

Original Research Article

**SERVICE QUALITY, PRICE AND STUDENT SATISFACTION IN MODIBBO
ADAMA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, YOLA. ADAMAWA STATE NIGERIA**

ABSTRACT

Satisfying students is an important factor towards quality university education because students are the major customers of universities. This study analysed service quality, price and student satisfaction in Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola . The major objective is to assess the relationship between service quality, price and student satisfaction. The study used a sample size of 215 students from different departments and schools in the university. The study analysed data using regression, Anova and independent t-test. The study found that tangibles, assurance and price were significantly associated with student satisfaction while reliability, responsiveness and empathy were not significantly related to student satisfaction. The study recommends that management of public universities in Nigeria should engage qualified lecturers, universities should encourage departments to open student support services and management should consider continue with the current pricing.

KEYWORDS: Service Quality, Price, Student Satisfaction, Nigerian University

INTRODUCTION

University education is continuously being sought after by many individuals across the world. The desire for qualitative university education by individuals has drawn attention of scholars to examine the relationship between service quality and student satisfaction in universities (Ginsberg, 1991; Pereda, Airey and Bennet, 2007; and Uka, 2014). Therefore, any undertaking to measure the quality of service in higher education could be diverse and complex. In attempting to measure perception of service quality by students, universities are confronted by numerous measurement techniques. However, the major challenge is in the identification and implementation of the most suitable method for measuring service quality taking into cognisance the procedures and costs involved. In a typical higher institution of learning, there are different stakeholders. These include students, teaching and non-teaching staff, employers, government and its funding/supervisory agencies, auditors, and assessors, among others (Harvey and Burrows, 1992). Consequently, each stakeholder has its own

perspective on quality, which is in turn influenced by its own interest and goals. Of all the stakeholders, it is believed that the most significant customers of universities are students and their parents (Pereda, Airey and Bennet, 2007).

The quality of service in universities is of immense importance due to increase in the competition for applicants between the universities. Gronroos (1984) argued that the universities were increasingly engaging themselves to measure service quality in a professional way just like business organisations involved in services marketing. Increased competition and rapid changes in the educational environment coupled with numerous challenges have made universities to recognise the importance of student satisfaction to their survival. Hence, paying more attention on student satisfaction prepare universities to satisfy student needs and also enable them to develop a system for evaluating how effectively they meet or exceed such needs (O'Neill, 2003).

The Nigerian university system has gone through a lot of transformation since the establishment of the first university in 1948. Universities are now being established by the federal government, various state governments, faith-based organisations as well as private individuals all over the country. However, the Nigerian university system is besieged with numerous problems. These include; financial crisis, poor infrastructure, brain-drain, erosion of university autonomy, graduate unemployment, volatile and militant students' unionism, activities of secret cults, examination malpractices and sexual harassment (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009). Also, Kazeem & Ige (2010) contended that one major issue that has consequences on service quality in Nigerian universities is the inadequate number and quality of teachers. Analysing the problems from the perspective of universities of technology, Adesoji & Abiodun (2010) found that poor funding, inadequate and poor facilities, shortage of adequate and qualified academic staff, disproportionate class size and very little financial support to students in universities of technology in Nigeria, constituted major problems.

57 These problems, coupled with the persistent rise in demand for university education led to the
 58 deregulation of the university system and the introduction of private universities. The main
 59 reason for licensing private universities in Nigeria is to among other things, increase access to
 60 university education, address the problem of scarce educational resources, raise alternative
 61 ways of funding university, improve the quality of university education, enhance efficiency,
 62 align with practice in other parts of the world and address the problem of irregular academic
 63 calendar (Utulu, 2001; Oyebade 2005; and, Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). It was expected that
 64 the deregulation of university education, which resulted in the licensing of new private
 65 universities will help address the myriad of problems being faced by the Nigerian university
 66 system. But it was soon discovered that deregulation also has its own resultant problems. For
 67 instance, private universities account for less than 7% of enrolment in Nigerian universities
 68 due to high tuition fees being charged by them (Bamiro, 2015). Other problems include:
 69 profit-making motive, widening of social gap and sacrificing of quality for profits (Ajayi &
 70 Ekundayo, 2008). Given these challenges facing the university system in Nigeria, this study
 71 sets out to examine service quality and student satisfaction in Nigerian public universities
 72 using the Modibbo Adama University of Technology (MAUTECH), Yola, Adamawa State,
 73 Northeast Nigeria as a case study. Other authors like Ajayi & Ekundayo (2008), and Adesoji
 74 & Abiodun (2010), have all carried out studies on quality in the Nigerian university system
 75 but none has focused on the combined effects of service quality and price in determining
 76 student satisfaction. Also, there has been no study that focuses exclusively on Adamawa
 77 state, Northeast Nigeria. Consequently, this study will also attempt to investigate the
 78 combined effects of both service quality and pricing on student satisfaction.

79 **Objectives of the study:**

- 80 1. To asses' relationship between service quality and student satisfaction of university
 81 education.

82 2. To asses relationship between price and student satisfaction of university education

83 3. To reveal the gender difference in satisfaction among students.

84 **Statement of Hypotheses:**

85 The study will test the following hypotheses:

86 H₀₁ Tangibles and student satisfaction of university education is not significantly related.

87 H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between reliability and student satisfaction of
88 university education.

89 H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between responsiveness and student satisfaction of
90 university education.

91 H₀₄: Assurance and student satisfaction of university education are not significantly
92 related.

93 H₀₅: Empathy and student satisfaction of tertiary education are not significantly related.

94 H₀₆: There is no significant relationship between price and student satisfaction of university
95 education.

96 H₀₇: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among gender.

97

98 **LITERATURE REVIEW**

99 Service quality could be defined as a reflection of the customer's perception of
100 specific dimensions of services being provided by an organisation. (Zeithaml and Bitner,
101 2003). According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), service quality has been
102 defined as a consumer attitude showing his perception of the overall superiority and
103 excellence of a service provider. Abdullah, (2006) argued that Lewis and Booms (1983) were
104 perhaps the first to define service quality as a measure of how well the level of service being
105 delivered meets the expectations of the customer. There is a distinction between expected
106 quality and perceived quality. In the context of customer satisfaction, perceived quality is
107 always given a considerable thought. According to Abu Hasan (2008, p. 165), perceived
108 quality is defined as "the consumer's judgment about an entity's overall experience or

superiority”. Thus, perceived quality is the customer’s interpretation of the quality of service being received. Service quality could also be measured from past experiences. Sultan and Wong (2012, p. 759) state that “past experience provides a brief cognitive standard and helps in evaluating the standard of service quality of present and/or future service encounters”.

Satisfaction has also been defined from various perspectives. For example, Kotler and Clarke (1985) define satisfaction as a state felt by a person who has experienced the performance of duty or a result that meets his expectations. Oliver (1997, p.13) defines satisfaction as “the consumer’s fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under- or over fulfilment”. This implies that satisfaction could be negative or positive. Devasagayam, *et. al* (2013, p. 3) state that “satisfaction is an ongoing, dynamic process”. Thus, customer satisfaction can be achieved during the process of the consumption of the service, and not only after it has been consumed.

Service Quality and Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is a very important issue for all universities and their managements since it is used to measure quality. However, many quality experts believe that the measurement of student satisfaction at higher education institution is arguably one of the biggest challenges facing managers (Cloutier & Richards, 1994). The university is an educational and a service providing entity, where the service is often produced and consumed at the same time. Therefore, university managements must consider how the quality of their services is being perceived by students and how the level of satisfaction of students is being enhanced by these services. In educational institutions like other service providing organisations, service quality has an impact on customer satisfaction (Ekinci, 2004). In some cases, the dissemination of the right or the wrong information affects the expectations of

134 quality. If what is communicated to the customer, does not match the experience, the result
135 will be a negative perception of quality (Solomon, 1996).

136 Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) introduced the SERVQUAL scale.
137 SERVQUAL stands for service quality. SERVQUAL is based on the assumption that there is
138 a gap between expectations of the customer and perceptions of performance of the service. It
139 has two parts with 22 items divided into five dimensions namely reliability, responsiveness,
140 assurance, empathy and tangibles.

141 The SERVQUAL scale has been utilised by some scholars in carrying out studies on
142 student's satisfaction with varying results. According to Uka (2014), social and physical
143 factors of an institution's services could significantly influence the degree of attractiveness
144 and the students' overall satisfaction. Social factors consist of student-faculty members'
145 relationships, student-administration members' relationships and student-student
146 relationships. The physical factors represent the class size and the environment, technology
147 used during the lectures, library and computer laboratory, wi-fi connections in the campus,
148 cafeteria and all student related service facilities.

149 Pereda, et al (2007), carried out a study on service quality and student satisfaction.
150 The study focused on full-fee-paying postgraduate students from non-EU countries at one
151 institution in the UK. Using Lehtinen and Lehtinen's 1991 framework, a Q-sort and factor
152 analysis were undertaken. Results of the study revealed that four factors of service quality:
153 recognition; quality of instruction and interaction with faculty; sufficiency of resources; and
154 aspects of physical quality play significant roles in student satisfaction. Students were also
155 found to have attached much importance to their institution's reputation.

156 Hanaysha, et al (2011) conducted a study on service quality and students in Malaysian
157 universities. The findings generally indicate that the majority of students are satisfied with the

158 facilities provided by universities and there was a strong correlation between all the five
159 dimensions of service quality and student satisfaction.

160 Ali & Abdirisaq (2014) carried out a study on student satisfaction in three universities
161 in Mogadishu using both purposive and stratified sampling techniques. The result showed
162 that there is a positive significant relationship between SERVQUAL dimensions and
163 students' satisfaction. It was also found that empathy recorded a significant relationship with
164 student's satisfaction.

165 Kontic (2014) investigated the potential to apply the SERVPERF scale for assessing
166 service quality in Serbia. The response of the students revealed that the most important
167 dimensions were Assurance and Reliability, followed by Responsiveness and Empathy.

168 **Price and Student Satisfaction**

169 Price is any amount exchanged for the consumption of a commodity. Zeithaml (1988)
170 stated that the customer's perceived price can be considered to be what is given up or
171 sacrificed to get a product or service. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) defined price as the
172 amount of money exchanged for a product or service, or the sum of the values that customers
173 exchange for the benefits of acquiring the product or service. The price of the service can
174 have a significant influence on customer's perceptions of quality and satisfaction.

175 Some scholars have carried out studies on the relationship between price and student
176 satisfaction. For instance, Alderman, et al, (2001) studied school quality, school cost, and the
177 public/private school choices of low-income households in Pakistan and the result showed
178 that even the poorest households use private schools extensively, and that patronage of
179 private schools increases with increase in income. Hemelt & Marcotte (2011), using data on
180 all U.S. public 4-year colleges and universities from 1991 to 2006, found that a \$100
181 increase in tuition and fees would lead to a decline in enrolment of about 0.25 percent. They
182 also found little evidence that large tuition increases result in disproportionate enrolment

responses. Akinyemi, et al (2012) carried out a study of education financing reforms in Nigeria the results indicated that the household demand for university education is inelastic meaning increase in tuition fees/other charges does not significantly affect enrolments.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in higher educational institutes has attracted some scholars (Uka, 2014, Pereda, et al, 2007 and Abdullah, 2006). However, the framework of this study was based on modified SERVQUAL. Parasuraman, et al, (1988) introduced the SERVQUAL scale. SERVQUAL has two parts with 22 items divided into five dimensions namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. SERVQUAL defines five dimensions for service quality as follows:

- (1) Reliability is the level to which the knowledge, skills learned and services are offered accurately and timely.
- (2) Assurance encompasses the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence to customers.
- (3) Responsiveness is the willingness to assist customers and provide prompt service. In difficult situations, it could be regarded as the ability to respond effectively.
- (4) Empathy refers to the attention and care that the institution may offer to customers as well as convenient operating hours.
- (5) Tangibles symbolises the appearance of buildings, equipment, and staff.
- (6) Price is introduced into the modified SERVQUAL for this study.

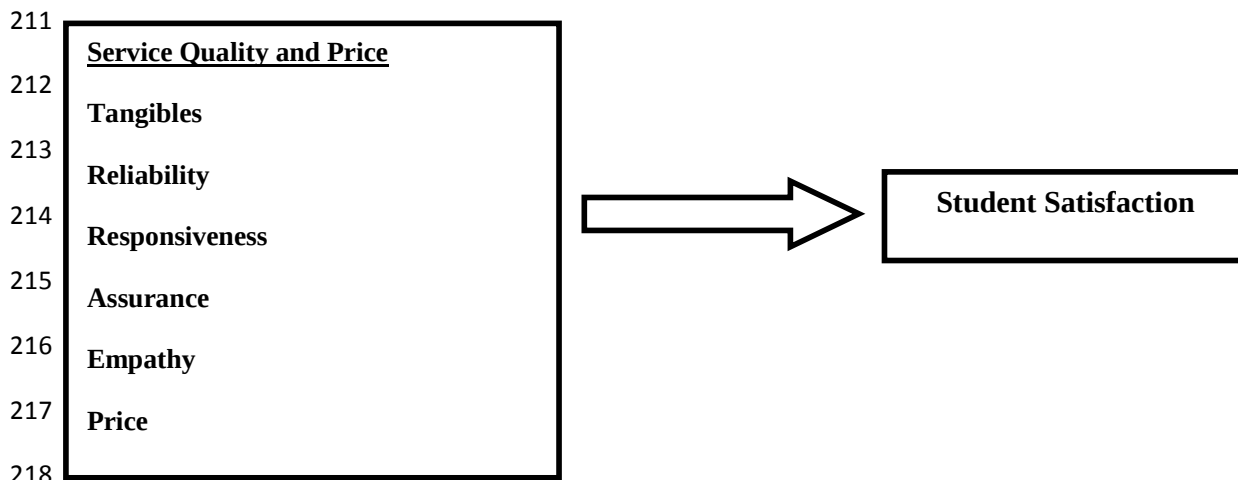
SERVQUAL scale has been extensively used in measuring service quality in higher education, for example, (O'Neil and Wright, 2002; Abdullah, 2006; Yeo, 2008 and Ali & Abdirisaq, 2014). However, as stated earlier, this study utilises the modified SERVQUAL in

207 which a new variable (Price) is introduced into the model. Consequently, the framework of
208 this study is illustrated as follows:

209

210 Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



219 Source: Modified from Parasuraman et al (1988)

220

221 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

222 The research design is confirmatory research through hypotheses testing. The study
223 attempt to confirm the theoretical relationship between the independent and the dependent
224 variable of the study, this study adopt survey method and cross-sectional data was obtained.
225 The study utilized regression, Anova and independent T-test to analyse the result.

226 This study adopts the survey method of research design. Cros-sectional primary data
227 were obtained through the administration of questionnaire to students of Modibbo Adama
228 University of Technology Yola. The research instrument was designed using components of
229 the SERVQUAL. Respondents were required to tick appropriate answers designed on a five-
230 point Likert scale. Ranging from “STRONGLY AGREE” to “STRONGLY DISAGREE”.
231 Normality, collinearity, linearity and homoscedasticity were checked and found to be within

the range to run regression. The model for the research was developed using regression analysis.

234

Regression model:

Where;

ST = Satisfaction

TG = Tangible

RE = Reliability

RP = Responsiveness

AS = Assurance

EP = Empathy

PR = Pricing

The regression equation is expressed as:

$$ST = \alpha + \beta_1 TG + \beta_2 RE + \beta_3 RP + \beta_4 AS + \beta_5 EP + \beta_6 PR + e$$

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7$ are coefficients to estimate and e is the error term.

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLE TECHNIQUE

The researcher distributed 250 questionnaires and 230 were returned of out of which 15 was substantially unfilled, so the used 215 respondents. The study used stratified random sampling techniques, the basis for strata was department and level of students

Source of data

The study used primary source of data. Data were obtained through the administration of questionnaire to students of Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola. The research instrument was partly adopted from Parasuraman, et al (1988) the SERVQUAL and adjusted to fit the area of the study and pricing aspect was drawn based on in-depth analysis of

255 available literature. Respondent were required to tick appropriate scale designed on a five
256 point Likert scale.

257 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

258

259

260 **Table 1: Reliability Values for Service quality, price and satisfaction**

Construct	Reliability
TG	0.786
RE	0.731
RP	0.698
AS	0.778
EP	0.822
PR	0.759
ST	0.737

261 Source: Field Survey, 2015.

262

263 Table 1 shows the reliability of independent and dependent variables. Many scholars have
264 argued what constitute a strong and weak reliability values, this study will adopt the views of
265 Guilford (1965) that 0.70 cronbachs value indicates a high level of reliability and 0.35
266 indicates a low value.

Table 2 Correlations

	ST	TG	RE	RP	AS	EP	PR
ST	1						
TG	0.396**						
RE	0.464**	0.448**					
RP	0.457**	0.455**	0.561**				
AS	0.516**	0.372**	0.587**	0.609**			
EP	0.421**	0.353**	0.457**	0.529**	0.538**		

PR	0.233**	0.153**	0.178**	0.104**	0.217**	0.078**	
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.025	0.009	0.128	0.001	0.257	
N	215	215	215	215	215	215	215

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

267 Source: Field Survey, 2014

268

269 **Analysis of Combined Effect**

270 **Table 3: Model Summary^b and ANOVA^b Statistics**

Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Summary	.602 ^a 7 ^a	0.363	0.344				
Regression				59.503	9.917	19.717	0.000 ^a
Residual				104.620	0.503		
Total				214			

271 a. Predictors: (Constant), PL, PR, PM, PE, PD, PP, PC

272 b. Dependent Variable: ST

273

Table 4: Standard coefficient result of the combined effect of variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.566	0.276		2.051	0.042
TG	0.170	0.076	0.145	2.227	0.027
RE	0.142	0.082	0.130	1.737	0.084
RP	0.105	0.083	0.099	1.267	0.207
AS	0.266	0.090	0.234	2.967	0.003
EP	0.120	0.068	0.123	1.762	0.079
PR	0.108	0.053	0.117	2.052	0.041

a. Dependent Variable: ST

From the above data as indicated in table 4 of combined effect of regression, tangible, assurance and pricing have significant relationship with student satisfaction in Nigerian public education as shown with values of TG with 0.027, 0.003 and pricing with 0.041 which are all below 0.05 significant level. Hypotheses 1, 4, and 6 null hypotheses rejected while alternated accept. Hypotheses 2, 3, and 5 null hypotheses are accepted with value of Re 0.084, Rp with 0.207 and EP with 0.079 which are all higher than the significant level of 0.05.

This result is partly in line with the findings of Hanaysha et al (2011) of student being satisfied with tangibles in university education. However, this result is not in full conformity with the result of Ali and Abdirisq (2014) that students are satisfied with service quality dimension in university education. The satisfaction of the student with tangibles is no doubt an obvious phenomenon considering high intervention by Nigerian government in university education. Also pricing in Nigerian public universities especially to citizen are not exorbitant considering is not up to 10% of what private universities are charging as tuition fees. So, student being satisfied with pricing is the reflection of the low tuition fees and other charges. None satisfaction of students on other service quality dimension may be due to decades of strikes and crises in Nigerian university which erode the mutual relationship between students and lecturers. And also, it may be due to shortage in quality and quantity of academic staff.

Table 5: Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ST	Male	113	3.3805	.76408	.07188
	Female	102	3.2990	.98694	.09772

Table 6: Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	7.638	.006	.681	213	.497	.08151	.11976	-.15455	.31757
ST Equal variances not assumed			.672	189.760	.502	.08151	.12131	-.15778	.32080

294 The study also found that there is no significant mean difference between male and female
295 students with satisfaction with university education. As indicated with values of 0.497 and
296 0.502 which are > 0.05 , this can be seen in table 6. Therefore, in hypothesis 7, the null
297 hypothesis is maintained.

298

299 **Conclusion.**

300 Service quality in Nigeria universities has become a serious issue considering the complaint
301 of stake holders on poor quality of graduate being produced by Nigerian public universities
302 despite enormous high investment by government in the tertiary institution. This study has
303 analysed the satisfaction derived by customers (students) in terms of quality of services
304 rendered by this institution through modified SERVQUAL which included price. The study
305 drew some implications for management to form basis for policy and strategy in order to
306 improve the quality of services rendered in Nigeria universities

307 **Management implication and of the study.**

308 Management of the university should ensure more components of tangible are enhanced even
309 though the relationship between tangible and student satisfaction is significant, the correlation
310 is not strong.

311 Management of Modibbo Adama University of technology needs to establish a strong base
312 for students to feel services rendered to them as customers are reliable. As the result showed
313 reliability and student satisfaction relationship is not significant, more needs to be done in
314 places like having qualified lecturers, adhering to university calendar and insisting in error
315 free record.

316 Management should ensure that lecturers are willing to help students, lecturers should never
317 be too busy to respond to students and lecturers should always stick to their lecture time
318 tables.

319 Assurance showed significant relationship with student satisfaction. Therefore university
320 management should try more to maintain components of assurance to keep satisfying
321 students.

322 The university should encourage departments to appoint student support officers in order to
323 hasten friendly relationship between students and staff. The university authorities should also
324 create more convenient operating hours for student.

325 Finally, the result indicated that students are satisfied with pricing in the university. Therefore
326 management should maintain the present trend in pricing.

327

328

329 Limitations and suggestions for further research

330 This study was conducted in only one public university. Therefore there is a need to broaden
331 the population to involve students of many other universities.

332 The study has not looked at the differences in variation among students in different levels and
333 age, so future studies can analyse that.

334

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