
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SERVICE QUALITY AND STUDENTS PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN DELTA STATE

SURPRISE EREMWANARUE OSAIGBOVO

*Department of Business Administration and Marketing
Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria.*

And

PROF. CHARLES G. E. SALAMI

*Department of Business Administration and Marketing
Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria.*

Abstract

This study examined a comparative analysis of service quality and student performance in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State. Furthermore, this study examine critical factors in service quality dimensions (tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy) that contribute most to student academic performance and satisfaction in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State. This study was conducted using a set of questionnaire which were properly and duly completed by 200 Bachelor degree students from two tertiary institutions (Delta State University, Asaba Campus and Western Delta University, Oghara) in Delta State. The study used correlation and analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical tools in analyzing it results. The results of this study provided support for the Parasuraman's SERVQUAL (1985) which related to factors contributing to student's satisfaction. The study also concluded by sporting out two of the service dimensions that are very important (Empathy and assurance). It was recommended that organization should further research and consider service quality in other level of education such as the primary schools and secondary schools respectively.

Keywords: Comparative analysis, service quality, students' performance, tertiary institutions.

Introduction

Quality service delivering is vital to every organization success. It is the force that propels corporate marketing and financial performance. The origin of quality service found its root in the business sector of the global economy in the 1990s because of increased foreign competition and deregulation which forced organization to provide quality service to its customers (Antony, Antony and Gosh, 2004). Many businesses, industries, entrepreneur, organizations etc. recognized that their profitability or their continued existence depends on the loyalty and satisfaction enjoyed by their customer's which in turn results in the development of customer's perception. In an effort to grow market share, most organizations now focus on meeting or exceeding their customer's expectations.

The tertiary education service sector has become one of the fastest growing sectors in Nigeria. The speed of growth of this sector is as a result of increased student enrolment, reduced funding of public universities by government, increased stakeholder's expectation of the service provided by an institution, increased competition from private universities and conversion of middle level institutes by public universities to care for excess demand of students. Quality service in education is therefore gaining prominence with the main stay remaining, high service delivery for enhanced student satisfaction and retention.

Education is viewed by government as a social service to the stakeholders, while to the private sectors going into education, it is seen as a very good source of revenue generation that is the main reason why they try to do all within their power to provide quality services that is or will be acceptable to the people. In today's academic environment, education has become a vital medium or instrument for promoting economic growth and resource development of a country's citizen and to promote equal educational opportunities for her citizenry irrespective of ethnic, religious, disabilities, gender and age (Griemel-Fuhrmann and Geyer, 2003). The level of service quality provided by any academic institution dependent on the course quality it renders both in its departmental level and its faculty levels. The performance of a student is vital to the survival of any academic institution most especially in our present day generation where there are new private and public universities competing for the few available students.

A student's perception of quality of education offered by a university be it private or public affects the intellectual behavior of such a student positively or negatively. Without perceived value, there is really no good reason for a student to choose a particular university

over the other since all most all universities offer same courses. Academic institutions should ensure that services rendered to the public must give the student an impression whether positive or negative about the services rendered. Outstanding service quality offered by an institution and perceived by a stakeholder to be effective gives organizations a competitive edge over its close competitors (Elliot and Shin, 2002). Thus, service quality perceived can be a product of the evaluating a number of services encountered and this can range from encounters with staff, lecturers and departmental heads. When an businesses, industries, organizations etc. provides services that exceed customer expectation, the stakeholder views the service to be of high quality but when they fails to meet stakeholder's expectations; their services will be adjudged to be of poor quality.

Students are the most important stakeholders in the tertiary education industry and satisfying their needs is the primary objective why the institutions are into business. Thus, the satisfaction of student with the type services rendered by an institution has been a challenge to many institutions and its been observed that student's satisfaction has resulted to student's retention, attraction and attraction of fresh students. Many tertiary institutions try to evaluate and compare the services so provided with other institutions in order to attain competitive edge or advantage and to attract new entrants into their organization. Thus, to attract more students, meet the need and retain such students, every tertiary institution provider has to know and acknowledge the student's perceptions or view and expectations towards the service quality so provided. Every institution must know and ensure that the service so provided gives the stakeholder (students) a positive impression about it. Hence, this study examined a comparative analysis of service quality and student performance in selected tertiary institutions in Delta state.

Statement of the Problem

Many tertiary institutions programs had been denied accreditation because the academic regulatory body views the level of quality as well as the level of services been rendered by those institutions as not meeting the required standard set by it. Some areas these institutions failed has to do with their weak core course structure, provision of the basic infrastructure needed to teach the course, failure to attain the required standard curriculum set up by the academic regulatory body and their inability to produce and possess the right caliber of lecturer with the skills and basic qualification to handle vital task in their institution.

Measuring student performance with respect to the level of service rendered by any institution of higher learning has gone beyond just theoretical discussion. This has resulted to increased competition amongst various university and other higher learning institution,

funding problems, providing the necessary basic infrastructure, pressure by members of governing bodies on institutional accountability and changes in student's demography have allowed for public scrutiny of the different tertiary institutions.

In order to handle the growing interest faced by these institutions, many universities have put in place measures to meet the expectations of diverse constituents of the university be it the legislature, boards, university administrators, staff, students and parents. The measure of institution's service delivery is placed mainly on the university rather than the main stakeholders (students) who is the output or product of the institution. Consequently, measuring of quality service in higher institutions often focuses on areas that add to the prestige of the university with regard to test scores of fresh students, expenditure on research, infrastructure, faculties and scholars produced by the institution.

Many institutional measure of quality service delivery may be of no importance to students. Students do have contact with the institution in different ways and each time they form impressions on the quality service they have encountered. These encounters should be noted and use as an indicator to measure the student perception since service delivery in higher institutions occurs through different service providers over many years, there are a number of decision points at which the student has the opportunity to remain with the current institution or defect to another. Despite the importance of measuring performance of student in the university, many institutions are measuring quality indicators other than student perceptions of institutional services. There is limited literature related to the impact of service quality measures on specific student demographic variables. The research on student satisfaction measures with university services in higher education is lacking, and thus warrants further study. This study examined the comparative analysis of service quality and student academic performance in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria.

Purposes of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between quality service and academic performance of students in the tertiary institution. Several factors in service quality that will be discussed and analyzed are tangibility, assurance, responsiveness and empathy.

The specific purposes of this study are:

- i. To examine the relationship between tangibility of quality service and academic performance of students.
- ii. To ascertain the relationship between responsiveness of service quality and student performance.
- iii. To examine the relationship between assurance of quality service and academic performance among students.

- iv. To determine the relationship between empathy in service quality and students performance

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. To know the extent of which tangibility of service affect academic performance of students?
- ii. To determine the level of which responsiveness in service delivery affect academic performance of students?
- iii. To ascertain the degree to which service assurance affect academic performance of students?
- iv. To examine the extent to which empathy in service quality affect academic performance of students?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H1:** There is no positive relationship between service tangibility and students academic performance.
- H2:** There is no positive relationship between responsiveness in quality service and students academic performance.
- H3:** There is no positive relationship between service quality assurance and academic performance of student.
- H4:** There is no positive relationship between empathy in service and students performance.

Significance of the Study

Developing service quality has been proved across a lot of industries. Service quality that can be applied to tertiary institutions, especially to private tertiary institution, distinguishes them from their counterparts (public).

Private tertiary institution in attempt to competing at academic levels with other tertiary institution should offer an added advantage to champion quality, service to their student.

Notably, it can be assumed to be an important root to the competitive excellence for the service oriented organization as by neglecting these aspects of quality service will put such organization at a competitive disadvantage compared to its counterparts because most of its revenues are enrollment related thus affecting its financial health.

This study is vital because it is going to ascertain the degree of service quality and level of academic performance among students either of public tertiary institutions or private tertiary institutions.

The result from this study can be useful tool to give valuable information on the elements and dimensions, which have been given a priority by students in assessing the quality of services and satisfaction.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was cross sectional survey design which was intended to investigate comparative analysis of service quality and student performance in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State. The population of the study comprised a total of 344 final year students from both private and public universities and in this case, Faculty of Social Sciences in Western Delta University, Oghara and Faculty of Management Sciences, Delta State University, Asaba Campus, both in Delta State. The simple random technique was used. Thus, the sample size for the study was 200. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, titled: “comparative analysis of service quality and student academic performance in tertiary institutions” (CASQSAPTI). The items were structured on a 5 Likert scale response format of strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed, and strongly disagreed valued at 5,4,3,2 & 1 respectively. The questionnaire consists of three sections A, B and C respectively. Section A provides the necessary demographic information of the respondents, Section B measurement of service quality in tertiary institutions, while Section C was concerned with the measurement of student performance.

The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Management Sciences based on its content and face value for obtaining meaningful data. In order to establish the internal consistency of the items, Cronbach alpha formula was used. In doing this, copies of the instrument were administered to 20 students outside the proposed sample for the study. Data was collected and the reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach alpha statistical method which showed a reliability index for tangibility .834; responsiveness .888; assurance .817; while empathy .858, and with these figures, the instrument was considered reliable for use. The instruments for data collection were administered and retrieved on the spot by the researchers and two research assistants. The statistical tool employed to analyze research questions one, two, three and four were the mean and standard deviation, while the analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the four hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The p-value was used to take decisions on the hypotheses. If the p-value is less

than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and if the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained.

Results

The Results of the findings are presented as follows:

Questionnaire Distribution

Out of the three hundred (300) questionnaires distributed to the two faculties, only two hundred (200) which represent seventy eight percent (78%) of the total questionnaire distributed were returned and properly filled, the remaining 20% were not retrieved and 2% were not properly filled by the respondents.

Table 1: Distributions and Return of Questionnaire

Options	No Distributed	No Returned	% Returned	No not returned
Delta State University, Asaba Campus	150	134	67%	16
Western Delta University, Oghara	150	66	33%	84
Total	300	200	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The above table indicates that a total of three hundred (300) questionnaires were distributed with one hundred and fifty (150) distributed to each school. Out of the 150 distributed to the Faculty of Management Sciences, Delta State University, Asaba Campus, 134 were duly completed and returned which represent 67% while 66 were duly completed and returned from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Western Delta University, Oghara which represent 33%. A total of 16 distributed questionnaires were not duly completed and returned by Delta State University, Asaba Campus and a total of 84 distributed were not duly completed and returned by Western Delta University, Oghara for reasons best known to the individual concerned. The total number of questionnaire usable for the data presentation and analysis is 200

Table 2: Genders of Respondents

Gender	No	%
Male	95	48
Female	105	52
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the table above 95 (48%) of respondents were male and 105 (52%) of the respondents females. This indicates that the male respondents were less in number than the female respondents.

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

	No	%
15 – 20 yrs	120	60
21 – 25 yrs	65	33
26 – 30 yrs	15	7
31 and Above	-	-
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the table above, the age distribution of respondents which was spread across various age ranges/brackets shows that the highest concentration of respondents fell within the age of 15-20 years which account to 120 (60%) of respondents. It reveals that 21-25 years category accounts for 65 (33%) of respondents, 26-30 years were just 15 (7%) of the respondents. None of the respondent fall under 31 and above (0%).

Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents

	No	%
Married	20	10
Single	180	90
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table above indicates that only 20 (10%) of the respondents were married while 180 (90%) of the respondents were single.

Table 5: Department of Respondents

	No	%
Accounting	60	30
Banking & Finance	40	20
Business Administration	65	33
Marketing	20	10
Economics	15	7
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the above table, 60 (30%) were from Accounting, 40 (20%) were from Banking and Finance, 65 (33%) were from Business Administration, 20 (10%) were from Marketing Department and 15(7%) Economics Department.

Table 6: Level of Respondents

	No	%
100	35	17
200	42	21
300	75	38
400	48	24
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the above table, 35 (17%) of respondents were in 100 level, 42 (21%) of respondents were from 200 level, 75 (38%) of the respondents were in 300 level and 48 (24%) of respondents were in 400 level.

Table 7: Religious Background

Religion	No	%
Christian	180	90
Muslim	18	9
Other Religion	2	1
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The table shows that, 180 (90%) of the respondents were Christians, 18 (9%) of the respondents were Muslim, while 2 (1%) belong to other religions.

Research Question 1

Table 8: To what extent does tangibility affect academic performance?

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Statement 1	40	20.0	25	12.0	60	33.0	45	23.0	30	12.0
Statement 2	60	33.0	45	23.0	20	10.0	35	14.0	40	20.0
Statement 3	70	38.0	30	12.0	20	10.0	40	20.0	40	20.0
Statement 4	68	35.0	40	20.0	22	10.5	40	20.0	30	14.5

Source: Researchers' Field survey, 2017

From the table above, it shows the pattern of responses to the research question one, it was observed in the statement. One which was “appearance of lecturers affect academic performance” 40(20.0%) strongly agreed, 25(12.0%) agreed, 60(33.0%) undecided, 45(23.0%) disagreed and 30(12.0%) strongly disagreed. Statement two which is “Layout of classrooms affect academic performance” 60(33.0%) strongly agreed, 45 (23.0%) agreed, 20(10.0%) undecided, 35(14.0) disagreed and 40(20.0%) strongly disagreed. For statement three, “Lighting in classroom affect academic performance” 70(38.0%) strongly agreed, 30(12.0%) agreed, 20(10.0%) undecided, 40(20.0%) disagreed and 40(20.0%) strongly disagreed. Statement four which “Appearance of building and grounds affect academic performance” 68(35.0%) strongly agreed, 40(20.0%) agreed, 22(10.5%) undecided, 40(20.0%) disagreed and 30(14.5%) strongly disagreed.

Research Question 2

Table 9: To what extent does responsiveness affect academic performance?

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Statement 1	80	40	110	58.5	0	0	10	1.5	0	0
Statement 2	145	65	50	33.5	5	1.5	0	0	0	0
Statement 3	160	70.5	39	29	1	0.5	0	0	0	0
Statement 4	100	50	80	40	0	0	15	8.5	5	1.5

Source: Researchers' Field survey, 2017

From the table above, it was observed in statement one “Availability of personnel to assist affect academic performance” 80(40%) strongly agreed, 110(58.5) agreed and 10(1.5%) disagreed. In statement two, “Availability of lecturers to assist affects academic performance” it was observed that 145 (65%) strongly agreed, 50(33.5%) agreed and 5(1.5%) were undecided. According to statement three, “Lecturer’s capacity to solve problems when they arise can affect student academic performance” 160(70.5%) strongly agreed, 39(29%) agreed and 1(0.5%) undecided. For statement four, “Staff capacity to solve problems when they arise affect academic performance” 100(50%) strongly agreed, 80(40%) agreed, 15(8.5) disagreed and 5(1.5%) strongly disagreed.

Research Question 3

Table 10: To what extent does Assurance affect student academic performance?

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Statement 1	94	48	66	30	0	0	30	20	10	2.0
Statement 2	80	40	100	50	15	8.5	5	1.5	0	0
Statement 3	80	40	110	58.5	10	1.5	0	0	0	0
Statement 4	72	39.0	110	51.5	0	0	18	10	0	0

Source: Researchers’ Field survey, 2017

From the above table, it is observed in statement one “Registration is timely and error –free” 94(48%) strongly agreed, 66(30%) agreed, 30(20%) disagreed and 10(2.0%) strongly disagree. Statement two “The university keeps its records accurately” it is observed that 80(40%) strongly agreed, 100(50%) agreed, 15(8.5%) undecided, and 5(1.5%) disagreed. For statement three which says “Lecturers are generally reliable”, 80(40%) strongly agreed, 110(58.5) agreed, 10(1.5%) undecided. Statement four state “Staff sincere interest in solving students problem” 72(39.0%) strongly agreed, 110(51.5%) agreed and 18(10%) disagreed.

Research Question 4

Table 11: To what extent does empathy affect academic performance?

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Statement 1	140	56	38	24	0	0	22	20	0	0
Statement 2	72	30	89	45	12	11	27	14	0	0
Statement 3	60	30	92	38	8	5.5	31	20	9	6.5
Statement 4	110	52.0	76	40.0	14	8.0	0	0	0	0

Source: field survey, 2017

From the table above, statement one “Administration has student’s best interest at heart”. It is observed that 140(56%) strongly agreed, 38(24%) agreed, 22(20%) disagreed. Statement two “access to computer facilities is accommodated with student’s convenient” is observed that 72(30%) strongly agreed, 89(45%) agreed, 12(11%) undecided and 27(14%) disagreed. Statement three “access to study room is accommodated with student convenience”. It is observed that 60(30%), strongly agreed, 92(38%) agreed, 8(5.5%) undecided, 31(20%) disagreed and 9(6.5%) strongly disagreed. Statement four “staff are willing to give students individual attention”. It is observed that 110(52.0%) strongly agreed, 76(40.0%) agreed, and 14(8.0%) undecided.

Table 12: Correlation Coefficient among the Variables

To conduct the correlation coefficient, the SPSS statistical package (version 21) was used.

CORRELATIONS

		Tangibility	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
	Pearson Correlation	1			
Tangibility	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	200			
	Pearson Correlation	.364	1		
Responsiveness	Sig. (2-tailed)	.282			
	N	200	200		
	Pearson Correlation	.244*	.358**	1	
Assurance	Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	.001		
	N	200	200	200	
	Pearson Correlation	.219	1.000**	.355**	1
Empathy	Sig. (2-tailed)	.912	.000	.001	
	N	200	200	200	200

Source: Researchers’ Field Survey, 2017.

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

The table above present a correlation coefficient for the 4 variables used as indicators of service quality. The result of the correlation analysis shows an overwhelming positive correlation among the entire variables. It is observed from the correlation table that tangibility do maintained a positive correlation with student academic performance ($r = 0.364$), responsiveness do maintain a positive correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.244$). On the other hand, assurance maintained a positive correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.358$). Empathy maintained a positive correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.355$). With the correlation result as observed in the correlation table it could be affirmed or said that tangibility, assurance, responsiveness and empathy are all good predictors of good service quality in tertiary institutions and all have a positive impact on a student's academic performance.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between tangibility and academic performance.

Table 13: ANOVA
Tangibility Influence

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.151	1	14.541	3.795	.081
Within Groups	1525.634	401	4.821		
Total	1525.785	402			

Source: Researchers' Field Survey (2017)

On the Anova table, the mean square observed between and within group is at 14.541 and 4.821 respectively, while the f-value is observed to be $f=3.795$ with a significant value of 0.081. The critical value of the Anova f calculated-value as observed from the Anova table with a 0.05 level of significant is at $f = 3.00$ which is thus less than the calculated f -value of $f=3.795$. This implies that there is a significant relationship between tangibility and student's academic performance and the differences in variance of tangibility are not due to chance. The decision rule therefore is to accept the alternate hypothesis that states that there is a significant relationship between tangibility of the respondents and students academic performance, going by the decision rule. By implication, the result portrays that tangibility does have a significant impact on a student's academic performance in an institution.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between responsiveness and students' academic performance.

**Table 14: ANOVA
Responsiveness Influence**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.755	4	14.101	3.571	.031
Within Groups	1463.805	329	6.732		
Total	1476.56	333			

Source: Researchers' Field Survey (2017)

From the table above, the mean square for the Anova analysis observed between and within group is at 14.101 and 6.732 respectively, while the f - calculated value for the statistic is at $f=3.571$ with a significant value of 0.031. With a 0.05 level of significance, the table value for the Anova statistic will be $f = 3.31$ which is also less than the calculated f -value of $f = 3.571$ with a significant value of 0.031. This implied that there is a significant relationship between responsiveness of the respondents and this has a significant and positive relationship with a student's academic performance. Therefore, the decision rule is to accept the alternate hypothesis that state that there is a significant relationship between the responsiveness and a student's academic performance of an institution.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between assurance and the academic performance of a student.

**Table 15: ANOVA
Assurance Influence**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.364	4	13.842	3.476	.032
Within Groups	1416.722	401	3.615		
Total	1423.086	405			

Source: Researchers' Field Survey (2017)

The table above presents the Anova result for the analysis conducted for hypothesis three. As the result has shows, the mean square value for between and within is observed to be 13.842 and 3.615 respectively, while the f – calculated value is observed to be 3.476 with a significant value of $sig.=0.032$. Comparing this value with the tabulated value of the f - statistic at 0.05 level of significance which is $f = 2.42$, the calculated f - value is greater than the table f – tabulated value. By implication, it means that there is a significant relationship between assurance of the respondents and this relationship is significantly related to the

academic performance of students of an institution of higher learning. The decision rule therefore is to accept the alternate hypothesis that state that there is a significant relationship between assurance and the academic performance of students.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant relationship empathy and the academic performance of a student.

**Table 16: ANOVA
Empathy Influence**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.141	3	12.138	3.912	.042
Within Groups	1413.116	356	3.645		
Total	1417.257	359			

Source: Researchers' Field Survey (2017)

The above presents the Anova result for hypothesis four. From the result, the mean square for between and within group are observed to be 12.138 and 3.645 respectively, while the calculated f - value is observed to be $f = 3.912$ with a significance value of $= 0.042$. At 0.05 level of significant, the table f-value is observed to be $f = 2.41$ which is less than the calculated f – value of the analysis. By implication this means that there is a significant relationship between empathy and a students academic performance. The decision rule thus is to accept the alternate hypothesis that state that there is a significant relationship between empathy and the academic performance of students of higher institutions.

Discussion of Results

The researcher questions indicate the five service dimensions (tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) and overall service quality that has strong relationship with student academic performance. The result is consistent with the findings by Ham and Hayduck (2003) and Bigne, Molinerand Sanchez (2003) that found that there is a positive relationship between service quality and student satisfaction (academic performance).

Based on hypothesis one which was stated that there is no positive relationship between tangibility and student academic performance. But the findings of this study have proven that there is a positive relationship between tangibility dimension of service and student academic performance. During the course of this study, in some of the face to face interaction, most students stated that one of the major factors that draw their attention to their school was the environment, buildings, field, lecture rooms, hostel accommodation etc.

this then agrees with the findings of Cuthbert (1996). He stated in his findings among the service quality dimension in SERVQUAL tangibility has a higher positive relationship with student performance.

In hypothesis two, which stated that there is no positive relationship between responsiveness and student academic performance? it was observed in this study that most people tend to do well in anything they are doing when they get the right and quick response to their questions or needs. As quick responses further encourage students or individual in their pursuit of their dreams or goals. This is to say that the null hypotheses were rejected based on this study as responsiveness has a positive relationship with student academic performance. This is in line with the findings of LaBalanc and Nguyen (1997) who stressed in their findings that reputation is tied closely to manager's capacity to meet customer needs as quickly as possible.

Hypothesis three stated also that there is no significant relationship between assurance and student academic performance. But this study has given us reasons to reject the null hypothesis. As it was observed from the response from the respondents that assurance is a major key that can bring about satisfaction and boast performance of any student. For example, students are meant to understand that when they do the needful and at the right time, they are sure of when they will graduate and in terms of their needs, they can always build their trust on the school management as well as academic and non-academic staff for such needs to be meant and at the right time. This is in line with the study carried out by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1996) who stated that assurance and reliability is a major key as it help students to build trust, knowledge, courtesy, confidence etc. which is part of assurance dimension in service quality.

During the test for hypothesis four which stated that there is no positive relationship between empathy and student academic performance. It was observed that empathy tend to have the strongest hold on student as it is ranked by students as the best among all the service quality dimension. As a result of this findings, Empathy has been rated 40% by respondent of this study followed by assurance 25%, tangibility 20% and responsiveness 15%.

In this study, empathy has the strongest relationship followed by assurance, tangibility, responsiveness and reliability. In addition, the relationship between overall service quality and student academic performance is also important. This means that the relationship is stronger than moderate. Seeing that tangibility has a stronger relationship than responsiveness brings the researchers' back to what Walton (1990) has been stressing earlier, seeing it as a compliment to the services provided in higher education in such to enhance academic performance and student satisfaction. Silverman (2000) also agreed and

the way they see it, the peripheral aspects and facilities will have a direct and indirect effect on the evaluation of higher institution. It is found that although the dimensions in service quality are important but assurance is found to be one of the most important (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1996). Consistent with what has been depicted by Selladurai (2000) in his research, stating that although all dimension of service quality are actual useful in explaining student performance but that does not mean that all dimensions are significant. It proves that assurance is one of the dimensions that are significantly related with satisfaction meaning that students in higher institutions are actually concerned with the knowledge, courtesy and ability to inspire trust and confidence.

Curbert (1996) in his study has mentioned that most important contribution to academic performance and satisfaction actually due to the service encounter. Selladurai (2000) also concluded the same opinion by seeing it from perspective of communication. This finding corresponds with Danielson (1998) found that when student expressed satisfaction with their college experiences, these situation seem to be centered on involvement and contact with people.

By sharing the same fundamental nature, it confirmed that empathy plays a crucial and an influential role towards performance because referring back to the meaning of empathy. It defined as “being able to communicate care and understanding through the interpersonal skills of the staff and student-friendly, policies and procedures”. O’Neil and Palmer (2004) said empathy is a dimension that is significant with “satisfaction, although the strongest support for this finding is actually from Maushart (2003) as he found that when student show a high satisfaction with their college, experience, it is due to the formal and informal contact with their lecturer. It is understandable to the reason why the contact with the lecturer. Seem to play an important role because according to Clewes (2003) the process of teaching and learning is actually the central part to student’s evaluation of service quality it could have an effect towards student’s evaluation and academic performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings derived from the study, it is clear that service quality has significant positive relationship with student academic performance. Thus, it confirms what other literature try to suggest here, which is by improving service quality, it may potentially improve the student’s academic performance as well and that is the priority of the private higher institutions due to the fact that they have to compete to earn interest from the students to study there. It is important to verify here that from the analysis, two dimensions in service quality empathy and assurance are the most critical factor in explaining student’s satisfaction and academic performance whatever that need to be done to increase empathy and assurance

in service quality therefore will help students to give better evaluation to their performance as well as their satisfaction. Based on the result of the findings of this study, it is believe that if this research work is improved upon by other researchers for further studies, it will help boast the research on service quality to a student's academic performance in higher institution of learning. It will also help various institutions of higher learning to provide quality services that will always capture or satisfies the aspirations, views and perceptions of students.

Many students in higher institutions of learning in present day Nigeria do not really enjoy quality service from their academic environment because the necessary infrastructural facilities needed to aid their studies are not there. Students' learning in an environment not conducive for learning does not impact anything on the students. So it will be vital for other researchers to put forward some of the basic infrastructural facilities needed by institutions of higher learning to give their students quality service for the money paid as tuition to the institution.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Service quality, has been widely accepted as an antecedent of performance and neglecting it may jeopardize the competitiveness of any organization as satisfaction and competitiveness of a service related organizations are inter-related.
2. That denying or neglecting the importance of service quality is the same like, risking the continuation and the competitiveness of the institution because by taking it into consideration service quality can actually explain almost 70% variance in satisfaction.
3. Tertiary institutions should focus on critical factors in service quality especially empathy and assurance mean that the institution is paving a way towards a letter evaluation in satisfaction.
4. The result has clearly show that empathy dimension of service quality is been rated the best and as such academic institute or institute of higher learning should pay more attention to it (empathy) in terms of service delivery.

References

- Antony, J., Antony, F. J. & Ghosh, S. (2004). Evaluating Service Quality in a UK Hotel Chain: A Case Study, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(6), 380-384.
- Bigne, E., Moliner, M. A., & Sanchez, J. (2003). Perceived quality and satisfaction in multi service organizations: The case of Spanish public services. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 17 (4), 420-442.
- Clewes, D. (2003). A Student-centred Conceptual Model of Service Quality in Higher Education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 9(1), 69-85.
- Cuthbert, P. F. (1996). Managing service quality in HE: is SERVQUAL the answer? Part 2. *Managing Service Quality*, 6(3), 31-35.
- Danielson, C. (1998). Is satisfying college students the same as decreasing their dissatisfaction? AIR 1998 Annual Forum Paper. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research 38th, Minneapolis,
- Elliot, K. M., & Shin, D. (2002). Student satisfaction: an alternative approach to assessing this important concept. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 24(2), 197-209.
- Griemel-Fuhrmann, B., & Geyer, A. (2003). Students' evaluation of teachers and instructional quality-analysis of relevant factors based on empirical evaluation research. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28 (3), 229-238.
- Ham, L. & Hayduk, S. (2003). Gaining competitive advantages in higher education: analyzing the gap between expectations and perceptions of service quality. *International Journal of Value-Based Management*, 16(3), 223-242.
- LeBlanc, G., & Nguyen, N. (1997). Searching for excellence in business education: an exploratory study of customer impressions of service quality. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 11(2), 72-79.
- Maushart, J. (December 4, 2003)

Study says students are satisfied with college experience. *The Daily Aztec*, San Diego State U.MN, May 17-20, 1998), US Michigan.

O'Neill, M. A., & Palmer, A. (2004). Importance-performance analysis: a useful tool for directing continuous quality improvement in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 12(1), 39-52.

Osaigbovo, J.A. & Salami, C.G.E. (2017). Comparative Analysis of Service quality and student performance in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State. Unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation, Delta State University, Abraka.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L (1996). The behavioral consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(2), 31-46.

Selladurai, R. (2000). A look at Total Quality Managements (TQM) Effectiveness” Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Conference of the Production and Operations Management Society, April 1-4, San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A.

Silverman, L. (2000). *Critical Shift: The Future of Quality in Organizational Performance*, Non-Profit World, November-December, 27-28.

Trunbull, M. (1993). *What is Total Quality Management?* The Christian Science Monitor, May 3, 12.

Walton, M. (1990). *Deming Management at Work*, New York: Putnam/Perigee.