UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

By
ERIC ERNEST MANG'UNYI
212561377

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Management, IT and Governance
College of Law and Management Studies

Supervisor: Prof. Krishna K. Govender

2015

PERMISSION TO SUBMIT

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

College of Law and Management Studies

Supervisors Permission to Submit Thesis/ Dissertation for Examination

Student Name: Eric Ernest Mang'unyi	Student No: 212561377		
Title: Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: The Case of Private Universities in Kenya			
Qualification: PhD	School: Management, IT and Governance		
		Yes	No
To the best of my knowledge, the thesis/dissertation is primarily the student's own work and the student has acknowledged all reference sources		√	
The English language is of a suitable standard for examination without going for professional editing.		√	
Turnitin Report 7 %			
Comment if % is over 10%: N/A			
I agree to the submission of this thesis/dissertation for examination			
Supervisors Name: PROF K. K. GOVENDER			
Supervisors Signature:			
Date: SECOND DATE		6/10/2014	
Co- Supervisors Name:			
Co- Supervisors Signature:			
Date:			

Updated College Form 18 May 2012 (v.1) Page 1

DECLARATION

I ....Eric Ernest Mang'unyi..................declare that

(i) The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

(ii) This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

(iii) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

(iv) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:

a. their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
b. where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.

(v) Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am an author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.

(vi) This dissertation/thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation/thesis and in the References sections.

Signature:

Date: 23 – 01 – 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe my sincerest appreciation to:

Almighty God for giving me all-round health to complete this thesis. Even though much tougher than any I have ever completed, it was a great learning experience as well as an enriching encounter so very meaningful in my life.

Prof. Krishna K. Govender for the enormous support, advice, guidance and unfailing patience offered to me through the years of this research. Your constructive criticisms of my work at various stages was really engaging and helped a lot in shaping the thesis and contributed to my growth as a future researcher.

Sr. Josephine Adibo, for introducing me to UKZN – your inspiration prompted me to start writing the initial proposal.

Dr. Ann Rita Njageh, for your optimism and support throughout my thesis on a nearly daily basis – you are excused now!

Ms. Susan Mwangi the research assistant, thank you for your tireless efforts in data collection.

Mr. Oscar Ngesa for lending a hand on statistical issues, your valuable advice and assistance in interpretation of the data really helped greatly.

My parents for their infinite love and encouragement throughout my life for showing the importance of education, and for that reason, I dedicate this thesis to them.

Many participants of the institutions visited who made the data collection process successful. I hope that your valuable input will help improve your respective institution's service levels and satisfaction even more.

ABSTRACT

In light of the unprecedented growth and changes in higher education (HE), private universities would have to ensure that their service quality (SQ) and level of customer satisfaction (CS) are high. Unique to developing and sustaining successful relationships with staff, students and other role players is the quality of service, which would eventually contribute to their satisfaction levels. The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the dimensions of HE quality that contribute towards perceived SQ, and the relationship between service quality and satisfaction among different university customers, namely, students, and employees (academic and administrative staff).

Through a cross-sectional survey using an adapted and specifically customized HEdPERF questionnaire, employees' and students' perceptions were measured according to six quality dimensions. The sample comprised 600 students and 250 employees from four private universities in the faith-based and "commercial" categories. The sample was selected through stratified purposeful random sampling. The data from 133 employee and 522 student respondents was analyzed separately and then the combined, using SPSS and more specifically AMOS and structural equation modeling, to fit the data to the conceptual models.

The employee and student surveys revealed a collapsing of the original six dimension HEdPERF scale to four dimensions (academic, non-academic, access and reputation) revealing a more 'fused' finding of SQ in the context of this research. The HEdPERF dimensions of HE quality were analyzed to identify the most significant dimensions contributing towards SQ in private HE institutions, and exploring the association between SQ and CS through regression analysis and the structural equation modeling. It became evident that the aforementioned dimensions of quality pertaining to private universities have a positive and significant relationship with SQ, in turn influencing CS. Furthermore, an increase in SQ enhances CS, thus reinforcing what has been reported in many studies in the services marketing literature. It is also worth noting that, one of the study's most significant findings revealed that no significant differences were found between SQ and CS constructs of employees and students in terms of their perceptions of SQ. Empirical evidence also suggests a very strong positive relationship between the student-customers' perception of university SQ and the overall SQ.

It was concluded that only four HEdPERF quality dimensions are key indicators of private HE quality. It is also concluded that the HEdPERF model offers a good opportunity to address inferior service quality service in certain quarters of the private higher education sector in Kenya.

The study recommends that although it is likely that the relative importance of each service quality dimension may vary depending on who the customer (employee or student) is, and its contributions to SQ and CS, university management should recognize and manage these in order to improve the HE institutions level of HE quality and customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Higher Education, HEdPERF, Private University, Service Quality, Kenya.

PUBLICATIONS BASED ON THIS RESEARCH

In the course of development and writing of this thesis, some results presented herein have already been presented to the international research community, and/or is under review in the form of journal publications authored or co-authored as follows:

Mang'unyi, E. E. and Govender, K. K. (2014). Perceived service quality (SQ) and customer satisfaction (CS) – students' perceptions of Kenyan private universities.

This paper presents to the international research community and higher education managers both theoretical and empirical evidences that some variables of SQ significant to students of private universities in Kenya can be utilized in determining SQ in higher education context. Grounded on Higher Education Performance Model (HEdPERF), the paper puts forward established significant relationships among the perceptions of academic quality, non-academic quality, reputation quality and access quality of a university, as well as how they relate to SQ and their influence on student satisfaction. Finally, recommendations to university managers and higher education policy makers are made.

Mang'unyi, E. E. and Govender, K. K. (2014). Perceived service quality and customer satisfaction – employees' perspectives of Kenyan private universities

By providing a model linking service quality and employee customer satisfaction developed on exploratory evidence from a study conducted among employees of private higher education institutions in Kenya, partial support for the proposed conceptual model was ascertained. The paper advances a model applicable to HE context as well as presents research and managerial implications that issues non-academic needs to be considered since they are significant to employees. Furthermore, implicit and unequivocal services from university management at superior standards need to be granted for maximum satisfaction.

Mang'unyi, E. E. and Govender, K. K. (2014). The service quality-customer satisfaction nexus: a study of employees and students perceptions in Kenyan private universities

This paper highlights findings from combined actual "employees and students" samples in the Kenyan higher education sector examined. Based on results from private universities, service quality is measured with a view to identifying quality attributes/dimensions and existing relationships to customer satisfaction. Prospects to higher education managers to advance strategic service quality delivery deliverables for their universities are expounded. The efficacy of the HEdPERF tool in evaluating service quality in higher education industry in different development thresholds is delineated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

INDEX OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS:	Analysis of Moments Structures
ATM:	Automatic Teller Machine
CFI:	Comparative Fit Index
CHE:	Commission for Higher Education
CS:	Customer Satisfaction
CUE:	Commission for University Education
CUEA:	Catholic University of Eastern Africa
E-commerce:	Electronic Commerce
ECSI:	European Customer Satisfaction Index
EFA:	Exploratory Factor Analysis
E-learning:	Electronic Learning/Online Learning
E-Service:	Electronic Service
GOK:	Government of Kenya
HE:	Higher Education
HEdPERF:	Higher Education Performance-only
HEIs:	Higher Education Institutions
HELB:	Higher Education Loans Board
IBM:	International Business Machine
ICT:	Information Communication Technology
IHL:	Institutions of Higher Learning
IQA:	Chartered Institute of Quality Assurance
ISO:	International Standards Organization
JAB:	Joint Admission Board
KCA:	Kenya College of Accountancy
KEBS:	Kenya Bureau of Standards
KNBS:	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MFIs:	Microfinance Institutions
MOE:	Ministry of Education
MoHEST:	Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology
NCST:	National Council for Science and Technology
PCA:	Principle Component Analysis
PhD:	Doctor of Philosophy
PHE:	Private Higher Education
PHEIs:	Private Higher Education Institutions
RMSEA:	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM:	Structural Equation Modelling
SERVPERF:	Service Performance Model
SERVQUAL:	Service Quality Model
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SQ:	Service Quality
SSP:	Self-Sponsored Programme
TQM:	Total Quality Management
UK:	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
USIU:	United States International University

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic Aspects: Firdaus (2006) defines academic aspects in terms of the responsibilities of academic staff to fulfill students' needs and includes characteristics such as positive attitude, provision of regular feedback to students, communication skills and sufficient consultation hours.

Access: This is the ability of higher learning institutions to be approachable, easy to contact, convenient and available (Firdaus, 2006: 575).

Customer Expectation: Uncontrollable factors including past experience, personal needs, word of mouth, and external communication about higher education service (Kimani, 2011).

Customer Perception: Customer's feelings of pleasure or displeasure or the reaction of the customers in relation to the performance of the university staff in satisfactory or unsatisfactory services (Kotler, 2000; Lovelock, Patterson and Walker, 2001).

Customer Satisfaction: As a customer's fulfilment of response, customer satisfaction is the judgment that a product or a service provided is giving a pleasurable level of consumption related fulfilment, including levels of under or over fulfilment (Oliver, 1997). As a modification of Oliver's (1997) definition, in this study the term "customer satisfaction" refers to pointers of service quality giving satisfying levels of consumption related fulfillment.

Customer: A consumer of any type of service in any organisation, including higher education services. Higher education institutions' customers fall into five groups namely: the students, the employees, the government and the public sector, industry and society (Martensen, Gronhold, Eskildsen & Kristensen, 2000). In the context of this study, university customers will include students, staff (both academic and non-academic) and government.

Higher Education: May be termed as education offered at university or similar institutions.

Non-Academic Aspects: Characteristics necessary to aid students achieve their study requirements (Firdaus, 2006: 575). These are aided by non-academic staff when performing their duties and responsibilities at their work places.

Private Higher Education Institution: An institution that does not receive state funding but relies on other sources of revenue.

Private Higher Education: University level education offered at a privately-owned establishment.

Programme Aspects: This relates to the ability of a higher learning institution to offer a wide range of reputable academic programmes and specialisations with flexible structure and syllabus (Firdaus, 2006: 575).

Quality Attributes: Are measurable aspects related to service quality, for example, academic and non-academic criteria, reputation, programme issues etc. Each attribute corresponds to a question asked in the employee and student survey.

Reputation: According to Firdaus (2006), this includes the prestige associated with a higher learning institution's ability to project a professional image through provision of quality service.

Service Quality: Service quality is the variation between expectations and perceptions of the service performance from a customers' standpoint (Jayasundara, 2009). Service quality is defined in this study as conformance of a service to the needs of a customer or the ability of a particular service to satisfy the expected needs of a customer in a tertiary institution.

Service: A service is any act that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product (Kotler, 2003). According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), services are economic activities offered by one party to another, usually time-based acts aimed at bringing about expected results to recipients themselves. Consumers of services expect to get value in exchange for their money, time and effort made from accessing the merchandise, expert skills, amenities, and systems, among others, but do not take ownership of any of the tangible elements involved (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007).

Understanding: This involves "familiarizing oneself with clearly defined student requirements with regard to services such as counselling and health services" (Firdaus, 2006: 575).

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The environment in which higher education operates across the globe is turbulent and dynamic. Forces both international and national are driving change across many higher education institutions in the world. These changes have spurred governments and higher education institutions to place issues of quality high on their agendas. It has been acknowledged (Becket and Brookes 2006) that there is still no common agreement on the best way to appraise service quality[1] within the higher education context despite the advancements made so far through research and debate. As Becket and Brookes (2007) affirm, this is because the quality concept has been recognised to be a complex and multi-faceted construct, in particular in the tertiary education milieu. Consequently, the measurement and management of the quality of services especially in the Higher Education (HE) industry has raised various issues (accountability, increasing student population, competition in HE, greater expectations of customers, flexible delivery methods) which have led organizations to adopt a multiplicity of service quality management practices, many of which draw upon existing industry models.

In the light of the above, this study set out to explore the critical dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction in Kenyan private universities, since perceived excellence of service is a precursor of satisfaction, and overall service quality is associated to satisfaction (De Shields Jr, Kara and Kaynak, 2005; Hishamuddin and Azleen 2008; Lassar, Manolis and Winsor, 2000; Siddiqi 2011; Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2006).

This introductory section summarises the study, as well as provides the background and the outline of the research problem. This is followed by a discussion of the plan and goals, importance and scope, as well as the conceptual and theoretical framework

[1] See some definitions later in this chapter and exhaustive descriptions in chapter 3.

of the study. Lastly, the organisation of this thesis is briefly outlined at the end of this chapter.

1.2 Background and Outline of the Research Problem

The importance of quality as a key component of the management of institutions of higher learning (IHL) in Kenya cannot be underestimated. According to the Commission for University Education (CUE, 2012), the number of students qualifying for higher education increased by 42% during the period 2009-2012. This is attributed to the increase in the establishment of more constituent colleges. For example, in 2010, over 90,000 students scored C+, the minimum university entry grade (Ministry of Education, 2011; Muindi, 2011). Moreover, the increase in enrollment by the Joint Admission Board for public universities increased by over 23% from 17,100 in 2008/2009 to 21,000 in the academic year 2009/2010 to 34,000 in the academic year 2010/2011 (CUE, 2012). The increase was to meet the demand for university education hence universities, specifically public universities, had to double their intake. With the increasing number of students qualifying for higher education, the introduction of part-time degree courses (i.e. module II or parallel, distance and open learning, evening programmes etc.), and the mushrooming of universities, the question of service quality management in the IHL in Kenya is very fundamental (Ngome, 2010).

University customers have different experiences as university service consumers (Hogg and Hogg, 1995; Perez, Juan, Gema and Raquel, 2007), for instance, the students want quality, their expectations for better service performance is increasing, therefore increased customer satisfaction is important (Doherty, 1994; Rasli, Danjuma, Yew & Igbal, 2011). For many years, higher education provision has been considered a service, hence this has called for providers to adopt a customer-focused approach (Angell, Heffernan and Megicks, 2008). Vaill (2008) asserts that in higher education (HE), education is a service therefore the providers' of this service have to be alert and be able to quickly respond to the students concerns. Furthermore, in the

HE environment where numerous stakeholders[2] exist, conflicting views have emerged on who the 'customer' is. For instance, some researchers (Little and Williams, 2011) posit that the student as a customer has long been accepted across the globe and that as opposed to the past, students purchase the service of education, have exclusive access to HE offering, bear responsibility of the costs of their studies paid directly and are required to demonstrate readiness in service engagement (Aldridge and Rowley 1998; Sharrock, 2000; Quinn, Lema, Larsen & Johnson, 2009). This means that students should be considered as customers and therefore treated as any other customer of higher education (Eagle and Brennan, 2007). On the other hand, Quinn et al. (2009) argue that by managing and utilising some higher education institution (HEI) services, then employees (academic and administrative) too are customers.

By adopting the principles of customer service and Total Quality Management (TQM), many companies including universities have improved overall performance thereby, succeeding in their quality improvement efforts. Researchers such as Hogg and Hogg (1995) and Nagaprasad and Yogesha (2009) have postulated several reasons for customer service and TQM, such as increased customer satisfaction as it interconnects varieties of system-wide elements and makes data-driven decisions to minimise errors and waste in procedures and processes. Oswald (2009) asserts that improved performance in organisations is as a result of quality management. The Chartered Institute of Quality Assurance (IQA) delineates TQM as a business model of management geared towards addressing quality issues where as a rational approach, an organisation's management creates, delivers and captures value while addressing quality measures (ISO 8402:1994). However, TQM success is pegged on the long term contribution and participation of all employees' realised through customer satisfaction and thus benefiting all institutional stakeholders and the larger society. Ngome (2010) posits that quality management is a philosophy for organisational management in a way which enables an organisation to meet stakeholder expectations and needs effectively, without compromising the underlying moral principles. To do this, all the organisation's employees need to change their

[2] See chapter 3, section 3.8 for further discussion of stakeholders and or customers of higher education system

attitude, be motivated, and provided with resources and show commitment that will lead to enhancements in processes, services and products offered as well as being accountable.

Over the decades, issues concerning quality of service in higher education have taken on new dimensions and received varied treatment. The need for organisations to provide quality service as well as stay a head of competition leads to adoption of strategies to improve services (Kimani, 2011). This mindset has encouraged organisations to continuously improve their services and adopt new ways to deliver the same services which is gaining currency in fast-growing countries like Kenya.

Some researchers (Perez et al., 2007; Kimani, 2011) assert that the changing needs, preferences and tastes of the customers', and more so the changing nature of global markets have lead to the increasing prominence of service quality. The aforementioned researchers maintain that as a significant factor, service quality has enabled companies to stay a head of competition due to their enhanced service and/or product offerings as compared to their competitors and therefore realising enhanced performance (Perez et al., 2007; Kimani, 2011).

Service quality is viewed as a critical dimension of competitiveness (Shahin and Samea, 2010). Seth, Deshmukh and Vrat (2005) state that service quality is the variance between a customer's expectation of a service and the actual service performance within the aspects of quality. Researchers Hung, Huang and Chen (2003) posit that in today's services industry, the major challenge is offering outstanding service quality and meeting customers' expectations. Zahari, Yusoff and Ismail (2008) emphasises that regardless of the sector (public or private) or industry (product or service), service quality is crucial. Furthermore, some researchers (Seilier, 2004; Zahari et al., 2008) posit that the degree to which a service satisfies or surpasses customer requirements ammounts to service quality.

As a key area of focus to industry stakeholders, service quality has had a strong influence or effect on customer's satisfaction and allegiance, return of investment as well as other organisational measures of performance (Seth and Deshmukh, 2005;

Chang, Wang and Yang. 2009; Yee, Yeung and Cheng, 2010; Siddiqi, 2011). The demand for better services in both developed and developing countries has made organisations to develop ways to assess quality of service delivery (Brown and Bitner, 2007).

Scholars have pointed out the importance of service quality and customer satisfaction (Cronin and Brady, 2001; Perez et al., 2007; Maddern, Roger and Andi, 2007; Kara, Lonial, Tarim and Zaim, 2005). Kimani (2011) suggested a positive perception by students towards service quality received in their respective universities in Kenya, and concluded that overall student satisfaction is impacted upon by how they perceive quality. Using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient to test the relationship, Kimani (2011) found that perception on quality of service is collectively influenced by various aspects or factors of service quality which complement each other hence must be considered as a whole. Other researchers have looked at the antecedents of customer satisfaction (Jamal and Naser, 2002; Hensley and Sulek, 2007; Herington and Weaven, 2007). Furthermore, Hishamuddin and Azleen (2008) affirm that service quality is a widely accepted as a precursor of satisfaction and ignoring it may compromise organisational performance since there is a relationship between satisfaction and competitiveness. Rust, Danaher and Sajeev (2000) looked at the relationship between service quality and an organisation's competitiveness, while Lopez, Laura and Alison, (2007) explored ethnicity and customer satisfaction, and Kong and Jogaratnam (2007) looked at culture and perceived quality. From all the above mentioned studies, it was established that culture and ethnicity affect quality of service and that there is a link between service quality and organisational competitiveness (Rust et al., 2000).

According to Bounds, Lyle, Mel and Gipsie (1994) as cited by Oswald (2009: 1), it is apparent that for over thirty years organisations in the first world countries have been working towards the attainment of quality management. This has been attributed to the general belief that superior commodities and services result in better organisational efficiency (Oswald, 2009).

The need for continuous quality improvement especially in IHLs in Kenya as an overall effort for organisational change means Kenya is not an exception in pursuing service quality in IHLs. Most recently, several organisations have embarked on this journey of quality management systems implementation. For example, the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) statistics show that in Kenya over 250 organisations including universities have obtained ISO certification (KEBS, 2011).

There are numerous research studies on service quality, customer satisfaction and other quality related issues (Seth and Deshmukh, 2005; Yee, Yeung and Cheng, 2010; Kimani, 2011; Owino, 2013). In many of the studies (Siddiqi, 2011; Yee et al., 2010; Hasan and Ilias, 2008; Hishamuddin and Azleen, 2008; Owino, 2013; Ravichandran, Kumar and Venkatesan, 2012), the research scholars have identified different views on the issue of service quality and it's determining factors. Furthermore, research has shown that different aspects do have an impact on service quality, and on customer satisfaction. However, a very limited amount of empirical work is available on service quality and customer satisfaction in the case of Kenyan private higher educational institutions, especially universities. In view of the aforementioned, the goal of this study was to investigate the nexus between service quality and customer satisfaction in Kenyan private universities. In so doing, this study also offers some empirical evidence about the nature of associations that exist between the dimensions of service quality and customers' perceptions of service quality in a developing country context.

1.3 Problem Statement

Customers use different standards to measure the service excellence they get from a university. The quality of services received is also likely to differ in importance, usually some being more important than others, since different customers are treated differently. While different criteria are important only a few are 'most' important. From the customer's perspective, these basic characteristics form the perceived service quality (Ombati, Magutu, Nyamwange and Nyaoga, 2010). The aforementioned authors' further state that several recognised models of service quality lean towards expectations while putting minimal emphasis on the subject of importance. For example, the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman (1985 and 1988) which has been extensively used to measure perceived service quality. It is therefore important to explore the association between service quality and customer satisfaction variables so as to highlight their importance and how service quality impacts customer satisfaction and institutions' performance.

Many institutions, including the higher education sector in Kenya, have already been depicted for example, as outwardly showing minimal market direction and meagre services disregarding the needs of the customer (Ombati et al., 2010). Staff-customer promise fulfillments, failure of systems, limited time for customer servicing, and unnecessary bureaucracy are among the most frequently challenges. This has greatly influenced customers' perception of the quality of service offered, and hence this has adversely affected some Kenyan universities in respect to reduced student enrollments and credibility (Akinyele and Olorunleke, 2010; Ngome, 2010).

In addition, the higher education sector in Kenya has experienced intense competition, with new education service providers such as private middle-level colleges emerging with diversified offerings. A key differentiator in the market place today is the quality of service (Calvo-Porall, Levy-Mangin and Novo-Corti, 2013). One would ask, does efficiency and effectiveness signify progressive changes and at the same time aid service performance? Or is it the customer, the employee or the institution that benefits from the services received? Different customer experiences and perceptions of the services received as university service consumers can cause frustrations (Hogg and Hogg, 1995). This is because customers want quality as their expectations for better service performance are increasing. With poor services, customer satisfaction levels are lower, dragging the institution's image, credibility and even staff morale down (Akinyele and Olorunleke, 2010).

In a competitive academic environment, it is important to identify what enables private universities to attract and retain customers. Universities seeking to have an edge over their peers should foster stronger relationships with their customers. A number of studies (Ham and Hayduk, 2003; Wang and Shieh, 2006; Manuel, 2008; Kimani, 2011) have been conducted on service quality delivery, and most of the service quality research done within the higher education context have put emphasis mostly on students' views of quality. It is evident that the academic and administration staff perspectives have previously been overlooked, and other university customers and other non-academic aspects of educational experience have also been ignored in most cases.

No research exists in Kenya that has investigated the critical dimensions of quality management, and the customers' perceptions of service quality in Kenyan private universities. This study therefore seeks to examine the link between the critical dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction in Kenyan private universities.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

The main objective of this study is to examine the interrelationships amongst the critical dimensions of quality management as measured through customers' perceptions of service quality that contribute to customer satisfaction in selected Kenyan private universities.

1.4.2 The Specific Objectives were:

a) To identify the critical dimensions of service quality,
b) To assess the critical dimensions of quality that contribute to customer satisfaction,
c) To determine the relationship between the quality management dimensions and service quality,
d) To determine the effect of service quality management on customer perceptions of service quality,
e) To examine the relationship between the organisation's critical dimensions of service quality and customers' perceptions of service quality, and
f) To ascertain the challenges facing effective implementation of service quality management.
g) To suggest ways of improving service quality in private universities by elucidating the relationship between SQ and CS.

1.5 Research Questions

Since the literature (Chapter 3) alludes to the influence and or interrelationships between the service quality construct variables and customer satisfaction, this study was guided by *inter alia* the following research questions:

1. What are the critical dimensions of service quality in private higher education in Kenya?
2. What are the critical dimensions of service quality that contribute to customer satisfaction in Kenyan private higher education?
3. How important are the service quality dimensions in influencing customer satisfaction?
4. What are the effects of internal service quality management initiatives on customer perceptions of service quality?
5. Is there a relationship between the organisation's critical dimensions of service quality management and customer perceptions of service quality in Kenyan private universities?
6. What challenges are to be faced when implementing effective service quality management initiatives in private universities in Kenya?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

By considering the abovementioned related research questions and objectives, a number of hypotheses were proposed and tested. This assists in authenticating the value of this study, hence making a real contribution to the body of knowledge within service marketing, which is the key motive of this study. The hypotheses were stated as follows:

H1: The HEdPERF service quality dimensions (academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programme aspects, reputation, access and understanding) form the perceived service quality, which have a significant positive relationship with the overall service quality.

H_{1a}: Academic aspects are related to service quality

H_{1b}: Non-academic aspects are related to service quality

H_{1c}: Programme aspects are related to service quality

H_{1d}: Access is related to service quality

H_{1e}: Reputation is related to service quality

H_{1f}: Understanding is related to service quality

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between students' perceived quality and the overall service quality.

H3: Each university (HEdPERF) service quality dimension (academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programme aspects, access, reputation and understanding) has a direct positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction.

H4: There is a significant positive association between the customers (employees and students) perceived private university service quality and customer satisfaction.

H5: There is a difference in university customers' (employees and students) perceptions of the importance of each of the sub-dimensions of service quality.

H6: There is no significant difference in satisfaction between university customers' (employees and students).

1.7 Significance and Contribution of the Study

This study envisages a number of end results for university managers and administrators. Previous research in this area is virtually non-existent in Kenya, and the present study is likely to bridge this gap in the knowledge of the sector. The results from this study could also be used by the private university leaders and managers to come up with plans to improve their level of service and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, light is shed on the service quality dimensions which university customers will indicate as priority in assessing the quality of services and determining their satisfaction.

The study findings are important since they supplement previous research studies and contributed to the existing body of knowledge simultaneously generating new knowledge in the area of service quality management. This was achieved through consolidating the findings in order to demonstrate that improved service quality of private universities in Kenya benefits not only the students but different stakeholders. In addition, appropriate service quality and customer satisfaction models are advocated from the findings of this study.

The study is also important to university employees who will be able to assess the quality of service they give in relation to their customers' expectations. The study is of importance to students since the information may assist them to prioritise their needs at the university as they are the immediate consumers of university services. Student sponsors, like parents, may benefit from the study as they become aware of the experiences their children have at universities, which may form a basis for decision-making for other students joining the universities. Regulating agencies may benefit from this study as quality assurance bodies.

The study findings are intended to help influence policy formulation at higher education including informing academic leaders and managers develop strategies to improve level of service and customer satisfaction.

In addition, the findings of this study may serve as a source for ideas about improving performance and new ways to think about issues related to service quality improvement. Practitioners in this field will be able to get valuable guidelines which will help them to understand the determinants and nature of relationships in regard to expected organisational outcomes and enhance the competitive advantage of IHL. This study provides recommendations which it is hoped will be useful information to private higher education institutions in Kenya.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study was limited only to all 17 chartered private universities in Kenya because research (CUE, 2012) indicates that the majority have embarked on a journey of implementing quality management initiatives. This research relied on responses from selected university employees and students in higher education. The study explored the perceptions of individual respondents in each university with respect to their experiences about the quality of service. The final outcome was to identify critical factors for determining service quality in universities in Kenya and how the dimensions influence customer satisfaction.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

This research is primarily interested in private universities operating in Kenya; public university and colleges providing higher education were not considered. The survey included two types of customers of higher education institutions, namely, the students and employees (academic and administrative). The employees and students were considered since they have direct interactions with respective services provided by their institutions. Furthermore their familiarity and understanding of everyday educational experiences is adequate. The outcomes from surveying the perceptions and opinions of the aforementioned respondents enhanced the quality of the data collected.

1.10 Assumptions of the study

The major underlying assumptions of the study are:

(i) The variables have been clearly defined and are measurable.

(ii) All respondents will cooperate and provide reliable and accurate responses.

(iii) The research design and methodology employed is appropriate to the problem being addressed and the aim of the study.

(iv) The findings from this study are generalisable to a wider sample and not limited to the sample being studied.

(v) The results of the study are relevant and useful to the stakeholders in the higher education sector.

1.11 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is structured into seven chapters.

Chapter one is an introductory chapter and is concerned with the background and context of the study, the research rationale (problem), aims and objectives, significance and scope of the study and lastly provides a summary the organisation of the thesis.

Chapter two discusses the status of the higher education sector in Kenya. These include and are not limited to growth, development and growth of the private higher education sector as an alternative provider of higher education. The major challenges facing universities in Kenya with specific reference to private universities are also highlighted.

Chapter three provides an overview of service quality and customer satisfaction. This chapter reviews existing theories and models of quality measurement and the different approaches to the measurement of service quality. A review of the literature on service quality issues and dimensions of quality, and their relation to customer perceptions are presented. Finally, the chapter reviews studies on service quality dimensions and customer perceptions in the higher education contexts from developed and developing countries. This chapter concludes with a description of the conceptual framework for the research.

Chapter four explains the research design and methodology used to address the research objectives. These are the population of the study, sampling procedures, data collection methods, development and administration of the questionnaire, reliability and validity of the measurement scales, data analysis techniques and issues of ethical implications that were dealt with.

Chapter five presents the detailed research results, and an analysis of these results in terms of the literature presented.

Chapter six is a discussion of findings by firstly presenting a summary of key findings in relation to literature, and then discussing the wider theoretical and practical implications of the findings and further research in the field of service quality in higher education industry.

Chapter seven presents the conclusions and recommendations and provides suggestions for further research. Finally, at the end of the thesis appendices were placed and they included data collection instruments, letters to respondents, ethics clearance letter and other additional information.

1.12 Conclusion

This introductory chapter described the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives and questions. This was followed by a discussion of the value of the research as well as its scope. Finally, the chapter layout of the whole study was explained. In the chapter that follows, the literature relevant to the contemporary state of private higher education in Kenya.

CHAPTER TWO
PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN KENYA

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the current status of private higher education in Kenya. The growth, development and expansion of private higher education as an alternative provider of higher education is discussed, followed by an explanation of the major challenges facing private universities in Kenya, and their impact on the higher education service environment.

2.1.1 Brief Background of Private Universities in Kenya

The establishment of private universities in Kenya is guided by the Universities Rules of 1989 and the Universities Act of 1985 (CAP 210b). According to Mwiria, Ng'ethe, Ngome, Ouma-Odero, Wawire and Wesonga (2007) in Kipkebut (2010), several factors have negatively impacted the growth of the private sector education in Kenya. Such factors include limited admission opportunities to public universities, regular closure of public universities due to student unrest and workers' strikes in demand for better working conditions, and the desire to complement institutions of higher learning managed by the government (Mwiria et al., 2007).

According to Onsongo (2011), religious organisations which are mainly protestant churches, own about two-thirds of private universities in Kenya and the main aim of these churches involvement in higher education is to attract their adherents in an effort to ensure that as these young people benefit academically, they stay within the faith. Furthermore, Nguru (1990) in Onsongo (2011) asserts that the primary goal of these church affiliated private universities and that of the earlier missionary schools is not different, in that they aim at promoting the Christian faith. Ndegwa (2008) further points out a concern that private universities are seen as mainstream institutions that offer education perceived to be comparable to or of higher quality than public universities.

In the past decade, Kenya has experienced a rapid expansion of primary and secondary education. This growing demand for advanced training has led to an increase in the demand for tertiary education, resulting in the rise of a number of private universities from a single university in 1969 to about 29 universities by 2013 (see Table 2.1).

These private universities have become popular among many Kenyan citizens. This increasing popularity of private universities as alternative providers of university education has been driven by the perception that quality in public universities is deteriorating, and their inability to cope with the demand for higher education, that is, inability of the public universities to absorb all students that qualify to be admitted to the university (Onsongo, 2011). Considering these factors, it is evident that private universities are likely to continue to thrive and that government is unlikely to continue funding future expansion of public universities.

Table 2.1 Status of Private Universities in Kenya

Chartered Universities[3]	**Year of Accreditation**
a. University of Eastern Africa, Baraton	1991
b. Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA)	1992
c. Scott Theological College	1992
d. Day Star University	1994
e. United States International University (USIU)	1999
f. Africa Nazarene University	2002
g. Kenya Methodist University (KEMU)	2006
h. St. Paul's University	2007
i. Pan African Christian University	2008
j. Strathmore University	2008
k. Kabarak University, Nakuru	2008
l. Mt Kenya University (MKU)	2011
m. Africa International University	2011
n. Kenya Highlands Evangelical University	2011

[3] These are universities that are fully accredited.

Chartered Universities[3]	Year of Accreditation
o. Great Lakes University of Kisumu (GLUK)	2012
p. KCA University	2013
q. Adventist University of Africa	2013
Universities with Letters of Interim Authority[4]	
a. Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology	2002
b. Aga Khan University	2002
c. Gretsa University	2006
d. Presbyterian University of East Africa	2008
e. Inoorero University	2009
f. The East African University	2010
g. Genco University	2011
h. Management University of Africa	2012
i. Riara University	2012
j. Pioneer International University	2012
k. UMMA University	2013
Registered Universities[5]	
Nairobi International School of Theology	
East Africa School of Theology	

Source: *CUE, Accreditation and Quality Assurance Report July 2006 – June 2012; CUE website 2013*

2.2 Growth, Development and Expansion

University education in Kenya has grown remarkably in the past two decades. In the early 1990s, the World Bank instituted a number of policies that led to the unprecedented growth of private universities in the country. One such policy,

[4] These universities which are operating with letters of interim authority receive guidance and direction from CUE in order to prepare them for the award of charter.

[5] These are institutions that before the establishment of the CUE in 1985 were offering university level education. They were fully registered in 1989 and were issued with a Certificate of Registration.

according to Abagi, Nzomo and Otieno (2005), was a requirement that the government should put a maximum limit on the growth in public universities to three percent per year until the year 2017. In addition, the government was supposed to restrict enrollment to 10,000 students per year. This ceiling was against the over 50,000 secondary school graduates qualifying for university level education (Joint Admission Board, 2003). According to Oketch (2004) putting limits on admission created a large market of potential clientele for private universities because public universities were unable to absorb all the university-qualifying candidates.

This change in admission policy marked a renewed interest for private universities which had previously been kept at the periphery by the government. This therefore created an influx in the number of students looking for university education. The large number of qualified candidates is also attributed to the introduction of the primary free primary education which lead to the growth of primary education (Onsongo, 2011). Moreover, there was a change in the funding policy from higher education to basic education, meaning that individuals were expected to take on the increased cost of higher education, hence creating the need for private provision of the same education (Oketch, 2004).

Private universities in Kenya are accredited by the Commission for University Education (CUE), previously known as the Commission for Higher Education, a body that was established through an Act of Parliament in 1985. The establishment of the commission was an indication of the government's commitment towards encouraging private initiatives in the higher education sector. This was followed by the drafting and implementing of policies to regularise the growth of private universities including the establishment of appropriate accreditation and programme evaluation mechanisms, provision of technical assistance for the development of curriculum and management of the institutions (Oketch, 2004). The government of Kenya also assured the expansion of private higher education through avoidance of disincentives such as tuition price controls.

In 1999 the United States International University (USIU) was the first private university to be established in East Africa and was awarded a Presidential Charter by

Kenya’s first president the same year (USIU, 2006). Later in 1999 it was issued a charter after fulfilling all the requirements stated by CUE (Oketch, 2004; USIU, 2006). The growth of private universities began from the 1990s and presently Kenya has about 30 private universities, which fall into three categories. One group consists of universities that have been chartered by the Kenyan government and therefore offer local degrees and diplomas just like the public universities. This category has 14 universities. The second group comprises of those that are registered but are yet to be chartered. These universities offer degrees and diplomas in the names of foreign parent universities. The last category which currently has 11 private universities is those operating on letters of interim authority, (See Table 2.1).

2.2.1 Management of Kenyan Universities

The policies governing individual universities in Kenya are well outlined in the charters that the Kenyan government gives public and private universities upon accreditation. The university charters define the powers of a university and its basic governance structure, including major committees and officers. The powers and responsibilities set out in the charter and statutes provide the framework within which the whole decision making process takes place. The charter and statutes of the universities state how officers of the universities shall be appointed and in addition make provision for the appointment, by council, of such other officers as may be required from time to time (Commission for University Education, 2012).

2.2.2 Regulation of Private Higher Education

The Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya – a Government of Kenya (GOK) Institution – has the mandate to oversee the creation and supervision of private universities. The commission carried out this mandate since 1986 under the Universities Act of 1985, that of the Establishment of Universities Act of 1989 and the standardisation, accreditation and supervision rules of 1989. The commission is tasked to inspect public universities and give registration and accreditation to private universities. However, having gone this far, it has concentrated most of its activities on the registration and accreditation of private universities.

The registration and chartering of universities is a long and rigorous process. A private university is first given a letter of interim authority to conduct university education and is later reclassified as a chartered university after fulfilling the requirements set out by CUE (Tuitoek, 2006). The interim status allows a university to function fully like any other university except that all new academic programmes require the approval of the commission. The award of a charter status means that a private university has fulfilled all requirements in terms of having enough facilities and human resources in the departments to provide adequate teaching. However, private chartered universities are still subjected to curricula control.

Establishing a private university follows a strict guideline as spelt out in the guidelines for preparing a proposal for the establishment of a privately funded university in Kenya (CUE, 2012). The requirements include a detailed document including historical background of the university, vision, mission, location, academic character of the sponsoring institution or body, aims and objectives, governance, academic programmes and resources such as academic staff, physical facilities, financial and library services. A series of inspections by CUE commissioners are then carried out over several months by technical, library and facilities inspection team. Inspection normally includes a review of curricula and staffing level for each of the programmes submitted. It is only after a university has fulfilled all the aforementioned requirements that a letter of interim authority to establish a university is granted (CUE, 2012).

2.3 Factors Contributing to the Growth of Private Universities

2.3.1 Student Enrolment

Private university students account for about 20 percent of the university population in Kenya (Oketch, 2004; Abagi et al., 2005). There are some clear patterns in enrollment, curriculum, location and course structuring, among others. Female student representation is higher in private universities taking a share of more than 50 percent of the population (Ngome, 2010; Brown, 2001). The increased population of females joining these universities is partly because the minimum cut-off mark for admission of women into public universities is lower than that of men. Usually, when students fail to qualify for admission into public universities, in other words fail to reach the minimum entry cut-off points set by Joint Admission Board (JAB), they turn to private universities. Another factor contributing to increased enrollment is the nature of courses offered. The courses are attractive to many students since they tend to be social sciences and business oriented courses which are perceived to be relatively ‘easier’.

Another characteristic associated with most of these private universities in Kenya is that they are concentrated in and around the capital city of Nairobi (Abagi et al., 2005). The reason for this is because of the availability of supportive infrastructure and a large readily available market. Also, the continued government support which includes provision of loans to needy students through the Higher Education Loans Board contributes to an increase in enrollment.

2.3.2 Demand for University Education

According to Oketch (2004), the increased demand for university education in Kenya has been because of its linkage with formal employment and prestige associated with being a graduate from a private institution. This increased demand for university education coupled with unplanned expansions and government’s difficulty to sustain funding to the universities overwhelmed public universities’ limited resources. Because of these developments, the government was forced to loosen its control on the provision of higher education and encourage the founding of private universities in the 1990s. This move saw the accreditation of various universities such as University of Eastern Africa, Baraton in 1992; The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 1992; Daystar University, 1994; Scott Theological College, 1997 and United States International University, 1999 (Wesonga, Ngome, Ouma-Odero and Wawire, 2007).

2.3.3 Favourable Government Policy towards Private Universities

According to Oketch (2004), some government policies favoured private universities like the establishment of the CHE through an Act of Parliament in 1985 which enabled the commission to inspect and validate the provision of private higher education, was a significant indication of the government’s commitment to encouraging the development of private universities. Before the CHE was established, private institutions used to offer higher education by being affiliated to foreign universities. However, with the formation of the commission, it was no longer a requirement by the CHE that institutions be affiliated to foreign universities for accreditation (Oketch, 2004). This then reduced the extensive process which involved writing of memorandums of understanding and associations.

In a slightly different context, favourable government policies have also brought about international competition in the higher education industry as governments are now focusing on knowledge-based economies. This makes higher education in both developed and developing countries an important sector that supports a nation's overall strategy for continued existence and its ability to compete globally. This therefore implies that performance of higher education is important in the international context for competitiveness of any nation. The Kenyan government is encouraging local private higher educational institutions to achieve outstanding international positions through arrangements such as joint establishments between local and international institutions which allow international institutions to establish offshore campuses and offer degree programmes (CUE, 2012).

2.3.4 Declining Confidence in Public Universities

In the 1980s Kenya experienced an unplanned expansion of public universities while at the same time there was decreased allocation of funds by the government. Oketch (2004) further noted that during that time public universities' academic programmes did not meet the market demands which therefore affected the chances of their graduates being absorbed into the job market through employment. In addition, there was a considerable diminishing of confidence among the public about those universities that were funded by the government in Kenya. These challenges led to increased interest in private universities because their environments were perceived to be more conducive to learning. Private universities are thought to offer more market oriented courses that guarantee their graduates employment and have better physical facilities, factors which have attracted an increased student enrollment mainly from affluent backgrounds which continue to sustain their growth.

2.3.5 Quality of Education

According to Abagi et al. (2005), private universities strive to provide quality education that will ensure their graduates' employability. The good quality of education has been attributed to several factors such as modern facilities and infrastructure like information technologies, well stocked libraries with up-to-date books, modern teaching-learning techniques and adequate student-teacher interactions as well as student-teacher ratios compared to public universities whose quality has been on the decline (Tuitoek, 2006). Close monitoring by the Commission for University Education (CUE) is also a contributing factor towards quality assurance.

Many private universities rely on teaching staff from public universities who offer part-time services. This ensures a degree of quality, as some of these part-time lecturers are highly experienced senior teaching staff who at times, are heads of departments and/or faculties. It is therefore, an advantage for private universities to have varying combined experiences from different public universities. Furthermore, according to Otieno (2007), a number of private universities hire public university lecturers to design their programmes in order to pass the CHE scrutiny and as such there is hardly any difference between public and private university curriculum content in some programmes.

2.4 Contributions of Private Universities to Higher Education Service Industry

2.4.1 Widened Access to Higher Education

Public universities have not been able to absorb all students qualifying to be admitted to the university (Onsongo, 2011; Oketch, 2004). This frantic growth rate has made it almost impossible for the public institutions to keep up the pace as private investment in tertiary education in Kenya and Africa in general has been on the rise. In Kenya about 30 universities are privately funded. Participation of these private universities in the provision of university education has helped to ease the rising demand for higher education. This account for up to 35 percent of enrollment (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, KNBS, 2011) while the public higher education sector serves about 25 percent of applicants. In addition, Murphy (2009) posits that programmes offered in such institutions widen access for underrepresented groups in higher education in addition to increasing demand for higher education among new learners.

2.4.2 Unique Student Experience

Another contribution of private universities is that they provide students with a variety of encounters such as student independence, and learning about new environments and cultures among others. Materu (2007) states that there is no such thing as a standard student hence universities of the future need not provide a standard student experience.

2.4.3 Recognition and Marketability of Degrees

Degrees from private universities are becoming increasingly popular (Abagi et al., 2005). Private universities offer fewer cutting-edge courses which are deemed to be market-oriented. This makes them unique with regard to the time it takes to complete a degree programme which in most cases are completed within the prescribed period of time.

2.4.4 Quality and Costs

In recent years, there has been an increasing concern in Kenya and Africa in general on issues about the quality of higher education (Tuitoek, 2006; Materu, 2007). This has been caused by efforts to expand enrollment, increasing competition in the higher education market (Chen, Yang and Shiau, 2006) and increasing complaints by employers that graduates lack skills necessary in the workplace (Materu, 2007). In the context of these issues, private entities are often equated with quality hence the cost of education in private universities is higher compared to public universities since parents who send their children to these institutions usually demand quality education and a superior student experience.

2.4.5 Improved Retention of Skilled Human Capital

Materu (2007) affirms that private higher education can be a means of improving the retention of skilled human capital. Improving the quality of university education, which has remained a burning question among education stakeholders, will translate to improved value of products presented to the market by higher education institutions in Kenya (Odhiambo, 2011). As a result, this will enhance the attractiveness of local private universities and consequently increase the number of qualified students studying locally. For this reason, the availability of highly qualified and skilled human capacity is enhanced. As a result, foreign universities are no longer as attractive as in the past, therefore reducing professional emigrations or what is referred to as 'brain drain'. This is also likely to reduce the urge and rush for students to enroll in universities abroad for courses which are offered locally at a fair cost.

2.5 Challenges Facing Private Universities

There has been a tremendous effect on the higher education sector because of the increase and development of private institutions of higher learning in Kenya. In spite of the successes that they have achieved, private higher institutions continue to face various challenges that may negatively impact on their performance of quality of service delivery hence affecting the perceptions of consumers of their services. Some of the challenges are as discussed below.

2.5.1 Local Competition from Self-sponsored Degree Programmes

Competition is an attempt or rivalry to gain advantage in the market place. According to Chen et al. (2006), there has been a tremendous increase in competition in the higher education sector especially from non-traditional sources including e-universities. There has been also an intense increase in international competition in educational services and therefore this has seen huge investiments in higher education in many countries in the world in an effort to sustain global competition. According to Roostika (2009), the driving force of wealth creation is knowledge economy which has made access to higher education more and more significant. The aforementioned researcher further notes that although demand has come to exceed supply, it does not make things easier for higher learning institutions in terms of attracting students. Kenya as a developing country is encountering intense competition among local institutions. Every year the number of high school graduates selected, for example, to join public universities is increasing (CUE, 2012). The public higher education sector only serves about 25 percent of applicants, while the majority of applicants join private universities. Students are now becoming more rational and selective about the programmes they choose to study, and also have many options to choose from than was previously the case. It is becoming apparent in the higher education market that there is no assurance that public institutions are always preferred to private institutions. This has made both public and private higher education cognisant of the nature of competition in higher education.

Another reason for increased competition in the higher education sector in Kenya was the start of privately-sponsored degree programmes (SSPs) otherwise known as module II programmes by public universities.These programmes were introduced to capture the existing market thereby attracting applicants who would otherwise join private universities (Otieno, 2007). However, this has also turned universities into money-minting enterprises thus putting little emphasis on quality issues. Furthermore all sorts of courses, some dubious, have been introduced to generate income irrespective of market needs (Daily Nation, 2012, p. 12). According to Mutula (2002), private universities also rely on the pool of part-time lecturers from public universities to teach in their universities since they have few full-time lecturers. This phenomenon has been threatened because these lecturers are getting attractive packages from their universities for teaching these self-sponsored programmes (Mutula, 2002).

2.5.2 Limited Variety of Programmes of Study

Many universities were started without good planning and as a result there has been duplication of courses (Daily Nation, 2012, p. 12). The ability of private universities in meeting all the market needs and the needs of their prospective students is a drawback. They only offer fewer cutting-edge courses which are deemed to be market-oriented leaving out some programmes for example science and technological based programmes. This is because the non-technological based, and science courses require less investment in terms of infrastructure and equipment (Abagi et al., 2005).

It is worth mentioning that although private universities have been under tight supervision by the Commission for Higher Education, some have found ways of short-changing the system and have gone ahead to introduce unaccredited programmes to the disadvantage of learners (Daily Nation, 2012, p. 12).

Another major area of concern for private universities in regard to programmes of study is the length of time it takes to get a new programme reviewed and approved by CUE. The process is demanding and can stifle innovations hence, making private universities less competitive in the market place (Tuitoek, 2006). The process is not the same for public institutions. This competitive edge is further compromised since most reviewers of private universities are from public universities which gives them advance knowledge on innovative degree programmes which the public universities can implement without long delays.

Though there have been attempts to introduce new market-driven courses such as software engineering, public health, and business information technology among others, this has, however, been hampered by the short supply of qualified personnel and capital to set up the required infrastructure (Daily Nation, 2012, p. 12; Abagi et al., 2005; Wesonga et al., 2007). Hence, this has given public universities a great advantage over private universities because they have longer traditions in offering such programmes and have the facilities as well as resources, including highly experienced personnel and academics (Otieno, 2007).

2.5.3 Student Supply

A steady supply of learners is essential because most private universities depend entirely on tuition fees from students. This is a challenge because supply is dependent on demand (Oketch, 2004). In addition, a number of the universities in Kenya are not popular and may, therefore, be affected by a poor supply of students. Related to supply is lack of government support to students which in turn hinders enrollment of these students in private universities. For instance, at present only "students in public and chartered universities" receive loans from the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB), (Ngome, 2010) while those students from institutions under interim authority do not benefit which prevents such private institutions from increasing the numbers of students that can access their education.

2.5.4 Physical Facilities

According to Wesonga et al. (2007), physical facilities in a university determine the number of academic programmes it can offer and student enrollment. The environment in most private universities has been found to be more conducive to learning and many universities have embraced modern technologies in teaching, communication, well-stocked libraries, lecture rooms and students' recreational facilities among others that enhance academic excellence and research (Wesonga et al., 2007). However, many private universities also have a challenge in meeting all these resources therefore compromising maximum performance.

2.5.5 Financial Constraints

Financial constraint is a major challenge facing many institutions of higher learning in Kenya including both public and private universities. For instance, private universities have a heavy reliance on tuition fees (Mwiria, Ng'ethe, Ngome, Ouma-Odero, Wawire and Wesonga, 2007) which implies that student population in these private institutions must be adequate to enable them to survive (Varghese, 2004). In fact, this heavy dependence on tuition fees coupled with a lack of alternative sources of income has made these institutions expensive and thus unaffordable for most Kenyans except for those from high socio-economic status, thus raising concerns about equity in these institutions (Varghese, 2004). Therefore high tuition fees limit the numbers of students being attracted to private universities.

Mwiria and others (2007) note that heavy dependence on tuition and other levies are solely for the purposes of their operations. The authors further say that this raises concern specifically on flexibility and stability enjoyed by these institutions. This is so because an organisation's structure of income usually indicates the variety of sources of finances. If an institution gets its income from various but autonomus sources, then it benefits from greater financial independence. Dependence on one or a few sources of financing may lead to instability.

But there exist other revenue streams from which private universities access finance such as auxiliary enterprises like cafeteria and room-board services among others that are normally started with the intention to offer additional services for the specific university at a fee. Private universities also receive loans for students from Higher Education Loans Board and some students receive bursaries and scholarships from the Ministry of Education. These loans, bursaries and scholarships account for between 2

– 4 percent on average of university income (Mwiria et al., 2007). Other sources of finance include donations, grants, gifts and endowments which constitute an important funding for capital development. Alumni contributions and bank loans are other sources though credit facilities attract only a few private universities.

2.5.6 Increasing Competition for University Students and Staff

Competition can be defined by ascertaining how the needs of the customer can be met. A competitive organisation is characterised by various products or services that it offers which provide solutions to the customer as well as fulfilling his or her desires. In the past twenty years, Kenya has increasingly experienced competition for university students in both local and global arenas resulting from an increase in private university establishments (Oketch, 2004), increasing the capacity of the current public universities, establishment of new government-funded universities, a growing number of private varsities and introduction of new and innovative methods of delivery of tuition due to technological advances (Ngome, 2010). These changes have caused universities to abandon their core responsibilities and become “money minting machines” (Abagi, 2007). Among strategies that have been employed is the establishment of constituent colleges and upgrading of technical schools and polytechnics into university colleges to offer different diplomas and degrees without considering the availability of manpower, teaching staff and infrastructure to support the teaching and learning process. In addition some of the programmes are charged at very low cost to attract students thus posing a serious threat to the quality of university education service in Kenya (Kiprotich and Ayodo, 2005).

In addition, Tuitoek (2006) and Ngome (2010) state that apart from competing for students, universities are also competing for staff. The supply of staff, specifically doctorate holders, has rapidly shrunk as a result of a decline in doctoral student grants, rise in the cost of such training among other factors, including salaries. This affects the quality of lectures a university has and consequent diminished services. Attracting senior staff at professional level will continue to be a problem for some time. With regard to salaries, any industrial dispute between a public university faculty and the government leading to increases in salary will require private universities to respond, which may lead to increases in fees thus limiting access to more prospective students.

2.5.7 Recruitment of Staff and Students

Recruitment of staff and students in the early beginnings of a private university was a major challenge (Tuitoek, 2006). For example, potential employee associate private universities with low remuneration, poor job security, limited benefits and a job environment that is not conducive to working. On the other hand, potential students are not sure of the quality of degree programmes and the perception of employability from potential employers. These limitations have led to employment of young staff with no or little experience translating to a compromised education quality and delivery of service as a whole in the institutions (Teferra and Altbach, 2004; Varghese, 2004).

Commenting on the issue of enrollment and how it has affected the quality of Kenyan degrees, Kimani (2010) has the view that “students were being admitted into universities for courses that have not been registered with the regulator, worsening the higher education quality that already has reached critical levels thereby exposing the graduates to the risk of rejection in the labour market.”

Kimani (2010) went further to point out that “some courses for which thousands of students are enrolled have not been accredited and are therefore not recognised as offering proper qualification to the various disciplines”, risking career aspirations of thousands of students. Private universities have been blamed as the main offenders threatening to destroy the credibility of Kenyan degrees, whereby “they create departments and launch new courses before getting the official approval from CUE, some go ahead to start programmes first then file applications for accreditation with CUE later,” (para. 4), an incorrect way of doing things that goes against the laid down procedures and guidelines.

The aforementioned cases are relevant to private universities in their quest to exploit the revenue potential in the market by targeting employed learners seeking to better their expertise mainly in the evening or otherwise known as part-time studies. Besides setting up and offering courses that have not been authorised, the quality of the quality of learning in the higher learning environment has been compromised because universities are competing for students leading to over-enrollment of students beyond the capacity they can handle. This further has put strain on available resources including the lecturers who have found it quite difficult to manage the situation for example, handling large classes far beyond what the CUE has recommended (Kimani, 2010).

The current erosion of the Kenyan degree programmes is attributed to the rapid expansion experienced in the last decade, and contributing to openning up of university colleges and satellite campuses by government-owned universities in far-flung areas in the country, further compromising the quality of services as well as that of education. Although the higher education environment has seen growth in the number of skilled teaching staff, it still does not match up with the student enrollment levels leading most institutions to employ unskilled and inexperienced lecturers. For example, some of the universities departments have staff without doctorate degrees while in some extreme cases postgraduate programmes are taught by first degree holders (Kimani, 2010). The aforementioned issues pose greater risks to the country's realisation of its vision 2030, achieving good fiscal status and becoming a modern industrial economy. This is because the higher education sector is extremely vibrant, experiencing stiff competition on such issues as remaining relevant in the global world, ensuring quality education and service offerings as well as fairness.

The significance of higher education in any country's development should not be underestimated especially with regard to quality education service. Higher education institutions have a role in the economy – to provide the much needed graduates with required skills for the readily available job market which would, in turn, ensure national development and raise the country's edge in competition globally. Nevertheless, if private universities in Kenya have to achieve this feat, they require appropriate management of educational service quality.

Regrettably, all the aforementioned setbacks that private universities in Kenya face are threatening the realisation of their stated missions, objectives and goals including service quality management as stated in some of the universities' service charters. Declining service quality amid expansion, putting up infrastructure, growing education demand, increasing enrollment, developing curricula, and competition, among other factors, has negatively affected the quality and relevance of education service in private universities (Tuitoek, 2006). Limited physical facilities and increasing competition for university students and staff have compromised the quality of education service provision (Ngome, 2010; Wesonga et al., 2007). In light of the aforesaid concerns impeding the Kenyan higher education service industry, the major goal of this thesis was to empirically test the interrelationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and their influence to customers' perceived service quality.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the context of Kenyan private higher education to provide an understanding of the issues contributing to their growth and development, as well as issues affecting the private universities in Kenya which, in turn, may have an impact on the service environment. This was done so as to provide an understanding of private higher education environment in Kenya, and the challenges for quality management.

In summary, this growth of private universities has been linked to structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that were aimed at cutting government spending, and privatisation processes initiated by the World Bank in 1986 – 1990s (Altbach, 1999). The private universities in Kenya have come to be vital to the growing quest for university education, since public universities are no longer able to meet this demand. However, since private universities depend on tuition fees as their main source of funding, they have become the preserve of well-to-do Kenyans who are ready and willing to pay more for the kind of education they wish their children to acquire.

The growth and expansion of private higher education in Kenya has had a positive impact to the Kenyan economy and development. Private universities have made significant contributions including provision of wider access to education, enhanced quality, provision of market-oriented degree courses and providing students with unique higher education experience. They have also contributed to the education of masses that would otherwise have no chance to access higher education. On the other hand, there are numerous challenges that impact on the provision of private higher education that have need to be recognised such as limited programmes and facilities, inconsistent student supply, financial constraints among others. Despite the challenges reported, the importance and role of private universities in higher education cannot be downplayed hence need to be appreciated.

The next chapter presents a comprehensive literature review with regard to service quality and customer satisfaction. Hypothetical models and previous studies done, and relationships between the service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction are discussed. It finally concludes by introducing the conceptual model developed from the review of literature.

CHAPTER THREE

SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine relevant literature which underpins this research, the concept of service quality will be expounded and the significance of understanding service quality, and also explores how perceived perceived service quality relates to customer satisfaction. Various service quality models and issues around these models are also discussed, culminating in the design of the conceptual framework. An appraisal of the existing works on the service quality dimensions and customer perceptions in higher education contexts from developed and developing countries are also provided.

3.1.1 Importance of Reviewing Related Literature

Creswell (2014: 28) asserts that through a literature review, the researcher is able to bring forth studies of interest with the one being undertaken. This further assists in delineating boundaries and standards to measure outcomes with those of other studies. Some researchers (Boote and Beile, 2005; Creswell 2014; Sekaran 2006) have highlighted that it helps isolate key variables. Further, variables deemed valuable and considered probable to influence the problem under investigation are incorporated into the study (Sekaran, 2006: 64).

According to Boote and Beile (2005) the big picture, research focus, and the limits are prearranged and that what is within or outside the scope and border of investigation, including justifications, is highlighted. Furthermore, Sekaran (2006) asserts that a framework of interconnected ideas can be developed explaining how things work or why they happen, as well as hypotheses to be tested in the study. In this study, the dimensions of service quality and their connection to customer satisfaction were tested and emerging models developed thereof. Clarity of the statement of the problem can be ascertained as well as testability and repeatability of the results of a research. Perceptions of readers are captured, thereby guaranteeing the importance and significance of the problem under investigation. Therefore, through literature review other scholars can be convinced or influenced to conduct studies on similar or different topics (Sekaran, 2006).

Boote and Beile (2005) agree that a review of the literature helps position existing literature in a wider intelligent and historical big picture. The researcher is able to critically examine the methodology used to better understand the claims made and the reasoning behind it. The aforementioned researchers further assert that such an examination elucidates various lessons arrived at and learned in a study area, and the remaining gap. Through this, the author synthesises literature in order to bring a new perspective out of it (Boote and Beile, 2005). Importantly, a good literature review is the foundation of allied thoughts about how things work or why they happen and methodological sophistication, a process which is aimed at improving the quality and usefulness of the resulting research.

3.2 Definition of Key Concepts

3.2.1 Quality

The word “quality” is recognised as one of the most significant ‘objects’ in our day-to-day lives, and is thereby seen as a strategic tool by many establishments. Different viewpoints exist on how the idea of quality can be looked at. According to the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), quality can be viewed as the extent of perfection (KEBS, 2012), denoting the level to which something is good enough to fulfill its mandate, is error free and fulfills customer desires (Oswald, 2009). Furthermore, the quality definition of a product or a service can be termed as the compliance with the needs, free from defects or having a degree of customer satisfaction (KEBS, 2012).

Similarly, ISO 9000:2005 quality standard explains that a combination of built-in features satisfying particular desires of a customer delineates quality. The aforementioned definitions of quality could be positioned under five groups (Hardie, 1998), including conformity to requirement, appropriate to a purpose, meeting customer perceptions, going beyond expectations of the customer and superiority to competitors.

3.2.2 Service Quality

Many service quality analysts have attempted to distinguish service quality from different points of view providing different definitions. To date, the extant service related literature contains numerous definitions of service quality. For instance, earlier work by Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) refers service quality to the act of providing exceptional service proportionate to consumer anticipations. Grönroos (2000) argues that a service constitutes all the service acts that occur even though not at all times, during the service delivery period between a customer and the employee giving the service. Interactions also happen between the customer and tangible goods and/or the procedures laid down by the service provider to solve customer problems or offer answers to customer requirements. According to Fogli (2006) service quality a positive or negative viewpoint and/or opinion delineating a particular service, implying a general feeling held by a customer in relation to the comparative lower quality or higher quality of the organisation and its service offerings.

Customers' perceptions of services provided by a company form the service quality; that is, customers' perceptions of what services should be offered and how they should be offered. When the providers of a service understand how their customers assess their services, then the ability to manage such assessments and/or evaluations becomes easier as well as the ways to positively guide them (Seth, Deshmukh and Vrat, 2005). Jayasundara (2009) argues that the most widely accepted definition of service quality from the customer's viewpoint is the difference between expectations and how customers perceive the delivery of the service or how the service was performed.

In the higher education industry, the level of satisfaction gained by university customers with their service encounters is a leading indicator of service quality (Rasli et al., 2011). Considering the above discussions and definitions, it is evident that the quality of a service is delianated and evaluated from the customers' standpoints in a given organisation. Furthermore, customers normally make judgement of the service received and their expectations of the service experience (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Table 3.1 briefly summarises the conceptualisation of service quality definition based on the literature.

Table 3.1 Conceptual Definitions of Service Quality in the Marketing Literature

Source	Service Quality Conceptualisation
Zeithaml and Bitner (1996)	The delivery of exceptional service relative to customer expectations
Fogli (2006)	A positive or negative universal appraisal of a specific service delivery
Jayasundara (2009)	The variance between service expectations and customers' perceptions of the service delivery
Ombati et al. (2010)	A general appraisal of service A universal judgment of value on the superiority of the overall service
Rasli et al. (2011)	Level of satisfaction gained by university customers with their service encounters

Source: *Researcher's compilation, 2014*

As Table 3.1 above indicates, by conceptualizing service quality, it is expected that the objective of examining the key dimensions that contribute to private higher education student-customer and employee-customer satisfactions will be more achievable. The term "service quality" is important in this thesis since it will provide more objective and practical information in the measurement of the key attributes (academic, non-academic, access, programme issues, understanding and reputation) specific to the higher education context.

3.2.3 The Importance of Service Quality

A great deal of interest in extant literature and research in service marketing has been generated concerning the service quality concept and its importance (Ham and Hayduk, 2003; Angell et al., 2008). According to Wisniewski (2001), the complexity associated with both defining service quality and its measurement with no conclusive agreement emerging on either, has elicited a lot of interest on the subject. Grönroos (2000) asserts that service quality is an integral part of service marketing while other researchers (Bolton, Lemon and Verhoef, 2004; Luo and Homburg, 2007) are of the view that service quality is an important characteristic that differentiates an organisation's products and acts as a basis for competitive advantage and for increases in profitability and the company's marketplace.

The earlier work of Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) claims that competitive advantage arises from outstanding service quality, which later Schmidt (2002) and Watson (2003) concurred with, terming it as an ingredient for competition, an attribute that enables one to outperform competitors. Grönroos (2001) asserts that it is a source of competitive company strategy, business performance (Van der Wiele, Dale and Van, 2007) and satisfaction (Oliver, 1997). Furthermore, Ombati, et al. (2010) state that service quality depicts a common appraisal of service, otherwise stated, a universal judgment of value derived from the general service, more or less perceived as a feeling and/or formed opinion.

3.3 Service Industry

3.3.1 The Nature and Characteristics of Services

It is been acknowledged in the service research and extant works that goods are different from services because they are physical and therefore can be touched, felt and seen, while a service is an act (Kotler, 2000). According to Grönroos (2001), the process nature of a service as opposed to a physical object implies that a company only provides services through interractions and that no evidence exists of physical products thus different marketing programme. Kotler (2000) asserts that even though an individual can provide a service to another person, no one between the two can claim ownership of the service because it is basically an act, and thus cannot be felt. Therefore, its creation may perharps not necessarily be related to objects.

A number of researchers (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2004; Mudie and Pirrie, 2006; Kotler, 2000) suggest four broad features traditionally related to services, namely: intangibility, inseparability (of making and use), heterogeneity and perishability. This section reviews in brief each characteristic and implications thereof.

- Intangibility is the main feature of services and a critical distinction between goods and a service. Some characteristics of a service according to Kotler (2000) are that it cannot be seen, touched or tasted before they are bought, implying that services are performances rather than objects and it is therefore difficult for an organisation to understand how consumers perceive their services on the one hand and how the organisation evaluates service quality on the other, further complicating its conceptualisation. Furthermore, according to Siddiqi (2011), a service cannot guarantee quality because it cannot be assessed and stored before it is solds. Therefore, majority of the companies are unable to make judgement of how their services are valued hence ascertain their service quality. Therefore, since a service does not have any physical characteristics that can be marketed, it is important that attention is focused on promoting the benefits derived from the service rather than emphasising the service itself. It is obvious that higher education for instance, should ensure that the course materials to be taught are of a clearly defined standard as the quality of the delivery will depend on the knowledge of the teaching staff. Students may perceive the same lecturer differently since they have different perceptions and service experiences. This will be similar to other staff like the administrative staff, who provide other services to different customers of the university.

- Inseparability of services means there exists simultaneous production and consumption (Kotler, 2000; Mudie and Pirrie, 2006). Services are, in a majority of instances, produced and consumed at the same time. There is a noticeable difference between products and services in respect to the sequence of production and use. Services are first sold, then produced and consumed simultaneously whereas goods are first produced, then stored and finally sold and consumed (Kotler, 2000). Therefore, since it is known that in the service sector that the quality of service performance relies on both provider execution of the service and the quality and productivity of the customer; customers are an integral part of the service process (co-producers). Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) posit that customer participation should be encouraged in the higher education sector as this will work effectively, for example, if both the staff and student understand their roles and those of the others. This is so because in higher education sector, for instance, a student is not only in the position of a customer but also that of a co-producer

(Govender and Ramroop, 2012) hence, the quality, performance and productivity of higher education depend on the participation of both staff and students.

- Service performances are heterogeneous, implying that they are not related or similar and that are dependent who provides it, where and when it is provided (Kotler, 2000). For example, Kotler (2003) asserts that the aspect of heterogeneity is evident more especially in labour intensive services. According to Zeithaml et al. (2008), it is difficult to standardise their performances and this often differs from provider to provider, from consumer to consumer, and in different time lines. In most service establishments, it is difficult to assure consistent personnel behaviour to attain uniform quality. Hence, heterogeneity as a service characteristic makes the reputation of the seller and advertising of the service by strong word of mouth reference extremely important in service marketing.

  In higher education for example, perceptions of quality may vary among individual students (De Shields Jr et al., 2005) of different academic levels and classes, depending on who teaches them. An individual university customer may perceive the quality offered by the institution differently depending on the circumstances faced. A first time customer, that is, one with minimal experience with the institution may perceive the quality of service differently from a customer who has been with the institution for a while. This is also true of a first year student compared with a final year student. The perceptions of a first timer might be affected by other people since their experience with the institution is minimal. In contrast, the perceptions of a final year student or a client who has experienced the services before might be different since s/he might have much more experience with the higher education services (De Shields, 2005). Therefore, of importance is that the perception of quality is dependent on how these institutions are able to identify and satisfy the needs of not only the students but all customers in general at all levels of interactions.

- Services are also perishable, hence cannot be stored, inventoried or warehoused for later sales or use (Mudie and Pirrie, 2006). Therefore, if their demand exceeds supply then it will be impossible to meet the demand unlike in manufacturing where goods can easily be taken from the warehouse. Likewise, if capacity exceeds demand, then chances are high that the service value of that service is lost. At the university there is a variation among customers because of the many personal interactions involved with the staff. Hence, the resultant satisfaction by the customers from such relations may depend on factors such as competence, staff personal characteristics, physical appearance and staff customer interactions (Mudie and Pirrie, 2006). Generally, quality of services and customer satisfaction depends on how capably an institution is able to manage its service offerings; thus research in the education service sector remains a challenge. In the higher education context, the characteristics of a service provider are also exhibited in addition to the four characteristics mentioned above.

3.3.2 The Nature and Importance of Service Quality

Brady and Cronin (2001) assert that the concept of service quality is based on a service experience described in terms of its attributes such as reliability, assurance, or empathy. As noted by Driver and Johnston (2001) interactions that occur between a customer and any part and/or feature of an organisation providing a service characterises a service encounter. This definition includes a customer's interaction with service providers such as contact employees and other visible elements like automated systems and machines. According to Jayasundara (2009) identification of the quality of a particular service requires that such a service must have quality features like staff responsiveness, dependability and consistency of technological advancements which must be present during service interraction.

The importance of service quality can be traced to the past two decades when organisations started investigating service quality as a form of differentiation and competitive advantage. Organisations have recognised that service quality enhances competitiveness through differentiation. Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff, and Terblanche (2004) state that the only means an organisation can use to differentiate itself from others is to offer better quality service. This is so because in a given industry competitors offer similar quality products at similar prices (Seth, Deshmukh and Vrat, 2005). Excellent service quality is not only difficult to emulate, but also a vital buying consideration for many customers. In particular, service quality as a concept is becoming increasingly important because of factors such as the opening up of markets, the increased use of information technology as well as the higher levels of well-informed customers (Seth et al., 2005). On a similar note, Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2008) point out that any plans and efforts by an organisation that focuses on customer satisfaction, high returns and service quality may in fact be more successful than those that solely focus on cost cutting.

There is a likelihood that various problems (unfulfilled service promises, lack of transparency, communication breakdown, technological and service failures) may arise due to lack of focus on service quality which may lead to problems such as customer and employee complaints as well as other associated costs (Lewis, 2007). There are many benefits that are related to a good service quality programme, such as reduced costs, an enhanced corporate image, increased productivity, sales and market share as well as overall improved business performance. Van der Wiele et al. (2007) agree and state that improvement of service quality is connected to improved revenue, which in turn can lead to higher profit margins. Similarly, Foster (2010) states that quality of service remains the major differentiating characteristic to beat competitors in the marketplace.

Notably, service quality is an abstract concept and that different organisations may use different ways to evaluate service. It is also useful to note that different variables have been used to measure service such as productivity, profitability, market share, and sales, among others (Van der Wiele et al., 2007). For effective management of a service firm, it is important that the clients' view of service quality is understood. It is common to find that there is always a difference between the provider of a service and the consumer over perceptions and expectations of quality. Therefore it becomes important for provider for a service to become aware of the expectations of consumers as well as to ensure that these expectations are met in service quality.

3.3.3 Sources of Service Quality Dilemma

In today's dynamic services environment and the sophisticated and perceptive customer, demand for the highest level of service quality is inevitable. Delivering the expected level of service quality is crucial to a firm's growth, prosperity and existence. Service organisations have recognised that the key to survival and having a loyal customer base is through delivery of quality service which in turn leads to customer satisfaction, thus improving the organisation's general standing in terms of increased student catchment area, reduced costs and improved organisational bottom lines among other benefits. Therefore, as Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml (1988) assert, it is important for companies in the service industry to spot the factors impeding service quality realisation and look for improvement avenues as well as aligning and making the consumer aware of their service delivery. These will in turn aid the organisations to streamline and enhance their service delivery systems. Further, the authors identified the following causes of service quality problems:

People Factor

According to Berry et al. (1988) the quality of services suffers most because of employee unpreparedness and incompetence to deliver a service to the acceptable levels. Inability of service providers to perform a service at specified levels may be due to an organisation's shortcomings such as failure to offer remuneration that will enable it attract skilled workers, failing to train its personnel adequately, or both. As a result, the the aforementioned researchers assert that inexperienced employees may be moved to positions before they are ready, eventually leading to poor service quality. In the higher education setting, unskilled teaching staff will equally not deliver to expectations or may lower the quality of the educational service hence producing graduates that may not meet labour market expectations. Similarly, employing administrative staff in the admissions office that is unable to respond to all customer admission enquiries and able to maintain their desires may sever the organisation's relationship with the customer. Therefore, to maintain service quality, the Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) needs to establish appropriate standards and maintain workers that are willing and able to perform at specific levels (Berry et al., 1988).

In addition, as concerns higher education, Govender and Ramroop (2012) contend that the inability to clearly identify roles between service customers (postgraduate research students) and service employees (research supervisors) in the higher education research supervision process arising from uncertainty with regard to the contribution the customer (student) is intended to put in, will eventually interfere with the supervisor's input thus leading to inadequate service delivery due to job-related stress (Hsieh and Yen, 2005) of the service provider. This will eventually, by extension, affect service performance on the part of employee resulting in a poor service experience for the customer. Stress related to the responsibilities of the employee is a major contributor to the inability to deliver good service (Govender and Ramroop, 2012).

Overlapping of the Production and Consumption of the Service: Since customers consume services as they are being produced (Mudie and Pirrie, 2006), any mistakes made during these situations are immediately apparent and no amount of effort to control the quality will change the situation. A worker's image is vital and part of a service experience, thus it is wise to have similar personnel handle clients each time as their familiarity with expectations of a customer will lead to consistent performance.

Service Proliferation and Complexity

According to Berry et al. (1988), institutions have to face many new services with added complexities within a short period of time. For example, in higher education, frequent changes in education delivery modes with new demands and capacity for the university, or introduction of new programmes and/or development with new requirements from the regulator make it almost impossible for the institution to handle the many changes, hence they can be eroded. This may lead the institutions to start promoting new services to customers even before staff is fully trained to start delivering the said services.

Inadequate Service to Internal Employees

Internal staff act as intermediaries, hence the quality of service provided, for instance, to the front line staff, is critical to provision of quality services. For example, if the registry staff in an IHL is not given a functional computer system, then processing of students' examination results enquiries will be difficult since any inquiry cannot be processed when the system is down (Berry et al., 1988). Institutions of Higher Learning need to recognise that they indeed have "intermediate customers" i.e. front line staff, who need to be oriented to give high quality service in the event of a breakdown of operational support as they directly represent the organisation.

Communication Shortfalls

Communication breakdown results from misunderstanding the clients' communication, such as using professional terminology which may confuse and/or irritate a customer, hence training staff to effectively interact with customers is paramount. In addition, overpromising clients has also been identified as a major cause of customer dissatisfaction. This technique is always used by providers of services to make their clientele happy by assuring them that a service will be delivered within a time frame that the customer wants to hear (Berry et al., 1988). This creates an unnecessarily bad impression of the service provider especially when the promises are not met.

Failing to stay in touch with customers until a problem is solved is another major shortfall in the communication, hence leading to service quality failure (Berry et al., 1988). It is important for organisations to understand the causes of service problems and to come up with ways to mitigate the effects of such service letdowns. By minimising the consequences of service failures, institutions can transform annoyed and frustrated customers into satisfied ones, thereby creating an improved perceived service quality.

3.4 Service Marketing in Higher Education

3.4.1 Service Defined

Service has been given different meanings and present-day descriptions come to an agreement that no physical output exists when a service is delivered, inspite of the fact that, as Palmer (2008) asserts, it may assist in the manufacture of goods. Armstrong and Kotler (2003) define a service as any act offered by a person to another and cannot be owned. In addition (Lamb et al., 2004) define services as actions executed during service delivery and cannot be physically owned. Unique features that characterise a service, namely "intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability" (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985; Palmer 2008) differentiate services from goods. Therefore, as Kotler, Armstrong, Wong and

Saunders (2008) stress, it is beneficial for a company to consider and take advantage of these special service characteristics when designing marketing programs.

In chosen markets any service business, just like manufacturing businesses, uses marketing to strongly position themselves or their brands. Kotler and Andreasen (1996) point out that for every service characteristic there is a problem posed for the management of service offerings which the authors assert should be changed into challenges during the process of designing the final service offerings. The characteristic of intangibility has to be borne in mind since it is complicated and risky for service customers to assess the quality. Therefore, consumers end up primarily relying on other aspects such as the cost, facts and proof of availability of a service instead of the essential service. As stated by Palmer (2008), in return service organisations might respond by focusing on tagibles and service quality in their bid to market themselves and remain relevant in the industry. The physical evidence, for instance, may include focusing on what the consumers can see, namely, the way employees dress, which may be used to generate a positive mental picture by the consumers. This helps an organisation in that the dress code becomes an important instrument to market the organisation's services. Service providers in the higher education industry therefore are supposed to also become aware of the resultant effects emanating from the service factors. Kotler and Andreasen (1996) affirm that employees of a firm can make their organisation to be 'physically' visible by making noticeable of their performances.

In the higher education context for example, students in a higher learning institution might be satisfied with the education service from their interactions with the staff which may depend on factors ranging from physical appearance of both the lecturers and administrative staff, and other forms of interaction they may have with their lecturers such as consultation hours, availability and other aspects that affect their academic experience. This will in turn have an impact on how they perceive the quality of education services they receive. Availability of lecturers for consultation is one example of being customer oriented. As De Shields Jr. et al. (2005) point out, being customer-oriented can help higher learning institutions tackle the many recurrent problems that are exhibited in the higher education market place. The aforementioned authors' further note that the educational experience received by the students or educational service received by the customer and the relationship thereof goes on to benefit both the university and the entire society, thus creating an inter-reliant relationship between institutions, students and society in general.

3.4.2 The Service Package

According to Grönroos (2000), services have two main components, namely the outcome of the service and the experience that emanates out of the core service, hence they are perceived as bundles. The result of the service is often referred to as the service outcome. Conversely, the customer perception of the service process – how it was provided – is the service experience. However, the outcome of the service and the experience obtained from it will depend on aspects such as the organisation and its facilities, how front-line employees serve their customers and other tangential services that facilitate the core service offerings.

3.4.3 Special Characteristics of Higher Education Service Providers

The characteristics exhibited by higher education services are no different from those associated with other services, as identified by Mudie and Pirrie (2006) namely: intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability. Whereas traditional features of a service offering are evident in higher education, unique characteristics are notable which differentiate it from any other retail service. One such characteristic of HE is conflicting views on who the customer is, since various stakeholders including students, parents, sponsors, and the government, among others, exist and utilise services of HE (Quinn et al., 2009). Each of the aforesaid customers has access to a HE offering, for instance, students pay for a service to be delivered (education) as well as a requirement that they provide merit and eligibility in the service engagement. They also meet the cost of education similarly to their parents and act as a point of contact for some service interactions. Involvement of different stakeholders within the HE environment makes measurement of HE services complicated compared to retail services, including how each stakeholder perceives the indicators of service which may also be conflicting (Becket and Brookes, 2006; Quinn et al., 2009).

3.5 Customer Service and Satisfaction

According to Turban, Lee, King and Chung (2002: 87), customer service entails interrelated undertakings planned to surpass customer expectation. This implies that a product or a service should be able not only to meet but exceed the expectations of a customer. When a product or service meets what a customer expects then this translates to customer satisfaction.

The intense competition in the higher education market place has made universities utilise more customer oriented approaches (continuous improvement of service processes, dynamic interaction between the university and its customers, attentive and responsive to students' standpoints etc.) in service delivery (Kara and De Shields, 2004; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2010). While looking at higher education as a service, Hallinger and Snidvongs (2008) emphasised that students' dependability need to be increased, hence educational managers need to develop avenues to achieve it. This is so because the quality of learning is regarded differently from a customer's standpoint depending on their wants and needs. Therefore, administrators should focus on students' perceptions of the quality of learning offered in higher education (Oldfield and Baron, 2000), and devise ways to manage or influence positively the way in which customers, specifically students, have an effect on one another, and put in place useful methods with which they can support each other's experiences. Such mechanisms would improve students' satisfaction with their learning experience since there is always interaction among customers.

Quality relies on how institutions in higher education are able to identify and satisfy the needs of students, including other customers at all levels of service. Creating attention on students' perceived service quality in higher education would enable them evaluate the service through the student's point of view (Oldfield and Baron, 2000). Furthermore, it is important to realise that since in HE it is not only students that are customers, and because any marketing approach requires a company to get to know its customers, it is important to not the desires of the target market, modify the service offerings to match the existing market trend, and offer superior quality service to all its customers to increase customer satisfaction.

While emphasising the need for university managers to focus on internal customers, specifically the students, Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2010) assert that higher learning institutions that support the customer oriented approach would be able to collect data from the student-customer and respond to their needs and wants. By doing so, leaders in higher learning institutions can evaluate their internal marketing aspects through the internal customers (students), and as a result of that engaging them in the process of making important organisational decisions. This way, the leadership of the university would tailor their services based on students expectations (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2010).

Voss (2009) acknowledges that in the event that the faculty had enough understanding of students' desires, they could oversee them and bring them to a practical level. Gathering data would help in creating different creative administration and instructive apparatuses. Along these lines, the data is used for making a plan and/or procedure for an advanced education change. The higher education environment of today calls for different ways of managing quality. A standout amongst the most imperative quality sustenance exercises related to HE advancement is by making students be part of the process of making improtant organisational choices (Stukalina, 2012). For instance, the fullfillment students get from their education is of immense importance because students with high levels of satisfaction spread positive sentiments about an institution through word of mouth. This in turn translates to loyalty and positive behaviours. Universities may use student satisfaction survey information to better comprehend and enhance their learning surroundings with the aim of increasing the rate of retention hence enabling them to manage the university student absorption rates. In addition, since being customer focused is a prerequisite for survival of institutions of higher education, studying the satisfaction concept in HE is important, given the complexity of the current dynamic and competitive environment.

3.6 The Service Encounter in Higher Education

Customers are usually presented with an opportunity to evaluate the services of a provider when they interact with or encounter service processes and thereby form a perception of service quality. Each service encounter provides the consumer with an additional chance to build perceptions of service quality (Zeithaml et al., 2006).

Customers have different expectations of a service before purchasing it. These expectations are influenced by personal needs or wants and past experiences of a service. For example, after a customer has purchased a service, s/he evaluates the encounter by comparing the actual service encounter and their perceived expectations of the service.

In higher education setting, service perceptions are influenced by the particular service encounters of different customers (Seth et al., 2005). For example, students' academic service perceptions will be influenced by their educational encounters and related services from the moment they interact with the academic service providers (Govender, 2013). Similar perceptions will also be exhibited by other customers of the university. The service encounter experienced can extend over a period of time. If a university provides services in an effective and efficient manner, then this will form positive perceptions of that particular institutions' service delivery. On the other hand, if the services are ineffective and inefficient, it is likely translate to negative perceptions of the service delivery and quality.

3.7 Service Quality in the Higher Education Context

Widely debated in recent articles and extant literature is the issue concerning quality and different perceptions of quality. Interestingly, many of the quality specialists: gurus, experts, scholars, researchers and consultants agree that quality must be controlled by stakeholders because services are simultaneously created and consumed. Customer contribution to quality service, therefore, is not new in the services marketing literature where it is acknowledged that customers' participation is very important to the service delivery process, meaning that service clients take an interest in the delivery of the service as it is being carried out (Bendapudi and Leone, 2003; Yoon, Seo and Yoon, 2004). According to Grönroos (2000), by taking part in the service process the customer becomes a partner in the organisation. This calls for the management of service organisations to design, put into practice and monitor frameworks which attract and increase effective customer contribution and secure systems that give support to contact personnel to encourage clients' interest in the process (Yoon et al., 2004). Zeithaml et al., (2006) assert that when customers can genuinely and meaningfully take an interest in the service process of certain services, the quality of input from the customer determines the quality of service process and outcome. It is also believed that trained and educated customers in their roles in the service process participate positively in the service creation (Zeithaml et al., 2006). Therefore organisations should welcome suggestions from customers to enable them to offer quality services that appeal to their customers (Ojo, 2010).

While acknowledging that academic institutions face great challenges in matters concerning implementation of quality based practices (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010; Oswald, 2009), Quinn et al. (2009) observe that it is hard to describe service quality in higher education institutions. However, from a quality perspective, the authors provide a definition of service quality in terms of operations classified as educational, administrative, and supportive services. The higher education sector shares numerous attributes with different organisations controlled by the state and has various stakeholders, for example, students, sponsors, parents, employees (both academic and non-academic) and society at large, all of whom have a feel of different characteristics of the higher education system and/or services (Quinn et al., 2009). They also have conflicting vested interests in higher education institutions. However, these stakeholders in the long-run are concerned with the ‘products’ from the universities – the graduates. Employers and society in general are concerned mainly with graduates of the system while parents and students will be concerned with the process. For example, to make service quality better, it requires a continual upgrading in the clarity, correctness and unwavering quality of services performed, with no specific facet emerging to both internal and external customers of the institution (Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009). This is because a negative reaction may arise due to improvements made to meet perceptions of consumers from outside (external) while excluding those customers who are directly connected to an organisation (internal) who are the suppliers of the services. Galloway (1998) points out that with scarce and/or restricted resources it may not be conceivable to at the same time achieve all stakeholders’ criteria although they may not be essentially incompatible. However, it is difficult to improve appearance and responsiveness simultaneously with service jobs given to employees in educational institutions (Galloway, 1998). Similarly, as Gule (2009) suggests, the role of leadership in organisation, employee involvement, process excellence and focus on customers is critical in the repackaging of a service market offering. Therefore, empowering the employees and customers to understand their roles in the production and delivery of a service is the key to efficient and effective service in today's organisation.

While exploring the relationship between the postgraduate research students' perception of their role, research climate and service quality, Govender and Ramroop (2012) hypothesised that in higher education, a supportive research climate for the research and students' understanding of their roles as research students in creating a postgraduate service will have an influence on the research students' perceptions of postgraduate service quality delivered by their supervisors. The researchers further stated that universities need to ensure that a positive and supportive research climate exists because it is likely to influence service delivery and perceptions of research service quality, especially the service offered by the research supervisor. This then calls for proper management of the service encounter between the postgraduate student and the research supervisor. Similarly, Alaba and Olanrewaju (2012) in a study in Nigeria to examine the SERVQUAL dimensions of service quality on postgraduate students' thesis or dissertation writing and whether the postgraduates writing was satisfactory or not found that individually and jointly, SERVQUAL constructs had significant contributions towards the postgraduate students' thesis writing although responsiveness and reliability were found to be better predictors of the thesis writing process. Furthermore, significant differences were found in postgraduates' thesis writing with reference to their profession and gender. However, thesis writing was found to be unsatisfactory among postgraduates. It is therefore worth noting that to motivate students success in thesis writing at postgraduate level, the quality of services needs to be guaranteed and improved. De Shields Jr et al., (2005) who studies the determinants of satisfaction and retention in university that are expected to effect on a student's experience, observed that students who had a positive university experience were more prone to be satisfied with the university than students who do not have a positive university experience. Therefore, an institution needs to be responsive to students' needs through enhanced customer service. This will impact positively; for example it will increase the enrollment and retention of students. A positive climate must be created to manage effective communication with all students so that institutions of higher education put a high value not only on their learning but also on individual needs (Adela, 2009).

Comprehending value from the a customers standpoint can help service managers get valuable data in assigning and planning projects and/or programmes that will better fulfill students requirements of higher education while assisting institutions of higher learning to gain or maintain a competitive edge (Seymour, 1992; Schmidt, 2002; Watson, 2003). It is therefore imperative that higher education managers apply standards used by profit-making institutions on their customers for them to adapt to the changing nature of the higher education marketplace. Higher learning institutions can adjust their firm structure, methodologies and systems and focus more on the experiences of student satisfaction (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2004 in De Shields Jr. et al., 2005).

Joseph (1998) in Ong and Nankervis (2012) states that there is a need for institutions of higher learning to separate themselves from competition by giving superior quality services to enable them to compete effectively in the market place. Focusing on their two core functions – general administrative services and education service – which serve as distinct differentiation strategies will result in quality services. According to De Shields Jr. et al. (2005), a customer oriented approach is an appropriate strategy that higher learning institutions can execute to address the perpetual issues in the higher learning sector. Value should be based on the institutions' goals and commitment and long term interests of the university customers.

3.7.1 The Consequence of Service Quality in Higher Education

Service quality has become a significant aspect in educational institutions, and. numerous reasons for this have been provided by different authors. The growing importance of service quality can be attributed to increased competition in the educational environment (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010). This competition has pushed higher education institutions to improve value in their service activities through a customer-centric approach (De Shields Jr. et al., 2005) which translates to good service quality.

De Shields Jr. et al. (2005) also acknowledge, from various studies they have conducted on determinants of service quality, how higher education has transformed. The aforementioned authors posit that education is turning out to be more of a commodity with students as consumers. For example, they assert that whereas students who have a positive perception of university life were more likely to be satisfied with the institution, those who otherwise had a different and/or negative experience will not. Therefore, it can be pointed that quality is the only survival tactic of higher education institutions. Consequently, lack of knowledge of the competitive nature of higher education environment, provision and measurement of quality of services will ultimately disadvantage an institution. Institutions have to understand that to the extent that they are in competition for students, the students remain their core customers (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010).

A major differentiator of an organisation from another which forms the basis for attracting and retaining customers is good service quality (Ong and Nankervis, 2012). For enhanced competitive advantage within higher education institutions, differentiation from competitors through provision of higher quality services places them effectively ahead of competition in the market. In addition, decisions to join an institution are based on the quality of services provided. In a university's function students search for evidences of service quality (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010: 3), which in turn acts as one of key aspects impacting students' decision making on which educational institutions they should join. De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010) further state that other features observed are personal reasons, location of the university and previous experiences by associates or connections. The significance of connections' encounters further deciphers into a selling point and thus is an image builder outside the domain of a company. This suggests that to keep up with their state of competition in the sector, universities need to sustain their positive image and programmes quality (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010: 4).

3.8 Customers of a Higher Education System

It is important to note that the higher education environment and its setting somehow make focusing on the customer complicated (Quinn et al., 2009). Students of a university are possibly the first and most obvious customers while many other stakeholders in HE function as customers although they operate in different areas and have different interests in the higher education process. Kanji and Tambi (1999) assert that given students are paying for a service to be delivered they should be treated as customers. Rolfe (2002) asserts that with payment of fees, a student's approach to education changes from that of a recipient of free service to that of a consumer. Rolfe (2002) proceeds and argues that the bottom line is that institutions of higher learning need students in order to survive and thrive; and students are the direct recipients of theese services. Given that students pay for their education and the enhanced relationship between students and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) continues to be strong, then satisfaction remain high (Bejou, 2005). Students' satisfaction is crucial to universities and its management, directly or indirectly. Therefore, student satisfaction with regard to the quality of service delivery by the university becomes a vital aspect. This further calls for the university to focus its services on students because they serve as the direct customers of university's services hence the university should maximise student satisfaction, minimise dissatisfaction and therefore this in turn will improve the institutions' performance.

In further support of the notion that a student is a customer, Brennan and Benington (1999) noted that when universities market and promote their activities through different mediums targeting students, then it is insinuated that students are customers. However, the aforementioned authors also argue that various governments treat education as a commodity which in a free market may be purchased, which does not necessarily qualify students to be customers because of the divergent interests to be fulfilled for insance, by an institution of higher learning (Brennan and Benington, 1999). Furthermore, Brennan (2001) asserts that the criterion for admission is more valued compared to programmes.

It is explicitly evident that discussion on the student-customer has been ongoing and two different approaches have been adopted in the way HEIs treat the students, namely the customer-oriented (student-customer) approach, and the student-product approach. Some researchers (Lovelock and Young, 1979; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; Bateson, 2002) especially those in the service marketing disciplines proceed from a premise that the student is a consumer and/or co-producer of the education service.

However, some (Franz, 1998; Albanese, 1999; Emery, Kramer and Tian 2001) contend that students should not be viewed as customers. Vaill (2008) further asserts that it is not recommended for the higher education industry to view the student as a customer as observed by for profit organisations. Typical businesses go after consumers but universities, then again, need to strive to pull in the best students.

Despite the divergent views, there is overwhelming support for viewing students as customers and adopting the principles of customer service to the education environment (Bejou 2005; Obermiller, Fleenor and Raven, 2005). It is argued by Marcel and Harris (2000) that how different people define a customer depends on an individual's perspective of the student. Furthermore, Marcel and Harris (2000) assert that if students utilise specialised services, are co-producers of some services through providing constructive criticism and or feedback, look for support from service providers to complete a task, then they should be considered as primary customers.

In addition to the aforementioned customers in a higher education setting, different customers are served by different aspects of university operations. According to Quinn et al. (2009), whereas residence halls exclusively serve student customers' accommodation needs, administrative areas in a university serve explicit internal and external customers. For example, a research function serves employees and graduate students customers as well as government agencies and research sponsors. Both administrative and academic employees' excersise control in the design and execution of some services in a university including consuming some services (Quinn et al., 2009), they therefore meet the crieteria of being a HEI customer.

In light of the above university service managers need therefore to assess perceptions of the service quality offered to consumers (students and employees) to ascertain its impact on their satisfaction with the service. This study intends to examine internal customers (employees' and students')[6] of HE with the objective of analysing the key

[6] The employee and the student are defined to as 'customers' of a private higher education institution (university); therefore service quality pertains to employee and student customers' perceptions.

contributors to their perceived quality of services, and service satisfaction in higher education. Perceived experiences of the different customers is important, since it is hoped to provide more objective and practical information for assessing the key variables under study, thus making service quality and customer satisfaction explicit to the HE context.

Table 3.2 below illustrates the different characteristics of higher education quality from the perspectives of customers of higher education.

Table 3.2 General Customers in Higher Education

Customer Group	**Customer Characteristics**
a) Students	They pay for the service, are taught (service), consume administrative functions, pay for other supporting services like hostel accommodation
b) Parents/Guardians/Carers	Select or assist their children in selection of service provider, pay for service, are point of contact for some service interactions
c) Potential Employers	Buy end product of the process of service, at times fund and give advice in designing service.
d) Accreditation Body/Regulator	Regulate product and/or designing of services.
e) Staff (Academic & Administrative)	They exercise control in the design of some products or services and also make use of some services.
f) Society	They benefit from services given while paying for the said services through taxation for parts of the services.
g) Government	Has some influence on the design of some services and products and assists in funding for service provision, e.g. in Kenya through Higher Education Loans Board which provides loans to students.
h) Researchers Sponsors	Often have contractual engagement. Give grants in return for information, services and other activities
i) Disciplinary Academic Communities	Benefit from scholarly activities of academic staff.

Source: *Quinn, Lemay, Larsen, and Johnson (2009: 141).*

Table 3.2 above provided an overview on who the higher education customer is and their attributes. It is evident from the discussion and the table that students of an institution of higher education are obviously the ‘main’ and/or primary customers; therefore, they interact most with higher education institutions (Hill 1995 in Roostika, 2009). Further, it is good to acknowledge many other competing stakeholders that function as customers in different areas within an institution of higher learning.

3.9 Antecedents of Customer Satisfaction, Perceptions of Service Quality, and Expectation of a Service

3.9.1 Customer Satisfaction

Companies that are customer oriented have enhanced customers’ experience through emphasizing a grasp of the needs and wants of the customer and exploited this to give consumers what they require. Customer satisfaction as a relationship marketing concept has advanced as a basic measure for satisfaction. According to Morgan, Anderson and Mittal (2005) customer satisfaction is essential for a corporation’s survival and existence, or in other words, it should be the ultimate goal of all firms. Customer satisfaction with services is significant to a company’s economic prosperity (Morgan et al., 2005). Various definitions have been provided with regard to what merits the concept of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction in the wider sense is considered to be an openly displayed feeling of expression that emanates from judgement made from the expected outcomes with the evaluation of a commodity or service performance (Jayasundara, 2009). Several researchers (Brady and Robertson, 2001; Lovelock, Patterson and Walker, 2001) conceptualise customer satisfaction as a customer’s judgement (positive or negative) or feeling of contentment or dis contentment occuring from the difference between a product’s or a service’s alleged performance or outcome and expectations. This implies that there will be a variation in the levels of satisfaction for the same service performance expressed by various customers.

Jones and Suh (2000) posit that in general, widely known conceptualisations related to satisfaction are transaction specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction. According to Boshoff and Gray (2004), transaction specific satisfaction is the way the customer assesses his or her experience and his or her reaction about a particular service encounter. On the other hand, Cook (2008) relates cumulative satisfaction to the consumer's general assessment of the consumption experience to data. Boshoff and Gray (2004) further assert that satisfaction is not inherent in the product or service itself however fundamentally relies on upon how the consumer sees the properties of the product or service as they identify with that individual.

Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) assert that customer satisfaction is a relation of the client's appraisal of quality of services quality, item quality, and cost. On the other hand, satisfaction is achieved when a customer's needs (real or perceived) are met or surpassed (Gerson, 1996). According to Kotler (2000) satisfaction is an individual's estimation of feelings of pleasure or displeasure originating from his or her consideration/interpretation of a product's perceived outcome in relation to what he or she expects. Therefore, a customer of a product or a service will be satisfied if the expected outcome is achieved and on the other hand he or she will be dissatisfied if the product or a service does not meet the expected outcome. Accordingly, satisfaction is an experience of contentment of a likely result (Hom, 2002). Prior expectations with regard to the level of quality also influence satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a service (Sigala, 2004; Ekinci, 2004).

It is important to also point out the important role communication plays in service expectations. According to Solomon (1996), a negative impression of service and fulfillment is created when what is conveyed to a client does not match his or her encounter. Satisfaction with a service, thus, could be within a segment of a service or of the encounter with numerous interrelated components that make up a whole encounter. In a process point of view of customer satisfaction, Gupta and Zeithaml (2006) and Rust and Chung (2006) affirm that customer satisfaction is the process that is connected to exactly how customers react towards the evaluation of the difference a customer perceived in relation to past desires and real execution of the product or service as experienced after its utilization. As a customer's fulfillment of response, Oliver (1997) defined customer satisfaction as the judgment that a manufactured good or a service gave or is giving an appropriate level of utilization related satisfaction, including levels of under or over satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction can be viewed from three perspectives depending on the product's perceived performance with respect to the purchaser's desires. A below expected performance of a product leads to customer dissatisfaction while a matching performance to expectation leads to satisfaction. More so, if the performance surpasses expectations, the customer is highly pleased or fulfilled (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). Therefore, satisfaction is the judgement made by a customer on whether a product or a service met an individual's needs and desires (Zeithaml, Bitner and Glemler, 2009). Exceptional marketing companies use various strategies and work beyond their scope to please their customers. In return, highly pleased customers will buy and use a product or consume a service more than one occasion and through word of mouth tell others about their good experiences with a company's products or services. The ultimate goal is to ensure customer expectations correspond to company performance. Remarkable organizations intend to make their clients' experience pleasurable by guaranteeing just what they can supply and after that surpassing their delivery guarantee or basically conveying more than they assure. Simply stated, they exceed their delivery promise or basically deliver more than they promise. In conclusion, customer satisfaction can be described as an outcome of customer's assessment of his or her consumption experience with the services received. Nonetheless, different levels of satisfaction are experienced by different customers as they have dissimilar attitudes and dissimilar ways of perceiving a product's or service's performance.

3.9.2 Perceptions of Service Quality – The Customer's View Point

Customers' perceptions are key to the assessment of benefits provided by educational institutions. Naik, Gantasala and Prabhakar (2010) posit that customer perceptions and expectations are based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes or opinions and are in a state of constant flux and become different. This implies that the service experience is subjective, since it is an individual's response based on his or her feelings felt when consuming a service (Chen and Chen-Fu, 2009). As well, Cook (2008) affirms that every service felt is sent to the customer's mind, therefore a past experience may influence an individual's feelings on whether to take up a service or not.

Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) assert that customers perceive services from three perspectives, namely, the nature of the service, how fulfilled they are with the service, and the general estimation of the service. Han (2010) asserts that customer perceptions of service encompass the service worth, its quality and customer satisfaction. The general evaluation of how good or bad a product or a service is the final interpretation of the perceived service quality (Athiyaman, 1997). Brink and Berndt (2005) state that customers' regard services to the degree to which the quality of the service provided and the fulfillment level gained. Sheth and Mittal (2004) are of the opinion that perception is a series of actions undertaken by an individual namely; selecting, organizing and interpretation of information received from the environment. Therefore, customer perception involves acquisition and/or receipt, systemising and giving sense to data or an incentive noticed by the customer's five senses giving meaning to customer's environment (Strydom, Cant and Jooste, 2000). Perceptions are consequences of several reviews made by the customer, and Chen and Chen (2009) note that recognisable quality is the general assessment of the helpfulness of an item focused around the customer's impression of what is gotten and what is given.

Robert (1996) in Ong and Nankervis (2012) states that perceptions of higher education students of their experience of higher education are significant because providers of higher education are attempting to become more student-oriented. Kimani (2011) states that the way university customers, specifically students, recognise service quality is vital since it ascertains how they appraise the service. In addition, Basher, Machali and Mwinyi (2012) state that in making decisions to return to microfinance institutions (MFIs), customers are likely to reflect whether or not they get superior quality service. This implies that decisions to return to the MFIs will depend on how the customers perceived the initial services they received. Thus the perceived value is a finer indicator of repurchase expectations than either fulfillment or quality (Chen and Chen, 2009).

A study by Chen and Chen (2009) on quality experience, perceived value, and behavioural intentions in the tourism industry demonstrated that the anticipated value from consumers standpoint of a service are key to the measurement of the benefits provided by organisations. According to the above authors, service experience is a subjective individual response that is focused around the emotions that are felt by consumers when utilizing or expending a service.

Cook (2000) suggests that every service experienced is sent into the mind of a customer while Petzer and Steyn, (2006) notify that when there is displeasure in the service, it prompts a negative consumer experience, which thusly brings about an unfavorable impression of the organisation by the customer. According to Terblanche and Boshoff (2010), the customer's view and/or perspective of quality have a huge impact on how the quality is perceived. Given that perceptions of service quality by a customer is through every single stage/period of their contact with the organisation, every period of their contact with the organization, consideration ought to likewise be paid to the service performance framework (Payne, Christopher, Clark and Peck, 1999). Failure of the service delivery system to fulfill customers' needs or wants will lead to defections even when these needs or wants are satisfied.

Students' concerns in their institution will be retained if they recognise that an institution's quality, include its standardised learning environment, existence of an intellectual faculty, facilities suitable to support the learning process and supporting infrastructure (Alridge and Rowley, 2001). Further, Keller (2003) posits that when an institution has reliable facilities regarded or perceived to be of a higher quality provided to students which motivates them, then it is more likely that they will be attracted and affiliated to the institution. In addition, the quality of services is typically accredited to the collaboration and assistance of the administrative staff as well as the academic staff with the students. It is usual to find that most students become demotivated if they find that the staff is not concerned with and caring of them. According to Hasan and Ilias (2008), an education institution needs to train and educate its employees in approaches that will create a sense of enablement by means of management, collaboration, compassion and empathy so as to achieve quality assurance.

According to Molapo and Mukwada (2011), the benefits organisations claim to offer with regard to the quality of service hardly influence perceptions customers hold. The authors claim that investing in the provision of those benefits claimed to be offered may not specifically increase the value to customer retention, despite the fact that customer retention remains a vital component of business execution. Nowadays, customers are viewed as valuable assets of the organisation as opposed to wellsprings of income that need to be dealt with and secured for exploitation (Lombard, 2009). It is, therefore, worth noting that perception plays an important part in defining the value that customers append to the services rendered by players in an industry.

Bearing in mind the nature of services offerings provided by the education institutions of higher learning and the difficulty connected with the evaluation of quality in higher education, the idea of perceived service quality is utilized. In addition, the judgment is based on both when the service is provided as the transaction takes place, and the overall impression of the overall performance of the providers of the education service. The reason is that experiences in education involve both one-time transactions and everyday academic and administrative experiences including broader characteristics like image and reputation. It is therefore important to note that in this thesis service quality and perceived service quality have been used interchangeably – implying that both terminologies contain the same meaning.

3.9.3 Expectation of a Service in Higher Education

It is acknowledged that expectations of a service vary from one individual to another bearing in mind that complex considerations have to be made such as a customer’s own pre-set beliefs and other people’s opinions (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Santos (2003) asserts that expectation is therefore a judgement and/or attitude derived out of consumption of a product or a service before the next purchase; it may involve experience. Customers’ expectations are identified with diverse levels of fulfillment which may be focused around past encounters, learning from commercials and personal communications and/or interractions.

As previously stated, customers hold different types of service expectations (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). Using a conceptual model of the nature and determinants of customer expectations, Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) established that customers have various expectations from the services desired which reflect what they want, a mix of their beliefs, adequacy of service which reflects what customers are willing to accept, and lastly the predicted service which is what customers believe they are likely to obtain. According to Kimani (2011), students' expectations are influenced by a variety of controllable and uncontrollable factors by the education service providers. This is because customers have wide expectations of their relationship with their service providers as well as expectations of individual service encounters.

It may be concluded that since the definitions of expectations are diversified, it can be concluded that expectation is a factor that cannot be controlled, since it includes inter alia past experience, background, and customers' perceived judgement at the time of purchase, advertising, attitude and image. In addition, customer expectations are influenced by factors such as pre-purchase convictions, verbal communications, individual needs, customers' encounter with service, and other individual perspectives. Because expectations are dissimilar among customers' based on their knowledge of a product or service, employees need to influence customers' expectations to ensure that they are realistic and that their employees can fulfill them (Naidoo, 2004).

3.10 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Service quality and customer satisfaction are the centre of attention of organisations and have been noted as major prerequisites for establishing and maintaining relationships with customers. Many researchers have addressed the association between the two constructs – service quality and customer satisfaction. For example, Cronin and Taylor (1992) stated that the relationship between the two has significant and strategic concerns. Most oftenly, service quality and customer satisfaction are linked, however according to Zeithaml et al. (2009) they are discrete constructs. Whereas satisfaction is a perceived to be a broader concept, service quality centers particularly on the measurements of the service. Perceived quality is part of satisfaction, though quality and fulfillment are focused around customers' impression and/or feeling of the service performance. The explanation behind the emphasis on the nature of the service and customer satisfaction in numerous studies is on the grounds that companies can isolate themselves by giving better service quality and general customer fulfillment.

Grönroos (2007) asserts that, whereas the difference between service quality and satisfaction has been debated over and over again in the available literature, in practice the two concepts are often used interchangeably. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) argue that both concepts are assessment characteistics oftently liable to change or vary, and are connected to customers' perceptions of a given product or service. The aforementioned researchers' further state that the abovesaid concepts can be measured based on expectancy disconfirmatory paradigm. However, the authors also point out that satisfaction is a broader concept while on the other hand service quality is a focused assessment of specific dimensions of service. Therefore, service quality is an essential part of customer satisfaction. However, Peer and Mpinganjira (2011) caution that the two constructs are diverse even though occasionally, in literature, service quality perceptions are used to refer to customer satisfaction.

It is evidenced by many studies that have been conducted with respect to satisfaction in various contexts, and most of the researchers found that service quality precedes customer satisfaction (Lassar et al., 2000; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Siddiqi, 2011). It ought to however be noted that a correct understanding of the empirical indicators of customer satisfaction is needed, as this may translate into higher perceived value for service companies including higher education in a competitive environment. Customer satisfaction at the individual person level is the only perfect measure of quality perceptions, which contain both objective and subjective response to customer-related experiences resulting from consumption of a product or a service. As a context-related concept, therefore, an organisation is said to have correctly interpreted consumer desires including provision of products and services of acceptable quality only if individuals are summarily satisfied with the company's products and services offered of which they are customers (KEBS, 2011).

According to Bitner (1990), and Bolton and Drew (1991), customer satisfaction is the outcome of service quality. Doherty (1994) affirms that quality increases customer satisfaction, while Athiyaman (1997) posits that quality is a consequence of customer satisfaction. Jamal and Naser (2003) point out that service quality is the precursor of customer satisfaction. However, Jamal and Naser's (2003) research found an insignificant link between customer satisfaction and seen characteristics of the service environment, and this was also supported by Beerli, Martin and Quintana (2004). The authors assert that the satisfaction variable assumes a service performance evaluation received by the customer, a finding that is in contrast with that of most researchers. Yee et al. (2010) found that service quality has affects on customer satisfaction. Hishamuddin and Azleen (2008) further state that a customer's perceptions of the quality of the attributes of services of a company leads to satisfaction, therefore understanding of these quality attributes would lead to an extremely superior economic benefits for service organisations in the market structure (Lassar et al., 2000). More importantly, for any service supplier concerned with guaranteeing that they are constantly receptive to their customers, having knowledge on customers' perspectives of the quality of service is a basic concern.

Musalem and Joshi (2009) assert that for organisational survival in any industry, it must be responsive to customers. Marx and Erasmus (2006) looked at customer satisfaction with service quality and customer service in supermarkets and found that there was significant difference in satisfaction with participants with different supermarkets. Customers compromise in terms of entire shopping experience implying collective customer service attributes are more important than individual while judging service quality (Marx and Erasmus, 2006). The aforementioned authors revealed that money, processes and personnel are crucial to service quality and enhance loyalty. The authors further state that, in South Africa, many companies that invest heavily on promotion and advertising programs emphasise on price, an element of customer service that has been rated low and not identified as very important determinant of customer service as expected by customers. This calls for the reallocation of budgets to programmes focusing on knowledge and competence of personnel.

Berndt's (2009) study on the nature of service quality and customer perceptions in the motor industry using established service quality dimensions asserts that customer focus is a strong contributer to business success, hence the focus should be directed towards dealing with customers' needs and issues they raise. Therefore, service delivery process is important within the service situation and has an effect on perceptions of service quality. One of the important actors of business viability is the relationship between the businesses and their customers. Awareness and/or consciousness about the quality of offerings is seldom influenced by the benefits companies claim to offer (Molapo and Mukwada, 2011). Therefore, perceptions may not be significant to customer retention though it remains a critical componemt of business performance.

It is rightly argued from the discussion above that service quality is an essential prerequisite of customer satisfaction, and that customers are only satisfied if their needs and wants are met. Petzer and De Meyer (2011) found clear relationships between service quality, service satisfaction and behavioural intent implying that customers' intention towards a service is dependent on previous experiences with the service delivery process. This eventually results in increased customer satisfaction (Basher, Machal and Mwinyi, 2012). For example, Rasli, Danjuma, Yew and Igbal (2011) allude to a direct connection between service quality and customer satisfaction in higher learning, consequently students' expectations from university training are determined by their learning encounters and individual inclinations (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010). Similarly, expectations of a university depend on their experiences and individual preferences (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010), and this therefore determines employees' decision-making process for example, for maximum commitment. Malik, Danish and Usman (2010) add that the quality of an offerring greatly influences the students' satisfaction in multiple dimensions. Therefore, the decision for instance to enroll at a university will depend on service encounters the prospective student experiences.

As a basic essential for building and maintaining fulfilling relationships with esteemed customers (Hasan and Ilias, 2008), service quality is a competition consideration feature of the organisations within a particular in the current dynamic and competitive business environment (Siddiqi, 2011). Furthermore, it is an essential differentiating and/or distinguishing factor. Through differentiation, an organisation is able to become economically viable in a marketplace. While investigating the service quality and customer satisfaction nexus in the telecommunications business in Nigeria, Ojo (2010) found that service quality affects customer satisfaction. The researcher asserts that quality and customer satisfaction constructs are positively interrelated. In addition, Basher et al. (2012) also found service quality has a significantly postive effect on customer satisfaction, which showed that a customer's decision to visit the microfinance institution again will be determined by the quality of services they receive. According to Peer and Mpinganjira (2011), readiness to come back to or propose and/or suggest to family or companions, a service provider translates to customer satisfaction. Basher et al. (2012) assert that a positive correlation exists between service quality and behavioural intentions which eventually increases customer satisfaction. This therefore determines a customer's decision-making process; for example, for customers to go back for a service in an organisation, they are likely to recall the previous service performance and/or quality. Clearly there seems to be much debate on the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. While researchers like Bolton and Drew (1991), Parasuraman (1988) argue that customer satisfaction results to service quality, other researchers maintain that it is service quality that leads to customer satisfaction (Jamal and Naser 2003; Hasan and Ilias 2008; Yee et al., 2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that the two concepts, namely service quality and customer satisfaction are interrelated. It is also important to note that service value is vital in the service delivery process, since Kiran and Diljit (2011) found that service value is largely affected by perceptions of quality and hence is an important determinant of customer satisfaction.

Zeithaml et al. (2009: 103) provide a linkage between service quality and customer satisfaction showing that service quality is a motivated assessment that reflects the customers' perceptions of SERVQUAL factors. Satisfaction, on the other hand, is more encompassing because it is shaped by views of the service, product and cost, together with conditional factors such as economic conditions, political situations and environmental factors, and personal factors such as attitudes, perceptions, lifestyles and self-concept. To sum up, while conceptualisation of service quality and satisfaction within institutions of higher learning is more context-specific to the higher education settings, it is no different from conceptualisations in other service industry contexts. Given the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction this study endeavoured to model HE satisfaction as a function of perceived service quality, in private universities in Kenya.

3.11 Consequences of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Some marketing theorists (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996) assert that customer satisfaction had been recognised to have an influence on the attitudes of people towards an institution. Therefore, it is perceived to be an important determinant of the customers' future behaviour. In this section, several consequences of satisfaction and their contributions are discussed in general services industries and higher education service industry.

Jones and Sasser (1995) examine the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty among thirty organisations from five different markets. They find that where customers have many choices the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is linear; hence, as satisfaction rises, so does loyalty. Chang et al. (2009) stated that service quality influences customer satisfaction and generates customer allegiance. A key to organisational survival is the retention of very committed customers (Jones and Sasser, 1995). For example, in a research framework advanced by Zeithaml et al. (2008), the researchers' related three variables namely; service quality, satisfaction and allegiance. In, the aforementioned researchers' model, service quality is the outcome of reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy and tangibles. Satisfaction is impacted by the nature of service quality and product and cost as well as the situational and individual characteristics.

In the context of higher education for example, De Shields et al. (2005) posited that customer satisfaction has led to retention, while Athiyaman (1997) added that it has led to action taken as a consequence of strong word of mouth communication and recommendations. Govender and Ramroop (2011) affirm that service quality is connected with service satisfaction, hence it generates loyalty. The aforementioned authors assert that it is important to manage the relationship between the two constructs. Educational institutions will be able to maximise postgraduates' satisfaction with their education experience and minimise dissatisfaction. This will not only help retain students but also improve the institution's performance ratings and consequently help in the recruitment of postgraduates. The early work of Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger (1997) in Siddiqi (2011) recommended that in service settings much the same as higher learning, the associations were self-reinforcing meaning that fulfilled consumers helped employee fulfillment, and the other way around.

There are many benefits associated with customer satisfaction and service quality which lead to greater customer trustworthiness and commitment. According to Manuel (2008), effective organisations compete to deliver satisfying services to their customers. In a study to establish customer perceptions of service quality at the Business Studies Unit of Durban University of Technology, Manuel (2008) concluded that customers expect the business school to deliver superior services surpassing their expectations. However, the author contends that, other than provision of quality services that satisfy customers, having a competitive advantage and making profits are other reasons for business existence. It is worthy for an organisation to maintain valuable customers as opposed to continuously appeal and create new customers to replace the ones who leave (Chang et al., 2009). Highly satisfied customers spread the news through positive referrals thus becomes an advertisement and selling instrument for a firm, translating to lower costs of drawing in new customers (Lovelock and Wright, 2002). Rasli, Danjuma, Yew and Igbal (2011) maintain that if quality is an integral tool for service delivery at university, then continuous patronage and retention of students will be ensured. Therefore, as Maringe and Gibbs affirm, universities need to consider students' perceptions in trying to be competitive since service quality and ability for universities to attract and retain customers are interdependent (Maringe and Gibbs, 2009). Han (2010) postulates that there is a significant relationship between overall satisfaction to re-enter intention and re-enter intention on the other hand significantly predicts word-of-mouth intention. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) also hold similar views that with high customer satisfaction, organisations are able to develop devoted customers who in the long run, further act as agents of promotion for the firm further through vital word-of-mouth advertising and referrals. In addition, Ojo (2010) asserts that to sustain a high level of customer satisfaction, organisations must know customers' expectations and how to meet such expectations as customer satisfaction helps in customer loyalty (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Malhotra, 2005) and retention.

It is also worth noting that a negative service experience resulting from a service failure is disadvantageous to the institution, since customers will rate it unfavourably (Petzer and Steyn, 2006). According to Terblanche and Boshoff (2010) the perception of a university customer about the quality of the education service significantly influences the perceived value. Therefore, a need to enhance the service delivery system since customer's perceived service quality emanates from each stage of the service process with the institution (Payne et al., 1999). Lombard (2009) says that in the present business environment the organisation sees customers as valuable assets rather than just sources of income that need to be nurtured and protected for exploitation. It is important to note that the perceptions held by customers about a service play an important role in determining the value they attach to the services rendered by an organisation. Molapo and Mukwada (2011) posit that the most effective strategies that need to be practiced to retain customers in organisations include service quality, after sales services, and provision of services at affordable prices. However, the author cautions that although delivery of quality services and benefits is necessary, it is not a sufficient way to retain customers, hence roots for effective marketing. Customers are significantly different with regard to the marketing activation plans used by market rivals (Molapo and Mukwada, 2011).

Although the literature shows that service quality is the immediate precedent of customer satisfaction, there still remains a considerable debate on the nature of relationship. This study contributes to narrowing this gap in the literature, especially in private universities sub-sector and demonstrates the importance of increasing the understanding of the subject by re-examining the relationship in a model reflecting the links between the two constructs at individual dimensional level.

3.12 Theoretical Review of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction – An African Perspective

This section presents a comparison of service quality and customer satisfaction studies in Private Higher Education (PHE) institutions in Africa. However, although this section only looks at the aforementioned variables, it will firstly provide an overview of the private higher education environment and how it influences the education service environment, without deviating from the research context under review.

According to Tilak (2006) the rate at which PHE is growing the world over is astounding. For example, on the Asian continent growing numbers in enrollments have been witnessed in countries such as Ukraine, Malaysia, India and Philippines. On the other hand, in some countries such as Canada, Greece, Germany and Australia, PHE providers are almost nonexistent since in these countries public institutions dominate the higher education sector. Tilak (2006) further posits that in public institutions in some of the developed countries, enrollments range between 90 – 95%. Furthermore, the aforementioned notes that in other countries PHE has grown tremendously in that in the near future there are fears that it could possibly replace the public higher education system because of continued cuts in government funding on higher education and the competition with which PHE brings, thus improving the higher education system as a whole.

For example, Kenya has experienced tremendous growth in PHE in the past two decades due to policies instituted by the World Bank limiting growth of public universities as well as restriction on enrollments (Abagi et al., 2005), hence creating a large market for private universities. Furthermore, changes in the funding policy from higher education to basic education led to an increase in cost of HE creating room for private provision of HE (Oketch, 2004). The result of the aforementioned lead to quality gaps experienced within the Kenyan PHE since the Kenyan government was not the brain child of privatisation of higher education policies (Oanda, 2008). Similarly, Ajayi (2006) assert that in Nigeria increased demand for HE lead to the beginning of PHEIs resulting to quality issues. Mamdani (2007) maintained that the general education delivery and service in East Africa was affected by the profit-oriented nature of the educational offering.

Schalkwyk (2011) says that private institutions worldwide provide services that serve their customers and they tend to operate like businesses applying the basics of business management in their daily operations. In addition, Tilak (2006) further states that they are entrepreneurial in nature and can be found all over the world and that these universities are developing towards a focus on profit and entrepreneurship. Therefore, many developing countries such as Kenya, South Africa among others are not yet leaders in terms of PHE, although these countries may exhibit a commercial approach to PHE such as a focus on profits and market oriented products and services just like other countries in the world.

According to Gbadamosi and De Jager (2008), stagnating and declining budgets amongst universities for instance in South Africa, heavy dependence on tuition fees and other levies for operations amongst private universities in developing countries (Mwiria et al., 2007) and other forces such as increased enrollments (Onsongo, 2011), technology advances and technological skills requirements (Schalkwyk, 2011), have led to increased pressures on service delivery from the students. This implies that they need to come up with strategies for their institutions' survival (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2008). These, therefore have an impact on the reputation and image of the university. A compromised image and reputation of a university is likely to send different perceptions to its customers according to Grönroos (1984) who noted that a corporate image depicts the nature of relationships and perceptions that customers have with the institution's services. This is contrary to service offerings in PHE in certain republics such as the USA, Brazil and Japan which have a long history account of service offerings of reliability and dependability. Schalkwyk (2011) asserts that in the aforementioned countries educational service quality is well developed and perceived to be superior. This is demonstrated by high enrollments in some countries such as Brazil and Japan, where over 80% of the enrollments are found within the PHE.

According to Williams (2003), as cited in Gothan and Erasmus (2008), service quality needs to be defined within the context of different countries, according to whether they are developed or developing. This is because of the significant differences between the perception and practical implementation of the dimensions of service quality between the two types of countries. Service reliability in developed countries revolves around consistency, dependability and accuracy in service performance while in developing countries human related aspects such as personnel assistance are crucial (Gothan and Erasmus, 2008).

Direct competition for a similar market amongst higher learning institutions in South Africa has had far-reaching extensive implications for these institutions. This competition has also seen PHEIs employ management practices to advance the competence and quality of services moving from unreceptive to a more vibrant market approach. For example, as Gbadamosi and De Jager (2008) report, technology impacts on the employees which have created private educational institutions that compete for both postgraduate students and school leavers, to adapt to the changes. Highly responsive private HE institutions meeting demand in specific areas, for instance, that public providers do service, are regarded highly among their customers. Furthermore, the aforementioned authors state that universities must be mindful of their own services and how these are seen in the marketplace, if they are to satisfy student requirements. Likewise, Owino (2013) assert that for students to experience equal value regardless of where they experience the service, institutions need to systemise the human (reliability and responsiveness) and non-human elements (physical facilities).

Henry and Caldwell (2006) postulate that consumers with low educational levels prefer familiar products and their quality expectations are lower, therefore demonstrating more tolerance for ineffective services as opposed to consumers in developed countries or experienced and sophisticated consumers who frequent the same service provider. Chambati and Fatoki (2011) in their study on resident students' satisfaction with accommodation services provided by their university established that distrust builds between the students and university residence management when students as customers are not satisfied with service delivery. If there is lack in recognising longterm value of customer relationships by the institution, this leads to dissatisfaction. A member of faculty, for instance, who does not relate well with the students during the teaching and learning process, may create a negative experience of the education process to the students. Therefore, enhanced relationship marketing, communication, management commitment and trust must exist since customer relationship marketing is important for service delivery (Chambati and Fatoki, 2011). More so, customer relationship marketing enables an organisation to successfully deliver on service provision hence improved customer experience, retention, reduced costs, customer satisfaction and allegiance (Ojo, 2010; Chambati and Fatoki, 2011). Therefore, to increase customer satisfaction and enhance commitment, universities should provide services that suit students' needs thus resulting in the creation of customer loyalty.

Govender and Ramroop (2011) maintain that an important relationship between students' perception of the overall service experience and overall service satisfaction among postgraduates in a South African university. Therefore, there is a great need to manage the aforementioned associations which will translate to students' satisfaction with their education experience at university. In addition, Gbadamosi and De Jager (2008) emphasise the importance of the interwoven relationships between the variables and, effective management in the HE sector in South Africa, to enable universities to retain students, improve their ratings and thus help in recruitment of postgraduate students.

To achieve customer satisfaction Bick, Brown and Abratt (2004) assert that superior service and customer-focus is needed. Displeasure by the customers causes a decrease in market share. In their study, the aforementioned authors' state that institutions must demonstrate market orientation and customer orientation as well as customers' involvement (Bick et al., 2004). Zeithaml et al. (2006) argue that meaningful participation in terms of quality input by customers determines the quality of service performance as well as outcome. Similar opinions are held by Yoon et al. (2004) who assert that customers' participation is very important to service delivery process. Furthermore, quality service at university level is a precursor of academic excellence (Ezeokoli and Ayodele, 2014). In their study to determine SQ dimensions encountered by students on sustainability of HE in a Nigerian university, Ezeokoli and Ayodele (2014) established that SQ (SERVQUAL) dimensions individually contributed significantly to students academic satisfaction. This implies that quality services motivate and retain the best customers.

Peer and Mpinganjira (2011) concentrate on the greater role patients need to play in the design and evaluation of healthcare service improvement programmes specifically in private medical practices. While examining service quality and patient satisfaction in private medical practice in South Africa, the authors established that patients' perceived quality importantly affects their general satisfaction with an offering. It is also noted that patients' future positive behavioural intentions towards an offering is well determined by their previous service experience and general satisfaction. The care patients receive determines not only their satisfaction but also whether they will remain with a practice and whether they will recommend it to others (Coovadia, 2008).

In a study to establish how customers evaluate service quality of the appliance sales departments of retail stores in the context of South Africa, Gothan and Erasmus (2008) suggest that retailers should assist their customers during the pre-purchase stage with specific attention directed towards technical quality, that is. Intentional provision of product information (what is done) and the functional quality – empathetic assistance with regard to personal related product needs (how it is done). With regard to the public service, Akinboade, Kinfack and Mokwena (2012) assert that the proportion of citizens satisfied with public service delivery in South Africa is low. Other research findings which are consistent with thes aforementioned findings within public service delivery include Mzini (2011) and De Jager, Du-Plooy and Ayadi (2010). Service quality managers need to take cognisance of the most important service quality issues specifically customer expectations in public health sector to have satisfied customers (De Jager et al., 2010). Coovadia (2008) asserts that patients' satisfaction with the care they receive determines their stay with a service and whether they will recommend it to others.

3.13 Challenges of Implementing Service Quality within the Services Sector

Service quality improvement is confronted with many challenges which are inherent in many organisational systems. By looking at different barriers and limitations of quality systems in public administration, Bugdol (2006) outlines a number of challenges experienced with quality systems hence affecting service provision. Firstly, the author asserts that the lack of potential to apply the process approach is the major reason for low quality of services (Huq, 2005). Huq (2005) further states that organisations often place emphasis on the outcome not the development or process of services offered thereby seriously undermining the quality of services of organisations. This is because many functional cells or positions manage the process after a quality system implementation. For instance, in higher educational settings, for a student to be fully registered for a course he or she has to go through various processes in different functions right from admission inquiry, credit office and registration among others. Therefore, it is apparent that various documentations necessary for registration have to be obtained and performed in various offices. The aforementioned author further points out that, developments in the methods of management of human resources hinder the quality of services. Some institutions do not take full advantage of the many methods of human resources management like open and competitive recruitment processes, and employee appraisal is often left to the discretion of the immediate or direct supervisor or superior (Huq, 2005). In addition, Huq (2005) posits that holes in education and training lead to failure in quality systems of service. Furthermore, though the existence and functioning of quality services departments and/or desks which has become a “trend” in many organisations including higher learning institutions is touted to positively influence the quality of services, it happens that often such sections become another “connection in the service development process sequence” thus lengthening the time taken to serve a customer (Huq, 2005). For instance, an admission enquiry made at the registry office of a university need not be directed to a customer service desk for details of application fee and programme on offer. This is a simple enquiry that should be sorted by the officer at the admission desk. It actually becomes an obstacle on the way to achieving direct contact with a competent officer (Bugdol, 2006). Every staff member needs to have and actively support customer service ownership. In the contemporary business environment customer service has become integral across all sections in the organisation with a call centre as a backing ‘component’ of front office operations to receive, oversee and follow up on customer enquiries. This has led to gradual disappearance of the conventional customer service department. Having a manager at a senior level helps champion company-wide customer service orientation. Modern organisations know too well that customer service is reflected in all they do and this is not a preserve of a single department. This should not exclude higher learning institutions, since they need to keep pace with the changes of the modern world.

To add to the aforementioned by Bugdol (2006), it is often common to find many organisations from time to time mention that the customer is crucial; however just a couple of them put adequate resources to make everybody responsible to convey a service that compare to customers' expectations. It is essential for every single employee in an organisation to acknowledge that an organization-wide customer orientation is everything they need to keep customers (Zeithml and Bitner, 1996) and pull in new ones with or without an assigned division particularly set up to manage customer matters. This is so because several risks arise when considering customer service as an explicitly complaints handling department. For example, other sections of the organisation become contented, referring all queries and 'troublesome' customers to such a 'department', thus putting pressure of such teams created to address customer issues spending most of their time sorting matters of other departments. It is worth mentioning that to realise service quality, organisations need to move customer service role from this reactive role to a more proactive customer service ideology – i.e. being proactive to their consumer needs. They should steer a culture of service excellence that is, consistently meet and manage customer expectations by ensuring, for example, that minimal complaints re-occur while holding every section responsible for any disservice. A true service culture is one where service providers embrace a service mindset. As such, each individual in the organisation has a role to play in driving such a culture. Customers must demand better services while the institutions must commit to meeting the needs of their customers. Then again employees must demonstrate a service mindset and must be equipped with skills needed to deliver a service that meets customer expectations. This would help minimise other challenges posing a risk to the services industry such as lack of information flow within the organisation and failure to create a continuous improvement service culture (Huq, 2005).

Another obstacle is the variation in management styles whereby a new member of staff tends to influence or change the way things are done. It is common to find that every new 'manager' comes with his or her own management style which influences the way things are done in organisations. This in the long run affects service provision. Lastly, some services quality systems are badly designed even though they have been known to trigger some positive changes in institutions. However, Bugdol

(2006) warns that improvement in the quality of services should begin with the learning and recruitment processes, specifically pointing out that implementation of human resources management methods such as evaluation of personnel's competencies is necessary and should be useful. Stopping employee assessment during recruitment at experience only and verification of formal requirements with regard to skills and competencies are not sufficient, since they compromise the quality of services delivered.

3.13.1 Private Higher Education Institution as a Special Type of Organisation

Taking into consideration their nature and structure, private higher education institutions have specific characteristics. It is common in Kenya to find that there is a great difference in terms of structure and complexity which therefore has an influence on collective action. For the private universities, their structures differ from one university to another depending on the 'sponsoring' organisation – mainly Christian organisations who oversee their governance (Onsongo, 2011). Cultural orientation in these higher education institutions is a major aspect that impacts on organisational change and adaptation. These in one way or another postulate an organisation's standing and may enable or affect an institution's efficiency in service provision therefore, impacting on how it responds to different external demands and/or market pressures and also on how policies are put into practice or why they fail altogether. Studies have shown that status and satisfaction can be connected in different ways. Researchers have found positive correlations between a university's standing and satisfaction (Wang and Shieh, 2006; Hasan and Ilias, 2008; Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009). Therefore, it is obvious that the abovementioned features which are entrenched in a particular higher institution may to an extent unevenly influence service quality enhancement efforts.

3.14 Empirical Review on Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

There is evidence that customer satisfaction with service quality is by implication influenced via perceived value. For instance, a study by Eggert and Ulaga (2002) on customer satisfaction among 301 employees in US organisations found that with proper implementation of service quality – SERVQUAL features, there will be increased individual perceived value. Therefore, they concluded that this leads to increased customer satisfaction.

A study by Caruana, Money and Berthon (2000), using personal interviews with 80 customers of an audit firm, showed a positive relationship between service quality and perceived value. Similarly, Bigne, Moliner and Sanchez (2003) found in multi-service organisations in Spanish public services that overall service quality connects with satisfaction. This was similar to higher educational settings, where Ham and Hayduk (2003) found that there was a positive correlation between perception of service quality and student satisfaction. Each of the dimensions of service quality was correlated and it emerged that reliability had a higher degree affiliation followed by responsiveness and empathy, assurance and tangibility in that order. Combrinck's (2006) study on students' perceptions at the management department of the University of Western Cape, South Africa, established that there was uncertainty among undergraduates in their attitude to the service quality in the department while postgraduates' ratings of service quality were more negative. The study emphasised the importance of management to put more effort into the management of quality and related outcomes.

While developing an internet sevice based quality model (e-service) by customising the SERVQUAL tool, Lee and Lin (2005) examined the nexus among e-service quality measurements and general service quality, customer satisfaction and purchase intentions. The researchers surveyed 297 consumers, and complex statistical methods were employed to test both measurement and research models. It was found that web site appearance, dependability, interactivity and trust impacts on the general service quality and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, trust issues significantly influenced purchasing intention of customers. The study proposed that online stores ought to subsume innovating marketing and promotion techniques to enhance customer purchase intentions through dedicating adequate resources to the e-service quality.

On the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction at a library in a Taiwan university, Wang and Shieh (2006) employed a questionnaire survey to investigate users' perspectives and service delivery by the library. Findings of this research show that general service quality influences overall satisfaction. Besides, this research showed that tangibles, reliability, assurance and empathy were relatively important stimulants impacting on overall satisfaction. However, perceived ranking of service quality attributes had no significant difference among institutes and status (Wang and Shieh, 2006).

A study conducted by Hasan and Ilias (2008) among 200 undergraduate students in two private higher education institutions to ascertain the relationship between the fivefold dimensions of service quality and overall service quality and students' satisfaction, revealed that service quality is an important gateway to student satisfaction. From the results, two dimensions, namely empathy and assurance, contributed more to satisfaction than the other dimensions of service quality that were measured, namely: age, tangibility, responsiveness and reliability. Therefore, this meant that empathy and assurance relatively contribute most to students' satisfaction.

Hishamuddin and Azleen (2008) looked at service quality and student satisfaction in private higher education institutions in Malaysia by adopting the SERVQUAL dimensions and conducting correlation and regression analysis. Overall, the results of their study revealed that the model's quality dimensions have a significant relationship with students' satisfaction. Similarly, Mahiah et al. (2006) asserts that these factors are highly correlated and very significantly associated with one another therefore implying a significant interconnection with student satisfaction.

Prugsamatz et al. (2006) considered the impact of explicit and implied service assurances on Chinese undergraduates' expectations of overseas universities. Information was gathered from 133 undergraduate Chinese students from two Australian universities. The results demonstrated that Chinese students relied upon past encounters, publicity and personalised interractions suggesting that, the more explicit and implicit service promises the respondent is presented to the higher the anticipated desires of the university's service quality. Nevertheless, their level of desires was relatively superior when presented to explicit service promises.

In 2008, Manuel conducted an empirical study to predict customers' perception of service quality. He applied the SERVQUAL instrument, surveyed 190 students at the Business Studies Unit of the Durban University of Technology. The results of the study confirmed that each of the fivefold-dimensions exhibited a negative quality gap. The results further suggested that 'tangibles' componet had the largest gap. Likewise, there were noteworthy contrasts between the perceptions and expectations of students in all of the five SERVQUAL measurements.

Yunus, Ismail, Ishak and Juga (2009) conducted a survey among a sample of 150 Malaysian public university students using the SERVQUAL instrument and a cross-sectional research design. They conducted a field study to investigate the effects of service quality and perceived value on customer satisfaction. The outcome of hierarchical regression analysis showed that perceived value positively correlated with each of the five dimensions of SERVQUAL, in turn, were significant determinants of customer satisfaction. It was concluded that perceived value partly mediates in the relationships between service quality and its determinats. Similarly, a study by Naik, Gantasala and Prabhakar (2010) on the effect of SERVQUAL on customer satisfaction in India's retailing found that service delivery significantly influenced consumer fulfillment. It could be presumed that service quality dimensions are crucial for satisfaction in retailing.

Trivellas and Dargenidou (2009) looked at the influence of organisational culture and job satisfaction on the quality of services provided in higher education in Greece. The research used different frameworks to measure the three variables namely organisational culture, job satisfaction and higher education quality. The sample included academic and non-academic staff. A structured questionnaire was employed to measure the aforementioned variables. The results indicated that specific culture variables directly affect different dimensions of higher education service quality.

Chitty and Soutar (2004) assessed the applicability of the European Customer Satisfaction Index framework to tertiary education in Europe, using a sample of 221 undergraduates in an Australian university. The data was analysed through structural equation modeling, and variations emerged in some of the model's paths. The results showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between image and loyalty, although satistaction had a negative correlation with loyalty. It was recommended that insititutions of higher learning need to criticaly observe their reputation well if they are to create student allegiance.

A study by Ombati et al. (2010) on service delivery and information and communication technologies in banks in Kenya through a cross-sectional survey design on 120 consumers who use virtual banking services revealed, safety, efficiency, convenience, accuracy, availability, dependability and reliability, and good user interface as the most important variables. The study further established that technology and service quality are interrelated.

Kimani (2011) conducted research on business students' general perspectives of their respective universities about service quality and found out that service attitudes affect student overall satisfaction with a service. The study sampled 436 business students using survey research design and employed stratified and purposive sampling procedures. Factor analysis was used to establish which load more into the dimensions of university service quality while Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the nature of relationship. Kimani (2011) concluded that various factors determined service quality in Kenyan universities aggregate.

Owino's (2013) study on 750 university students employing Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and hierarchical regression to test the influence of service quality (SQ) and corporate image on student satisfaction (CS) in Kenyan universities found existence of significant differences in the dimensions of SQ that influence CS among public and private university students. It was also found that SQ was positivey related to CS, SQ and corporate image and corporate image and CS. It was also revealed that students in private universities experienced different service quality from those in public universities. The study concluded that SQ has a strong influence on CS and recommended that building the corporate image and ensuring reliability of services will positively influence students' perceptions.

While measuring students' perceptions of service quality at an Iranian university, Khodayari and Khodayari (2011) found that a gap exists between students' perceptions and expectations and also among SERVQUAL's five fold quality dimensions (reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy). The researchers concluded that consumer expectations minus perceptions signifies the perceived service quality determined by the relative extent of the four gaps as well as the direction related to delivered service quality and the target to be delivered on the providers' side.

De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010) carried out a survey among 404 students from universities in South Africa in an attempt to examine the gap between students, perception and importance attached to service delivery. The study further wanted to ascertain the true determinants of general satisfaction with their respective universities. From the randomly selected group of students, there was lower service expectations with what students' considered important in their universities. The most important factors that were found to effect on students overall satisfaction with their respective institutions were reliance on management's support, availability of hostels, willingness to leave or/and change, explaining up to 30 percent of variance.

An exploratory study by Govender and Ramroop (2011) examined the relationship between the postgraduate (PG) students' perception of service quality, service experience and satisfaction with the PG service of 816 cohort of graduating master's and doctorate postgraduates in one of the top five research universities in South Africa using a specially developed and validated PG service quality, and a single item PG service satisfaction measuring instrument. Statistical correlation analysis and structural equation modeling were used to propose associations among PG experience and PG service quality, and the results revealed that the PG students' perceptions of overall service experience and their service quality were significantly related. It was also evident that there was a significant association between students' perception of the overall service experience and overall service satisfaction. However, no relationship was found between the PG service experience and PG service satisfaction, although service quality was found to be connected with service satisfaction.

Basher et al.'s (2012) studied the influence of service quality and government's role on consumer satisfaction in the microfinance sector in Kenya. The findings revealed that service quality had a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction while, on the other hand, regression results revealed an insignificant role of government on customer satisfaction. These results showed that in making a decision on whether to repurchase services of the microfinance institutions, customers were likely to consider on the quality of service they receive.

While exploring the perceived differences in HE service quality among 212 third and fourth year undergraduate students of a private and public university center in Spain using a modified SERVQUAL instrument, Calvo-Porall et al. (2013) tried to elucidate the quality in learning and student experiences, and achievement from students' point of view, by identifying the determinants of perceived quality in university. Through mean comparisons and making use of covariance structure models, it was found that perceived HE quality is greatly influenced by tangibility followed by empathy, with significant differences emerging, with private university centres performing better than public university centres.

Ravichandran et al. (2012) conducted an empirical examination into SQ employing HEdPERF among professional engineering institutions in India using a sample of 106 respondents. Through univariate analysis and multiple regression, some attributes (quality programmes, standard syllabus and structure, empathetic administrative officers, feedback from students for progressive measures) were found to be dominant in predicting the overall SQ. More so, through EFA eleven factors (11) loaded that surpassed original HEdPERF scale. Using the HEdPERF scale, Kumar and Yang's (2014) study of SQ in Malaysia among 275 international undergraduate students in a university found, four determining factors of satisfaction among students namely; reputation, access, programme issues and career prospects and that satisfaction exerted positive significant effect on loyalty.

Firdaus (2006) study in higher education in Malaysia among 409 students posited that student perceptions levels of the service quality are constrained within six dimensions namely non-academic aspects, academic aspects, reputation, access, programme issues and understanding. By conducting a multiple regression analysis, the six dimensions were found to be significantly related to service quality level provided by an institution. More so, a direct blend of the of all the six-HEdPERF dimensions accounted for over fourty two percent of the variance of SQ level.

3.15 Service Quality Measurement – The Missing Theoretical Link

According to a number of sources inter alia literature, research studies and surveys, there is evidence that in the higher education setting all over the globe, it seems that measurement of service quality has remained elusive, since different researchers used different methods to measure service quality. For example, Kimani (2011) employed the modified HEdPERF to evaluate perceived quality of services of commerce students' in Kenyan public and private universities. Owino (2013) used adapted and modified performance-only scale to assess the relationship between SQ and corporate image and student satisfaction in Kenyan universities. Firdaus (2005) employed both HEdPERF and SERVPERF to determine which scale was more applicable in the higher education setting. Firdaus (2005) concluded that HEdPERF was an all-inclusive performance-based measuring scale that strives to isolate determining or/and contributing factors of service quality within the institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, this modified HEdPERF measurement instrument – a performance-based approach helps clarify the variance among factors under assessment thus generating acceptable levels of construct and discriminant validity, lead to consistent assessments and superior model fitness (Firdaus, 2006).

In this study, through the literature review, various models for operationalisation and conceptualisation of the service quality concept have been identified and applied in the services industry, including higher education. It is also apparent that conflicting results have been produced on how the concept of service quality should be observed and measured or how organisations can use it to improve their service performance. However, the HEdPERF model which formed the basis of the current research has not been widely explored. Thus, further exploration and application of the model in studying customer satisfaction in HE is important and necessary.

Lee and Lin (2005) modified the SERVQUAL scale while developing an internet-based (e-service) quality model and evidenced that the components of website design, approachability, availability and reliance affect general quality and user satisfaction. This was as a result of their research study examining the relationship among key components and general quality, satisfaction and consumption plans. Other researchers who have used the SERVQUAL instrument in higher education include Khodayari and Khodayari (2011), Manuel (2008), and Hishamuddin and Azleen (2008). Caruana et al. (2000) conducted face to face cross-examination of customers of an audit company to find out if any relationship existed between service quality and value perceived, and they established that the two conceptual variables were clearly interrelated.

In addition, different exploration designs and methodologies were applied to evaluate the quality of service in institutions of higher learning. Kimani (2011), who did a cross-sectional survey study to assess perceived service value among commerce students' in Kenyan public and private universities, found that overall student satisfaction was positively influenced by service quality expectations. Prugsamatz et al. (2006) adopted a cross-sectional design to assess the impact of service assurances on what overseas students' (Chinese) feel foreign institutions of higher education (service provider) 'should offer'. Three influential sources of information found were marketing and promotion, favourable communication and previous experience. However, some limitations existed; for example, Prugsamatz et al.'s (2006) study was limited in that the outcomes were not universal thus could not relate to other cultures, such as Europeans and other African countries meaning results would be problematic. Through comparing two public and two private universities, Kimani's (2011) study was limited in terms of the sample, since the focus was on business schools and students per se. Basher et al.'s (2012) study was also limited in terms of sample size and scope (one industry) in that the focus was only on two microfinance institutions in one region or town and a smaller sample where probability sampling procedures were not used; hence the results were not generalisable. Calvo-Porall et al.'s (2013) study was narrow in terms of sample which is skewed towards the undergraduates thereby excluding representation of the whole university's groups. Confined to the boundaries of Kenyan university cultural context Owino's (2013) study excluded students taking graduate programmes and was limited in terms of the universities sampled. Firdaus' (2006) study was limited in terms of measurement items wording which were entirely positively worded contrary to Churchill's (1979) assertion that instrument should have both positively and negatively worded items. It did not also include other customer groups such as employees who are internal to institutions. It is important to acknowledge that most of the studies conducted in higher education institutions have applied different methodological perspectives, quantitative or qualitative; however, the current study used a quantitative approach and also mixed the two groups of students (undergraduates and postgraduates), disciplines, different learning modes and other aspects of university customers including both administrative and academic staff in studying service quality and customer satisfaction.

Recent studies (Manuel, 2008; De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010; Kimani, 2011; Govender and Ramroop, 2011; Khodayari and Khodayari, 2011; Owino, 2013 and Calvo-Porall et al., 2013) conducted in Africa and other developed countries on dependable statistical correlation between the two constructs (quality judgement and consumer fulfillment) in universities have put forward mixed outcomes. In addition, it is evident that service judgement in universities or/and higher learning industry in general in developed countries remains relatively established plus that research has been done in detail to explore the concept. Knowing how various customers and stakeholders perceive service quality provides a need to contribute to the debate of service quality in a less-researched country. Moreover, the measure of service quality concept in private higher learning institutions is greatly under-explored, specifically, in reference to the internal service and/or internal marketing perspectives. Addionally, to date, it is not within the author's knowledge of any specific research, which has been reported, incorporating the internal service and/or internal marketing within the higher education system. Studying the concept in greater detail can benefit institutions of higher learning in Kenya. Consequently, the measurement of service quality in Kenyan private universities could lead to unique information that may well be implemented in quality management and enhancement. Having an insight of how the different measures impact and connect to general quality judgement through quality assessments, universities would have the capacity to creatively formulate effective and comprehensive set of service delivery procedures. Furthermore, isolating the positive and negative aspects relating to the different quality dimensions can help to divide and share available organisational assests to enhance service provision to higher education consumers. Therefore, this study will enrich and extend the previous quantitative studies in the area of service quality by looking into all service judgement dimesnions (academic and non-academic) and, expanding the target group to include the select employees as many of the studies in the review have not done so.

The next section discusses some service quality models which were applied in different settings. From the empirical studies cited above, which focus on the measures of service quality (SQ) judgement, it is evident that SQ is not unidimensional but rather a multidimensional construct (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010; Kimani, 2011; Govender and Ramroop, 2011; Calvo-Porall et al., 2013 and Owino, 2013). Demonstrations of the different dimensions of SQ that have been explored in the higher education (HE) sector are illustrated in the discussions which follow. It was also evident from the earlier literature that SQ is a complex concept, since Grönroos (1984) asserted that quality can be measured through functional, technical and image perspectives, while Parasuraman et al. (1985; 1988) proposed five dimensions: reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness. Even though there is agreement on the complexity of the construct with many dimensions used to measure SQ, the concept differs in many studies due to the specificity nature of SQ and the context in which it is being looked at. Table 3.3 provides a reference of SQ related studies in the general service and HE contexts that have used different measurement frameworks.

Table 3.3 Evidence Supporting SQ in HE and General Service Industries

Quality Model & Dimensions (Operationalisation)	Perspective	Concept Investigated	Studies
SERVPERF: Essential, acceptable and functional	Undergraduate students	Service Quality	Oldfield and Baron (2000)
SERVQUAL: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance & tangibility	Students	Service Quality	Ham and Hayduk (2003)

Quality Model & Dimensions (Operationalisation)	**Perspective**	**Concept Investigated**	**Studies**
ECSI: Image, staff and administrative staff study programmes and facilities	Undergraduate business students	Online Service Quality	Chitty and Soutar (2004)
SERVQUAL: E-service quality dimensions – dependability, approachability, web site design and trust	Online consumers	Online Service Quality	Lee and Lin (2005)
HEdPERF: Non-academic aspects, programme aspects, academic aspect, reputation and programme access	Higher education students	Service Quality	Firdaus (2006)
SERVQUAL expectation-perception gap: empathy, assurance, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness	Undergraduates at management department	Service Quality	Combrinck (2006)
SERVQUAL: Chinese students' service expectations (explicit and implicit) of overseas universities	Undergraduate Chinese students	Service Quality	Prugsamatz et al. (2006)
SERVQUAL: University library; Tangibles, reliability, assurance and empathy	University library customers	Service Quality	Wang and Shieh (2006)
SERVQUAL: age, empathy, assurance tangibility, responsiveness and reliability	Undergraduate students	Service Quality	Hasan and Ilias (2008)
SERVQUAL	Students at University	Service Quality	Hishamuddin and Azleen (2008)
SERVQUAL	Students at business studies unit	Service Quality	Manuel (2008)
SERVQUAL	Undergraduates	Service Quality	Yunus et al. (2009)

Quality Model & Dimensions (Operationalisation)	**Perspective**	**Concept Investigated**	**Studies**
SERVQUAL	Retail units in India	Service Quality	Naik et al. (2010)
SERVQUAL: Willingness for change, students' intention to leave, trust in administration and support, availability of accommodation facilities and academic performance	Students	Service Quality	De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010)
Customised HEdPERF	Undergraduate business students	Service Quality	Kimani (2011)
SERVQUAL	Students	Service Quality	Khodayari and Khodayari (2011)
Modified Scale: PG service quality, PG service experience and PG service satisfaction measuring instrument	Postgraduate research students	Service Quality	Govender and Ramroop (2011; 2012) Govender (2012; 2013)
SERVQUAL	3rd and 4th courses undergraduates	Service Quality	Calvo-Porall et al. (2013)
Adapted and modified performance-only scale	Undergraduates	Service Quality	Owino (2013)
HEdPERF	Professional engineering students	Service Quality	Ravichandran et al. (2012)
HEdPERF	International undergraduate students	Service Quality	Kumar and Yang (2014)

Source: *Researcher's compilation, 2014*

Table 3.3 has shown that different ways of assessing the quality of service and the models applied in both the higher education sector and general services industry have been applied widely by different researchers while revealing different results. From all these studies it can be deduced that service quality is not a unidimensional concept since some earlier studies of service quality also confirms its multidimensional conceptualisation. However, it should be pointed out that due to the context specific nature of service quality therefore, the dimensionality of service quality varies from one study to another.

3.16 Management and Measurement of Perceived Service Quality (SQ) in a Higher Education (HE) Context

3.16.1 Management of SQ in HE

3.16.1.1Through Employees and Students

Becket and Brookes (2008) assert that higher education institutions (HEIs) are learning organisations where quality of service is interpreted and evaluated by all internal constituents (employees and current students) as and when provided. The constituents also have dissimilar preferences, for example, of how the indicators of quality of service are assessed which may also be conflicting, and how they define it (Becket and Brookes, 2008). As learning centres, this assists the university to enhance the general quality of service often through more innovative practices. The aforementioned authors further state that in higher education, various methods have been adopted by internal stakeholders which include, among others, service assessment through the use of various measurement techniques and models that have been adopted in HE setting (see section 3.16.2), individual appraisal practices and student judgement of the learning process. All these efforts have proved to occassion constant performance and quality enhancement. The contribution of employees towards service quality initiatives has proved to boost the integration of new approaches and/or ways to consistently manage quality within all organisations' service processes (Becket and Brookes, 2008). There is a need to view knowledge and skills development as a process to increase employees' ability and willingness to perform. Particularly, efforts should be directed towards improving employees' awareness and skills as supported by Berry et al. (1988) who assert that reliability and assurance have a direct relationship with the competence of an employee. Knowledge and skills training is an endless organisational activity hence, without short-term sessions and advanced trainings the employee risks going stale or becoming sloppy, and eventually the motivation dies when learning and application of what has been learnt stagnate. Different methods can be used to enhance learning by operational staff and experts in sessions, socialisation and good training programmes which will raise service quality issues.

In addition Berry et al. (1988), posit that it is central to take into account supervisors interests in quality endeavours. The authors argue that it not only enables them to focus on customer-contact staff and internal employees however efforts should as well be directed towards having key personnel – operation unit manager. Such a manager will act as a quality crusader besides establishing service quality within the quality team of the organization, and all actions to improve service quality in the organisation must involve them. Therefore, as Shahin and Samea (2010) articulate, they ought to pay more attention to quality practices and those things that will generate some benefits to the customers. The authors argue that paying little or no attention to the service process or leaving it on its own altogether will blind them to customers' perceptions. Similarly, they will be unable to see how the performance of employees is incorporated in the service process. Failure to identify this perceived service by the employees which is related to a service offer will compromise the service delivery process as it has been found that service delivery is a result of employee fulfillment of his or her obligation (Shahin and Samea, 2010). Similarly, involving service providers (service managers and employees) in the service process helps them critically understand their responsibilities alongside ensuring greater consumer participation (Hsieh and Yen, 2005). Likewise, it helps alleviate the employees' role conflict. If the roles of both service providers and service customers are communicated, this will reduce job stresses that may arise due to job conflicts.

Another way of managing service quality is by setting customer-oriented service standards which helps improve quality. This can be achieved through making it a practice or a norm and symbolising quality in the institution. Berry et al. (1988) note that standards help clarify what are the needs of offering greater value to the customer and communicate the most 'significant' priorities of the organisation. Performance can also be evaluated against set standards because quality assessment itself derives from the service process as well as the service outcome. To sum up, to build a culture that is service oriented there is need to continually evaluate performance with set criterions and reward outstanding performance.

3.16.1.2 Through External Stakeholders

Conventionally, quality assurance procedures have been associated with external stakeholders such as the higher education regulators. For instance many countries have national organisations which are solely mandated with the management of quality within HEIs. For instance, in Kenya, the Commission for University Education (CUE) has the broad mandate of making better provisions for the advancement of university education and for connected purposes (CUE, 2013). Consequently, the broad roles of the institution are to inspect, accredit, audit and report on procedures of quality within HE institutions. They are primarily concerned with measurement and evaluation of quality assurance procedures in HEIs. They guarantee value and dependability of systems of quality and processes adopted to manage service quality standards (Becket and Brookes, 2008). Existence of such organisations of quality assurance requires that HEIs exhibit actions that make them accountable in their practices thus exercising control of quality and the people in charge of quality control within these institutions. This, therefore, ensures that the external stakeholders measure procedures and the degree of their quality against required levels of quality of service being provided.

3.16.2 A Review of Some Service Quality Models and Frameworks for Measuring Customer Satisfaction

The changing needs and expectations exhibited by an organisation’s customers and the search for superior service and delivery of quality services by organisations to their customers have compelled companies to often evaluate the quality of their services to keep in line with the market demands. It is difficult to find customers settling for less service quality once they have experienced the possible. Customers will continue to look forward, and they will expect more not only from a higher education service supplier but from all providers without exception. Therefore, to deal with such challenges, providers of services must continuously assess their service quality and, furthermore, benchmark the same with trend-setters in the similar or other industry sector. Measurement of service quality has therefore become crucial for higher education service providers despite many scholars and experts maintaining that evaluating quality judgements at institutions of higher education poses one of the greatest challenges in quality circles (Quinn et al., 2009). Despite the challenges posed in measurement of service quality in HE and the complexities involved in the nature of services offered in the HE environment, it appears necessary to continue measuring these services for continuous improvement.

The section reviews some select and recent service quality measurement instruments, their relevance in higher learning institutions, their application to different settings both in the higher learning industry and other industries too. It is acknowledged that the conceptualisation and operationalisation of service quality is an on-going debate and a very contentious subject matter. Models of different kinds have been put forward to explain this construct though the dimensionality of the service quality has not been successfully addressed. The review of the select model is done in order to give an overview of contributions of the models that concurrently relate service quality and customer satisfaction in the different services sector. The models are presented in terms of a brief description and the major observations.

3.16.2.1 The Nordic Model – Technical and Functionality Quality Model

This model developed by Grönroos (1984) discusses the concept of quality by distinguishing what is received by the customer (technical quality) and the service performance which results from the interaction (mental) between the consumer and the service-firm employee (functional quality). In a nutshell, the functional quality would include all that is received in the service process itself. In addition, there is the corporate image dimension (aka corporate identity) of service quality, which is the ‘mental picture’, formed in the minds of consumers or/and springs up at the mention of the specific service organization plus how they view it (what the customers see about the firm), and this is built up by the technical and functional quality of the service. In addition to these two factors, many other factors determine the corporate image and this, in turn, is reflected in the nature of associations and perceptions that customers have with the company’s services. These factors include: corporate social conduct, corporate contributions, corporate employee conduct, business conduct, service (features, performance, style and design, reliability, etc), nature of communication (advertising, publicity, promotions, public relations, direct mail, web design and interaction telemarketing, etc), distribution channels and networks, pricing, customer support and training, etc.

The model illustrates that presupposed service quality and the actual (perceived) service quality provided in an organisation should be equivalent in order to manage perceived service quality. The management of HE can use this model by studying what the customers of HE expect regarding nature of service quality and afterward judge against the actual quality of service that they are providing. The management should take care to improve the image that customers and the general public have because this in turn affects customers' perceptions about their universities. As noted by Seth et al. (2006), it was observed that when consumers' interests in a firm's services are consistently reflected in their daily dialogues, then this has a significant effect on prospective customers short-term and long-tern judgements; thus indicating the importance of managing a university image. Image has also been associated with influencing students' choice of institution. This therefore means that HE institutions need to build a reputation for provision of higher quality experiences for its customers. Failure to do so will lead to a negative impact on the institution; for example, it may impact negatively on student enrolment and retention (Canic and McCarthy, 2006).

3.16.2.2 The SERVQUAL Model

The service quality model (SERVQUAL) developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985; 1988) delineates service quality as the difference (gap) between consumer perceptions of quality service received and expected service. The authors argue that the characteristics consumers use to evaluate different service qualities (expected and perceived) are similar. Service quality is an individual's formed attitude and consists of either positive or negative previous service encounters. This model uses gap analysis and it is argued that organisation's service is enhanced with better management of the service differences.

In most research on service quality, the SERVQUAL model or a modified SERVQUAL model is used and it has also been successfully adapted within the education context (Pariseau and McDaniel, 1997; Stodnick and Rogers, 2009). After an evaluation of four alternative service quality models, Brandy and Cronin (2001) stated that the SERVQUAL model appears to be distinct from others as it uses one or more determinants to measure service quality. However, this model is criticised for only focusing on the service delivery process. Grönroos (2001) further states that by looking at the way the service was actually received and using it to judge a customer's behaviour may be misleading of the true or/and genuine quality of service since it eliminates all quality factors of a service experience hence has a less estimated worth. In addition, Caruana et al. (2000) argue that on the SERVQUAL scale respondents mark their desired service quality level near the high end and adequate service quality level near the low end of the scale. Furthermore, they tend to mark service judgements in between the desired and adequate level making a variance restriction which limits the full use of the scale. The model is also criticised on the context in which the number of dimensions that make up the service quality was done, varying customer's assessments of service quality, fluctuating items that do not load on to the expected factors which one would have prior knowledge, the high level to which the five dimensions intercorrelate and its application within university education and inability to capture total service quality expectations of student customers. Despite SERVQUAL's face and construct validity flaws, it remains a dominant reliable scale within institutions and recognisable in articles and adapted forms to assess the service value and consumer expectations (Buttle, 1996).

Stodnick and Rogers (2009) applied the SERVQUAL in a classroom setting in the USA and the findings showed that correlation exists between 'measures of different but related constructs (nomological validity) and with other measures of the same construct (convergent validity)', (Buttle, 1996: 24). Stodnick and Rogers (2009: 115) further argued that SERVQUAL performs better than conventional student evaluation scale and significant differences in the variables related to student achievement and satisfaction can be clarified. "It was concluded that the measurement of service quality of the learning environment implied that learners could be customers; hence this is important for all stakeholders in the delivery of higher education" (Stodnick and Rogers, 2009: 115). Cuthbert (1996) used the SERVQUAL model based on the initial perceptions of a close fit between the elements of service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985) and the factors considered to be relevant in the measurement of students' course experience. Similarly, Pariseau and McDaniel (1997) employed the SERVQUAL scale to assess both the excellence and importance of each of the five dimensions at two universities in the USA, for both the faculty (providers) and the students (customers), and concluded that SERVQUAL may be used as a tool for benchmarking performance to enhance service quality in higher education.

3.16.2.3 Service Performance-Only (SERVPERF) Model

The SERVPERF model was developed by Cronin and Taylor (1992) due to the limitations of the SERVQUAL model and strives to capture only the perceptions of service quality during and after a service encounter. SERVPERF as a method of evaluation of service quality became famous due to the belief that it is more practical model for the measurement of service quality and consumer satisfaction. According to Cronin and Taylor (1992), performance-only based measures of service quality are appropriate means of measuring students' service experiences within the educational contexts. This framework made use of the original SERVQUAL scale items but excluded the expectations items of the SERVQUAL scale therefore, making it a more comprehensive scale towards measurement of customer attitudes towards service quality.

Several studies have been conducted using the SERVPERF scale. Firdaus (2006) conducted a study on 409 students in six tertiary institutions to test the service quality for unidimensionality, consistency and strength, and superior explained variance employing SERVPERF and HEdPERF. Oldfield and Baron (2000) measured service performance in higher education as experienced by students', and they argued that they (students) would positively evaluate service quality in their university without giving it a second thought so long as they had been at their university for at least six months.

The model has some limitations associated with it despite its impact in the service quality domain. According to Firdaus (2006), even though the model addresses perceptions after service consumption, it does not evaluate variation in estimation scores. Secondly, SERVPERF is weighed down by the unique characteristics of the higher education industry since it is a generic framework. It also overlooks the need to assess expectations due to their variation during a service encounter.

3.16.2.4 European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI) Model

According to Kristensen et al. (2000), the ECSI model relates consumer fulfillment to its contributing factors and in turn, to its consequence, thus encouraging consumer patronage. The model proposes that supposed value significantly influences satisfaction and student allegiance. The actual service (hard dimensions), delivery methods (soft dimensions) and the providers repute contributes or/and influences perceived value. The hard dimensions are the resultant educational services (courses and teaching approaches) including other exterior services such as counselling and library services, while the soft dimensions are means by which the education service is conveyed based on student-lecturer relations (Chitty and Soutar, 2004).

The ECSI model has seven latent variables (reputation, expectations, perceived quality of hardware, perceived quality of human ware, perceived value, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty), (Martensen et al., 2000). All the latent variables of the ECSI model and the relationship between them are important to a university. The hardware and human ware quality are also logical in a higher education institution where human ware refers to the human elements such as the teaching staff and administrative staff while hardware are the non-human elements such as courses and equipment.

Chitty and Soutar (2004) assessed the applicability of the ECSI model to tertiary education in Europe by focusing on a sample from undergraduates. From the aforementioned study, it was established that student loyalty could be measured by the revised ECSI framework. The results from the assessment implied that student loyalty in a tertiary school emanates, and is sustained, through proper communication strategies building faith and trust that a university can offer fulfilling learning experiences. Further, much emphasis should be on the end results as opposed to the strategies used to convey the results.

According to Martensen et al. (2000) ECSI describes the relationship among individual variables, such as image, as the starting point of customer satisfaction analysis, and that the variable is closely related to service and the institution. Customer expectation is related to individual expectations from a service which is influenced by past experiences as well as the promotion of the service, hence impacting on customer satisfaction. Perception of quality of service is concerned with the service process or attributes such as staff qualities and time, among others. Similarly, perceptions about the value of service are related to expected quality. Customer loyalty, on the other hand, emanates from positive service quality which envisions itself through repeat purchases of the service and through word of mouth reference while complaints result from comparison of service expectations and performance.

3.16.2.5 E-Service Quality Model

The success and failure of electronic commerce is determined by service quality (Seth and Deshmukh, 2005). This model was developed by Santos (2003) to achieve high economic value, consumer gratification and quality sustainance for the organisations in e-business. For greater achievement of aforementioned results, the e-service quality model advocates for an elegant web site, with ease of access, understanding and attraction, and should be fast enough, have adequate support and focused maintenance. According to Zeithaml et al. (2009), the growth of e-tailing and e-services has raised concerns among organisations since they are unable to tell how consumers' make judgement of the cyberspace service quality. Several definitions of e-service have been provided for example, Rust and Lemon (2001) talk about e-service as provision of service on the internet while Santos (2003) refers to superior e-service quality in the virtual market place (cyberspace) as judged by the consumers'.

Within the education sector all over the world, online learning (e-learning) has gained prominence. This is because of numerous advantages it offers such as it is relatively cheap, convenient and has a wider reach to many potential learners carry on their education. Any learning delivered through the internet where the instructor and the learner do not meet physically in a classroom per se is referred to as online learning

(Richardson and Swan, 2003. Delivery of learning via the internet allows learners to participate remotely. This has seen e-learning develop in that learners no longer need live interactive sessions with their lecturers in order to complete a course. Other features such as interactive mode, web design and appearance, content, and ease of download, among others, enable learners and other customers to enquire, download or register; hence they are important factors for any higher education institution.

3.16.2.6 Higher Education PERFormance (HedPERF) Model

Firdaus (2005; 2006) proposed the Higher Education PERFormance-only (HEdPERF) Model. He argues that it is all-inclusive, reliable and valid measurement scale that attempts to isolate the absolute attributes or/and aspects of service quality unique to the higher education industry. Compared to SERVPERF, HEdPERF is an industry specific framework to measure service performances within the higher education setting (Firdaus, 2005). Nevertheless, the author suggested that the model be further validated through research in different countries and industries because his study was limited to one service industry – Malaysian Tertiary Institutions.

It is further important elucidate that service quality in tertiary institutions is vital; therefore university management should direct their efforts towards improving satisfaction and how it is perceived by all stakeholders, by taking into consideration all SQ dimensions. Universities that want to increase customer satisfaction have to consider all the SQ dimensions rather than focusing only on academic characteristics as the literature review has revealed. Furthermore, analysis of non-academic aspects of service quality including external factors such as reputation and access and other employees who are not necessarily students as many studies reviewed have done is crucial. With increased competition within the HE environment, satisfying customers' needs only may not be sufficient without satisfying how they perceive the overall service quality.

This study used the HEdPERF model (Firdaus, 2006) to measure overall customer satisfaction within the private higher education context in Kenya because it is deemed all inclusive in terms of the dimensions to be measured, both academic and non-academic, and more specifically employee perceptions of SQ which affects their performance which, in turn, is reflected in the service delivered to students and other university customers. In addition reputation, programme issues, and access were included. Moreover, the instrument is justified for use in this research because different customers (employees) of private HE institutions were targeted contrary to many studies that have researched on students. More so, little research has been conducted specifically within the conceptual model of HEdPERF producing contradictory evidence.

3.17 Summary

This section has reviewed some service quality models and their application to different contexts. Table 3.4 summarises the key tenets of the aforementioned models and application of the service quality concept. From the review, it appears there is no universal set of definitions, models and dimensions of service quality. It is also evident from the table that service quality is a subjective construct and takes a multidimensional approach. The review of the models seem to be more general than specific to a particular industry setting; therefore, care needs to be observed in adoption of the models to particular contexts in their application.

Table 3.4 Summary of Related Models Focusing on Service Quality

	Researcher(s)/Author	Year Developed	Definition	Major variables	Application
1.	Grönroos The Nordic Model	1984	Quality results from comparison of perception with expected performance. Identified 2 components of SQ.	Technical quality Functional quality	General service sector
2.	Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml SERVQUAL Model	1988	The differences between consumers' anticipations and their view of service. Identified 5components of SQ.	Reliability Assurance Tangibility Empathy Responsiveness,	General service sector
3.	Cronin and Taylor The SERVPERF Model	1992	Relates customers' perceptions of a service to their expectations of the service experience. An improvement of SERVQUAL.	RATER factors but based on performance only.	General service sector
4.	Zeithaml, Bitner and Glemler (2009) Santos (2003) E-service Quality Model	2003; 2009	Identified seven dimensions that are critical for core service evaluation.	Efficiency Fulfillment System availability Privacy Responsiveness Compensation	E-businesses

	Researcher(s)/Author	Year Developed	Definition	Major variables	Application
				Contact	
5.	European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI) Model		Interconnects customer satisfaction to its contributing factors, and in turn to customer allegiance.	Aesthetic appeal of a company, Expectations, Product quality Customer interaction Supposed service worth	General service sector and Higher Education
6.	Firdaus The HEdPERF Model	2005: 569 - 581	A more comprehensive performance based model that attempts to capture the authentic determinants of service quality within the higher education sector. Comprise six aspects	Non – academic aspects, academic aspects, reputation, Access , Program aspects and understanding	Higher Education

***Source**: Researchers compilation, 2012*

3.18 Theoretical Framework, Development of Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

3.18.1 Theoretical Perspectives of Different Approaches

Theoretical frameworks/models are aimed at making findings of a study meaningful and also generalisable. For example, Creswell (2014: 59) asserts that a theory in a quantitative study is used deductively with the aim of verification or testing it. This is usually achieved when a researcher examines hypotheses or questions that are derived from it. Collecting data to test a theory and reflecting on the results that either confirm or disprove it helps in advancing the theory. Further, the theory helps explain or predict interrelationships among variables in a quantitative study. On the other hand, theories are used in qualitative studies to provide broader explanations of behaviour and attitudes and act as a theoretical lens or perspective that guide the study (Creswell, 2014: 64). Questions that the study would like to address can be raised and significant issues examined alongside helping to establish a researcher's position in the study, study's population samples, how data is to be collected and analysed and finally, the writing of final accounts. In the context of mixed methods, theories are either used deductively or inductively. However, theory use depends on the weight given to the approaches in the mixed methods. This study used a quantitative method and the theoretical framework as explained later in this section was particularly used as a guiding tool for the entire study, research questions or hypotheses formulation, and data collection procedure.

3.18.2 Theoretical Framework Guiding the Study

In the conceptual context of the study, Seth, Deshmukh and Vrat (2005) assert that service quality results from the gaps formed out of expected service performance and actual service encounter in relation to quality dimensions. The aforementioned authors' further state that the outcome of a service performance and its measurement is determined by factors such as the location of the service activity, situation, time, and need, among other factors. Customers' expectations are changing with regard to particular services. This is because of intensified competition in the market place, time and a rise in number with specific service experiences, etc. In the analysis of dimensions of service quality management and improvement initiatives in universities in Kenya, various service quality models have been researched and discussed in detail. Each model had its own characteristics and limitations.

Though most of the extant literature reviewed appeared to suggest the most cited and researched methods of evaluating service quality SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor, 1992) and/or SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988) vis-á-vis other generic instruments, this research was anchored on the more recent Higher Education PERFormance-only (HEdPERF) model proposed by Firdaus (2005). The model is industry specific, and it has been tested and validated as a more comprehensive and relevant model (Firdaus, 2006). Furthermore, it is an all-inclusive measuring scale based on performance and it is able to take into account all the features that determine service performances within tertiary institutions. Thus, the HEdPERF model has the capability of isolating those areas that are importantly specific in the evaluation of quality of service within the higher education sector.

The modified HEdPERF scale has a six factor structure with 41 items. According to Firdaus (2006: 569) in higher education context “there exist six determinants for service quality with conceptually clear and distinct dimensions, namely academic aspects, reputation, non-academic aspects, access and program issues and understanding”. Therefore, this modified HEdPERF method results in acceptable reliability value estimations, criterion-related validity, greater expounded variance and an acceptable model fit than other scales (Firdaus, 2006: 576-578; Brochado and Marques, 2007).

Borrowing largely from Firdaus’s (2006) scale but contextualising the variables, Kimani (2011) surveyed service quality from business students’ view point in Kenyan universities. The purpose was to identify important factors that determined service quality according to students’ perspectives. The outcome of the study was a positive perception by the students towards the service performances from the participating higher education institutions. Ravichandran et al.’s, (2012) empirical study using HEdPERF among 106 respondents’ in professional engineering institutions in India using multiple regression analyses found some dominant variables predicting overall SQ. furthermore, eleven (11) factors loaded that surpassed original HEdPERF scale.Thus, the instrument was justified to be the most suitable for this study as it has been proved to suit service quality measurement for tertiary institutions (Brochado and Marques, 2007).

In summary, the multidimensionality of the service quality concept is asserted in various studies that have focused on the dimensions of service quality (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Firdaus, 2005; Govender and Ramroop, 2011, 2012; Parasuraman et al., 1985) to mention but a few. Therefore, using a multidimensional measurement model helps a researcher distinguish the complex nature of service quality. This is because some researchers such as Grönroos (1984) have cautioned against using a single-item approach to indicate a complex construct such as service quality. Furthermore, a multi-items approach was employed to measure the two constructs under study. The abovementioned approaches, therefore, helped in operationalisation of the concept of service quality.

3.19 Limitations of Existing Service Quality Measurement Models Employed in Higher Education

There are several limitations associated with existing service quality models. According to Firdaus (2006), Functional and theoretical inconsistencies have to a larger extent hindered application and development of a substitute but comprehensive framework in service quality measurement for higher education. This is because the subject of service quality has been vague for many years.

The conventional service quality measurement approaches are attribute-based where institutions have been fed with differentiated results (variants) on perceived universal quality as well as consumer assessments of specific quality attributes. An example is the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988) which zeros on the application of uni-dimensional constructs to quantify perceived quality irrespective of the service sector in consideration, on a 7 point measure using 22 items that are used to quantify the service quality latent variable. Firdaus (2006) affirms that the model operationalises service quality by eliminating or/and separating expectation and perception components.

There has been a growth in literature focused towards searching for the best measurement model that can be applied in the higher education context for quite some time. Although the majority of literature available supports the use of SERVQUAL model to measure service quality in higher education sector, the model has not been without criticism (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Buttle, 1996; Caruana, Money and Berthon, 2000; Grönroos, 2001). Buttle (1996) states that the SERVQUAL model is generally problematic and comments on SERVQUAL's five determinats of quality are not necessarily universal; therefore it lacks universal applicability. It has also received little success, leading many scholars to apply alternative models such as SERVPERF discussed later in this section. There are also concerns about the face validity and construct validity about the measurement instrument. Lastly, the model fails to recognise past social science research in particular, theoretical literature on the psychology of perception, value and meaning of the gaps, and the possibility of applying further statistical methods due to the nature of scales which are essentially ordinal (Buttle, 1996: 12/13). The model is also criticised because of varying expectations, absence of any previous information and service encounter with the higher education, and unknown anticipations of new learners in tertiary institutions (Caruana et al., 2000). SERVQUAL also only focuses on the service delivery process. Grönroos (2001) states that customers' behaviour is considered in abstraction leading to poor judgement of service quality. SERVQUAL instrument is also based on gaps model approach to service quality (Cronin and Taylor, 1992).

In addition, Caruana et al. (2000) argue that on the SERVQUAL scale respondents mark their desired service quality level near the high end and adequate service quality level near the low end of the scale. Furthermore, they tend to mark their perceptions in-between the desired and adequate level making a variance restriction which limits the full use of the scale. To sum up, theoretically the service dimensions hypothesised fail to load from the factor analysis and complementary sets of dimensions have been generated by different researchers. Also, SERVQUAL fails to operationalise expectations and that there is reversal of items/ questions in the scale thus raises some criticism (Buttle, 1996 in Aldridge and Rowley, 1998). Andaleeb (2001) further notes that the scale misses out on the measurement of the aggregate service quality expectations more so, data are usually collected following the service encounter.

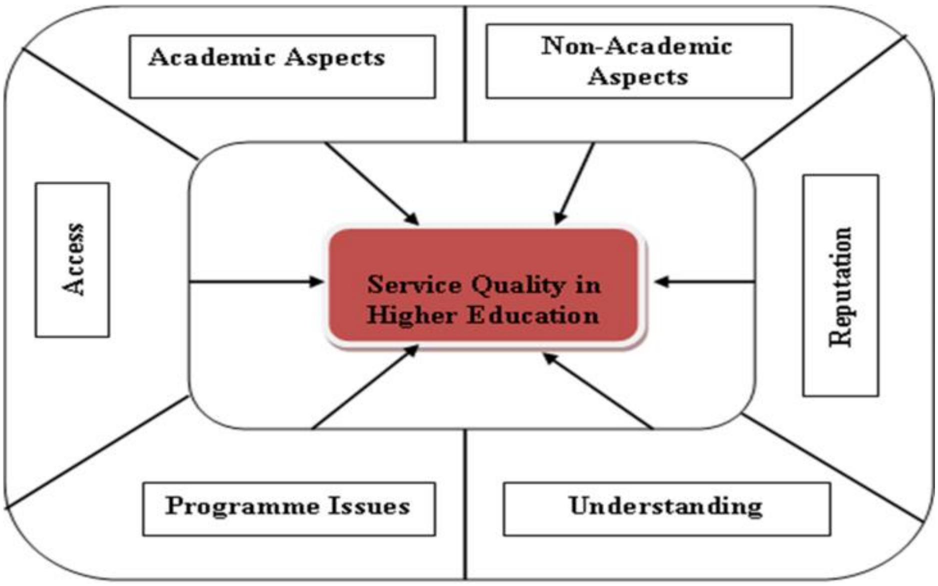
The limitations of the SERVQUAL model led to the development of a performance only measure of service quality called SERVPERF by Cronin and Taylor (1992). The SERVPERF model is a more direct approach to assess a particular service experience and is said to outperform any other generic measure of service quality previously developed and applied (Firdaus, 2006). Nevertheless, SERVPERF framework addresses post-consumption assessments of a certain service delivery.

3.20 Justification for Using the Higher Education Performance-only (HEdPERF) Model

Bearing in mind that service quality is a construct that fits a specific context (Roostika, 2009) it is important that service quality dimensions are designed for a specific study suiting a specific context like the current one. In addition, since the application of the reviewed models did 'not' work well in higher education settings, a thorough literature review was done to establish the most suitable components that form service judgement for the Kenyan private higher education setting. After the thorough literature review, it was decided that this study would examine the dimensionality of service quality in HE sector based on the 'model' proposed by Firdaus (2006) (see section 3.15.7). The model is helpful in clarifying the aspects of service quality in HE based on the argument that it has been uniquely designed for higher education, having been purified and clearly defined targeted for a particular industry. It is also important to mention that service quality is a complicated construct hence it is prudent to take a multidimensional approach to measure it as opposed to using a one-dimensional approach – measuring it as one latent variable using multiple item(s). This thesis therefore adopts the HEdPERF model to examine service quality in universities.

According to Firdaus (2006), if service quality is measured by means of the HEdPERF method, it is likely to produce more dependable results or inferences, be able to measure the characteristics or variables being investigated or intended to measure. This model is also appropriate for this study in that it encompasses the non-academic aspects of the educational experience which have been ignored in previous researches. It is a valid and reliable measuring scale that universities can put into use to enhance their service performance considering fast-paced growth and development of worldwide education marketplaces amid cut-throat competition.

Figure 3.1. Conceptual Model of the Dimensions of SQ in HE Integrating the HEdPERF Model



Source: *Researcher's Conceptualisation, 2012*

The service dimensions in Figure 3.1 represent how consumers of higher education services in their minds organise information about service quality. It shows the perceived factors that lead to increased service quality level in a nutshell.

3.20.1 Development of Hypotheses

A hypothesis can basically be defined as a logical guess or supposition of relationships among variables alluding to the existence of some fact, the validity of which is testable. These relationships are proposed in relation to some existing phenomenon derived from knowledge and theory in marketing research formulated for the study. By testing the hypotheses, valid solutions for the problem under investigation are found or otherwise through the confirmation of relationships (Sekaran, 2006).

3.20.1.1 Service Quality Dimensions in Higher Education

In his framework of service quality in tertiary institutions, Firdaus (2006) proposed six dimensions as mentioned earlier: academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programmes aspects, reputation, access and understanding. The value of academic characteristics has been identified in most service quality studies conducted in higher education (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010; Kimani 2011; Govender and Ramroop, 2011). Access was considered most important in general services industry (Ombati et al., 2010) and in higher education by Kimani (2011) and, Kumar and Yang (2014). The importance of understanding specifically student needs was highlighted (Watson, 2003; Chitty and Soutar, 2004; De Shields et al., 2005; Adela, 2009). Another valuable aspect in higher education sector that has been identified, for instance, to enhance retention (Martensen et al., 2000) and to build student loyalty (Chitty and Soutar, 2004; Kumar and Yang, 2014) is reputation. One more important aspect in the higher education industry that has been recognised as influential in aiding students to achieve their study obligations is non-academic aspects. For example, De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010) Kimani (2011) and Owino (2013) outlined that it is important to make available facilities such as accommodation, modern equipment and library among others, and trust and support from administration. Programmes (academic) which are products offered by a higher education institution has been considered an important dimension (Firdaus, 2006; Kimani 2011; Ravichandran et al., 2012; Kumar and Yang, 2014). Based on the aforementioned arguments, the literature provides a foundation to hypothesise that there were relationships between service quality and the aforesaid dimensions in private higher education in Kenya. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated to be tested in the study:

H1: The HEdPERF service equality dimensions (academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programme aspects, reputation, access and understanding) form the perceived service quality construct, and these have a significant positive relationship with the overall service quality in higher education.

H_{1a}: Academic aspects are related to service quality

H_{1b}: Non-academic aspects are related to service quality

H_{1c}: Programme aspects are related to service quality

H_{1d}: Access is related to service quality

H_{1e}: Reputation is related to service quality

H_{1f}: Understanding is related to service quality

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between students' perceived quality and the overall service quality.

3.20.1.2 Link between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the HE Setting

In order to attract and retain customers, higher educational institutions have adopted different marketing approaches thus exhibiting features of a service. Therefore, service quality and customer satisfaction concepts are directly applicable as a way to enable higher education institutions to respond more effectively to the market needs. Many studies in the higher education sectors reviewed examine associations between service quality and student satisfaction (Ham and Hayduk, 2003; Combrinck; 2006; Wang and Shieh, 2006; Hasan and Ilias, 2008; Hishamuddin and Azleen, 2008; Yunus et al., 2009; Govender and Ramroop, 2011; Kimani 2011; Owino, 2013); with others indicating that service quality influences (or is a precursor of) consumer gratification (Hensley and Sulek, 2007; Herington and Weaven, 2007; Hishamuddin and Azleen, 2008). For example, Athiyaman (2007) and Prugsamatz et al. (2006) studies showed that positive word-of-mouth communication of satisfied customers may attract new customers who may in turn spread a positive impression to other people by word-of-mouth. Owino's (2013) study revealed that building corporate image and consistent service reliability will result in satisfied customers. Jones and Sasser's (1995) study established that satisfaction leads to loyalty. On a similar note, De Shields et al. (2005) posited that customer satisfaction has led to retention while Govender and Ramroop (2011) found that service satisfaction generates loyalty among postgraduates in a university. The benefits of loyal students are significant for institutions in that they will remain with the institution for either a short period or longer term as Rasli et al. (2011) maintain so that there will be continuous patronage and retention of students as long as quality remains an integral tool for service delivery at university. From the abovementioned review, it is evident that there is a direct positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in private higher education. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Each university (HEdPERF) service quality dimension (academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programme aspects, access, reputation and understanding) has a direct positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction.

H4: There is a significant positive association between the customers (employees and students) perceived private university service quality and customer satisfaction.

3.20.1.3 Satisfaction as Perceived by Different Customers of Higher Education

The higher education sector has many stakeholders that consume services from the education environment, therefore making defining a customer in such a setting somewhat complicated (Quinn et al., 2009). The most obvious customers are the students, while many other stakeholders in HE function as customers although for the different areas in which they operate and the different interests they have in the higher education process. Conceptualising customers as consumers of any types of services in higher education services, Martensen (2000) categorised customers of HE into five categories: the students, the employees, the government and the public sector, industry, and the society. In the context of this study, university customers will include students, staff (both academic and non-academic) and government – HE regulator (CUE). Students pay for the service, are taught (service), consume administrative functions and pay for other supporting services like accommodation. An accreditation body/regulator (in this case CUE) controls the product (academic programmes) and/or designing of services like teaching methodologies and delivery modes, while the employees (academic and administrative) exercise control in the design of some products or services and also consume some services (Quinn et al., 2009).

In the higher educational service settings, the relationships between SQ and CS are self-reinforcing (Heskett et al., 1997). Therefore, if educational customers are satisfied with the educational services; this will in turn translate to employee satisfaction and vice versa. On the other hand, Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) posit that university customers' attitudes towards an institution are influenced by the satisfaction they get. When an employee receives poor services from the employer, this might affect his or her attitude towards the institution, consequently affecting service and individual satisfaction. An example would be as stated by Petzer and Steyn (2006) that a negative service experience resulting from a service failure will result in unfavourable perception of the institution by a customer. If a student's perception about the quality of the education service is good for instance, then the value that will be attached to that service will be higher as opposed to a poor educational service experience, which will translate to a lower value perception of that service (Terblanche and Boshoff, 2010). Govender and Ramroop (2011; 2012) assert that to achieve postgraduate students' satisfaction with their educational experience at the university, it is essential to manage the service experience, service quality and satisfaction. The authors confirm this by elaborating that this is so because there is an association among the variables. Based on the previous empirical evidence and theoretical arguments, this study postulates that:

H5: There is a difference in customers' (employees and students) perceptions of the importance of each of the sub-dimensions of service quality.

H6: There is no significant difference in satisfaction between university customers' (employees and students).

3.20.2 The Conceptual Framework

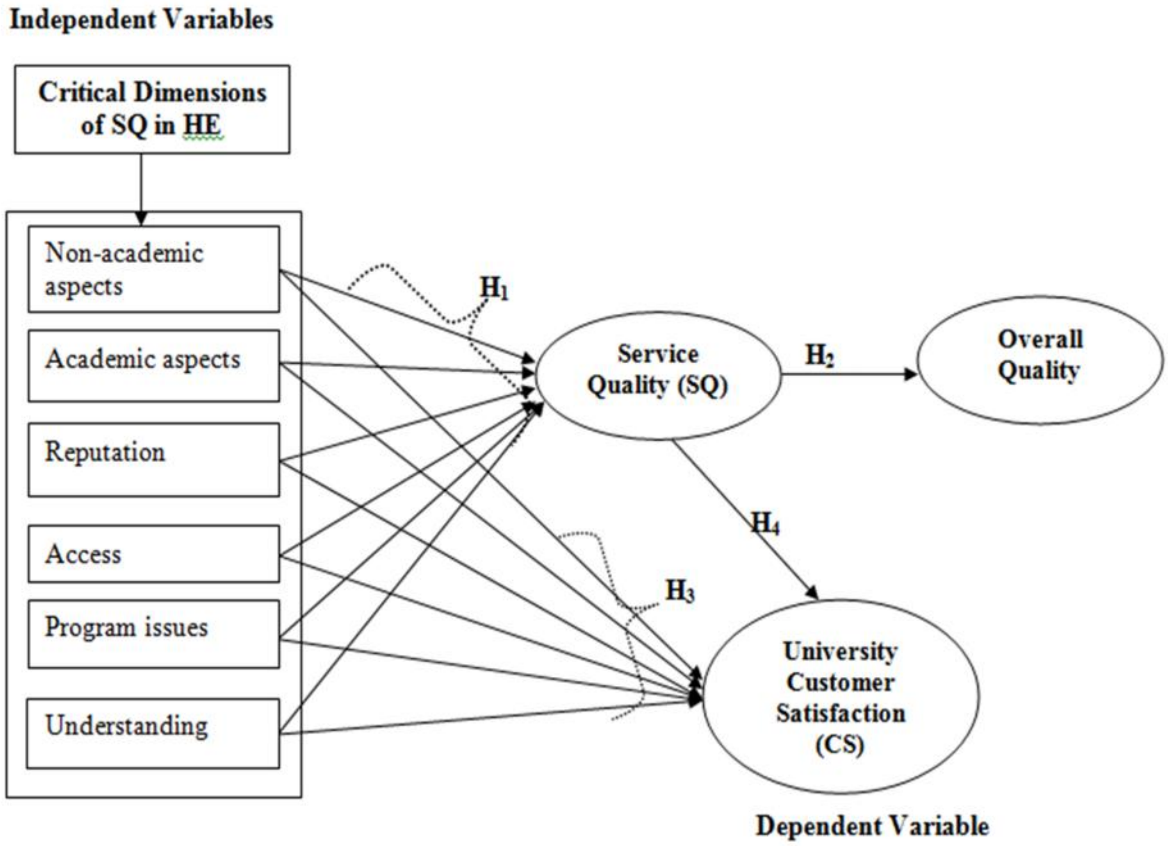
3.20.2.1 Components of the Conceptual Model

Some researchers (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010; Govender and Ramroop, 2011; 2012; 2013) have identified the value of academic characteristics in their service quality studies in tertiary institutions as the responsibilities of academics or lecturers specifically towards students. Another aspect related to academics is the academic programmes, which are products offered by a higher education institution and has been considered an important dimension (Firdaus, 2006; Kimani 2011). They aforementioned researchers promote the idea of universities providing variety of well-known market-driven academic programmes or/and specialities with a workable delivery mode, and curriculum. Access according to Firdaus (2006) assertion relates to approachability, accessibility (ease of contact) and committment of service employee, as well as convenience, which were identified by Kimani (2011) as most important in the higher education service industry. Students' needs must be understood, therefore understanding their specific needs in terms of counselling and health services will lead to greater satisfaction (Watson, 2003; Chitty and Soutar, 2004; De Shields et al., 2005; Adela, 2009). Reputation, which is the ability of higher learning institutions to project a professional image to the outside world (Firdaus, 2006), helps in enhancing retention (Martensen et al., 2000) as well as building loyalty (Chitty and Soutar, 2004). Another important component in the higher education industry that has been given recognition and found to be influential in aiding learners' to achieve their learning obligations is non-academic aspects. These include aspects connected to the responsibilities of the non-academic staff and "are essential to enable students' fulfill their study obligations" (Firdaus, 2006: 575). For example, according to De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010) and Kimani (2011), making facilities such as accommodation, library, and sports facilities among others, available are key to attracting students to an institution. In addition to that, trust and support from administration, which can be in form of different resources such as financial, expertise etc. are some of the characteristics that add to non-academic component.

3.20.2.2 Conceptual Model

Based on the extensive review of the service quality literature and the context of this study, six components of service quality in the higher education service environment proposed by Firdaus' (2005; 2006) a 'research model' has been conceptualised and used to create the holistic conceptual research model (Figure 3.2). In order to ascertain the critical dimensions of service quality management, the central tenet of the proposed model tested by this study was to isolate the key variables underpinning service quality in higher education namely,: non-academic aspects, academic aspects, reputation, access, program issues and understanding, as the key considerations in customer satisfaction, and which lead to overall quality relating to Kenya's higher education setting, as illustrated below. The model has been developed to conceptualise the theoretical framework of the study.

Figure 3.2 Conceptual Model Linking Service Quality Dimensions, Customer Satisfaction in Higher Education



Source: *Researcher's elaboration (2012)*

From the conceptual model depicted in Figure 3.2, it is evident that there are two main variables under study, and it is conceptualised that different dimensions of service quality directly impact on consumers' attitudes towards a service. Thus, the type of service quality attributes put in place by an organisation will either positively (enhanced relationship) or negatively (decreased service quality) influence perceptions of quality. The independent variable is service quality while the dependent variable is customers' satisfaction. Finally, conceptualisation of the model also shows that satisfaction levels towards services received by HE customers will also be influenced by their status in the HE settings.

3.20.3 Conclusion

Chapter three provided a review of literature, and a theoretical and conceptual framework for the current study. A discussion of the dimensionality of higher education service quality was provided. The interrelationship among the two constructs (i.e. service quality and customer satisfaction) and their significance in both the general services industries and the higher education sectors was reviewed. A review of some service measurement models and their application to different service contexts was done. The direct and indirect relationships among the two key constructs (SQ and CS) under investigation were reviewed to provide the basis for the conceptual framework and a number of hypotheses that were postulated. The conceptual framework was developed based on a detailed theoretical review of extant literature studies, journals, and research studies relating to the service industry, service judgement, customer satisfaction, perceived satisfaction and behaviour in the general services sector and in higher education context. This provided confirmation of the importance of examining the two key constructs and their relationships in the Kenyan private higher education sector. The two key constructs provided a more accurate and comprehensive picture of the relationship in predicting perceived service quality which this research is designed to cover the gap.

In the chapter which follows the research methodology of the study is discussed. The research design, ethical considerations, population, the sample and sampling techniques, research instruments and their reliabilities are discussed. An explanation of data collection process, analysis and other statistical analysis used to test the hypotheses are also detailed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

According to Cooper and Schindler (2008) a research design is the blue print for achieving the study goals, aims and responding to the research enquiries. Research methodology refers to a planned course of action or/and structure in which an empirical study follows or adheres to and the means employed to accomplish the study questions (Ngau and Kumssa, 2004). Therefore, it entails laying down the procedures and methods for information gathering from the field, and choosing the cases who play a part in the research. The procedure for the study guides the investigator during data collection, analyses and interpretation of the data or facts gathered from the field.

The current chapter describes the methodology used in the investigation as well as techniques used in the design of the research and to accomplish the research objectives. It focuses *inter alia,* on the study plan, selection strategies and sample population, means of information gathering, formation of the questionnaire and ways of distribution, as well as description of data analysis techniques. Statistical techniques used in the study, namely exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analyses with structural equation modeling, are explained.

4.2 Philosophical Worldview for the Study

A research worldview or paradigm refers to a set of basic beliefs that underlie a study or guide an act (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). Therefore paradigms are important because they shape the way research is conducted. A basis from which knowledge is created and the process that will underlie the research design and therefore interpretation of the findings is based on a philosophy. Gage (1989: 107) affirms that a paradigm signifies a person's view or belief of the world and nature, his/her position in it and the likely links that he/she may have in various portions of that. Worldviews are shaped by several factors such as the discipline the researcher is undertaking, previous research experiences and the beliefs held by the researcher's advisers (Creswell and Plano, 2007; Creswell, 2014). These beliefs held by a researcher often lead to the choice of the research approach. Therefore, understanding and putting oneself in a specific research philosophy enables the whole research process to take shape and the knowledge claims. Methodological pluralism is acceptable but philosophical pluralism is not (Karl, 2004). This section begins with a discussion of two predominant research paradigms that have been widely employed in planning research, followed by identification of the research philosophical assumption which this study has adopted and which is related to the area of marketing research and the research framework.

4.2.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism philosophical thought holds that reality is built and is influenced by factors such as social, cultural and gender. The approach, often described as qualitative research (Stiles, 2003), allows for a more intensive and flexible relationship with the respondents providing more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. Researchers interact with participants in order to uncover people's beliefs and meanings within a social context. There is need for a direct contact between the researcher and the matter or subject being studied (Stiles, 2003). There is inseparability between values and facts within which a reality is understood. However, according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007), interpretivism is susceptible to researcher's influence because it may not be related to their knowledge per se but to their eloquence or oratory skills. Therefore, interpretivisim is more biased since analysis and understanding of the information relies heavily on an indivudual (Stiles, 2003). Furthermore, in this approach there is no clear-cut distinction between biased and unbiased analysis of information when contextualising a phenomenon, although in the complex and ever changing business environment interpretive perspective is highly appropriate. Therefore, it becomes a challenge to generalise a research/investigation aiming at explaining the complex nature of societal concerns (Saunders et al., 2007). The common methodologies used under this philosophy are in-depth interviews, focus groups and case studies.

4.2.2 Positivism

The researcher's strategy in this study was to select an overall research philosophy among various paradigms that have existed in marketing literature, that is, between positivism grouped under quantitative or objectivist, and interpretivism usually associated with qualitative. The paradigms differ on the basic underlying assumptions that ultimately guide the choices about research methodology and methods. According to Usher (1996) and Stiles (2003), positivists assume that research findings will not be affected since the investigator will not be close to the vicinity of the research phenomena or stand back and that while looking at the research problem, empahisis will be geared towards objectivity in the methods and the conduct of the entire research study. This is true because it is assumed that reality exists beyond the human mind. Thus, reality is separate from the point of view of an individual who is observing it, and this reality provides human knowledge foundation. Positivism has the advantage of its emphasis on easy identification of key elements to be measured and demonstration of validity, reliability and comparability is achieved. It is possible to explain, control and predict phenomena (Hussey and Hussey, 2003). Positivists in most cases gather exact quantitative data hence emphasising careful sampling, kind of data to be collected using questionnaires, analysis of the data using logical or step by step statistical techniques to test the stated theories/hypotheses, sampling probability, data combination and accuracy in measurement and interpretation (Stiles, 2003). With careful sampling, the findings can be generalised and comparisons made. However, the disadvantage of positivism is that when dealing with social subject matters, positivism becomes inadequate since it does not make possible the usage of personal knowledge and insight gained in social interaction.

In this study, positivism was the most appropriate paradigm that shaped the author's research design and knowledge claims. It was considered an objective approach that enabled a survey to be conducted and quantitative data to be collected. Through analysis of the quantitative data, more exact and objective answers could be obtained thereby providing appropriate answers to the study questions as well as enabling the hypotheses to be tested.

4.3 Research Design

Research design is a well crafted strategy and orderly arrangement used by the investigator to carry out a research and successfully enables objective answers to be obtained to the problem of the research (Babbie and Mouton, 2007: 74; Kerlinger, 1986: 279). Similarly, Creswell (2009) states that research design provide a road map that encompasses three things – philosophical assumptions, strategies for inquiry, and specific methods. Various factors need to be put into consideration when selecting the design of a study namely the aim or goal, setting, unit of analysis, degree of participation of the researcher, kind of research (quantitative or qualitative) and the amount of time it will take to collect data (Sekaran, 2006).

The present investigation was based on a positivism worldview assumption which considers exact quantitative data and provides answers to the set research questions and confirmation of hypotheses set. A cross-sectional survey design strategy was employed in that data were collected at one point in time (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005), the above-mentioned survey strategy provides a general view of a given population at a given time. Firstly, comparison of various variables that have been collected can be done at similar time period. Secondly, a survey helps in learning about peoples' attitudes, beliefs, values, behaviour, opinions, habits and desires. It also helps to cover a wide area using a representative sample. In this study, data was collected from a large sample of students, academic and administrative employees from selected private universities in Kenya which are geographically scattered, within a period of about four months. Thirdly, a quantitative approach was preferred because of particular requirements of the study such as the size of the survey, data used (that is, numerical or categorical) and statistical analysis to be applied to analyse the hypotheses (Kline, 2011). In addition, a quantitative approach was less time consuming, there were reduced cost elements, it enabled the researcher to collect data from a large sample of respondents and the researcher was able to secure the cooperation of the respondents within a short period of time. Similar instruments containing the same questions for the two sets of participants were used to collect the data. Piloting exposes what works and what does not in terms of unclear instructions and vague questions (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Quantitative data collected through the use of self-administered questionnaires is deemed to increase the chances of reliability and replicability. Finally, through a survey and use of quantitative methods the researcher was able to examine the links between the service quality and customer satisfaction constructs using specified and appropriate statistical analysis.

4.4 Target Population

The geographical location for this research was Kenya in East Africa. The choice of Kenya as a study location was motivated by the challenges that the higher education sector, specifically institutions of higher learning, have been facing over the past few years due to unprecedented growth amid competition in education provision. The population, generally, refers to all cases about which research findings can be generalised. It is the entire aggregation of a group of people, things of interest or events of one or more characteristics in common that the researcher has interest in, wishes to investigate, infer, and about which information is desired (Best and Kahn, 2005; Sekaran, 2006: 265; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010: 262). It is an eligible population that is included in research; and therefore a researcher ends up deriving a sample that participates in the study. The students, employees, government and the public sector, industry, and society are the key service consumers of a higher education institution's services (Martensen et al., 2000; Quin et al., 2009). To achieve the goal and objectives of this study, the target populations was all employees (academic and administrative), and students of the four private universities. Academic and administrative employees were selected to ensure that the views on internal satisfaction are consistent.

4.4.1 Sampling Frame

The sampling frame is a list of elements or members of a population from which a sample may be drawn or obtained (Cooper and Schindler, 2008; Zikmund, 2010). The sample frame for this thesis was obtained from the database of the Commission for University Education (CUE) of Kenya (2012). The same information was accessed from their website which provides detailed public access about all the higher education institutions existing across Kenya. According to the CUE, Kenya has a total of 39 chartered universities, and of these, 17 are private, while 22 are public. A key feature of higher education provision is that universities are not uniform and they differ greatly with regard to different features such as age, specialisation, orientation and size (Pereda, Airey and Bennett, 2007). Therefore, for this study, a number of factors were taken into consideration when selecting the universities, namely: geographical location, age, size and ownership. The age and size of the universities are important factors in this study because some of the private universities have been in existence for less than five years. Ownership factor is also important since the majority of private universities have religious affiliations while others have a 'commercial' orientation. Finally, the universities selected were sampled from different geographical locations and, in many cases students are drawn from different regional and cultural backgrounds especially those located in the capital city of Nairobi. Table 4.1 reflects the affiliations and geographical locations of the institutions that were targeted due to budgetary and time constraints.

4.5 Description of the Sample and Sampling Procedures

According to Cohen et al. (2005), adopting suitable strategies to sampling, survey instruments development, and methods and procedures will result into a valid and meaningful research. Furthermore, an adequate sample ensures that the researcher can confidently be sure that a matched sample of another study is likely to produce nearly related results (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003; Wiersma, 1995). In addition, Koul (1990) notes that a survey design requires a large sample particularly if inferential statistics are to be calculated as is done in this study. Therefore, a large sample is essential to reduce the sampling error.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) state that sampling from the population is an important process in research. Sampling entails processes of selecting adequate elements or sub-sections of a population that enables the researcher to understand character traits, qualities or features of such a population thus enabling generalisations to an entire population (Sekaran, 2006: 266). A sample, therefore, refers to a portion of a population representative of the entire population. As such, sampling techniques fall under two extremes - probability and non-probability. Various reasons can be used to explain this. For instance, quantitative data needs large samples (Creswell and Plano, 2007). However, it is important to note that it was impracticable to survey the entire population of university customers – employees and students (Saunders et al., 2007).

This research employed quantitative procedures to arrive on the sample. The sample size was calculated using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula and made representative enough of the population by using probability sampling procedures. Probability sampling allows each unit a known probability and is given an equal chance of being included. In particular, random sampling was used to accord individuals in the target population equal and independent chances of being included. In contrast, in non-probability sampling designs, elements in the population do not have any chances that they will be picked as sample subjects (Cooper and Schindler, 2008; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010), further limiting generalisations of the findings from the study population. It actually relies on the researcher's subjective assessment, choice or decision. The study made use of stratified random sampling to select respondents in order to get adequate representations of groups that are relevant for the study. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was implemented. Questionnaires were randomly distributed to different selected classes in the selected institutions that had been selected using stratified method.

Purposive sampling procedure was used to select the universities so as to ensure control of important parameters[7] such as religious orientation, academic concentration and location (rural/urban). Moreover, purposive sampling of the universities was done since it was not possible in terms of limited resources to survey the entire range of private universities as aforementioned. Therefore, four universities (see Table 4.1) were selected following the argument by Kothari (2009), that 10 – 20 percent of a larger population is a good representative sample. For this reason, the researcher took at least 15 percent of the target population as a sample. Specifically, the following universities were selected to form the sample: The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) and Strathmore University (SU) which both are faith-based and located in the city of Nairobi; United States International University (USIU) located in city environs and Mt Kenya University (MKU) located in rural area. Patton (1990:

[7] Units used to select universities in the study

169) asserts that purposive sampling can be used in selecting information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon in depth. This also helped the questions under study hence enabling learning greatly on the concepts of the study – service quality and satisfaction and their relationships.

Table 4.1 Category of Universities and the Sample

Type of University	Frequency (F)	Sample		Location	Year Chartered
Private (faith-based) universities	12	2	CUEA	City based	1992
			SU	City based	2008
Private (commercial) universities	5	2	MKU	Outside Nairobi	2011
			USIU	City Environs	1999

Source: *Compilation by the researcher based on statistics available at CUE, 2013*

The strata factor of interest in this study was the different customer segments of both academic and administrative employees, and students based upon the composition of the population. Within each stratum, random sampling method was employed since it is considered the best method by which to reduce sampling bias and help achieve a high level of representation (Sekaran, 2006; Saunders, et al., 2007). Importantly, in the survey data collection process, the following were considered: the respondent (student-customer) had to be fully registered, while the academic and administrative employee should be permanently employed in the institutions. Furthermore, to ensure the variability of the sample, statistical validity and the capacity to describe service quality experiences, variables for use in the stratification process were identified within the student strata comprising of undergraduates and postgraduates and included year of study, programme of study and mode of study, i.e. regular (full-time) and evening (part-time). Thereafter, randomisation of elements was done and a random selection of students was implemented. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to the various classes of students that had been selected using a stratified method.

Several methods were used to determine the sample size. This included formulas that determine appropriate sample sizes for surveys based on aspects such as prevalence of the variable of interest, correct estimations (confidence level) and a suitable margin error. The sample size for this study was obtained using the pre-defined sample size calculator proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for known population size and by convention the level of precision was maintained at approximately 5 percent, while the confidence level was kept at 95% (5% margin of error) and non-responses to some of the questionnaires (Krejcie and Morgan (1970), in Sekaran (2006; 293). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) developed a table[8] based on the formula which shows the expected sample size and study's sample population hence ensuring representativeness of population sample. The researchers' further note that "the population increases at a diminishing rate and remains constant at slightly more than 380 cases" (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). The equation for determining the sample size employed is shown below.

$$S = X^2 NP(1-P) \div d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)$$

Where:

s = the required sample size

X^2 = Chi-square value for 1 degree of freedom @ 0.05 level (3.841) preferred.

N = the population size

P = the population proportion (expected to be 0.5 of the entire sample size)

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a fraction (0.05).

It is important at this point to note that the students sample was increased though, as aforementioned, 380 cases were within the recommended sample size (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). The study increased the sample of students to 600 (CUEA and MKU, 200 each while SU and USIU are 100 each). These samples were increased due to the need to be appropriate for the planned data analysis (inferential statistics), to avoid skewed distributions of different categories of programmes and modes of study among students, and also to compensate for non-response (Kline, 2011). Other reasons envisaged were participant failure to return questionnaires, choose leave the study, returned incomplete or spoiled questionnaires, for example selecting two choices instead of one, or not completing some items. Therefore, the number of student respondents was substantially larger than the minimum number required for

[8] Refer Appendix 6

the desired level of confidence and precision (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). With regard to staff, 250 questionnaires were distributed so as to maximise the response rate. According to Kline (2011), to derive adequate effect sizes for structural equation modelling, sample sizes need to be in excess of 200 cases. However, Loehlin (1992) says that at least 100 cases are required for SEM and preferably 200 (if possible). Furthermore, for small populations with fewer than 100 respondents the entire population should be surveyed, a sample size of at least 50% should be adequate for a population of about 500, 20% for 1500 while a sample of at least 400 from a population of 5000 and above is sufficient (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). In this study it was quite impracticable to survey the entire population of university customers. The total sample size achieved for this study (n) was 655 subjects, that is, 522 students and 133 employees (Table 4.2 below). The main focus of the researcher was to get a sufficient and good sample. Therefore, the researcher holds that the samples for students and employees are truly satisfactory and representative.

With the approval from the Deputy Vice Chancellors concerned with academic affairs at each of the targeted universities, academic and administrative employees were identified together with the help of the Human Resources Managers, while the students were identified with the help of the Academic Registrars and institutional research officers of each university. This helped ensure variability of the sample and capacity for population samples to describe their service quality experiences since they were drawn from various departments, faculties, year of study and programme of study.

Table 4.2 Sample of the Study

Institution	Type of Customer Segment	Total Population	No. of Subjects in the Sample (n)	Sample participated
CUEA	Students	5638*	361	161
	Academic staff	201	132	33
	Non-academic staff	291	165	53
SU	Students	3654*	346	99
	Academic staff	127	92	2
	Non-academic staff	200	132	6
USIU	Students	7158*	364	93
	Academic staff	234	144	0
	Non-academic staff	66	56	3
MKU	Students	18,765*	377	169
	Academic staff	1372	302	19
	Non-academic staff	644	242	17
Total		**38,355**	**2716**	**655**

Source: *Compilation by the researcher based on statistics available at Human Resources Departments of the Respective Institutions and website statistics (2011/2012).*

Notes: (a) The figures are based on entire number of students and staff at main and satellite/regional campuses of the universities in the country.

*(b) * Implies that the figure provided were tentative*

(c) CUEA = The Catholic University of Eastern Africa; SU = Strathmore University; USIU = United States International University; MKU = Mt Kenya University; CUE = Commission for University Education

4.6 Research Instruments, Design and Development

In this study, the main tool for data collection was a survey form (questionnaire). Prior to designing the questionnaires, relevant literature was reviewed to identify the key research variables. Questions which would shed light on both the independent and dependent variables of the study were incorporated in the questionnaire. The dependent variable was customer satisfaction (CS) while the independent variable was service quality (SQ). The questionnaires were carefully designed to ensure relevance and accuracy of the data collected (Zikmund et al., 2010). Boyce (2003) emphasises that it is important to develop a good questionnaire since it is not possible to change the already collected data, and researchers rarely have another opportunity to refer to the respondents. Furthermore, Sekaran (2003) asserts, primary data is collected at the actual site where the event occurs. This thesis necessitated collection of data on SQ and CS and their interrelationships as envisaged in the conceptual framework illustrated in the previous chapter, thus requiring specific direct information for verification of hypotheses proposed. The questionnaire method was used because it is relatively unobtrusive and is not expensive to use in data collection (Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin, 2010). In addition, the questionnaire eases collection of large amounts of data as well as in tabulating and analysis. There is also an advantage of economies of scale and anonymity for respondents (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010) as well as generalisability of conclusions regarding the defined target population (Hair et al., 2006).

Two research instruments, that is, employees' questionnaire (Appendix 2) and students' questionnaire (Appendix 3) were developed. The questionnaire for university employees and students was structured to utilise the sections approach (Burns and Bush, 2000) for easier completion by the respondents. For example, the questionnaire had three sections with related instructions that sought information on demographics, service quality, customer satisfaction and challenges of SQ implementation in institutions. Parasuraman et al. (1988) proposed that the questionnaire should carry comprehensible instructions and clear presentation of the questionnaire that is appealing to the respondents. The physical design of the instruments was considered for good presentation and administration of the survey, including ensuring minimal errors and understandable instructions. A description of the instruments used in the research is described further in the following sub-sections.

4.6.1 Questionnaire for University Employees and Students

Both questionnaires were majorly scaled to a 7-point scale as Likert scales with 1 representing the lowest value, while 7 the highest (Leedy and Omrod, 2005). Section one of the questionnaire for the employees, and the last section of the questionnaire for students had questions pertaining to biographic characteristics of the sample. Section two was designed to assess aspects of quality that contribute more to customer satisfaction in private universities in Kenya, based on the HEdPERF model (Firdaus, 2006), and the third section contained statements pertaining to customer satisfaction, overall satisfaction and challenges facing effective the implementation of service quality management also borrowing heavily from the main constructs of service quality developed by Firdaus (2005; 2006). The questions generally required the respondents to rate the statements which they agreed or disagreed with in respect to the aforementioned sections. In order to align the different questionnaires, it was necessary to ensure that both the questionnaires (employees and students) contained questions concerning common themes, in order to measure SQ perceptions and satisfaction from different perspectives, but about the same issues and situations. The researcher considered the layout, length, and questions sequence as advised by Parasuraman (1991). This format was adopted to shorten the questionnaire while emphasising the common themes among the questions and therefore inviting respondents to answer each question in relation to other questions in the matrix to ensure accuracy. In addition, explicit instructions were provided by the researcher on how to mark or respond to each question (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). The questionnaires contained structured and semi-structured questions that captured all study variables directly or indirectly.

4.7 Field Work

A pilot study and revision and refinement of the research instruments preceded the actual field work. It was then followed by administration and collection of data for the study. This process is extensively discussed in this section.

4.7.1 Pilot Study and Refinement of Instruments

According to Leedy and Omrod (2005), a pre-test usually refers to a small-scale trial or ‘trying out’ of particular research components that allows for the identification of potential problems with the instrument. Piloting of the data collection instruments is a very important step in questionnaire design because it exposes what works and what does not, for example, unclear instructions and vague questions (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). After development of the questionnaire, the instrument was piloted to ensure that the items in the survey questionnaire were well-stated and defined, and that the respondents would draw the same meaning from them, and also to give the researcher an idea of approximately how long it would take the respondents to complete the questionnaire. Further Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) assert that "a pilot test assists to avoid formulating questions that would seek more than two answers or several responses and meanings within a particular question (double-barreled questions) and those that would create uneasiness and or become unpleasant to the participants".

Although the minimum sample size sufficient to provide an effective pilot test should be ten (Saunders et al., 2007), Radhakrishna (2007) proposes at least twenty to be sufficient for a pre-test. In this study, the researcher conducted a pilot-test in one private university by distributing thirty (30) questionnaires. Twenty (20) questionnaires were administered to students while ten (10) were administered to both academic staff and administrative employees of private university that was not included in the main study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) argue that not including the pilot study sample into the main study helps avoid contamination of the respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate the duration of time it would take to complete the questionnaire, highlight vague or unclear items or which they were uncomfortable with, and were also asked to make any other comments that would improve the questionnaire. A total of 20 usable questionnaires were returned (students = 15; and employees = 5), and reliability analysis results of the core constructs on the 7-point scale survey instruments are as indicated in Table 4.3 below. The measurement scales of the pilot test data was examined for internal consistency using the most widely used diagnostic measure – Cronbach alpha coefficient (Hair et al., 2006) to ensure reliability of the pilot test data. Trial tests on the selected data analysis methods was also done by the researcher on the data collected from employees and students in the pilot study to generate dummy data for about 50 participants (Robson, 2007). The pilot study assisted in establishing if the questionnaires succeeded in measuring what they were intended to measure (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). It was therefore beneficial in checking whether the questions had proper layouts to minimise researcher bias. As a result, questions that did not yield expected responses or seemed confusing were refined by rephrasing them, restructuring or removing them. Similarly, vague items were rectified and grammatical errors and numbering corrected. In a nutshell, the pilot testing process helped to reformat the instruments with the aim of improving efficiency and maximising response rate.

4.7.2 Questionnaire Reliability

Reliability is concerned with or refers to the capacity of a measure to repeatedly produce and supply same answer or consistent results in the same circumstances (De Vaus, 2002), meaning that it is “free of unstable error” (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) describe reliability as “the extent to which data collection tool is error free and therefore ensures repeated measurement across time and under differing conditions” i.e. are robust. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) define reliability by giving it different synonyms: dependability, stability, consistency, equivalence, predictability and accuracy. Therefore, it implies that if participants respond to a question in a similar manner over and over again, then the survey instrument reliability is assured. This survey used the Cronbach Coeficient Alpha – α for multipoint-scaled items commonly used to test interitem consistency (Gliem and Gliem, 2003), to test the consistency of respondents’ answers to all items in a measure. Sekaran (2006: 307) pointed out that Cronbach coefficient alpha reflects the degree of positive cohesiveness among the items on the scale in order to check scale reliability. The underlying principle for internal consistency is that individual items measure identical constructs on the scale; this is an indication of sameness of the items in a measurement scale that measure a latent variable (Sekaran, 2006). This implies that the items form a consistent and coherent whole and therefore, have the ability and/or the quality necessary to measure exactly a similar idea while at the same time the respondents are able to draw similar interpretations of the items (Sekaran, 2006: 205, Sekaran and Bougie, 2010: 162). It shows the items and related sub-sets in the measuring instrument are correlated highly. Brown (2002) indicates that the Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 (if no variance is consistent) and 1 (if all variance is consistent). The closer the coefficient is to 1.0, the higher the correlation of the items in a measure (Sekaran, 2006: 307). An alpha (α) score of 0.70 or higher is considered satisfactory (Gliem and Gliem, 2003; Sekaran 2006). Hair et al. (2006: 137; 2010) assert that a reliability greater than 0.7 is acceptable. Furthermore, the following rules of thumb are given: “>0.9 – Excellent, >0.8 – Good, >0.7 – Satisfactory, >0.6 – Questionnable, >0.5 – Not good enough (Poor) and <0.5 – Unacceptable” (George and Mallery, 2003). The reliability test was performed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Table 4.3 Summary of Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients Analysis of the Pilot Survey Instruments Study Variables

Variables	**Reliability (Cronbach’s - α)**			
	Student Questionnaire		**Employee Questionnaire**	
	No. of Items per variable	Alpha coefficient	No. of Items per variable	Alpha coefficient
Non-Academic Aspects	23	0.941	24	0.600
Academic Aspects	16	0.928	14	0.745
Reputation	10	0.889	10	0.870
Access	10	0.923	12	0.724
Programme Issues	4	0.744	4	0.817
Understanding	3	0.835	3	0.807
Challenges	9	0.933	9	0.928
Satisfaction	6	0.943	6	0.818

The reliability coefficient alphas of all the core constructs in pilot study for the two instruments as shown in Table 4.3 above, were all greater than 0.6 mark of acceptability (George and Mallery, 2003; Hair et al., 2006: 137). Therefore, from the table it is clear that the results were quite adequate and satisfactory indicating that the questionnaires were reliable measuring instruments. This thesis follows George and Mallery (2003) and Hair et al.’s (2006) recommendations suggesting that alpha values greater than 0.6 as being ideal.

4.7.3 Validity of the Questionnaire

The degree to which an empirical measure 'taps' the concept set out to be measured and not something else is referred to as validity (Babbie and Mouton, 2007). Therefore, it refers to the degree to which a test measures what was actually intended to measure. Furthermore, validity indicates the extent to which results obtained in a study are the actual outcomes of what was being measured and could give wider generalization of the sample. This study employed face, content, as well as construct and discriminant validity[9]. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) content validity is the extent to which a measure includes sufficient set of items that capture the universe of all pertinent items related to the concept being measured. In other words, it represents how well the concepts in a measure have been delineated and, adequately covers all the research questions in the study. Sekaran and Bougie (2010: 158) add that content validity ensures that the measurement items sufficiently represent the universe of the concept under study. A thorough review of the literature was done to ensure content validity, and operational definitions of terms were provided. In addition, the questionnaires were checked to ensure they covered all the main areas of the study. In order to ensure face validity, the questionnaires were developed in close consultation with the candidate's academic supervisor, and were also given to two business research experts for their independent judgement of how well the instrument met the standards i.e. their independent assessement of the test items. Their suggestions and inputs were included in the questionnaire after they attested to the content of the questionnaire. The instrument was also evaluated by the School of Management, IT and Governance academic research leader and UKZN ethical clearance committee. Saunders et al. (2007) posit that providing peers' and experts' review instruments for face validity helps establish their relevance. By considering the model and the measurement instrument being used (Cooper and Schindler, 2008), construct validity was ensured through operationalisation of the variables and application of exploratory factor analysis, where acceptable levels of construct validity were achieved through deletion of individual items that could have compromised the instrument's validity.

---

[9] See a detailed discussion in chapter 5

4.8 Data Collection Procedures and Techniques

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), data collection refers to the process of collecting particular data with the intention to concur or contradict certain truths. The process of collecting data is crucial in any study since information collected can accurately be disseminated and also assist in the advancement of important platforms. Prior to embarking on the research, several preparatory measures were undertaken. For example, the researcher wrote to the Deputy Vice Chancellors – Academic Affairs (Research) of the concerned universities requesting permission to collect data from their institutions. The contents of the letter were carefully crafted to indicate the purpose of the study, credibility, and all ethical obligations. The letters were personalised to each Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of academics or research and were signed by the researcher. Contact information of the researcher was included to allow population sample to make inquiries or seek clarification on that matter prior to data collection. Prior visits to institutions provided an opportunity to seek appointments and agree on suitable dates for administering the questionnaires and/or conducting interviews, and therefore increase response rates. The written permission was important because it enabled the researcher to have access to the informants from each university.

Once permission was granted and population samples confirmed participation, the researcher expressed appreciation for their participation and/or agreement and thereafter described the steps of the survey. The researcher offered assurances to enable the respondents to relax and provide honest responses. The questionnaires (Appendix 2 and 3) were accompanied by an introductory statement (see Appendix 4) to emphasise confidentiality and other ethical considerations. Another letter which was the 'gatekeepers' consent was also included, which indicated that permission had been granted to the researcher by the university authorities.

The questionnaires were 'droped and picked' by the researcher and a research assistant who had been guided by the researcher on how to effectively administer the questionnaire prior to the real field work. The students participated in the survey either before or after completing their class sessions. This was achieved by asking for permission from lecturers, most of who were cooperative in assisting and granted the researcher this permission. Moreover, some even assisted with the distribution and collection of these questionnaires. A ‘drop and pick’ approach was used to administer the questionnaires, i.e. the questionnaires were distributed to students randomly in classrooms and they were given about 15 to 20 minutes to fill them in. Thereafter the questionnaires were collected on the same day. With regard to students on part-time mode of study, they were asked to drop the completed questionnaires into a box which was provided in the administrative office, which boxes were picked up on a later date. It had been possible to submit the questionnaires in person directly to the respondents (part-time students). This ensured that the views of all student respondents were obtained and thus produced a higher response rate. On the other hand, the majority of academic and administrative staff emphatically refused to participate in this study. Several reasons were cited as complete refusal to participate in the study; some did not fill in the questionnaires distributed to them, while others lost the questionnaires. Some lecturers indicated that the timing was not good since the period of one week for which permission was granted by some universities clashed with exams and other important university activities that they were involved in. This made the response rate to be somewhat low and data collection difficult. All in all, data was collected over a four month period extending from late September 2013 to January 2014. Similarly, the researcher was not able to conduct interview(s) with the regulator as initially intended as permission that had been granted earlier was later denied despite making numerous personal visits, emails and phone calls. The regulator cited reasons that the research was best suited for the universities targeted and therefore insisted that the researcher should focus on those institutions and not on the regulator. Consequently, this led to a change in the research methodology and data collection.

4.9 Data Processing and Analysis Procedures

4.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Creswell and Plano (2007) and Creswell (2014) suggested different approaches towards analysing quantitative and qualitative data, and their suggestions were followed in conducting this study. The data from the two questionnaires data sets (employee and students) were screened and edited to detect errors and omissions. Then it was serialised in readiness for coding, entry, and analysis. Coding is the process of giving values to responses so that answers can be put in groups (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). Thereafter, the two data sets were captured into the computer for viewing and manipulation and easier conversion to information that was needed. The data for each respondent group were analysed separately and then utilised to provide a single report (Creswell, 2014). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to manipulate the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were computed to obtain a general understanding of the universities' and respondents' characteristics in terms of biographic information, thus enhancing frequency and percentage distributions. Sekaran (2006: 394) states that "descriptive statistics involves transformation of raw data into a form that would provide information to describe a set of factors in a situation", thus helping the reader to have a thorough overview of the variables and characteristics of the sample. Inferential statistics were computed in the second stage of the analysis as explained in the next section.

4.9.1.1 Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis Technique (EFA) was used to reduce or summarise data contained in a large number of variables into a smaller number of factors in order to maximise the validity of the instruments (Hair et al., 2006). The use of Likert scale questionnaires prompted the researcher to opt for the EFA technique for the factor analysis. The underlying purpose was to determine stronger linear combinations of many variables that aid in investigating the interrelationships effectively without pre-conceived hypotheses (Hair et al., 2006; Zikmund, 2003). Therefore, factor extraction was done by use of Principle Component Analysis (PCA) (Field, 2009), which was used to reduce the many factors to more manageable sets with strong correlations and also enabled understanding of variables' structures (Hair et al., 2006) which were later used to aid further analysis. To obtain a clear pattern of loadings, oblique rotation - direct oblimin proposed by Jennrich and Sampson (1966) was used to summarise the construct's structures of the variables studied (Browne, 2001). To help in factor interpretation, this study employed a cut-off mark of 0.4 since the questions were in the form of Likert scales. This approach was used to determine those factors that underlie SQ and CS in PHEIs.

4.9.1.2 Correlation Analysis

Spearman's rank correlation analysis was conducted to explore the nature of relationships between the variables. According to Sekaran (2006; 207), correlation analysis is performed to outline the mutual influences or relationship strength of two variables on each other. Specifically, it looked at the association between an organisation's service quality dimensions as perceived by both employees and students, and customer satisfaction. The correlation coefficient (*r)* indicates the strength of relationship between two variables. However, there is no explanation of the amount of variance that is indicated in the dependent variable when numerous independent variables are subjected to a test (Sekaran, 2006).

Levene's (1960) test for homogeneity of variance in the data was used to ascertain whether there exist any significant differences in satisfaction between students and employees. Statistical significance usually expressed in terms of the level of significance is the probable value that a test has occurred by chance and that p-value is computed. A p-value of 0.05 or less was considered to be significant and used in this study.

4.9.1.3 Structural Equation Modelling

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is a process that is used to predict causal relationships among latent variables, was used to predict the variance in the dependent variables through regressing (CS) against the independent variable (SQ) (Sekaran, 2006: 406). Structural equation modeling technique which is a large sample technique and a popular contemporary statistical tool (Kline, 2011), was preferred because it enables clarity and testability of competing models therefore enhancing the potential to further understand the analysis (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). The authors further assert that it also enables simultaneous tests to be done on model fit and individual parameter estimate, and how a latent variable directly or indirectly influences other latent variables in the model (estimates relationships between latent variables). A comparison of regression between coefficients, variances and means, and between subject groups was done. Through measurement and factor analysis models, errors were eliminated, hence estimation of the latent variables was free from measurement errors. Lastly, SEM provided the most attractive quality framework where various linear models in an integrated manner fit and their effect whether direct, indirect or both effects can be explored (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). Therefore, the SEM was done in two stages as a number of researchers have proposed (Hair et al., 2006: 714), where the measurement model is scrutinized with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) before testing the structure model (Lee, Ooi, Tan and Chong, 2010; Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). Statistical analysis and testing was carried out using SPSS (version 20) and AMOS (version 21), which allows two rival models to be compared. In AMOS a toolbar is available which aids drawing of the models with boxes representing independent variables while circles stand for dependent variables. Further, in evaluating relationships (direct and or indirect effects and outcomes) among set variables, path analysis (structural model) was employed as it is proven to be the most relevant model in substantiating theory (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004: 50). By using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) research data was fitted to the observed data and a critical ratio (CR) estimate value > = 1.96 suggested significance of the causal path between the latent variables (Kline, 2011; Hair et al., 2006). A graphical format was used to present the SEM models where boxes represent observed variables; circles show latent variables, while arrows between the variables indicate directional paths being hypothesized (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004; Hair et al., 2006: 714). Therefore, the significance of variation and co-variation among variables was determined.

4.9.2 Qualitative Approach Analysis

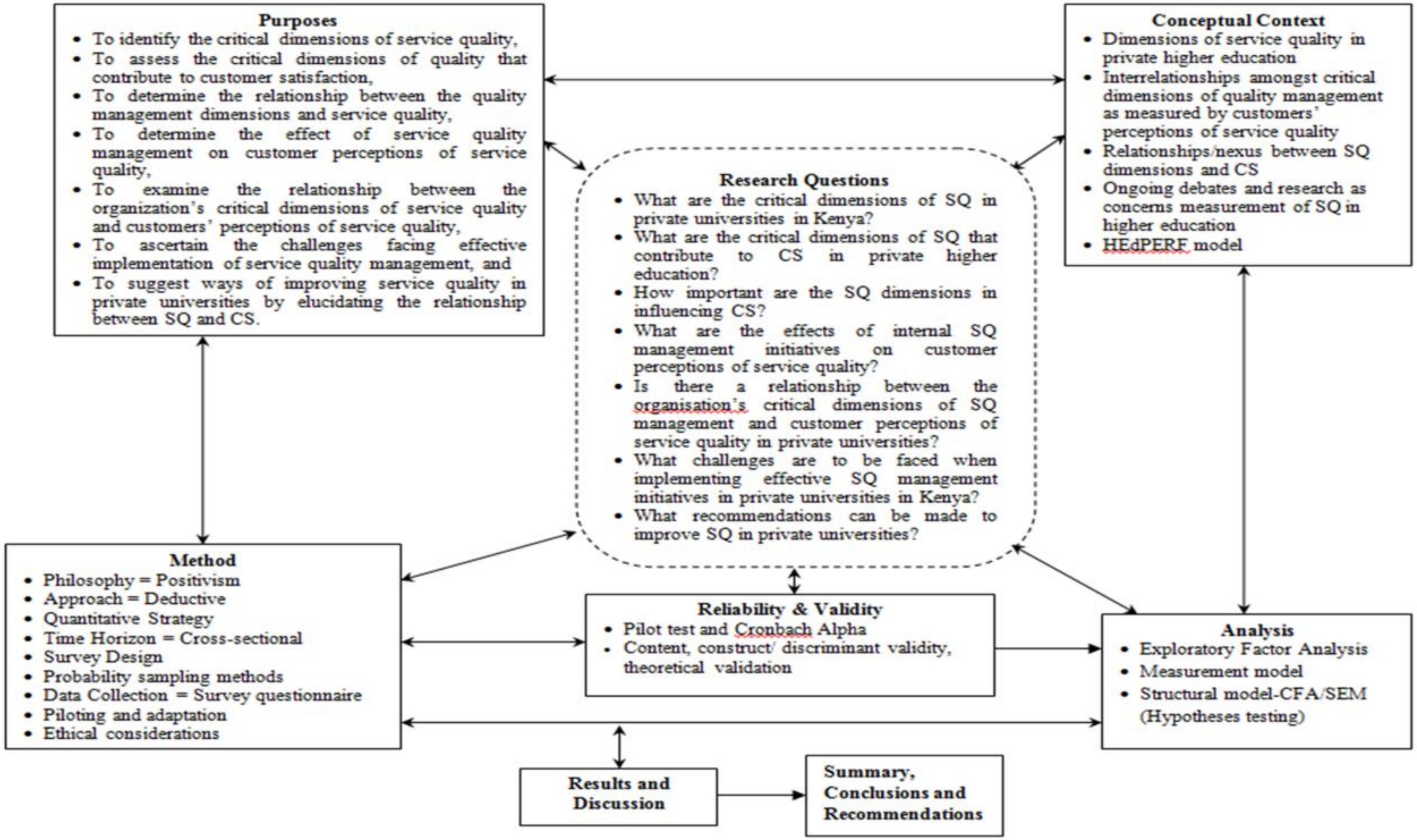
The data generated from the response to the open-ended items were analysed using content analysis – a qualitative method. Individual ideas that were referenced from text responses were given code names. Each code formed a new idea where associated text passages were linked to it. Through sorting out similar codes and their rate of recurrence, they were then grouped together and reconstructed into narratives before presentation into a discussion (Creswell and Plano, 2007: 129). Counts were performed on the open-ended data to get percentages (quantifying) thus leading to an understanding of the data. This followed an orderly presentation of research questions, a process that enabled all relevant data on a particular issue of concern to be put together (Cohen et al., 2005). Thus, data from the open-ended questionnaire items was collated so as to give a collective answer (Cohen et al., 2005: 468). This was facilitated through the use of Nvivo 10, a computer-based software program which is suitable for qualitative or text data. The programme can store, segment and organise text data therefore helping the researcher find patterns in the data (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005: 137).

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are the norms or standards of behaviour in the conduct of a research (Sekaran, 2006: 17; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010: 15). Norms guide moral choices about people's behaviour and relationships with others with the aim that no individual may suffer any adverse consequences from research activities (Cooper and Schindler, 2003; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Prior to embarking on the research process all ethical issues expected of a researcher in the design, conduct, analysis and dissemination of findings in the entire study were considered. Second level ethics was related to the population samples as parties who needed to be aware of their basic rights were protected during the entire research process. Population samples were given clear information about the purpose and nature of the research and their consent was sought prior to their participation in the study. Study samples were informed that the study was voluntary; so they were able to choose whether to participate or not, or to withdraw at will from the project with no negative consequence. Adequate measures were taken to protect the confidentiality of the population samples and any promise made to the survey samples was kept. Information about the study was made available to the potential participants to enable them to give their full consent to participate in the study. There was need to use participant's names on the questionnaires. However, an explanation was provided for this. Also important to note was that the data collected was safeguarded in a steel cabinet/safe and was not disclosed to the public in any way, since ethical issues may arise at all stages of a research, from problem statement specification, research questions, data collecting and analysis and writing up of the report from the data (Creswell, 2003: 63) irrespective of the type of research – qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods (Creswell, 2014: 92). Accuracy standards were adhered to in the collection, analysis and interpretation, and reporting of the study findings. All sources used in the study were acknowledged. Furthermore, ethics, principles and obligations pertaining to the conduct of research activities by the researcher and as outlined in the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) policy on research ethics were adhered to (UKZN, 2007). Ethics pertaining to academic writing and publishing were followed. The approval for this research was granted by the UKZN's Ethical Committee on 6th September 2013, protocol reference number HSS/0966/013D (Appendix 5). University of KwaZulu-Natal research regulations require that every research that involves human subjects needs to obtain ethical clearance from the committee.

The ultimate goal of the current study was to investigate the interrelationships amongst the dimensions of quality management as measured through customers' perceptions of service quality in selected Kenyan private universities. Figure 4.1 illustrates the design of the study, with reference to the method described in this chapter.

Figure 4.1 Conceptualisation of the Study Design



4.11 Conclusion

This chapter presented a description of the research methodology that was adopted for the study. The research design (which provided a foundation of the research methodology), population of the study, sampling procedures, data collection methods, questionnaire development and administration, reliability and validity of the measurement scales, data analysis techniques and the ethical implications were discussed. The research designwhich was a survey, was preceded by a review of the research philosophy that guided the study. Validity and reliability issues whuch are imperative in ensuring the credibility of the research findings were alos dicussed.

A detailed discussion of the results of both the descriptive and inferential statistical analysis to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses proposed are presented in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE
ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the methodology that was employed in the research was discussed. Reporting the results of a research is arguably one of the most challenging, but also a rewarding stage of the entire process of a research. According to Sekaran (2006:341) a report is a presentation of all relevant information backed by necessary data from the study, convincingly written with the aim of persuading the reader to 'buy into the idea'. To contribute to the relevant field or discipline, conclusions and recommendations are drawn based on surveying past studies, the methodology used for the present study, and emerging perspectives from the current interviews and data analyses. Some important norms to be considered when reporting research results include good descriptions and lucid explanations logically flowing from the results of data analysis should be sufficient and complete when reporting (Sekaran, 2006). This chapter presents the results of the data analysis following the general structure outlined below:

- General demographic description and descriptive analysis of the sampled respondents (students and employees[10]) from the four universities in Kenya. This offers the reader a clear understanding of the respondents included in the study. These analyses were carried out using frequencies, means and percentages.
- A discussion of the reliability and validity of the measures and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results of the study variables.
- Examination of relationships and hypotheses tests and discussion thereof.

The aforementioned analyses provided a foundation for the discussion of the statistical analysis using regression analysis and the structural equation model and the path analysis. Specifically, the presentation was organised and presented following

[10] The terms 'employee' and 'staff' have been used interchangeably and refer to the same thing

the research objectives that were raised in chapter one. Data that addresses a particular research theme were presented together.

5.2 Descriptive Analysis

5.2.1 Response Rate

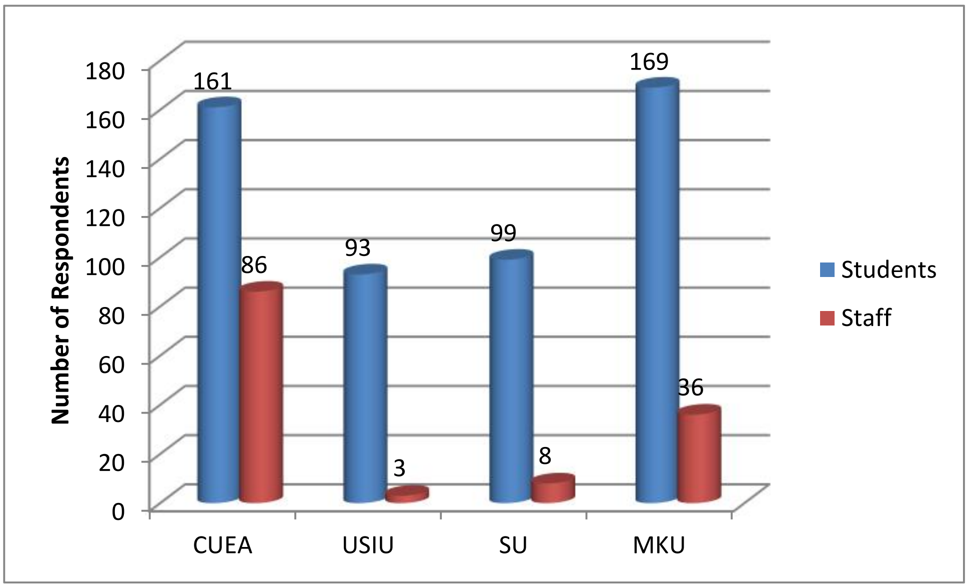
A total of 850 questionnaires were administered in four universities out of which 670 were returned. Following the data editing process, five hundred and twenty two (522) student questionnaires were deemed fit for analysis. One hundred and thirty three (133) employee questionnaires were also used for analysis. The total response ratio for this research was reasonably satisfactory at 522 out of 600 total survey forms for students distributed (87%) and employees 133 out of 250 (53.2%). The response compares favourably to similar studies inter-alia, De Jager and Gbadamosi's (2010) whose sample was 404, Firdaus (2006) 381, Hasan and Ilias (2008) 200, Kimani (2011) 436, Manuel (2008) 190, and Yunus et al. (2009) 150 students. This meant that the sample set satisfied the criterion validity requirements. Table 5.1 illustrates a summary of the responses according to the participating institutions.

Table 5.1 Summary of Population Realisation to the Questionnaires

No. of questionnaires	**Numbers**	**Percentage (%)**
Total number of questionnaires distributed	850	100
Total number of questionnaires returned	670	78
Number of questionnaires returned useful for analysis	655	77
Number of questionnaires not returned/unsuitable for meaningful analysis	125	14

Figure 5.1 depicts the student-employee sample representation from the various institutions.

Figure 5.1 Student and Employee Respondents from the Four Participating Institutions



5.2.2 Sample Profiles

Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 below present a summary of staff and students respondent characteristics respectively. With reference to the employee, the statistics reveal that of the 133 staff who participated in the study, 40.6% were academics while 59.4% were administrative employees. The majority of the respondents were male (54.9%) while female were 44.4%. A further cross tabulation of occupational group and gender revealed that there were no major differnces among the academics by gender since 37.3% were female while 42.5% were male. A similar situation was presented with the administrative employees where 62.7% formed the female category while 57.5% were male. The majority of the staff respondents were middle aged or younger, where 63 (47.4%) were aged between 30 to 39 years, 42 (31.6%) were between 40 to 49 years, and 26 (19.5%) were below 30 years of age. Few respondents were aged 50 years and above.

The staff members were also asked to indicate their years of service at their respective institutions. One hundred and five (78.9%) staff respondents irrespective of occupation group had between 0 and 10 years work experience, whereas 42 (77.8%) were academic employees and 63 (79.7%) were administrative employees. In addition, 19 (14.3%) had between 11 – 15 years of service experience, including 9

(16.7%) academics and 10 (12.7%) administrative employees, while only a few (6%) had worked for over 16 years. Among the academic employees the majority 21 (38.9%) were pursuing their doctoral studies, while only 15 (27.8%) of the respondents were PhD holders. Overall, there were no major significant gender differences in the levels of education among male and female respondents. Among the administrative employees, the data shows that42.1% were in middle management, 9.8% were technical staff, while a few (6.8%) were in senior management. Of this category of staff, with respect to gender there were slightly more male respondents in all levels of management 52.6% (X^2 = 0.054, df = 2, p>0.05).

Table 5.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Staff Sample

Variable	*Value label*	*Frequency*	*Valid Percent (%)*
Education Qualification	Diploma Bachelor's Degree Masters Degree PhD (ongoing) PhD	18 39 38 23 15	13.5 29.3 28.6 17.3 11.3
Gender	Male Female	73 59	54.9 44.4
Occupational Groups	Academic Administrative	54 79	40.6 59.4
Age Group	< 30 years 30 – 39 40 – 49 > 50	26 63 42 1	19.5 47.4 31.6 .8
University Service Experience	0 – 4 years 5 – 10 years 11 – 15 years 16 + years	54 51 19 8	40.6 38.3 14.3 6.0
Management Level of Non-teaching staff	Senior management Middle management Technical staff No Response	9 56 13 55	6.8 42.1 9.8 41.4

In relation to the students, the data in Table 5.3 below shows that the majority of student respondents (66.3%) were aged between 18 and 23 years, 18.6% were aged between 24 and 29 years while 6.8% were aged 36 years and above. Of the students who participated in the study, there were more female (49.8%) and 47.7% were male.

This was also exhibited when cross-tabulation was performed where there were more female students (51.6%) in the full-time degree programme than there were male (48.4%) although in the part-time programme 50.5% were male while 48.5% were female. However, it is important to point out that the majority (78.7%) of student respondents were in the full-time programme; 70.5% were pursuing their first degree; about 9% were doing a postgraduate degree (masters or doctorate), a few respondents (5.6%) were in a diploma programme and 4.2% were in the professional programme courses. The majority of respondents (37.4%) were in their first year, in the second year there were 30.1%, the third year had 20.3% and a few (7.1%) were in their fourth year of study.

Table 5.3 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Student Sample

Variable	***Value Label***	***Number***	***Valid Percent (%)***
Age	18 – 23	346	66.3
	24 – 29	97	18.6
	30 – 35	25	4.8
	36 – 41	17	3.3
	42 – 47	10	1.9
	48 – 52	4	.8
	Above 53 years	4	.8
	No Response	19	3.6
Gender	Male	249	47.7
	Female	260	49.8
	No Response	13	2.9
Nature of Study Programme	Full-time	411	78.7
	Part-time	99	19.0
	No Response	12	2.3
Programme of Study	PhD	7	1.3
	Masters	39	7.5
	Bachelors	368	70.5
	Diploma	29	5.6
	Pre-university	2	.4
	Advanced Diploma	7	1.3
	Professional Course	22	4.2
	No Response	48	9.2
Year of Study	First	195	37.4
	Second	157	30.1
	Third	106	20.3
	Fourth	37	7.1
	No Response	27	5.2

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show the distribution of some disciplines in the universities that were selected for the study. The modal breakdown of the faculties from which the student respondents represented is as follows. The findings show that out of the 522 respondents, the results are dominated by commerce/business 285 (55%), education 68 (13%), social sciences 39 (8%), Law 33 (6%), Information Technology 35 (7%), and International Relations 11 (2%) among other disciplines. This is based on the foundations on which the universities were founded as was discussed in chapter two.

Figure 5.2 Overall Student Characteristics Based on Discipline

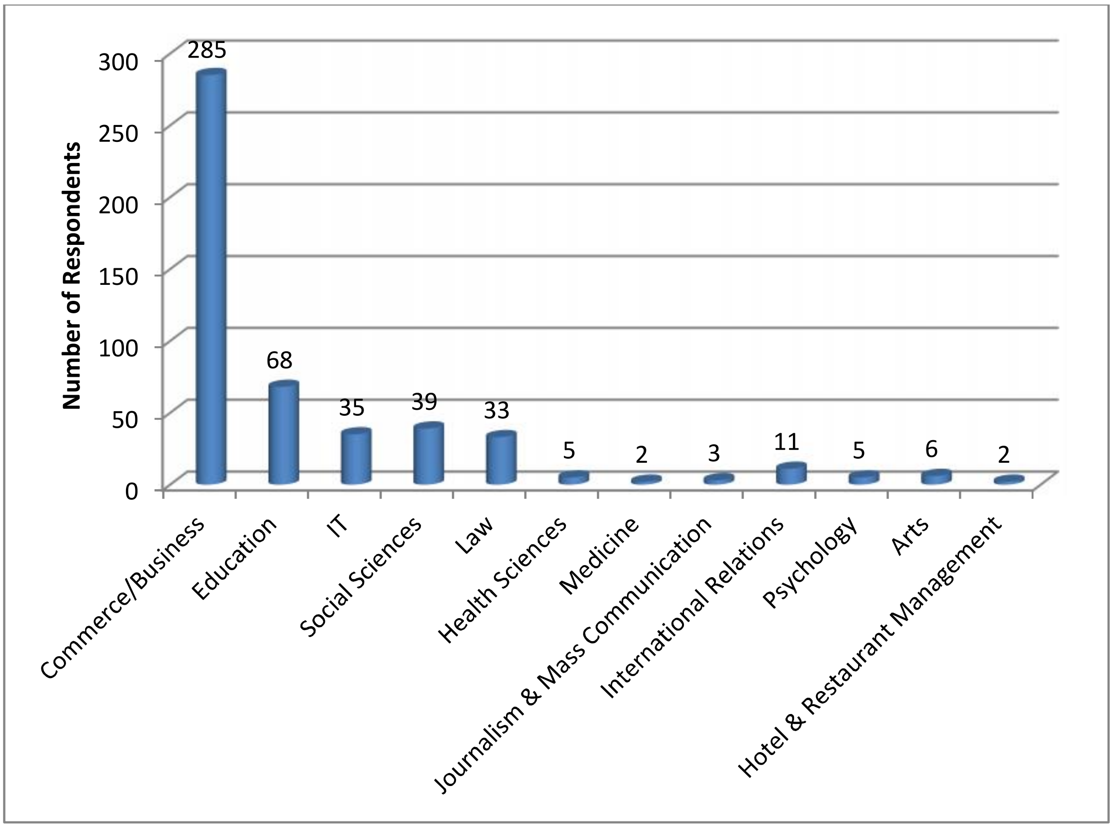
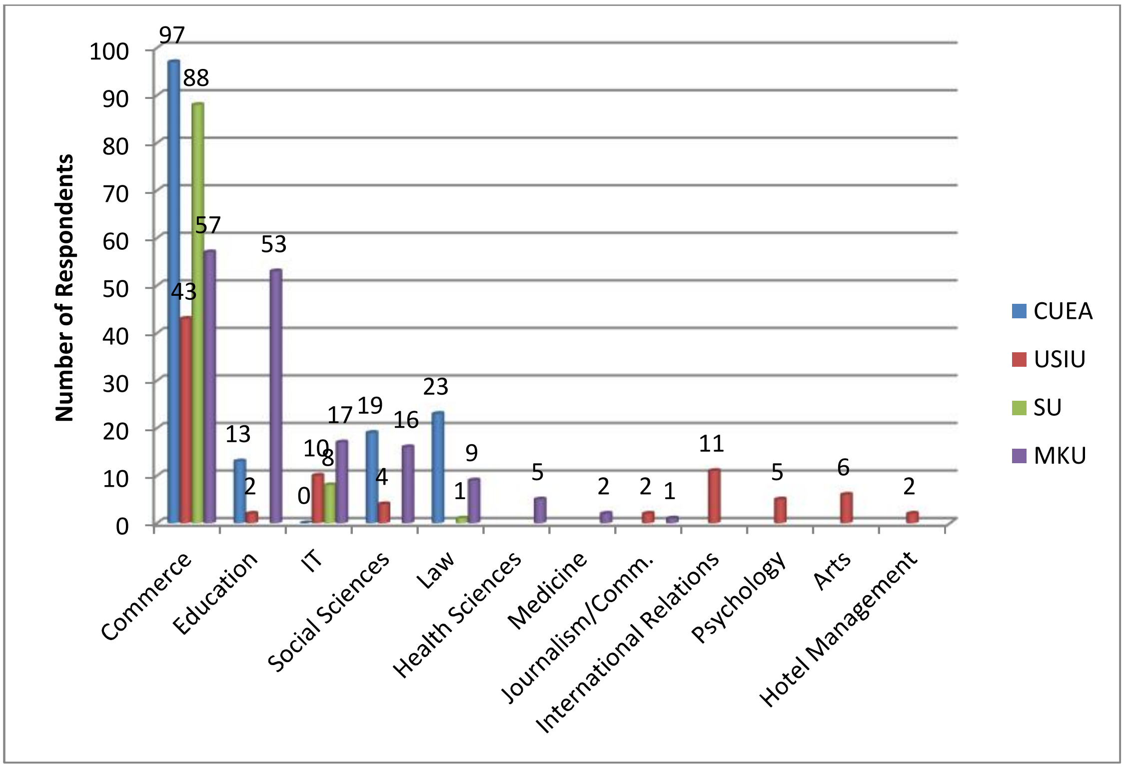


Figure 5.3 Student Characteristics Based on Discipline per University



5.3 Reliability Analysis and Factor Analysis

5.3.1 Students' Data Reliability and Factor Analysis

Cronbach alpha (Cronbach, 1951), with sequential item selection strategy for maximising internal consistency of multi-dimensional Likert-type questionnaires espoused by Wille (1996) in Raubenheimer (2004), referred to as stepwise reliability analysis approach, was used to check how repeatable were the measurements included in the student questionnaires . Internally inconsistent items were sequentially deleted therefore maximising the scales reliability. Sekaran and Bougie (2010:325) assert that generally reliabilities are considered poor if they fall below 0.60, those in the range of 0.70 are acceptable, while those over 0.80 are good (indicate a high degree of internal consistency). In this research study, the coefficient of reliability with a value greater than 0.7 was deemed as being appropriate.

Table 5.4 shows the stepwise reliability analysis for the student measurement tool. The table summarises the stepwise reliability ananlysis results by showing the reliability of all the variables, dubbed initial reliability and finally, the reliability after stepwise analysis, dubbed final reliability. The table also gives the number of variables (7) that yielded that final reliability of items a, b, c,…, w (see appendices 2 & 3). Since all the Cronbach alphas are greater than 0.7, this indicates good internal consistency or reliability of the data, for the seven latent variables with respect to their adapted measurement items.

Table 5.4 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Students Measurements

Instrument	**Original Items**	**First No. of items**	**Initial Cronbach Alpha coefficient**	**Final Items**	**Final No. of items**	**Final Cronbach Alpha coefficients**
Non-academic Aspects	a,b,c,…,w	23	0.941	a,b,c,…,w	23	0.941
Academic Aspects	a,b,c,…,p	16	0.928	a,b,c,…,p	16	0.928
Reputation	a,b,c,…,j	10	0.889	a,b,c,…,j	10	0.889
Access	a,b,c,…,j	10	0.923	a,b,c,…,j	10	0.923
Programmes	a,b,c,d	4	0.744	a,b,c	3	0.854
Understanding	a,b,c	3	0.853	a,b,c	3	0.853
Overall Satisfaction	b1,b2,…,b7	7	0.933	b1,b2,…,b7	7	0.933

After this reliability analysis, it was noted that some of the constructs had too many variables, thus, there was a need to reduce redundant variables from these constructs. To achieve this, Spearman's rank correlation (rho) was carried out for each construct and highly correlated variables in each construct were grouped together by computing their average. Highly correlated variables carry the same information, hence this was the principle used to reduce the number of variables. Table 5.5 shows this reduction process and the final aggregation of the variables to few but possessing the same information.

Table 5.5 Factor Reduction Process and Final Aggregation for Adapted Student Variables

Instrument	Variables	Correlated variables	Index variable
Non-Academic Aspects	a,b,c,…,w	a,b,c,d	NOACD1=(a+b+c+d)/4
		r,s,t,u,v,w	NOACD2=(r+s+t+u+v+ w)/6
		e,f,g,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,p,q	NOACD3=(e+f+g+h+i+j+k+l+m+n+o+p+q)/13
Academic Aspects	a,b,c,…,p	a,b,c,d,e,h,l,m,n,o,p	ACD1=(a+b+c+d+e+h+l+m+n+o+p)/11
		f,g,i,j,k	ACD2=(f+g+i+j+k)/5
Reputation	a,b,c,…,j	b,e,j	REP1=(e+b+j)/3
		a,c,d,f,g,h,i	REP2=(g+a+c+f+d+i+h)/7
Access	a,b,c,…,j	a,b,f	ACC1=(a+b+f)/3
		c,d,e,g,h,i,j	ACC2=(c+d+e+g+h+i+j)/7
Programmes	a,b,c,d	-	-
Understanding	a,b,c	-	-
Overall Satisfaction	b1,b2,…,b7	b7	SAT1=b7
		b1,b2,…,b6	SAT2=(b1+b2+b3+b4+b5+b6)/6

5.3.2 Rotated Factor Loadings for Students' Instruments

Factor analysis was carried out to identify the different groupings that the variables belonged to. This also enabled measurement of both the construct and discriminant validities of the student measurement instrument. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), while incorporating Principle Component/factor Analysis (PCA) for factor extraction with an oblique rotation method (Jennrich and Sampson, 1966), where correlation of the factors and the loadings more than 1 were provided, was used to summarise the constructs structures of the variables (factor loadings) under study (Browne, 2001). From the rotated factor loadings presented in Table 5.6, it is evident that four factors accounted for the variance among the factors, since the factor loadings for some variables are greater than 0.4, which was considered high enough. Some standards have been proposed for determining and interpreting the minimum requirements applied in both the validity and reliability measures. A loading of between 0.3 – 0.4 is considered to meet minimum level, of up to 0.5 is practically significant while that which meets factor loading of greater than 0.7 is deemed to be well defined (Hair et al., 2006). In this study, 0.4 was regarded as an acceptable factor loading. The extracted factors that loaded on each factor were provided with meaningful names thus: Factor 1 was named *non-academic* (*administration quality),* Factor 2 was named health *quality (understanding),* Factor 3 *programme quality,* and Factor 4 was named *satisfaction*. However, some dimensions namely; programme quality and understanding quality were found to have no relationship with service quality, their inclusion into the model was making the entire model fit insignificant; hence these were excluded in the final model.

Table 5.6 Rotated Factor Loadings for Modified Students Measurement Instruments

	Non-academic Quality FACTOR 1	**Health (understanding) Quality** FACTOR 2	**Programme Quality** FACTOR 3	**Satisfaction** FACTOR 4
UND1	--	.738	--	--
UND2	--	.737	--	--
UND3	--	.780	--	--
PROG1	--	--	.743	--
PROG2	--	--	.705	--
PROG3	--	--	.785	--
PROG4	--	--	.655	--
NOACD1	.711	--	--	--
NOACD2	.722	--	--	--
NOACD3	.817*	--	--	--
ACD1	.773	--	--	--
ACD2	.792	--	--	--
REP1	.482	.613	--	--
REP2	.610	.457	--	--
ACC1	.576	.450	--	--
ACC2	.574	.505	--	--
SAT1	--	--	--	.868*
SAT2	--	--	--	.751
OvQual	--	--	--	.579

Source: Hair et al. (2006:734); ***Highest factor loadings;** Results calculated from survey data (2013). Note: UND = understanding, PROG = programmes, NONACD =

non-academic, REP = reputation, ACC = access, SAT = satisfaction, OvQual = overall quality;

From the results presented in Table 5.6 above, it is clear that the student measurement instruments that were adapted met the acceptable levels of validity (construct and discriminant) since they had loadings which exceedd 0.4 (Hair et al., 2006).

5.3.3 Empirical Findings of the Student Sample

Figure 5.4 (see page 155) presents the student research model which was tested using SPSS AMOS (v 21.0), and the resulting maximum likelihood ratio. The observed data was fitted to the model. The correlation matrix of the sample with maximum likelihood ratio estimates was used to specify the analysis. The interpretation here was the critical ratio (CR) value higher than or greater than 1.96, and p-values less than 0.0001 (*** means $p<0.0001$) which would mean statistically significant influence. On the other hand, the CR less than 1.96 ($p>0.0001$) would imply a non-significant influence exists (Arbuckler, 2012).

5.3.3.1 Structural Equation Model Results for Student Sample

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for the measurement model was carried out using SPSS AMOS (v 21.0). It was hypothesised that understanding, non-academic factors, academic factors, accessibility factors and reputation are constructs which feed into the quality of service, which in turn affects student satisfaction. This study used the CFA to assess the student measurement model and various indices to evaluate/estimate the measurement model fit. As a commonly used statistic for model fix index, Chi-square (x^2) was employed in this study. Hair et al. (2006) state that in SEM, the Chi-square statistic is used to examine the existence of relationship between two models. Hu and Bentler (1999:2) in Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen (2008) assert that the chi-square value helps to assess the extent of inconsistency between the sample and fitted covariance matrices. The tested model is presented in Figure 5.4 on page 155, and the parameter estimates for the model are presented in Table 5.9 (see page 156).

It is important to point out that in this test the larger the p-value the better the fit (contrary to many statistical tests). The model was found to be adequate and this was confirmed by the chi-square value. (x^2) of = 43.097, Degrees of freedom = 38 and a p-value = 0.262. Comparing the p-value with level of significance of 0.05, the p-value was greater than 0.05 ($p>0.05$), hence the model was declared adequate (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). P-values exceeding 0.05 indicated the models were adequate (Hooper et al., 2008). The fit of the model to the data was checked using Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the ratio of Chi-square value to degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF). If the CFI value is greater than 0.90 (Hair et al., 2006) or ≥ 0.95 (Hu and Bentler, 1999), then the model fits to the data well. RMSEA values range from 0 to 1, hence small RMSEA values, for example less than 0.1, means a good fit to the data, while values below 0.05 indicate a very good fit (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). Other scholars (Browne and Cudeck, 1993) state a value less than 0.04 indicates that the model fits the data well while Hu and Bentler (1999) state that a value less than 0.06 fits the data well. With a large sample, the RMSEA is best applicable in a confirmatory or competing modelstrategy (Hair et al., 2006; Browne and Cudeck, 1993:141). Furthermore, CMIN/DF values less than 3 show better fit. In this analysis CFI = 0.999, CMIN/DF = 1.134 and RMSEA = 0.016. As shown in the Tables 5.7 and 5.8 below, the criterion indicate that the model fitted the data well. Therefore, the final finding was considered to be admissible to proceed with structural equation modeling.

5.3.3.2 Goodness of Fit Indices for the Student Model

According to Hair et al. (2006:735) and Schumacker and Lomax (2004:81), goodness of fit indices are used for accepting or rejecting the model. Table 5.7 below shows summarised fit indices results of fit emerging from the student sample of the constructs being measured and the structural model. All the fit indices were more than the proposed criterion (Table 5.8) for any measurement model hence the proposed student model was deemed sufficient meeting all statistical requirements.

Table 5.7 Model Fit Estimates for Student Measures

CMIN/DF

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P-value	CMIN/DF
Default model (*proposed model)	40	43.097	38	.262	**1.134**
Saturated model (*all variances and covariances are allowed to freely vary)	78	.000	0		
Independence model (*all covariances are constrained to zero)	12	4051.585	66	.000	61.388

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	**.016**	.000	.036	.999
Independence model	.340	.332	.349	.000

CFI (Baseline comparisons)

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.989	.982	.999	.998	**.999**
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

NFI= Normed Fit Index, RFI= Relative Fit Index, IFI=Incremental Fit Index, CFI=Comparative Fit Index, TLI=Tucker-Lewis Index

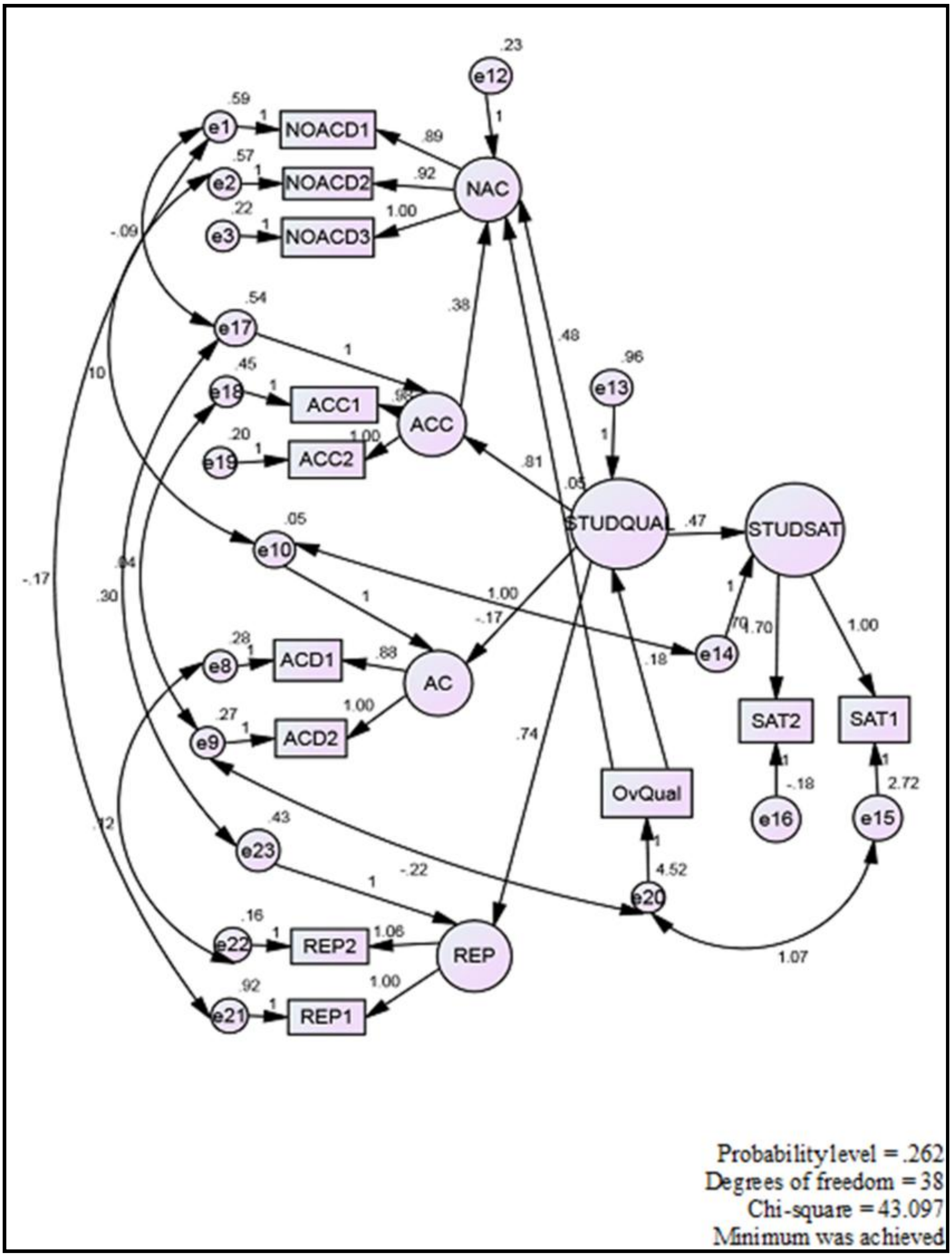
Table 5.8 Criterion Employed for Goodness-of-Fit for the Student Model

Fit Indices	**Acronym**	**Actual Value of Indices**	**Suggested Value**	**Reference**
Absolute Fit Measures				
Chi-square test (CMIN)	X^2	43.097 (p=0.262)	P>.05 (non-significant)	Hu and Bentler, (1999); Hooper et al. (2008); Kline (2005)
Degrees of freedom	*df*	38	≥0	Kline (2005)
Ratio of Chi-square/degrees of freedom	X^2/df (CMIN/DF)	1.134	2 to 3	Schumacker and Lomax (2004) Hair et al. (2010)
Root mean square error of approximation	RMSEA	0.016	<.04; < .05	Browne and Cudeck (1993); Hu and Bentler, (1999); Hooper et al. (2008)

Fit Indices	**Acronym**	**Actual Value of Indices**	**Suggested Value**	**Reference**
Incremental/Relative Fit Measures				
Normed Fit Index	NFI	.989	>.95	Schumacker & Lomax (2004) Hu & Bentler (1999)
Relative Fit Index	RFI	.982	>.90	Hu & Bentler (1999)
Incremental Fit Index	IFI	.999	>.90	Hair et al. (2006)
Tucker-Lewis Index	TLI	.998	>.90 to >.95	Hair et al. (2006)
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	0.999	>.90	Hair et al. (2006)

After confirming the measurement model, the magnitude of the relationships between constructs in the structural models is presented (Figure 5.4). Path diagrams offer convenience in illustrating a model in a visual form (Hair et al., 2006:714) with a straight arrow indicating a direct dependence relationship between two constructs while a curved arrow depicts correlation between the two variables. Figure 5.4 below is an illustration of the student structural model with standardised maximum likelihood estimators.

Figure 5.4 Structural Equation Diagram and Estimates (Student Customer – Service Quality Hypothesised Model)



Note: Errors of measurement related with each indicator are shown as "e" and followed by the corresponding numbers of the service quality scale.

Table 5.9 Models Parameter Estimation and Levels of Statistical Significance (Relationships among Variables in the Student Model)

Path (Structural Relation)			Estimate (β)	Standard Error (S.E.)	C.R. (t-value)	P-value
STUDQUAL	<---	A2OvEval	.181	.023	7.780	***
ACC	<---	STUDQUAL	.813	.079	10.318	***
STUDSAT	<---	STUDQUAL	.475	.097	4.919	***
AC	<---	STUDQUAL	1.000			
NAC	<---	ACC	.378	.081	4.642	***
REP	<---	STUDQUAL	.740	.077	9.576	***
NAC	<---	STUDQUAL	.479	.111	4.309	***
NAC	<---	A2OvEval	.050	.016	3.064	.002**
NOACD3	<---	NAC	1.000			
NOACD2	<---	NAC	.922	.041	22.439	***
NOACD1	<---	NAC	.891	.043	20.940	***
ACD2	<---	AC	1.000			
ACD1	<---	AC	.884	.037	24.153	***
SAT1	<---	STUDSAT	1.000			
SAT2	<---	STUDSAT	1.697	.300	5.661	***
ACC2	<---	ACC	1.000			
ACC1	<---	ACC	.981	.036	26.995	***
REP1	<---	REP	1.000			
REP2	<---	REP	1.064	.056	18.965	***

Notes: *** means p=0.01; ** means p=0.05

STUDQUAL = student quality, ACD = academic, STUDSAT = student satisfaction, NAC = non-academic, REP = reputation, SAT = satisfaction.

Table 5.9 above provides a summary of the path coefficient results and their significance. With reference to Figure 5.4 and the results of Table 5.9, it is evident that six path coefficients were statistically significant at 0.05 percent level. Thus, Hypothesis H1 was partially supported by this study. The result as hypothesised by the model in relation to the study context undoubtedly indicates that the relationship between service quality and the academic aspects, non-academic aspects, access and reputation, are statistically significantly positive. As can be seen from the same table, the parameter coefficient estimates in order of magnitude (i.e. academic aspect = 1, access = 0.813, reputation = 0.740 and non-academic aspect = 0.479) of the sub-hypotheses are statistically significant ($p<0.0001$) and as depicted by their t-score values. Therefore, the academic aspects, non-academic aspects, access and reputation are perceived by the students to be most important in how they perceive and evaluate the quality of service received (Firdaus, 2006; Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996; Leblanc and Nguyen, 1997; Soutar and McNeil, 1996) as they have a direct effect on service quality. Since the effect is positive among students, this may serve as an inducement to an individual's satisfaction levels. On the other hand, sub-hypotheses H1c for the programme and H1f for understanding the dimensions, were not supported by the findings. In addition, since the two dimensions were found not to be related with service quality, their inclusion in the model was making the entire model fit insignificant; hence they were excluded in the final model. The findings also confirmed H4, namely, that service quality dimensions are significantly related to customer satisfaction (Cronin and Taylor 1994; Ojo, 2010: Kumar and Yang, 2014; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996). When service quality increases by 1 unit, student satisfaction also increases by 0.475. Therefore, the finding supports hypothesis (H4). Thus, it was clear that service quality is positively related with student satisfaction. Furthermore, student perceived quality has a positive and significant relationship with overall student quality ($\beta = 0.181$; CR = 7.780; $p<0.0001$), (H2), as well the quality of the non-academic aspects was positively related to the overall quality with $\beta = 0.050$, CR = 3.064, $p = 0.002$. Figure 5.4 also shows some some correlation structures between error terms for example, 'e10' is related to 'e14' which are suggested by the modification index output of AMOS after initial model fitting without any correlated error terms which help improve the overall model fitting.

5.4 Employee Data

5.4.1 Reliability and Factor Analysis

The Cronbach coefficient alpha, using the stepwise reliability analysis approach, was also used to check on how repeatable the measurements were for the higher education employee data. Cronbach alpha with values greater than 0.7 were recommended as the acceptable measure of internal consistency for the employee instruments (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010: 325). Table 5.10 below summarises the outcome of the reliability analysis procedure by showing the reliabilities of all the variables, dubbed initial reliability and finally, the reliability after stepwise analysis, dubbed final reliability. The table also gives the number of variables that yielded thet final reliability since all the Cronbach alphas were greater than 0.7, which indicated a good reliability of the measurement instrument administered to the employees.

Table 5.10 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Employee Measurements

Instrument	**Original Items**	**Initial No. of items**	**Initial Cronbach Alpha coefficients**	**Final Items**	**Final No. of items**	**Final Cronbach Alpha coefficients**
Non-Academic Aspects	a,b,c, …,x	24	0.599	a,b,c,h,k,l,m,n,o,p, q,r,s,t,u,v,w,x	18	0.758
Academic Aspects	a,b,c, …,n	14	0.745	a,b,c,e,f-n	13	0.763
Reputation	a,b,c, …,j	10	0.87	a,b,c,…,j	10	0.87
Access	a,b,c, …,l	12	0.724	a,b,c,…,g,I,j,l	11	0.853
Programmes	a,b,c,d	4	0.817	a,b,c,d	4	0.817
Understanding	a,b,c	3	0.807	a,b,c	3	0.807
Overall satisfaction	c1,c2, …,c7	7	0.819	c1,c2,…,c7	7	0.819

After the abovementioned reliability analysis, it was noted that some of the constructs had too many items, and there was need to reduce it. To achieve this, Spearman's rank correlation procedure was conducted and highly correlated items in each construct were grouped together by computing their average. Highly correlated items carry the same information, hence this was the principle used to reduce the number of variables. Table 5.11 below shows this reduction process and the final aggregation of the variables to a few, but possessing the same information.

Table 5.11 Spearman's Rank Correlation for Adapted Employee Variables

Instrument	Variables	Correlated variables	Index variable
Non-Academic Aspects	a,b,c,h,k,l,m,n,o,p,q,r,s,t, u,v,w,x	a,b,c,x	NOACD1=(a+b+c+x)/4
		w,m,v	NOACD2=(w+m+v)/3
		u,s	NOACD3=(u+s)/2
		p,h,n,o,r,t,l, q,k	NOACD4=(p+h+n+o+r+t+l +q+k)/9
Academic Aspects	A,b,c,e,f-n	n,j,m,k	ACD1=(n+j+m+k)/4
		a,l,f	ACD2=(a+l+f)/3
		c,b,e	ACD3=(c+b+e)/3
		i,g,h	ACD4=(i+g+h)/3
Reputation	a,b,c,…,j	e,b,d,h,i,j	REP1=(e+b+d+h+i+j)/6
		g,a,c,f	REP2=(g+a+c+f)/4
Access	a,b,c,…,g,I,j,l	K,i,j,l,b	ACC1=(k+i+j+l+b)/5
		d, e, f	ACC2=(d+e+f)/3
		c,a,g	ACC3=(c+a+g)/3
Programmes	a,b,c,d	-	-
Understandi ng	a,b,c	-	-
Overall Satisfaction	c1,c2,…,c7	c2,c5	SAT1=(c2+c5)/2
		c1,c3,c4,c6, c7	SAT2=(c1+c3+c4+c6+c7)/5

5.4.2: Rotated Factor Loadings for Employee Measurements

Factor analysis was conducted to identify the factors which explain the data contained in a large number of variables into a smaller number of factors. From the rotated factor loadings indicated in Table 5.12, it is evident that the various items used to measure the service quality variables can be grouped , since the factor loadings for some variables is greater than 0.4 (Hair et al., 2006), which is high enough and therefore meets the minimum acceptability level. An attempt was made to give the factors meaningful names, as depicted in the table. Factor 1 was called *satisfaction*, Factor 2 was called *quality of programmes*, Factor 3 was named *academic quality*, Factor 4 *health quality* and Factor 5 was referred to as *credibility*. Since all the factors had loading with values greater than 0.4, they were considered practically significant or ideal measures of reliability (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 5.12 Rotated Factor Loadings for Modified Employee Measurement Instruments

	Satisfaction Factor(1)	Quality of Programmes Factor(2)	Academic Quality Factor(3)	Health Quality Factor(4)	Credibility Factor(5)
NOACD1	.607	.040	.124	-.073	.002
NOACD2	.387	.345	.154	**.503**	-.134
NOACD3	.727	.015	.113	.192	-.123
NOACD4	.844*	--	--	--	--
ACD1	--	--	.786	--	--
ACD2	--	--	.652	--	--
ACD3	--	--	.739	--	--
ACD4	--	--	.823*	--	--
REP1	.758	--	--	--	--
REP2	.662	.468	--	--	--
ACC1	.794	--	--	--	--
ACC2	.678	--	--	--	--
ACC3	.668	--	--	--	--
SAT1	.544	.422	--	--	--
SAT2	.755	--	--	--	--
PROG1	--	.714	--	--	--
PROG2	--	.657	--	--	--
PROG3	--	.831*	--	--	--
PROG4	--	.769	--	--	--
QUALGEN	--	--	--	--	.873*
UND1	--	--	--	.813*	--
UND2	--	--	--	.778	--
UND3	.474	--	--	.567	--

Source: Hair et al. (2006:734); ***Highest factor loadings**

Note: NOACD = non-academic, ACD = academic, REP = reputation, ACC = access, PRG = programme, UND = understanding, SAT = Satisfaction, OvrQual = overall quality, QUALGEN = quality general

The results presented in Table 5.12 above clearly demonstrate that both construct and discriminant validity criteria were met since the items used to measure employee perceptions of service quality were adapted, met the acceptable validity level of 0.4 on the factors (Hair et al., 2006).

5.4.3 Empirical Findings of the Employee Sample

Figure 5.5 below presents the employee research model tested using the computer programme SPSS AMOS. The observed data was fitted into the employee service quality model. Simliar to the explanation of analyis of the student data, t-values higher than 1.96 with $p<0.0001$ would mean a significant influence of particular variable on another, whereas t-values less than 1.96 ($p>0.0001$) would imply non-significant influence (Arbuckler, 2012).

5.4.3.1 Structural Equation Modeling for Employee Sample

The parameter estimates for the structural model depicted in Figure 5.5 and associated estimations for the model are presented in Table 5.13. The model was found to be adequate and this was confirmed by the chi-square value and its corresponding p-value. The model had a Chi-square = 85.448, degrees of freedom = 82, probability level = 0.375. When comparing the p-value with the level of significance of 0.05, the p-value was greater than 0.05, hence the model was deemed adequate (Hair et al, 2006).

The fit of the model to the data was checked using Comparative Fit Index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the ratio of the Chi-square value to the degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF). If the CFI value is greater than 0.95, this indicates that the model fits the data well. Small RMSEA values, particularly less than 0.04 also indicate that the model fits the data well, and also CMIN/DF values less than 3 show a better fit (Hair et al., 2006; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Schumacker and Lomax, 2004:81). In this study the CFI = 0.997, CMIN/DF = 1.042 and RMSEA = 0.018, as shown in the Tables 5.14 and 5.15 (criterion used) below, all of which confirm that the model fitted the data well.

5.4.3.2 Goodness of Fit Indices for the Employee Model

Table 5.13 below shows the fit indices of the employee sample and the constructs that were measured. All the model fit indices met the proposed threshold (Table 5.14) for any measurement model, thus the suitability of the proposed employee model.

Table 5.13 Model Fit Estimates for the Employee Measures

CMIN/DF

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	38	85.448	82	.375	**1.042**
Saturated model	120	.000	0		
Independence model	15	1126.332	105	.000	10.727

CFI

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.924	.903	.997	.996	**.997**
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

NFI= Normed Fit Index, RFI= Relative Fit Index, IFI=Incremental Fit Index, CFI=Comparative Fit Index, TLI=Tucker-Lewis Index

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	**.018**	.000	.052	.933
Independence model	.271	.257	.286	.000

Table 5.14 Criteria Employed for Goodness-of-Fit for Employee Model

Goodness of fit statistics	**Acronym**	**Actual Value**	**Recommended Value for a good fit**
Absolute Fit Measures			
Chi-square test (CMIN)	X^2	85.448 (p=.375)	P>.05 (non-significant)
Degrees of freedom	*df*	82	≥0
Ratio of Chi-square/degrees of freedom	X^2/df (CMIN/DF)	**1.042**	< 3
Root mean square error of approximation	RMSEA	**.018**	< 0.06

Goodness of fit statistics	Acronym	Actual Value	Recommended Value for a good fit
Incremental/Relative Fit Measures			
Normed Fit Index	NFI	.924	>.90
Relative Fit Index	RFI	.903	>.90
Incremental Fit Index	IFI	.997	>.90
Tucker-Lewis Index	TLI	.996	>.90
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	**.997**	>.90

Source: Adapted from Hair et al. (2006:734)

Table 5.15 Model Parameter Estimation and Levels of Statistical Significance in the Employee Model

Path (Structural Relation)			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-Value
AC	<---	QUALITY	.727	.183	3.969	***
ACD3	<---	AC	.890	.159	5.589	***
NON_AC	<---	QUALITY	1.000			
ACC	<---	QUALITY	.740	.128	5.790	***
REP	<---	QUALITY	.690	.122	5.668	***
SAT	<---	QUALITY	.626	.124	5.070	***
NOACD1	<---	NON_AC	1.000			
NOACD2	<---	NON_AC	.554	.111	4.988	***
NOACD3	<---	NON_AC	.855	.153	5.595	***
NOACD4	<---	NON_AC	.956	.150	6.375	***
REP2	<---	REP	1.000			
REP1	<---	REP	1.521	.148	10.279	***
ACD4	<---	AC	1.000			
ACD2	<---	AC	.874	.139	6.297	***
ACD1	<---	AC	1.011	.123	8.243	***
ACC3	<---	ACC	1.000			
ACC2	<---	ACC	1.111	.118	9.451	***

Path (Structural Relation)			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-Value
ACC1	<---	ACC	1.535	.153	10.057	***
ACC1	<---	ACD3	-.091	.027	-3.410	***
SAT1	<---	SAT	1.000			
SAT2	<---	SAT	1.319	.166	7.929	***

Note: *** means =0.01, NOACD = non-academic, AC = academic, REP = reputation, ACC = access, PRG = programme, UND = understanding, SAT = Satisfaction

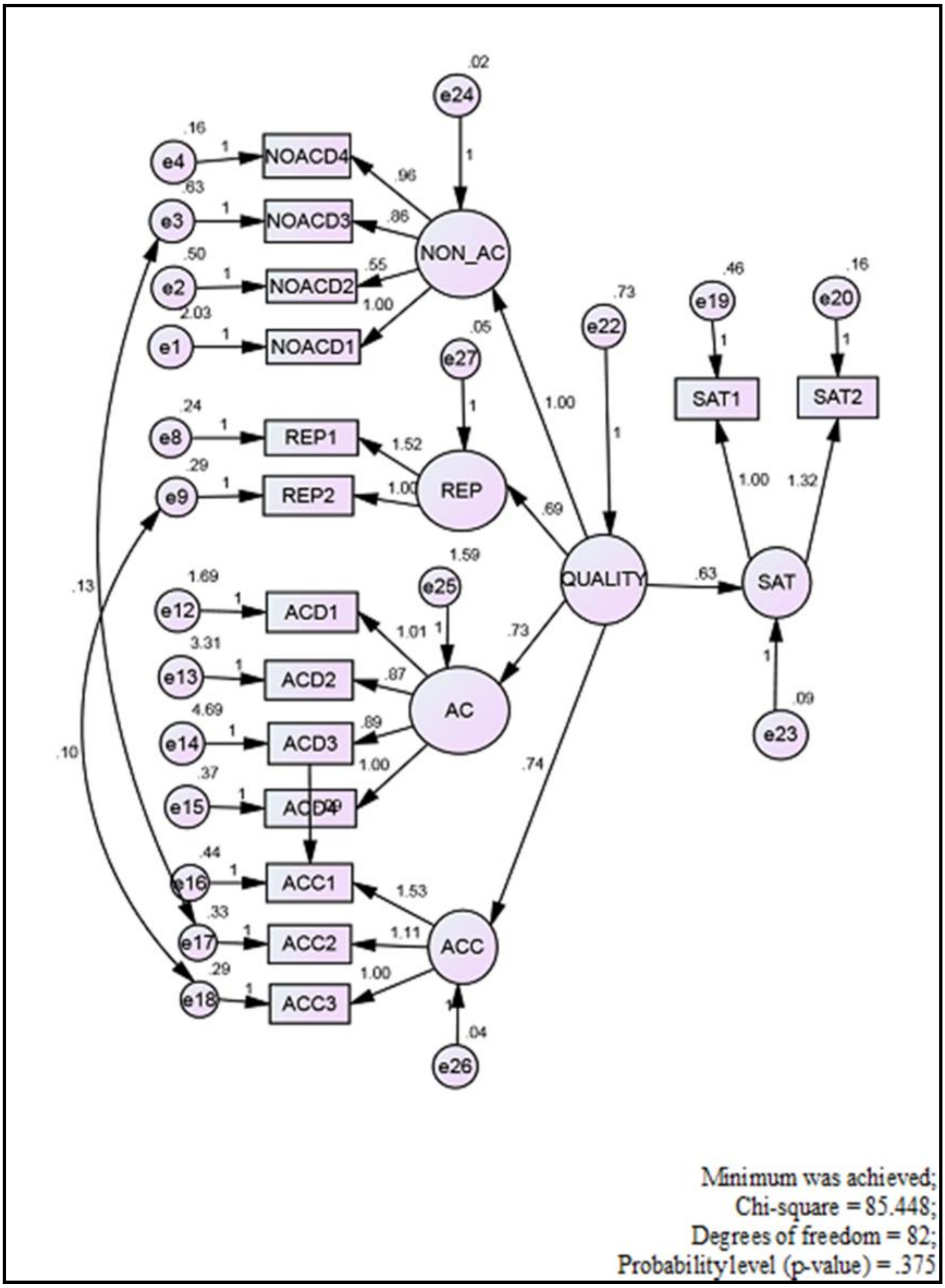
It can be deduced from the results (Figure 5.5 and Table 5.15), that the estimations are highly significant ($p<0.0001$) for five paths. The results indicate that when quality increases by one unit, employee satisfaction increases by 0.626. Therefore, it is concluded that the quality of service is positively related with satisfaction of employees. These findings confirmed hypothesis H4 and are therefore consistent with earlier studies (Cronin and Taylor, 1994:125; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; Ojo, 2010; Rasli, Danjuma, Yew and Igbal, 2011) supporting the proposition for a strong relationship between service quality and employee satisfaction. Hypothesis H1 stated below was also partially supported by employee findings.

H1, The HEdPERF service equality constructs (academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programme aspects, reputation, access and understanding) form the perceived service quality construct and these have a significant positive relationship with overall service quality.

Table 5.16 also illustrates that the non-academic aspects have a positive relationship with the quality of service, with a coefficient estimate of 1 and no p-value since it was one of the fixed paths for estimation. . The findings also showed that the academic aspects have a positive relationship with the quality of service, with a coefficient estimate of 0.727 with p-value 0.0001. Access has relationship with the quality of service (0.740 with p-value 0.0001), and reputation aspects had a positive relationship with the quality of service (coefficient estimate is 0.690 with p-value 0.0001). The aforementioned findings support the four secondary hypotheses, *H1a, H1b, H1d and H1e*, which imply that academic activities, non-academic activities, and reputation and access, respectively would be positively related to the perceived service quality. Previous research (Firdaus, 2006; Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996, Parasuraman et al., 1985) support the hypothesis that access (inter alia ease of contact, availability of both academic and administrative staff and convenience) contribute to higher perceived SQ from the employees' standpoint. The ability to project a professional image and or reputation (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010: 4; Grönroos, 1984; Owino, 2013) in the HE industry is central, as the findings reveal, since it generates allegiance (Jones & Sasser, 1995; Chitty and Soutar, 2004), and enhances retention (Martensen et al., 2000) as well. These results too are positively related to Firdaus's (2006) determinants of SQ, where the academic and non-academic characteristics have been identified (Leblanc and Nguyen, 1997; Kumar and Yang, 2014; Soutar and McNeil, 1996) as important indicators of service quality. Finally, two sub-hypotheses (*H1c and H1f*) could not be tested because the items making up the scale could not load on the factors successfully, therefore resulting in their elimination from the employee model.

Figure 5.5 below which was developed from covariance analysis, which tested the relationship between perceived university SQ and employee satisfaction, indicates the structural model between university SQ and employee perceived quality with the resulting maximum likelihood standardised estimators. By way of a 'snapshot' the path diagram attests to the results of various hypotheses that were postulated. Figure 5.5 reveals that the results are similartothat of some of the HEdPERF SQ dimensions (non-academic, reputation, academic, access) impact employee perceived SQ, and consequently influence employee satisfaction.

Figure 5.5 Structural Equation Diagram and Estimates (Employee-Service Quality Hypothesised Model)



Note: Errors of measurement related with each indicator are shown as "e" and followed by the corresponding numbers of the service quality scale

5.5 Combined Employee – Student Sample

The research attempted to combine the two data sets following the same procedures as was done with the independent sample data sets. The correlation matrix and maximum likelihood estimations are depicted in Figure 5.6 (see page 168) with their subsequent p-values shown in Table 5.16 below.

Table 5.16 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for combined Data Measurements

Instrument	**Original Items**	**Initial No. of items**	**Initial Cronbach Alpha coefficients**	**Final Items**	**Final No. of items**	**Final Cronbach Alpha coefficients**
Non-academic Aspects	All non-academic variables	22	0.875	All non-academic variables	22	0.875
Academic Aspects	All academic variables	14	0.854	All academic variables	14	0.854
Reputation	All reputation variables	10	0.886	All reputation variables	10	0.886
Access	All access variables	10	0.911	All access variables	10	0.911
Programmes	All programme variables	4	0.750	All programme variables	4	0.750
Understanding	All	3	0.832	All	3	0.832
Overall Satisfaction	All	7	0.887	All	7	0.887

As can be noted from Table 5.16 above, it is evident that the combined data set yielded acceptable reliability coefficients (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010) for the six 'sub-latent' variables that were measured.

With regard to validity measurements, Table 5.17 below reflects the results of validity of the 'combined' model's data. Construct and discriminant analysis were performed and, as can be observed from the table, all the factors (satisfaction, health quality, programme quality) loaded above the recommended (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 5.17 Rotated Factor Loadings for Combined Student-Employee Measurement Instruments

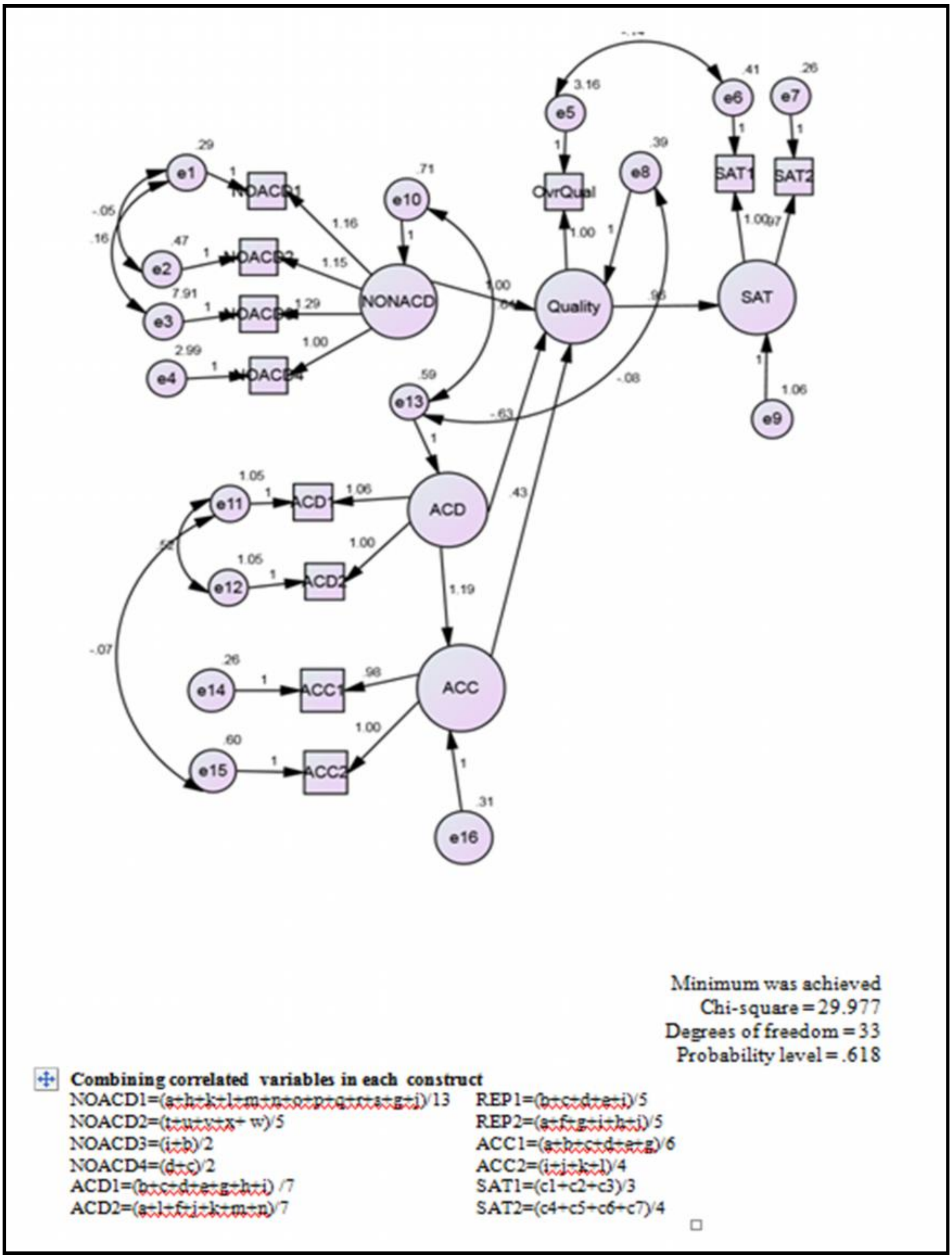
	Satisfaction Factor 1	Health Quality Factor 2	Programme Quality Factor 3
NOACD1	.755	--	--
NOACD2	.659	.450	--
NOACD3	.435	--	--
NOACD4	.514	--	--
ACD1	.751	--	--
ACD2	.726	--	--
REP1	.499	.539	--
REP2	.539	.506	--
ACC1	.530	.528	--
ACC2	--	.578	--
PRG1	--	--	.751
PRG2	--	--	.717
PRG3	--	--	.793
PRG4	--	--	.650
UND1	--	.741	--
UND2	--	.764	--
UND3	--	.783	--
OvrQual	--	--	--

Source: Hair et al. (2006:734)

Note: NOACD = non-academic, ACD = academic, REP = reputation, ACC = access, PRG = programme, UND = understanding, OvrQual = overall quality

The resulting maximum likelihood estimates (Figure 5.6) illustrate the structural model between university service quality and 'employee-student' perceived quality, with the resulting standardized regression estimates. It is evident from Figure 5.6 that only three path coefficients were statistically significant out of the six HEdPERF's SQ dimensions thus, non-academic, academic and access impact employee perceived SQ, and also influence ‘employee-student’ satisfaction. The three hypothesised paths were confirmed and or supported.

Figure 5.6 Resultant Structural Model for Employee-Student-Quality



Note: Errors of measurement related with each indicator are shown as “e” and followed by the corresponding numbers of the service quality scale

The estimates reflecetd in Table 5.18 below, indicate the fit of the data to the combined 'employee-student' model, where chi-square value is 29.997; the RMSEA is 0.00, and CMIN/DF was equal to 0.908, supporting the goodness of fit. All the relative fit measures namely, the normed fit index (NFI), relative fit index (RFI), incremental fit index (IFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), yielded values greater than 0.95, further confirming that the model fitted the data well (Hair et al., 2006; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). The variables considered insignificant, for instance reputation, was further dropped since it could not load on the model. Therefore, the model was reconfigured and it was concluded thatthe combined model for the entire sample is not fully confirmed.

Table 5.18 Model Fit Indices for the Combined Employee-Student Measures

Goodness of fit statistics	**Acronym**	**Actual Value**	**Good fit desired range**
Absolute Fit Measures			
Chi-square test (CMIN)	X^2	29.977(p=.618)	P>.05
Degrees of freedom	*df*	33	≥0
Ratio of Chi-square/degrees of freedom	X^2/df	**.908**	< 3
Root mean square error of approximation	RMSEA	**.000**	<.06
Incremental/Relative Fit Measures			
Normed Fit Index	NFI	.991	>.90
Relative Fit Index	RFI	.986	>.90
Incremental Fit Index	IFI	1.001	>.90
Tucker-Lewis Index	TLI	1.001	>.90
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	**1.000**	>.90

Source: Adapted from Hair et al. (2006:734)

Table 5.19 Regression Weights of the 'Student-Employee' Model

Relation among variables			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
ACC	<---	ACD	1.188	.086	13.863	***
Quality	<---	NONACD	1.000			
Quality	<---	ACD	-.630	.264	-2.383	.017
Quality	<---	ACC	.435	.196	2.213	.027
SAT	<---	Quality	.959	.117	8.194	***
NOACD4	<---	NONACD	1.000			
NOACD3	<---	NONACD	1.291	.182	7.082	***
NOACD2	<---	NONACD	1.151	.112	10.301	***
NOACD1	<---	NONACD	1.164	.111	10.486	***
SAT1	<---	SAT	1.000			
ACD2	<---	ACD	1.000			
ACD1	<---	ACD	1.060	.058	18.292	***
ACC2	<---	ACC	1.000			
ACC1	<---	ACC	.983	.042	23.310	***
SAT2	<---	SAT	.971	.045	21.450	***
OvrQual	<---	Quality	1.000			

Note: *** means P=0.01, NOACD = non-academic, ACD = academic, ACC = access, PRG = programme, UND = understanding, SAT = Satisfaction, OvrQual = overall quality

From Table 5.19 above which indicates the relationships among the research variables, it is evident that H1is partially supported. The non-academic aspects as well as the access dimension had a positive influence on quality, implying a significant positive relationship with quality (0.435; $P<0.05$), therefore accepting sub-hypotheses H1b and H1d respectively. Interestingly, the academic 'sub-dimension' of quality was not directly associated with either the employee or student quality as was expected (-.630; $p<0.05$). In other words, it influences service quality indirectly. Contrary to the findings reported by (Firdaus, 2006; Leblanc and Nguyen, 1997; Soutar and McNeil, 1996), the findings for this study do not support sub-hypothesis H1a. By investigating the influence ofservice quality on satisfaction, the findings showed that the path from service quality to satisfaction was significant with 0.959, $p<0.0001$. The results implied that when the quality of service increased by one unit, there was a subsequent increase in satisfaction by 0.959, fully supporting hypothesis H4. It is concluded that perceived private university service quality had a predictable and significant influence on customer satisfaction. To sum up, the results of the combined (employee-student) model reveal that not all sub-dimensions of service quality are significant and positively associated with SQ, which by implication extends tocustomer satisfaction.

5.6 Observed Variable 'Effect' Sizes and Comparative Ranking of Perceptions of SQ between Employees and Students

In ascertaining the effect sizes with the employee and student samples and to answer *RQ3 'How important are the service quality dimensions in influencing customer satisfaction?'* a covariance structural analysis was employed. The analyses helped in establishing the influence of each of the dimensions of the HEdPERF scale on perceptions of the quality of service in PHE. With regard to employees, the results showed that the non-academic aspects were perceived as the most important, followed by, access, academic aspects and reputation. On the other hand, students ranked the academic aspects, access, reputation and the non-academic aspects in that order of importance. The above-mentioned results clearly indicated that the perceptions of employees and students towards the quality of service in PHE vary in their order of importance (H5). In other words customers' (students and employees) prioritisation of the SQ indicators in higher education institution is dissimilar. Table 5.20 below shows the t-values and p-values of the SQ factors.

Table 5.20 Weightings of Significant Variables observed in the Employee and Student Model Fits

Employees				Students			
SQ Factor	***Estimate***	***t-value***	***P-Value***	***SQ Factor***	***Estimate***	***t-value***	***P-value***
1. Non-academic aspects	1.000			1. Academic aspects	1.000		
2. Academic aspects	.727	3.969	***	2. Access	.813	10.318	***
3. Access	.740	5.790	***	3. Reputation	.740	9.576	***
4. Reputation	.690	5.668	***	4. Non-academic aspects	.479	4.309	***

*** means p<0.01

5.7 Comparison of Satisfaction between Employees and Students

The customers were asked six questions related to their satisfaction with the university services and one question on their overall satisfaction. Each question was measured on a Likert scale, taking a range of 1 to 7. In this scale, 1 implied that the customer was completely dissatisfied, while a 7 implied that the customer was completely satisfied.

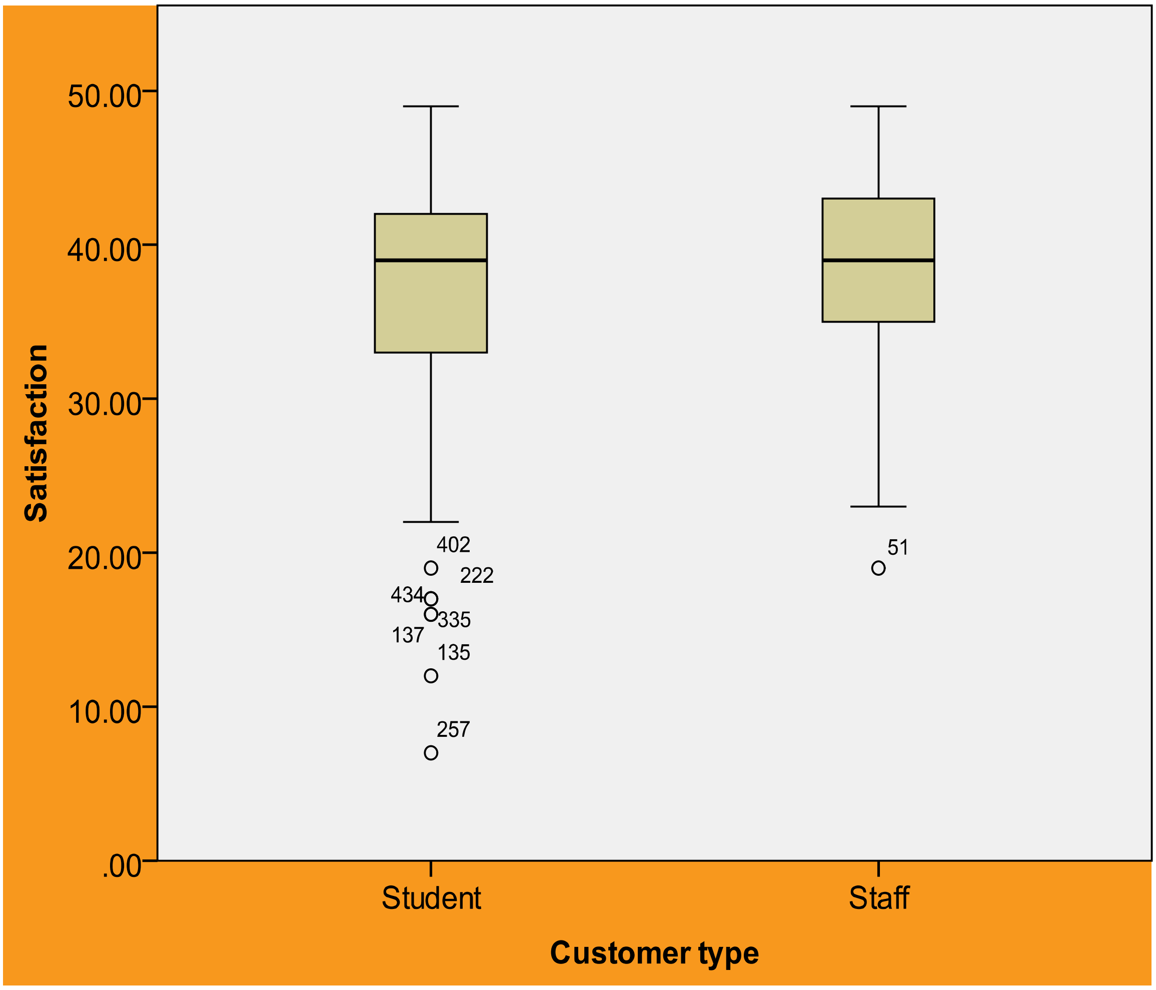
A new variable, called ‘satisfaction score’, was computed from these 7 variables by summing these facets of satisfaction. The lowest value that this variable could take is 7 while, the maximum value is 49. Table 5.21 summarises the distribution of the satisfaction score.

Table 5.21 Satisfaction score

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction Score	576	7.00	49.00	37.7	6.698

The average score is 37.7, and it is greater than the midpoint of 28, meaning that the customers are fairly satisfied with the services that they receive. Further analysis was conducted to determine if the satisfaction score varied by the type of customer (employee/student), more spcifically, if there was a difference in the satisfaction between employees and students. An exploratory analysis using a box plot was conducted to determine (graphically), if there was a difference before conducting a formal statistical test. A box plot was drawn to check if there was a pattern in the satisfaction score by customer. The box plot is shown in Figure 5.7 below.

Figure 5.7 Satisfaction by Customer



Hair et al. (2006) and Kline (2005) assert that a dataset may have cases with scores characteristically dissimilar from the rest of the observations, therefore forming outliers. Although this study utilised a 7- point Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 7 – strongly agree, some outliers were identified, implying that some responses provided were on extreme points of the scale. From the box plot (Figure

5.7) above, it is evident that both students and staff have almost the same satisfaction scores. However, some students had very low satisfaction, hence forming outliers represented by circles. Only one staff member's score was categorised as an outlier. To check if there is a significant difference in the satisfaction between the student and employee customers, a student's t-test results for independent groups (Field, 2009) was used, and the results are shown in Table 5.22. The alpha was set at the 5% level, and the two-tail test was conducted and the null hypothesis was tested, for the two groups' satisfaction with the quality. The two aforementioned groups' satisfaction was statistically comparable.

Table 5.22 Satisfaction Score by Customer Type

	Customer Type	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Satisfaction	Student	450	37.5044	6.89671	0.32511
	Staff	126	38.3968	5.90739	0.52627

Table 5.23 Levene's and T-test for Comparison of Satisfaction between Employees and Students

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	p-value	t	p-value	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	4.555	.033	-1.323	.186	-.89238	.67466	-2.21749	.43273
Equal variances not assumed			-1.443	.151	-.89238	.61860	-2.11124	.32648

From Levene's test results indicated in Table 5.23 above, the null hypothesis of equal variances between the employees and students is rejected, since F = 4.555, p-value=0.033, is significant, showing a significant difference in variances of the two groups, hence the “equal variances are not assumed” row is used to perform the t-test. The results of the Levene’s test signified that equal variances could not be assumed, and an alpha level of 0.05 was chosen. If $p > 0.05$, then the null hypothesis is not rejected, while a p value < 0.05 implies significant results. Therefore, the equality of means between the employees and students, t (-1.443) and the associated p-value, was found to be 0.151, which is greater than 0.05. This illustrates that no significant difference existed in the mean satisfaction of the employee and student groups on the quality of service; hence, the null hypothesis (H6) was notrejected, implying that there is no statistical significant difference in satisfaction between employees and students. Although staff have a slightly superior quality satisfaction index score (mean = 38.39, SD = 5.91) than students (mean = 37.50, SD = 6.89), there is not a significant statistical difference in these averages. With reference to the literature reviewed the findings concur with that of some researchers such as De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010). The institutions in the aforementioned study were also private universities, thus it was assumed that employees and students in the private university were subjected to similar conditions of educational service environment. In other words, other variables that could have affected the service quality were constant in both groups. The conclusion is that, the test is not biased to any customer.

5.8 Alternative Models of the Impact of the HEdPERF Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction – Employees and Students Perspectives

5.8.1 Structural Model: Relative Impacts of Service Quality dimensions on Customer Satisfaction

To futher test research hypothesis H3 based on the original model, this thesis argues for the existence of a direct impact on the HEdPERF’s six service quality dimensions and CS. Therefore, this section specifically analyses the effects/relationships in the structural model, as illustrated in Figure 5.8 below in the conceptual model relating to the main construct, service quality’s dimensions (academic, non-academic, understanding, access, programme issues and reputation) on the customer satisfaction construct, for both employee and student data sets. Figures 5.9 and 5.10 respectively, present the structural equation modeling (SEM) results for the postulated paths in the structural models from the students' and employees' data sets.

Figure 5.8: Illustration

Table 5.24: Results of the Best Fit Models

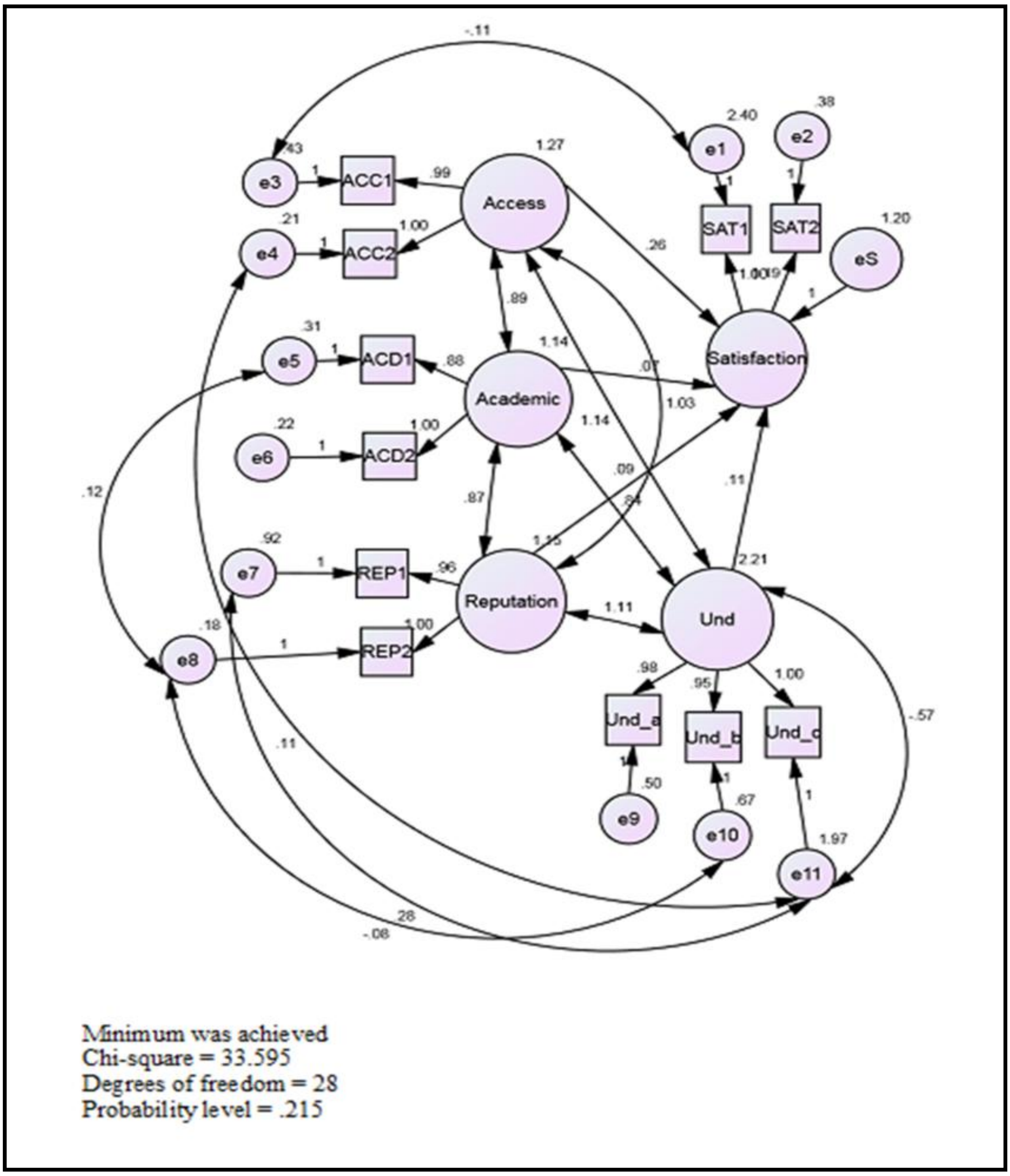
Model	X^2	DF	P	X^2/df (CMIN/DF)	RMSEA	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Student sample	33.595	28	.215	1.200	0.021	.991	.982	.998	.997	.998
Employee Sample	37.877	36	.384	1.052	0.019	.950	.924	.997	.996	.997

X^2=Chi-square, DF=degrees of freedom, CMIN/DF=ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom, NFI= Normed Fit Index, RFI= Relative Fit Index, IFI=Incremental Fit Index, CFI=Comparative Fit Index, TLI=Tucker-Lewis Index

With reference to the structural model (Figure 5.9), the SEM outputs presented in Table 5.24 above illustrate that the required values for the goodness of fit indices were achieved, and the p-value is greater than 0.05, suggesting that this model is good fit. The aforementioned is based on the goodness-of-fit measures, X^2 (28) = 33.5, RMSEA = 0,021, CFI = 0.998, CMIN/DF = 1.20 and *p*-value of 0.215 (Hair et al., 2006; Kline, 1998). Table 5.24 also shows that the goodness-of-fit indices (RMSEA) lies below the upper threshold value of 0.04 – 0.06, which is regarded as the desired range for a good fit (Browne and Cudeck, 1993; Hu and Bentler, 1999). Conversely, values of the normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), relative fit index (RFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) estimate are at the lower threshold of 0.9, which assuggested by Hair et al. (2006) and Hu and Bentler (1999), are superior model fit indices.

Figure 5.9 below presents the resulting student structural model with corresponding regression estimates. As depicted in Figure 5.9, the SQ dimensions access, academic, reputation and understanding have a direct positive influence on student satisfaction.

Figure 5.9: Estimated Structural Equation Modelling Results from Students' Data



Note: Errors of measurement related with each indicator are shown as "e" and followed by the corresponding numbers of the service quality scale

Table 5.25: Direct Influence: Structural Equation Modelling Students Result (Default model)

Path			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Satisfaction	<---	Academic	.072	.093	.782	.434^{ns}
Satisfaction	<---	Reputation	.085	.135	.632	.527^{ns}
Satisfaction	<---	Understanding	.115	.062	1.852	.049
Satisfaction	<---	Access	.258	.129	2.002	.043
SAT1	<---	Satisfaction	1.000			
SAT2	<---	Satisfaction	1.194	.155	7.718	***
ACC2	<---	Access	1.000			
ACC1	<---	Access	.990	.037	27.025	***
ACD2	<---	Academic	1.000			
ACD1	<---	Academic	.885	.039	22.728	***
REP2	<---	Reputation	1.000			
REP1	<---	Reputation	.960	.049	19.454	***
Und_c	<---	Understanding	1.000			
Und_b	<---	Understanding	.952	.068	14.017	***
Und_a	<---	Understanding	.976	.066	14.822	***

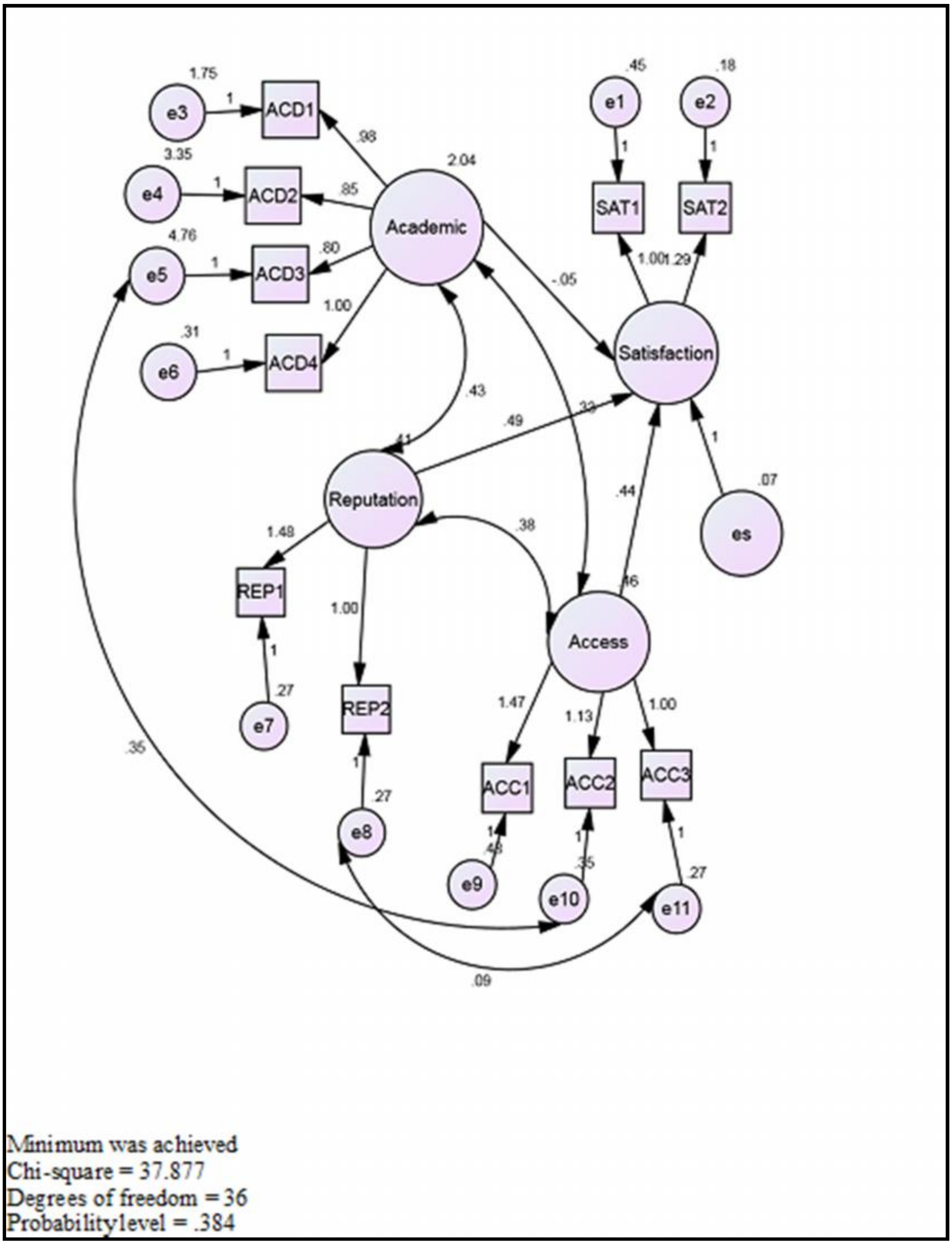
Notes: SAT = Satisfaction, ACC = Access, REP = Reputation, Und = Understanding
Implies significant at $p < 0.05$; * Implies significant at $p < 0.01$; ns = Not significant

Table 5.25 above show that with respect to the student structural model results, academic, reputation understanding and access were found to have a strong positive influence on satisfaction among the students. Among these determinants of satisfaction, only 'understanding' β = 0.115 (t = 1.852; p-value = 0,049) and 'access' β = .258 (t = 2.002; p-value = 0,043) were found to have a direct impact (p<0.05) on satisfaction among the students. These findings concur with that of Firdaus (2006) who also found access and understanding as indicators of student satisfaction. Watson (2003) argues that understanding specifically student needs with reference to counselling and health quality services will lead to greater satisfaction. The other service dimensions, programme and non-academic, were found not to fit the model. Therefore, the results lead us to the conclusion that only four dimensions have a direct influence on student satisfaction, however, only two path coefficients were positive and significant, providing support for H3d and H3f. The aforementioned also emphasizes the importance of understanding the service quality dimensions in explaining student satisfaction. Thus, it is suggested that 'access' and 'understanding' dimensions should be incorporated when examining student satisfaction. Accordingly, service quality managers at universities should emphasise firstly 'understanding' and later the other dimensions.

With reference to the employees' structural model, the goodness of fit indices reflected in Table 5.24 X^2 (36) = 37.9, RMSEA = 0.019, CFI = 0.997, CMIN/DF = 1.052 and p – value = 0.384) indicate that the model represents a good fit to the data The aforementioned is further supported by the NFI, IFI, TLI and CFI, all of which are greater than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2006). The employee model (Figure 5.10) revealed that the academic, reputation and access dimensions were found to greatly influence satisfaction among employees. A ccess (β = 0.438; t = 2.146; p = 0.032), (Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996; Firdaus, 2006) and reputation (β = 0.494; t = 2.092; p = 0.036), (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010: 4), were found to have a direct positive and significant impact on satisfaction at $p < 0.05$ significance level. Therefore, the results support sub-hypothesis H3d and H3e. Similar to the students' data set, the results from the employees' data set revealed the importance of access and reputation as drivers of employee satisfaction with the university's service quality. Consequently, priority should be given firstly to 'access' then 'reputation' and later on the other dimensions of service quality. More so, the two dimensions should be included in a customer satisfaction study in the future.

Figure 5.10 below presents a 'snapshot' path diagram of the postulated hypotheses and their standardised regression estimates for the impact of academic, access and reputation (SQ variables) on employee satisfaction.

Figure 5. 10 Estimated Structural Equation Modelling Results from Employee Data (Direct Effect/Relationships)



Note: Errors of measurement related with each indicator are shown as “e” and followed by the corresponding numbers of the service quality scale

Table 5.26: Direct Influence of Conceptual Model: Structural Equation Modelling Employee Result (Default model)

Path			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Satisfaction	<---	Academic	-.055	.037	-1.468	.142^{ns}
Satisfaction	<---	Reputation	.494	.236	2.092	.036**
Satisfaction	<---	Access	.438	.204	2.146	.032**
SAT1	<---	Satisfaction	1.000			
SAT2	<---	Satisfaction	1.286	.157	8.210	***
ACD4	<---	Academic	1.000			
ACD3	<---	Academic	.804	.152	5.285	***
ACD2	<---	Academic	.849	.137	6.202	***
ACD1	<---	Academic	.984	.121	8.133	***
ACC3	<---	Access	1.000			
ACC2	<---	Access	1.125	.115	9.753	***
ACC1	<---	Access	1.470	.146	10.056	***
REP2	<---	Reputation	1.000			
REP1	<---	Reputation	1.475	.146	10.132	***

Note: SAT = Satisfaction, ACC = Access, REP = Reputation, ACD = Academic

Implies significant at $p < 0.05$; * Implies significant at $p < 0.01$; ns = Not significant

To sum up, the findings illustrated above provide 'partial' support for hypothesis (H3), and by implication, the sub-hypotheses relating to direct relationships between the SQ dimensions and customer satisfaction where:

H3: Each university (HEdPERF) service quality dimension (academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programme aspects, access, reputation and understanding) has a direct positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction.

Based on Figure 5.9 and drawing on the results from Table 5.25, 'understanding' (p = 0,049) had the strongest path followed by 'access' (p = 0,043). The aforementioned findings are in line with that of Owlia and Aspinwal (1996), who found that 'access' to be a very important SQ dimension while on the other hand, 'understanding' was important in the general services industry (Parasuraman et al., 1985), and in higher education (Firdaus, 2006). This implies that the satisfaction derived from the quality of services received by the students is directly influenced by the service providers' understanding and accessibility. Therefore, efforts directed towards improving the service quality dimensions in private universities could have a greater impact on the students' satisfaction. Furthermore, Figure 5.10 also shows that 'reputation' (p = 0.036) was followed by 'access' (p = 0.032), implying that employees draw their satisfaction more from institution's reputation and accessibility. Grönroos (1984) and Firdaus (2006) established the importance of reputation in determining service quality. Secondary hypotheses H3d, H3e and H3f are therefore fully supported by the abovementioned results. It can be concluded from the aforesaid that 'access' is perceived as being somewhat more important among both students and employees, since it is common to all.

5.9 Summary of the Hypotheses Test Results

Schumacker and Lomax (2004:70) assert that when testing hypotheses, there is a need to look at the parameter's sign to ascertain if there is unanimity with expectations from the hypothesised model(s), and whether parameters fit within the expected range of values. Therefore, parameters should show the predictable direction, and be statistically different from zero and their practicality. The hypotheses generated from the literature reviewed in this thesis (Chapter 3), is evaluated and summarised in the context of the conceptual framework.

This section outlines the summarised empirical analysis of the examined relationships and hypotheses tests that were carried out among the various variables of the study. The 18 hypotheses (as well as six sub-hypotheses for H_1 and H_3 respectively) that were proposed to be tested, as well astheir underlying associations, and decisions have been summarised in Table 5.27.

Table 5.27 Hypotheses Findings (significant results) – Student, Employee Quality

Hypotheses/No.	Hypothesised Weight	Real Weight	Result Interpretation
H1	+	+ / -	Partly Supported
H1a	+	+	Supported
H1b	+	+	Supported
H1c	+	XX	XX
H1d	+	+	Supported
H1e	+	+	Supported
H1f	+	XX	XX
H2	+	+	Supported
H3	+	+/-	Partly Supported
H3a	+	+	Supported (ns*)
H3b	+	+	Supported (ns*)
H3c	+	+	Supported (ns*)
H3d	+	+	Supported
H3e	+	+	Supported
H3f	+	+	Supported
H4	+	+	Supported
H5	+	+	Supported
H6	+	+	Supported

Note: (+) = Positive Influence; (-) = Negative Influence

XX: The two variables (programmes and understanding) lacked validity and were dropped, thus their relationships could not be verified therefore excluded

Ns = Not Significant ($p > 0.05$)

To sum up, testing the relationships among specific attributes/dimensions of SQ in the Kenyan private HE context was important because the different university service consumers have different preferences or expectations of specific SQ components. As shown in Figures 5.11 and 5.12, the main model estimates revealed that 11 hypotheses were fully supported, two were partially supported, while three were supported although did not produce significant results.

Figure 5. 11: Research Model and Results – Students' Perspectives

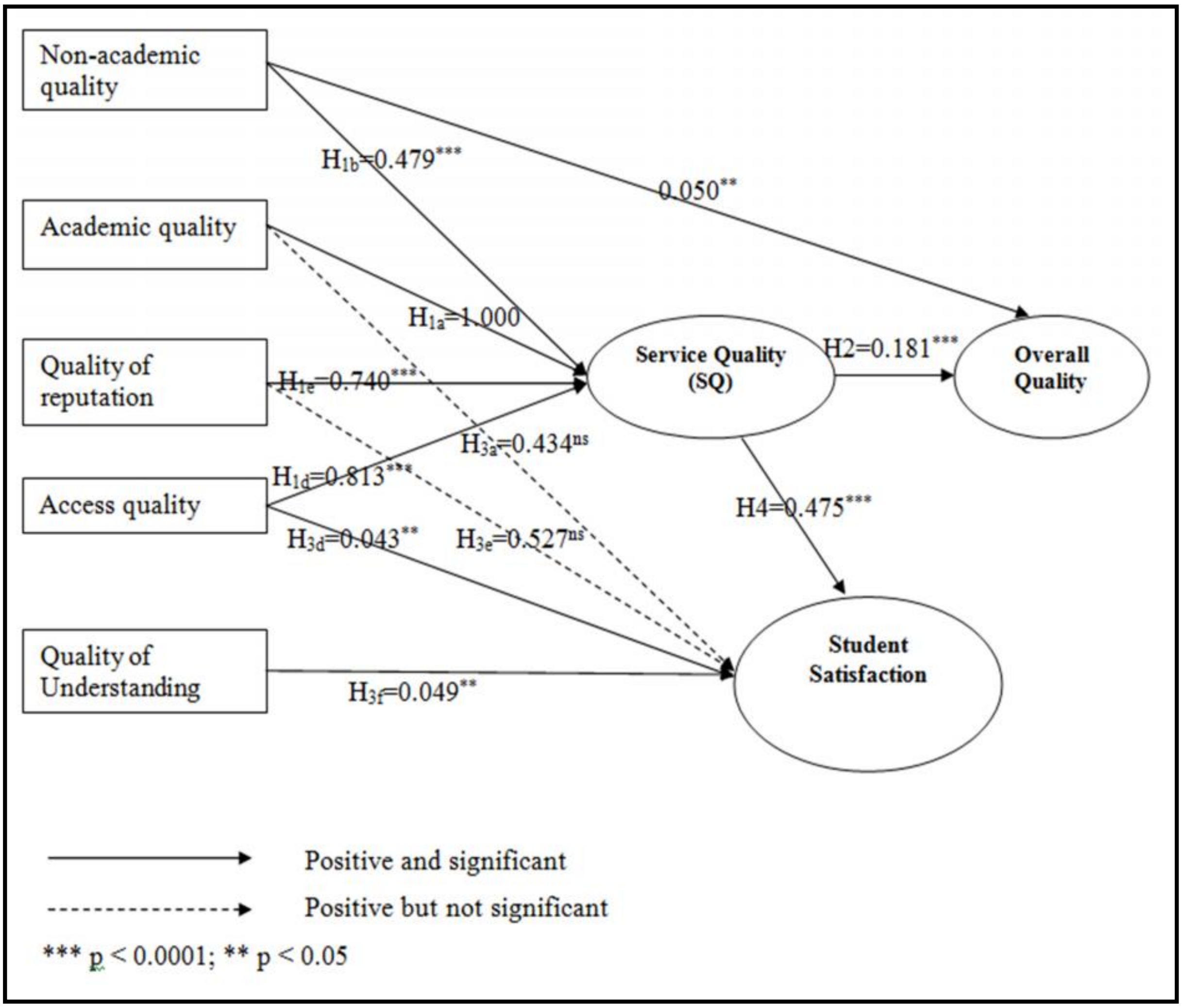
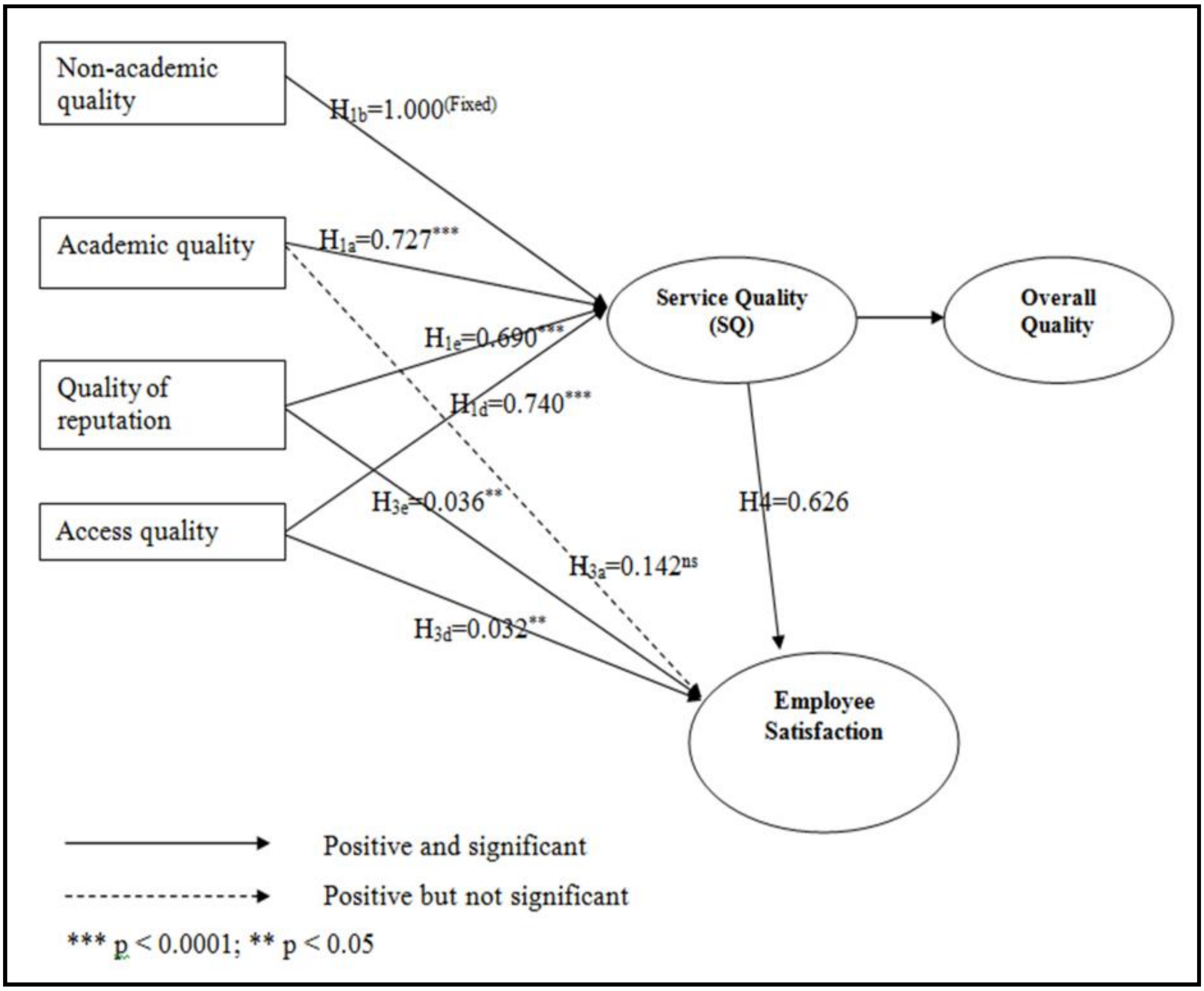


Figure 5. 12: Research Model and Results – Employees' Perspectives



5.9.1 Hypothesis H1: The HEdPERF service quality constructs (academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programme aspects, reputation, access and understanding) form the perceived service quality construct and these have a significant positive relationship with overall service quality.With respect to students and employees models, Hypothesis H1 is partially supported and the path coefficient is statistically significant ($p<0.0001$). As well, secondary hypotheses $H1_a$ (Academic<---Studqual), $H1_b$ (Non-academic<---Studqual), $H1_d$ (Access<---Studqual) and $H1_e$ (Reputation<---Studqual) have statistically significant path coefficients and have the expected positive signs. Employees' results with coefficient paths $H1_a$ (Academic<---Equal), $H1_b$ (Non-academic<---Equal), $H1_d$ (Access<---Equal) and $H1_e$ (Reputation<---Equal) have also the expected positive signs. These results from the secondary hypotheses demonstrated that the abovesaid attributes strongly influences perceived university service quality in that an increase in the qualities were likely to push customers satisfactions a notch higher.

5.9.2 Hypothesis H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between students perceived quality on general service quality.

Hypothesis H2 is represented by path coefficient STUDQUAL<---OvEval. This hypothesis is supported because the path coefficient has the expected positive sign and is significant at $p=0.0001$. this result also suggested that student quality has a significant effect on perceived overall quality implying that an increase in university's SQ would in turn, influence overall quality hence positive satisfaction among students.

5.9.3 Hypothesis H3: Each university (HEdPERF) service quality dimension (academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programme aspects, access, reputation and understanding) has a direct positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction.

With a statistically significant path coefficient ($p<0.0001$), Hypothesis H3 is partially supported. With regard to students' secondary hypotheses H3d and H3f and for employees' H3e and H3d are fully supported for both models since they exhibit the estimated positive sign. These results suggested that perceived quality of access, reputation and understanding were directly related to customer satisfaction hence important factors in the determination of both students and employees satisfactions.

5.9.4 Hypothesis H4: There is a significant positive association between perceived private university service quality and customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis H4 is represented by different coefficients of paths for student (STUDSAT<---STUDQUAL) with regression estimate = 0.475, employees (ESAT<---EQUAL) estimated at 0.626 and merged employee-student (SAT<---Quality) at 0.959 regression estimate. The corresponding coefficients for the aforementioned paths are statistically significant ($p<0.0001$) and had the priori estimate positive sign. These results imply that university customers highly relate quality of service with their satisfaction. In summary, service quality was found to be an important factor which positively influences satisfaction.

5.9.5 Hypothesis H5: There is a variation in customers' (employees and students) perceptions of the importance of each of the sub-dimensions of service quality

Hypothesis H5 is supported since a variation existed in the order of importance (rank) from which employees and students perceived the quality dimensions.

5.9.6 Hypothesis H6: There is no significant difference in satisfaction among university customers' (students and employees).

Hypothesis H6 is supported since equality of means between the employees and students, *t* (-1.443) and the associated *p*-value was found to be 0.151, which was not significant at 5% confidence level. The results suggested that no significant difference in the mean satisfaction of employees and students groups on the quality of services found. This implied that perceived service experiences by both students and staff to what they believed crucial to SQ in their universities was more or less similar.

5.9 Barriers to Effective Implementation of Service Quality Management in PHE in Kenya

One of the study objectives was to identify the challenges that face university managers in the management of service quality in PHE in Kenya. Both students and employees' were required to respond to this question through the semi-structured questionnaires.

5.9.1 Factors that Inhibit Effective Implementation of Service Quality as Perceived by Employee-Customers

Employees were requested to indicate the perceived challenges on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 = Absolutely Disagree and 7 = Absolutely Agree. . The respondents were asked to either agree or disagree with some of the items listed and indicate whether they felt that these were challenging to their respective institutions in their efforts towards realisation of service quality. From Table 5.28, it is evident that with the exception to CQc and CQf, for all other items the employee respondents' neither agreed nor disagreed, that challenges existed which impede the effective implementation of service quality in their universities. Bearing in mind the nature of the scale, the mean values for the employee scale (above 3 and leaning towards 4) show that for the majority of the questions, the employees 'agreed' that challenges existed. Furthermore, the t-test (one sample) was performed to further verify whether the mean score for employee data set on challenges was < or = 4. It was established that at the 5% significance level, the p-value was 0.000. Therefore, it was concluded that the results tending towards 'slightly agreeing' implied that there existed challenges that hinder the effective implementation of service quality.

Table 5. 28 Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Challenges towards Implementation of Service Quality

Challenge Item	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
ECQa	3.55	4	5	1.905
ECQb	3.59	4	1[a]	1.895
ECQc	3.46	3	1	1.917
ECQd	3.61	4	4	1.926
ECQe	3.81	4	5	1.831
ECQf	3.01	3	1	1.952
ECQg	3.71	4	1	2.043
ECQh	3.63	4	1	2.165
ECQi	3.59	4	1	2.097

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Further exploration of the challenges facing the effective implementation of SQ in HE was conducted by calculating the Pearson's Chi-square test statistic. The intention was to determine whether the opinions about the challenges from the employees' perspective differed with respect to the respondents' employment status. It was apparent that there was statistically significant evidence that member category responses to the "items concerning challenges towards implementation of SQ" differed depending on employee status (academic or administration) at $x^2 = 3.151$, $p>0.05$. For example, the percentages in the Table 5.29 below, as it highlights that the distribution of responses varies considerably between the two categories of staff.

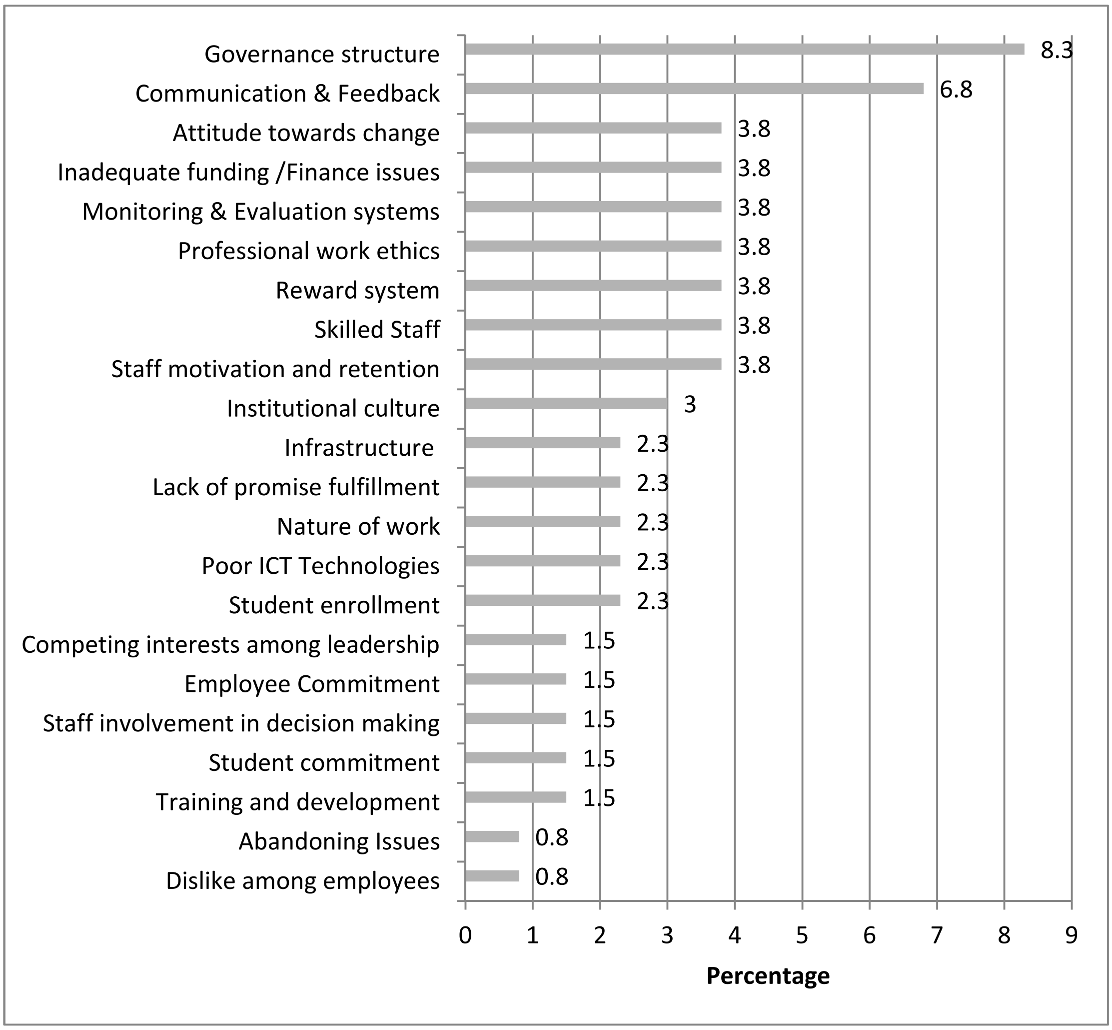
Table 5. 29 Contingency Table for Challenges towards Implementation of Service Quality as Perceived by Employees with regard to their Occupation

Challenges to Implementation of SQ	Occupation		Total
	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff	
Agree	17 21.1 32.7%	35 30.9 67.3%	52 52.0 100.0%
Disagree	27 25.6 42.9%	36 37.4 57.1%	63 63.0 100.0%
No Opinion	10 7.3 55.6%	8 10.7 44.4%	18 18.0 100.0%
Total	54 54.0 40.6%	79 79.0 59.4%	133 133.0 100.0%

In each cell: Top Value = Count, Middle value = Expected Value, Bottom Value = Percent

The study sought to establish other challenges (Figure 5.13 below) that limited effective implementation of service quality in the respective universities as perceived by the staff respondents. As reflected in Figure 5.13, the governance structure of an institution was the indicated as being the main barrier that hindered the effective implementation of service quality in the private institutions of higher learning.

Figure 5. 13 Barriers that Hinder Effective Implementation of Service Quality – Employees' Views (N=133)



Note: Multiple responses were possible

5.9.2 Factors that Inhibit Effective Implementation of Service Quality as Perceived by Students-Customers

With respect to the students, by using a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 = Absolutely Disagree and 7 = Absolutely Agree to assess their perceived challenges, the respondents were asked to either agree or disagree with the items listed. From Table 5.30 it is evident that the mean values were tending towards 3.5 and more, implying that for the majority of the questions, the students perceived that the challenges listed do exist in their universities.

Table 5.30 Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Challenges towards Implementation of Service Quality

Challenge Item	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
StuCQa	3.29	4	4	1.933
StuCQa	3.28	4	4	2.005
StuCQa	2.97	3	1	1.977
StuCQa	3.41	4	1	1.998
StuCQa	3.41	4	4	2.007
StuCQa	2.91	2	1	2.023
StuCQa	3.03	3	1	1.996
StuCQa	3.02	3	1	2.005
StuCQa	3.16	3	1	2.046

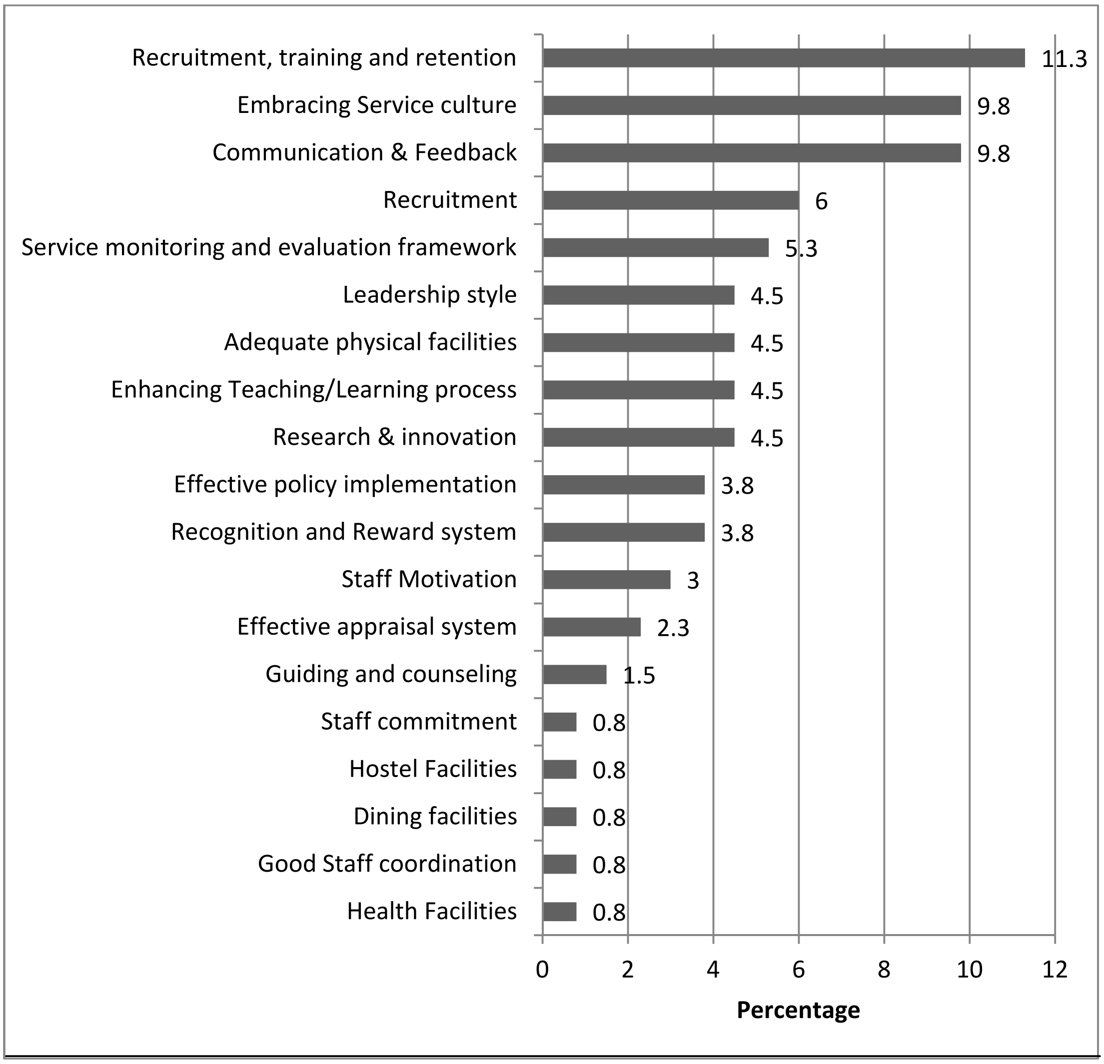
The study further sought to establish what other challenges inhibited the effective implementation of service quality from students' perspective. It was ascertaind that, bureaucracy and lack of commitment were major inhibitors for both students and staff. Other major barriers were inadequate teaching and learning resources, inadequate skilled personnel, ineffective communication and feedback mechanisms, inadequate physical infrastructure, and high student enrolment (overpopulation) and inadequate funding. Other major reasons mentioned were slow academic programme development and implementation, especially those that are in line with the needs of the current market trends, poor ICT technologies, lack of accommodation facilities, 'wanting' dining facilities, poor management of students' records, insecurity and safety of students while at campus, marketing of institutions, poor maintenance of existing physical facilities, ethnicity and nepotism, non-existence of monitoring and evaluation systems, high staff attrition and poor health facilities.

5.9.3 Improving Service Quality within Private Higher Education in Kenya

The employees and students identified measures that will help mitigate the barriers to implementation and, improve SQ. Figures 5.14 and 5.15 indicate that good practices such as recruitment, training and retention of employees, and training and education of employees is paramount (Hasan and Ilias, 2008), since they enable management, teamwork and consideration leading to quality realisation. Communication, embracing a service culture within service processes, and improving internal service processes (Becket and Brookes, 2008; Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009) were also considered important. Other strategies include: monitoring and evaluation, research and innovation, and provision of not only adequate but modern physical facilities (Abagi et al., 2005). With the facilities in place, it is assured that academic excellence and research will be realised (Wesonga et al., 2007).

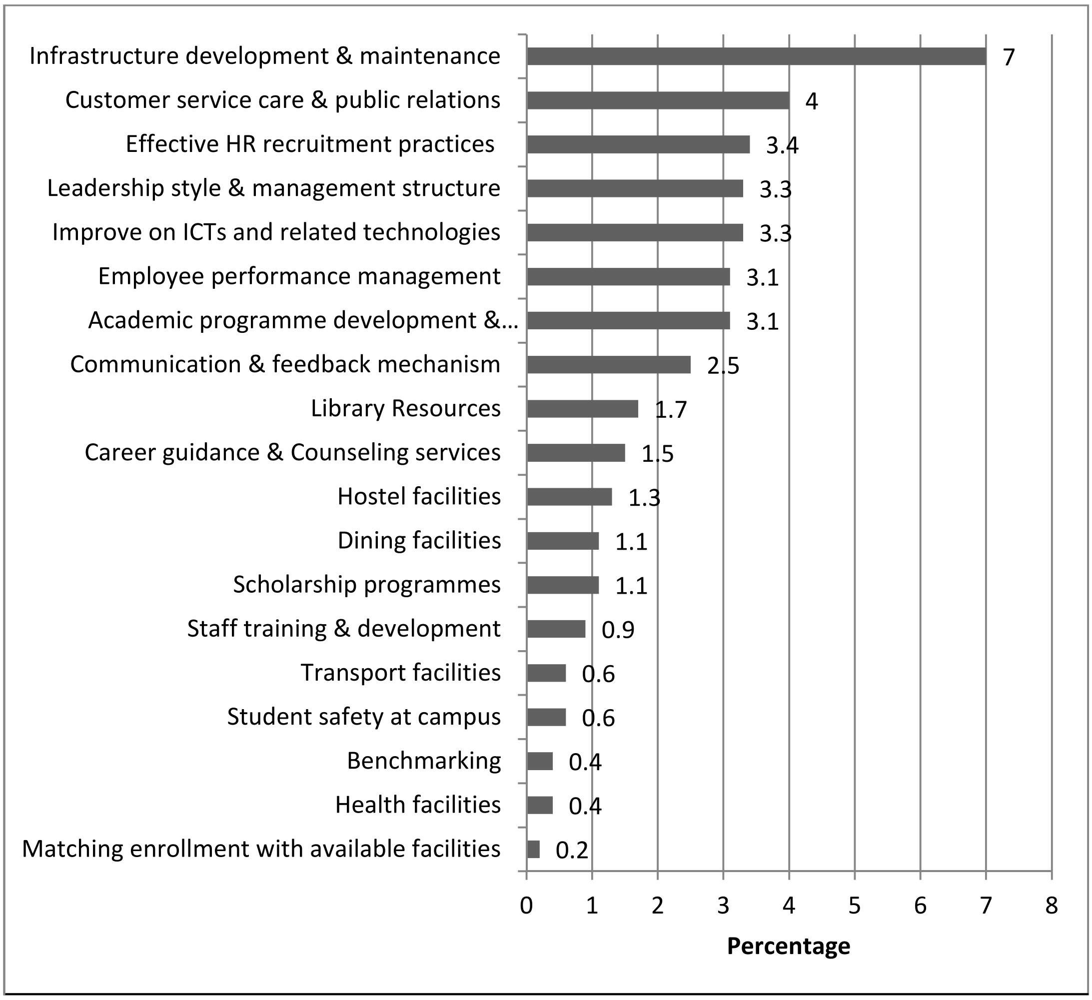
Alridge and Rowley (2001) assert that to motivate students, quality should be focused on ensuring that dependable facilities that support learning are in place, including skilled staff, a conducive environment for learning to take place and supporting infrastructure. This will retain students in an institution and will increase their trust in administration and support (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010; Keller, 2003). Availability of hostels, dining, sports and health facilities, guidance and counseling, and library resources will attract students to an institution (Kimani 2011). Motivation of employees results in employees meeting their obligations, which has been found to lead to quality service delivery (Shahin and Samea, 2010). More so, the quality of services is typically accredited to teamwork and support of the administrative staff as well as the academic staff with the students. If students realise that the staff is not concerned with and caring of them they become demotivated. Higher learning institutions need to set benchmarks as this helps their work roles and makes the communication of set priorities clearer (Berry et al., 1988).

Figure 5. 14 Measures to Improve Service Quality as Expressed by the Employee Customer (n=133)



Note: Multiple responses were possible

Figure 5. 15: Measures to Improve Service Quality as Expressed by the Student Customer



Notes: Student-Customer (n=522); Multiple responses were possible

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with a preliminary analysis of the results. The confirmation of the validity and reliability of the items in the instruments was also done using factor analysis. The path co-efficients of the different models were calculated using SEM. Consequently, all hypothesised relations were considered and described. A discussion of the barriers to successful implementation of quality services was made including measures that could be adopted to mitigate them. Finally, a summary of all hypotheses postulated was provided. The data provided in this chapter enabled the interpretation. In the next chapter the significant findings, their discussion and interpretations in the context of existing literature is presented.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a discussion as well as an interpretation of the empirical results presented in the previous chapter. The central theme of the study was to look at the interrelationships among service quality variables and customer satisfaction among administrative and academic staff and students in Kenyan private universities. The study tried to isolate the service quality variables that have a greater influence on customer satisfaction in private universities in the Kenyan context, to ascertain whether the aforementioned dimensions have an impact on the overall satisfaction of the customer and lastly, investigated the differences in perceptions among various university customers. This chapter further summarises the key study question and discusses comprehensively the significances of the results for real-world application, theoretical use and future enquiries in higher education management studies.

6.2 Discussion of Findings

6.2.1 Critical factors of service quality in private higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Kenya

By citing Lagrosen (2001), Roostika (2009) asserts that testing the SQ dimensions with reference to a particular situation ensures its validity and reliability. While earlier service quality dimensions by Parasuraman et al. (1988) are acknowledged, they may not characterise the specific nature of the higher education industry. Thus, this thesis used Firdaus's (2006) scale, specifically developed to assess SQ in the higher education sector.

The intention of this research study was to identify the major dimensions of service quality in the Kenyan context that have the most influence on customers' perceived quality. Structural model results and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) findings showed that service quality in Kenyan universities consisted of four dimensions. The results from the EFA illustrated that the set of items in the service quality scale did not completely load on to six factors as was initially proposed. The findings did not conform exactly to Firdaus's (2006) revised framework or six dimensions, namely, academic aspects, non-academic aspects, programme aspects, access, reputation and understanding. The EFA results revealed that the items making up perceived quality of university service loaded on to four factors namely; academic, non-academic, access and reputation which were identified as valid and reliable measures. Therefore, the HEdPERF service quality model, 'partly' supported the validity and applicability of the model's four dimensions as a measure of SQ in the private higher education Kenyan context. Therefore, this thesis partially supports Firdaus's (2006) approach to evaluating service quality in the higher education sector context.

In line with Firdaus's (2006) study, the results of this study support the construct validity of the HEdPERF service quality measures, as was evidenced from the test of reliability results of student and employee measures. All reliability coefficients were greater than 0.7 which were acceptable (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The current research therefore adds to other studies corroborating use of the model in higher education in Kenya and beyond (Kimani, 2011; Ravichandran et al., 2012; Kumar and Yang, 2014).

6.2.2 Dimensions of service quality that contribute to customer satisfaction

With regard to the student sample, the 'academic' construct had the highest weighting (1.000), compared to access (0.813), reputation (0.740) and non-academic aspect (0.479). Similarly, the major determinants of employee satisfaction are 'non-academic aspect' (1.000), 'academic aspect' (0.727), 'access' (0.740) and 'reputation' (0.690) among employees. All results were significant at $p<0.0001$, which is consistent with other published studies (Lassar et al., 2000; Naik et al., 2010; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Siddiqi, 2011; Ravichandran et al., 2012) which concurred that service quality dimensions are crucial for customer satisfaction and that certain variables were related to various dimensions of service quality within the higher education industry (Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009; Kumar and Yang, 2014; Owino, 2013; Ravichandran et al., 2012). Moreover, some researchers (Gupta and Zeithaml, 2006; Khodayari and Khodayari, 2011; Rust and Chung, 2006) assert that variation between expectations and perceptions depend on the importance or value attached to the variables (H4) being assessed related to quality of services offered. It became evident that a variation in the customers' (employees' and students') perceptions of the importance of each of the sub-dimensions of service quality existed. Hence, it may be concluded that university customers havedifferent expectations of a service (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000).

In this thesis, the SEM clearly shows that four service quality dimensions are valid and reliable, and these may be applicable to measure the service quality construct. The path coefficients from independent employee and student samples have shown the positive significant effects of the academic aspects, non-academic aspects, access, and reputation on the quality of service. Programmes and the 'understanding' dimensions in both the students' and employee samples were dropped, while reputation in the combined employee-student sample was also dropped because they had unsatisfactory validity measures.

Consistent with earlier empirical studies (Firdaus, 2006; Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996, Parasuraman et al., 1985; Kumar and Young, 2014) access (inter alia readily available staff – academic and administrative staff, a stress-free interaction and convenience) contributed to higher perceived SQ from the employees' standpoint. Therefore, academic institutions need to put access at the forefront of their service quality strategy. The ability to project a professional image (reputation) was also found to be important (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010:4; Grönroos, 1984; Kumar and Young, 2014) in higher education industry. It is also associated with creating loyalty (Chitty and Soutar, 2004). Furthermore, the abovementioned results concur with those of Firdaus's (2006), Leblanc and Nguyen (1997) and, Soutar and McNeil (1996) determinants of SQ.

The results from the combined data are to some extent unexpected or contrary to earlier research (Firdaus 2005, 2006; Kimani 2011; Soutar and McNeil, 1996). However, the aforementioned is an indication that the university administrators should take cognisance of and improve the aspects that will increase employee as well as student satisfaction experiences in the higher education environments.

Practically, high quality service which is supported by adequate facilities, and employees with the right attitudes (employee quality) will definitely lead to positive perceptions of an institution by customers (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996: 117). Customers will get the impression that the provider of the service has a sense of leadership, is responsible, dependable, truthful and innovative thus, a positive evaluation of their satisfaction with the service. Some researchers (Cronin and Taylor, 1994: 125) have identified employee service quality a vital factor of service quality.

Besides, this study attempted to investigate the impact of individual HEdPERF SQ dimensions on the students' and employees' satisfaction with the university service quality. The empirical findings showed partial support for hypothesis (H3), (Athiyaman, 1997) and consequently, the secondary hypotheses relating to direct relationships between the SQ dimensions and customer satisfaction. From the students standpoint, the 'understanding' service quality dimension had the strongest path (p = 0,049), followed by access (p = 0,043). These findings concur with some researches (Parasuraman et al., 1985) who established that 'understanding' is an important aspect in the general services industry, while Owlia and Aspinwal (1996) and (Firdaus, 2006) found 'access' to be an important SQ dimension in higher education. This implied that the satisfaction derived from the quality of services received by the students is directly influenced by the service providers' understanding and their accessibility. The employee results also shows that 'reputation' (p = 0.036) was followed by 'access' (p = 0.032), implying that employees draw their satisfaction more from the institution's 'reputation and accessibility'. Grönroos (1984) and Firdaus (2006) established the importance of reputation in determining service quality. Significant efforts directed towards improving the service quality dimensions in private universities could have a greater impact on students' and employees' satisfaction. Access is perceived more important among students and employees since it is common to all (Firdaus, 2006; Owlia and Aspinwal, 1996).

6.2.3 Outcome of critical dimensions and their effects on perceptions of service and satisfaction

From the survey it became evidentthat 'academic quality' was a positive predictor of service quality, although it was ranked first among students, while employees acknowledged it as second in terms of importance. These results were consistent with research by De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010) who postulated that academic performance is a critical determinant of students' overall satisfaction. With regard to 'access', Firdaus (2006) noted that it was an important element for SQ identified by students and employees, since it was found to be positively correlated with universities' quality of services. Similar findings were reported with regard to the 'non-academic and reputation' dimensions of SQ. For instance, Grönroos (1984) argued that the 'reputation' of an organisation reflects on existing relationships and the customers' perceptions of university services, while Ravichandran et al. (2012) assert that empathetic administrative officers contribute to the overall satisfaction of students.

The findings also indicate that the perceived private university service quality was significantly and positively associated with customer satisfaction (Athiyaman, 1997) where, a unit increase in quality caused employee satisfaction to increase by 0.626,while student satisfaction increased by 0.475 with a unit increase in service quality. Consistent with the literature, considerable association was determined between the perceptions of students of their entire service experiences and the quality of services they received (Govender and Ramroop, 2011). Similar findings have also been reported earlier (Heskett et al., 1997) among employees. However, some studies revealed a significant lower perceived service quality delivery by students to what they believed to be vital in their learning centres (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010). These results are in line with the aforementioned findings where satisfaction of the students with the service quality was lower compared, to employees' satisfaction. Managing students' learning experience will maximise their levels of satisfaction and minimise dissatisfaction (Govender and Ramroop, 2011; Govender, 2012).

Notably, not all the HEdPERF framework dimensions of SQ fitted in the models, thus implying that not all dimensions directly influence employee and student satisfaction. It would therefore be good in future to consider important mediating variables between the two main constructs that this studyconsidered when assessing higher education service qualty, as implied by the literature.

The Levene's test results revealed that both students and staff have almost the same satisfaction score (t-test value of 0.151; $p > 0.05$), therefore no significant difference in satisfaction was found among university customers. The similarity could be attributed to the perceived importance of the quality of service dimensions of employees vis-à-vis that of students. Consistent with the literature (Becket and Brookes, 2008), this study affirmed that the quality of service is interpreted and evaluated by all internal constituents (employees and current students) as and when provided. This means that dissimilar preferences exist among the customers for the quality of service, and its definition and evaluation of pointers of service may be conflicting (Becket and Brookes, 2008). Therefore, this calls for university managers to enhance both employee and student perceptions of service quality (Brochado, 2009).

In respect to direct impact of the standalone SQ dimensions on CS (H3), 'understanding' and 'access' were found to have a strong significant influence ($p < 0.05$) on satisfaction among the students. On the other hand, 'access' and 'reputation' were also found to have a positive and significant influence on satisfaction ($p < 0.05$) among the employees' of private universities. These findings are consistent with the extant SQ empirical research findings (Firdaus, 2006; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996) which postulated 'access' to be a significant SQ dimension. In addition, earlier studies (Parasuraman et al., 1985) in the general services industry and the subsequent findings of Firdaus (2006) in HE considered the 'understanding' dimension to be important, thus consistent with the current findings. Finally, this study identified reputation as an important determinant of SQ in higher education consistent with some studies (Grönroos, 1984; Firdaus, 2006). These results have the implication for service managers that 'access and reputation' are vital drivers of employee satisfaction in respect of university's service quality. Therefore, priorotising 'access', then 'reputation' and later the other dimensions of service quality, should be the focus of private universities if they hope to achieve a competitive advantage (Shahin and Samea, 2010; Rust et al., 2000), increase 'business' performance (Van der Wiele et al., 2007) and as well satisfy consumers of their services (Oliver, 1997).

6.2.4 Barriers to Effective Implementation of Service Quality

From this study it became apparent that institutions are faced with bureaucracy, lack of skilled personnel and inadequate physical infrastructure (Abagi et al., 2005; Wesonga et al., 2007). Other impediments mentioned include slow academic programme development and implementation, especially those that are in line with the needs of the current market. This is further complicated by the approval process by the CUE (Tuitoek, 2006), which suffocates innovation, hence leading to poor performance of institutions. As some researchers (Oketch, 2004) have postulated, supply is dependent on demand and, some private universities in Kenya are grappling with high student enrollment (overpopulation) while others have low student numbers. High enrollment requires adequate physical infrastructure that will support the ever limited teaching and learning resources (Wesonga et al., 2007). Since private universities have been found to depend heavily on tuition fees (Mwiria et al., 2007) this has never been enough to sustain them, therefore the problem of inadequate funding arises, as this study established.

Other challenges articulated were ineffective communication and feedback, poor ICT technologies, lack of accommodation facilities, ‘wanting’ dining facilities, poor management of students’ records, insecurity and safety of students while at campus, marketing of institutions, poor maintenance of existing physical facilities, ethnicity and nepotism, inexistence of monitoring and evaluation systems, high staff attrition and poor health facilities. These challenges have to an extent compromised the quality of service in private universities (Ngome, 2010; Tuitoek, 2006; Wesonga et al., 2007). Furthermore, Galloway (1998) asserts that lack of adequate resources proves to be a greater challenge, making it almost impossible to consurrently achieve all stakeholders’ needs. The aforementioned author further argues that it becomes problematic to enhance the image and approachability together with service responsibilities the employees are assigned in educational institutions further compromising service quality.

University managers have no option but to look for ways that will exceed expectations if they are to increase their customers’ reliability (Hallinger and Snidvongs, 2008), be more customer-focused (Kara and De Shields Jr., 2004), and furthermore come up with ways to positively manage and influence their customers' relationships by adopting useful methods. Out of the mutual influence within the customers themselves this will translate to increased satisfaction (Oldfield and Baron, 2000). Evaluation of SQ through data collection (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2010) will enable HE institutions to get to know their customers, the needs of the market and, align services to suit these market needs thereby, offering superior quality to all their customers which should then translate to customer satisfaction. In short, service providers need to include satisfaction surveys in their quality frameworks.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter reported (in a summary), the results of the empirical study, by elucidating the SEM test results. With the heightened competition within the Kenyan higher education sector in broader sense, specifically private higer education, the findings and recommendations are important for decisions that have customer-focus inclinations. The marketing approaches that higher education institutions have adopted will aid in prudent management of universities.

In the final chapter, a summary discussion of the SEM and hypotheses testing results of the study and emerging models out of the initial proposed conceptual model (chapter 3) are illustrated and discussed. The contribution of the study sample, and related recommendations emanating from the study findings are accordingly made and the implications for future research are identified.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

Furtherto the data presented and interpreted in the two preceding chapters, this chapter is devoted to presenting a summary of the findings, main conclusions from the findings and recommendations based on the objectives of the study. Areas for possible further research are provided at the end of this chapter.

7.2 Summary of Results

The findings of this study have provided partial confirmation for the use of the HEdPERF framework in the Kenyan private higher education scenario. The study examined perceived service quality and how it influences customers' satisfaction among students and both academic and administrative employees, in Kenyan private universities.

Presented hereunder, is a summary of the interrelated and significant path relationships, influence and importance of the dimensions in the proposed model as illustrated in Chapter 3 resulting from the SEM analysis of the employees', students' and combined employee-student data.

The weights of the dimensions of the service quality variables in order of importance in PHE from the students (Figure 5.16), employees (Figure 5.17) and merged employee-student (Figure 5.18) points of view are explained below. Furthermore, the final tested emergent models with standardised β are also displayed. Academic, non-academic, reputation and access attributes of the HEdPERF quality dimensions were generally found to have a significant and positive relationship with perceived service quality. This study utilised goodness-of-fit measures to test the hypothesised model. Regression weights were used for hypotheses testing and to establish the extent to which the measurement and structural models fitted into the study data, absolute fit measures were used while the proposed model was matched to a baseline model by using the incremental fit indexes (Hair et al., 2006). The outcomes of absolute and incremental fit measures were consistent and acceptable for all the hypotheses tests conducted in the study.

7.2.1 Path Coefficient Results

Based on the goodness of fit test results for the employee and student samples, and the corresponding results of CFA, the dimensions ‘programme and understanding’ were eliminated (see empirical models of SQ and CS and outcomes in Figures 5.16 and 5.17) to re-run the structural models (student and employee respectively) to determine the path coefficients.

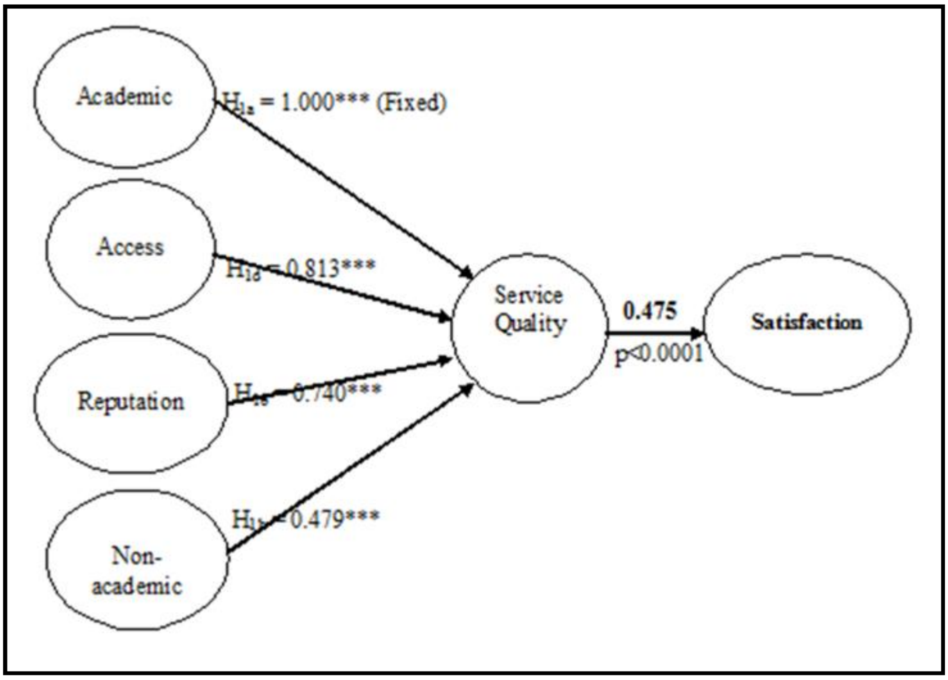
Table 5. 31 Summary of Statistically Significant Relationships between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Hypothesis	Dimension	Path	SE	t-value	p-value	Outcome
H1a	Academic	1.000	Fixed	Fixed	-	Supported
H1b	Non-academic	0.479	0.111	4.309	***	Supported
H1d	Access	0.813	0.079	10.318	***	Supported
H1e	Reputation	0.740	0.077	9.576	***	Supported
H4	Student quality	0.475	0.097	4.919	***	Supported

*** Significant Regression Coefficient (p=0.01)

The results of Table 5.31 above and also shown in Figure 5.16 indicate the relationships of the students perceived quality domains thus: academic (1.000), followed by access (t = 10.318; 0.813), reputation (t = 9.576; 0.740) and non-academic (t = 4.309; 0.479) positively and statistically significant with SQ. Moreover, student perceived quality had a positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.0001$) influence on student satisfaction (t = 4.919; 0.475). Therefore, the hypothesised relationship between HEdPERF SQ dimensions and perceived student quality is partially supported through academic activities, access, reputation and non-academic aspects of higher education.

Figure 5. 16: Summary of Results in the Student Empirical Model for Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction



*** Means Significant at $p<0.01$

Similarly, Table 5.32 shows that employees view non-academic aspect (1.000) to have greater impact, then academic aspect (t=3.969; 0.727), access (t=5.790; 0.740) and reputation (t=5.6680.690) on their perceptions of service quality. The p-values and path coefficients of the employee results illustrate that non-academic, academic, access and reputation respectively, positively affected the quality of service in the university sub-sector in Kenya and the dimensions were all significant ($p<0.0001$). The findings supported secondary hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1d and H1e respectively. It is therefore concluded that in private higher education environments, perceived employee quality is partially supported through non-academic aspects, academic activities, access and reputation.

Employee perceived quality had a positive and statistically significant influence on their satisfaction at t=5.070; 0.626). Therefore, hypothesis three (H3) is supported.

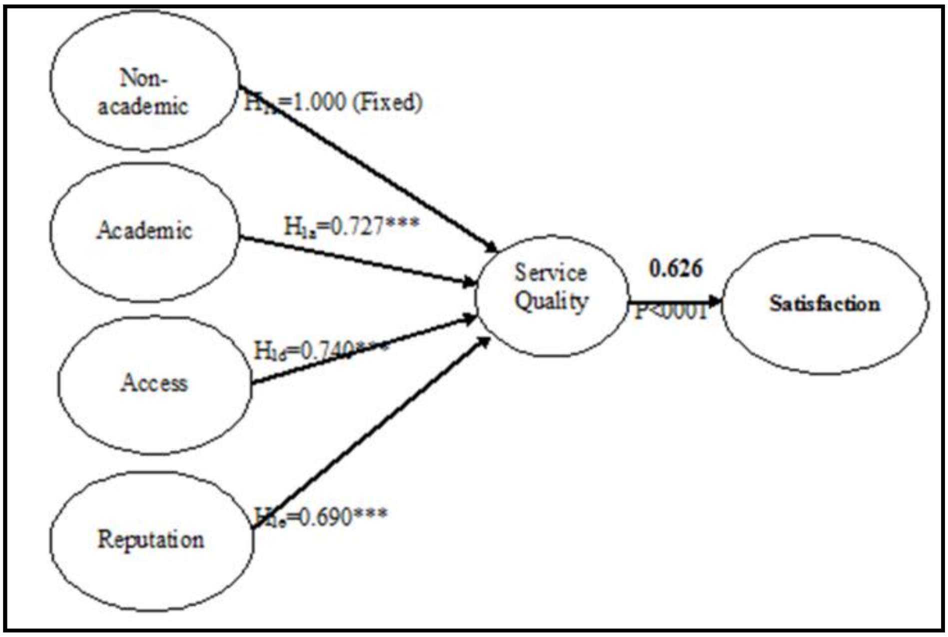
Table 5. 32 Summary of Statistically Significant Relationships between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction of the Employee Model

Hypothesis	Dimension	Path	SE	t-value	p-value	Outcome
H1a	Academic	.727	.183	3.969	***	Supported
H1b	Non-academic	1.000	Fixed	Fixed	-	Supported
H1d	Access	.740	.128	5.790	***	Supported
H1e	Reputation	.690	.122	5.668	***	Supported
H4	Employee quality	.626	.124	5.070	***	Supported

*** Significant Regression Coefficient (p<0.01)

From Table 5.32 above, the relative contributions of the SQ constructs to overall service quality and customer satisfaction, from employee’s perspective, can be depicted as is illustrated in Figure 5.17 below.

Figure 5. 17: Summary of Results in the Employee Empirical Model for Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction



*** Means Significant at p<0.01

With regard to the merged employee-student data, the goodness of fit results and corresponding findings of CFA led to the elimination of the programme, reputation and understanding' dimensions (see Figure 5.18), and the remaining data were used to run the structural model to determine the path coefficients. Table 5.33 below show the ensuing results for the merged employee-student data sets which are illustrated graphically as shown in Figure 5.18.

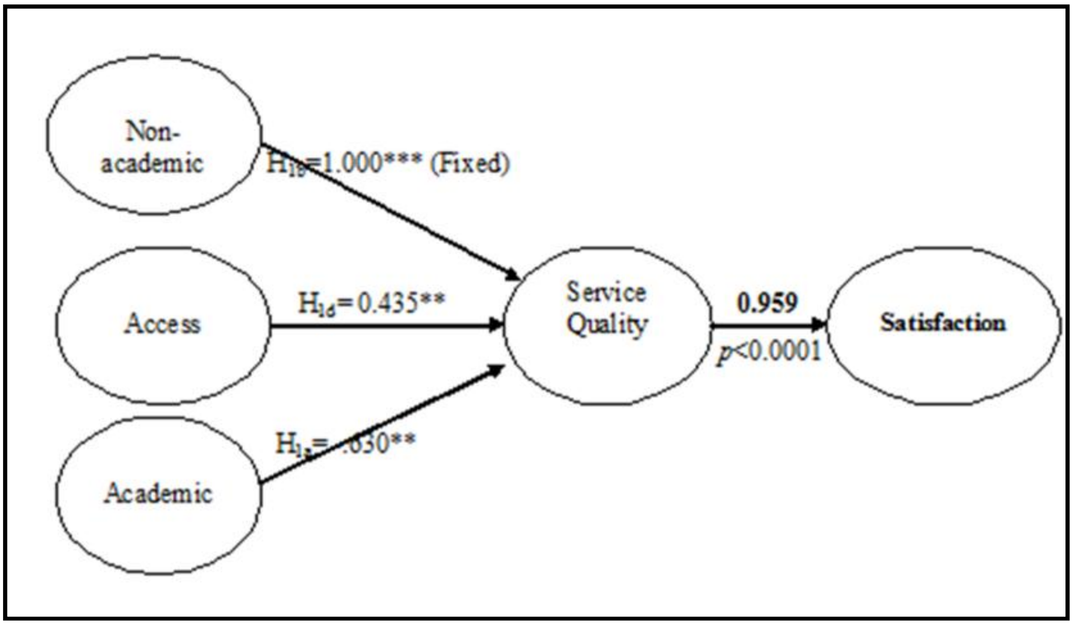
Table 5.33 Summary of the Statistically Significant Relationships between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction of the Employee-StudentModel

Hypothesis	Dimension	Path	SE	t-value	p-value	Outcome
H1a	Academic	-.630	.264	-2.383	.017*	Not Supported
H1b	Non-academic	1.000	Fixed	Fixed	-	Supported
H1d	Access	.435	.196	2.213	.027*	Supported
H4	Employee-student quality	.959	.117	8.194	***	Supported

*** Significant Regression Coefficient (p<0.01); * significant at p < 0.10

From the Table 5.33 above, the p-value for the path coefficient from the academic activity to quality of service is insignificant (-.630; p>0.0001) indicating that academic activities does not positively affect service quality. It is concluded that the hypothesised relationship between the 'academic' aspects or activities (for the combined employee-student data set) and perceived service quality is not supported with respect to Kenya's private higher education industry. On the other hand, the p-values for the path coefficients from 'non-academic' activities (1, fixed path) and 'access' (0.435) to service quality were positive and significant (p<0.0001), which implies that the 'non-academic' aspects and 'access' positively affects service quality in higher education industry. The P-value for the path coefficient from the employee-student quality to satisfaction is positive (0.959) and significant (p<0.0001), which indicates that service quality has a positive effect on the employee and student satisfaction levels in Kenyan private universities.

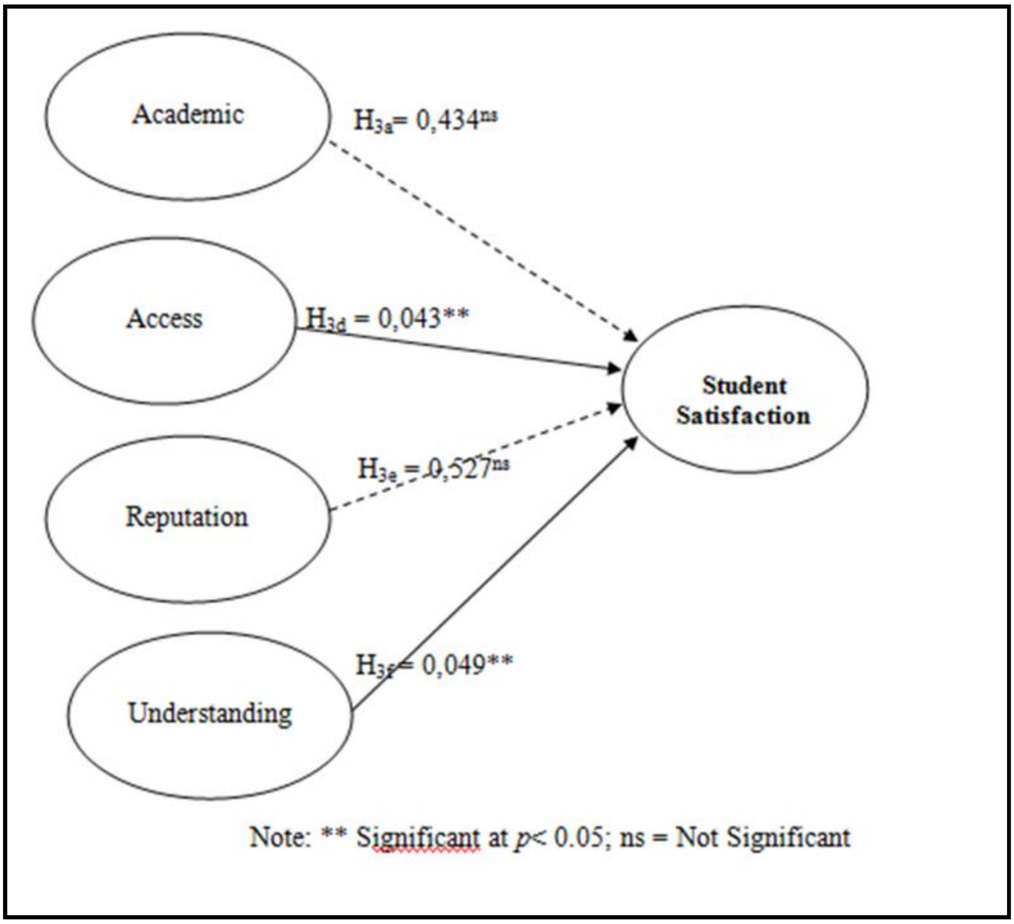
Figure 5. 18: Summary of Results of the Employee-Student Empirical Model for Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction



** Means Significant at $p<0.05$

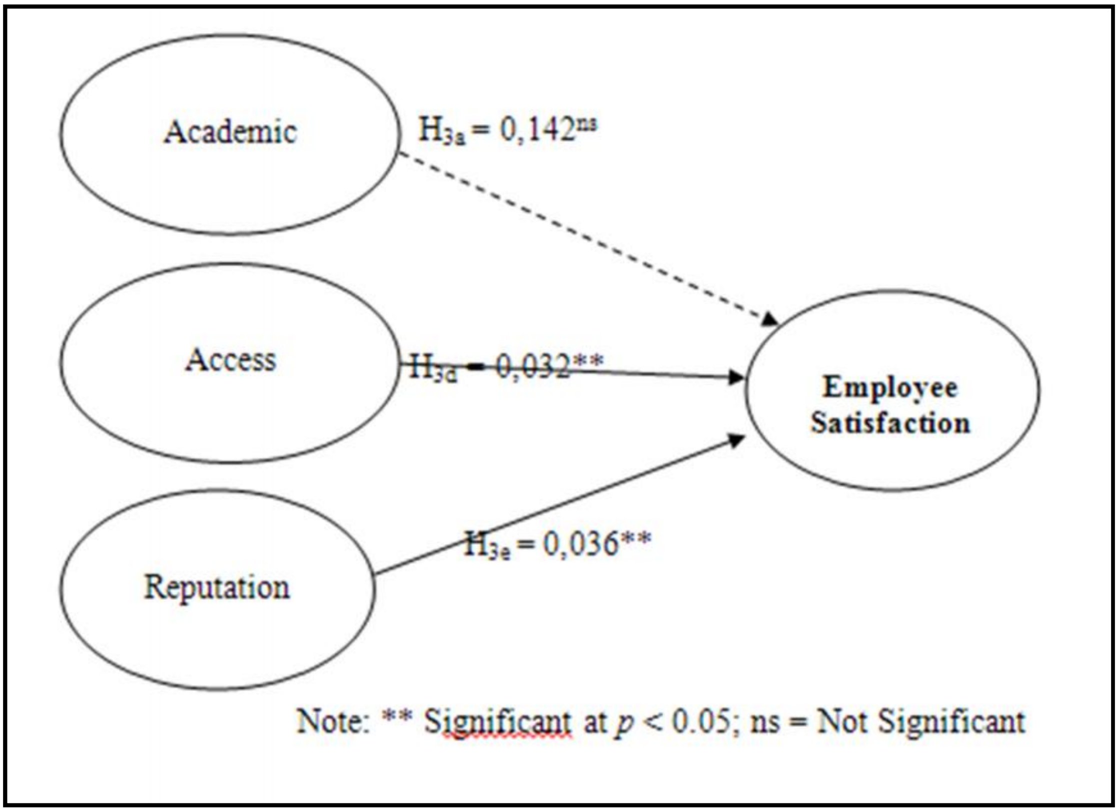
The structural models above were assessed in terms of: their structural and measurement fit measures, the contribution of every assessed path coefficient, the extent of each expected path coefficient measuremet and the bearing of each structural path coefficients. On the other hand, alternative models were developed where the effects of the SQ attributes on CS were assessed. The results indicated that of the six HEdPERF dimensions, four namely, academic, reputation, understanding and access emerged to have an impact on student satisfaction. However, only two (understanding: 0,049 and access: 0,043) of the aforesaid dimensions dimensions were significant as shown in Figure 5.19 below, supporting sub-hypotheses H3d and H3f and therefore consistent with theory that the abovementioned attributes positively affect students' satisfaction towards an institution as suggested for example, by Firdaus (2006) and Kumar and Yang (2014).

Figure 5. 19: Summary of Student Empirical ModelTesting – Direct Results for Individual Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction



With reference to the PHE employees, three dimensions were recognized namely; academic, access and reputation that impacted directly employee satisfaction as illustrated in Figure 5.20 below. Of the three dimensions, access (0,032) and reputation (0,036), have positive and significant impact on satisfaction among employees' of the private universities. Thus, secondary hypotheses H3d and H3e were fully supported, which results are consistent with earlier research (Owlia and Aspinwal, 1996; Firdaus, 2006; Grönroos, 1984).

Figure 5. 20: Summary of Employee Model Testing – Direct Results for Individual Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction



7.3 Significance and Academic Contributions

The study has contributed to the academic knowledge of services and service quality in higher education (university sub-sector), by confirming the applicability of HEdPERF model to the Kenyan private higher education context in particular. The findings reveal that four constructs or dimensions of service quality show high significant relationships with perceived SQ, thereby influencing CS and hence are important to SQ among employees and students as university customers.

The findings have also shown that the debate and applicability of HEdPERF model in higher education is still open. Although this research re-affirmed the applicability of the aforementioned model, it is advisable to temper the findings before making sweeping generalisations, especially because the scale is appropriately customised to suit different contexts.

Previous research findings have been confirmed through the findings of this study on the underlying relationships between SQ and CS. By examining the dimensions of the model and their relationship to CS, it was confirmed that not all dimensions of the SQ construct equally influence CS. This, therefore, makes a partial contribution to existing knowledge of services marketing on the impact of SQ attribute measures on CS. It was also found that in the research setting,, CS is influenced by the "academic, non-academic, reputation, and access" dimensions, which influence was found to be significant.

The research focused on employees' and students' perceptionsof perceived quality in PHEIs. The perceptions of students and employees of the SQ dimensions, and their subsequent impact on satisfaction, have been weighted to show which dimensions have a greater more influence on SQ and satisfaction.

Along with other contributions, this study is a pioneer to empirically test a model on higher education SQ and resultant outcomes in the Kenyan private HE scenario, using the SEM method.

The study notably provides the basis for further practical explorations in the area of probing the nature and relative value of the 'academic, non-academic, reputation and access' dimensions as criteria that employees and students consider in evaluating their satisfaction with university services in a developing country context.

7.4 Managerial Implications

The results reported in the current study have several policy and practical implications for not only private universities but the entire Kenyan higher education sector. By empirically testing the extent to which SQ relates to CS, some practices for service managers in universities have been highlighted, which can be adopted and help advance SQ and consequently CS of both the internal and external customers. The current education market is experiencing rapid expansion amid a push for 'commercialised' education; thus continuous focus on service quality is paramount. It is very crucial for university administrators to know the key characteristics and drivers that largely influence the general satisfaction decisions of university's service consumers. In this study, the ‘non-academic’ aspects, academic aspects, access and reputation were significant factors that customers used to assess the institutions performance when determining satisfaction. Assigning high priority to these service dimensions will increase the level of CS, among university customers since SQ has been confirmed to have a significant relationship with satisfaction (Bigne et al., 2003).

Having employees committed to SQ is fundamental for universities to meet their SQ objectives. This can be enhanced through investing in the CS and SQ programmes balancing the cost of making those improvements withthe potential gain of doing so. Management can therefore take heed of the necessity for continuously training employees, so that they can be empowered to take responsibility for their personal development.

Management should be the foremost practitioner of service excellence. Decisions on service quality resources and how they should be managed will boost an organisation’s reputation and image. By doing so, customers of the institution will end up endorsing it positively.

Efforts should be directed towards improving employees’ awareness and skills because dependability and promise have a direct relationship with employee competence. Knowledge and skills training are a never-ending process, hence without refresher sessions and advanced training there is a risk of the employee ‘becoming stale’ and sloppy (less attention of quality and detail); eventually becoming demotivated. Management can enhance the competence and/or knowhow and develop capacity by involving both operational staff and experts in sessions, socialisation and good training programmes. Involvement of service managers and employees who are the service providers in the service process will help them clearly know expected standardsvwith regard to their service performances and in what way to best complete their tasks while including the input of their customers (Hsieh and Yen, 2005).

Designing and communicationg a service charter or policy within every section of the organisation and, emphasising the same, could improve CS. Installation of an effective monitoring and evaluation systems amid emphasis on a customer oriented approach and the need to be attentive to students' and employees' interests, will benefit the institution. Data collection from the main internal customers (employees and students) should be the norm (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2010) as this will make them feel part and parcel of the institutional decision making process. For instance, indirect participation of students in the decision making process has been associated with improvements in HE as it is viewed as an integral quality assurance management activity (Stukalina, 2012). To summarise, effective implementation of the aforementioned policies and practices in managing the service environment will lead to more satisfied customers, a motivated workforce, and an improved image, among other many positive benefits for the PHEI.

7.5 Conclusions

With respect to PHE, service quality is the 'password' to customer satisfaction. Therefore, universities have no reason to shy away from it but should rather oblige customers' perceptions of service quality by prioritising their activities. This is because good quality of services positively impacts on customer satisfaction. By examining university service quality among its staff and students, four HEdPERF dimensions (academic aspect, access, non-academic aspect and reputation) emerged as appropriate. The empirical findings of this study which was conducted for the thesis highlight a number of insights concerning employees' and students' perceptions with PHE quality from which it is true to assert that vital indications for PHE quality is the aforementioned four dimensions. Emphasis should be directed towards non-academic dimension to improve perceived student quality of service as it seems to perform poorest yet it is regarded as one of the important elements. Moreover, institutional reputation as perceived by employees needs to be looked at as it appears to be plummeting yet it is an important element in portraying a university image.

In this study, three structural and two 'alternative' models were developedthat examined university service quality and its association with satisfaction from an employee and student perspective. The outcomes of this study therefore, are significant for strategic planning by university administration or management (in Kenya and beyond) in charge for not only private higher education but also general higher education. Finally, caution should be taken when undertaking a study on SQ by carefully adapting the measurement tool according to the context as this may yield meaningful results.

7.6 Recommendations

There is a need for institutions of higher learning to make sure that the experiences of university customers are managed in ways that will increase their perceptions of quality and satisfaction. This is important because the different perspectives of perceived quality of services exhibited by employees and students points towards the approaches taken in the management and delivery of the services; hence the variation in each dimension's contribution to service quality and consequently fulfillment. It is further recommended that taking cognisance of significant service quality issues will positively have an effect on customers as managers of service quality will reaffirm.

For successful implementation of quality enhancing strategies, there is a need to implement adequate resources including, human resources and logistical support. The study expounded some challenges that higher institutions face, which revolve around the dimensions explained and consequently impede effective implementation of quality services. Priority and allocation of resources such as funds should be directed towards these four components. Both employees and students will be optimistic if universities provide highly skilled human resources, information and computer technologies, library, accommodation, and dining facilities, health services, guiding and counseling, and general physical infrastructure.

It has been realised that one of the major factors that allude to quality dilemma is human resources. Continuous training and development of employees will add value as knowledge and skills will be advanced. Sense of ownership and respectful behaviour among employees that will result in customer satisfaction should be emphasised. Clear identification of roles will minimise stress and increase output. A service-oriented mindset including continuous service culture and information flow among employees equipped with relevant skills for service delivery will ensure that expectations of customers are met. Employees should be informed about the institutional customer service focus that will enable customers to be acquired and retained.

For good service management and improved quality, universities should set service standards in view of customer expectations by making it a norm and symbolising quality in the institution. Having set parameters on which to gauge services given assists employees to have clear-cut job responsibilities as well as helps to communicate the organisation's main concerns. Evaluation of performance should be a continuous process and exceptional performance should be rewarded.

7.7 Limitations of the Study

Likewise to other investigations, although the current research was established on sound literature and methodological foundations, it must be acknowledged that there were certain limitations. Below is a discussion of some of these limitations and recommended ways to deal with them.

The data collection process was met with several challenges where the researcher was unable to conduct the interview(s) with commissioners from Commission for University Education (CUE) because at the time of the data collection, the institution was undergoing major structural changes. There was a lot of discontent and anxiety which resulted in non-commitment by the CUE, despite several visits and assurances, phone and mail contacts. This caused the study design to change. However, despite the hurdles, the results of the study are still useable.

The surveyed respondents were from one sector, i.e. private higher education. Drawing only from a single sub-industry therefore implies that the results cannot necessarily be generalised to other service sectors like the public service, health service and the like. Although the sample was adequate for statistical analyses, it was however restricted. This can still be considered as further limiting the generalisation of the findings. Nonetheless, certain findings can still be applicable across service industries.

The sample for this study included internal customers - students and employees whose perceptions keep changing from time to time. Therefore, the one-off strategy employed (cross-sectional) may ignore such changes, which may make it challenging to infer causality. However, the extensive literature surveyed enabled the hypothesised relationships to be tested. Notably, an in-depth study would have been carried out although this was not possible due to cost and time reasons. Furthermore, closed-ended questions limits the opportunity respondents would have to comment on aspects measured, hence the need to relook at the research methods/design issues. In addition, other customers (external) could be included in future studies, since their perceptions may also be important in developing a complete picture of PHEI's service quality.

Recommendations that customer satisfaction should not be observed in a single perspective cannot be ignored. The present study went ahead and looked at many sides of customer satisfaction, operationalising the dimensions along those that build up service quality. Expanding the dimensionality of the construct at different levels of an institution where numerous encounters with providers of services can be captured while working within the limits of this study and/or beyond it could lead to different observations and outcomes with the validity of the research methods still holding.

Finally, only four universities were chosen due to inter-alia, cost and time constraints. A similar of different set of results may ensue should all private universities in Kenya be surveyed. Furthemore, a comparison with the publics may also produce interesting results. Nonetheless, to abate this shortcoming a careful selection of the four institutions[11] was done based on the parameters stated in chapter four, hence it is expected that the sample of the universities in the study was sufficient.

7.8 Suggestions for Further Research

The expansion of education across the Kenyan borders by Kenyan universities implies that there is scope to broaden this research to test in other jurisdictions. Extending it in such institutions to try exploring and understanding the perceptions about SQ from a

[11] See chapter four for elaborations

cross-cultural context point of view, and different work practices and methods, will be valuable. Examination of different cultural contexts may have a significant influence on SQ and CS, opening up another area of comparative research that could help universities get to know the worldwide picture of issues pertaining to the relation between CS with SQ. This would also imply a broadened sample size that would encompass different contexts whereby definitive conclusions could be ascertained.

Even though the findings are derived from extensive empirical investigations, they should in no way be regarded as exhaustive since they focus on an area subject to continuous debate, many changes because of technological advancements, and a competitive service environment. The usage of the data and the results may be limited due to trade-offs that ensued in the methodology. The sample included “core” customers of a university, i.e. students and employees (aka internal customers), and was therefore restricted. Some other possibilities for future consideration could include other university customer groups (external) in order to enrich varieties of the samples and to increase the generalisability of the findings. Comparison of SQ perceptions of these groups of higher education sector may provide rewarding research in Kenya. This is because these groups consist of, for example, family/parents, government, employers etc. who play important roles in higher education industry including competitiveness of HE. Furthermore, an opportunity for future research relates to enhancing the research methodology employed by using appropriate tools for data collection to capture their different perceptions of quality. The research design was mainly survey based, largely on self-administered questionnaires. It is therefore proposed that to counter the limits associated with the methodology used in this research, a unique methodology preferably using a mixed methods paradigm to address a similar research problem or replication of the study would be of great significance in terms of generalisations and pertinent addition to the marketing services literature and understanding. Its strength would be examined for making generalisations to different settings and moreover, it would provide a better understanding of the results. For instance, future research could focus on interviewing the abovementioned group of individuals since during interviews it is possible to explain questions and probe details, making the respondents think deeply as opposed to general questioning, thus further enhancing the generalisability of results.

Research for an effective and inclusive system for the measurement of SQ and identifying areas of service where quality, is in its infancy in the Kenyan higher education sector. Thus, on-going research is imperative particularly in the industry which is facing massive expansion, growth and varied challenges. Furthermore, this study presented a cross-sectional picture of SQ in higher education. A longitudinal study on SQ and outcomes in Kenyan institutions could enrich the findings of this study.

It is beyond doubt that successful testing of the higher education performance only framework/instrument (HEdPERF) led to the identification of four-dimensional constructs that customers (employee and students) use in forming quality perceptions with regard to service universities. Therefore, the framework is still a suitable tool for measuring SQ in higher education sector in Kenya even though it is still new compared to SERVQUAL or SERVPERF. Furthermore, it has not been utilised in various countries and markets yet although with a few in Malaysia and India. The studies can also be extended to public universities using the HEdPERF model.

7.9 Conclusion

A synopsis in respect to the research results were linked to the objectives and research questions of the study and discussed in this final chapter. The significance and importance of the study to the marketing subject from the point of theory and its practical implications has been highlighted. Conclusions from and implications of the research were evaluated. Recommendations founded from the current research have brought forward opportunities for other studies that would help broaden the study outside its current parameters.

REFERENCES

Abagi, O., Nzomo, J., & Otieno, W. (2005). *Private higher education in Kenya*. International Institute for Educational Planning. UNESCO. Retrieved April 13, 2012, from http//www.unesco.org/iiep

Adela, G. (2008). European graduates level of satisfaction with higher education. *Higher Education*, 57, 1-21. Retrieved October 12, 2012, from http://www.innci.inco.upv.es/intranet/…/AR98_1_adela%20higher%20education.pDOI10.1007/s10734-008-9121-9

Ajayi, T. (2006). *Private High Education in Kenya: New Trends in Education: Growth and Expansion of Private Higher Education in Africa.* Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.

Akinboade, O. A., Kinfack, E. C., & Mokwena, M. P. (2012). An analysis of citizen satisfaction with public service delivery in the Sedibeng District Municipality of South Africa. *International Journal of Social Economics,* 39(3), 182 – 199. Retrieved July 3, 2012 from http://dx.doi.org/10.1198/03068291211199350

Akinyele, S. T., & Olorunleke, K. (2010). Technology and service quality in the banking industry: An empirical study of various factors in electronic banking services. *International Business Management,* 4 (4), 209-229.

Alaba, A., R., & Olanrewaju, A., K. (2012). Service quality dimensions and thesis writing among postgraduate students in southwest Nigeria. *Universal Journal of Education and General Studies,* 1(7), 188-194. Retrieved October 12, 2012 from http://www.universal researchjournal.org/ujegs

Albanese, M. (1999). Students are not customers: a better model for medical education. *Academic Medicine*, 74(11), 1172-1186. Retrieved May 13, 2014 from http://journals.lww.com/

Aldridge, S., & Rowley, J. (1998). Measuring customer satisfaction in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education,* 6(4), 197–204. Retrieved August 13, 2012 from http://x.doi.org/10.1108/09684889819242182

Altbach, P. G. (1999). Private prometheus: private higher education and development in the 21st century. Westport CT: Greenwood Press.

Amran, R. A., Danjma, I., Yew, L.K., & Igbal, M., J. (2011). Service quality, customer satisfaction in technology-based universities. *African Journal of Business Management,* 5(15), 6541-6553. Retrieved September 10, 2012 from http://www.academicjournals.org/AJBM. doi: 10.5897/ajbm10.1687

Andaleeb, S. S. (2001). Service quality perceptions and patient satisfaction: a study of hospitals in a developing country. *Social Science & Medicine,* 52, 1359–1370. Retrieved August 13, 2012 from www.elsevier.com/locate/socscimed

Angell, R. J, Heffernan T. W., & Megicks, P. (2008). Service quality in postgraduate education. *Quality Assurance Higher Education,* 16(3), 236 – 254.

APA (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Arbuckler, J. (2012). *IBM, SPSS, AMOS 21 User's Guide*. AMOS Development Corporation.

Athiyaman, A. (1997). Linking student satisfaction and service quality perceptions: The case of university education. *European Journal of Marketing,* 31(7), 528-540. Retrieved August 13, 2012, from http://web.uct.ac.za/staff/jbeneke/justin/p528.pdf

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2007). *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Basher, M. S., Machali, M. M., & Mwinyi, A. M. (2012). The effect of service quality and government role on customer satisfaction [Special issue]. *International Journal of Business and Social Science,* 3(14), 312-319. Retrieved September 27, 2012 from www.researchgate.net/

Bateson, J. (2002). Consumer performance and quality in services. *Managing Service Quality*, 12(4), 206-209.

Becket, N., & Brookes M. (2008). Quality management practice in higher education – what quality are we actually enhancing. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education,* 7(1). Retrieved February 14, 2013 from http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/johlste

Becket, N., & Brookes, M. (2006). Evaluating quality management in university departments. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 14(2), 123 – 142. Retrieved November 13, 2012 from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09684880610662015

Becket, N., & Brookes, M. (2007). Quality management in higher education: a review of international issues and practice. *The International Journal for Quality and Standards,* 1(1), 85 – 121. Retrieved February 14, 2013 from http://www.bsieducation.org/ijqs

Beerli, A., Martin, J. D., & Quintana, A. (2004). A model of customer loyalty in the retail banking market. *European Journal of Marketing,* 38(1-2), 253-275.

Bejou, D. (2005, March/April). Treating students like customers. *BizEd Magazine*, p. 44-47, Retrieved July 4, 2012 from http://www.aacsb.edu/publications/archives/marapr05/p44-47.pdf

Bendapudi, N., & Leone, R. P. (2003). Psychological implications of customer participation in co-production. *Journal of Marketing,* 67, 14-28.

Berndt, A. (2009). Investigating service quality dimensions in South African motor vehicle servicing. *African Journal of Marketing Management,* 1(1), 1-9. Retrieved August 31, 2012 from http://www.academicjournals.org/ajmm

Berry, L. L., Parasuraman, A., & Zeithaml, V. A. (1988, September-October). The service-quality puzzle. *Business Horizons*, Retrieved August 31, 2012 from http://www.areas.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/

Best, J. W., & Kahn, J. V. (2005). *Research in Education,* (9th ed.). New Delhi: Prentice Hall.

Bick, G., Brown, A. B., & Abratt, R. (2004). Customer perceptions of the value delivered by retail banks in South Africa. *International Journal of Bank Marketing,* 22(5), 300–318. Retrieved August 31, 2012, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02652320410549638

Bigne, E., Moliner, M. A., & Sanchez, J. (2003). Perceived quality and satisfaction in multi-service organizations: the case of Spanish public services. *The Journal of Services Marketing,* 17(4), 420-442.

Bitner, M. (1990). Evaluating service encounters: The effects of physical surroundings and employee responses. *Journal of Marketing*, 54, 69-82. Retrieved August 14, 2012, from http:// www.ida.liu.se/~steho/und/.../9602205187.pdf

Bolton, R. N., & Drew, J. H. (1991). A longitudinal analysis of the impact of service changes on customer attitudes. *Journal of Marketing,* 55 (1), 1-10. Retrieved from http:// www.ruthnbolton.com/.../LongitudinalAnalysisofServiceChangesonAttit...

Bolton, R. N., Lemon, K., N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2004). The theoretical underpinnings of customer asset management: A framework and propositions for future research. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* 32(3), 271-292.

Boote, D. N., & Beile, P. (2005). Preparation scholars before researchers: on the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research. *Educational Researcher, 34(3)*. Retrieved December 26, 2013 from http://edr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/34/6/3. doi: 10.3102/0013189X034006003

Boshoff, C., & Gray, B. (2004). The relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction and buying intentions in the private hospital industry. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 35(4), 27-37.

Bounds, G., Lyle, Y. A., & Gipsies, R. (1994). *Beyond total management toward the emerging paradigm*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Inc.

Boyce, J. (2003). *Marketing research in practice*. Sydney: McGraw-Hill.

Brady, M. K., & Robertson, C. J. (2001). Searching for a consensus on the antecedent role of service quality and satisfaction: An exploratory cross-national study. *Journal of Business Research*, 51(1), 53-60.

Brady, M., K., & Cronin, J., J. (2001). Some new thoughts on conceptualising perceived service quality: A hierarchical approach. *Journal of Marketing,* 65(3), 34 – 49.

Brennan, L. (2001). How prospective students choose universities: A buyer behavior perspective. (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, Australia). Retrieved August 7, 2012, from http://hdl.handle.net/11343/39537

Brennan, L., & Benington, L. (1999). Concepts in conflict: students and customers – an Australian perspective. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education.* Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wmhe20

Brink, A., & Berndt, A. (2005). *Customer relationship management and customer service.* Lansdowne: Juta and Co. Ltd.

Brochado, A., & Marques, R. C. (2007). Comparing alternative instruments to measure service quality in higher education. *Working Paper, 258*. Retrieved July 17, 2014 from http:// www.fep.up.pt/investigacao/workingpapers/07.12.19_wp258.pdf

Brown, F. A. (2001). *Challenges facing private universities in Kenya: The case of United States International University*. Paper presented at a seminar on 'the role of private universities in Kenya' 29 February 2000. Nairobi: Women Educational Researchers of Kenya, WERK/Ford Foundation.

Brown, S. W., & Bitner, M. J. (2007). Mandating a service revolution for marketing. In Lush, R. F. & Vargo, S. L. (Eds), *The service-dominant logic of marketing: dialog, debate and directions*, (pp. 393-405). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp.

Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In K. A. Bollen, & J.S. Long (Eds.), *Testing structural equation models*, (pp. 136-162). Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Browne, M.W. (2001). An overview of analytic rotation in exploratory factor analysis. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 36, 111-150. Retrieved March 16, 2014, from https://www.psych.umn.edu/faculty/waller/classes/.../Browne2001.pdf

Bugdol, M. (2006). The barriers and limitations of the implementation of quality systems in public administration. *Territorial Samorzad*, 12, 65-71.

Burns, A. C., & Bush, R. F. (2000).*Marketing research* (3rd ed.). NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Buttle, F. (1996). SERVQUAL: Review, critique, research agenda. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30(1), 8–32. Retrieved July 7, 2012 from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090569610105762

Calvo-Porall, C., Levy-Mangin, J. P., & Novo-Corti, I. (2013). Perceived quality in higher education: An empirical study. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning,* 36(6), 601-619. Retrieved February 12, 2014, from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=17099899. doi: 10.1108/MIP-11-2012-0136

Canic, M. J., & McCarthy, P. M. (2006). Service quality and higher education do mix. *Quality Progress,* 33(9), 41-46. Retrieved July 7, 2012 from http://www.valdostastateblazers.us/administration/.../service-and-higher.pdf

Caruana, A., Money, A. H., & Berthon P. R. (2002). Service quality and satisfaction – the moderating role of value. *European Journal of Marketing,* 34(11/12), 1338-1352.

Chambati, R., & Fatoki, O. (2011). A consumer analysis of service provision offered by a university to its resident students in South Africa. *African Journal of Business Management, 5(7), 3001-3011*. Retrieved May 16, 2012 from http://www.academicjournals.org/AJBM. doi: 10.5897/AJBM11.133

Chang, H. H., Wang, Y. A., & Yang, W. Y. (2009). The impact of e-service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty on e-marketing: Moderating effect of perceived value. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence,* 20(4), 423.

Chen, C., & Chen-Fu, S. (2009). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intensions for heritage tourist. *Journal of Tourism Management,* 31(1). Retrieved July 7, 2012, from http://www.sciencedirect.com

Chen, S., Yang, C., & Shiau, J. (2006). Scorecard in the performance evaluation of higher education. *TQM Magazine*, 18(2), 190-205.

Chitty, B., & Soutar, G. N. (2004). Is the European customer satisfaction index model applicable to tertiary education? *Marketing Accountabilities and Responsibilities*, Wellngton, New Zealand, N.A: *Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference*, 2004, N.A: p N. A

Churchill, Jr. G. A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16(1), 64-73. Retrieved July 16, 2014, from faculty.mu.edu.sa/download.php?fid=43587

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2005). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.

Combrinck, T. (2006). *A pilot empirical investigation into student perceptions of service quality at the department of management of the University of the Western Cape*. (Master of Commerce dissertation, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa). Retrieved on July 4, 2012, from http://www.etd.uwc.ac.za.

Commission for University Education, CUE. (1999). *Guidelines for preparing a proposal for establishment of a privately funded university in Kenya*. Retrieved June 13, 2011 from http://www.cue.or.ke

Commission for University Education. (2012). *Status of universities in Kenya*. Retrieved June 13, 2011 from http://www.cue.or.ke/status.html

Commission for University Education. (2013). *Strategic plan 2010 – 2015*. Retrieved February 14, 2013 from http://www.cue.or.ke/status.html

Commission for University Education (2013, March/June). New dawn for university education. *CUE Newsletter.* A Commission for University Education, Kenya Publication.

Cook, S. (2000). *Customer care: How to create an effective customer focus.* London: Kogan page Limited.

Cook, S. (2008). *Customer care excellence: How to create an effective customer focus.* London: Kogan page Limited.

Cooper, R. D., & Schindler, S. P. (2008). *Business research methods* (8th ed.). New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited.

Coovadia, M. Y. (2008). *Identification and evaluation of patient satisfaction determinants in medical services delivery systems within the South African private healthcare industry* (Master of Business Administration Dissertation, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa). Retrieved April 12, 2012, from http://upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-03102010-155423/.../dissertation.pdf

Creswell, J. W., & Plano, C. V. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Qualitative inquiry and research – choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cronbach, L.J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297-334.

Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, S. A. (1992). Measuring service quality: A reexamination and extension. *Journal of Marketing,* 56(3), 55-58. Retrieved August 14, 2012, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1252296, doi: 10.2307/1252296

Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, S. A. (1994). SERVPERF versus SERVQUAL: reconciling performance-based perception-minus-expectations measurement of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(1), 125-131.

Cuthbert, P. F. (1996). Managing service quality in HE: is SERVQUAL the answer? Part 1. *Managing Service Quality*, 6(2), 11 – 16. Retrieved September 10, 2012 from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ doi: 10.1108/09604529610109701

Daily Nation (2012, December 24). New university act progressive and timely. *Daily Nation*, p. 12.

Dale, B. G., Van Der Wiele, T. & Van, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Managing quality.* Malden: Blackwell.

De Jager J., & Gbadamosi, G. (2010). Specific remedy for specific problem: measuring service quality in South African higher education. *Higher Education*, 60(3), 251 – 267. Retrieved July 6, 2013, from http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10734-009-9298-6. doi: 10.1007/s10734-009-9298-6

De Jager, J. W., Du-Plooy, A. T., & Ayadi, M. F. (2010). Delivering quality service to in and out-patients in a South African public hospital. *African Journal of Business Management,* 4(2), 133–139. Retrieved July 4, 2012, from http://www.academicjournals.org/AJBM

De Shields Jr, W. O., Kara, A., & Kaynak, E. (2005). Determinants of business students satisfaction and retention in higher education: Applying Herzberg's two-factor theory. *International Journal of Educational Management,* 19(2/3), 128–139. Retrieved August 7, 2012, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09513540510582426

De Vaus, D. A. (2002). *Jouneys in survey research: Surveys in social research*, (5th ed.). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Doherty, G. (1994). Can we have a unified theory of quality? *Higher Education Quarterly,* 48(4), 240 – 255. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.1994.tb01656.x

Doyle, J. (1998). *Introduction to survey methodology and design* [Adobe Digital Editions Version]. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://www.sysurvey.com/tips/introduciton-to-survey.htm

Driver, C., & Johnston, R. (2001). Understanding service customers: The value of hard and soft attributes. *Journal of Service Research,* 4(2), 130-140.

Eagle, L., & Brenman, R. (2007). Are students customers? TQM and marketing perspectives. *Quality Assurance in Education,* 15(1), 44-60. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09684880710723025

Eggert, A., & Ulaga, W. (2002). Customer perceived value: a substitute for satisfaction in business markets? *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing,* 17(2/3), 107-118.

Ekinci, Y. (2004). An investigation of the determinants of customer satisfaction. *Tourism Analysis,* 8, 197-203.

Emery, C., Kramer, T., & Tian, R. (2001). Customers vs. products: adopting an effective approach to business students. Quality Assurance in Education, 9(2), 110 – 115. Retrieved May 13, 2014, from http://www.emerald-library.com/ft doi: 10.1108/09684880110389681

Ezeokoli, R. N., & Ayodele, K. O. (2014). Dimensions of Service Quality Encountered By Students on Sustainability of Higher Education in Nigeria. *Developing Country Studies*, 4(6), 147 – 156. Retrieved August 5, 2014, from www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/DCS/article/download/11796/12146

Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS (3rd ed.)*. Sage Publications Ltd.

Firdaus A. (2005). The development of HEdPERF: A new measuring instrument of service quality for the higher education sector. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 30(6), 569-581. doi: 10.1111/j.1470-6431.2005.00480x.

Firdaus A. (2006). Measuring service quality in higher education: HEdPERF versus SERVPERF. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 24(1), 31–47. Retrieved March 12, 2012, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02634500610641543

Fogli, L. (2006). *Customer service delivery.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Forster, S. T. (2010). *Managing quality: Integrating the supply chain (*4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Franz, R.S. (1998). Whatever you do, don’t treat your students like customers! *Journal of Management Education*, 22(1), 63-69.

Gage, N. (1989). The paradigm wars and their aftermath: A “historical” sketch of research and teaching since 1989. *Education Research*, 18, 4-10.

Galloway, L. (1998). Quality perceptions of internal and external customers: a case study in educational administration. *The TQM Magazine*, 10(1), 20–26.

Gbolahan, G. (2011, April). *Customer satisfaction in higher education in selected African countries.* Paper presented at the International Conference on Higher Education Marketing (ICHEM). Cairo, Egypt. Retrieved February 8, 2012, from http:// staffprofiles.bournemouth.ac.uk.

Gbolahan, G., & De Jager, J. (2008). Measuring service quality in South Africa higher education: Developing a multidimensional scale. *Proceedings of the Global Business and Technology Association,* 375-384. Madrid, Spain. Retrieved February 8, 2012, from http://www.gbata.com/readings.html

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). *SPSS for windows step by step: A simple guide and reference* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Gerson, R., F. (1996). *Great customer service for your small business.* California: Crisp Publications.

Gliem, J. A., & Gliem R. R. (2003, October). *Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for likert-type scales.* Paper Presented at the Conference of Midwest Research to Practice on Adult, Continuing and Community Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. Retrieved July 20, 2013, from https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/.../Gliem+&+Gliem.pdf?

Gothan, A. J., & Erasmus, A., C. (2008). Customer's evaluation of the service quality of the appliance sales departments of retail stores in a South African context. *Latin American Advances in Consumer Research,* 2, 61-70.

Govender, K. K., & Ramroop, S. (2011). The postgraduate service experience, service satisfaction and service quality: A South African case study. *Alternation Special Edition 4*, 228–250. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http:// alternation.ukzn.ac.za/docs/18.3%20SpEd%204/11%20Gov.pdf

Govender, K. K., & Ramroop, S. (2012). Relationship between the postgraduate research students' perception of their role, research climate and service quality. *African Journal of Business Management,* 6(4), 1642-1651. Retrieved August 3, 2012, from http://www.academicjournals.org/AJB.

Govender, K. K. (2011). Exploring the Postgraduate Research Climate and the Postgraduate Research Experience: A Conceptual Model. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 25(7), 1344 – 1358. Retrieved August 2, 2012 from http://www.ajol.info/index.php/sajhe/index

Govender, K. K. (2013). The relationship between the postgraduate research climate and supervisor research service quality. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(3), 146-158. Retrieved May 20, 2014 from http://www.centreofexcellence.net/J/JSS/JSS Mainpage.htm

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 11, 255 – 274.

Grönroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18(4), 36 – 44. doi: 10.1108/EUM0000000004784

Grönroos, C. (2000). *Service management and marketing: A customer relationship management approach.* (2nd ed.). West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Grönroos, C. (2001). The perceived service quality concept – A mistake? *Managing Service Quality,* 11(3), 150-152.

Grönroos, C. (2007). *Service management and marketing: Customer management in service competition* (3rd ed.). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Gule, M. (2009). Improving the service quality of taxi operators in the Nelson Mandela Bay. (MBA thesis, Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa). Retrieved August 15, 2012, from dspace.nmmu.ac.za:8080/jspui/.../1115/.../Xolile%20Michael%20Gule.p...

Gupta, S., & Zeithaml, V. (2006). Customer metrics and their impact on financial performance. *Marketing Science,* 25(6), 718–739.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis* (6th ed.). Singapore: Prentice-Hall

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis: A Global Perspective*. New York: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Hallinger, P., & Snidvongs, K. (2008). Educating Leaders: Is there anything to learn from business management? *Educational Management Administration and Leadership,* 36, 9-31. Retrieved February 8, 2012, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1741143207084058

Ham, L., & Hayduk, S. (2003). Gaining competitive advantages in higher education: Analyzing the gap between expectations and perceptions of service quality. *International Journal of Value-Based Management,* 16(3), 223 – 242.

Han, T. (2010). *An analysis of members' satisfaction of ski program quality at private sports centers in Seoul, Korea*. (Unpublished, PhD thesis, Faculty of the United States Sports Academy, Daphne, Alabama). Retrieved from https://ussa.edu/

Hardie, N. (1998). The effects of quality management on business performance. *Quality Management Journal, 5,* 65 – 83.

Hasan, H. F. A., & Ilias, A. (2008). Service quality and student satisfaction: A case study at private higher education institutions. *International Business Research,* 1(3), 163-175. Retrieved February 8, 2012, from http:// www.ccsenet.org/jopurnal.html

Hemsley-Brown, J. V., & Oplatka, I. (2010). Market orientation in universities: A comparative study of two national higher education systems. *International*

Journal of Educational Management, 24(3), 204-220. Retrieved August 2, 2012, from http:// www.emeraldinsight.com/. doi: 10.1108/09513541011031565

Henry, P. C., & Caldwell, M. (2006). Self-empowerment and consumption. *European Journal of Marketing*, 9/10(40), 1031-1048.

Hensley, R., I., & Sulek, J. (2007). Customer satisfaction with waits in multi-stage services. *Managing Service Quality*, 17(2), 152 – 173.

Herington, C., & Weaven, S. (2007). Can banks improve customer relationships with high quality online services? *Managing Service Quality*, 17(4), 404 – 427. doi:10.1108/09604520710760544

Heskett, J. L., Sasser, W. E., & Schlesinger, L. A (1997). *The Service Profit Chain*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Hessey, J., & Hussey, R. (2003). *Business research method: Practical guide for undergraduate & postgraduate students* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke, Hampshire: McMillan Press Ltd.

Hishamuddin, F. A. H., & Azleen I. (2008). Service quality and student satisfaction: a case study at private higher education institutions. *International Business Research*, 1(3), 163–175. Retrieved April 13, 2012, from http://www.ccsenet.org/journal.html

Hogg, R. V., & Hogg, A. L. (1995). Continuous quality improvement in higher education. *International Statistical Review*, 63(1), 35-48. Brussels: International Statistical Institute.

Hom, W. C. (2002). Applying customer satisfaction theory to community college planning of student services. *iJournal: Insight in Student Services*, n2, Retrieved June 15, 2011, from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED481317

Hooper, D., Coughlan, J., & Mullen, M. R. (2008). Structural Equation Modelling: Guidelines for Determining Model Fit. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 6(1), 53 – 60. Retrieved June 27, 2014, from http://www.ejbrm.com

Hoyle, R. H. (1995). The structural equation modelling approach: Basic concepts and fundamental issues. In R. H. Hoyle (Ed.), *Structural Equation Modelling: Concepts, Issues, and Applications* (pp. 1-15). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Hsieh, A. T., & Yen, C. H. (2005). The effect of customer participation on service providers' job stress. *The Service Industry Journal*, 25(7), 891–905. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02642060500134162.

Hung, Y. H., Huang, M. L., & Chen, K. S. (2003). Service quality evaluation by service quality performance matrix. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 14(1), 79 – 89. doi: 10.1080/14783360309706

Huq, Z. (2005). Managing change: A barrier to TQM implementation in service industries. *Managing Service Quality*, 15(5), 452–469. Retrieved February 5, 2013, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09604520510617301.

Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cut-off criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1-55. doi: 10.1080/10705519909540118

Jayasundara, C., C. (2009). *Developing a model for predicting customer satisfaction in relation to service quality in university libraries in Sri Lanka* (Doctoral thesis in Information Science, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa). Retrieved September 15, 2012 from http://archive.cmb.ac.lk:8080/research/handle/70130/169

Jamal, A., & Naser, K. (2003). Customer satisfaction and retail banking: an assessment of some of the key antecedents of customer satisfaction in retail banking. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 20(4), 146 – 160. doi: 10.1108/02652320210432936

Jennrich, R. I., & Sampson, P. F. (1966). Rotation for simple loadings. *Psychometrika*, 31(3), 313 – 323. Retrieved 1 May, 2014, from http://link.springer.com/

Jones, M. A., & Suh, J. (2000). Transaction-specific satisfaction and overall satisfaction: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Services Marketing,* 14(2), 147-159. doi: 10.1108/08876040010371555

Jones, T., & Sasser, W. (1995). Why Satisfied Customers Defect? *Harvard Business Review*, 73(6), 88-99.

Karl, K. (2004). A researcher's dilemma - philosophical and methodological pluralism. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 2(2), 119-128. Retrieved August 26, 2013, from http://ejbrm.com/issue/download.html?idArticle=140

Kanji, G., K., & Tambi, M., A. (1999). Total quality management in UK higher education institutions. *Total Quality Management*, 10(1), 129–153.

Kara, A. Lonial, S. Tarim, M., & Zaim, S. (2005). A paradox of service quality in Turkey: The seemingly contradictory relative importance of tangible and intangible determinants of service quality. *European Business Review*, 17(1), 5 – 10. Retrieved June 12, 2014 from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=868900. doi: 10.1108/09555340510576230

Kara, A., & De Shields Jr. (2004). Business Student Satisfaction, Intentions and Retention in Higher Education: An Empirical Investigation. *MEQ*, 3.

Retrieved August 16, 2012, from https://archive.ama.org/archive/Community/.../student_satisfaction.pdf

Keller, K. L. (2003). *Strategic brand management: building, measuring and managing brand equity*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kenya Bureau of Standards. (2011). *Quality and Customer Satisfaction.* Retrieved April 16, 2012, from http://www.kebs.org

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. (2011). *Private Universities Student Enrollments 2005/06 – 2010/2011*. Retrieved February 12, 2012, from http://www.knbs.or.ke/university%20enrolment.php

Kerliger, F. N., & Lee, H. B. (2000). *Foundations of behavioural research, (*4th ed.). Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers.

Kerlinger, F. (1986). *Foundations of behavioural research*, (3rd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Khodayari, F., & Khodayari, B. (2011). Service quality in higher education. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research in Business,* 1(9), 38 – 46. Retrieved August 7, 2012, from: http:// www.idjrb.com/articlepdf/idjrb9n1p5u.pdf

Kimani, M. (2010, May 3). East Africa: Low quality universities hinder growth. *Business Daily*, 145.

Kimani, W. S. (2011). *Business students' perception of service quality in Kenyan private and public universities.* Nairobi, Kenya: CUEA Press.

Kipkebut, D. J. (2010). Human resource management practices and organizational commitment in higher educational institutions: A Kenyan case. *IUP Journal of Organisational Behaviour*.

Kiran, K., & Diljit, S. (2011). Antecedent of customer loyalty: Does service quality suffice? *Malaysian Journal of Library and Information Science*, 16(2), 95-113. Retrieved August 7, 2012, from http:// www.majilis.fsktm.um.edu

Kiruthu, L. (2013, February 12). Why customer service is not a department. *Daily Nation, Smart Company Magazine* (p.12).

Kline, R. B. (2011). *Principles and practice of structural equation modelling* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Kombo, D. & Tromp, D. (2006). *Proposal and thesis writing: An introduction of open learning*. Nairobi: Causeway Press.

Kong, M., & Jogaratnam, G. (2007). The influence of culture on perceptions of service employee behavior. *Managing Service Quality*, 17(3), 275 – 297. doi: 10.1108/09604520710744308

Kothari, C. (2009). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques.* (2nd ed.). New Delhi: New Age International Press Ltd.

Kotler, P. (2000). *Marketing management: The millennium edition.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-hall.

Kotler, P. (2003). *Marketing Insights from A to Z: 80 concepts every manager needs to know*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Kotler, P. Armstrong, G., Wong, V., & Saunders, J. (2008). *Principles of marketing* (5th ed.). Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Kotler, P., & Andreassen, A. R. (1996). *Strategic marketing for non-profit organisations.* London: Prentice Hall.

Koul, L. (1990). *Methodology of Education Research*. Bombay: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.

Krathwohl, D. R. (1997). *Methods of educational and social science research: An integrated approach* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement.* 30, 607–610. Retrieved August 7, 2012 from people.usd.edu/~mbaron/edad810/Krejcie.pdf

Kristensen, K. Martensen, A., & Gronhold, L., (2000). Customer satisfaction measurement at post Denmark: Results of application of the European customer satisfaction index methodology. *Total Quality Management,* 11(7), 1007 – 1015.

Kumar, J., & Yang, C. L. (2014). Service quality and loyalty of international students studying in the field of hospitality and tourism. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Management*, 2(3), 97-118. Retrieved July 17, 2014, from mojem.um.edu.my/filebank/published_article/.../Volume%202(3)-6.pdf

Lamb, C. W. Hair, J. F., McDaniel, C., Boshoff, C., & Terblanche, S. (2004). *Marketing* (2nd ed.). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Lassar, W. M. Manolis, C., & Winsor, R. D. (2000). Service quality perspectives and satisfaction in private banking. *Journal of Service Marketing,* 14(3), 244–271.

Leblanc, G., & Nguyen, N. (1997). Searching for excellence in business education: an exploratory study of customer impressions of service quality. *International Journal of Education Management*, 11(2), 72–79. Retrieved June 9, 2014 from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ doi:10.1108/09513549710163961

Lee, V. H., Ooi, K. B., Tan, B. I., & Chong, Y. L. (2010). A structural analysis of the relationship between TQM practices and product innovation. Asian Journal of

Technology Innovation, 18(1), 73 – 96. Retrieved June 28, 2014 from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19761597.2010.9668683#.U6z6ZEClrcs. doi: 10.1080/19761597.2010.9668683

Lee, G., & Lin, H. (2005). Customer perception of e-service quality in online shopping. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management,* 33(2), 161–176. doi: 10.1108/09590550510581485

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical research: planning and design.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Levene, H. (1960). Robust tests for equatlity of variances. In I. Olkin, G. S. Ghurye, W. G. Madow, W. Hoeffding & H. B. Mann (eds.), *Contributions to probability and statistics: Essays in honour of Harols Hotelling* (pp. 278 – 292). Menlo Park, CA, USA: Stanford University Press.

Lewis, B. R. (2007). *Managing service quality.* In B. G. Dale, T. Van der Wiele, & J. Van Iwaarden (eds.), Managing quality (pp. 234-257). Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research (*4th ed.), (pp. 97 – 128). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Little, B., & Williams, R. (2011). Students' role in maintaining quality and enhancing learning: Is there a tension? *Quality High Education*, 16(2), 115-127.

Loehlin, J. C. (1992). Latent variable models: An introduction to factor, path and structural analysis, (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Hillsdale.

Lombard, M. R (2009). Customer retention strategies implemented by fast food outlets in the Gauteng, Western Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces of South Africa – A focus on something fishy, Nando's and Steers. *African Journal of*

Marketing Management, 1(2), 70–80. Retrieved August 7, 2012, from http://www.academicjournals.org/ajmm.

Lopez, J., Laura, K. H., & Alison, R. (200). Ethnicity and customer satisfaction in the financial services sector. *Managing Service Quality,* 17(3), 259 – 274.

Lovelock, C. H., & Young, R. F. (1979). Look to customers to increase productivity. *Harvard Business Review*, 57(3), 168-178.

Lovelock, C. H., Patteson, P. G., & Walker, R. H. (2001). *Services marketing: An Asia Pacific perspective.* Australia: Prentice Hall.

Lovelock, C., & Wirtz, J. (2004). *Services marketing: People, technology, strategy* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice-Hall.

Lovelock, C., & Wirtz, J. (2007). *Services Marketing: People, technology, strategy* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education.

Lovelock, C., & Wright, R. (2002). *Principles of service marketing and management* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.

Luo, X., & Homburg, C. (2007). Neglected outcomes of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing,* 71, 133 – 49.

Maddern, H. Roger, M., & Andi, S. (2007). Customer satisfaction and service quality in UK financial services. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management,* 27(9), 999 – 1019.

Mahiah., S., Suhaimi., S., & Ibrahim., A. (2006). Measuring the level of customer satisfaction among employees of human resource division. *Proceedings of the Advances in Global Business Research,* 3(1), 1549-9332. Retrieved August 7, 2012, from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.99.4030

Malik, M. E., Danish, R. Q., & Usman, A. (2010). The impact of service quality on students' satisfaction on higher education institutes of Punjab. *Journal of Management Research,* 2(2), 1-11. Retrieved September 3, 2012, from http://www.macrothink.org

Mamdani, M. (2007). *Scholars in the market place. The dilemmas of neo-liberal reform at Makerere University, 1989 – 2005*. Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA.

Manuel, N. (2008). *Customer perception of service quality at the business studies unit of the Durban University of Technology* (MBA thesis, Durban University of Technology, South Africa). Retrieved June 2, 2012, from http://hdl.handle.net/10321/418

Marcel, F. & Harris, C. (2000). If Students are not Customers, What Are They? *Academic Medicine*. 75(12), 1173-1177. Retrieved May 13, 2014 from http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/pages/results.aspx?txtKeywords=marcel%20deon

Maringe, F., & Gibbs, P. (2009). *Marketing higher education: Theory and practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Martensen A., Gronhold L., Eskildsen J. K., & Kristensen, K. (2000). Measuring student oriented quality in higher education: Application of the ECSI methodology. *Sinergie Rapport di Ricerca* N. 9, 372-383. Retrieved September 3, 2012, from http://aniaitomek.zozlak.org/.../MartensenEtAl_2000_Measuring%20Student%

Marx, J. M. M. N., & Erasmus, A. C. (2006). An evaluation of the customer service in supermarkets in Pretoria East, Tshwane metropolis, South Africa. *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences,* 34, 56–68. Retrieved September 4, 2012, from http://www.ajol.info/index.php/jfecs/article/viewFile/52891/41502

Marx, J. M. M. N., & Erasmus, A. C. (2006). Customer Satisfaction with Customer Service and Service Quality in Supermarkets in a Third World Context. *Advances in Consumer Research, Asia Pacific Edition*, 7.

Materu, N. P. (2007). *Higher education quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Status, challenges, opportunities and promising Practices*. World Bank Working Paper, 124. doi: 10.1596/978-0-8213-7272-2

Molapo, M. E., & Mukwada, G. (2011). The impact of customer retention strategies in the south african cellular industry: The case of the eastern Free State. *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology,* 1(2), 52-60. Retrieved September 4, 2012 from http://www.ijbhtnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_2_September_2011/7.pdf

Morgan, N. A., Anderson, E. W., & Mittal, V. (2005). Understanding firms' customer satisfaction information usage. *Journal of Marketing*, 69 (3), 131-151. Retrieved September 4, 2012, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.69.3.131.66359

Mudie, P., & Pirrie, A. (2006). *Services marketing management* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Elsevier Ltd.

Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches.* Nairobi, Kenya: Acts Press.

Muindi, B. (2011, May 9). Kenya varsity deal to fix admission delays. *Daily Nation*. Retrieved December 4, 2013 from http://www.nation.co.ke

Murphys, P. (2009). Higher education access/foundation courses (A research report). Retrieved July 3, 2013, from National University of Ireland website: http://www.nuigalway.ie/access/documents/access_courses_final_report_3.pdf

Musalem, A., & Joshi, V. (2009). How much should you invest in each customer relationship? A competitive strategic approach. *Marketing Science,* 28(3), 555-565. doi: 10.1287/mksc.1080.0424

Mutula, S. M. (2002). University education in Kenya: Current developments and future outlooks. *The International Journal of Educational Management,* 16 (3), 109-119. doi:10.1108/09513540210422219

Mwiria, K. Ng'ethe, N., Ngome, C., Ouma-Odero, D., Wawire, V., & Wesonga, D. (2007). *Public and private universities in Kenya: New challenges, issues and achievements in higher education in Africa.* Retrieved June 15, 2011, from http://www.eldis.org/go/home&id=35863&type=Document

Mzini, L. B. (2011, June). *The Relationship between accountability and customer satisfaction in Sedibeng District Municipality, South Africa.* Paper Presented at A Multinational Conference on Improving the Quality of Public Services, Moscow, Russia. Retrieved March 3, 2012, from http://www.umdcipe.org

Nagaprasad, H. & Yogesha, B. (2009). Enrichment of customer satisfaction through Total Quality Management techniques. *Proceedings of the International Multi Conference of Engineers and Computer Scientists* 2009 Vol. 2, IMECS 2009, March 18 - 20, 2009, Hong Kong. Retrieved January 26, 2015, from www.iaeng.org/publication/IMECS2009/IMECS2009_pp1899-1903.pdf

Naidoo, D. K. (2004). *Improving service delivery at South African police service community service centres* (Master's thesis, Tshwane University of Technology). Retrieved August 12, 2012, from http://libserv5.tut.ac.za:7780/pls/eres/wpg_docload.download_file?p...pdf

Naik, C. N. K. Gantasala, S., & Prabhakar, G. V. (2010). Service quality (Servqual) and its effect on customer satisfaction in retailing. *European Journal of Social Science,* 16(2), 231–243. Retrieved May 2, 2012, from http://www.eurojournals.com/ejss_16_2_08_.pdf

Ndegwa, S. (2008, April). *Kenya: Private university growth a mixed blessing* [Online Higher Education Web Publishing, Issue No. 23]. Retrieved June 15, 2011 from http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?Story=2008041014370064

Ngau, P. & Kumssa, A. (2004). *Research design, data collection and analysis.* A training manual, Nairobi: United Nations Centre for Regional Development, UNCRD Africa Office.

Ngome, C., K. (2003). Country higher education profile in Kenya. In D. Teferra & P. G. Altbach (Eds.), *African higher education: An international reference book* (pp. 359 – 371), Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ngome, C. K. (2010, October). *Massive growth of university education in East Africa and the challenges facing the sector between 2000-2010: The Case of Kenya.* Paper Presented at the 10th Anniversary Celebrations of the Revitalization of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), Kampala, Uganda. Retrieved June 15, 2011, from http//:www.iucea.org/downloads/Massive_Growth.pdf

Nguru, G. M. (1990): The role of private universities in Kenya. In P.P.W. Achola, K. R. Gray and B. W. Kere (Eds.), *Trends and the future of university education in Kenya.* Nairobi: Masaki Publishers.

Oanda, I. O. (2008). *Privatization and Private High Education in Kenya: Implications for Access, Equity and Knowledge Production*. CODESRIA Dakar: Imprimerie Saint Paul.

Obermiller, C., Fleenor, P., & Raven, P. (2005). Students as customers or products: Perceptions and preferences of faculty and students. *Marketing Education Review, 15*(2), 27-38. Retrieved May 13, 2014 from, http://www.ebscohost.com/ AN 18030970

Odhiambo, G., O. (2011). Higher education quality in Kenya: A critical reflection of key challenges. *Quality in Higher Education*, 17(3), 299 – 315. Retrieved February 8, 2012, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2011.614472

Ojo, O. (2010). The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the telecommunication industry: Evidence from Nigeria. *Broad Research in Accounting, Negotiation, and Distribution,* 1(1), 88-100. Retrieved September 3, 2013, from http://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:bra:journl:v:1:y:2010:i:1:p:88-100

Oketch, J. O. (2004). The emergency of private university education in kenya: trends, prospects and challenge. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 24, 119-136.

Oldfield, B.M., & Baron, S. (2000). Student perceptions of service quality in a UK university business and management faculty. *Quality Assurance in Education,* 8(2), 85 – 95. Retrieved September 10, 2012 from http:// http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ doi: 10.1108/09684880010325600

Oliver, R. L. (1997). *Satisfaction: A behavioural perspective on the consumer*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Ombati, T. O., Magutu, P. O., Nyamwange, S. O., & Nyaoga, R. B. (2010). Technology and service quality in the banking industry: Importance and performance of various factors considered in the electronic banking services. *African Journal of Business & Management (AJBUMA),* 1. Retrieved February 9, 2012, from http://www.aibuma.org/journal/indix.htm

Ong, W. M., & Nankervis, A. (2012). Service quality in higher education: Students' perceptions in Australia and Malaysia. *Review of Integrative and Business Research,* 1(1), 277-290. Retrieved April 30, 2013, from http://www.sibresearch.org

Onsongo, J. K. (2011). *Promoting gender equity in selected public universities of Kenya.* Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: OSSREA Publications.

Oswald, S. W. F. (2009). A theoretical model for implementing quality management in an automated environment. *International Journal of Control and Automation*, 2(2), 1-8. Retrieved January 6, 2013, from http://www.sersc.org/journals/IJCA/vol2_no2/1.pdf

Otieno, W. (2007). Private provision and its changing interface with public higher education: The case of Kenya. *JHEA/RESA*, 5(2/3), 173-176. Retrieved June 15, 2011, from http://www.codesria.org/Links/Publications/jhea2_07/otieno.pdf

Owino, E. O. (2013). The influence of service quality and corporate image on customer satisfaction among university students in Kenya. (Doctoral thesis, University of Nairobi, School of Business, Kenya). Retrieved August 5, 2014, from chss.uonbi.ac.ke/

Owlia. M.S., & Aspinwall, E.M. (1996). A framework for the dimensions of quality in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 4 (2), 12–20. Retrieved June 9, 2014, from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ doi: 10.1108/09684889610116012

Palmer, A. (2008). *Principles of services marketing.* London: McGraw-Hill.

Parasuraman, A., Berry, L. L., & Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12–40. Retrieved August 31, 2012, from http://www.areas.kenanflagler.unc.edu/.../SERVQUAL-%20a%20multiple

Parasuraman, A, Zeithaml, V.A., and Malhotra, A. (2005). E-S-QUAL: A multiple item scale for assessing electronic service quality. *Journal of Service Research*, 7(3): 213-233.

Pariseau, S. E., & McDaniel, J. R. (1997). Assessing service quality in schools of business. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 4(3), 204 – 218. Retrieved September 10, 2012 from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ doi: 10.1108/02656719710165455

Patton, M. W. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods (2nd ed.), Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Payne, A., Christopher, M., Clark, M., & Peck, H. (1999). *Relationship marketing for competitive advantage: Winning and keeping customers*. (1st ed.). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Peer, M., & Mpinganjira, M. (2011). Understanding service quality and patient satisfaction in private medical practice: A case study. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(9). Retrieved September 17, 2012, from http://www.academicjournals.org/AJBM

Pereda, M., Airey, D., & Bennett, M. (2007). Services quality in overseas education: the experience of overseas students. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education,* 6(2), 1-13. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from http//www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/resources/johlste.

Perez, M. S., Juan, C. G. A., Gema, M. M. C., & Raquel, S. F. (2007). Effects of service quality dimensions on behavioural purchase intentions: A study in public sector transport. *Managing Service Quality*, 17(2), 134-151. doi: 10.1108/09604520710735164

Petzer, D. J., & De Meyer, C. F. (2011). The perceived service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intent towards cell phone network service providers: A generational perspective. *African Journal of Business Management,* 5(17), 7461-7473. Retrieved February 9, 2012, from http://hdl.handle.net/10210/7788. doi: 10.5897/ajbm11.302

Petzer, D. J., & Steyn, T. F. J. (2006). Customer retention: A theoretical perspective of service failure and service recovery in the hotel industry. *Acta Commercii*, 6(1), 162-172. doi: 10.4102/ac.v6i1.106

Prugsamatz, S., Pentecost, R., & Ofstad, L. (2006). The influence of explicit and implicit service promises on Chinese students' expectations of overseas universities. *Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics,* 18 (2), 129-145. doi: 10.1108/13555850610658273

Quinn, A., Lemay, G., Larsen, P., & Johnson, D. M. (2009). Service quality in higher education. *Total Quality Management*, 20(2), 139 – 152. doi: 10.1080/14783360802622805

Radhakrishna, R. B. (2007). Tips for developing and testing questionnaires/instruments. *Journal of Extension,* 45(1). Retrieved February 3, 2012, from http://www.joe.org

Ramroop, S., & Govender, K. K. (2013). Managing postgraduate research service quality: Developing and assessing a conceptual model. *SA Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 16(2), 154 – 169. Retrieved May 9, 2014 from http://www.sajems.org/index.php/sajems/issue/view/34

Rasli, A., Danjuma, I., Yew, L. K., & Igbal, M. J. (2011). Service quality, customer satisfaction in technology-based universities. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(15), 6541 – 6553. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from http://www.academicjournals.og/AJBM; doi: 10.5897/AJBM10.1687

Raubenheimer, J. (2004). An item selection procedure to maximise scale reliability and validity. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 30(4), 59 – 64.

Ravichandran, K., Kumar, S. A., & Venkatesan, N. (2012). Students' perceptions on service quality. *International Academic Research Journal of Business and*

Management, 1(1), 23-38. Retrieved July 17, 2014, from http:// www.researchgate.net/profile/...on.../d912f4fe86c878a293.pdf

Ree, H. J. V. (2009). *Service quality indicators for business support services* (Doctoral Thesis, University College London, UK). Retrieved September 17, 2012, from http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/19902/1/19902.pdf

Richardson, J. C., & Swan, K. (2003). Examining social presence in on-line courses in relation to students perceived learning and satisfaction. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 7*(1), 68-88. Retrieved September 17, 2012 from http://ppcr.hms.harvard.edu

Robson, C. (2007). *How to do a research project: A guide for undergraduate students.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Rolfe, H. (2002). Students' demands and expectations in an age of reduced financial support: The perspectives of lecturers in four English universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 24(2), 171-82.

Roostika, R. (2009). *The role of customer value within the service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions relationships: An empirical examination in the Indonesian higher education sector*. (PhD thesis in Business Management, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia). Retrieved February 8, 2012, from http://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/vital/access/services/.../swin.../SOURCE 2.

Roseman, G. B., & Wilson, B. L. (1985). Numbers and words: Combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single large-scale evaluation study. *Evaluation Review, 9*, 627-643.

Rust, R. T., & Chung, T. L. S. (2006). Marketing models of service and relationships. *Marketing Science.* 25(6), 560 – 580. doi: 10.1287/mksc.1050.0139

Rust, R. T., & Lemon, K. N. (2001). E-Service and the Consumer. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 5 (3), 83-99. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from http://dl.acm.org/

Rust, R. T., Danaher, P. J., & Sajeev, V. (2000). Using service quality data for competitive marketing decisions. *International Journal of Services Industry Management,* 11(5), 438–469. Retrieved August 12, 2012, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09564230010360173

Santos, J. (2003). E-service quality: a model of virtual service quality dimensions. *Managing Service Quality,* 13(3), 233 – 246. Retrieved August 31, 2012, from http:// http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ doi: 10.1108/09604520310476490

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2007). *Research methods for business students.* (4th ed.). Essex: Pearson Education Ltd.

Schalkwyk, R. D. (2011). The impact of leadership research methods (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Schmidt, R. (2002). A student's initial perception of value when selecting a college: An application of value added. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 10(1), 37–40.

Schumacker, R. E., & Lomax, R. G. (2004). *A beginner's guide to structural equation modelling*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Seilier, V. L. (2004). *Examining service quality for homebuyers in the residential real estate brokerage industry.* (Doctoral thesis, University of Western Sydney, Sydney). Retrieved August 12, 2012, from http://handle.uws.edu.au:8081/1959.7/726

Sekaran, U. (2006). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach* (4th ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2010). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach* (5th ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Seth, N., Deshmukh, S. G., & Vrat, P. (2005). Service quality models: A review. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, 22 (9), 913-949. doi: 10.1108/02656710510625211

Seymour, D. T. (1992). *On Q: Causing quality in higher education.* New York: MacMillan Press.

Shahin, A. (2006). SERVQUAL and model of service quality gaps: A framework for determining and prioritizing critical factors in delivering quality services. In P. V. Sarathy (Ed.), *Service quality–An introduction* (pp.117-131). Andhra Pradesh: ICFAI University Press.

Shahin, A., & Samea, M. (2010). Developing the models of service quality gaps: A critical discussion. *Business Management and Strategy*, 1(1:E2), 1-11. Retrieved February 7, 2012, from http://ww.macrothink.org/bms

Sharrock, G. (2000). Why students are not (just) customers (and other reflections on life after George). *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *22,* 149-164. doi:10.1080/713678141

Shekarchizadeh, A. Rasli, A. & Hon-Tat, H. (2011). SERVQUAL in Malaysian universities: perspectives of international students. *Business Process Management Journal*, 17(1), 67 – 81. Retrieved June 9, 2014 from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ doi: 10.1108/14637151111105580

Sheth, J. N. & Mittal, B. (2004). *Customer behaviour: A managerial perspective* (2nd ed.). Ohio: Thomson South-Western.

Siddiqi, K. O. (2011). Interrelations between service quality attributes, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the retail banking sector in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Business and Management,* 6 (3), 12-36. Retrieved February 8, 2012, from http://www.ccsenet.org/ijbm

Sigala, M. (2004). *Investigating the factors determining e-learning effectiveness in tourism and hospitality education. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education,* 16(2), 11 – 21.

Solomon, M. R. (1996). Consumer behaviour. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Soutar, G. & McNeil, M. (1996). Measuring service quality in a tertiary institution. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 34(1), 72–82. Retrieved June 9, 2014 from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ doi: 10.1108/09578239610107174

Stiles, J. (2003). A philosophical justification for a realist approach to strategic alliance research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 6(4), 263 – 271. Retrieved August 26, 2013, from www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=858462. doi: 10.1108/13522750310495346

Stodnick, M., & Rogers, P. (2009). Using SERVQUAL to measure the quality of the classroom experience. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, 6 (1), 115-133.

Strydom, J. W., Cant, M. C. & Jooste, C. J. (2000). *Marketing Management* (4th ed.). Cape Town: Juta & Co.

Stukalina, Y. (2012). Addressing service quality issues in higher education: the educational environment evaluation from the student's perspective. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy.* 18(1), 84-98. Retrieved April 17, 2012 from http://www.tandfonline.com/. doi: 10.3846/20294913.2012.658099.

Teferra, D. & Altbach, P. G. (2004). African higher education: Challenges for the 21st century. *Higher Education*, 47 (1), p. 21-50

Terblanche, N. S., & Boshoff, C. (2010). Quality value, satisfaction and loyalty amongst race groups: A study of customers in the South African fat food industry. *South African Journal of Business Management,* 41(1), 1-9. AN 48917018

Tilak, J. B. G. (2006). Private higher education: Philanthropic to profits. In *Higher Education in the World 2006: The Financing of University.* New York: Palgrave McMillan.

Trivellas, P., & Dargenidou, D. (2009b). Organisational culture, job satisfaction and higher education service quality: The case of Technological Educational Institute of Larissa. *The TQM Journal*, 21(4), 382 – 399. Retrieved September 9, 2012, from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/ doi: 10.1108/17542730910965083

Tuitoek, D. (2006, November). Networking for quality higher education. In Regional Eastern Africa Unistaff Alumni Network, [REAL Unistaff] (Eds.), *Challenges in establishing a private university in Kenya: Case study of Kabarak University* (pp. 230-233). Nairobi, Kenya: Kenyatta University Press.

Turban, E., lee, J., King, D., & Chung, H. (2002). *Electronic commerce: A managerial perspective.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall International.

University of KwaZulu-Natal. (2007). *Research Ethics Policy*. Retrieved June 12, 2013, from http://research.ukzn.ac.za/.../Research_Ethics_Policy_V _-_Final_rec_from_AC

Usher, R. (1996). *A Critique of the Neglected Epistemological Assumptions of Educational Research.* In D. Scott and R. Usher (Eds.), Understanding educational research (pp.9-32). London: Rutledge.

Vaill, P. (2008). *Beware the idea of the student as a customer: A dissenting view*. Retrieved July 4, 2012, from http://www.people.veu.edu/~rsleeth/NotCustomers.html

Varghese, N. V. (2004). Private higher education in Africa. *International Institute for Education Planning:* UNESCO. Retrieved February 12, 2012, from http://www.unesco.org/iiep/pdf/pubs/privatHEAfr.pdf

Voss, R. (2009). Studying critical classroom encounters: The experiences of students in German college education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 17(2), 156 – 173. doi:10.1108/09684880910951372

Wang, I., & Shieh, C. (2006). The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction: The example of CJCU library. *Journal of Information and Optimization Sciences*, 27(1), 193–201. Retrieved April 16, 2012, from http://www.tarupublications.com/.../jios/.../jios134.pdf

Watson, S. (2003). Closing the feedback loop: Ensuring effective action from student feedback. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 9(2), 145 – 157.

Wesonga, D., Ngome, C., Ouma-Odero, D. & Wawire, V. (2007). Private provision of higher education in Kenya: Trends and issues in four universities. In K. Mwiria, N. Ng’ethe, C. Ngome, D. Ouma-Odero, V. Wawire & D. Wesonga (Eds.), *Public and private universities in Kenya*. Oxford: James Curry Ltd.

Wiersma, W. (1995). *Research methods in education: An introduction* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Wille, G. W. (1996). *A stepwise procedure for the empirical assessment of latent variable models*. (Unpublished master’s thesis). University of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Wilson, A., Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, J. & Gremler, D. (2008). *Services marketing.* Maidenhead, Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

Wisniewski, M. (2001). Using SERVQUAL to assess customer satisfaction with public sector services. *Managing Service Quality*, 11(6), 380-388. doi: 10.1108/EUM0000000006279

Xiliang, H. (2010). *An examination of international trophy hunters' South African hunting experiences* (Master's thesis, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University). Retrieved July 4, 2012, from http://dspace.nmmu.ac.za:8080/jspui/bitstream/10948/.../Xiliang%20Han.pdf

Yee, R. Yeung, A., & Cheng, T. (2010). An empirical study of employee loyalty, service quality and firm performance in the service industry. *International Journal of Production Economics,* 124(1), 109.

Yoon, M. H., Seo, J. H. J., & Yoon, T. S. (2004). Effects of contact employee supports on critical employee responses and customer service evaluation. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 18(5), 395–415. Retrieved August 13, 2012, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/08876040410548311

Yunus, N. K. Y., Ismail, A., Ishak, S., & Juga, Z., R. (2009). Service quality dimensions, perceive value and customer satisfaction: ABC relationship model testing. *IBEJ*, 2 (1), 1-18.

Zahari, W., Yusoff, W., & Ismail, M. (2008). FM-SERVQUAL: A new approach of service quality measurement framework in local authorities. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate,* 10(2), 130 – 144.

Zeithaml V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2006). *Integrating customer focus across the firm* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2009). *Service marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm* (5th ed.). New Delhi: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

Zeithaml, V. A., Parasuraman, A., & Berry L., L. (1990). *Delivering quality service: Balancing customer perceptions and expectations.* New York. NY: The Free Press.

Zeithaml, V. A., Wilson, A., & Bitner, M. J. (2008). *Services marketing* (4th ed.). The McGraw-Hill Companies: New Delhi.

Zeithaml, V., A., & Bitner, M., J. (1996). *Services marketing.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Zeithaml, V., A., Berry, L., L., & Parasuraman, A. (1993). The nature and determinants of customer expectations of service. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* 21(1), 1-12. doi: 10.1177/0092070393211001

Zikmund, W. G. (2003*). Exploring marketing research* (8th ed.). South Western, Cincinnati, OH: Thompson Learning

Zikmund, W. G., Babin, B. J., Carr, J. C., & Griffin, M. (2010). *Business research methods* (8th ed.). South-Western: Cengage Learning.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

COLLEGE OF LAW AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

CONFIRMATION OF INTENTION TO SUBMIT DISSERTATION/THESIS

(*THIS FORM IS TO BE COMPLETED THREE MONTHS BEFORE SUBMISSION OF MASTERS DISSERTATIONS, AND THREE MONTHS BEFORE SUBMISSION OF PHD THESIS, AND HANDED IN AT THE SCHOOL OFFICE)*

NAME OF STUDENT: ERIC ERNEST MANG'UNYI

STUDENT NUMBER: 212561377

DEGREE: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SCHOOL: MANAGEMENT, IT AND GOVERNANCE

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: PROF. KRISHNA K. GOVENDER

NAME OF CO-SUPERVISOR: N/A

TITLE OF DISSERTATION/THESIS: SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

PLEASE SUBMIT AN ABSTRACT NOT EXCEEDING 350 WORDS

DATE OF INTENTION TO SUBMIT: NOVEMBER 2014

POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 67227
00200, CITY SQUARE
NAIROBI KENYA

TELEPHONE NUMBER: Office: 8891601/6; Ext 1177/1176

CELLPHONE: +254 721 973 630

E-MAIL ADDRESS: mangunyie@gmail.com

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE: DATE:

CO-SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE: DATE:

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF

Questionnaire Code No: ___________________________________

Instructions

1 For absolute confidentiality **DO NOT** give your name anywhere on this questionnaire.
2 Please feel free and be as honest as possible. There is no right or wrong answers.
3 Mark in the box/the answer that best suits your view and where necessary, indicate in writing in the space provided.

Definition: The term **customer** denotes all kind of consumers of services of a higher education institution/university.

SECTION A

Please complete the following section which asks for information about you and your work.

A1. Name of your university? ____

A2. Occupation Academic Staff [ ] Non-academic Staff [ ]

A3. If teaching staff, indicate discipline_________________________________

A4. If non-teaching staff (please tick)

a. Senior Management or Senior administrative staff [ ]
b. Middle level staff [ ]
c. Technical/Support staff [ ]

A5. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

A6. Age: Below 30 years [ ] 30 – 39 years [ ] 40 – 49 years [] 50 and above [ ]

A7. How many years of university service do you have?

0 – 4 years [ ] 5 – 10 years [ ]
11 – 15 years [ ] 16 and above years [ ]

A8. Please select the highest educational qualification you hold.

Certificate or equivalent [ ]
Diploma [ ]
Bachelor's Degree [ ]
Master's Degree [ ]
PhD (ongoing studies) [ ]
PhD [ ]
Others (specify)
____

SECTION B: ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Different university customers expect different quality of services from their institutions. As you are also a customer of your university, please look at the following statements and **mark/circle** by indicating how you agree or disagree with aspects related to the services offered by your university. You may use the scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Absolutely Disagree and 7 is Absolutely Agree.

The Scale is as denoted below:

Absolutely Disagree	**Strongly Disagree**	**Slightly Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Absolutely Agree**
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Item							
	Non-Academic Aspects – relates to duties carried out by non-academic staff and are essential to enable students fulfill their study obligations							
a.	Administrative staff are caring and courteous with students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b.	Administrative staff have a professional appearance/image	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.	A full range of up-to-date academic facilities are provided by admin staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.	Class sizes are kept to minimum/small sizes to allow personal attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e.	The university's graduates are easily employable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.	The academicians are educated and experienced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g.	Administration staff show a sincere interest in solving students and/or staff problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h.	Administration staff give students and/or staff caring and individualized attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i.	The administration staff deal with inquires/complaints efficiently and promptly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j.	Administration staff respond to requests for assistance from students & staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
k.	The administration offices keep students records accurately maintained and are easy to retrieve	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
l.	Administration staff keep their promises	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m.	The opening hours of offices are convenient to you	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
n.	Administration staff show positive work attitude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
o.	Administration staff communicate well with both students & staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
p.	Staff have good knowledge of university systems/procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q.	I feel secure and confident with my university	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
r.	Administration staff provide service within reasonable timeframes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
s.	The university treats students equally and with respect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
t.	Administration staff respect confidentiality when information is disclosed to them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
u.	Administration staff are easily contacted by telephone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
v.	The university promotes excellent counseling services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
w.	The university encourages and promotes student union	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
x.	Administrative staff have good knowledge of service delivery procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Academic Aspects – factors related to responsibilities of academics							
a.	Lecturers have sufficient knowledge relating to the content of courses/subjects they teach	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b.	Lecturers deal with me in a caring and courteous manner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.	Lectures respond to my requests for assistance promptly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.	Academic staff have a sincere interest to solve my problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e.	Lecturers show positive attitude towards students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.	Lecturers communicate well in class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g.	Lecturers mark and return exams and assignments on time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h.	Lecturers allocate sufficient and convenient time for consultation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i.	Class sizes are kept to minimum/small sizes to allow personal attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j.	The university offers programs with flexible syllabus and structure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
k.	The university offers reputable academic programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
l.	Lecturers are highly educated and experienced in their respective fields	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m.	I feel secure and confident while dealing with the lecturers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
n.	Academic staff have good knowledge of service delivery procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Reputation – ability of higher learning institution to project a professional image							
a.	The university has a visually appealing professional appearance/image	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b.	The university has good hostel facilities/equipment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.	The university has visually appealing and up-to-date academic facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.	The university's internal quality programmes are functional and help improve service delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e.	university recreation facilities are adequate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.	The university has an ideal campus location and layout	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g.	The Academic staff are well educated and experienced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h.	university services are provided within reasonable timeframes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i.	The university's health facilities are adequate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j.	The university values and takes feedback for improvement of its service performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Access - relate to such issues as approachability, ease of contact, availability and convenience							
a.	The university gives students fair amount of freedom	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b.	The university staff are available at all times to assist	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Access - relate to such issues as approachability, ease of contact, availability and convenience							
	students							
c.	The university has convenient operating hours	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.	The university treats students equally and with respect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e.	Staff behaviour makes you feel that you can trust them and have confidence in them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.	Students information is kept in confidence or confidentially	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g.	The university staff can be easily be contacted by telephone, face to face, email etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h.	The university values feedback from students to improve service performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i.	The university has standardized and simple service delivery procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j.	Complete and accurate information is provided to you in good time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
k.	A flexible service is provided to meet your individual needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
l.	Your complaints are constructively handled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Programme Issues - emphasizes the importance of offering wide ranging and reputable academic programmes and or specializations with flexible structure and syllabus.							
a.	The university offers a variety of programmes with various specializations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b.	The university offers programs with flexible syllabus and structure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.	This university programmes are delivered in different modes e.g. full-time, part-time, weekend etc. therefore convenient to students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.	Our university provides multiple options of academic programmes to choose from	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Understanding – relates to understanding students' specific need in terms of counselling and health services							
a.	The university promotes excellent counseling services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b.	There is individualised attention of counseling services provided to students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.	The university health services are adequate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B2. Please indicate your overall evaluation of QUALITY of the services provided by your University, by placing a check mark X or √ in the relevant box below

Extremely poor	Very poor	Fairly poor	Neutral	Fairly good	Very good	Extremely good

B3. **CHALLENGES FACING EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with aspects related to challenges facing effective implementation of service quality in your university. Use the scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Absolutely Disagree and 7 is Absolutely Agree.

	Challenge	**Scale**						
a.	Absence of process focus to service delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b.	Emphasis on the outcome not the process of services offered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.	Unsatisfactory development of human resources management methods e.g. lack of education and training, objective employee evaluation etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.	The "fashion" for customer service offices/desks that require one to seek assistance instead of directly contacting the officer concerned	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e.	Variableness or variability of management styles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.	Badly designed quality systems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g.	Dissatisfied internal customers (employees)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h.	Lack of information flow within organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i.	Failure to create a continuous improvement service culture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B4. What other challenges face effective implementation of service quality management in your university?

____

____

____

____

SECTION C: ASSESSMENT OF SATISFACTION

Please indicate your degree of **SATISFACTION** of each of the following items in relation with the overall services provided by your university, by placing a check mark **X or** √ in the relevant box below. The scale is as indicated: 1 = Completely Dissatisfied, 2 = Very Dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat Dissatisfied, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Somewhat Satisfied, 6 = Very satisfied, 6 = Completely Satisfied.

Factor	**Completely dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Somewhat dissatisfied**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat satisfied**	**Very satisfied**	**Completely satisfied**
C1. The duties carried out by non-academic staff to enable students fulfill their study obligations	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
C2. The responsibilities of academics/lecturers as pertains students overall study/goals achievement	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
C3. How satisfied are you with your institution/university in the way it is projecting its professional image outside?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

C4. How satisfied are you with your university's staff (both academic and administrative) in terms of their approachability, ease of contact, availability and convenience when services are needed or customers to be attended to?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
C5. My university offers a wide range and reputable academic programmes/specializations with flexible structure and syllabus	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
C6. How satisfied are you with the way your university understands and treats students' specific needs in terms of counselling and health services	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

C7. Please indicate your overall evaluation of **SATISFACTION** with respect to services provided by your University, by placing a check mark X or √ in the relevant box below. All things considered, I am ...with the quality of services offered to me by my university.

Completely dissatisfied	**Very dissatisfied**	**Somewhat dissatisfied**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat satisfied**	**Very satisfied**	**Completely satisfied**
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

C8. Additional comment(s) on how your university could improve its service quality delivery

____

____

---End---

Thank you for your kindness and your help in filling out this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 3: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Questionnaire Code No: ________________________________

Instructions

- For absolute confidentiality **DO NOT** give your name anywhere on this questionnaire.
- Please feel free and be as honest as possible. There is no right or wrong answers.
- Mark in the box/the answer that best suits your view and where necessary, indicate in writing in the space provided.

Definition: The term **customer** denotes all kind of consumers of services of a higher education institution/university.

SECTION A: ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Different university customers expect different quality of services from their institutions. As you are also a customer of your university, please look at the following statements and **mark/circle** by indicating how you agree or disagree with aspects related to the services offered by your university. You may use the scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Absolutely Disagree and 7 is Absolutely Agree.

The Scale is as denoted below:

Absolutely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree	Absolutely Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Item							
	Non-Academic Aspects – relates to duties carried out by non-academic staff and are essential to enable students fulfill their study obligations							
y.	Administrative staff are caring and courteous with you	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
z.	Administrative staff have a professional appearance/image i.e. are neat appearing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
aa.	A full range of up-to-date academic facilities are provided	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
bb	Class sizes are kept to minimum/small sizes to allow personal attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
cc.	Administration staff show a sincere interest in solving my problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
dd	Administration staff give me caring and individualized attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ee	The administration staff deal with inquires/complaints efficiently and promptly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ff.	Administration staff respond to requests for assistance from students – show interest in responding to student requests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
gg.	The administration offices keep students records that are accurate, error-free and are easy to retrieve	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
hh	Administration staff keep their promises	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ii.	The opening hours of offices are convenient to you	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

jj.	Administration staff show positive work attitude towards students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
kk.	Administration staff communicate well with students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ll.	Administration staff have good knowledge of university systems/procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
mr	I feel secure and confident with my support staff behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
nn	Administration staff provide services within reasonable timeframes and keep their promises	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
oo	The university treats students equally and with respect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
pp	Administration staff respect my confidentiality when I disclose information to them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
qq	Support staff understand specific needs of students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
rr.	Administration staff are easily contacted by telephone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ss.	The university promotes excellent counseling services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
tt.	The university encourages and promotes student union	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
uu	Administrative staff have good knowledge to answer student questions and of service delivery procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Academic Aspects – factors related to responsibilities of academics							
o.	Lecturers are neat appearing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
p.	Lecturers have sufficient knowledge relating to the content of courses/subjects they teach	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q.	The academics are educated and experienced in their respective fields	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
r.	Lecturers deal with me in a caring and courteous manner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
s.	Lectures respond to my requests for assistance promptly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
t.	Academic staff have a sincere interest to solve my problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
u.	Lecturers show positive attitude towards students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
v.	Lecturers communicate well in class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
w.	Feedback on progress - Lecturers mark and return exams and assignments on time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
x.	Lecturers allocate sufficient and convenient time for consultation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
y.	Class sizes are kept to minimum/small sizes to allow personal attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
z.	The university offers programs with flexible syllabus and structure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
aa.	The university offers reputable academic programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
bb	The behaviour of lecturers instill confidence in students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
cc.	I feel secure and confident while dealing with my lecturers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
dd	Academic staff have good knowledge of service delivery procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Reputation – ability of higher learning institution to project a professional image							
k.	The university has a visually appealing professional appearance/image	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Reputation – ability of higher learning institution to project a professional image							
l.	The university has good hostel facilities/equipment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m.	The university has visually appealing and up-to-date academic facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
n.	The university's internal quality programmes are functional and help improve service delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
o.	University recreation facilities are adequate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
p.	The university has an ideal campus location and layout	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q.	The Academic staff are well educated and experienced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
r.	University services are provided within reasonable timeframes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
s.	The university's health facilities are adequate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
t.	The university values and welcomes feedback for improvement of its service performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Access - relate to such issues as approachability, ease of contact, availability and convenience							
m.	The University gives students fair amount of freedom to contact their lecturers at times convenient to them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
n.	The university staff are available at all times to assist students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
o.	The university has convenient operating hours	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
p.	The university treats students equally and with respect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q.	Staff behaviour makes you feel that you can trust them and have confidence in them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
r.	The university staff can be easily be contacted by telephone, face to face, email etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
s.	The university has standardized and simple service delivery procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
t.	Complete and accurate information is provided to you in good time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
u.	A flexible service is provided to meet your individual needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
v.	Your complaints are constructively handled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Programme Issues - emphasizes the importance of offering wide ranging and reputable academic programmes and or specializations with flexible structure and syllabus.							
e.	The university offers a variety of programmes with various specializations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.	The university offers programs with flexible syllabus and structure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g.	This university programmes are delivered in different modes e.g. full-time, part-time, weekend etc. therefore convenient to students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h.	Our university provides multiple options of academic programmes to choose from	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Understanding – relates to understanding students'							

	specific need in terms of counselling and health services							
d.	The university promotes excellent counseling services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e.	There is individualised attention of counseling services provided to students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.	The university health services are adequate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A2. Please indicate your overall evaluation of the QUALITY **of the services provided by your University, by placing a check mark** X **or** √ **in the relevant box below**

Extremely poor	Very poor	Fairly poor	Neutral	Fairly good	Very good	Extremely good

A3. **CHALLENGES FACING EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with aspects related to challenges facing effective implementation of service quality in your university. Use the scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is Absolutely Disagree and 7 is Absolutely Agree.

	Challenge	**Scale**						
j.	Absence of process focus to service delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
k.	Emphasis on the outcome not the process of services offered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
l.	Unsatisfactory development of human resources management methods e.g. lack of education and training, objective employee evaluation etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m.	The “fashion” for customer service offices/desks that require one to seek assistance instead of directly contacting the officer concerned	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
n.	Variableness or variability of management styles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
o.	Badly designed quality systems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
p.	Dissatisfied internal customers (employees)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
q.	Lack of information flow within organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
r.	Failure to create a continuous improvement service culture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

What other challenges face effective implementation of service quality management in your University?

____

____

SECTION B: ASSESSMENT OF SATISFACTION

Please indicate your degree of **SATISFACTION** with respect to each of the following items in relation with the overall services provided by your university, by placing a check mark **X or** √ in the relevant box below. The scale is as indicated: 1 =

Completely Dissatisfied, 2 = Very Dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat Dissatisfied, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Somewhat Satisfied, 6 = Very satisfied, 6 = Completely Satisfied.

Factor	**Completely dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Somewhat dissatisfied**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat satisfied**	**Very satisfied**	**Completely satisfied**
B1. The duties carried out by non-academic staff to enable you as a student fulfill your study obligations	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
B2. The responsibilities of academics/lecturers as pertains your overall study/goals achievement	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
B3. The way the university is projecting its professional image outside?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
B4. The university's staff (both academic/lecturers and administrative) approachability, ease of contact, availability and convenience when you need a service(s) or to be attended to?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
B5. The range and reputable academic programmes/specializations with flexible structure and syllabus	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
B6. The way your university understands and treats students' specific needs in terms of counselling and health services	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

B7. **Please indicate your overall evaluation of** SATISFACTION **of the services provided by your University, by placing a check mark** X **or** √ **in the relevant box below. All things considered, I am ...with the quality of services offered to me by my university.**

Completely dissatisfied	**Very dissatisfied**	**Somewhat dissatisfied**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat satisfied**	**Very satisfied**	**Completely satisfied**
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

B8. Additional comment(s) on how your university could improve its service quality delivery

____

____

SECTION C: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Please tick (√) in the appropriate box

C1. What is the name of your university?

____

C2. What is your age?

18 – 23 [ ]   24 – 29 [ ]   30 – 35 [ ]
36 – 41 [ ]   42 – 47 [ ]   48 – 52 [ ]
More than 53 [ ]

C3. What is your gender?
Male [ ] Female [ ]

C5. What is your programme of study?
Full-time [ ] Part-time [ ]

C6. Indicate your Faculty/Department/School of study which you fall under (e.g. Education, Commerce, Business, IT etc.

____

C7. What is the nature of your programme of study? (E.g. BSc, BED, MED, PhD etc.)?

____

C8. Indicate year of study
First Year [ ]
Second Year [ ]
Third Year [ ]
Fourth Year [ ]

End

Thank you for your kindness and your help in filling out this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 4: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management, IT and Governance

Dear Respondent,

PhD Research Project
Researcher: Eric Ernest Mang'unyi (+254 721 973 630)
Supervisor: Prof. Krishna K. Govender (+27 (0)33 260 6487)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

I, **Eric Ernest Mang'unyi** am a PhD student in the School of Management, IT and Governance, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: ***Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: The Case of Private Universities in Kenya***.

The aim of this study is to: examine the interrelationships amongst critical dimensions of quality management as measured by customers' perceptions of service quality in selected Kenyan private universities.

Through your participation I hope to understand the customers' perceptions of service quality in Kenyan private universities and relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. The results of this survey are intended to contribute to the understanding of the nexus between service quality and customer satisfaction. It will help influence policy formulation at higher education including informing academic leaders and managers develop strategies to improve level of service and customer satisfaction.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the School of Management, IT and Governance, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

It should take you about 15 minutes/s to complete the questionnaire. I hope you will take the time to complete the questionnaire.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature : __ ___ Date____29/7/2013_____

This page is to be retained by participant

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management, IT and Governance

PhD Research Project
Researcher: Eric Ernest Mang'unyi (+254 721 973 630)
Supervisor: Prof. Krishna K. Govender (+27 (0)33 260 6487)
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

CONSENT

I____(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

____________________ ____________________

Signature of Participant **Date**

This page is to be retained by researcher

APPENDIX 5: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL ™
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

6 September 2013

Mr Eric Mang'unyi 212561377
School of Management, IT & Governance
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0966/013D
Project title: Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: The Case of Private Universities in Kenya

Dear Mr Mang'unyi

Full Approval – Expedited

This letter serves to notify you that your application in connection with the above has now been granted full approval.

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

……………………………………………
Dr Shenuka Singh (Acting Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Professor KK Govender
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor B McArthur
cc School Administrator: Ms D Cunynghame

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Acting Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350/4557 **Facsimile:** +27 (0)31 260 4609 **Email:** ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX 6: TABLE FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE FROM A GIVEN POPULATION

N	**S**	**N**	**S**	**N**	**S**	**N**	**S**	**N**	**S**
10	**10**	100	**80**	280	**162**	800	**260**	2800	**338**
15	**14**	110	**86**	290	**165**	850	**265**	3000	**341**
20	**19**	120	**92**	300	**169**	900	**269**	3500	**346**
25	**24**	130	**97**	320	**175**	950	**274**	4000	**351**
30	**28**	140	**103**	340	**181**	1000	**278**	4500	**354**
35	**32**	150	**108**	360	**186**	1100	**285**	5000	**357**
40	**36**	160	**113**	380	**191**	1200	**291**	6000	**361**
45	**40**	170	**118**	400	**196**	1300	**297**	7000	**364**
50	**44**	180	**123**	420	**201**	1400	**302**	8000	**367**
55	**48**	190	**127**	440	**205**	1500	**306**	9000	**368**
60	**52**	200	**132**	460	**210**	1600	**310**	10000	**370**
65	**56**	210	**136**	480	**214**	1700	**313**	15000	**375**
70	**59**	220	**140**	500	**217**	1800	**317**	20000	**377**
75	**63**	230	**144**	550	**226**	1900	**320**	30000	**379**
80	**66**	240	**148**	600	**234**	2000	**322**	40000	**380**
85	**70**	250	**152**	650	**242**	2200	**327**	50000	**381**
90	**73**	260	**155**	700	**248**	2400	**331**	75000	**382**
95	**76**	270	**159**	750	**254**	2600	**335**	1000000	**384**

Note: *N = Population Size; S =Sample Size*
Source: *Krejcie and Morgan (1970) in Sekaran, 2006: 293)*