

CREATING CUSTOMER VALUE IN AN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

This study researches the topic creating customer value in an educational environment. Two objectives are set, namely to measure the student service levels of the selected secondary schools, and then to determine if any differences exist between student perceptions and student expectations.

The literature review covers two models of service quality, namely the Kano model and the SERVQUAL model. Both the Kano model and the SERVQUAL model are client service models that presently exist in practice. The Kano model gives insights into the dynamics of customer choices and their needs, which ensures the delivery of successful products and services.

The SERVQUAL method is a technique that is used in performing a gap analysis of an organisation's service quality performance against customer service quality needs. This model is an indispensable model and a familiar methodology too amongst services organisations whose purpose is to improve their service quality, therefore SERVQUAL is the research methodology of choice.

The empirical research was done by collecting primary data from a selected group, using the SERVQUAL questionnaire to measure students' expectations and perceptions. The sample size was 120 respondents, and they all responded by completing the structured SERVQUAL questionnaires. A seven-point Likert scale was used in the Service Quality Questionnaire (Appendix A). A "1" was labelled as "completely dissatisfied" while a "7" was labelled as "Completely satisfied".

The reliability of the data was confirmed by means of Cronbach's alpha, and α -values of 0.57 (students' perceptions) and 0.85 (students' expectations) revealed satisfactory reliability. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to calculate the mean values of the criteria while principal factor analysis was employed to extract factors from both groups of data. The factors

of the perceived service have been identified as Teachers' Mind-Set (explaining the variance of (33.3%), Excellent Service (15.5%) and Display (12.5%). Regarding the factor analysis of the expected levels of service, the factors identified are: Teachers' Mind-set (38.7%), Service Reputation (28.7%) and Contact session (7.5%).

From the research it was clear that the three major recommendations to managers of secondary schools who intend to have sustainable competitive service quality, have managerial actions focused at:

1. Internal training.
2. Induction programmes
3. Surveys (further research and monitoring).

List of key terms: Service quality; effective secondary school; Kano; Servqual; factor analysis

CONTENT'S

CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY	2
1.3	HYPOTHESIS	2
1.4	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	3
1.4.1	Literature review	3
1.4.2	Empirical research	3
1.5	OUTLINE OF THE STUDY	4
1.5.	LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE	5
1.6	SUMMARY	5

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	INTRODUCTION	6
2.2	MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY USING KANO MODEL	7
2.2.1	Application of the Kano model – analysis	8
2.2.2	Relating Kano categories to customer needs	10
2.3	MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY USING SERVICE QUALITY MODEL	11
2.3.1	Service quality dimensions	13
2.3.2	Usage of Service Quality – applications	14
2.3.3	Steps in Service Quality – process	14
2.3.4	The Service Quality gaps	14
2.3.4.1	The knowledge gap	16
2.3.4.2	The standard gap	17
2.3.4.3	The performance gap	17
2.3.4.4	The Communication gap	18
2.3.4.5	The Service delivery gap	18

2.3.4.6	The zone of tolerance	18
2.3.5	The strength of SERVICE QUALITY benefits	19
2.3.6	Limitations of Service Quality – disadvantages	20
2.3.7	Assumptions of Service Quality	20
2.4	SUMMARY	21

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

3.1	INTRODUCTION	22
3.2	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	23
3.3	ANALYSIS OF MEAN VALUE	23
3.4	RELIABILITY	24
3.5	FACTOR ANALYSIS	25
3.5.1	Perceived service	25
3.5.2	Expected service	26
3.5.3	Factor comparison	27
3.6	SUMMARY	28

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1	INTRODUCTION	29
4.2	CONCLUSION	29
4.3	RECOMMENDATIONS	30
4.4	AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	32
4.5	SUMMARY	32

BIBLIOGRAPHY	34
APPENDIX A	40
APPENDIX B	41

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 2.1: KANO CATEGORIES RESULTING FROM ASKING PAIR QUESTIONS	11
TABLE 2.2: SPECIFIC DIMENSION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL SERVICE QUALITY	13
TABLE 3.1: FACTOR COMPARISON	34

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 2.1: KANO MODEL OF CUSTOMER SATSFACION	7
FIGURE 2.2: GAPS MODEL	15
FIGURE 2.3: SERVICE QUALITY GAPS MODEL	16
FIGURE 3.1: STUDENTS PERCEPTION & EXPECTATION PAIR	24

CHAPTER 1

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A secondary education institution, in South Africa, like any other business institutions, needs to satisfy its clients in order to survive in the business. It has been shown in various researches (Cronin & Taylor, 1992:55-62), that a customer with a positive attitude towards a business engages in positive word-of-mouth communication. This attitude affects the bottom line of the business.

The core service of a secondary education institution is teaching. It is intangible and dominant in the education institution (McDougall & Snetsinger, 1990:27-40). This means that teaching lacks physical service evidence while it is done. It forces a consumer to rely on sources of information such as word-of-mouth recommendations to arrive at purchase decisions (Webster, 1991:5-17).

Specifically, a prospective student comes to know about a secondary education institution and forms expectations about the quality of service he/she would receive from the institution. He or she will know about the institution through others who have attended or who are attending the institution. These people could be parents, friends, and relatives. Other sources of information such as institutional advertisements and university guides which also impact on school choice, have been shown in various research (Cook & Zallocco, 1983:197-212), that word-of-mouth recommendations from family constitute a major source of influence on students' secondary school choice.

Recently, in a medium size secondary school in South Africa, in the province of Kabuli-Natal, a study was conducted among its postmatric students because of the unhappiness expressed by those who attended Nilgiri Secondary School who neither could find job nor furthering of their studies at tertiary level. One of the questions the postmatric students were requested to respond to was, whether postmatric students

would recommend the learning areas or programs which they have completed at Nilgiri Secondary School to their friends or relatives. The comments were provided such as the following: The learning areas seemed much unorganized and pathetically slack. There were no criteria to guide students. A lot of assessments were based on subjective and personal opinions, which was not an acceptable level for secondary institution.

Furthermore, it has been reported in the service marketing literature that a dissatisfied postmatric student reveals his or her experience to approximately nine other people (Singh, 1990:193). If this is true, the school could lose many potential applicants to its programs.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The first objective of this research is to empirically assess or model the relationship between "postmatric students' perception of service quality" and their intention to recommend the programs to others. In the course of this examination, the open-ended responses provided by those postmatric students who intend not to recommend the school will be discussed.

The first study objective is to measure students' evaluation of the learning experience which leads to students' satisfaction. This in turn will impact on her or his overall attitude which could result in repeat purchase and post purchase communications about the service. The second objective of this study is to determine if any differences exist between students' perceptions and students' expectations. The experience of education is often the first direct interaction between students and most service delivery processes.

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

The research of this study is based on the assumed relationship between students expectation and students perception. Since the "intention" measure is dichotomous, the relationship between postmatric students' perception of service quality and their

intention to recommend the school will be examined using a general log-linear model. In other words, both the variables will be treated like response variables and their mutual association will be explored. On the other hand, if the expectations of the students are not met, the institution stands to lose the students to its competition. The hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis of the research are as follows:

H_o

A service gap exists between students' expectation and students' perception

H_a

A service gap does not exist between students' expectation and perception

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Literature review

Literature review was done which precedes a research proposal and results section. Its ultimate goal is to bring the reader up to date with current literature on a topic and forms the basis for another goal, such as future research that may be needed in the area. This is a body of text that aims to review the critical points of current knowledge and or methodological approaches on a particular topic. Literature reviews are secondary sources, and as such, do not report any new or original experimental work. It was a systematic review, focused on a single question that tries to identify, appraise, select and synthesize all high quality research evidence relevant to that question.

1.4.2 Empirical research

Theoretical research regarding service delivery, the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) model is useful in a student context. The questionnaire was developed that collected all of the information needed to measure the model's various constructs using items based on those contained in Khristensen, *et al.* (2000:109) study. The questionnaires, also sought information from postmatric students about their reasons for enrolling at

the institution, and their plans for furthering studies at tertiary institutions. The data were collected from students of Nilgiri Secondary School (two Matric classes) in a controlled environment to ensure validity, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In chapter 2 the literature review covers two models of service quality, namely the Kano model and the service-quality model. Both the Kano model and the service-quality model are client service models which currently exist in practice. The Kano model offers insights into the dynamics of students' choices and their needs which ensures the delivery of successful products or services. It is a quality management and marketing technique that can be used in measuring students' happiness.

The service-quality model has a technique that can be used in performing a gap analysis of an organization's service quality performance against customer service quality needs. This is an empirically derived method that may be used by services organizations to improve their service quality.

Chapter 3 consists of the research methodology as well as the empirical testing of the models used. Measuring service quality is as complex as defining it. It is normally done on an assumption that the customers' attitude towards the service will have an effect on their future behaviour, such as repeat of their good behavior and to keep recommending the institution to others. In reality, market research is done in order to measure the effectiveness of the institution's advertising channels and students' evaluation of the service they received.

Chapter 4 consists of the conclusions, recommendations and areas for future research that has been identified in the study. The study illustrates that students' mind-sets play both integral and indispensable role to the institution as they facilitate the interface between the institution and the students. It extracts several recommendations that excellent institutions may implement to improve their service delivery.

1.6 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE

This study should be repeated in the future to enable School Management Team (SMT) of educational institutions to compare the results and to see if there have been any significant differences between students' expectations and students' perceptions now and then. It can also serve as an indicator to determine which of their managerial interventions are successful and which ones are not.

1.7 SUMMARY

The first chapter sets the table for the research. It focuses on the background of the study, states the objectives embracing the study and also formulates the hypothesis. The Matric students keep on demanding more and more from secondary institutions .Therefore institutions must ensure that their service delivery is at their maxima if they want to retain their students in this competitive market. However, measuring service delivery is a must if they want to stay ahead of their competitors. The next chapter concentrates on the literature review in identifying a fit for the model of service quality measurement in this application setting.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

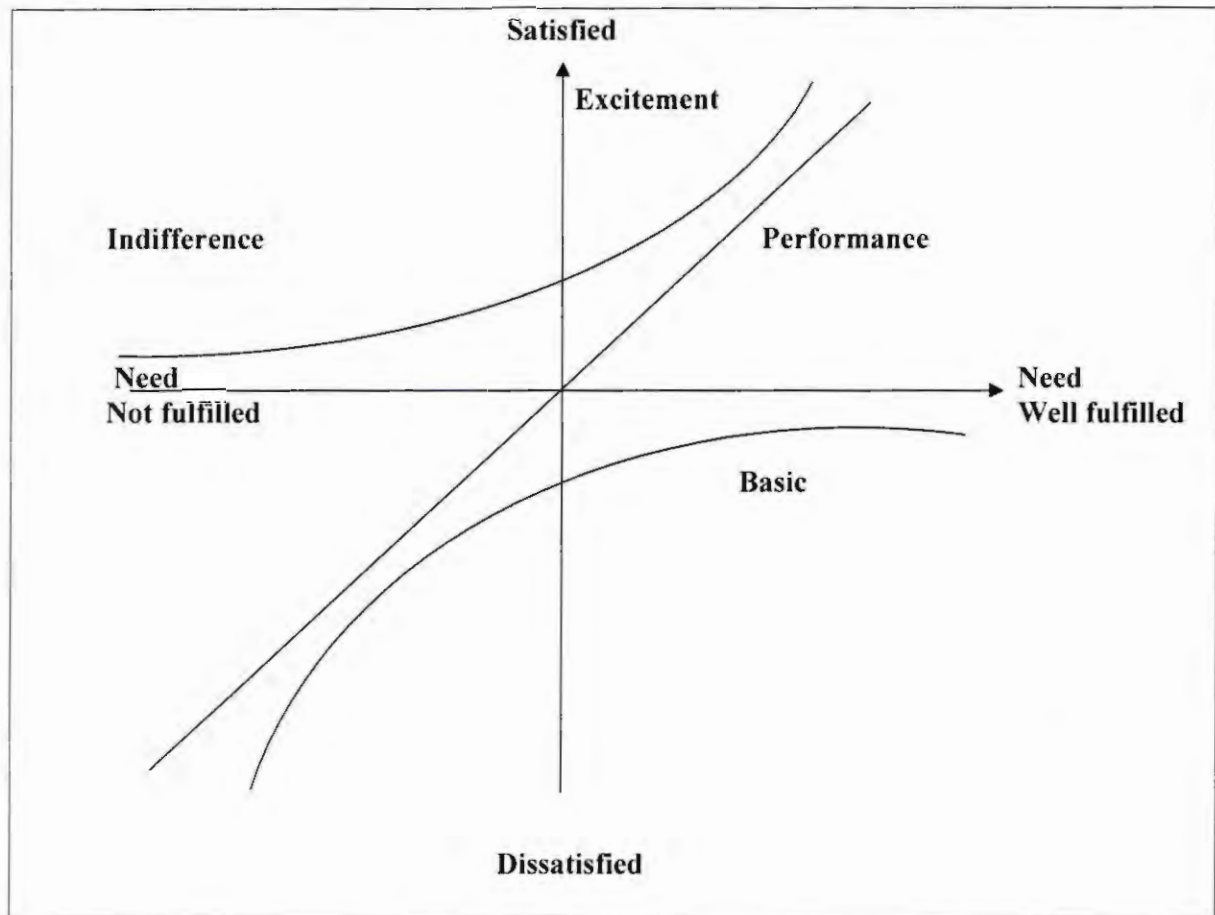
2.1 INTRODUCTION

As the business term, consumer (dis)satisfaction is the measure of how postmatric students (products) and services supplied by the Secondary School in question meet its students' expectation. According to Parasuraman, *et al.* (1985:50) consumer (dis)satisfaction is a consequence of the consumption response. If it is reinforcing, then consumer satisfaction with the purchase or consumption experiences increase. On the other hand, if the consequence of a purchase or consumption experience is punishing, then consumer dissatisfaction occurs. Satisfaction is the product or service quality perception that relates to the global evaluation of the product or service. The "molar" connection between consumer satisfaction, perceived quality, and post purchase behavior including word-of-mouth communications plays a significant role according to Rust, *et al.* (1996: 52).

The core service of secondary school as an institution is teaching which is intangible and dominant one (McDougall & Snetsinger 1990:35). This type of service also lacks physical evidence .It forces a consumer to rely on sources of information such as word-of-mouth recommendations to arrive at purchase decisions (Webster 1991: 16). The secondary school like any other business institution needs to satisfy its clients in order to survive in the business. It has been shown in various researches (Cronin & Taylor, 1992:58, Oliver, 1997:51), that a customer with a positive attitude towards a business engages in positive word-of-mouth communication which affects the bottom-line of the business. This research examines the relationship between 'service quality and 'diffusion of information about the secondary school'. The research highlights the differences between consumer satisfaction and perceived service quality perceptions.

2.2 MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY USING KANO MODEL

FIGURE 2.1 KANO'S MODEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION



Source: Berger (1993)

The Kano Model of Customer Satisfaction indicated in figure 2.1 can be used to classify product attributes based on how they are perceived by customers and their effect on customer satisfaction. These classifications are useful for guiding design decisions in that they indicate when good is good enough, and when more is better. Kano's model of customer satisfaction distinguishes six categories of quality attributes, from which the first three actually influence customer satisfaction (Kleynhans, 2008: 73-75).

1. **Excitement Factors (Satisfiers- Attractive).** The factors that increase customer satisfaction if delivered but do not cause dissatisfaction if they are not

delivered. These factors surprise the customer and generate 'delight'. Using these factors, a company can really distinguish itself from its competitors in a positive way.

2. **Performance Factors.** There are factors that cause satisfaction if the performance is high and those that cause dissatisfaction if the performance is low. Here, the attribute performance-overall satisfaction is linear and symmetric. Typically these factors are directly connected to customers' explicit needs and desires and a company should try to be competitive here.

The additional three attributes which Kano mentions are:

3. **Indifferent attributes.** The customer does not care about this feature.
4. **Questionable attributes.** It is unclear whether this attribute is expected.
5. **Reverse attributes.** The reverse of this product feature was expected by the customer.

The price for which customer is willing to pay for a product is closely tied to performance attributes. For example, customers would be willing to pay more for a car that provides them with better fuel economy.

Excitement Attributes

Excitement attributes are unspoken and unexpected by customers but can result in high levels of customer satisfaction, however their absence does not lead to dissatisfaction. Excitement attributes often satisfy latent needs – real needs of which customers are currently unaware. In a competitive marketplace where manufacturers' products provide similar performance, providing excitement attributes that address "unknown needs" can provide a competitive advantage. Although they have followed the typical evolution to a performance then a threshold attribute, for example cup holders are initially excitement attributes.

2.2.1 Application of Kano model- analysis

A relatively simple approach to applying the Kano Model Analysis is to start constructing Kano questionnaire based on products requirements which have been determined in the surveys, and asking customers two simple questions for each attribute to:

1. Rate the satisfaction if the product has this attribute; and
2. Rate the satisfaction if the product did not have this attribute.

To eliminate or include performance and excitement attributes which their presence or absence respectively lead to customer dissatisfaction is recommended. This often requires a trade-off analysis against cost. As customers frequently rate most attributes or functionality as important, asking the question "How much extra would you be willing to pay for this attribute or more of this attribute?" will aid in trade-off decisions, especially for performance attributes.

Prioritisation matrices can be useful in determining which excitement attributes would provide the greatest returns on customer satisfaction.

Consideration should be given to attributes receiving a "Don't care" response as they will not increase customer satisfaction nor motivate the customer to pay an increased price for the product. However, you do not immediately dismiss these attributes if they play a critical role to the product functionality or are necessary for other reasons than to satisfy the customer.

The information obtained from the Kano Model Analysis specifically it is regarding performance and excitement attributes, provides valuable input for the Quality Function Deployment process. The revised model suggests that the perceived value impacts on satisfaction in turn, are an antecedent to student loyalty. The perceived value of a service is assumed to result from a customer's perceptions of the core service provided (termed Hard dimensions), perceptions of service processes (termed Soft dimensions) and their image of the service provider - in this case, a school.

Good businesses focus on retaining their existing customers as well as obtaining new customers in order to grow and increase profits. Measuring customer satisfaction provides businesses with an indication of how successful they are in providing a service to the marketplace.

However, satisfaction is a comparison of what was expected and customer's perceptions of performance. There are two distinct conceptualizations of consumer satisfaction namely; short-term satisfaction is transaction specific, while long-term satisfaction is the result of repeated consumption encounters with a service provider (Kleynhans, 2008:42).

In a secondary school context, students' satisfaction is the result of many contact sessions with teachers, administrative staff and facilities of the institution. In order to identify the links between satisfaction and loyalty, satisfaction can be defined as a customer's post-consumption evaluation of a service, which includes cognitive and affective components, on the other hand loyalty is a customer's commitment to a service which develops from satisfaction that includes cognitive, affective and conative (intention) components that lead to repeat purchase.

Hennig-Thureau (2001:207) have argued that student loyalty should be examined from a relationship marketing perspective as students are engaged in on-going service transactions with their school and their satisfaction arises in part from their participation in those service encounters.

2.2.2 Relating Kano categories to customer needs

One needs to explore why customers react as they do to the various categories. Customers react positively to exciting features because exciting features represent new benefits (if this is a new feature), or a new level of performance, if this is a feature they are familiar with (Zultner & Mazur, 2006). This satisfies customers, but in this case they are simply receiving more benefits they are familiar with. It is possible that an existing feature can jump to an exciting feature in some cases, indicated in table 2.1, if the level of performance is raised high enough, and if new benefits or new levels of benefits result to the customer satisfaction. So the key is to find new benefits that are new to the customer.

TABLE 2.1: THE KANO CATEGORIES RESULT FROM ASKING PAIRED QUESTIONS

Physical State	Sufficient			
Insufficient	User Perception	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied
	Dissatisfied	Skeptical	Must- Be	One -Dimensional
	Neutral	Reverse	Indifferent	Attractive
	Satisfied	Reserve	Reserve	Skeptical

Source: Zultner and Mazur (2006)

2.3 MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY USING THE SERVQUAL MODEL

The service-quality method from Parasuraman (1985: 43) is a technique that can be used for performing a gap analysis of an organization's service quality performance against customer service quality needs. Service organizations use service quality model to improve service quality. There are quite a number of methods involves in the development of an understanding of the perceived service needs of the target customers. These measured perceptions of service quality for the organization in question are then compared against an organization that is "excellent". The resulting gap analysis may then be used as a driver for service quality improvement

Service quality also takes into account the customers perceptions which are of relative importance to service attributes in allowing an organization to prioritize and to use its resources to improve the most critical service attributes.

The data is collected via surveys of a sample of clients, in these surveys clients respond to a series of questions based on a number of key service dimensions. The methodology

which was used originally was based around *twelve key dimensions* (Parasuraman et al, 1988):

1. **Tangibles.** Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.
2. **Reliability.** Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
3. **Responsiveness.** Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
4. **Assurance.** Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
5. **Empathy.** The firm provides care and individualized attention to its customers.
These dimensions have been adapted and refined by the authors (Zeithaml, 1990:25) to cover:
 6. **Competence.** Possession of required skill and knowledge to perform service.
 7. **Courtesy.** Politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact personnel.
 8. **Credibility.** Trustworthiness, believability, honesty of service provider.
 9. **Feel secure.** Freedom from danger, risk or doubt.
 10. **Access.** Approachable and easy contact

11. Communication. Listens to its customers and acknowledges their comments. Keeps customers informed in a language which they can understand.

12. Understanding the customer. By making an effort to know customers needs, their needs of service quality have been operationalised by Parasuraman *etal*, (1985, 1988). A 22-item instrument (SERVQUAL) was developed which tapped five determinants of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The responses were organized into seven categories with regard to education purpose for the school in question. As regard to word-of-mouth communications, respondents were requested to state whether they would recommend the course to their friends or not.

2.3.1 Service quality dimensions

Service quality dimensions are tangibles, reliability (being the most important factor), responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Based on an extensive number of audits, dimensions indicated in table 2.3 are claimed to be universal and can be measured with 21 or 22 items. However, modifications to items may be necessary when using certain type of methods to evaluate different services (Barton, 1992:773p). Items are statements, such as "service is good". Customers rate how well their expectations of this kind of service are meeting their perceptions of this particular service.

TABLE 2.2: SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL SERVICE QUALITY

<i>Dimension and Definition</i>	<i>Examples of Items Considered</i>
Reliability: ability to perform the service dependably and accurately.	• Assistance in library.
Course: the focus is on content of courses.	• Well organized timetables. • Studies relevant to real world situation.
Tangibles: appearance of physical facilities and provision of appropriate equipment.	• Picturesque grounds. • Modern accommodation.
Lectures: The focus is on presentation and organization of lectures.	• Well presented lectures – not just going over material already read in the prescribed text.
Study materials: provision of appropriate study materials.	• Provide past exam papers.
Responsiveness: willingness to help students; prompt feedback on assignments.	• Write comments on assignments.
Access: approachability and ease of contact.	• More face-to-face time.
Empathy: Caring.	• Individualized attention.

Source: Morgan and Piercy 1992, Oliver 1997)

2.3.2 Usage of SERVICE QUALITY- applications

Service quality model is globally used within service industries to understand the perceptions of target customers (students) regarding their service needs, and to offer a measurement of the service quality of the school. Service quality model can also be applied internally to understand teachers' perceptions of service quality with the objective of achieving sustainable teaching and learning processes.

2.3.3 Step in SERVICE QUALITY-process

Firstly, a simple survey of clients (customers) is conducted to find out whether their

perceived teaching and learning process needs are well understood, as well as measuring their perceptions of teaching and learning quality for the school in question.

Secondly, clients are asked to answer number of questions within each dimension which determines the relative importance of each attribute, and performance expectations that relate to an "excellent" school, as well as measurement of performance.

Thirdly, assessment of the gap between the desired actual performance and prioritizing the hallmark of teaching and learning processes is necessary. This encourages the school to focus its resources, for example figure 2.3 witnesses the importance of gaps model in order for a school to come up with strategic plans and maximizing sustainable teaching and learning processes while controlling the costs.

2.3.4 The SERVICE QUALITY gaps

Service quality assists in identifying customer perceptions of service quality while gap analysis takes this further and helps organization to identify the causes of service quality pitfalls in each dimension. Building expectation of the service to be received depend on four factors, namely

1. Word of mouth communications obtained from friends and acquaintances.
2. Personal needs,
3. Past experiences, and
4. Communications which set standards in the service organization and make organization to create its own expectations. This model suggests that service quality perception is the difference between the customer's perceptions and expectations of service delivery which results in four gaps, indicated in figure 2.3.

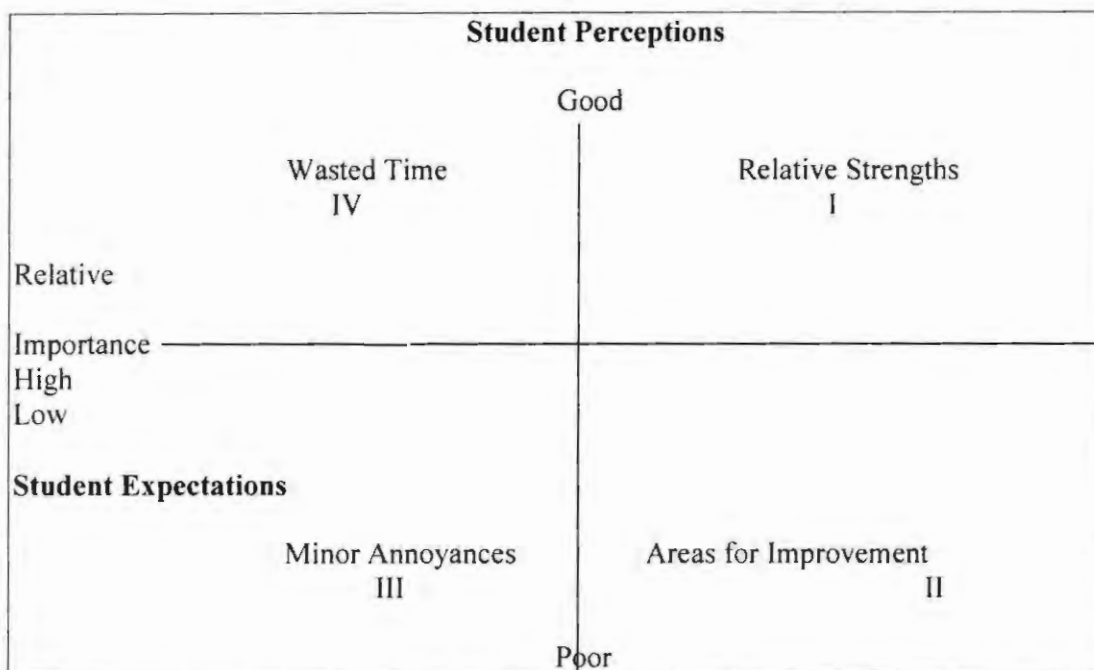
The gaps are the following:

- *Gap 1:* The difference between actual customer expectations and management's idea or perception of customer expectations. This can occur as a result of insufficient research or communication failures.
- *Gap 2:* The difference between management's perceptions of what customers (students) expect and service quality specifications drawn up,

detailing the service quality actions required - the standards gap.

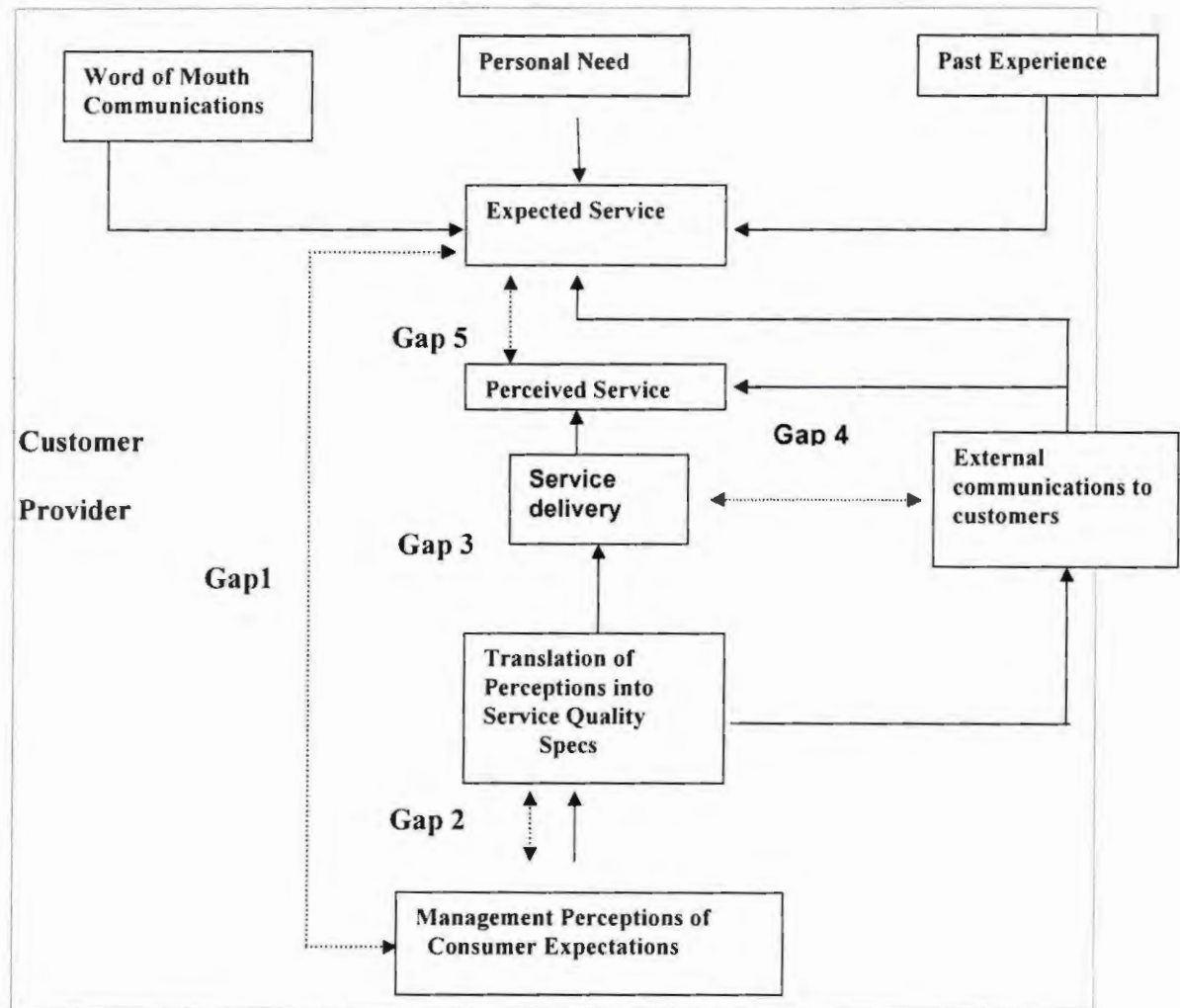
- Gap 3: The difference between service quality specifications and the actual service which is being delivered.
- Gap 4: The difference between the actual service being delivered and external communication are promises made, consistently fulfilled?
- Gap 5: The difference between what customers expect of a service and what they actually receive. Gap 5 results from the combination of Gaps 1 to 4.

FIGURE 2.2: GAPS MODEL



Source: Parasuraman *et al.* (1988:42)

FIGURE 2.3: THE SERVICE QUALITY OR GAPS MODEL



Source: Parasuraman *et al.* (1985:42)

2.3.4.1 The knowledge gap

An indispensable step in the delivery of quality service is to know what the customer (student) wants. Not fully understanding customers' service expectations can trigger a chain of bad decisions which result in poor service quality perceptions (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985:38).

It is therefore utmost importance that management knows what the (students) customers' service expectations are in order to be able to use these expectations

as quality standards. Gap 1 could be the result of the management not knowing exactly what the (students) customers' expectations are due to too many levels of management and inadequate upward communication. Factors embracing Gap 1 are:

1. Insufficient marketing research
2. Inadequate use of marketing research
3. Lack of interaction between management and (students) customers'
4. Insufficient communication between contract employees and managers.

2.3.4.2 The standard gap

After identification of students' service expectations, the next step is to have service standards implemented. A system has to be developed to ensure sustainable high quality service. The standard gap expands if management implements standards which are based on internal services and not on customers' expectations. Factors embracing Gap 2 are:

1. Inadequate management commitment to service quality
 2. Absence of formal process for setting of service quality goals
 3. Inadequate standardization of tasks
 4. Perception of infeasibility that (student) customer expectations cannot be met.
- For organizations to narrow the gap they have to commit to rendering high quality service through establishment of innovative solutions to problems and service delivery goals provided that there is buy-in from management (Barton, 1992).

2.3.4.3 The performance gap

Gap 3 is critical and is referred to as the service performance gap. It refers to the level of service delivery expected from management. This happens when teachers or students are not willing to perform the service on the desired level. Gap 3 can

be easily identified, rectified and managed. *Factors* embracing *Gap 3* are:

1. Lack of teamwork
2. Poor teacher - job fit
3. Poor technology - job fit
4. Lack of perceived control of contact personnel
5. Inappropriate evaluation and/or compensation system
6. Role conflict and/or ambiguity among contract employees

2.3.4.4 The communication gap

Customer expectations can be influenced by advertisements and other external communication through the differences between service delivery and external communication such as over-promise or absence of information regarding certain aspects of good service delivery. The *factors* embracing *Gap 4* are:

1. Lack of horizontal communication due to inadequate communication between the different departments/functional areas of the organization.
2. The tendency to promise more than that can actually be delivered. Gap 4 refers specifically to the lack of coordination between the teachers responsible for service delivery and the ones doing the marketing.

2.3.4.5 The service delivery gap

Gap 5 can be identified as the overall difference between the expected service and the perceived service experienced. Service quality is determined. The overall gap between what was expected and what was delivered determines service quality. This means that:

1. Service quality is relative not absolute
2. Different students may perceive the level of service quality differently
3. Quality is determined by the students who has "all the votes", not by the service provider
4. Service quality can be achieved by either meeting or exceeding expectations, or by changing expectations.

2.3.4.6 The zone of tolerance gap

The gap between expectations and perceptions produces disconfirmation measures and graphical presentations, such as the zone of tolerance. Disconfirmation measures are the Measure of Service Superiority (MSS) and the Measure of Service Adequacy (MSA).

One is able to use service quality data of customer (student) priorities to feed into organizations quality standards. Customers and their ranked order of importance become the so-called "*whats*" and these "*whats*" are compared with the "*hows*" (the key business processes). The relationships are matched to check service design and provision according to key requirements which help organization in identifying those processes need to be fixed.

The measures are computed by extraction formulas: $MSS = \text{Perceived Level} - \text{Desired Level}$ $MSA = \text{Perceived Level} - \text{Accepted Level}$ while comparing expectations and perceptions of different student groups and assessing expectations and perceptions of internal students.

2.3.5 The strength of SERVICE QUALITY benefits

One is able to assess how useful SERVICE QUALITY data (Kleynhans, 2008:23) is by means of:

- ❖ Tracking client expectations and perceptions over time and the discrepancies between them;
- ❖ Comparing a set of TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES(SERVICE QUALITY) scores against those of competitors –schools which are excelling in matric results;
- ❖ Comparing expectations and perceptions of different client groups; and
- ❖ Assessing teaching and learning processes(service quality) from the

clients perspective; and

- ❖ Comparing expectations and perceptions of internal clients-other departments and/or teaching and learning processes including formal and informal assessment dealt with.

According to Kleynhans (2008:26), SERVICE QUALITY data is to:

Use it on client priorities to add into school quality standards;

Client priorities their and their positioned order of importance becomes the so-called Whats and whats can be compared hows (which are the key school(business) processes and relationships matched to check teaching design and provision according to key requirements and it assists to identify which processes need to be corrected. In addition to it provides client perceptions of teaching and learning quality, acts as benchmark established by the learners of that school, shows the performance level perceived by clients, offers a chance to clients to comment and make suggestions, and warrants teachers with respect to clients' expectations and satisfaction.

2.3.6 Limitations of SERVICE QUALITY

Contributes to problems with the reliability, discriminate validity, convergent validity and predictive validity for the measurement. They suggest that caution should be exercised in the use of service quality scores in the development of measures for assessing of quality information services.

2.3.7 Assumptions of SERVICE QUALITY

Although the validity of the service quality model is based around the results of accurate empirical studies, a number of academics who have performed further empirical studies appear to contradict some of the original findings. Students/customers needs can still be documented and captured, but customers needs remain stable during the whole process.

2.4 SUMMARY

In Chapter 2 of the study, the two selected service quality models, namely the Kano model and the service quality model, are discussed. These two models have been selected and evaluated from the various client models that currently exist in the literature. The service quality model has been chosen as the analytical tool and will be applied to the collection of empirical data. The research methodology and results will be discussed in the next chapter of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research methodology and the results of the findings, forms an integral part of the study, and reports with statistical correctness on the findings. Both figures and tables are used to increase readability and presentation of the results where after the data was subjected to descriptive statistics and then to factor analyses.

Measuring service quality is as complex as defining it. This is usually done on an assumption that the students' attitude towards the service will have an impact on their future behaviour, such as recommending the institution to others. This behaviour is usually not only focusing on service delivery but, also attitude. It measures the students' attitude and makes inferences from this to both service delivery and to buyer behaviour. The purpose of service quality research is actually to know what kind of service is really being delivered by the institution and how does this really impact on the students' behaviour towards the institution.

From my own experience I know that students normally give both positive and negative feedback when they are evaluated even if they are not satisfied with the teaching and learning they received but to impress the teacher concerned. This kind of evaluation does not actually give a School Management Team (SMT) something to work on, due to the fact that it does not tell the management what is actually wrong with the service delivery of the institution. It does not give any relevant information on which the SMT can take action to improve on the institution's service delivery. Therefore, it is clear that to base service quality research on attitudes is not very useful. Exceptions to this would be institution that is in a monopoly position, it does not have to bother itself about students' loyalty because its students have to be loyal, yet they need to keep their students satisfied at all cost.

In reality, market research should measure the effectiveness of the institution's advertisement channels and students' evaluation of the service they received.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The empirical research was done by collecting primary data from a selected group, using the service-quality questionnaire to measure student's expectation and student's perception. The sample size was 120 respondents, and they all responded by completing the structured questionnaires. Questionnaire", also sought information from postmatric students about their reasons for enrolling at the institution, and their furthering of studies plans at tertiary institution. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part measured student expectations and values and the second part measured student perceptions and core values. A seven-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire, Service Quality Questionnaire (ANNEXTURE A). A "1" was labelled as "completely dissatisfied" while a "7" was labelled as "Completely satisfied".

All the primary data collected through the service-quality questionnaire were established in the form of descriptive statistical analysis in order to transform the raw data into an easy understandable and interpretable, as well as to give descriptive information. Through the questionnaire, scores of student's expectation and student's perception were computed. If the score is positive, it means satisfaction and if it is negative that means dissatisfaction in the corresponding service feature. The negative scores mean that there may be a need to improve those features. If the score is zero, it can be taken for granted that the students are happy in the performance of that particular service.

3.3 ANALYSIS OF MEAN VALUE

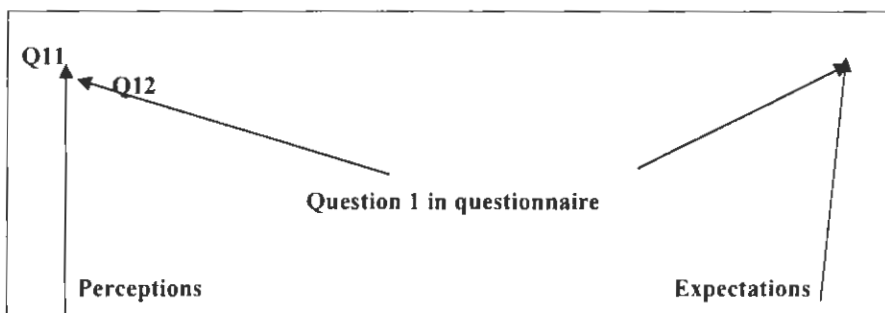
Statistical significance tests are used to illustrate the difference between two means, which is significant. The p-value is a criterion of this, giving the probability that the obtained value could be calculated under the assumption that the null

hypothesis is true. A small p-value (e.g. smaller than 0.05) is considered as sufficient evidence that the result is statistically significant.

An acceptable way to comment on practical significance is to use the standardized difference between the means of student's expectations and student's perceptions, i.e. the difference between the two means divided by the estimate for standard deviation. A measure that is called the effect size is introduced, which makes both difference to be independent of units and sample size as well as to relate to the spread of the data according to Ellis & Steyn (2003; 23).

The results of the mean values are shown in table 3.1 where a pair is indicated and in figure 3.1, 1 refers to question 1 of the questionnaire attached hereto as Annexure 1. The item labelled as Q11 measures student's perception and Q12 measures student's expectation.

FIGURE 3.1: STUDENTS PERCEPTION AND EXPECTATION PAIR



The same principle relates to the other paired questions.

3.4 RELIABILITY

The initial data set, consisting of 22 paired variables, was subjected to Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha reliability test and none of the variables were rejected as all of them had a values of 0,57 to 0,85 (Cronbach, 1951:307). An overall a-value of 0.79 for students' perceptions and an overall a-value of 0.806 for students' expectations were calculated.

Furthermore, this showed that the data set maintained acceptable internal stability levels and is suitable for use in a factor analyses procedure. The focus was on the factors like reliability referring to an indicator's dependability. A reliable indicator will give the same results each time a subject is measured. Therefore, for the purposes of determining reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, is a determinant of how well a set of items measures a specific construct that was used.

3.5 FACTOR ANALYSIS

The factor analysis revealed that main factors could be identified from the data for both customers' perceptions and customers' expectations. The factor analysis explains a cumulative variance of 61.3% for students' perceptions and 74.9% for students' expectations. The factors have been labelled and interpreted accordingly. The number of each factor corresponds with the factor numbers in Appendix A and Appendix B. The tables also show the percentage of variance explained by each of the factors, as well as the cumulative variance. This shows that a number of things has to be taken into considerations namely, clients perception and expectation, teacher's mind-set and contact sessions, displaying, environmental safety and lastly conducive teaching and learning atmosphere.

3.5.1 CLIENTS PERCEIVED TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES (SERVICES)

Factors regarding to the perceived teaching and learning processes are identified and appear in Appendix A and subdivided into three factors, factor1 shows what the clients have in mind about the achievements of objectives by both teachers students themselves. Clients have a hope that at 33% of the teaching and learning processes have to be met. Factor2 indicates that about 15% of the teachers in clients minds meet the minimum demands from the students side, on the other hand factor3 clients reveals that clients in their minds believe that teachers will solve their problems holistically.

Teachers Mind-set Factor

Teachers mind-set regarding students' perceptions is crucial as it has been identified in Appendix A to explain the variance of 33.3%. All of the items loading onto factor 1 point to teacher's mind-set as one of the more important elements being considered by students when making decision about which effective school can be a good choice. Elements such as being helpful, instilling confidence, being courteous, giving individual attention and personal service, as well as understanding their students' specific needs form part of Factor 1. The substantial variance explained makes this a clear indicator that management (SMT) has to pay special attention to their students' needs.

Excellent teaching and learning

This factor has 15.5% and tells us that the school is not good at all clients themselves are not in a position to defend the school when it comes to actual teaching and learning activities. For excellent teaching and learning to take place: three parties (parent, child and teacher) must be involved; teaching media must be available; teachers must have both professional and academic qualification relevant to the learning area he/she teaches and lastly must an excellent event management skills which is only obtainable at the tertiary institutions.

Displaying teaching and learning

Students will go to the school that is being displayed and it has good resources. The display factor of the school is 12.5% and this tells us that this is type of the school which is not publicized well. What is important is that school can display itself through its performance by having a competitive edge and sustainable development. School requires urgent and serious management team to sort challenges facing it and redress the departments which are responsible for this chaos. There is no doubt that this shows that the school is not growing but drowning.

3.5.2 CLIENTS EXPECTED TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES(SERVICES)

The expectation factor here is also subdivided into three factors, it appears in Appendix B. In factor1 about 38% of clients expect teachers to show sincere interest, be exemplary, solve problems, tell exactly when teaching and learning commences, always and be willing too, give individual attention and personal service and most importantly clients expect teachers to understand their special needs. Factor2 shows that about 28% of clients expect teachers to be neat in their appearance, effective and efficient, insist on error free records, give prompt service, never too busy to respond and have clients best interest at heart. Factor3 indicates that clients expect 7.5% environment safety, this has a meaning that the school is not safety. In fact there must 100% environment safety before teaching and learning can take place.

Contact sessions Factor

During *contact session*, clients want to feel safe and secure when they enter into contact session. Teachers have to be honest with students, must give excellent service and treat them correctly. They should not make mistakes by treating students poorly, especially in communications, because students will no longer want to enter into any contact session with school. This factor in Appendix B has a variance of 7.5%. This tells us that clients are getting satisfaction with to teaching and learning processes.

Teaching and learning reputation

The factor shows 28.7% meaning that teachers do not practice what is expected of them, to give their best to help the clients but, they provide less to prepare the clients. Being efficient is characteristics of a school which is well managed.

3.5.3 FACTOR COMPARISON

The factors of both the perceived service and expected service are shown in the Appendix B and table 3.1 below. It is clear that students have a higher expectation from effective schools but, they are presently not receiving the expected service levels. This is also being confirmed from the descriptive statistics.

TABLE 3.1: FACTOR COMPARISON

FACTOR	FACTOR LABEL PERCEIVED SERVICE (Variance Explained %)	FACTOR LABEL EXPECTED SERVICE (Variance Explained %)
1	Teacher's mind-set (33.3%)	Teacher's mind-set (38.7%)
2	Excellent teaching & learning (15.5%)	Teaching & learning reputation (28.7%)
3	Display (12.5%)	Contact session (7.5%)
Total Variance %	61.3%	74.9%

Round about 12% more of the variance is explained by the expectations and the perceptions of actual service. Most of this additional variance is within teacher's mind-set: what is the different to be aware of, is to look into the teaching and learning processes, with different angle as the expectations data set relates more to the reputation of the service delivery.

3.6 SUMMARY

This chapter presents the methodology of the empirical research as well as the results obtained from the statistical analysis. The results consist of descriptive statistics, reliability testing as well as principal factor analysis for both the students' perceptions and expectations. Each of the data groups has identified three factors. The next chapter, being the closing chapter of the study, collects conclusions and suggests recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 gives the conclusions and recommendations on the data collected through the SERVQUAL questionnaire. A descriptive statistical analysis was used to transform the raw data into a form that made it be easily understood and interpreted as such. This chapter also serves as the final chapter of the research, then areas for future research as well as a summary of the research puts the study to an end.

4.2 CONCLUSIONS

The study illustrated the use of a qualitative methodological approach regarding students' perception and expectation. It shows that educator mind-set plays a crucial role as it facilitates the interface between the school and the students. The educators' responsiveness, attitudes, habits, skills and knowledge are all very important elements. Staffs need to be committed to service if a school wants to retain its students.

Excellent service is the foundation for excellent effective schools. When their service is excellent, students will perceive value in the service. The benefits from the reinforcement of positive word-of-mouth communications are maximized when the reality of service delivery matches the students' expectations.

The factors identified correspond well to existing literature on the subject. The correlation between teachers' mind-set and students' perception and expectation proves that students do have certain criteria when they decide

where to study. Students definitely expect a certain level of quality service from effective schools.

Furthermore, it seems that students associate the physical facilities with excellent service. Postmatric students must be the mirror of effective schools. Students' perceive teachers' ability to show interest in and solve their problems as good service delivery.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has extracted several recommendations to effective schools to improve their service delivery. Improvement is certain if they focus on the identified factors. The following recommendations are made:

Teacher empowerment: Teacher empowerment helps teachers serve students at the level of the school where the customer students' interface exists. Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing a teacher to think, behave, and take action, and control work and decision making.

The school should focus on giving teachers the instructional methods and current supporting material they need to be effective and efficient in their service delivery, such as student information files that temporary teachers can use to better understand the students' needs. The factors identified correspond well to existing literature on the subject. The correlation between teachers' mind-set and students' perception and expectation proves that students do have certain criteria when they decide where to study. Students definitely expect a certain level of quality service from effective schools.

Furthermore, it seems that students associate the physical facilities with excellent service. Postmatric students must be the mirror of effective schools. Students' perceive teachers' ability to show interest in and solve their problems as good service delivery. Systems can be created that speed up routine contact session. Internal training and communication services

should be established so that teachers can be more competent and feel more confident when dealing with students.

The first step for our educational system is to ask the same basic strategic questions any business in trouble has to ask:

Who are my customers?

What is my mission?

What are the resources? Strengths? Weaknesses?

How can I measure my performance?

As in a business, the answers will be customer driven.

The school's customers are the future employers of its students. Its mission is to serve these customers by increasing each student's ability to contribute economically to the short- and long-term benefit of society. The school's resources are its employees; its limited federal, state and community funds and the limited support parents can give its efforts.

Finally, schools can measure their own performance by placement students in jobs or in further education programs, and by demonstrations that students have acquired specific skills clearly linked to economic performance and are developing their own human capital. Focusing on business as the key customer, school should strengthen its performance as a supplier. In order to prepare student "products" for a useful work life, schools need to create stronger ties between schooling and work.

One way to do this is to design the curriculum to better reflect the content and process of work. Another is to establish a credential system that sets work-relevant standards of achievement in specific skill areas.

Internal training: Often you will hear school management team (SMT) proclaim that their teachers are the school's biggest assets; however, developing their teachers are rarely their primary focus. SMT should focus on the benefits of internal training; not only is it cost effective, but it will also increase the way students perceive its school. There will surely be an increase in students' applications. For example, if SMT do a student's service program

for frontline teachers, one feature could be resolving client problems.

Induction programmes: The purpose of induction programmes is to ensure the effective integration of staff into the school. Without an effective induction programme teachers will never really understand the school, where they fit into the vision and mission and what the goals of the school are. This may lead to poor integration, low morale, increase the number of teachers leaving the school and failure to work to their full potential and ultimately it will impact on the students' perception of the school.

Surveys: By doing surveys, schools can learn more about their students' perceptions, expectations and needs. They can enhance their service delivery methods and improve student satisfaction through direct feedback to the organization. Schools can help their teachers to service their students better by understanding the educational environment and increase the level of student service they offer, thus gaining competitive advantage. Thus, surveys can encourage teacher's performance.

By involving teachers in the improvement process (giving them training on the purpose), they are able to provide insight into schools goals and in turn involvement offers teachers opportunity to voice their concerns and make suggestions. Rewards and recognition for positive ratings on surveys can be a strong incentive to improve service delivery.

4.4 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study should be repeated in future to check if the differences between students' expectation and perceptions still exist and/or whether there is a significant change in student expectation and perception.

4.5 SUMMARY

This study concentrated on students' perceptions and expectations. Factors that are deemed important to the success of service delivery when it comes to effective schools were identified. This study illustrates that student's expectations and perceptions are related to satisfaction with the service delivery. These factors include educators' mind-set, excellent teaching service, service reputation and feeling safe during contact sessions.

A clear- cut correlation exists between students' expectations and perceptions when it comes to service delivery. The purpose of the study is therefore to focus the attention of the management of effective schools on the factors of real importance in the growth and the students' outcomes of their effective schools. It is imperative that they align their academic staff with the vision and mission of the school.

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APPENDIX A

THE SURVEY

The questionnaire measures perceptions and expectation of students at effective schools. It is divided into two sections:

The first section requires you rate all effective schools to your expectations i.e. what you expect from the effective schools when it is providing services. The second section asks you to rate the effective school you have chosen to report on according to your perception of the teaching service.

1. EXPECTATIONS

This section of the survey is concerned with your opinions effective secondary school. Please choose features which you think effective school should possess. The interest here is a number that best shows your expectations of effective schools.

2. PERCEPTIONS

The following statements relate to your feelings about the particular effective school you have chosen. Please show the degree to which you believe this school has the feature described in the statement. Here, the interest in illustrating your perceptions about the effective schools

You should rate each statement as follows:

Completely Dissatisfied							Completely Satisfied	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

NB: Each statement in the questionnaire below have TWO ANSWERS - one for the PERCEPTIONS and the other for your EXPECTATION

Item	Statement	Perceptions 1	Expectations 2
1	Effective school will have modern looking equipment.		
2	The physical facilities at effective school will be visually appealing.		
3	Teachers at effective school will be neat in their appearance.		
4	Postmatric students (products) will be good representatives of effective schools.		
5	When effective schools promise to do something by a certain time, they do. E.g. teaching starts on the first day.		
6	When a student has a problem, teachers of effective schools will show a sincere interest in solving it.		
7	Effective schools will perform the service right the first time.		
8	Effective schools will perform the service at the time they promised to do so.		
9	Effective schools will insist on error free records.		
10	Teachers of effective schools will tell students exactly what they expect of them.		
11	Teachers of effective schools will present material clearly.		
12	Teachers of effective schools will always be well prepared, organized and be willing to students.		

13	Teachers of effective schools will be available regularly for student consultation.		
14	Teachers of effective schools will enhance students' capacity for solving problems.		
15	Students of effective schools will feel safe during contact sessions.		
16	Teachers of effective schools will be consistently courteous with students.		
17	Teachers of effective schools will have the knowledge to answer students' questions.		
18	Effective schools will give students individual attention.		
19	Effective schools will have operating hours convenient to all their students.		
20	Effective schools will have teachers who give students personal service.		
21	Teachers of effective schools will have their students' best interest at heart.		
22	Teachers of effective schools will understand the specific needs of their students.		

23. Please indicate which effective school you evaluated (For example, Nilgiri Secondary, Margot Fonteyn Secondary, Wingen Secondary, etc)

24. Will you recommend learning prompts to any one that you have completed at this school again?

YES	NO
-----	----

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Appendix A

FACTOR LOADINGS – PERCEPTIONS

Variable	Students' Perceptions	Factor Loading per Factor		
		1	2	3
Q101	Teachers of effective schools will tell students exactly when teaching will be started.	0.812		
Q121	Teachers at effective schools will always be willing to help students.	0.831		
Q141	Teachers' behaviour in effective schools will instill confidence in students.	0.828		
Q161	Teachers at effective schools will be consistently courteous with customers.	0.832		
Q181	Effective schools will give students individual attention.	0.865		
Q201	Effective schools will have teachers who give students personal service.	0.871		
Q221	Excellent teachers of effective schools will understand the specific needs of their students.	0.869		
Q31	Teachers at effective schools will be neat in their appearance.		0.685	
Q51	When effective schools promise to do something by a certain time, it is done		0.773	
Q71	Effective schools will start teaching right the first time.		0.758	
Q91	Effective schools will insist on error-free records.		0.775	
Q111	Teachers of effective schools will give prompt teaching to students.		0.782	
Q131	Teachers of effective schools will never be too busy to respond to customers' requests.		0.735	
Q151	Students of effective schools will feel safe during contact session.		0.779	
Q171	Teachers in effective schools will have the knowledge to answer customers' questions.		0.773	
Q191	Effective schools will have operating hours convenient to all their students.		0.852	
Q211	Teachers of effective schools will have their students' best interest at heart.		0.889	
Q21	The physical facilities effective schools will be visually appealing.			0.691
Q41	Postmatric associated with teaching will be neatly and attractive at effective schools .			0.678
Q61	When a student has a problem, teachers of effective schools will show a sincere interest in solving it.			0.785
Q81	Effective schools will start teaching at the time they promised to do so.			0.856
Variance Explained (%)		33.278	15.543	12.452
Cumulative Variance Explained (%)		33.278	48.816	61.273

Appendix B

FACTOR LOADINGS - EXPECTATIONS

Variable	Students' Expectations	Factor Loading per Factor		
		1	2	3
Q22	The physical facilities at effective schools will be visually appealing.	-0.763		
Q42	Postmatric students associated with effective schools will always be exemplary to community.	-0.775		
Q62	When a student has a problem, excellent teachers will show a sincere interest in solving it.	-0.589		
Q82	Teachers of effective will start teaching at the time promised to do so.	-0.853		
Q102	Teachers at effective schools will tell students exactly when teaching will commence.	-0.756		
Q122	Teachers in effective schools will always be willing to help students	-0.720		
Q142	Teachers' behaviour in effective schools will instill confidence in students.	-0.778		
Q162	Teachers of effective schools will be consistently courteous with students	-0.853		
Q172	Teachers of effective schools will have the knowledge to answer students' questions.	-0.732		
Q182	Effective schools will give students individual attention.	-0.757		
Q202	Effective schools will have teachers who give students personal service.	-0.758		
Q222	Teachers of effective schools will understand the specific needs of their students.	-0.756		
Q12	Effective schools will have modern looking equipment.		-0.756	
Q32	Teachers' dress code at effective schools will be neat in their appearance.		-0.321	
Q52	When effective schools promise to do something by a certain time, it is done.		-0.874	
Q72	Effective schools will start the teaching right the first time.		-0.856	
Q92	Effective schools will insist on error free records.		-0.685	
Q112	Teachers of effective schools will give prompt service to students.		-0.756	
Q132	Teachers of effective schools will never be too busy to respond to students' requests.		-0.865	
Q192	Effective schools have operating hours convenient to all their students.		-0.689	
Q212	Effective schools will have their students' best interest at heart.		-0.589	
Q152	Students of effective schools will feel safe during contact sessions.			0.678
Variance Explained (%)		38.653	28.658	7.578
Cumulative Variance Explained (%)		38.653	67.311	74.889

