the study was to establish how tangibility dimension impacted students’ perception about quality service delivery. The students were subjected to a series of questions that were meant to determine their opinions on tangibility. The responses obtained have been analyzed and presented in the sections that follow.

4.7.1: University Preparation in Offering Services to Students

The respondents were asked to indicate if they thought their universities were well prepared to offer quality services to students generally. The responses indicated that 53% disagreed while 47% agreed.
Table 4.16: University Preparedness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>47.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>53.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7.2: Level of Agreement to Statements on Tangibility Dimension

Respondents were asked to indicate their opinions regarding a number of statements that related to tangibility dimension. They were required to indicate if they (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neutral, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree to various statements as shown in the Likert scale below.

![Likert scale](image)

**Figure 4.15: Tangibility Dimension**

4.7.3: Congestion of Lecture Halls

The respondents were also asked to indicate whether their classes were usually congested or uncomfortable. The results obtained indicated that 81% of the private universities are not congested while 19% were actually congested as shown in the table.
Table 4.17: Congestion in Private Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congestion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>81.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7.4: Number of Lecturers Compared to Students Population

The study also required students to give their opinion regarding the number of lecturers as compared to their population sizes. From the results obtained, the students indicated that 62% of the universities were actually well staffed while 38% thought that the number of lecturers was not enough compared to the population of students as shown in the table.

Table 4.18: Number of Lecturers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Lecturers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>62.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>38.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8 Empathy Dimension on Service Quality

The fourth objective of the study was to establish how empathy dimension affected students’ perception on service quality in private higher institutions of learning. The students were asked a number of questions which were related to empathy traits of management and were required to give their opinions concerning the various universities’ management. The results obtained are analyzed and presented below.

4.8.1: University Commitment in Understanding Students’ Needs

The students were asked to show their opinion concerning the commitment of the university administrations in understanding their problems, needs and challenges. 12% of
the respondents said very frequently, 27% said frequently, 30% said rarely, and 31% said never at all. The results obtained are presented below.

![Bar chart showing responses to needs](chart.png)

**Figure 4.16: Students’ Needs.**

**4.8.2: Providing Caring and Individualized Attention to Students**

Respondents were asked if the universities were providing individualized and caring attention to students. 43% of the respondents agreed while 57% disagreed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attention</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>43.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>57.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.19: Caring Attention**

**4.8.3: Fairness of University Rules and Regulations**

When asked about the fairness of the rules of their respective universities, 50% of the respondents said yes while 50% said no as shown below.
Table 4.20: University Rules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Rules</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8.4: Empathic University Leadership

Based on the respondents’ views on whether their university leaderships were empathic, 36% of the students said yes while 64% said no as shown below.

Table 4.21: University Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>64.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9 Reliability Dimension on Service Quality

The study also sought to determine how reliability dimension impacts students’ perception on service quality in their respective schools. The respondents were subjected to a series of questions which were meant to find out their views concerning this dimension. Responses obtained are presented in the following sections.

4.9.1: Level of Agreement to Statements on Reliability Dimension

The study required students to respond to statements by indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly agree. The responses obtained are presented below.
Figure 4.17: University Vision Statements

Figure 4.18: University Dependability

Figure 4.19: Universities’ Capacity to offer Quality Services
4.9.2: Realizing Academic and Professional Goals

The respondents were asked to give their opinions as to whether they can rely on their universities in achieving their professional goals. 60% of the respondents said they cannot, while 40% said indeed they can.

Table 4.22: University Dependency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9.3: University Management and Faculty Winning Students’ Loyalty

Further students were asked to indicate if they think the university management has managed to win their loyalty based on the services they are given. 40% said yes while 60% said no as shown below.

Table 4.23: Student’s Loyalty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9.4: Opinion about University’s Vision Statement

Majority of the respondents demonstrated that their universities had very good and promising vision statements, supported by about 84% while 16% thought they were not relevant. Despite the favorable opinion given on the vision statements, majority felt that universities are not doing enough to live up to their glamorous vision statements.
4.9.5 Correlations

The coefficients of correlation obtained indicated that assurance dimension is positively correlated to reliability and tangibility dimension while it is negatively correlated to responsiveness and empathy dimensions. This can be interpreted to mean that the main factors that affected students’ perception on quality services were assurance, reliability and tangibility as opposed to responsiveness and empathy. However, all the factors had some influence in the overall perception.

**Table 4.24 Correlations Coefficient**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assurance</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Responsiveness</th>
<th>Tangibility</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>0.564443</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>-0.112012</td>
<td>-0.381037</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangibility</td>
<td>0.2751965</td>
<td>0.4283159</td>
<td>-0.4271703</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>-0.726694</td>
<td>-0.326685</td>
<td>-0.1234449</td>
<td>-0.015547</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.10 Chapter Summary

In the previous chapter, a detailed presentation on the methodology and data analysis procedure was presented. In this chapter, data obtained using both open ended and closed ended questions has been analyzed and presented using tables and figures for better understanding. The next chapter will present discussions, summary and recommendations for improvement and further studies.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the summary of findings, postulation and recommendations of the study grounded on the specific intentions that guided the entire research of service quality delivery in higher institutions of learning in the private sector. Conclusions are based on the study findings and analysis conducted in the previous chapter. The recommendations are made with regard to the conclusions reached after the data was analyzed.

5.2 Summary

The study focused on the general objective of examining the factors affecting students’ satisfaction in private universities in Kenya. The specific objectives that guided the study included assessment of how the five service quality dimensions namely; assurance, responsiveness, reliability, tangibility and empathy dimensions affect students’ perception on service delivery and satisfaction.

The study employed a descriptive research design methodology. The study’s target population was university students in private universities in Kenya that were randomly selected. The study used questionnaires as main data collection tools, in which data was collected using a structured questionnaire and the raw data obtained analyzed using SPSS in order to make it meaningful to the study’s objectives. Analyzed data was presented using tables and figures to help in easier interpretation.

The study found out that assurance is one of the major dimensions that determine the perceptions of students with regard to service delivery. About 67% of the respondents had indicated that their institutions were always involved in giving surety of delivering quality services, however most of the institutions did not live up to their commitments in practice. About 43% of the students thought that university lecturers and faculty members had above the minimum qualifications that are required to teach in higher institutions of learning. In this regard, the respondents indicated that skills in delivering academic services need to be further enhanced by individual professionals with management being on the look in selecting the best qualified pool of persons to offer services in order to achieve quality results. However, the study noted that some of the faculty is actually qualified but their commitment to teaching did not match up with their qualifications, an issue that would probably need further inquiry into establishing the cause of their poor
performance (Sarah et. al., 2011). Students indicated among various issues that university lecturers were not dedicated to institutions’ vision statement, probably due to alienation from management activities and not involved in university major decisions. Interestingly, majority of the interviewed students clearly indicated that if they were given opportunity again to select their universities of choice, about 67% would actually consider returning to their current institutions. Essentially, among the things students indicated they wanted from their university management and staff based on the study’s findings included courtesy, professionalism, ethical behavior, and fairness and this will in return promote confidence in their universities and ensure assurance to service delivery is a practical dimension.

The study’s findings indicated that management and faculty members of various universities were never willing to provide responsive services despite the commitments given. Among the issues noted by students that made the universities be considered as not practicing what they give as assurance on service delivery included lack of prompt services, lack of rapid responses whenever there were issues arising in the universities, lack of instant responses to students’ complaints, and sometimes unethical responses and ways of handling issues by management and staff members as well. These were among the many issues which made learners in various private universities feel that university education was apparently not helping them to achieve their desired goals, despite the fact that about 54% of them indicated that higher education learning was necessary for their career growth. Additionally students noted that despite the fact that universities provided scholarships, some of the mechanisms used to determine those who get scholarships were unethical such as ethnicity and religious backgrounds as opposed to fair means such as academic performance, financial backgrounds and other measurable levels for neediness. However, a few respondents cited that some universities actually based their decisions on scholarships on merit which was supported by about 29% of the respondents.

Based on the study’s findings, majority of the students represented by 53% indicated that universities were not well prepared to offer services to students. However, the study established that at least some universities were prepared because a 47% support means that slightly below average universities had the capacity to serve students well. The main issue therefore would probably be unwillingness to offer better services, lack of accountability, and above all unethical practices among the people in charge of management. Nevertheless, results also indicated that among the many challenges
concerning the preparedness of university in offering quality services included lack of equipment’s and facilities probably for the technical courses, infrastructural developments and physical appearances, personnel availability, and communication materials. These factors as a result affected students’ expectations with regard to satisfaction. Despite the noted lack of facilities, the study found out that classrooms in private universities were actually not congested as most of the students cited that this was the only issue that was well addressed. Better still, more than a half of the surveyed universities were found to be having more students but very few lecturers, hence impacting quality of teaching and service delivery.

A few of the universities were actually found to be empathic on students’ needs and problems. According to the study’s findings, the most challenging issues as far as empathic dimension is concerned in private university was lack of individualized attention that should enhance provision of attention and caring services to different students based on their unique problems. However in overall, the students felt that at least they got attention despite it being too general. Based on the university rules, a half of the respondents thought they were fair while another half felt they were not fair. This therefore indicated that rules and regulations did not play an integral role in determining students satisfaction based on service quality delivery model.

The study’s findings regarding to the dimension of reliability established that universities were not living up to the expectations. Notably, most administrators in universities did not strive towards ensuring that they lived up to their vision statements and therefore making the services they offered not dependable and reliable. Despite the weaknesses noted, most of the respondents were convinced that universities had the capacity to offer quality and reliable services to students if actually they wanted to. Generally, majority of the respondents demonstrated that their universities had very good and promising vision statements, supported by about 84% while 16% thought they were not relevant. Despite the favorable opinion given on the vision statements, majority felt that universities were not doing enough to live up to their glamorous vision statements.

5.3 Discussion

In this section, a discussion is given based on the study’s findings with regard to the specific objectives that informed the study. The specific aims of the study was to: assess how assurance dimension affected students’ perception on quality service; establish how
responsiveness dimension affected students’ perception on quality service; determine how reliability dimension affected students’ perception on quality service; determine how tangibility dimension impacted students’ perception on quality service; and to determine how empathy dimension affected students’ perception on quality service.

5.3.1 Effects of Assurance on Perception of Service Quality

Literature reviewed showed that there is a close relationship between assurance dimension and student perception on quality service. Based on this research’s findings, assurance of the universities’ commitment towards ensuring quality services is provided to students as one of the integral factors that actually determine the level to which students were satisfied with the nature of services received. From the findings, it was clearly evident that universities claimed to be offering quality services and equally gave glamorous promises, however, the actualization of the promises was still wanting in order to match both the surety given and the nature of services provided. Better still, it is a matter of fact to note that private universities just like public institutions, do provide training and education to a pool of students who at the end of their respective studies, remain to stand on equal measures to compete for business and employment opportunities in the same environment and alternatively be subjected to the same economic pressures. This therefore is reason enough for the private universities’ management to remain focused and provide services that make their students competitive in the market.

Away from the commitment assurance, another important determinant on the assurance of quality services was noted to be the actual level of expertise and qualification that faculty members possessed. This is one of the factors that the management should not necessarily come out and communicate to students through words, but rather demonstrate their efforts through actions and let the students build the confidence in the faculty’s abilities. It was however surprising that some of the faculty members who were considered to be extremely qualified would still not deliver to meet students’ expectations.

Another important aspect considered under assurance dimension was the achievement of goals through education. Students cited that education system as it is being structured in the current situation did not actually help them to achieve their goals in life. When the study sought to establish why students perceived that education was not giving the assurance of achieving life goals, almost a half of the respondents indicated that it failed to assure them of goal attainment due to inappropriate approaches and mechanisms of the
current education system. However, more than a half of the respondents clearly indicated that they were optimistic of the attainment of goals through education system and more importantly if appropriately structured.

Majority of the students as well indicated that they failed to recognize commitment of universities towards assurance due to the fact that majority of the staff members and faculty were themselves not dedicated towards respective universities’ vision statements. This was however not clear as to why, but some students indicated that perhaps some university staff and faculty members may be disatisifed with management operations and probably not being inlvoved in major decisions.

Despite the disatsfaction registered by the students, majory of the students respresented by more than 50% however demostrated that if given opportunities to select their universities again, they would definately select their current universities. This was a clear indication that in as much as there were many things which had not been fulfilled with regard to assurance on service quality, private universities were still desirable in the region especially by those studying in the private universities as compared to public institutions of higher learning.

In the opinion of the interviewed students, assurance given by management that is followed by actions, is more likely to foster a sence of confidence among students and in return improve perception on service quality. Further, respondents argued that if all the staff members, faculty and management of universities carried themselves with consideration to students and courteously, the perception of students will eventually be changed into a positive one and satisfaction will be achieved. This was a true representation of student population that considered quality service to be having a close relationship to assurance dimension irrespective of whether it is a private or public university institution.

5.3.2 Effects of Responsiveness on Perception of Service Quality

From literature reviewed in chapter two, it was concluded that responsiveness dimension is one of the most important factors in the SERVQUAL model. Further, this was the research’s second objective. The research established that students were for the opinion that universities were not responsive to the students’ expectations, since about 60% of the respondents were for the opinion that universities were rarely committed to provide prompt services to students. It was indicated that management and faculty members’
willingness to have students’ needs was not to the expectations, a fact that should be further investigated to establish why services were not willingly provided to satisfaction since private universities were generally believed to be sensitive to student needs in order to attract and retain more clients as they were actually operated with profit objectives.

A part from lack of prompt services in universities, some students also showed that there were no rapid and instant responses to their complaints on the nature of operations and quality of services received. Although cases of go-slows and strikes in private universities were generally not common, this did not however mean that students in private universities were never dissatisfied or did not complain. About 65% of students strongly disagreed that their universities solved cases presented to them in time and quickly. Additionally, there were indications that in situations where solutions were given, students were not handled ethically especially those believed to be in the forefronts in championing for the rights of students.

Based on responsiveness, a good number of students of about 60% indicated that their universities offered scholarships to students frequently, although the criteria for offering such scholarships was not considered to be fair by most respondents. Nevertheless, some of the main factors considered in giving scholarships included financial backgrounds, academic performance, and ethnic backgrounds in that order from the most to the least respectively. This indicated that there were some nepotism practices even in private universities in determining the beneficiaries to scholarships including considerations of religious and political affiliations although to a smaller extent.

Ideally, this was not in correspondence to the expectations on the practices that should be common in private universities given the fact that the core reason for operation and management of private universities in addition to delivery of quality services and offering education to the needy in community, most of them ideally operates on profit motives. Just like in business, faster response to customers’complaints, provision on services needed by customers, fair and equitable services, being responsive to the community needs especially on the environmental sensitive issues, are among the most important factors considered to retain and attract more customers.

Students believed that, if universities were ethical in running their major operations, the level of responsiveness will as well be regarded as having been improved greatly. It was
established that responsiveness created a sense of appreciation and positive regard on university efforts to deliver quality services by the students.

One of the main considered factors by students in receiving quality services is ethical practices, corporate social responsibilities, creating platforms that nurture responsive leaders in society, participating in community programmes, treating students with equality without considerations of economic backgrounds, political affiliations, ethnic backgrounds, religious backgrounds, or even social status or class in society. Those affected indicated that such practices largely demoralised them and increased dissatisfaction at the end of the day.

5.3.3 Effects of Tangibility on Perception of Service Quality

From the literature reviewed, it was indicated that tangibility influences some of the students although not at a greater extent. Based on this study, tangibility dimension was found to impact students’ perception about the nature and quality of services received. In tangibility, students indicated that due to high demand of education in the society, some universities were actually admitting more students that exceeded the available lecturers to offer teaching. This did not however compromise the fact that most private universities’ lecture halls were actually not very much congested, hence providing suitable environment for studies. About 47% of the respondents indicated that due to mismatch in the number of lecturers to student populations, this was a demonstration that universities did not prepare adequately to offer quality services to students.

A number of factors cited under tangibility preparation included meeting of general expectations of students, having in place adequate communication materials, personnel availability, proper equipments and facilities, university physical appearance, and above all the level of competition in the market.

Although there was clear evidence that private universities were growing day to day, the preparations to accommodate and satisfy the new demands were actually not commensurate to the growing number of populations in the universities. It was however cited that most private universities were actually affordable and hence promoting education even to the less privileged in society, affordability alone was nevertheless not considered sufficient to demonstrate preparedness to offer quality services.

The study therefore indicated that most students had higher expectations from their universities which were apparently not met. Preparation was considered to include
availability of policies and procedures on handling students and ensuring that responsive services were offered. Almost all universities were found to have in place adequate measures and policies to guide their operations. However, the main challenge was noted to be the level of implementation and level of abiding by the required standards of operation.

University rules and regulations were seen as important structures to harmonize both students’ conduct and that of the management, however a common ground was not found to be easily arrived at due to the many differences in terms of perceptions from the students. It was not clear whether it was entirely the fault of management in ensuring appropriate practices or even the students had a role to play.

Majority of the students however believed that private universities were not comparable to public universities in terms of comfort and attractiveness. From the study, most students were delighted to be in private universities but wished that a common level ground was obtained in which students can present their issues to management and be handled responsibly with aims of improving quality of services provided and making them more competitive in the job market after completing university education and training.

Private universities were on the other hand applauded for ensuring that lecture halls were actually not congested. Further, the environments were actually not just attractive but beautiful and convenient as well as conducive for studies. Among the areas that were wanting is ensuring availability of sufficient facilities and equipments for technical based disciplines such as sciences in order to ensure professional products are produced after completion of required training.

5.3.4 Effects of Empathy on Perception of Service Quality

From the literature reviewed, it was clear that empathy dimension which included aspects such as attention to students needs was of great influence to the perceptions that students developed concerning the quality of services they received from their universities. In this study’s findings, empathy was largely considered to what extent the private universities understood the needs of their students. Ideally, there are different needs by students, ranging from academic needs to financial needs. There would be slow students for instance in terms of academic progress while there are those who are faster runners in the same university course. Alternatively, there would be very needy students in terms of
financial and economic backgrounds while there are those who would be coming from financially stable families.

The most important factor on empathy is the ability to understand such student needs separately and provide unique assistance to each group meant to provide attention to each person. Such a move enhances satisfaction and self-esteem among the helped students provided higher levels of confidence are maintained in order to minimize chances of embarrassments to students.

It is only 39% of the students who were found to be appreciative that university administrators actually were committed towards ensuring that individual students needs were understood with confidentiality. It therefore implied that over 61% of students still believed that personal interests were never taken care of by their universities.

This went a long way to failure to appreciate and recognize the levels of students’ needs and hence university management not able to provide caring and individual attention to individual students all the time. As a matter of fact, when personal concerns of students actually remain unattended, the implication is that stress levels among students was actually found to be higher, and usually higher stress levels is a fact that directly affects performance and prosperity among students.

A half of the university students however showed that university rules were fair and empathic while another half were for a contrary opinion. This was followed by a similar proportion of respondents who shared thoughts that university leadership was an epitome of empathy while another half differed in opinion. This finding indicated that whether or not university leadership and management was considered to be empathic, it actually did not matter in determining if students were eventually satisfied with the level of quality service provision.

Generally, empathy being a way of putting oneself in other people’s situations, it was one of the most hardest virtue that people really practice. These were the sentiments of students who thought that university management, staff and faculty would not demonstrate empathy due to superiority complex and unwillingness to exercise the virtue of humility to the point of owning others’ challenges and problems. It was a situation that closely affected students on what they cited as lack of being appreciated and acknowledged.
5.3.5 Effects of Reliability on Perception of Service Quality

Finally, from literature review, it was noted that students greatly considered reliability dimension especially on universities living up to the promises of service philosophies and mission statements. This had a great impact on overall perception of an institution’s service delivery. From this study, it was found that reliability was closely linked to assurance dimension as well as empathy dimension in which students’ confidence was sought to be won by universities especially in terms of service quality delivery. Factors considered in this case were the attractiveness and promising nature of university vision statements; the level of dependability by the students on their universities; the capacity of universities to offer quality education; ability of the universities to help students realign academic and professional goals; ability of university management and faculty to win student loyalty; as well students’ opinion on the overall performance of respective universities management.

Various universities were found to be operating based on the legal frameworks as determined by the government through the ministry of higher learning. Universities that operate legally usually manage to attract more students by creating confidence in them and assuring them that the faculties being studied are actually relevant in the modern market environment. This does not only promote the spirit of hardwork among the learners, but also enhances acceptance and appreciation of the role of such universities in the Kenyan environment economically and socially.

Reliability on the large context involves acts of professionalism among university managers and leaders. Having proper structures of governance demonstrates suitability of such universities to offer standardized education services to the students. Furthermore, students in most cases would want to have their universities recognized and this is only possible if proper practices actually are carried out in such universities.

By so doing, both vision and mission statements of most universities which actually were found to be very promising, would make sense and be significant in the education sector. Since mission and vision statements are actually the main vehicles behind economic and social prosperity, fulfilling such promises is mandatory for competitive edge among universities.

The end result of responsive and ethical services which enhances dependability and reliability on the existence of private institutions of higher learning is actually the
increased level of loyalty among students. Loyalty is the ability to identify oneself with a university and feel proud to belong to ascertain university, which should propagate ethical and moral foundations in society.

5.4 Conclusion

5.4.1 Assurance Dimension Affecting Students’ Perception on Service Quality

The result findings clearly indicate that service quality dimensions are closely linked to the level of student satisfaction. Basically, the dimensions impact the level of quality due to the perceptions from the customers (students), and as a result affect the satisfaction levels. Among the most considered dimensions as established in this study include assurance dimensions. Assurance determines the level at which students will feel assured of the continued efforts by universities to ensure that services provided and nature of education is in line with required standards. The study shows that quality directly affects the loyalty and confidence of the customers on the service providers, hence affecting the way the products or services offered are accepted. Additionally, the results indicate that universities usually promise a lot but eventually fail to deliver. As a result, the study’s findings on assurance dimension conclude that service quality dimensions greatly affect students’ perception on service quality and satisfaction.

5.4.2 Responsiveness Dimension Affecting Students’ Perception on Service Quality

The study concludes that responsiveness dimension is as important as assurance dimension on service quality in private universities. It was established that responsiveness creates a sense of appreciation and positive regard on university efforts to deliver quality services by the students. Management of private universities are always expected to responsibly manage student affairs in a manner that promotes confidence and hence winning trust of students. As a matter of fact, students like customers will always want to be sure of the existence and continued survival of institutions in order to provide for their needs effectively. In this regard, responsiveness is demonstrated in many ways ranging from performance, growth and expansion, resource utilization, contribution to research and development, among many other positive contributions to the society at large.

5.4.3 Reliability Dimension Affecting Students Perception on Service Quality

Reliability was considered the third most important aspect of quality services delivery. Quality services in private universities were ideally considered from the point of view
that there were no fears of the university operations or rather the confidence that the appropriate education programmes and services were actually provided. If universities by any chance get subjected to higher education audit and scrutiny, it means that reliability in such a university collapses. It is good practice for universities to offer approved programmes irrespective of whether one is a private or public university so as to avoid deregistration and hence frustrating reliability. Reliability is key factor in determining how students eventually perceive service delivery of university and higher education in private universities.

5.4.4 Tangibility Dimension Affecting Students’ Perception on Service Quality

Tangibility equally contributes to the general overview of universities’ service quality delivery. Universities that demonstrate higher levels of tangibility dimensions usually have well-developed infrastructure, facilities, equipments, and procedures to ensure services are rendered on the basis of quality and relevance to the job markets. Universities can also be viewed as hubs for research, economic development, and technological development as well. In this regard, it is important for private universities also to be part of the wider network of universities that guides students in development and whose structures lead to discoveries and innovativeness in society. This largely builds on tangibility dimension that actually leads to improved quality of service delivery.

5.4.5 Empathy Dimension Affecting Students’ Perception on Service Quality

As already put, the study’s findings indicate that an individualized and caring attention is key to personal growth and strong self efficacy among the students. It is in itself seen as an empowerment approach to enable students in achieving their desired goals both academically and professionally. The most important factor on empathy is the ability to understand student needs separately and provide unique assistance to each group and provide attention to each person. Such a move enhances satisfaction and self-esteem among the assisted students provided higher levels of confidence would be maintained in order to minimize chances of embarrassments to students.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Recommendations for Improvement

With reference to the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made for improvement with respect to each specific objective.
5.5.1.1 The Effects of Assurance on Service Quality

The study recommends university management to be sensitive on the dimensions that are concerned with delivery of quality services in terms of education standards. In this regard, the universities will be able to win confidence and trust from students, propagating ethical standards, ensuring organization success and improved performance, and ensuring that quality services are given priority in private institutions of higher learning. Secondly, the study recommends that institutions of higher learning especially the private universities should endeavour to recruit highly qualified personnel to teach, ensure students’ goals are supported through relevant trainings, be dedicated to live by the university mission statements and core values, ensure that the faculty members exercise professionalism throughout in order to build students’ confidence to their respective universities. Further, university administration and management should not only promise students on delivery of quality services, but rather ensure the assurance given is matched with actions.

5.5.1.2 The Effects of Responsiveness on Service Quality

This study recommends that universities should demonstrate willingness to provide assistance to any challenges or problems experienced by students while on campus, ensure prompt, rapid, instant and ethical considerations of learners’ needs as well ensure ensuring fairness in provision of scholarships and other financial and non-financial incentives.

5.5.1.3 The Effects of Reliability on Service Quality

The study recommends that university administrations should be able to give students who are the main customers a sense of satisfaction and enable them to identify with their respective universities. Further, it should be ensured that promises given to learners and the public are adequately fulfilled, employing the principles of marketing on service quality management, striving to fulfil the ISO quality assurance standards, and putting more efforts to regain and retain reliability from students. This study established that the capacity to offer services should be demonstratably high in order to improve on reliability, as well as the ability to win students’ loyalty.

5.5.1.4 The Effects of Tangibility on Service Quality

The study recommends that universities should improve quality of physical facilities such as buildings, which give a good first impression on university facilities, and being competitive in terms of the courses offered to students. This study further recommends
that there ought to be adequate demonstration of university preparedness to provide quality services, increase of facilities such as classrooms to ease congestion in case of any, balancing the required ratios of lecturers to the student population, and improving communication facilities in universities.

5.5.1.5 The Effects of Empathy on Service Quality

This study recommends that empathy should be enhance in institutions of higher learning by the commitment of universities to understand the needs of students, provision of caring and individualised attention to students, enactment of fair university rules and regulations, ensuring empathic leadership, and promoting the welfare of university members including faculty members and students as well.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Further Studies

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made for further studies; Studies should be done to determine the factors that make university staff/faculty to perform dismally despite the fact that they are qualified to offer professional services in higher institutions of learning. Further, a study should be carried out to establish the factors that make students think that private universities are better than public universities as evidenced in the study findings in which the students had indicated that if given an opportunity they will still select their current universities despite the challenges faced.
REFERENCES


Higher Education Rankings of 2016.


APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: Request to collect data on a research topic entitled “The Impact of Service Quality on Customer satisfaction”.**

I am a graduate student at United States International University, in the Chandaria School of Business, undertaking Masters of Science in Organizational Development. As part of the requirements for the award of the degree, I am expected to undertake a research study which involves data collection and report writing. The purpose of this study is **“to investigate the relationship between service quality, corporate image and customer satisfaction among private university students in Kenya.”**

I hereby request for your participation by taking about 10 minutes to complete the attached questionnaire. The research results will be used for academic purposes only. Only summarized results will be made public. No one will have access to these records except the University and the researcher. The information obtained will be treated confidentially and for research purposes only.

Your support and cooperation in filling the questionnaire will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Ogendi Mark Rachuonyo

Email: markrachuonyo@yahoo.com

Telephone: +254726208937
Appendix II: Cover Letter: Institutional

Ogendi Mark Rachuonyo
USIU
Box 14634-00800
Nairobi, Kenya
0726208937

The DVC Academic Affairs
University Name
P.O. Box 342
Town, Kenya.
Dear Sir/madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT ACADEMIC RESEARCH DATA

I am writing to kindly request for permission to obtain data from your organization for the above mentioned purpose. I am a graduate student at USIU, Chandaria School of Business and as part of the requirements for the award of the degree; I am conducting a research on “Influence of service quality and corporate image on customer satisfaction among private University students in Kenya.”

I included your University in my study after observing that it was amongst the top ten ranked Universities in Kenya, based on the University web ranking. Given the research topic, it was considered that students in your university will be more potential in providing the required data. I therefore request that you allow me to collect data that is pertinent for the research. My mode of data collection is through self-administered questionnaire. I am targeting at least 100 respondents from your institution.

I am confident and assure that the information collected will be used purely for this academic research and I guarantee utmost confidentiality. I have attached a letter from the university certifying my candidature and a copy of the questionnaire. Copy of the findings will be availed to you upon request.

Thank You

Yours Faithfully,

Ogendi Mark Rachuonyo
Appendix III: Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS;

Kindly answer the following questions objectively by writing a brief answer or ticking in the space or boxes provided respectively.

Name (Optional)……………………………………. Email…………………………………….

Cell Phone…………………………………….

TOPIC: TO EXPLORE THE IMPACT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER (STUDENT) SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA.

PART A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tick (√) as appropriate

1. Kindly indicate your age bracket.
   
   Below 18 years ( )
   18-23 years ( )
   24-29 years ( )
   Above 30 years. ( )

2. Level of education studying
   
   Diploma ( )
   Bachelors ( )
   Masters ( )

3. Which year of study are you?
   
   Year 1 ( )
   Year 2 ( )
   Year 3 ( )
   Year 4 ( )

4. (a) What is the Name of your School ………………………………….

   (b) Department …………………………………………………………….
(c) Which course are you studying ............................................
(d) Specialization (if applicable) ...................................................

5. What factors influenced your decision to study in the course listed in 4 (c) above?

........................................................................................................
........................................................................................................

6. How do you finance your studies? (Tick all that are applicable)

HELB ( )
Bank loans ( )
CDF Bursary ( )
University Bursary ( )
Parent/Guardian ( )
Well-wishers ( )
Others ( ) Specify.............................................................................

Section B: Assurance Dimension on service quality

7. How often is your university committed towards assuring students on service commitment?

(a) Not at all [ ]
(b) Rarely [ ]
(c) Frequently [ ]
(d) Very frequently [ ]

8. What is your perception about the qualifications of the faculty members?

(a) Lack appropriate qualifications [ ]
(b) Have minimum qualifications [ ]
(c) Moderately Qualified [ ]
(d) Very Qualified [ ]
(e) Cannot tell [ ]

9. In your view, is education helping you to achieve your goals in life?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If No, explain why?
........................................................................................................
........................................................................................................
10. In your view, are the faculty members dedicated to your university’s vision?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

11. Do you have confidence in the faculty members?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

12. If you are given an opportunity to select your university again, will you choose the current university that you study in?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]
   Explain ………………………………………………………………………………………………

13. Are the members of staff and faculty in your university carrying themselves with professionalism all the time?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

14. What is your level of agreement with the following statements that relate to how assurance dimension affect your perception on quality service?

   1. Use a scale of 1-5 (1- Strongly agree; 2-Agree; 3-Neutral; 4- disagree;5- strongly disagree)

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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) My university is committed to satisfy students’ needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Our lecturers conduct themselves with courtesy all the time</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Assurance promotes confidence and trust in service delivery</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(d) I have confidence in my university, the faculty, and the services provided in my university</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e) A private University is better than a public university in terms of quality service delivery</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
15. In your view, how else is assurance dimension affecting students’ perception on quality service?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

Section C: Responsiveness Dimension on quality service

16. In your view, is your university willing to help students and provide them with prompt services?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If No, explain why?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

If yes how?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

17. What is your level of agreement with the following statements that relate to how responsiveness dimension affect students’ perception on quality service delivery?

Use a scale of 1-5 (1- Strongly agree; 2-Agree; 3-Neutral; 4- disagree; 5- strongly disagree)

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services are provided promptly in my university</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Services are provided rapidly in my university</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responses on issues raised are given instantly as they arise</td>
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<tr>
<td>The university management solves cases quickly as and when they arise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Then university’s teaching staff, management and supportive staff respond</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
18. How often does your university provide scholarships to students?
   ii. Not at all [ ]
   iii. Rarely [ ]
   iv. Frequently [ ]
   v. Very frequently [ ]

19. If your university gives scholarships, are the scholarships given fairly and on merit?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

20. In your view, is the number of lecturers sufficient/ enough based on the students’ population in your university?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

Section D: Reliability Dimension

21. What is your level of agreement with the following statements relating to how reliability dimension affect students’ perception on service delivery? (1- Strongly agree, 2- Agree, 3- Neutral, 4- Disagree, 5- Strongly Disagree)

<table>
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<th>Statement</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My university strives to live up to its vision statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Through the operations and commitment of management team, it is evident that the university has the ability to dependably and adequately perform the promised service</td>
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<tr>
<td>The university has the capacity to offer quality services to the students</td>
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22. Do you think you can rely/ depend on your university in helping you realize your academic and professional goals?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

23. In your opinion, do you think the university management and faculty have managed to win your loyalty?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]
   If yes, explain
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
If no, explain
.............................................................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................................................

24. What is your opinion about your university’s vision statement?
.............................................................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................................................

Section E: How Tangibility impact student perception on quality service delivery

25. In your view, is your university well prepared to offer services to students?

Yes   [  ]    No   [  ]

If No, explain why?
.............................................................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................................................

If yes how?
.............................................................................................................................................
.............................................................................................................................................

26. What is your level of agreement with the following statements that relate to how tangibility affects students’ perception on quality service delivery?
Use a scale of 1-5 (1- Strongly agree; 2-Agree; 3-Neutral; 4- disagree; 5- strongly disagree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The physical appearance of my university promote student perception on the nature and quality of services given</td>
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<tr>
<td>The equipments and facilities of my university are sufficient to serve the university’s population</td>
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<td>The university is well equipped with personnel in relation to the students population</td>
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<td>There are adequate communication materials to meet student needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>The university is always ready to meet the students’ expectations</td>
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</table>

27. Are the classes in your university usually congested or uncomfortable?

   Yes [ ]    No [ ]

28. In your view, is the number of lecturers able to serve you better based on the students’ population in your university?

   Yes [ ]    No [ ]

29. What is your opinion about your university’s facilities compared to student population?

   ............................................................................................................................................................................................................

............................................................................................................................................................................................................

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**Section F: Empathy Dimension on service quality**

30. How often is your university committed towards the understanding of the students’ needs?

   (e) Not at all [ ]
   (f) Rarely [ ]
31. In your view, are your university management and faculty providing caring and individualized attention to students?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If No, explain why?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

If yes how?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

32. In your view, are the rules and regulations of your university fair?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

33. In your opinion, do you think your university’s leadership is empathic?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explain ……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

34. Which of the following factors is considered do determine who gets scholarships in your university?

Academic performance [ ]
Economic/financial backgrounds [ ]
Religion [ ]
Ethnic backgrounds [ ]
Others [ ] Specify ……………………………..

35. What is your level of agreement with the following statements that relate to how empathy affects students’ perception on quality service delivery?
(Use a scale of 1-5 (1- Strongly agree; 2-Agree; 3-Neutral; 4- disagree; 5- strongly disagree)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(f) I receive a very caring attention in my university</td>
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<td>(g) I regret having joined this university</td>
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<td>(h) My lecturers are very understanding</td>
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<td>(i) My university is the best in the region</td>
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<td>(j) In my university, priority is given to students’ welfare above everything</td>
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Thank you for your cooperation!