AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SERVICE QUALITY DELIVERY IN TERTIARY EDUCATION – A CASE STUDY OF PENTECOST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, GHANA

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Institute Of Distance Learning, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MASTERS OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SEPTEMBER, 2012

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Commonwealth Executive Masters of Business Administration and that, to the best to my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely wife, Mrs. Patricia Ayerakwa Annor; my Parents; Mr. and Mrs. Asante Annor; my siblings Mrs. Helena Amoah and Mr. Opare Asante Annor for their love, support and encouragement.

This work is also dedicated to my special friends, Kwadwo Abbrey Asamoah-Duodu, Eric Adobah Thompson and CEMBA Study Group Members; Augustina, Prince, Tony, Amos, Cynthia, Ike and Eric.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God Almighty for seeing me through my two years of University Education.

My appreciation goes to my supervisor, Mrs. Lydia Andoh-Quainoo, Lecturer and Head of Marketing Department, Pentecost University College (PUC, Accra). I am also grateful to Mr. Boniface Snell Nankpi, of Valley View University, Accra for his immense support and input.

I am highly indebted to the students, staff and management of the Pentecost University College for their help and contribution towards the success of this work.

Finally, I am grateful to Mr. Gibson Annor-Antwi (Registrar, PUC) for his motivation, guidance and inputs that helped me stay focused from the beginning of this work to the end.
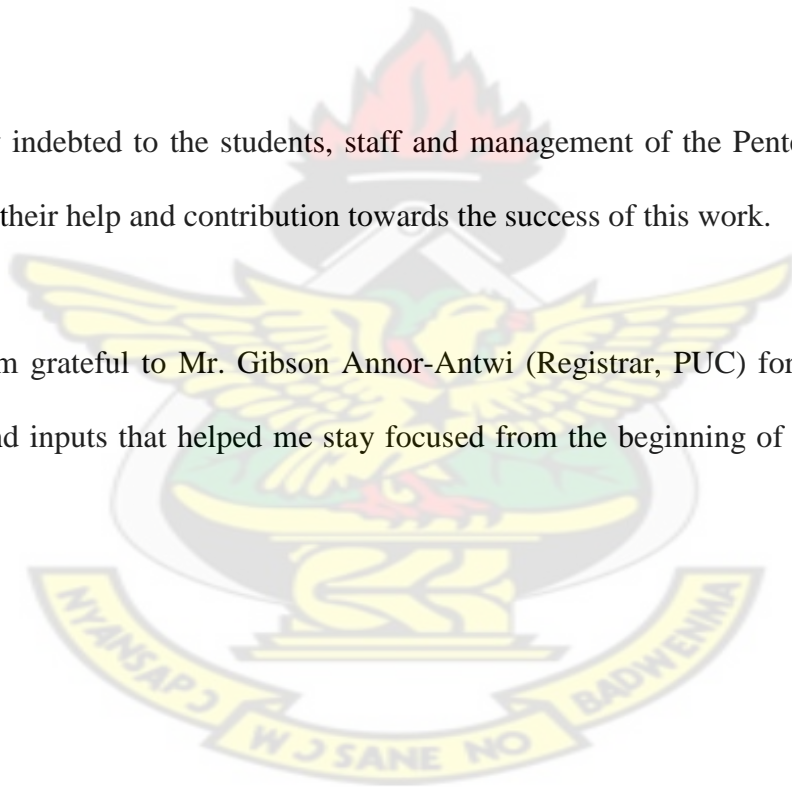
ABSTRACT

Quality in tertiary education is one key issue which is gaining awareness in the increasing global knowledge society. In Ghana, the situation is not different. With the increasing number of tertiary education providers, attention is now being focused on the student-customer in order to provide quality services to achieve customer satisfaction and profitability at the same time. The study attempted to assess the service quality delivery in the Pentecost University College (PUC), Ghana, with the view of understanding how various factors or dimensions of service quality affected students' satisfaction within a university setting. It also sought to assess Management and staff perception of service quality in the University. The methodology adopted the case study approach for the study. Data were collected using questionnaires from a sample of 230 respondents selected from the study population of 2733. SPSS was used in the analysis of primary data collected and the results were presented in the form of tables and figures. The findings were that both students and staff were satisfied with the service quality delivery in PUC. Both students and staff agreed that the current level of service quality in PUC was high. Additionally, it was found that quality dimensions such as empathy, assurance, tangibles, processes and procedures were important factors to students and staff. For instance, the study concluded that 66% of the students were not satisfied with how results are released in the University. Finally, it was found that course of study was the main factor which influenced local and international students to enroll at PUC. The study concluded that assessing service quality delivery enable tertiary education providers to prioritise factors which are considered important to students and staff for customer satisfaction, effective allocation of resources and for building and sustaining competitive advantage in a globally competitive higher education environment.

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List of Abbreviations

Term	Operational Definition
Regular Students	Regular students herein refer to students who have been admitted to undertake the course of study during the day that is from morning to late afternoon.
University	Used to refer to any institution of higher learning in this research.
FBA	Faculty of Business Administration
FEHAC	Faculty of Engineering, Health and Computing
FTM	Faculty of Theology and Mission
SERVQUAL	Service Quality Abbreviation developed by Parasuraman (1988)
Higher Education	Used synonymously with tertiary education to describe the provision of education at the university level.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of Study

Education is advancing due to a number of factors such as globalisation, technology and migration. Tertiary education has become one of the key issues to the economic, political and social development and competitiveness of the increasing global knowledge society. In Africa, expansion has become a constant feature of African higher education over the past thirty years. Africa, a continent of 54 countries, has around 800 million people. More than 300 public and 1,000 private institutions enroll five million students that employ about 200,000 faculties annually (Teferra, 2005). The demand for higher education greatly surpasses the supply. Due to this, the educational landscape has become more competitive as students have a choice and can now move to any part of the world for quality education. For example, the total number of students pursuing higher education tripled, climbing from 2.7 million in 1991 to 9.3 million in 2006, (World Bank, 2008). In the light of the increased number of students coupled with the competitive academic environment, it is important for tertiary institutions to consider factors that enable them to attract and retain students. Additionally, tertiary institutions which want to gain competitive edge in the future may need to begin searching for effective and creative ways to attract, retain and foster stronger relationships with students (Illias et. al, 2008). Consequently, the demands for quality global education has risen and quality assurance in tertiary education has received significant attention in this century both locally and internationally, public or private (Roberts, 2001). In Europe, both internal and external quality assurances are very important in tertiary education. However, about 80% of higher education quality assurance focuses on teaching with only 25% considering other aspects

of quality issues (Reichert & Tauch, 2003). In Africa, the demand for tertiary education has risen dramatically in this era. In recent years, there has been a rapid expansion of the private sector in tertiary education. According to a World Bank report (2008), there are more than 450 private universities and colleges in Africa today (World Bank 2008). In Ghana, public universities had a near monopoly in providing higher education as the case is in other countries of Africa (Varghese, 2004). The country could only boast of three public universities - University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and more recently University of Development Studies. In the early 1990s, the landscape for the development of higher education in Ghana changed when the private sector as well as religious and individual entities came on board. Currently, the National Accreditation Board (NAB) estimates that there are a total of fifty-seven (57) private universities in Ghana (www.nab.gov.gh). The Ministry of Education estimated that, in 2010 academic year alone, private universities enrolled a little over fifteen thousand (15,000) students to pursue various courses in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Out of this number, about one thousand five hundred (1,500) representing approximately 10% were international students' who were predominantly from other African countries (Ministry of Education, unpublished data) whilst 90% were local Ghanaian students. For instance, Pentecost University College (PUC) has grown from an initial student population of 171 in 2005 to 3874 in 2012 (PUC, 2011 Annual Report). One Hundred and Thirty-two (132) of the students' population constitutes the international students. The full-time staff position of the entire University currently stands at One Hundred and Twenty-Nine (129). This is made up of Seventy–six (76) Administrative Staff and Fifty-Three (53) Faculty Staff (PUC, 2011 Annual Report). It has been asserted that students and other stakeholders of education must receive value from their service providers (Khan & Matlay, 2009). Consequently, attention has now

been drawn to issues of value delivery quality of service and customer satisfaction in university education.

1.2   Service Quality in Higher Education

Service quality affects the ability of tertiary institutions, specifically universities, to attract and retain students (Ayliff and Wang, 2006) and it is one of the key success factors for an entity to reach, strengthen, and maintain its competitiveness (Magd et.al, 2003). The provision of excellent service is key to competitiveness in service industry. Service quality may be defined as customer perception of how well a service meets or exceeds their expectations (Czepiel, 1990). Service quality can be measured in terms of customer perception, customer expectation, customer satisfaction, and customer attitude (Sachdev and Verma, 2004). Ekinci (2003) indicates that the evaluation of service quality leads to customer satisfaction. (Bitner and Zeithaml, 2003) stated that satisfaction is the customers' evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met their needs and expectations. According to Lee, Lee & Feick, (2001) while both service quality and customer satisfaction have certain things in common, satisfaction is generally viewed as a broader concept than service quality assessment; thus, perceived service quality is a critical factor of customer satisfaction. In the context of private universities, quality of service becomes important due to the intense competition among universities, huge expectation, an increase in full fee payment and the classification of education as a marketable service.

According to Garvin (1988), service quality is a complex and volatile issue, largely driven by contextual unpredictability and complexity. Improving service quality does not happen overnight; it requires a persistent endurance to withstand the test of time through

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collective mindsets and efforts. Success depends on the dynamic exchange of mental models of both academic and non-academic staff in achieving service quality. Although individual attributes such as attitude and motivation may be difficult to modify over a short period, given the right stimulus through, for instance, an appropriate reward and compensation system, mental models can be changed for the benefit of the institution. The goal of service quality is customer satisfaction (Kessler, 1995). Service quality focuses on satisfying customers' needs in the moments of truth during service encounters where the customers form perceptions of the service delivered or received. Several authors have looked at customer satisfaction and have shown the two concepts' close relationship (e.g. Jones and Sasser, 1995; Sheth and Sisodia, 1999). Higher levels of customer satisfaction can lead to a reduction of the perceived benefits of alternative suppliers and hence to higher repurchase intentions (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993). In order to further emphasize this point, Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) claim that "a dissatisfied customer is more likely to search for information on alternatives and more likely to yield to competitor overtures than is a satisfied customer". Consequently, service quality is clearly linked to customer satisfaction. The relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality has received a good deal of attention in literature. Most scholars researching this relationship have come to the conclusion that service quality constitutes an important determinant of customer satisfaction (Santodouris & Tandiaris 2010). Service quality and excellence is becoming an integral part of higher education as students and other stakeholders demand for value increases. An indicator of quality in education is the service quality provided by these universities. Realizing the importance of service quality and students' perceptions of their university experiences, many universities have attempted to become more student and customer oriented. In higher education, service quality and satisfaction are linked to a number of factors such as

experience in consumption of teaching and learning, perception and physical environment but it appears that technically, service quality is more towards the institutional aspects. In this research, it is argued that service quality should include the students' perception and expectations and be more customer and marketing oriented in higher education to meet global trends, more competitively and sustainably.

Parasuraman et al (1985;1988) developed the most popular measurement tool for service quality. This was known as the SERVQUAL model. The SERVQUAL model is based on five service quality dimensions, namely tangibles (physical facilities, equipment and personnel appearance), reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), responsiveness (willingness to help customers and provide prompt service), assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to gain trust and confidence) and empathy (providing individualized attention to the customers). During the last few years, the SERVQUAL model has been used to measure service quality in various industries such as accounting and audit firms (Ismail 2006), higher education (Russel 2005; Markovi´c 2006) and web-sites (Parasuraman, Zethaml and Malhotra 2005; Nusair and Kandampully 2008). Despite its wide usage, the model has been criticized by a number of academics (Carman 1990; Babakus and Boller 1992; Teas 1994). Criticism was directed at the conceptual and operational base of the model, mostly its validity, reliability, operationalization of expectations, and dimensional structure. However, there is general agreement that SERVQUAL items are reliable predictors of overall service quality (Khan 2003).

1.3   Problem Statement

Global tertiary education has moved towards commercialization as a result of a number of factors such as globalization, technology and has created a global market for education. Higher education service providers are required to treat student as customers and deliver value to make them competitive (Munteanu et al., 2010). As universities strive to deliver value and students become conscious of quality, Tan (2002) concluded that in order to secure a niche in private universities in the long term, quality is one of the most crucial elements for private tertiary institutions. Therefore, it is imperative for private universities in Ghana to deliver and monitor the quality of their services to achieve customer satisfaction and profitability at the same time. Students (local and international) and staff have different service needs and expectations. Management responses to any identified gaps between perceived expectations and actual performance will have to be tailored to meet the needs of the particular customer segments.

Although there have been some work on quality assurance in higher education, much of the published work on service quality are mostly geared towards the technical aspects of higher education and most of them concentrate on effective course delivery mechanisms, and the quality of courses and teaching (Roberts, 2001; Athiyaman, 1997; Bourner, 1998; Cheng and Tam, 1997; McElwee and Redman, 1993; Soutar and McNeil, 1996; Varey, 1993; Yorke, 1992). Not much quality issues have focused on the student as a customer. Hence there is still a lot more work to be done especially from a customer and marketing perspective to bring out knowledge on other aspects of quality such as physical facilities, teacher-student interactions, and assessment of students in terms of examinations, terms and methods of collecting fees, certification and grading issues et cetera. In this way, quality issues and needs of students could easily be identified and addressed to

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complement technical quality. Moreover, the perception and expectations of service quality may differ between local and international students, employees and students, government and other stakeholders.

Furthermore, there is not enough available literature in Ghana which adequately answers the issues raised above. In order to bridge this knowledge gap, a study on an evaluation of the service quality delivery in a private university cannot be overemphasised. Moreover, university education has become competitive and costly. As a result, students (local and international students) have high expectations of private universities, due to the considerable emotional and financial investments that they make whilst studying in such universities (Ayliff and Wang, 2006). Yet in Ghana, little is known on whether or not these students become satisfied with the level of service quality provided by the private universities they attend. Students are not only concerned with how a service is being delivered but most importantly with the quality of output they receive. The study aims at determining how students can be satisfied and by so doing make recommendations on how Management of private universities could provide services to meet the unique needs of their students. The study would also assess the perception of staff and management of service quality delivery in the private universities set up.

1.4   Objectives

The main objective for the above study are as follows:

1.4.1   General Objective

The main purpose of this research is to assess the service quality delivery in tertiary education with specific reference to Pentecost University College (PUC), Ghana.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To assess the general level of satisfaction of quality among students in Pentecost University College (PUC).

2. To assess the current level of service quality delivery in Pentecost University College.

3. To determine service quality factors of value to students.

4. To determine the factors which influence local and international students to enroll at Pentecost University College.

5. To assess staff and Management's perception of service quality delivery in Pentecost University College.

1.5 Research Questions

The research will ask the following questions:

1. What is the general level of satisfaction of quality among students of PUC?

2. What is the current level of service quality delivery in PUC?

3. What service quality factors are of value to students?

4. What factors influence local and international students to enroll at Pentecost University College?

5. What is staff and Management's perception of service quality delivery in PUC?

1.6   Relevance of the Research

Arambewela and Hall (2009) state that student satisfaction, and by implication positive perceptions of service quality, is a source of competitive gain, likely to lead to positive word of mouth communication, student retention and loyalty. In order to be successful in attracting both local and international students, however, universities need to ensure that their students

receive the same level of education and overall experiences that they were promised when recruited initially. Voss, et al. (2007) stated that understanding the expectations of students in tertiary institutions is of great importance, which is especially true for student expectations of service quality.

Arambewela and Hall (2009) state that students are often branded as being prone to laziness and that they desire to complete assignments in the simplest way possible. Hence, they do not realise that education often requires an abundance of hard work and self-discipline. Although this stereotype is not necessarily true, due to these opinions and other reasons, many protest the idea of placing a great deal of importance on students' evaluation of service quality in the institution in which they study. Quality in tertiary education is not interested only in tangibles such as lecture venues, course materials and the like. It is also heavily dependent on the institution's human resources to provide a good service to its students (Voss, et al. 2007).

As demand for higher education rises globally and quality assurance becomes a key issue, it is in the interest of institutions of higher education to add the customer perspective of quality assurance that would integrate all aspect of quality to deliver value to students, parents, government and all stakeholders. This research is therefore not only relevant in helping the tertiary institutions in the formulation of appropriate strategies to meet the quality expectations of their students, but also for the educational service to provide quality from a wider dimension by including marketing perspective to satisfy the student customer. According to Munteanu et al (2010) it is time for tertiary institutions to be conscious of the fact that the student has a wider choice for tertiary education globally.

Also the results of this work would provide a quality assessment framework for prospective students who would want to study in universities globally to assess quality dimensions relevant to them.

1.7   Scope of the Study

Local and international students and staff of the Pentecost University College were the focus of the study. The study covered the service quality dimensions as proposed by Parasuraman (1988) and satisfaction of students at the Pentecost University College.

1.8   Organisation of the Study

The work was organised in five chapters. Chapter one laid the ground work of the study-comprising background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and relevance of the study as well as the organisation of the study. Chapter two discussed the literature review. Using the secondary source of data, this chapter reviewed some of the earlier studies done on the research topic. The review covered topics such as the various definitions of service and quality, service quality delivery in higher educational settings, service quality gaps, determinants of service quality, customer satisfaction among others.

Chapter three focused on a briefing of Pentecost University College. It also examined the method to be adopted to carry out the study. This included the research design, a definition of the total students population, sampling, data collection and analysis. It also captured sources of data collection and the methods of data collection, that is, the use of questionnaires et cetera. Chapter four explained the various statistical diagrams and tabulations used for the analysis of responses from the various questionnaires distributed. Detailed explanations and

inferences were drawn from the quantitative data collected to highlight the result of study. Chapter five provided a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the context for this study, stating the problem and delineating the objective and research questions which derive from this literature review. It was indicated that this study aimed at assessing the service quality delivery in tertiary education with specific reference to the Pentecost University College, Ghana. The purpose of reviewing the existing literature, according to Bryman (2008), is to identify what is already known about the chosen area and the concepts and theories that are relevant to it.

Most literature on services focuses on perceived quality which results from the comparison of customer service expectations versus perceptions of actual performance (Zeithaml, 2000). Customers are likely to be satisfied when their perception on services provided exceeds their expectations. Service quality in educational industry is defined on the basis of students' overall evaluation on the services they received, as part of their educational experience. This covers a variety of educational activities both inside and outside the classroom such as classroom based activities, faculty member/student interactions, educational facilities, and contacts with the staff of the institution.

Furthermore, education has as its core deliverable, the relationship between lecturers and students. It is usually face to face and sometimes via online interaction, which occurs over an extended period. For this reason, building relationships is not new in higher education. However, the higher educational institutions need to be more explicit in developing their

relationship marketing strategies. The development of long-term relationship is essential for most services: between customers and service providers, and business partners as a network. Therefore, a proper definition and understanding of service is critical at this point.

2.2 Definition of Service

In simple terms, services are deeds, processes, and performances (Zeithaml, 1996; Hoffman, 1997; Kasper et al., 2006). Relying on the broad definition of services, it becomes obvious that services are produced not only by service providers, but also manufacturers. The primary difference between goods and services is the character of tangibility (Hoffman, 1997). According to Brennan et al. (1997), services can be classified by the extent of customer contact, degree of customization, and the degree of labour intensity in the delivery of the service.
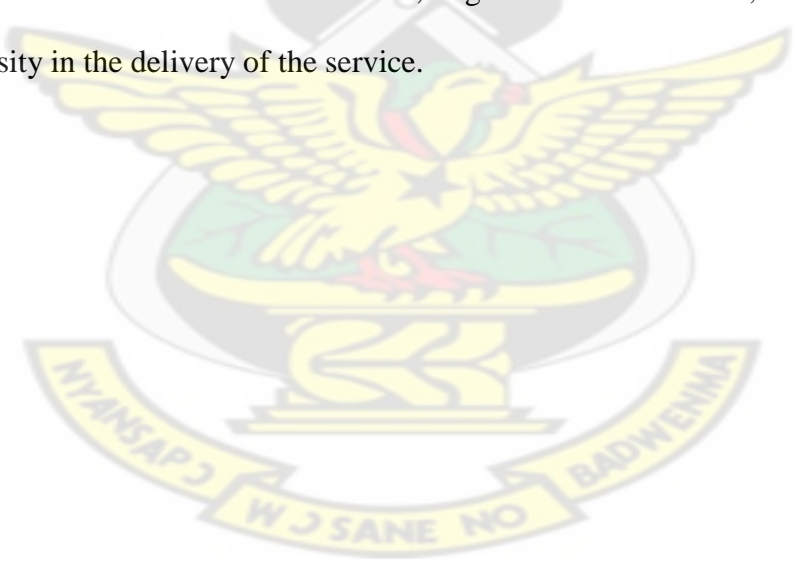
Table 2.1 – A table showing the definition of service among various authors

S/N	Author(s)	Definition
1	American Marketing Association, 1960	Activities, benefits, or satisfactions which are offered for sale, or provided in connection with the sale of goods.
2	Zenithal and Bitner (2000)	A service is any act or performance 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.
3.	Robert Hinson (2004)	A service can also be referred to as "an activity or series of activities, which is intangible that normally take place in interactions between the customer and the service employee or systems of the provider, which are provided as solutions to customer needs and problems".

Source: Tahar, 2008

In summary, a service is commonly defined as "a time-perishable, intangible experience performed for a client who is acting as a co-producer to transform a state of the client" (Spohrer & Maglio 2008). For this researcher, a service is any activity which is produced and consumed at the same time.

2.2.1 Characteristics of A Service

The characteristics of a service are discussed below:

Intangibility

One of the most important characteristics of a service is that it is primarily intangible (Zeithaml, 2003). A service cannot be seen, tasted, or touched the way tangible goods

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can. Education is essentially an intangible activity that cannot be stored in a warehouse. It cannot be patented nor shown or tested in advance.

Heterogeneity

The second key characteristic of service is heterogeneity (Fisk, 2000). The concept of heterogeneity posits that two "service products" will never be exactly alike. The service provider who delivers the service is often viewed by the customer as the service itself. Service performance can vary over time. The same can be said of the recipient of the service; he or she will not always be feeling the same. The main effect of heterogeneity is that provision of service and the satisfaction of the recipient of the service relies on the performance of the service provider; service quality relies on elements that are not easily controlled, such as the weather, quantum of work, and other external factors. Furthermore, it cannot be ensured that the service will be provided in exactly the manner that had been decided. How instruction is implemented can vary. The instructor is not always in the same mood, his form may vary and thus he may not always attain his set objectives. The same can be said about the students' whose form and preparation may vary, thus making them respond differently to the instruction. An important consideration here is that attending lectures is only one part of education process. A number of other important factors such as access to information services, book store and cafeteria come into play.

Inseparability

The third key characteristic of service is inseparability (Zeithaml, 2003). While most goods are first produced, then sold and finally used, service usually is first sold, then implemented and used at the same time (Lovelock, 2001). By registering for a course or

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study programme, a student has made a commitment for the future, and then the instruction is delivered. The student thus undergoes the instruction and often plays an important and active role in class by taking part in discussions or presentations of the topic. The same reasons make advance production impossible.

Perishability

Perishability is the fourth key characteristic of service. It underscores that service cannot be stored, saved, resold, nor returned (Zeithaml, 2003). The supply of service beyond the demand cannot be used at a later time when demand may increase, and service that does not meet one's expectations cannot be returned. For a student, it could be an interesting option, for example, if a poor class session could be returned and replaced by a better one. This is not possible. Perishability enhances the importance of assessing demand and coordinating the supply. In education it is important to assess how many students will take part in a certain course, to hire instructors to teach, and to guarantee that the group has the appropriate venue and equipment.

2.3   Service Quality

There has been continuous discussion and research on the concept of service quality in marketing literature for over two decades (Brady and Cronin, 2001). As a measurement framework, service quality has often been best described by its essential properties. Service quality has emerged as an all-inclusive strategic force, and a key strategic subject on management's agenda. It is therefore not surprising to see industry practitioners and academics alike keen on accurately measuring service quality in order to better understand its essential antecedents and consequences, and ultimately, establish methods for improving quality to achieve competitiveness and build customer satisfaction.

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2.4   Definition of Service Quality

Service quality may be defined as customers' perception of how well a service meets or exceeds their expectations (Czepiel, 1990). Nitecki et al. (2000) also defined service quality in terms of meeting or exceeding customer expectations, or as the difference between customers' perceptions and expectations of service. Moreover, service quality can be measured in terms of customer perception, customer expectation, customer satisfaction, and customer attitude (Sachdev and Verma 2004). Service quality is therefore the differences between customer expectation of service and perceived service. If the expectations are greater than performance, the perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occur (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Again, service quality is the delivery of excellent or superior service relative to customer, or superior relative to customer expectations (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996).

Finally, service quality can be defined as the difference between customer's expectation for service performance to the service encounter and their perceptions of service perceived. If the perceptions are larger than performance, customer satisfaction occurs. For this researcher, service quality can be defined as the difference between customers' expectations for the performance of the service before the actual service experience and their perceptions of the service received.

2.5   Customer Satisfaction

Kotler (1996) defined customer satisfaction as the level of a person's felt state resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcome in violation to his or her expectation. In every endeavour, satisfaction plays a major role in determining the originality and accuracy of a system. This is particularly so in the educational system

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where the higher the level of satisfaction, the higher will be the level of students grooming their skill development, course knowledge and mentality. According to Zeithaml (1988), satisfaction is the resultant outcome of an institution's administrative, as well as educational system's coherent performance. It can be deduced that students will be more satisfied and motivated for completing their studies if the institution provides an environment which facilitates learning, that is, the institution obtains proper infrastructure for educational utility accumulated with essential parameters of professional and academic development. (Rodie and Kleine 2000) posited a view that the students will be more motivated, loyal and good performers if their institution upholds essential educational facilities with affective staff of teaching and training. The teachers' performance in the class and outside the class is a significant feature of enhancing students' impartiality, motivation and satisfaction. According to Wachtel (1998), students rate the performance and methodology of teaching of their course instructors' as the prime indicators in their educational development and successful completion of their studies, because the higher the intellectual ability of the instructor the better will be the students' evaluation (Edstrom, 2008) and consequently, the better will be their reliability of the teaching staff.

2.6   Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The service quality literature is primarily founded on two themes: service quality and customer satisfaction. Some scholarly controversy and disagreement surround the relationship between the constructs of service quality and customer satisfaction. Despite this fact, these constructs originated from two different research theories. Both theories share the use of perceptions and expectations as the main antecedent construct, while others believe that it is service quality that leads to customer satisfaction and behavioural

intentions (Carrillat et al., 2009; Chia et al., 2008; Molinari et al., 2008; Ott, 2008). Review of the literature on services reveal a lack of consensus on the definition of satisfaction as a concept and therefore, there is no generally accepted measurement scale for customer satisfaction in higher education (Garcia –Aracil, 2009). Some scholars claim that service quality is an outcome of the service encounter, and that customer satisfaction is related to prior expectations and is conceptualized as a response to service quality in the form of disconfirmation (Oliver, 1980). Many researchers propose that customer satisfaction and service quality are separated and distinct constructs that share a number of similar qualities (Parasuraman et al., 1994). Models of satisfaction often focus on comparing customer expectations to the observed service delivered (Morad et al., 2011); these are referred to as the service quality gap (Parasuraman et al., 1993). Perceptions of service quality are built on prior expectations of what should be and will occur compared to the actual service delivery (Boulding et al., 1993). Indeed, empirical evidence has confirmed that the customers' perceptions of service quality and customer satisfaction directly affect their intention to positively favour an organization. Consequently, consensus concerning the best way to define and measure service quality does not yet exist (Clewes, 2003). Every stakeholder in higher education (e.g. students, professional bodies, and governments) has his or her/their own view of quality due to particular needs. This paper is concerned with one particular stakeholder in higher education, namely, the student who is considered the customer. This view, however, does not mean that other perspectives are not valid. In this regard, Guolla (1999) rightly points out that students could also take the role as clients, producers, and products. Based on the findings in the service quality literature, O'Neill and Palmer (2004:28) define service quality in higher education as the difference between what a student expects to receive and his/her perceptions of actual delivery. There are, however, conceptual issues in the service

quality literature concerning the sequential order of the two constructs. While authors such as Cronin et al., (2000) and Farrell et al., (2001) perceived quality as an antecedent to satisfaction, other authors such as Al-alak (2009, 2006) consider customer satisfaction as an antecedent to service quality. Farrell et al., (2001) give a good overview of this contentious conceptual issue. The majority of recent researches such as Zeithaml et al., (2008) consider service quality as an antecedent to customer satisfaction. In particular, Zeithaml et al., (2008) pointed out that service quality and customer satisfaction are fundamentally different concepts. They also pointed out that satisfaction is a broader concept in developing the framework of satisfaction, noted that service quality should be considered as a component of satisfaction. They supposed that customer satisfaction was influenced not only by service quality perceptions, but also by personal and situational factors and price. Further support can be found in the higher education literature, as Al-alak (2006, 2009) shows that students' perceived service quality is an antecedent to student satisfaction. Thus, this research follows the majority of recent research regarding service quality as an antecedent to satisfaction.

2.7   Tertiary Education as a Service Industry

As service organisations, tertiary educational institutions must provide value added services to satisfy the long-term needs and desires of their customers. These days, customers demand holistic services and not just a one off technical solution provided by service providers. Tertiary educational institutions are highly customer-centered service businesses, which perceive building relationships and providing quality service extremely important (Gronroos, 1995). As a service industry, tertiary institutions are dependent upon customer decisions for a significant portion of their revenue; the attraction of new students from word of mouth referrals is a classic marketing activity. The educational

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accreditation has historically concentrated on technical quality, for example, faculty degrees, number of library holdings and volume of research funds. In Ghana, the National Accreditation Board (NAB) is a quality assurance body which is responsible for governing the standard and quality of higher education offered by private higher educational institutions (PHEI). The market offering of service industries is characterized by three primary attributes which are the tangible nature of the core offering product and service, the simultaneous nature of service production and service consumption, and the customer's participation in the production and delivery of the service. While the core offering may be intangible, it is often manifested by tangible evidence, such as written policies, documents, diplomas, and transcripts. The simultaneity of production and consumption is a central characteristic of education where, for example, the lecture is "produced" by the professor as is simultaneously "consumed" by the student (Delene and Bunda, 1991). The core market offerings product and service of higher education consist of degrees and course of study at different prices and locations from a variety of institutions. These markets offering the educational services are presented to prospective buyers through a mix of promotional materials including the website, newspaper and flyers. Moreover, educational services also have a perishability problem because they cannot be stored for future delivery. Once the initial contact has been established and students have made their selection, institutions have to strategise to maintain and enhance the relationship by keeping in touch with them until commencement, and then continuing from there. With whatever category of customers, institutions will be able to capitalize on word of mouth recommendations if relationships are established correctly from the beginning.

2.8   Service Quality Models (SERVQUAL)

Research conducted by Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) provides a basic framework or model for conceptualizing service quality and customer satisfaction for services. This was known as the SERVQUAL model. The model contains 22 items for assessing customer perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of service. A level of agreement or disagreement with a given item is rated on a seven point likert scale. They suggest that it might be the perception of service quality that leads to customer satisfaction and, thereby, these authors use the gap between customer expectation of provider performance and the actual perceived experience of that performance. This means that, if a customer perceives the service to be of high quality, then the customer will be satisfied. The SERVQUAL model defined service quality using five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. However, some other authors (Bitner, 1990; Bolton and Drew, 1991) see this relationship in a different way and suggest that, if customers are satisfied with the service that is offered them, they will perceive it to be of high quality. In other words, satisfaction is an antecedent of service quality.

The proponents of the alternative model of service quality used in the development of SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor, 1992) argue that the difference gap formulation is fundamentally flawed and that quality should be defined simply in terms of perception, without giving great importance to expectations. Later work carried out by Cronin and Taylor proposes the "confirmation/disconfirmation theory" in which the "satisfaction gap" (between expectation and perception of performance) is transformed into a single measurement of performance, according to expectation.

2.8.1 The Gap Model in Service Quality

Measuring the gap between expected service and perceived service is a routine customer feedback process that is practised by leading service companies (Fitzsimmons, 2004). Customer satisfaction is dependent on minimizing the four gaps that are associated with delivery of the service. The market research gap is the discrepancy between customer expectations and management perception of these expectations. Gap 1 arises from management's lack of full understanding of how customers formulate their expectations, based on a number of sources: advertising, past experience with the firm and its competitors, personal needs, communication between management and its contact employees, and reducing the number of levels of management that distance the customer. The design gap results from management's inability to formulate target levels of service quality to meet perceptions of customer expectation and translate these into workable specifications.

Gap 2 may result from a lack of management commitment to service quality, or a perception of the infeasibility of meeting customer's expectations; however, setting goals and standardizing service delivery tasks can close the gap. The conformance gap occurs because actual delivery of the service does not meet the specifications set by management.

Gap 3 can arise for a number of reasons, including lack of teamwork, poor employee selection, inadequate training, and inappropriate job designing. Customer expectations of the service are formed by media advertising and the other communication from the firm.

Gap 4 is the discrepancy between service delivery and external communications in the form of exaggerated promises and lack of information provided to contact personnel. This is demonstrated in figure 1 below:

Figure 1 – A figure showing Service Quality Gap Model
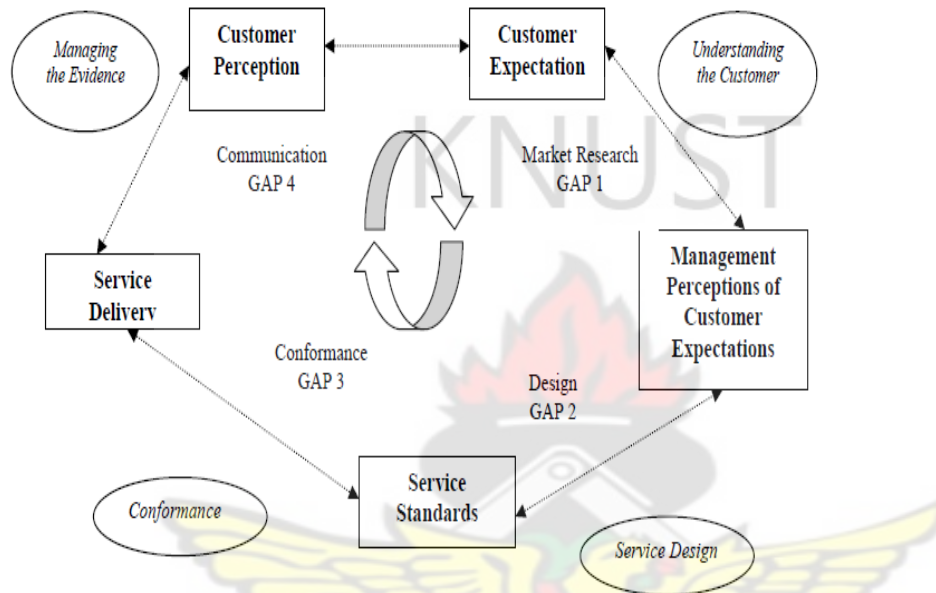
Source: Tahar, 2008

2.8.2 Service Quality Determinants

Parasuraman et al., (1988) has shown that no matter the types of service, customers use basically similar criteria in evaluating service quality. The criteria fall into the categories as described below:

i) Reliability: involves consistency of performance and dependability.

ii) Responsiveness: concerned with the willingness or readiness of employee to provide service. It involves timeliness of service.

iii) Competence: the possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service.

iv) Access: involves approachability and ease of contact.

v) Courtesy: involves politeness, consideration and friendliness of contact personnel.

vi) Communication: keeping customers informed in a language they can understand, and listening to them.

vii) Credibility: involves trustworthiness, believability and honesty. It involves having the customer's best interests at heart.

viii) Security: the freedom from danger, risk or doubt.

ix) Understanding/knowing the customer: involves making the effort to understand the customer's needs.

2.9   Measuring Service Quality and Satisfaction

In measuring service quality, two scales of measurement has been found: the SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, 1988) and Service Performance (SERVPERF) (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). The SERVPERF model concentrates its measurement on the perception of quality and actual performance hence service quality is seen as a measure of expectation and perception of actual   performance whereas the SERVQUAL measurement concentrate on only perception of quality, as such, when quality is perceived to be high, then according to Parasuraman, et al, (1988), service quality is high. However, the most popular measure of service quality has been the SERVQUAL, an instrument developed by Parasuraman et al, (1985; 1988). The first version of SERVQUAL was developed in 1985. It was based on a series of studies by Parasuraman and his colleagues who conceptualized service quality as the gap between customer expectations and perceptions (Ham et al., 2003; Parasuraman et al., 1988). The confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm views customer satisfaction judgments as the result of the consumer's perception of the gap between their perceptions of performance and their prior expectations (Parasuraman

et al., 1994). Disconfirmation is positive when service performance exceeds expectations; it is negative when the opposite is the case. Since then, the SERVQUAL instrument has been the predominant method used to measure consumers' perceptions of service quality. According to Ham et al. (2003), SERVQUAL has five generic dimensions or factors: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The SERVQUAL instrument consists of two sections: a 22 items section that records customer expectations of a company in the specific service industry; and a second 22 items section that measures customer perceptions of the company in that service industry. Results from the two sections are then compared to arrive at "gap scores" for each of the five dimensions. The larger the gap, the farther customer perceptions are from expectations and the lower the service quality evaluation. In contrast, the smaller the gap, the higher the service quality evaluation measured.

The SERVQUAL model is a useful tool, in that the process measures customer expectations for service delivery against customer perceptions of services actually being delivered. It is a technique that can be used in performing gap analysis of an organization's service quality against customer quality needs.

SERVQUAL is an empirically derived method that may be used by a services organization to improve service quality. The method involves the development of an understanding of the perceived service needs of target customers. These measured perception of service quality for an organization in question, are then compared to an organization that is "excellent". The resulting gap analysis may then be used as a driver for service quality improvement. The model consists of parallel statements. Each statement focuses on an aspect of one of the dimensions of service quality, and has a

response scale ranging from one to seven. The scale is used by a customer to indicate the extent or degree he or she agrees or disagrees with the statement.

SERVQUAL model is a diagnostic tool that uncovers a firm's weaknesses and strengths in the area of service quality. The SERVQUAL instrument is based on five service quality dimensions that were obtained through extensive focus group of customers. SERVQUAL takes into account the perception of customers of the relative importance of service attributes. This allows an organization to prioritize and use its resources to improve the most critical service attributes. Wisniewski (2001) suggests that SERVQUAL's questionnaire design, employing empirical psychometric testing and trial, means that it can be applied across a broad range of service organizations. However, critiques also argue that perception of quality alone might not be enough for measuring service quality. In this study the SERVQUAL model was used as the measurement for service quality and satisfaction.

2.10   SERVQUAL Variables

SERVQUAL scale measures five service quality dimensions as follows:

Tangibles: Tangibles are the "touchables" such as the physical appearance, facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials. The condition of the physical surrounding is tangible evidence of the care and attention to detail that are exhibited by the service provider.

Reliability: It refers to the service provider's ability to adequately and dependably perform the promised service. Reliability involves delivering the promised outputs at the stated level. This means that the service is accomplished on time and in a manner devoid of errors.

Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Keeping customers waiting, particularly for no apparent reason, creates an unnecessary negative perception of quality. If a service failure occurs, the ability to recover quickly and with professionalism can create very positive perceptions of quality.

Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence. The assurance dimension includes the following features: competence to perform the service, politeness and respect for the customer, effective communication with the customer and the general attitude that serves the customer's best interest.

Empathy: The firm provides care and individualized attention to its customers.

Empathy includes the following: approachability, sensitivity and the effort to understand the customer's needs. Customers use these five dimensions to form their perceptions of service quality, which are based on a comparison between expected and perceived service.

2.11   Validity and Reliability of SERVQUAL

A number of studies applying SERVQUAL in the public sector that report the successful application and reliability of the scale have been noted. (For example in health care, Youseff et al., 1996). SERVQUAL has also been used successfully in researches in higher education. According to Ham (2003), SERVQUAL has been administered by researchers investigating service quality in various industries, including higher education, by assessing expectations and perceptions with various determinants of service quality. Kang et al. (2002), stated that SERVQUAL has potential as a reliable measurement instrument. The result of his work indicates that SERVQUAL is multidimensional and it supports the usefulness of the perception subscale as a robust measure of service quality. Meanwhile, the usefulness of the expectation subscale would also be helpful in a future

comparison of service quality. The multiple dimensions of service quality are captured in the SERVQUAL instrument, which is an effective tool for surveying customer satisfaction that is based on the service quality gap model (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 2004).

2.12   Utilizing SERVQUAL

The gap score is calculated by the perception statements being deducted from the expectation statement. A positive gap score implies that expectations are actually being exceeded. This allows service managers to view whether they need to redeploy resources to areas of underperformance (Wisniewski, 2001). This could be particularly important in a public sector organization where budgets are under great pressure (Smith and Clark, 2007).

2.13   Service Quality in Higher Education

The concept of quality is not well defined in higher education (Cheng and Tam, 1997; Pounder, 1999). According to Mukhopadhyay (cited in Sahney, Banwet and Karunes, 2004), the term "quality in education" has been defined by various scholars, as "excellence in education" (Peters and Waterman, 1982), "value addition in education" (Feigenbaum, 1951), "fitness of educational outcome and experience for use" (Juran and Gryna, 1988), "specifications and requirements" (Gilmore, 1974; Crosby, 1979), "defect avoidance in education process" (Crosby, 1979) and "meeting or exceeding customer's expectations of education" (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). A single definition quality of education is not possible; rather, it would be more appropriate to define quality of education based on the criteria that stakeholders used to judge quality, and also to

consider the competing views when assessing the education quality (Green, cited in Sahney et al., 2004).

The following section discusses the concept of education quality and different models of education quality. Cheng (cited in Cheng and Tam, 1997) defines education quality as "the character of the set of elements in the input, process, and output of the education system that provides services that completely satisfy both internal and external strategic constituencies by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations". The seven models of quality of education proposed by Cheng and Tam (1997) to evaluate the concept of education quality are: (1) goal and specification model; (2) resource-input model; (3) process model; (4) satisfaction model; (5) legitimacy model; (6) absence of problems model; and (7) organizational learning model. Each of the education quality models has its own peculiar characteristics, strengths and limitations that describe the aspects of the education quality in its own respective ways; they are, however, interlinked with one another (Tam and Cheng, 1996). These models allow the administrators of tertiary institutions to assess their own education quality (Tam and Cheng, 1996). Advocacy for the process model asserts that education quality can be enhanced if the education institutions can smooth the internal process, and subsequently provide fruitful learning experiences to the relevant stakeholders (Cheng and Tam, 1997). The process model of education quality is very relevant to the management of higher education institution when there is a clear relationship between process and educational outcomes. Examples of the indicators for quality evaluation in the process model of education quality include leadership, participation, social interactions, classroom climate, learning activities and experiences.

Oldfield and Baron (2000) maintain that "there is an inclination to view service quality in higher education from an organizational perspective". They suggest that institutions should better pay attention to what their students want instead of collecting "data based upon what the institution perceives its students find important".

Similarly, Joseph et al. (2005) point out that research on service quality in higher education has relied too heavily on the input from academic insiders while excluding the input from the students themselves. They believe that traditional approaches leave "decisions about what constitutes quality of service (e.g. such as deciding what is most important to students) exclusively in the hands of administrators and/or academics". The researcher therefore, suggests that university managers should focus on understanding the needs of their students, who are the specific and primary target markets.

Higher educational institutions are like other service based firms which are dependent on people/students' perception yet one of the easiest powerful marketing strategy is through positive word of mouth.

Generally, students evaluate and judge the service quality to be satisfactory by comparing what they want or expect to what they are really getting. Gruber et al. (2010) believe that the behaviours and attitudes of customer contact employees primarily determine the customers' perceptions of the service quality provided. This means, the human interaction element is essential to determine whether students consider service delivered satisfactory or not. Additionally, it is expected that tertiary education service providers would put in place appropriate infrastructure such as faculty and administration blocks, halls of

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residences and hostels, catering facilities and recreational centres (Sapri, Kaka and Finch, 2009).

Ilias et al. (2008) noted that the main factors that could affect the level of students' satisfaction were students' perception of learning and teaching, support facilities for teaching and learning such as libraries, computer and laboratory facilities, learning environment (rooms for lectures, social space and university buildings), support facilities (health facilities, student accommodation, student services), and external aspects of being a student (such as finance, transportation). With all these capabilities, an institution will be able to meet student expectations and compete favourably.

In assessing service quality in higher education, McElwee and Redman (1993) adopted the SERVQUAL model as a basis for a modified model for higher education. In view of the framework of SERVQUAL, their research highlighted functional (interactive) aspects of quality. Hill (1995) also researched into the implications of service quality theory for higher education. Briefly addressing some quality dimensions, he focused mainly on the application of a perception-expectation model in this context. In another study, Anderson (1995) used SERVQUAL to evaluate the quality of an administrative section in a university (office of student services). This appeared to be successful, due to the compatibility between the environments in this case. Therefore, the SERVQUAL instrument which was developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) has been proven to be a valid instrument for measuring service quality.

2.14   Service Quality and the Role of University Management

According to Sander et al. (2000) and Hill (1995), student expectations are a valuable source of information. New undergraduate students may have idealistic expectations. If

higher educational institutions know about their (new) students' expectations, they may be able to respond to them realistically. At least, universities could inform students of what is realistic to expect from lecturers (Hill, 1995). The knowledge of student expectations may also help lecturers to design their teaching programmes (Sander et al., 2000). Hill (1995) found that student expectations in general, and in particular, in relation to academic aspects of higher education services such as teaching quality, teaching methods, course content have been quite stable over time. Telford and Masson (2005) point out that the perceived quality of the educational service depends on students' expectations and values. The authors cite several studies that indicate a positive impact of expectations and values on variables such as student participation (Claycomb et al., 2001), role clarity, and motivation to participate in the service encounter (Rodie and Kleine, 2000). Accordingly, Telford and Masson (2005) believe that it is important to understand expectations and values of students in higher education. Winsted (2000) and Zeithaml et al. (1990) maintain that service providers will only be able to deliver service encounters that will satisfy customers if they know what their customers expect in general, and if they understand the critical employee behaviours and attitudes from a customers' point of view in particular. If lecturers and employees know what their students expect, they may be able to adapt their behaviour to their students' underlying expectations, which should have a positive impact on their perceived service quality and their levels of satisfaction. The service quality in the field of education and higher learning particularly is not only essential but also important, since it is a vital parameter of educational excellence. It has been found that positive perceptions of service quality has a significant influence on student satisfaction and thus satisfied student would attract more students by word of mouth (Alves and Raposo, 2010). The students can be motivated or inspired from both academic performance as well as the administrative

efficiency of their institution. Ahmed and Nawaz (2010) posited that service quality is key to measuring educational excellence and is a major strategic factor for tertiary education providers to create a strong perception in stakeholders' (students and staff) minds. Most of the well-established high learning institutions focus highly on strategic issues like providing excellent customer services. It is important because by doing so they would be able to make and build good relationships with clients who are actually very important in determining their future in the industry.

2.15   Conclusion

In conclusion, one can infer that service quality and customer satisfaction has direct relationship. The students' expectations of a university education are skewed towards "learning experiences and individual preferences" (De Jager and Gbadamosi, 2010). This means the students' enrolment decision will depend on the service encounters relating to factors like support facilities and infrastructure, image and marketing, academic issues, administrative issues, location and access. Again, students' perceptions are important factors for universities to consider, in trying to be competitive in the higher education marketplace. This view is supported further by Maringe and Gibbs (2009) who identified a dependent relationship between service quality and universities' ability to not only attract, but also retain students.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This chapter explains in detail the methodology used in gathering the information necessary in this study. The purpose of this chapter is to outline a research strategy in order to achieve the research objective. The elements discussed include the research design, questionnaire, population and sampling techniques, data collection and analysis and a brief profile of PUC.

3.2   Research Design

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this study was to assess the service quality delivery in tertiary education with specific reference to Pentecost University College, Ghana. The quantitative method was used for this research. A number of research strategies are available for conducting social sciences: Experiments, surveys, histories, case studies, and the analysis of archival information. For the purposes of probing deeply into and evaluating the service quality delivery in private universities, the case study approach was used. This approach involves using one case to gain insights into a particular phenomenon, where there is also an explicit expectation that learning can be used to generalise or to develop a theory (Stake, 2003). The advantages of using a case study approach include: obtaining a deeper understanding of the issue being studied irrespective of how complex the issue is; revealing the inter-relationships which exist between groups, policy measures, processes and other factors which the study may focus on and its adaptability to various research objectives. One drawback of the case study approach is that, the research findings cannot be used to make generalizations. For instance, all findings from this study cannot be generalized for all other private universities in Ghana.

The researcher sought to find answers to five research questions informed by the literature review. They were: (1) what is the general level of satisfaction of quality among students of PUC? (2) What is the current level of service quality delivery in PUC? (3) What service quality factors are of value to students? (4) What factors influence local and international students to enroll at Pentecost University College? (5) What is staff and Management's perception of service quality in PUC?

3.3 Population

According to Twumasi (2001), a study population is the universal set of all respondents or members that contain the characteristics of interest. This population possesses common characteristics which enabled the research to achieve its objective. The population for this study includes all the students and staff of the university. This was on the basis of proximity to the researcher.

3.4 Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The sampling unit, the sampling technique and sample size employed in the study have been discussed.

3.4.1 Sampling Unit

The sampling unit is the regular students and staff of the Pentecost University College. Data on this was obtained from the PUC 2011 annual report. The report indicated that the total number of regular students was 2604. This is made up of 2107 business administration students, 136 Theology students and 361 Engineering students. The total number of staff is 129 made up of 76 Management and 53 Faculty staff. The total sampling unit is 2733.

3.4.2 Sampling Method

Sampling is taking any portion of a population as a representative of the population (Osuala, 2005). Generally, sampling enables the researcher to study a relatively small number of units in place of the target population and to obtain data that are representative of the whole target population. Convenience sampling was used in selecting the students' sample. This was on the basis of the willingness and ability of respondents to provide the needed information. The purposive sampling was employed to select management and faulty staff from the population of staff in the University being studied. Purposive sampling has been identified by scholars as appropriate for specific inquiries that target a specific group of people especially when a researcher wants to identify particular types of cases for in-depth investigation (Neuman, 2003 cited in Baboucarr et al, 2012). This is important because studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations (Patton, 2002). The purposive technique gave the researcher the opportunity to gather data from respondents who had the information which could lead to the achievement of the research objectives.
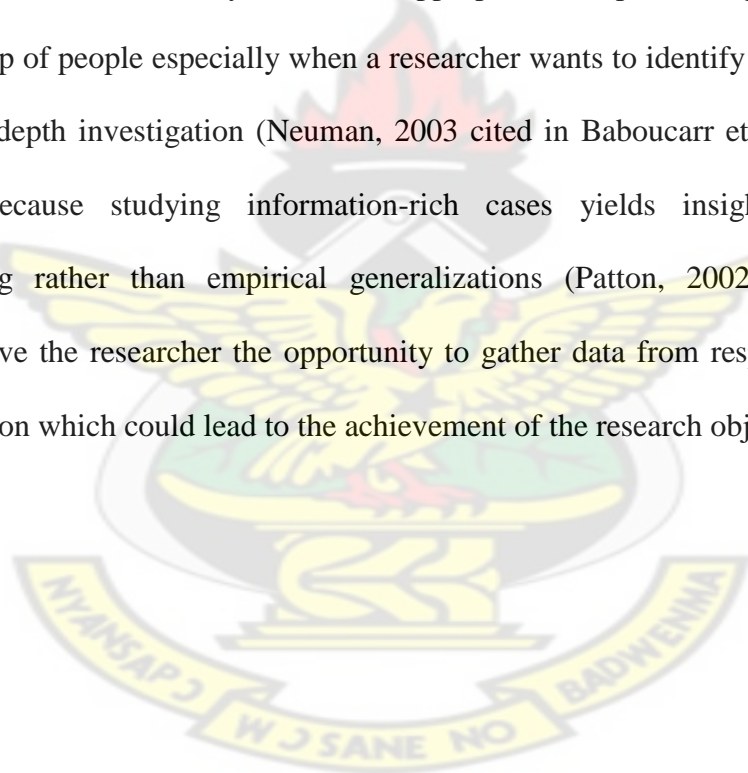
3.4.3 Sample Size

The table below indicates the various groups of students and staff in PUC and the corresponding proportionate sample size for each category.

Table 3.1 below depicts the sampling unit from which samples size determined

Faculty/Staff Categories	Sampling Unit	Sample Size
Faculty of Business Administration (FBA)	2107	130
Faculty of Theology and Mission (FTM)	136	30
Faculty of Engineering, Health and Computing (FEHAC)	361	40
Management and Faculty Staff	129	30
Total	**2733**	**230**

Source: Author's Construct, 2012

3.5 Data Collection

According to Twumasi (2001), data collection is the stage where the necessary data useful for the purpose of the research are gathered from the field. The ways of gathering these data for the research is what is termed as data collection method. The common methods used are observation, interviews and questionnaires. This research adopted questionnaire for the purpose of collecting primary data from respondents. The secondary data sources were taken from articles, journals, internet sources, published thesis, online sources, and text books on the subject matter. The questionnaires were structured in line with the SERVQUAL model as developed by Parasuraman et al (1988). The instruments are based on five dimension of service quality. These are responsiveness, assurance, tangibles, empathy and reliability. The SERVQUAL authors have not restricted the use of the instrument, and recommend adaptation to reflect the service being evaluated

(Parasuraman et. al.1991). For this research, the writer has modified the SERVQUAL instrument to include the processes and procedures. This is intended to make the study more relevant to the context of the chosen service environment. The questionnaire was structured in a five point likert scale format made up of eight sections and addressed the following areas:

1. Section A: Demographic data of respondents

2. Section B: General Level of Satisfaction

3. Section C: Responsiveness and Delivery

4. Section D: Empathy

5. Section E: Tangibles

6. Section F: Assurance

7. Section G: Procedures and processes

8. Section H: Reliability in service provided

The response strategy was a combination of opened and closed ended responses.

3.5.1 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was carried out during the second semester when students were on campus. This was to ensure that respondents were available and that the exercise was official. The researcher personally administered the instrument. This was to ensure a high return rate and to ensure that the questionnaire got to the right people. The data collection exercise lasted for one week.

3.6   Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were screened and vetted for consistency and accuracy. It came out that 150 and 30 questionnaires of both students and staff

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respectively were valid for analysis. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Solutions and Services (SPSS). The results have been presented in the form of descriptive statistics such as frequencies, cross tabulation and percentages with a little inferential statistics such as chi-squares.

3.7   Limitations

There were a few factors that limited this study. The time allotted for the study was inadequate. During the same period, there was the course work and as such the research could not cover virtually all areas of service quality delivery. This also made it difficult to get more literature than what was covered.

3.8   Profile of Pentecost University College

The Pentecost University College (PUC) was granted Institutional Accreditation by the National Accreditation Board (NAB) in November 2004 to run certificate, diploma and degree programmes. His Excellency, Mr. J. A. Kuffuor, the then President of the Republic of Ghana, inaugurated the Pentecost University College on May 22, 2003.

3.8.1   Vision

The vision of the Pentecost University College is to empower students to serve their own generation and posterity with integrity and the fear of God

3.8.2   Mission

The University's mission is to be on the cutting-edge of the dissemination of knowledge, quality education, research and training for the purpose of producing an excellent human

resource base to meet the demands of Ghana's development. This objective shall be achieved through:

• Building on our strengths and pursuing affirmative and open door admissions' policies;

• Providing a multifaceted education in Theology, Religious Studies and Mission, Business Management, Information and Communication/Computing Technology and other academic courses towards higher degrees;

PUC runs three Faculties - Faculty of Theology and Mission (FTM), Faculty of Engineering, Health and Computing (FEHAC) and Faculty of Business Administration (FBA). The current students' population stands at 3,874. This is made up of 2604 Regular students and 1270 Evening and Weekend students.

The researcher chose PUC because having existed for the past eight years and successfully graduated three batches of students, the University has come a long way and it is time for the University to assess its service quality delivery to position itself in order to remain competitive.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

4.1   Introduction

As indicated in chapter one, the study reported here was aimed at assessing the service quality delivery in tertiary education, a case study of Pentecost University College-Ghana. The previous chapter reviewed the literature relevant to the five research questions. This chapter is organised in terms of the five specific research questions posed in chapter one. It first reports findings on the general level of satisfaction of quality among students of PUC. Next, it will examine the current level of service quality delivery in PUC from the students' perspective; what service quality variables are important to students, What factors influence local and international students to enroll at PUC. Finally, staff and Management's perception of service quality delivery in PUC would also be reported. Before then, the demographics of the student respondents are presented.

4.2   Frequency Distribution of Results (Students)

The section presents the frequency distributions of the results on tables.

Table 4.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of Students

N = 150

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	99	66
	Female	51	34
Age	18 – 20 years	16	11
	21 – 23 years	59	39
	24 – 26 years	32	21

	Above 27 years	43	29
Country of origin	Ghana	129	86
	Togo	2	1
	Nigeria	13	9
	South Africa	3	2
	Others	3	2
Course of Study	Accounting	23	15
	Human Resource	14	9
	Marketing	28	19
	Banking & Finance	10	7
	Insurance	7	5
	Actuarial Science	3	2
	Theology	15	10
	Com. Studies	12	8
	Commerce	17	11
	Information Technology	21	14
Level	100	45	30
	200	23	15
	300	63	42
	400	19	13
Faculty	FTM	18	12
	FBA	111	74
	FEHAC	21	14

Source: Field Survey, 2012

In the case of the students, there were 66% males and 34% females. This may be due to the male dominance in the College. It could also be that during the administration of the questionnaires, the male students were more available to the researcher than the female students. They were aged between 18 years and above, with the modal age group being 21 – 23 Years. Eleven percent were between the 18 – 20 years and 29% above 27 years. Eighty-six percent of them were Ghanaians while the remaining 14% being international students from other African countries, like Togo (1%), Nigeria (9%), and South Africa (2%).

The students offered programmes like accounting (15%), Marketing (19%), Banking and Finance (7%) and Human Resource Management (9%). The rest are Insurance (5%), Actuarial Science (2%) Communication Studies (8%), Commerce (11%) and Information Technology (14%). Ten (10%) percent however, offered Theology.

Thirty percent were level 100 students, 15% level 200 students and 42% in level 300. Nineteen students (13%) were in their final year, level 400. Twelve percent were in the FTM, 74% in FBA while 14% were in FEHAC. Generally it appears that level 200 students were more, FBA were more that FEHAC and FTM students probably because they were more available at the time of data collection. Ghanaians were also more than international students due to the fact that in the real composition Ghanaians are more.

4.3 General Satisfaction of Quality in PUC

The first objective was to assess the general level of satisfaction of quality among students of PUC? Question 7 addressed it. This is depicted in the figure 2 below.

Figure 2: General level of Satisfaction among Students
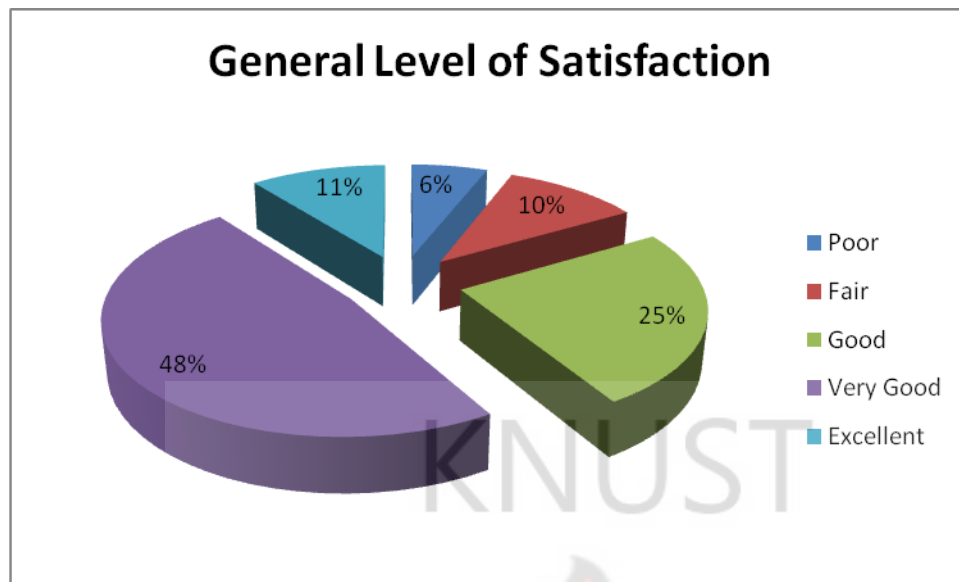
Source: Author's Construct, 2012

Figure 2 shows that majority (84.0%) of the respondents are satisfied with the general level of service quality delivery in the University. This is against 6.0% and 10.0% of the respondents respectively who either had a poor or fair level of satisfaction of service quality in the University. The results of the analysis indicate that the students have positive perception of the service quality of the university. They are overall satisfied with the service quality provided by all the units of the University. There is no significance difference between the local and international students perception about the service quality of the University. This was also corroborated by staff and Management who also had a very good impression of the quality of service provided in the College. This might not necessarily mean that the university is fully excellent since it might be possible that there are areas where some students might not be satisfied but when put together the majority are satisfied. This is consistent with similar findings by Bigne, Moliner and Sanchez (2003), Ham and Hayduk (2003) and Elliot and Shin (2002).

4.4 Current Level of Service Quality & Service Quality Factors

Research objectives two and three sought to assess the current level of service quality delivery and determine the service quality factors which are of value to students respectively. Question items 8 to 66 addressed it. As indicated in chapters two and three, the variables of SERVQUAL model (Responsiveness and Delivery, Empathy, Tangibles, Assurance and Communication, and Reliability) were used to assess the service quality factors of value to students in PUC. In addition to these, the service processes and procedures used also served as a determinant of service quality in this research. Results on Tables 4.4.1 and Table 4.4.6 provide the assessment.

TABLE 4.4.1 STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF RESPONSIVENESS AND DELIVERY

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
WILLING TO PROVIDE PROMPT SERVICE			
Strongly Disagree	**4**	**3**	
Disagree	**18**	**12**	
Not Sure	**60**	**40**	
Agree	**54**	**36**	**3.37**
Strongly Agree	**14**	**9**	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
EMPLOYEES ARE CUSTOMER-FRIENDLY			
Strongly Disagree	6	4	
Disagree	21	14	
Not Sure	43	29	
Agree	57	38	**3.47**
Strongly Agree	23	15	
TOTAL	150	100	
ALWAYS FEEL I HAVE RECEIVED THE NEEDED ATTENTION			
Strongly Disagree	7	5	
Disagree	35	23	
Not Sure	54	36	**3.15**
Agree	37	25	
Strongly Agree	17	11	
TOTAL	150	100	
EXCELLENT TOTAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE			
Strongly Disagree	5	3	
Disagree	10	7	
Not Sure	24	16	**3.80**
Agree	82	55	
Strongly Agree	29	19	
TOTAL	150	100	

ALWAYS INFORMED AS TO WHEN THE NEEDED SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED			
Strongly Disagree	8	5	
Disagree	25	17	
Not Sure	53	35	**3.28**
Agree	45	30	
Strongly Agree	19	13	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Thirty-six (36%) percent of the students agree that they receive prompt services from the institution, 3% of them strongly disagree with the fact that the institution is able to provide them with prompt services. 12% of them disagree whiles 9% of them strongly agree that PUC is able to provide them with prompt services. Meanwhile, 40% who are the largest population are not even sure whether services provided to them are prompt or not. This implies that a large population of PUC customers may not be aware of the kind of services provided to them. Moreover, this indicates that the University has either not been able to define the kind of services they provide to their students or are not putting in enough efforts to clearly define their services.

The researcher also considered the relationship between employee and customers of the institution and was able to identify that, out of the total number of respondents, 4% strongly disagreed that there is a friendly relationship between them and the employees of the institution. 14% of them disagree with that fact, 29% of them are not sure of the existing relationship. 15% of them strongly agree to the existence of a good relationship and 38% say that the employees have a friendly relationship with the customers of the institution. This means that the employees are very receptive to the students and this will go a long way to enable the institution satisfy her customers better through a good relationship.

Considering the level of satisfaction received by the customers of the institution, the researcher found out that, 5% of the respondents strongly disagree they have the needed attention, 23% of them disagree with this 36% of them are not even sure they are been attended to properly. 25% of them agree they receive the services they need and 11% strongly agree to it. Here it is obvious that a larger number of the respondents have not received all the attention they need and hence may have the perception that is not able to satisfy them. This can go a long way to reduce the population of the institution and hence their income.

One of the things the researcher considered was the excellent educational experience provided by the institution. Here it was found out that, 3% strongly disagree they receive an excellent educational experience in PUC, 7% say disagree 16% are not sure of their educational experience in the school, 19% strongly agree that the institution renders them the best educational experience they can think of and 55% forming the largest number of respondents agree that the school gives them an excellent educational experience. Since education is the core business of PUC, it implies that a large number of students are satisfied with the quality of knowledge impacted into them and this makes them very efficient in the production of their core business.

Taking into consideration the regularity of information flow to the customers, the researcher found out that, 5% of the respondents strongly disagree that they are always informed about activities going on in the school. 17% of them disagree to be informed always and35% of them are not sure whether they are well informed or not. Meanwhile, 30% of the respondents say that they are well informed in the school and 13% of them strongly agree to this. Here a majority of the respondents say that they are not well

informed about the activities going on in the school and it means that the school is not working hard enough on their form of communication to their customers but these customers are valuable to the institution and they need to be very well informed about what is going in the University.

TABLE 4.4.2 STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF EMPATHY

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
STAFF ARE VERY PROFESSIONAL IN THEIR WORK			
Strongly Disagree	0	0	**4.0**
Disagree	9	6	
Not Sure	20	13	
Agree	83	55	
Strongly Agree	38	25	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
STUDENTS' PROBLEMS ARE PROMPTLY AND SATISFACTORILY			
Strongly Disagree	9	6	**3.12**
Disagree	37	25	
Not Sure	42	28	
Agree	51	34	
Strongly Agree	11	7	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
COURTEOUS AND POLITE STAFF			
Strongly Disagree	3	2	**3.65**
Disagree	11	7	
Not Sure	48	32	
Agree	61	41	
Strongly Agree	27	18	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
STAFF UNDERSTAND MY NEEDS			
Strongly Disagree	11	7	**3.09**
Disagree	27	18	
Not Sure	59	39	
Agree	43	29	
Strongly Agree	10	7	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

As to whether students' problems are promptly and satisfactorily handled or not, 41% of the respondents agreed, 28% said they were not sure and undecided and 31% disagreed. Fifty-nine (59%) percent of them also agreed that staff were courteous and polite towards students, with 32% undecided and 9% disagreeing. Thirty-six (36%) percent of the

students indicated that staff understood their needs, 39% were not sure and 25% disagreed. In delivering total student satisfaction,(Banwet and Datta, 2003) posit that all employees of a university should adhere to the principles of quality customer service, whether they are staff involved in teaching or administration, or non-contact staff in management or administrative roles.

When students were asked to assess the empathy of the staff and management, 80% agreed that the staff and management were very professional in their work, 6% in disagreement. Thirteen percent however, were undecided. With the rest of the perceptions about 45% agreed to them whilst on the average, 24% disagreed (Table 4.4.2)
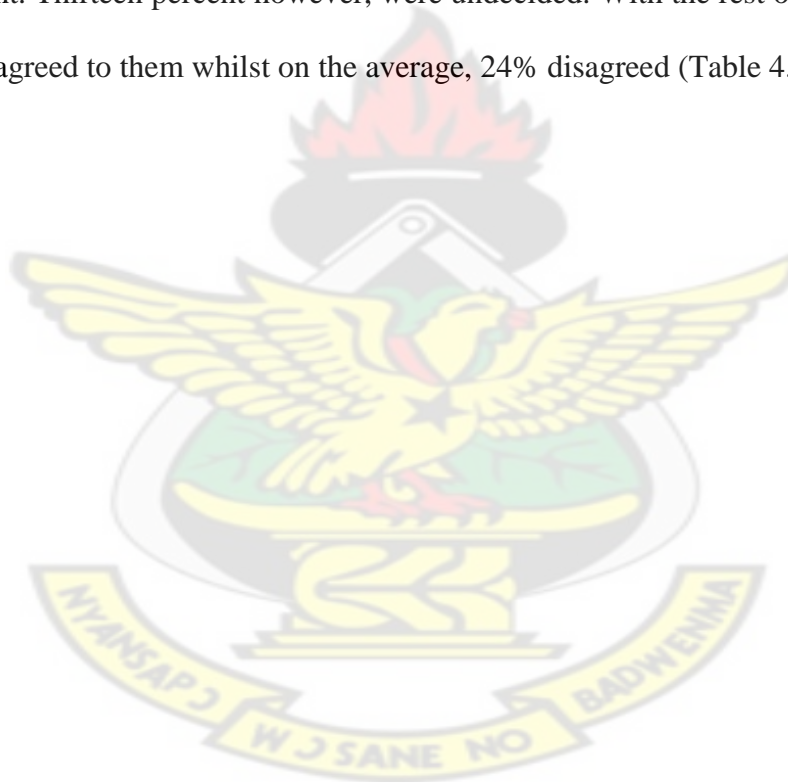
Table 4.4.3 Students Perception of Tangibles

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
SATISFIED WITH THE CLEANLINESS WITHIN BUILDINGS AND ITS SURROUNDINGS			
Strongly Disagree	6	4	
Disagree	11	7	
Not Sure	19	13	**3.91**
Agree	68	45	
Strongly Agree	46	31	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
PUC HAS ENOUGH FACILITIES TO ATTEND TO STUDENTS PROBLEMS			
Strongly Disagree	12	8	
Disagree	28	19	
Not Sure	47	31	**3.19**
Agree	46	31	
Strongly Agree	17	11	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
SATISFIED WITH CLEANLINESS OF WASHROOMS			
Strongly Disagree	10	7	
Disagree	25	17	
Not Sure	37	25	
Agree	46	30	**3.43**
Strongly Agree	32	21	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
SATISFIED WITH STAFF APPEARANCE			
Strongly Disagree	1	1	
Disagree	11	7	
Not Sure	8	5	**4.09**
Agree	84	56	
Strongly Agree	46	31	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 4.4.3 presents respondents' assessment of the tangibles. Seventy-six percent of the students agreed that they were satisfied with the cleanliness within the buildings and the campus surroundings, with 11% in disagreement. Twenty-seven percent disagreed that PUC has enough facilities to attend to students' problems, with the remaining 31% not sure and undecided. However, 42% agreed that the University has enough facilities to meet their problems. On the cleanliness of the washroom, it came out that 24% of the students were not satisfied. Twenty-five (25%) were undecided. This means that almost half (49%) of the students' body are not entirely satisfied with the cleanliness in the

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washrooms even though a little over 50% also agreed with the cleanliness in the washrooms. For staff appearance, 87% of the students were satisfied that staff dressed professionally to work. This is probably because the University is faith based and among the factors which are considered for the employment of a staff is modesty and professionalism in dressing.

Table 4.4.4 Assurance and Communication

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
SATISFIED WITH ACCESS TO INFORMATION			
Strongly Disagree	9	6	
Disagree	20	13	
Not Sure	50	33	
Agree	43	29	**3.41**
Strongly Agree	28	19	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
SATISFIED WITH RESPONSE TO QUERIES			
Strongly Disagree	10	7	
Disagree	29	19	
Not Sure	66	44	
Agree	29	19	**3.08**
Strongly Agree	16	11	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
PUC'S SERVICES ARE BY FAR BETTER THAN THAT OF OTHER PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES			
Strongly Disagree	7	5	
Disagree	39	26	
Not Sure	46	31	
Agree	26	17	**3.25**
Strongly Agree	32	21	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
PREPARED TO RECOMMEND THE UNIVERSITY TO OTHERS			
Strongly Disagree	16	11	
Disagree	13	9	
Not Sure	40	27	
Agree	48	32	**3.46**
Strongly Agree	33	22	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

With the students, majority of the respondents were rather undecided about the issues raised, as shown on Table 4.4.4. A total of 48% were satisfied with access to information, with 33% undecided. Moreover, 30% indicated that they were satisfied with the response

to their queries with 44% undecided. For the assertion that PUC's services are by far better than that of other private, 38% agreed to the statement, with 31% undecided. Thirty-one percent, however, disagreed that PUC's services are by far better than that of other private universities. This is probably because students' visit other sister private universities and may have observed that some of these universities have facilities which PUC may not have. For example, the PUC do not have a multi-purpose sports complex compared to other universities.

Table 4.4.5 Students' Perception of Processes and Procedures

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
TIME-CONSUMING PROCESSES			
Strongly Disagree	7	5	
Disagree	28	19	
Not Sure	48	32	
Agree	46	31	**3.31**
Strongly Agree	21	14	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
TIMELY RELEASE OF EXAMINATION RESULTS			
Strongly Disagree	33	22	
Disagree	66	44	
Not Sure	27	18	
Agree	20	13	**2.31**
Strongly Agree	4	3	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
SATISFIED WITH MARKING OF EXAMINATION SCRIPTS			
Strongly Disagree	33	22	
Disagree	66	44	
Not Sure	27	18	**2.66**
Agree	20	13	
Strongly Agree	4	3	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Except for the release of results and marking of their scripts which attracted 66% disagreement, students were satisfied with the other aspects of the procedures and processes in the University, as shown on Table 4.4.5. This is probably due to the large volumes of examinations scripts, lecturers have to mark at short deadlines during

vacations. It could also probably be due to the fact that students may not be aware of what kind of answers may be expected of during examinations.

Additionally, students (45%) observed that the processes in the university were time-consuming. This may be probably because the researcher observed that during examinations sessions, students have to stay in long queues to obtain their examination chits. Moreover, students noted that it look a long period for the university management to rectify errors in their results.

<div align="center">Table 4.4.6 Students' Perception of Reliability</div>

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
STAFF AND LECTURERS PROVIDE THEIR SERVICES AT THE TIME THEY PROMISE TO DO SO			
Strongly Disagree	2	3	
Disagree	6	4	
Not Sure	64	42	**3.61**
Agree	51	34	
Strongly Agree	26	17	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
STAFF AND LECTURERS TELL STUDENTS WHEN EXACTLY SERVICES WOULD BE PERFORMED			
Strongly Disagree	6	4	
Disagree	20	13	
Not Sure	61	41	**3.34**
Agree	43	29	
Strongly Agree	20	13	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
STAFF PERFORM SERVICES RIGHT THE FIRST TIME			
Strongly Disagree	13	9	
Disagree	14	9	
Not Sure	65	43	**3.21**
Agree	45	30	
Strongly Agree	13	9	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	
WHEN STAFF PROMISE TO DO SOMETHING BY A CERTAIN TIME, THEY DO SO			
Strongly Disagree	9	6	
Disagree	18	12	
Not Sure	66	44	**3.25**
Agree	40	27	
Strongly Agree	17	11	
TOTAL	**150**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

On reliability, 51% of the students agreed that staff and lecturers provide their services at the time they promise to do so, however, 7% of the students disagreed with that assertion. Forty two percent of the students were not sure of the assertion. Thirty nine percent of the respondents agreed that staff perform their services right the first time, 43% were, however, not sure. This may probably be due to students' lack of understanding of the nature of the administrative staff work. Thirty eight percent of the respondents also agreed that when staff promise to do something by a certain time, they do so. Forty-four

percent were not sure and 18% also disagreed. Generally, the responses of the respondents tend to suggest that there is quality service delivery. Considering the fact that service providers, staff and lecturers were willing to provide quality service and give prompt responses to complaints (73%), it can be said that currently there is quality service delivery. This is on the premise that quality service delivery dwells on the willingness, ability and the needed knowledge to provide needed services. According to Fitzsimmons (2004), the ability of a service provider to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, and their willingness to help customers' provide prompt service, form the bases of quality customer services. Keeping customers waiting, particularly for no apparent reason, create unnecessary negative perception of quality. If a service failure occurs, the ability to recover quickly and with professionalism can create very positive perceptions of quality (Fitzsimmons, 2004). It is further explained that knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence is a very important component of quality service delivery. The competence of service providers to perform the service, politeness and respect they have for the customer, effective communication with the customer and general attitude that the server has customer's best interest at heart sums up what is needed for quality service. The results of the study provide strong bases to assume that these variables are taken care of very well at PUC (Table 4.4.1-4.4.6.) Though quality service delivery can be seen to be very good, there was still the need to improve upon what is currently going on in PUC (87%). The results of this study are similar to other studies by Cheng and Tam (1996), Clewes (2003), Markovic (2005) and Al-alak (2009).

4.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENROLLMENT FACTORS AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The fourth objective was to determine the factors which attract local and international students to the University. It is analysed below:

Table 4.5.1: Distribution of source of attraction to PUC by student's country of Origin

Country of Origin	Enrollment Factors					Total
	Course of Study/Academic Programmes	Low Fees	Christian Values	Parental Choice	Others	
Local	55(42.6%)	6 (4.6%)	30 (23.3%)	8 (6.2%)	30(23.3%)	129 (100.0%)
International	7 (33.3%)	2 (9.5%)	3 (14.3%)	3 (14.3%)	6 (28.6%)	21 (100.0%)
Total	62	8	33	11	36	150

Source: Author's Construct, 2012

The table (4.5.1) shows that about (42.6%) of the study sample thus about 55 of the students from Ghana were attracted to the university based on their course of study, about (4.6%) 6 of them due to low fees, about 23.3% of them thus 30 of the local students were due to Christian values, 6.2% of them were due to parental choice with the remaining 23.3% of the local students due to other factors. The statistics on the international students that is students from Nigeria, Togo, South Africa and other countries outside Ghana also revealed that about 33.3% of them were attracted to the university based on their course of study, about (9.5%) 2 of them due to low fees, about 14.3% of them thus 3 of the international students were due to Christian values, 14.3% of them were due to

parental choice with the remaining 28.6% of the international students due to other factors. This with critical observation shows that students from Ghana are mostly attracted to the university due to course of study with others joining due to Christian values and other reasons whereas the international students aside their course of study, were usually attracted to the university due to other unstated reasons as shown on table 4.5.1 above.

Just like the findings above, Bashir (2007) explains that factors such as nature of the programme, safety, fees account for the factors which attract international students to choose a particular country to study. Joseph, Stone and Joseph (2003) believe that international students hold solid to superior academic credentials and are therefore desirable to tertiary universities. By delivering high quality customer service, tertiary universities are ensured of the continued entry of exceptional international students. As a result, international students are highly coveted by university recruiters and administrators across the globe (Joseph, Stone and Joseph, 2003)

- ❖ **Hypothesis testing showing the effect of Country of Origin on Enrollment Factors**
  The hypothesis sought to assess the source of attraction of students from Ghana and that of other countries. Hypothesis was therefore stated as:
  H_0: Country of Origin does not affect or influence source of attraction.
  H_1: Country of Origin affects or influences source of attraction
  An initial descriptive report showed the enrollment factors of students when it comes to enrollment of students of various origins thus the local and international students. The results of the chi-square tests below depict the association between the enrollment factors of students and their country of origin. This result would assist in determining whether or

not to reject the null hypothesis. A p-value less than the level of significance (0.05), would cause the rejection of the null hypothesis or otherwise.

Table 4.5.2: Chi-Square Tests for association between country of origin and source of attraction to PUC or enrollment factors

	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.521[a]	16	.036
Likelihood Ratio	21.460	16	.161
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.733	1	.188
N of Valid Cases	150		

a. 19 cells (76.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

Source: Author's Construct, 2012

The table above shows the testing of the hypothesis using the chi-square tests for association. The analysis showed that between the country of origin and enrollment factors, there is a significant difference in their overall level of satisfaction. This therefore leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that, country of origin affects or influences sources of attraction or enrolment factors and confirms the earlier result from the cross tabulation that students from other countries are more likely to be enrolled based on either course of study or other unstated reasons than their local counterparts which is mainly due to course of study. The chi-square table showed a p-value of **0.036** at a level of significance of 0.05 which statistically allows the rejection of the null hypothesis, hence the alternative hypothesis. This is consistent with similar works by (Verbik, 2007).

4.6 STAFF AND MANAGEMENT'S PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY DELIVERY

The final objective was to assess the staff and Management's perception of service quality in the University. Firstly, an analysis of the demographic factors of staff is explained below:

Table 4.6.1 Demographic Characteristics of Staff (N=30)

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	22	73
	Female	8	27
Position	Management	9	30
	Faculty	14	47
	Administration	7	23

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 4.6.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the lecturers and management staff. The sample was made up of 73% males and 27% female. The results also indicate that this group was made up 23% administrative staff, 47% faculty members and 30% management staff. It implies that the institution has its staff dominated by males and even though the institution is cautious of bridging the gap of gender bias, it is also caution of the fact that the female staff can affect productivity in term of maternity leave etc.

Table 4.6.2: Staff and Management's Perception of Service Quality (Overall)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Good	1	3.3	3.3
Very Good	29	96.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	

Source: Author's Construct, 2012

The above table shows staff and management's general perception of service quality based on the variables of the SERVQUAL model used in administering them. The above table reveals that almost all the staff and management; about 96.7% had a very good perception of service quality with the remaining 3.3% having a rather good perception of service quality. No case of poor service quality was recorded which however gives a very good perception of the quality of service in the university to stakeholders. Comparatively, the staff has a **very good (96.7%)** perception of service quality whereas the students have a rather **good (84%)** perception of service quality as illustrated by figure 2.
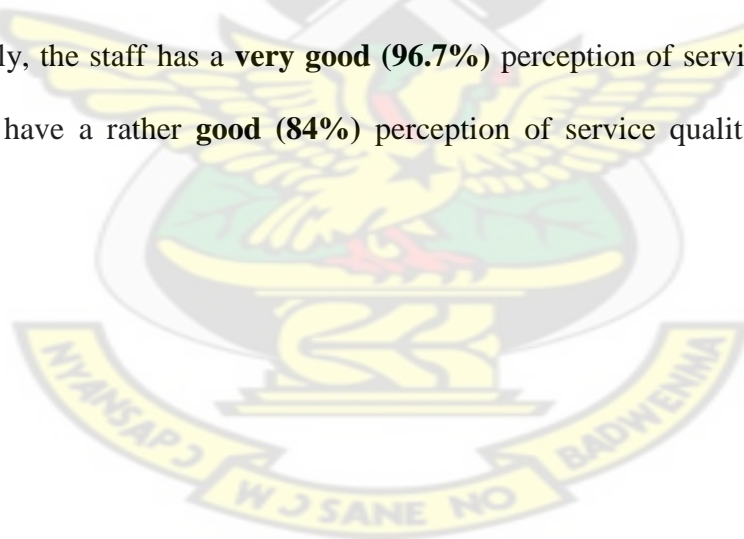
4.6.3 Staff Perception of Service Quality Based on SERVQUAL Model

Table 4.6.3.1 Staff Perception of Empathy

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
STUDENTS PROBLEMS ARE PROMPTLY AND SATISFACTORILY HANDLED			
Disagree	11	37	
Not Sure	5	16	
Agree	14	47	**3.10**
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	
STAFF UNDERSTAND STUDENT NEEDS			
Disagree	11	37	
Not Sure	6	20	**3.07**
Agree	13	43	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Even though, the researcher tested various aspects of staff perception of empathy factors on the staff, the two captured in table 4.6.3.1 above were significant. From the table, it was observed that 37% of the staff disagreed with the assertion that students' problems are promptly and satisfactorily handled. This is similar to students' opinion as captured in table 4.4.2. Forty-seven percent, however, agreed. These were mostly administrative and management staff whose job roles are structured and mainly routine. Sixteen percent of the staff were, however, not sure if students' problems were satisfactorily handled since there is no feedback mechanism to assess work done. As to whether staff understand student needs, it was observed that 37% disagreed. Twenty percent were not sure whiles 43% agreed that they understood student needs. This is probably because student needs differ according to their levels and country of origin, and by understanding them, the staff will be able to satisfy their needs better. This can encourage the students to tell others about the good services of the institution to help increase their student population.

Table 4.6.3.2 Staff Perception Of Tangibles

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
SATISFIED WITH THE CLEANLINESS WITHIN BUILDINGS AND ITS SURROUNDINGS			
Disagree	6	20	
Not Sure	3	10	
Agree	21	70	**3.50**
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	
PUC HAVE ENOUGH FACILITIES TO ATTEND TO MY PROBLEMS			
Strongly Disagree	3	10	
Disagree	10	33	**2.47**
Not Sure	17	57	
Agree	0	0	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	
SATISFIED WITH THE CLEANLINESS OF THE WASHROOMS			
Disagree	8	27	
Not Sure	19	63	**2.83**
Agree	3	10	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Seventy percent of the staff agreed that they were satisfied with the cleanliness of the buildings and surroundings of the university campus. This is probably because of the University Management policy of continuous maintenance of the university facilities. It could also probably be due to the outsourcing of the campus cleaning services to a Cleaning company. Twenty percent, however, disagreed whilst 10% were not sure. It was also observed that 43% of the staff disagreed that PUC have enough facilities to attend to their problems. Fifty-seven percent were, however, not sure probably because most of these staff are working for the first time in an academic setting. With regards to the cleanliness of the washroom, 90% of the staff were not satisfied even though Management has outsourced the cleaning services, most staff observed that supervision was low hence the company was not leaving up to expectation. Ten percent, however, agreed that the washrooms were clean. This implies that the institution needs to provide an oversight responsibility to ensure that there is value for money in the services provided by the outsourced company.

Table 4.6.3.3 Staff Perception of Assurance And Communication

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
OVERALL INFORMATION ABOUT PUC IS EASY TO OBTAIN			
Strongly Disagree	4	13	
Disagree	8	27	
Not Sure	14	47	**2.60**
Agree	4	13	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	
PUC SERVICES ARE BY FAR BETTER THAN OTHER PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES			
Disagree	8	27	
Not Sure	6	20	**3.27**
Agree	16	53	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	
CLARITY OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE PROVIDED WHEN STUDENTS MAKE ENQUIRES			
Not Sure	6	20	
Agree	18	60	**4.27**
Strongly Agree	6	20	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The next variables were assurance and communication. Eighty percent of the staff agreed with the clarity of information and advice when students make enquiries, with 20% not sure since there is a no structured feedback mechanism put place. Though a good percentage of the staff agreed to the issues raised under assurance and communication, Forty percent of the staff disagreed that overall information about PUC was easy to obtain, with 13% also agreeing to that assertion. Forty seven percent were however, not sure probably because most of the staff are not properly oriented on the channels available to access information in the University. Twenty seven percent disagreed with the view that PUC's services are by far better than that of other private Universities. This means that from the previous experiences of some of the lecturers, they are able to compare the kind of services provided to the students and this will help PUC in benchmarking their services.

Table 4.6.3.4 Staff Perception of Processes And Procedures

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
COMFORTABLE WITH PROCEDURES IN THE PUC			
Disagree	6	20	
Not Sure	3	10	**3.50**
Agree	21	70	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	
LECTURERS CONFORM TO TIMETABLES			
Disagree	9	30	
Not Sure	5	17	**3.23**
Agree	16	53	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	
EXAMINATION RESULTS ARE RELEASED ON TIME			
Strongly Disagree	7	23	
Disagree	23	77	**1.77**
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

For the processes and procedures, Seventy (70%) percent of the staff indicated that they were comfortable with procedures in PUC except those listed in table 4.6.3.4 above which showed some gaps. It is observed that all staff conceded that examination results are not released on time. This may be probably due to several reasons notably unrealistic deadlines, other staff commitments as in serving on Committees and Boards, challenges with the students' results management software in inputting student data. Fifty three percent, however, agreed that lecturers conform to timetables.

Table 4.6.3.5 Staff Perception of Reliability

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	MEAN
STAFF AND LECTURERS PROVIDE THEIR SERVICES AT THE TIME THEY PROMISE			
Disagree	2	7	
Not Sure	15	50	
Agree	11	36	**3.43**
Strongly Agree	2	7	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	
STAFF PERFORM SERVICE RIGHT THE FIRST TIME			
Disagree	17	57	
Agree	9	30	
Strongly Agree	4	13	**3.00**
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	
STAFF AND LECTURERS TELL STUDENTS EXACTLY WHEN SERVICES WILL BE PERFORMED			
Disagree	2	7	
Not Sure	17	57	
Agree	7	23	**3.43**
Strongly agree	4	13	
TOTAL	**30**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

On reliability, 43% of the staff agreed that they provide their services at the time they promise to do so, however, 50% were not sure of this assertion. This is probably because other uncontrollable factors could affect staff inability to perform services at the time they promise. Forty three percent agreed that staff perform service right the first time. Fifty seven, however, disagreed with the assertion. Thirty six percent agreed that staff tell students exactly when services will be performed. This is probably because students are served with a copy of the calendar for each semester. Moreover, notices are frequently posted to inform students of any impending activity. Fifty seven (57%) however, were not sure of this assertion probably because the nature of their job. For example administrative staff have few personal interactions and may not be able to tell students when certain activities shall be performed. Seven percent disagreed because some lecturers as a policy do not even inform students before conducting tests.

The finding addresses the measuring gaps as suggested by Fitzsimmons (2004). Gaps that arise from management's lack of full understanding about how customers formulate their expectations based on a number of sources: advertising, past experience with the firm and its competitors, personal needs, and communication between management and its contact employees, and reducing the number of levels of management that distance the customer. According to Fitzsimmons (2004), service quality may result from a lack of management commitment to service quality or a perception of the infeasibility of meeting customer's expectations; however, setting goals and standardizing service delivery task can close the gap.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study; aimed at assessing service quality delivery in tertiary education from the stakeholders (students and staff) perspective aimed at drawing out other non-technical issues of quality to compliment the technical ones.

5.2 Summary of Findings

As indicated in chapter one, quality assurance has become a key issue as demand for tertiary education increases globally. It is therefore in the interest of tertiary education providers to add customer perspective of quality assurance that would integrate all aspects of quality to deliver value to students, staff and all other stakeholders. The study therefore made the following findings:

Research Objective One: General Level of Satisfaction among Students

It was found that the students have positive perception of the service quality of Pentecost University College (PUC). They are overall satisfied (84%) with the service quality provided by all the units of the University. There was no significance difference between the local and international students perception about the service quality of the University.

Research Objective Two: Current Level of Service Quality in PUC

From the analysis, it was found that the current level of quality in PUC is high. Considering the fact that service providers, staff and lecturers were willing to provide

quality service and give prompt responses to students' complaints (73%), it can be said that currently, there is quality service delivery. Additionally, students (53%) agreed that employees were very receptive to them and showed a friendly countenance to them. Seventy percent of the students agreed that the study curriculum was up-to-date, 78% indicated that the lecturers were research oriented and that lectures conform to the time table. Students were also satisfied with the channels of communication (55%). Though quality service delivery can be seen to be high, most of the respondents indicated that there was still more room for improvement.

Research Objective Three: Service Quality Factors of Value to Students

The research also found out that among service quality dimensions which were measured, the following were of value to students: empathy, assurance, processes and procedures. On empathy, it was found that 53% of the students disagreed that staff understood their needs. However, 80% of the students agreed that staff and management were professional in their work. With the processes and procedures, it was found that 66% of the students were not satisfied with how examination results are released in PUC.

Research Objective Four: Enrollment Factors for Local and International Students

The fourth objective dealt with enrollment factors for local and international students in PUC. It was found that forty two percent (42.6%) of the students from Ghana were attracted to the university based on their course of study, about (4.6%) 6 of them due to low fees, about 23.3% of them thus 30 of the local students were due to Christian values, 6.2% of them were due to parental choice with the remaining 23.3% of the local students due to other factors. The statistics on the international students that is students from Nigeria, Togo, South Africa and other countries outside Ghana also revealed that about

33.3% of them were attracted to the university based on their course of study, about (9.5%) two of them due to low fees, about 14.3% of them thus three of the international students were due to Christian values, 14.3% of them were due to parental choice with the remaining 28.6% of the international students due to other factors. Except for the reason of programmes being offered at PUC, students chose the university because of the quality of service, particularly the nature of the lecturers and the general ambience of the school which some described as being student centered.

Research Objective Five: Perception of Management and Staff of Quality in PUC

Finally, it was also found that almost all the staff and management; about 96.7% had a very good perception of service quality. This, however, gives a very good perception of the quality of service in the university to stakeholders. The only case of poor service quality identified by staff was the cleanliness of washrooms, which recorded 90% of staff dissatisfaction.

5.3   Conclusion

Service quality is one of the most crucial elements for every institution. It is therefore imperative for private universities in Ghana to deliver and monitor the quality of their services to achieve customer satisfaction and profitability at the same time. Additionally, the research has brought out the fact that students and staff perceive service quality delivery differently and it is observed that the service quality dimensions such as empathy, processes and procedures and tangibles were relevant to both students and staff. Moreover, the research also showed that among the paramount factors which influence local and international students to enrol in the University were course of study and quality. This will draw attention of the University management to develop strategies on

enhancing the nature of the courses which are run whiles improving other non-technical quality issues. In conclusion, service quality is good at PUC, as it is the reason for 22% of the sampled students for selecting the school. However, all respondents felt that there is more room for improvement.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

There is the need for management to improve upon their procedures and processes, as students were not satisfied with the examination process and the release of examination results.

The University management should continue to develop academic programmes which are competitive and yet address the challenges demands of industry and commerce. Consultations could be held with industry players to effectively structure programmes that could address the challenging gaps in commerce. This would enable the University to attract and retain both local and international students.

Management should strengthen its control mechanisms to ensure that outsourced companies deliver on their services to provide value for money.

There is also the need to involve students in taking decisions that directly affect them. This would let the appreciate problems that might arise in the implemetation of those decisions.

Management need to encourage staff and lecturers to continue to provide quality service to students as it is a determining factor for students to enroll at PUC. This could be done through the strenthening of the Quality Assurance Unit to provide continous training to staff on the need for effective customer service.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The current study attempted to assess the service quality delivery of private universities in Ghana from the perspective of regular students and staff including Management. Hence, it would be beneficial for future research to consider the following suggestions:

1. Expansion of the study to include all Evening and Weekend Students in the Pentecost University College to establish competitive benchmarks, track student defections to other universities caused by poor service delivery, and promotes a statewide service quality measurement and students satisfaction.

2. Using the same methodology, further studies can be carried out at the target university to examine the long term implications of service quality improvement efforts.

3. A comparative study could also be made on the perception of service quality of students in public universities as against that of private universities in Ghana.

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KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INSTITUTE OF DISTANT LEARNING

<u>SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE</u>

Research topic:

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SERVICE QUALITY DELIVERY IN TERTIARY EDUCATION - A CASE STUDY OF PENTECOST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE (PUC), GHANA.

This research is being undertaken to assess the service quality delivery in tertiary education and how it affects the satisfaction of stakeholders (students, staff and Management) with specific reference to Pentecost University College. This study is conducted as part of a graduate study at KNUST. It is my belief that you will provide very helpful answers to the questions below to enable me present a good report. Thank you in advance for your contribution to this research study.

Please respond to the following by either writing in the blank space provided or ticking the appropriate box.

SECTION ONE - RESPONDENT PROFILE

1. **Sex**
   Male ☐   Female ☐

2. **Age**
   18-20 ☐   21-23 ☐   24-26 ☐   Above 27 ☐

3. **Country of Origin**

Ghana ☐   Nigeria ☐   Togo ☐   Gabon ☐   Congo ☐   South Africa ☐
Others ☐

4. **Course of Study**
   - Accounting ☐
   - Human Resource ☐
   - Marketing ☐
   - Banking & Finance ☐
   - Insurance ☐

- Communication Studies ☐
- Commerce ☐
- Insurance with Acturial Science ☐
- Theology ☐
- Information Technology ☐

5. Level

100 ☐　　　200 ☐　　　300 ☐　　400 ☐

6. Faculty

FTM ☐　　　FBA ☐　　　FEHAC ☐

7. General Satisfaction of Quality in PUC

Poor ☐　　　Fair ☐　　　Good ☐　　　Very Good ☐　　　Excellent ☐

SECTION TWO - Responsiveness and Delivery (Please tick as appropriate)

No.		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
8	Willing to provide prompt service					
9	Employees are customer-friendly					
10	Always feel I have received the attention I needed					
11	Excellent total educational experience					
12	Always informed as to when the needed service will be provided					
Professionalism and Quality of staff-Empathy						
13	Staff are very professional in their work					
14	Staff are very knowledgeable about their work					
15	Courteous and polite staff					
16	Students' problems are promptly and satisfactorily handled					
17	Satisfied with student services					
18	Receive individual attention from staff					
19	Satisfied with the helpfulness of staff					
20	Staff understand my needs					
Tangibles & Quality of facilities						
21	Satisfied with cleanliness within buildings and its surroundings					
22.	PUC has enough facilities to attend to my problems					

23.	Teaching aids and other equipment look modern					
24.	Staff appearance					
25.	General outlook of the campus					
	Satisfied with cleanliness of the following facilities					
26.	Lecture Halls					
27.	Hostels					
28.	Washrooms					
29.	Administrative & Faculty Offices					
Assurance & Communication						
30.	Satisfied with the ease in getting information					
31.	My queries are usually attended to promptly					
32.	Clarity of information and advice provided when I make enquiries					
33.	Overall information about PUC is easy to obtain					
34.	PUC's services are by far better than that of other private universities					
35.	Prepared to recommend the school to others					
Processes and procedures						
36.	Is it simple and easy to follow process to receiving services in the PUC.					
37.	Time-consuming process					
38.	Comfortable with procedures in the PUC.					
39.	The procedure needs to be improved					
Processes of Teaching						
40.	The study circular are up-to-date					
41.	Lecturers are innovative in their delivery					
42.	Lecturers are research-oriented					
43.	Lecturers conform to timetables					
44.	Channels for expressing student complaints					
45.	Staff are knowledgeable in their field of teaching					
46.	I am happy with the delivery process					
47.	Lecturers communicate well with students					
48.	I feel comfortable at lectures					
49.	I get feedback on my academic progress					
50.	I get adequate practical examples					
51.	I am involved in classroom discussions					
Marking and Release of Results						
52.	I am happy with how papers are marked.					
53.	Examination results are released on time					
54.	I am aware of the marking procedures					

		Satisfaction with Service Quality Provided by offices					
		Satisfaction with Service Quality Provided by the following offices					
55.	Rector's Office						
56	Registrar's Office						
57.	Academic Registry						
58.	Finance Office						
59.	Faculty Offices						
60.	Library						
61.	Clinic						
62.	Reception						
63.	Hostels						
64.	Cafeteria						
		Reliability					
65.	Staff and lecturers provide their services at the time they promise to do.						
66.	Staff and lecturers tell me exactly when services will be performed.						
67.	Staff performs service right the first time.						

Other Information

68. What attracted you to enroll at PUC

………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Research topic:

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SERVICE QUALITY DELIVERY IN TERTIARY EDUCATION - A CASE STUDY OF PENTECOST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE (PUC), GHANA.

This research is being undertaken to assess the service quality delivery in tertiary education and how it affects the satisfaction of stakeholders (students, staff and Management) with specific reference to Pentecost University College. This study is conducted as part of a graduate study at KNUST. It is my belief that you will provide very helpful answers to the questions below to enable me present a good report. Thank you in advance for your contribution to this research study.

Please respond to the following by either writing in the blank space provided or ticking the appropriate box.

SECTION ONE - RESPONDENT PROFILE

8. **Sex**
   Male ☐   Female ☐

9. **Position/Designation**
   - Management ☐
   - Faculty ☐
   - Administration ☐

10. **General Satisfaction of Quality in PUC**

Poor ☐   Fair ☐   Good ☐   Very Good ☐   Excellent ☐

SECTION TWO - Responsiveness and Delivery (Please tick as appropriate)

No.		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	You are willing to provide prompt service					
2.	Management and staff are customer-friendly					
Professionalism and Quality of staff-Empathy						
3.	Staff are very professional in their work					
4.	Staff are very knowledgeable about their work					
5.	Staff are courteous and polite to students					
6.	Students' problems are promptly and satisfactorily handled					
7.	You give students individual attention					
8.	Staff understand student needs					
Tangibles & Quality of facilities						
9.	Satisfied with cleanliness within buildings and its surroundings					
10	PUC has enough facilities to attend to students needs					
11.	Satisfied with cleanliness of the following facilities					
12.	Lecture Halls					
13.	Hostels					
14.	Washrooms					
15.	Administrative & Faculty Offices					
16.	Teaching aids and other equipment look modern					
17.	Staff appearance					
18.	General outlook of the campus					
Assurance & Communication						
19.	Clarity of information and advice provided when I make enquiries					
20.	Overall information about PUC is easy to obtain					
21.	PUC's services are by far better than that of other private universities					
22.	Prepared to recommend the school to others					
Processes and procedures						
23.	Is it simple and easy to follow process to receiving services in the PUC.					
24.	Time-consuming process					
25.	Comfortable with procedures in the PUC.					
26.	The procedure needs to be improved					

		Processes of Teaching					
27.	The study circular are up-to-date					
28.	Lecturers are innovative in their delivery					
29.	Lecturers are research-oriented					
30.	Lecturers conform to timetables					
31.	Channels for expressing student complaints					
32.	Staff are knowledgeable in their field of teaching					
33.	I am happy with the delivery process					
34.	Lecturers communicate well with students					
	Marking and Release of Results					
35.	I am happy with how papers are marked.					
36.	Examination results are released on time					
37.	I am aware of the marking procedures					
	Reliability					
38.	Staff and lecturers provide their services at the time they promise to do.					
39.	Staff and lecturers tell me exactly when services will be performed.					
40.	Staff perform service right the first time.					
41.	When staff promise to do something by a certain time, they do so.					