Assessing Service Quality and Students' Satisfaction at Institute of Public Administration (IPA), in Unguja Zanzibar

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Abstract
This study evaluated service quality and students' satisfaction at the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) Unguja Campus. The specific objective in this study was to examine the Reliability, Competence and Means Communication of the employees in satisfying the students at the Institute of Public Administration. The study employed quantitative research approach. The sample size consisted of 241 students and survey questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive and Pearson correlation techniques were used to analyze the data from the respondents. The results showed that, (70%) means of communication of the employees, competence of the employees and reliability of the employee have positive correlation with students' satisfaction at the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) Unguja Campus. The results revealed further that, independent variable which was the means of communication of the employees had greater correlation with student's satisfaction at the Institute of Public Administration, Unguja (0.844, p < 0.01) with students' satisfaction compared to reliability of the employees and competence of the employees. The study concludes that, means of communication has significant correlation with students' satisfaction at the Institute of Public Administration. The study recommends that, the Institute of Public Administration should continue to implement the service quality standards in education to ensure continuous improvement of student's satisfaction
Keywords: Service Quality, Students' Satisfaction, Reliability of the Employees, Competence of The Employees, Means of Communication of the Employees

Introduction

In Zanzibar, the issue of student satisfaction in Higher Learning Institutions of Unguja is broad and one that requires some clarification. There are many difficulties involved in managing customer satisfaction and these are particularly complicated in the education sector (Mallya, 2013). Because education is a service, it is often challenging to increase both customer satisfaction and productivity concurrently. Thus, Institutions need information about service quality to help them benchmark their activities and market their products (Ngairo, 2014). The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) was established by the Act No.1 of 2007 to support the Public Service Reform Programmes which calls for effectiveness and efficiency in public service. Historically, IPA started 45 years back in 1970s, it was known as" CHUO CHA UCHUMI" (COLLEGE OF ECONOMICS) under the control of Ministry of Education Zanzibar. Courses provided were mainly based on commercial studies, material management and elementary accounting. It was situated at Vuga. In 1984, the Institute was renamed Zanzibar Institute of Training of Public Servants. Following Government endeavor to improve public servants by providing performance improvement programmes for lower and middle cadres, coupled with public service reform programmes and increasing demand of the public service in the country, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar decided to rename the Institute; Institute of Public Administration. It was the only Government Institution which provided training on Secretarial Duties, Public Administration and Human Resource Development and other related disciplines.

According to IPA prospectus (2016), for the past five years, IPA has been producing different number of graduates but, this number doesn't increase. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the reasons behind this trend. This study aimed at investigating the different measures that Higher Learning Institutions have taken in a bid to satisfy perception of the students through different aspects like academic advising, attitude and expectations, campus climate, career development, computer laboratories and libraries, curriculum, teaching and research activities.

Statement of the Problem

Service Quality has emerged as an important theme adopted as a competing factor in higher learning institution. Competitive pressures have forced universities to search for strategies to retain students. Among them being maintenance and improved services, at the same time attempting to balance their budget. With the increasing competition amongst higher education institutions to attract students, "quality" has emerged as a theme to be adopted. In an effort to remain competitive, Zanzibar Universities and Colleges are trying to develop new ways to improve their service delivery. In a university community, the perception of students creates their reality and their collective perception create the climate for them at campus. Thus, we need to open our minds to the realities of being a student in today's world and let student concerns become our concerns as well (Ishengoma, 2004).

Therefore, service quality and student satisfaction are two things that move single handedly if the quality of services is not all that good, then, it means that students will not be satisfied with the services that are provided by university. Failure in providing service quality, dimensions put Higher Educational Institutions into risk of not only losing its valued students but also its accreditation. Universities have realized that, without providing quality service, their long-term survival is impossible (Aly and Akpovi, 2001). From IPA graduation books

(2014 to 2017), data showed that between 2014 and 2016, the number of students who graduated was 1225 while in the year 2017, it had decreased to 1073. Therefore, the decreasing number of graduates might be influenced by different factors, including the number of students enrolled between each academic year, the competition from other Institutes and drop out from university. These factors can relate to the customer's satisfaction towards the service quality offered by the Institute. Also, the graduation books (2018 to 2020) show that, in the year 2018 the number of graduates was 708 compared to 2019, they increased a little bit to 860. However, in the year 2020, the number of graduates reduced to 664 which was far less compared to the last two years.

The IPA adopted various measures to tackle the problem including; using social media's and other source of information like radios and television advertisements to advertise their programs, setting tuition fees that are affordable to be paid by students, employ new staffs that are competitive in delivering the training so as to ensure quality service delivery to their customers. However, the number of graduates every year decreases instead of increasing at Institute of Public Administration (IPA). Therefore, this study was designed to answer the following questions
1) What is the reliability of the employees in satisfying the students at the Institute of Public Administration, in Unguja?
2) What are the competences of the employees in satisfying the students at the Institute of Public Administration, in Unguja?
3) What is communication of the employees in satisfying the students at the Institute of Public Administration, in Unguja?

The Value Percept Theory
Westbrook and Reilly (1983) argued that, the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm may not be the most appropriate model to explain customer satisfaction, as customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction is more likely to be determined by comparative standards other than expectations. They proposed a Value-Percept Disparity Theory, originally formulated by Locke (1967), as an alternative to the Expectation Disconfirmation Paradigm. Criticizing the predictive expectations used as a comparison standard in the traditional Disconfirmation paradigm. This theory is related with this study since it focuses at the value given to the product while the major theme of this study is assessing the service quality provided by the Institute of Public Administration in meeting the customers' satisfaction whereby customers referred to are the students who are the key respondents of the study. And therefore, if they are satisfied with the services delivery by the institute, it means that the value of product corresponds to the service delivered, while the vise versa means the services delivered don't correspond to the value of product.

Empirical Literature Review
Twum & Peprah (2020) conducted a study on the impact of service quality on Students' satisfaction. A cross-sectional adopted questionnaire survey involving 100 students was conducted using the SERVQUAL Model with five Service Quality dimensions; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empath and assurance. Data was analysed with SPSS software in generating the mean and standard deviation and the regression results. The results of the study showed that, service quality and its dimensions of assurance, tangible and responsiveness provided at the School of Business were very satisfied. However, empathy

was moderately satisfied. This Indicated that, students had high expectations on services provided at the School of Business. It has also confirmed that satisfaction can be 100% accounted for by service quality dimensions of Assurance, Tangible, Responsiveness, Reliability and Empathy.

Yahaya et.al (2020) concentrated on the institutional service quality and students' satisfaction: perceptions from the University for Development Studies. The study was a cross-sectional survey that employed the use of an adapted SERVQUAL questionnaire to collect and analyse primary data from a sample of 384 students of the University for Development Studies (UDS), in Ghana. The results showed that, most of the students were very satisfied with the quality of services provided to them by the University; as such, they were willing to recommend the University to others. Also, the study found the University to be doing well in terms of its services that are related to the tangibility construct than it is doing in the other dimensions especially the assurance. The study concluded that, the University is doing well in its tangible services, followed by reliability services, responsiveness, empathy and then the dimension of assurance in that order.

Lodesso et.al (2018) conducted a study on assessing the extent of service quality as evaluated in students' satisfaction with services received at Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institutions. To this end, data was collected from final-year undergraduate students. The Service Quality (SERVQUAL) questionnaire was administered; the responses to a total of 1425 completed questionnaires (of the 1500 distributed) were electronically captured to an EXCEL spreadsheet for analysis purposes. The collected data was analyzed using the methodology of the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) model. Findings indicated that, the majority of the elements that constitute attributes of service quality were perceived by students to be very poor. This is reflected in low satisfaction scores. It is recommended that HEIs identify those service areas that have high perceived importance scores and low perception scores on service-experience in order to redeploy some of the resources and implement measures to improve service quality.

Mashenene (2019) concentrated on examining the effect of service quality (SQ) dimensions on the students' satisfaction in higher education in Tanzania. A cross sectional questionnaire survey involving 200 students was administered at the College of Business Education, Dodoma Campus. A SERVQUAL Model with five SQ dimensions; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance was adopted in this study. To estimate the overall SERVQUAL index score, the difference of perceptions and expectations (P – E) was computed and finally the scores for each SQ dimension were summed and divided by five. Binary Logistic Regression Model was used to estimate the effect of SQ dimensions on students' satisfaction. The results showed that, the SQ index of all SQ dimensions and the overall SERVQUAL index was negative, implying that, the SQ was negative. The regression results indicated that, tangibles, reliability, empathy and assurance have negative effect on students' satisfaction. The study recommended that, the college management needs to improve tangibles, reliability, empathy and assurance in order to minimize students' dissatisfaction toward SQ of education services offered by the College of Business Education, Dodoma Campus.

Hassan & Shamsudin (2019), the main objective of this research was to measure the effects of service quality and corporate image on students' satisfaction and loyalty. Stimulus-

Organism Response (SOR) model was adapted in conceptualizing the relationship between the constructs. The scope of the study was students from TVET HLIs which is Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL). This study adapted quantitative method whereby questionnaires were used as instrument for data collection. 398 data were collected and analyzed using PLS-SEM. The measurement model indicated that the measurement items were reliable and valid. The structural model indicated that, there was significance and direct effects of service quality and corporate image on students' satisfaction and loyalty.

Latif et.al (2019), the aim of the study was to develop and validate the construct (Higher Education Service Quality) to measure the level of service quality in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Scale development was undertaken through focus group discussions with four different stakeholders of HE that included students, parents, teachers and employers. The scale was validated through data collection from seven different HE institutions. Based upon exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the study found six determinants of service quality in HEI. They were named as teacher quality, administrative services, knowledge services, activities, continuous improvement and leadership quality.

Methodology
A descriptive research design was used in this study. The reason of using this design is due to the fact that, descriptive studies involve study of a particular phenomenon at a particular time. The quantitative research design was employed in this study since it allows the researcher to explore, explain a phenomenon and interpret data statistically in a wider and easy way. Kothari (2004) the study focused at the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) Unguja Campus and it is in South Region. The main reason for selecting this Institute was that, it is a public institution which provides the courses which are managing the public and directly connected with public services and also the Institute launched a higher degree programme (four years back) but it seems that every year the number of graduates decreases. The target population for this study were 609 students which include; the Bachelor degree and Diploma students at the Institute of Public Administration, Unguja Campus. This study used stratified random sampling technique in selecting the respondents for the questionnaire survey. A sample of 241 respondents was used and considered as appropriate for a study of this nature. A questionnaire survey was used for data collection in this study. For data analysis, correlation analysis techniques were used.

Study Findings

a)   Profile of the Respondents

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	17-20	63	26.1%
	21-24	142	58.9%
	25-28	36	14.9%
Gender	Male	79	32.8%
	Female	162	67.2%
Level of study	Diploma	135	56%
	Degree	106	44%
Marital status	Married	89	36.9%
	Unmarried	148	61.4%
	Widows	4	1.7%

Source: Field data, 2022

Table 1 illustrate that; different age groups were involved in this study. The study counts 63 (26.1%) respondents aged between 17-20 years, 142 (58%) respondents aged between 21-24 years, 36 (14.9%) respondents aged between 25-28 years. The findings imply that, all age groups for University level were considered in this study and it has been found out that, most students of IPA were aged from 21-24 years. Table 1 also shows that, 162 (67.2%) of the respondents were female while 79 (32.8%) were male. The results showed that, both gender were involved accordingly in this study. However, the number of female respondents was higher compared to the number of male respondents. This implies that, the number of enrollment of female students is getting higher and female students were fully participating. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of education. The results showed that, 135 (56%) were students of Diploma level and 106 (44%) were students of Degree level. These results from the findings imply that, the number of diploma students was higher than the degree level as most of the students end up at this level and others join other institutions for their undergraduate programs. Table 1 also shows that, 148 (61.4%) of the respondents were unmarried while 89 (36.9%) respondents were married and 4 (1.7%) respondents were widows. Therefore, the data indicates that, most of the respondents were from the unmarried and matured group who were capable of providing relevant information.

b) Relationship Between Service Quality and Students' Satisfaction at Institute of Public Administration (IPA)

A Pearson correlation Technique was used to analyze data for this study. This technique was used in this study in order to explore the strength of the relationship between two continuous variables. Pearson correlation coefficients (r) can range from –1 to +1 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2014). The sign in front indicates whether there is a positive correlation (as one variable increases, so too does the other) or a negative correlation (as one variable increases, the other decreases). The size of the absolute value (ignoring the sign) provides information on the strength of the relationship. A perfect correlation of 1 or –1 indicates that, the value of one variable can be determined exactly by knowing the value on the other variable. On the

other hand, a correlation of 0 indicates no relationship between the two variables. Specifically, this study was designed to appreciate the strength of the relationship among
a)   *The reliability of the employees and students' satisfaction;*
b)   *The competence of the employees and students' satisfaction and;*
c)   *The means of communication of the employees and students' satisfaction*

Thus, to determine/ interpret the value of correlation, different authors suggest different interpretations; however, Cohen (1988, pp. 79–81) suggests the guidelines illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 of Person's correlation coefficient (r)

Values of Pearson's correlation coefficient	Interpretation
r = 0.10 to 0.29	Small correlation
r = 0.30 to 0.49	Medium correlation
r = 0.50 to 1.0	Large correlation

Source: Cohen (1988, pg 79 – 82)

The results of the Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) as seen in Table 2 show that, all predictor variables namely reliability of the employees, competence of the employees and means of communication of the employees correlate positively with the dependent variable; students' Satisfaction.

Table 3
Correlation Analysis

		Reliability of Employee	Competence of Employee	Mean of Communication	Students Satisfaction
Reliability of Employee	Pearson Correlation	1	.512**	.359**	.431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.035
	N	241	241	241	241
Competence of Employee	Pearson Correlation	.512**	1	.680**	.221**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.009
	N	241	241	241	241
Mean of Communication	Pearson Correlation	.359**	.680**	1	.844**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	241	241	241	241
Students Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.431**	.221**	.844**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	. 035	.009*	.000	
	N	241	241	241	241

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researcher computation, 2022

Basing on the strength of the relationship, it is clearly seen that, independent variable means of communication of the employees has greater correlation with students' satisfaction compared to reliability of the employees and competence of the employees. Table 3 indicates that, the correlation means of communication of the employees and students satisfaction at the Institute of Public Administration, Unguja is 0.844, p < 0.01; two-tailed, while the Person's correlation between reliability of employees and students' satisfaction, competence of employees and students' satisfaction at the Institute of Public Administration, Unguja are 0.431, p < 0.01; two tailed and 0.221, p < 0.01; two tailed respectively.

The thresholds of interpreting the strength of the correlation regardless the direction of the sign either positive or negative according to Cohen (1988), it could be concluded that, means of communication of the employees has large correlation with students' satisfaction at the Institute of Public Administration, Unguja (0.844, p < 0.01), while reliability of the employees has medium correlation with students' satisfaction at the Institute of Public Administration, Unguja (0.431, p < 0.01). In addition, competence of employees has small correlation with students' satisfaction at the Institute of Public Administration, Unguja (0.221, p < 0.01). This result is consistent with the result of Twum & Peprah (2020) whose study was on the impact of service quality on Students' satisfaction. The results of the study showed that, service quality and its dimensions of assurance, tangible and responsiveness provided at the School of Business were very satisfied. However, empathy was moderately satisfied. Also, the results indicated that, students had high expectations on services provided at the School of Business. It has also confirmed satisfaction can be 100% accounted for by service quality dimensions of Assurance, Tangible, Responsiveness, Reliability and Empathy.

Conclusion

This study focused at assessing the service quality towards students' satisfaction with the primary objective of finding out the relationship between students' satisfaction and service quality delivered at the Institute of Public Administration with three main objectives; reliability of employees in satisfying students, competence of employees and means of communication applied by the employees while communicating to the students. The study employed quantitative approach as it allowed the researchers to explore, explain a phenomenon and interpret data statistically in a wider and easy way. The findings were derived from responses of questionnaires of the students at the Institute of Public Administration. Various solutions were proposed by the participants of the study towards the quality of service delivered by the employees of Institute of Public Administration. Institute of Public Administration can really meet or exceed expectation of students and can have advantage to be more competitive in the market and improve students' learning by delivering a high level of service quality as a means of generating and maintaining loyal customers.

We believe this study has both theoretical and practical contribution on this research since it focuses at the value given to the product while the major theme of this study is assessing the service quality provided by the Institute of Public Administration in meeting the customers' satisfaction whereby customers referred to are the students who are the key respondents of the study. And therefore, if they are satisfied with the services delivery by the institute, it means that the value of product corresponds to the service delivered, while the vise versa means the services delivered don't correspond to the value of product. This means when the

students attach a high level of perceived credibility to a service, they are more likely to need that service again. Students or customers are willing to pay more for brand with reputation for quality. With credibility it comes higher levels of trust and satisfaction.

With this study, the community develops a full understanding on how service quality is important in satisfying students' expectations. It further enhances policy makers to design regulations that do foster service quality and student satisfaction in their institutions. At last, the study serves as reliable guide in designing service quality improvements that will meet the students' satisfaction.

Recommendations

Service quality in educational institutions has been widely accepted that it is one of the most important activities of meeting the expectations and the needs of students. It is important for providers of education service to understand students' expectations and perception of what constitutes a quality service in order to attract more students and serve their needs. The Institute of Public Administration should continue to implement the service quality standards in education to ensure the continuous improvement of students' satisfaction. IPA should describe how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective measures are taken into consideration in order to achieve their goals. Therefore, this means that, educational institutions are committed to review their activities systematically, can look ahead considering where they want to be and when they should take necessary steps to ensure they get there.

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