MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY DELIVERED TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

The conceptualised and critically examined the thinking behind the quality of services rendered to undergraduate students at a state-owned institution in South Africa. The population was 106 and 106 questionnaires were administered and 87 were returned. The approach used for this study was a quantitative and a survey research method using a questionnaire to elicit information from the third-year undergraduate students of the Business Management Department at the University was followed. Findings from the study revealed that modern facilities were used to deliver quality services of teaching, research, and supervision of students. Many respondents attested to study guide materials at the Department of Business Management. Some of the students have issues with languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa, and isiNdebele. Several recommendations were made which include: the need to have efficient, effective, and quality services delivered on a regular basis. The need to have more recent and diverse materials that could meet the broad needs of the students. The study made credence on effective and efficient services rendered by lecturers at different intervals in teaching, learning and supervisory roles. Improved consultation hours of lecturers and tutors could assist students' inadequacy in study and materials required.

Keywords: Measuring service quality, undergraduate students, business management, Public University.

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1. Introduction

In contemporary society, there has been an increased level of competition among private and public organisations (Cardona & Bravo, 2012). This was due to the value placed on quality-orientated services in present-day organisation (Cardona & Bravo, 2012). At present, the level of discourse in higher educational systems with relation to service delivery offered to students has been on the increase. Cardona and Bravo (2012) and Ladhari (2008:65-67) argue that an increased demand for quality services requires educational practitioners be responsive to the evaluation of the curriculum that guides the growth and development of their products and services.

Institutions are mandated to educate students in the significance of quality access to education through teaching and learning offered as service delivery on a yearly basis (Cardona & Bravo, 2012:24). The essence is the goal of establishing higher institutions in the present-day information economy. On a similar note, Cardona and Bravo (2012:24) emphasise that students' ratings of teaching and learning in higher education have become the norm in the present-day educational system, since the overall satisfaction is of much concern.

However, Sharabi and Israel (2013:309) decry the competition for potential students as a challenge, resulting in less supply than the market demands. Higher education institutions continue to operate under pressure to create results of performance even while meeting informational needs of the students lessened. Provision of support would foster lecture and research fellowship in a multidimensional environment. This could be achieved through enhanced culture of quality service delivery to customers (Ravert & Merrill, 2008). The multidimensional environment calls for alternatives where academics require adequate training in evidence-based areas of specialisation where practices are more practically oriented. Ravert and Merrill (2008) conclude that there is a need to enhance and promote academic training through development of posters, symposiums and semi-evidence-based lectures and research that would increase their zeal to deliver quality services in institutions.

2. Conceptualisation of this study

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Provision of support would foster lecture and research fellowship in a multidimensional environment. This could be achieved through enhanced culture of quality service delivery to customers (Ravert & Merrill, 2008). The multidimensional environment calls for alternatives where academics require adequate training in evidence-based areas of specialisation where practices are more practically oriented. Ravert and Merrill (2008) conclude that there is a need to enhance and promote academic training through development of posters, symposiums and semi-evidence-based lectures and research that would increase their zeal to deliver quality services in institutions.

3. Literature review

Service quality is not a new term in the present-day knowledge economy. It has three different schools of thought. Firstly, it unveils the concept of services; secondly, the quality of the services being rendered and, thirdly, the relationship that exists between the services rendered and the quality of such services. When considering or addressing the issue of services, what comes to mind for every individual is the satisfaction derived from such services (Zarei, Arab, Rahimi, Rashidian & Tabatabei, 2012). The satisfaction derived from the service rendered helps to quantify its immense value to the customers. Studies by Naido and Nundlall (2010), Parasuraman et al. (1998), Al-Alak and Alnaser (2012), Khodayari and Khodayari (2011), and Zarei et al. (2012) established that service is the assistance rendered to someone based on his or her kinds of needs required.

Students' who enrol at any higher institution of higher learning do so based on their information needs (Harvey & Knight, 1996). The transfer of knowledge and skills received/acquired by undergraduate students is usually done through experts in their field of study. The feature of service delivery comprises intangibility, inseparability and heterogeneity (Harvey & Knight, 1996). Reflections of services rendered to undergraduate students in higher institutions of learning are anchored in consistency of transformative fitness and value of research and development of knowledge (Zarei et al., 2012; Al-Alak & Alnaser, 2012; Okon & Akpoiroro, 2015). Service quality delivery as a field of study has gained popularity since the early 1980s (Parasuraman et al., 1998).

The view of quality of any services rendered places expectation with performance. Parasuraman et al. (1998), and Okon and Akpoiroro (2015) argue that services are the measurement of how well customers match delivery of goods to their expectations. The measurement is dependent on the following five factors: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility (Parasuraman et al., 1998; Okon & Akpoiroro, 2015). The reliability of the service tries to unpack the ability that helps to produce services in a way that is accurate and dependable (Parasuraman et al., 1998; Okon & Akpoiroro, 2015). Responsiveness is the willingness of the organisation or the owner of the

business to help customers in the timely/prompt provision of the service (Parasuraman et al., 1998; Okon & Akpoiroro, 2015). Service delivery is perceived as being satisfactory when there is a positive response (Khodayari & Khodayari, 2011; Parasuraman et al., 1985). When negative signs occur, it perceives that services are unsatisfactory. However, the individual analyses must aggregate the overall performance of the services in terms of the satisfaction of meeting the customers' needs. The concept of quality in relation to this study reflects true and actual products delivered to the customer. Quality has evolved from time immemorial, although it is still new to some people in terms of service delivery (Shauchenka & Buslowska, 2010:87). Lovelock and Wirtz (2007:418) emphasise that quality can be viewed from five perspectives; namely transaction view, product-based approach, user-based approach, discussion approach, and value-based approached (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007:418). The interpretation of the perspectives is provided below.

The transaction approach views an advance on the quality as synonymous to innate excellence. Resounding marks gave premises of standards of high achievement. The viewpoint here is that it could often be applied to the performance of the visual arts. Most of the time, people learn to recognise high quality not only through the experience gained from repeated exposure, but also through managers or customers of quality. These help them achieve the desired results. The product-based approach sees quality as a precise and measurable variable. Differences in quality reflect differences in the amount of ingredients or attributes possessed by the product or service. However, this view fails to account for differences in the tests, needs and preferences of individual customers or even entire market segments (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007:418).

Okon and Akpoiroro (2015) emphasise that the measurement of quality service is a difficult task when a proper measurement task is carried out. Determining a quality product is also a difficult task considering the numerous products out there. However, the quality under investigation has to do with the satisfaction derived from a particular service rendered to customers. It was noticed that several services exist. Among these are medical services, transport services, humanitarian services, information services, to mention just a few. The product of services rendered varies from one person to another, irrespective of context (Okon & Akpoiroro, 2015).

The quality of any service could consider several factors, although dependent on the customer who requires it. The quality of service is seen from the angle of simple structure, capability and ease of use of products or facilities (Mahapatra & Khan, 2007). Brookes and Becket (2007) and Okon and Akpoiroro (2015) emphasise that during assessment of the quality of services rendered to customers, internal and external views of customers and the environment come from are significant. These help to evaluate the knowledge gap in the services. The five dimensional SERVQUAL scales as mentioned by Parasuraman et al. (1998), Harvey and Knight (1996), and Okon and Akpoiroro (2015) are better instruments when dealing with quality assessment of service delivery to customers.

Wang et al. (2004) argue that customer-perceived service quality is one of the primary success factors in order to gain a suitable and sustained competitive advantage for both manufacturers and service providers. However, the benefit of such service quality attribute to multiple causal relationships. A study by Coetzee, Van Zyl and Tait (2013) report that service quality offered in the banking sector has revealed causal relationships between service quality, client satisfaction and client loyalty. These make the benefits associated with service quality vague if not well address, managed and measured (Coetzee et al., 2013).

A study by Jain, Sinha and Sahney et al. (2011) suggested that, when dealing with service quality, multi-dimensional and hierarchical constructs are involved. This can be narrow down to the programme quality (input quality and academic facilities, university–industry interaction, curriculum) and quality of life (support facilities, non-academic processes, and campus and interaction quality) (Jain et al., 2011). Based on studies by Jain, Sinha and Sahney et al. (2011), the author of this study drew a distinction between service qualities in institutions of higher learning based on students' expectations.

Studies by Oliver (1993) and Coetzee et al. (2013) emphasised that the importance placed on service quality and service satisfaction continues to be on the increase. The quality and satisfaction are indicators of competitiveness in order to explore the benefit associated with the marketing strategies used by academics and practitioners. The relationship and nature of the two sides of the coin (customer evaluations and satisfaction with service quality) are now research paradigms explored in present-day studies.

The service producer tries all it can to please the consumer in order to have direct and continuous contact. Many factors affect the level of satisfaction according to Grönroos (1983). This includes service production, extensive involvement of people, security measures and creation of standards. For example, it could be difficult to handle security brokerage and at the same time, keep the service quality level when thousands of entrepreneurs are working out there.

To avoid communication gaps and other service failures, Gonzalez and Garzia (2008) argue that it is important for the organisation to know what the customers are thinking about their services, so that failures can be avoided and improvements can be made. They need to know which attributes to measure and which factors can be taken from different tools to identify customer satisfaction. Time and costs also affect customer satisfaction, and a quick response can be crucial for satisfying the customer. Maxham (2001) states that if problems in service delivery occur, the result can be that customers have to wait.

Gonzales and Garzia (2008) raise questions that address the organisational problem in the midst of rendering quality services to customers. This concerns what organisations should do in order to address the expectations of customers. Meeting these expectations requires organisations to implement such services in recovery of the systems. It is also important to combine different techniques to obtain the best results

in identifying customer satisfaction. When these are combined, improved service quality is actualised. Gonzales and Garzia (2008) reiterate that, when there is proper mechanisms in place, meeting users' information needs, and service quality could lead to becoming a final product.

The effectiveness of service delivery by employees involves a process of redesigning the final product and commitment to the organisational growth in the production and delivery process. Schneider and Bowen (1985) and Tornow and Wiley (1991) established a correlation between the attitude of employees, customers and employers when dealing with perceptions of service quality. They found that when customers are satisfied with services rendered to them, there is a direct effect on the perceptions placed on the employees and employer or organisation and management practices. Schneider and Bowen (1985) and Tornow and Wiley (1991) further note that customer satisfaction does not relate to values and attitudes of employees only, but also to the overall effectiveness of the organisation as correlates have a direct impact on the values and attitudes of the organisation.

The expectation of students' information needs in terms of the acquisition of knowledge should correlate with the perception of the actual products offered by the organisation (O'Neill & Palmer, 2004:42). This attestation also supports what Guolla (1999) states that the perceived satisfaction of students towards service quality delivery is quite different from customers who just go to the shop and buy goods. This anticipation would give the students an interest in further studies or take more courses at the university (Marzo-Navarro, Pedraja-Iglesias & Rivera-Torres, 2005; Wiers-Jenssen, Stensaker & Grogaard, 2002, Mavondo et al., 2004; Schertzer & Schertzer, 2004).

4. Factors that could promote quality service delivery to undergraduate students

The promotion of quality service delivery implies diverse avenues through which service delivery is offered to students in any higher institution of learning. This would ensure that the service quality in higher education continue to improve and grow. The factors, according to Becket and Brookes (2006), are the methodological approach, education quality (Cheng & Tam, 1997:23), environmental conduciveness (Shank & Walker, 1995:72) and perceptions of performance (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Considerable debate emphasises diverse ways through which quality of services can be promoted in higher institutions by Becket and Brookes (2006). Education quality is a vague and controversial issue in contemporary times (Cheng & Tam, 1997:23).

A survey of the service marketing literature as stipulated by Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Cronin and Taylor (1992) emphasised that there are two approaches to measuring service quality. First, SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and SERVPERF (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). One of the popular and significant strategies used to promote quality service delivery is SERVQUAL. SERVQUAL shows case that theoretical foundations serve as gap model for distinctive difference between customer expectations and performance perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The customer believes that the expectations about the service delivery serve as standards or

reference points against which performance is judged. Therefore, customers' perception is subject to assessments of the actual services experiments, which is offered by the providers (Zeithaml et al., 2006:49). They identify some factors that can influence expectations, as word of mouth communications, personal needs, past experience of the service and external communications from the service provider.

There are several empirical applications of the SERVQUAL paradigm that measure service quality in institutions of higher learning (Hill, 1995; Anderson, 1995; Cuthbert, 1996; Kwan & Ng, 1999; Sohail & Shaikh, 2004; Sahney et al., 2004; Tan & Kek, 2004). The SERVPERF paradigm is less popular than the SERVQUAL in the context of institutions of higher learning (Oldfield & Baron, 2000). More recently, a new industry scale, called HEdPERF, developed comprising a set of 41 items (Firdaus, 2006). This instrument can be used as a mean in considering not only the academic components, but also aspects of the total service environment as experienced by the student space.

The SERVPERF and HEdPERF scales were compared in terms of reliability and validity and the superiority of the newly purposed measurement instrument was confirmed (Firdaus, 2006). An alternative model based on the importance-performance paradigm (Martilla & James, 1977; Hermmasi et al., 1994; Hawes & Rao, 1985) assumes that students will use different criteria to make their evaluation, which are likely to vary in importance. The importance reflect on definition of "a consumers and relative value of the various qualities attributes" (O'Neil & Palmer, 2004:43). This requires data gathering based on students' assignments in order to obtain customer perceptions of the actual performance (O'Neil & Palmer, 2004; Joseph, Sekhon, Stone & Tinson, 2005; Angell, Hefferman & Megicks, 2008). As SERVQUAL and SERVPERF scales do not take into account the relative importance that students attach to the five dimensions.

The SERVQUAL instrument seems to have the most support in the service quality research field (Seth et al. 2005). Criticism in the literature of this study indicated that SERVQUAL is still the most widely applied instrument in service quality research (Gryna, et. Al., 2007; Kotler, 2000; Palmer, 2008; 2006; Wilson et al., 2008); Baki et al. 2009; Bayraktaroglu & Atrek, 2010); Chau and Kao, 2009; Etgar and Fuchs, 2009; Gilmore and McMullan, 2009; Kumar et al., 2009; Lai et al., 2007; Ruiqi and Adrian, 2009, and Wong et al, 2008). A universally accepted service quality model indicates that measures are also strategies used to promote service quality (Wisniewski, 2001).

When such SERVQUAL instruments have the consensus of the basic values and application possibilities, it is seen   as a medium of improvement. No other instrument appears to be superior to SERVQUAL; it has been tested through rigour of different research projects. The researchers believe that it demonstrates no limitation in terms of applications of its methodology in different service contexts (Wisniewski, 2001). This has unquantifiable measures that promote substantive attention.

Zenger (2013:74-76) asserts that through service quality, competitive advantages and growth would help create value for both the customer and the organisation. Zenger (2013:74) further states that value creation is in the form of actions that use strategies

to configure valuable capabilities, activities and resources in the organisation. The promotion of service quality to students brings about strategic sights and foresight to both customers and the business owner. The transformation of services into many products is also a strategy that could promote the business of the providers (Hefley & Murphy, 2008). At present, the service delivery in the economy has grown to where developing countries continue to flourish in the areas of education, health services, financial services, hospitality (tourism), human services, telecommunications and information technology (Hefley & Murphy, 2008).

As new trends in curriculum and teaching methodologies have evolved, support for students' knowledge and skills has also changed. The widespread recognition that universities now have for visible product, knowledge, is an important factor in economic and social change today. This growth calls for reasoned action for increased competitiveness of the higher education market all over the world.

Therefore, for implementation of university curriculum in this environmental change, customers' (students) perceptions of service quality are re-addressed (O'Neill & Palmer, 2004). This could bring about an understanding of services rendered by both academic and non-academic staff. This key influence on students' decisions would help to choose the most suitable recommendation of a particular institution and courses to students.

5. Research methodology

The research approach used for this study was a quantitative approach and a survey research method using a questionnaire to elicit information from the third-year undergraduate students of the Business Management Department at the University. The sampling method adopted for this study was the census and consists of the entire population of third year student in a particular year. The study employed a descriptive survey design and the target population was all third-year undergraduate students of the Business Management Department (106 undergraduate students). The process of collecting the data from the respondents took three weeks.

The characteristics of the population are generalised based on the sample adopted for this study. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the census sampling was applied. This comprises of the entire population of year three business management undergraduate students and the population earlier mentioned consisted of 87 third-year undergraduate students sampled. However, for the purposes of this study, the researcher used a quantitative mean (questionnaires) in eliciting data and information from the third-year undergraduate students of the Business Management Department. The questionnaire was made up of closed-ended questions to draw from the knowledge, experience and insight of the respondents. The researcher formulated several themes as indicated in the objectives of the study. This helped in the provision of subtitles such as service quality delivery, student population and service delivery system, accessibility to teaching resources, and environmental influence on development of students, among others.

This study applied some of the SERVQUAL instruments questions. This was done to reflect some of the items that were originally used in the adapted SERVQUAL questionnaire. The research instrument was tested as reliable through administering it to ten students from the Richards Bay campus. The significance of the data analysis is that it helps the researchers to arrange and give meaning to a large amount of data collected during research investigation (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:131). For this study, the descriptive and inferential statistical tools was used to analyse the quantitative data collected from respondents.

6. Results from data

The presentation of results considered diverse questions that could enhance answering the research objectives. In line with this, the questions below were raised in association with the variables of services rendered, access to quality services, teaching approaches and materials used by lecturers, and challenges experienced by undergraduate students based on quality service rendered at the Department of Business Management of the University.

6.1. Analysis and interpretation of demographic data

Descriptive, ANOVA and independent sample T-test were conducted on IBM SPSS version 25. The descriptive test was conducted to give the summary of the results. A one-way test between groups ANOVA was conducted to compare mean across service quality, teaching approach and teaching material. The T-test was conducted to compare the means of service quality, teaching approach and teaching material across gender. Before the results are presented, the demographic background of the respondents was presented below As indicated the majority of the respondents who participated in the study are female (65.5%). The results presented also indicate that the majority of respondents who participated in the study are between the age range of 22 and 26 years (64.4%). As observed, most of the students are mature before entering university for their studies. This could result in several factors such as family responsibilities, financial stress, inability to complete entry requirements, and delays in obtaining admission, among others. The findings suggest that embarking on further studies at a younger age is very important.

The highest number of respondents who participated in the study are in their third year at the university (46%). The reason was because the study was census based. Findings indicate that in year three of the Business Management Department, students are required to study and pass several modules before graduating from the university. The findings suggest that at level three at the Business Management department, in-depth knowledge are required of the students in order to advance their practices in the profession when they graduate.

6.2. Analysis and interpretation of research questions

The analysis considered the following sub-areas based on the research questions raised in this study.

- Service quality
- Teaching approach
- Teaching material

> ***What does undergraduate students think about service quality rendered at the Business Management department of the University?***

The results reveal that the overall mean (3.54) and standard deviation (0.63) of the construct service quality presented in Table 2 suggest that most respondents tend to agree with the question of service quality rendered. This means that students have a positive perception about the quality of service provided in the department of Business Management at the University. The result also indicate that, of all the statements made in service quality rendered, 58.6% of the respondents tend to agree with the statement that, "The Department of Business Management has modern facilities for quality services of teaching, learning, research and supervision", 66.7% of the respondents tended to agree with the question that "physical facilities" used by lecturers at the Department of Business Management are visually appealing to the undergraduate students" and 54% of the respondents tended to agree with the statement that "The Department of Business Management has adequate and qualified teaching staff that should render quality services to the undergraduate students at intervals".

The authors envisaged that provision of modern facilities for quality services of teaching, learning, research and supervision attributes to the management of the University, and the South African government making adequate budgetary allocation for the institution. These serve as support system that strengthens the institution on a regular basis. The impression about the provision of facilities led Cardona and Bravo (2012) and Ladhari (2008:65-67) to emphasised that increased demands by students for quality services force the educational system to advance in responsiveness to the evaluation of curriculum that guides the growth and development of their products and services. Cardona and Bravo (2012) and Ladhari (2008: 65-67) reiterate that there is a need to harness efficiency and effectiveness of services rendered to students. The reason is that service quality is of the utmost priority in the present-day economy. The aid of recent IT could advance this practice if appropriately harnessed. This infusion could lead to fast growth of the organisation and could stimulate staff motivation to work better.

Lodesso, Van Niekerk, Jansen and Müller (2018) affirm that the quality of services rendered to students differs from one institution to another. The services rendered are anchored on availability and accessibility to material resources, which can be used and applied in the delivery the services. Malik, Danish and Usman (2010) remark that the quality of services in education is fundamental in the present-day knowledge economy. What distinguishes universities and corporate organisations from each other is the nature of quality services rendered (Järvinen & Suomi, 2011). Therefore, the extent to which undergraduate students think about service quality rendered cannot be over-emphasised and undervalued.

The provision of adequate support in terms of bursaries and materials in the library could transform students' vigour in their studies. Based on the findings, the author suggests that the government of South Africa should make provision for budgetary allocation to tertiary institutions across the country. This was to promote transformation, development and growth of the institution in the country.

Musiige and Maassen (n.d) make mention of different factors that could promote quality service delivery to undergraduate students. This comprises individual factors (lecturers and other supporting staff), organisational factors (institutions/universities), funding factors (adequate budgetary allocation) and research culture (activities that could enhance research, teaching, learning, and other activities). When appropriated, these advance the rate at which staff members work to achieve their aims and those of the organisation. No organisation in the present knowledge economy can function better and thrive without the factors mentioned above (Lechuga & Lechuga (2012). It gives the organisation the self-determination, self-efficacy and self-sufficiency in terms of autonomy, proficiency and empathy (Lechuga & Lechuga, 2012; Hardré et al. 2011). These are materials of research activities, which result in the unpacking of strategies that could promote quality service delivery to undergraduate students.

Table 2: Service quality rendered to undergraduate students

Service quality rendered	Mean	Std Dev	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
	3.54	0.63					
The Department of Business Management has modern facilities for quality services of teaching, learning, research and supervision	4.06	0.85		9	2	51	25
				10.3%	2.3%	58.6%	28.7%
The physical facilities used by lecturers at the Department of Business Management are visually appealing to the undergraduate students	4.00	0.72		5	7	58	17
				5.7%	8.0%	66.7%	19.5%
The Department of Business	4.10	0.81	1	3	9	47	27

Management has adequate and qualified teaching staff that should render quality services to the undergraduate students at intervals			1.1%	3.4%	10.3%	54.0%	31.0%
Do you think the office space required of lecturers at the Business Management Department is big enough to facilitate discussion classes and group presentation should such a need arise?	2.80	1.25	14	30	7	31	5
			16.1%	34.5%	8.0%	35.6%	5.7%
The institution provides students with adequate support in terms of bursary and materials in the library, as such I like the services rendered to us as students	3.15	1.39	15	17	11	28	16
			17.2%	19.5%	12.6%	32.2%	18.4%
Are there any counselling/gui-dance that could be of assistance to you if your lecturer, tutor and colleagues could not help you in your academic performance?	2.90	1.13	8	30	18	25	6
			9.2%	34.5%	20.7%	28.7%	6.9%
Have you enjoyed the services rendered to you	3.78	1.20	7	8	7	40	25
			8.0%	9.2	8.0%	46.0%	28.7%

at the Department of Business Management since you registered in this institution?				%				

Data from field 2016

> ***What does undergraduate students think about the teaching approach offered at the Business Management department in the University?***

Respondents indicated that the teaching approach offered at the Business Management Department is proportionate as shown in the descriptive results (Mean=3.50; SD=0.56). The construct 'teaching approach' presented indicates that most of the respondents tend to be undecided of the statements of teaching approach. This means that students might have a positive or negative perception about quality of the teaching approach offered in the Business Management Department, University.

However, the results highlight some of the question asked about the teaching approach. Of all the questions asked, the results indicate that most of the respondents tend to agree with the following statement: "Are the teaching, learning and supervision given to students by lecturers done with passion for the job or with attitude and frustration" (50.6%). This means that that these students believe that the lessons are taught with passion for the job or an attitude and frustration. The Department of Business Management has every reason to comply with this service quality. The willingness, sympathy and ability to assist students in whatever way dependent on the obligation of the lecturer.

Therefore, the adequacy of qualified lecturers to support the teaching approach offered extends to quality service delivery offered to undergraduate students. Meanwhile, organisational growth and productivity of staff are ushered by the effort put together by the passion and reassurance to assists clients whenever the need arises. For organisations to remain viable, continual recruitment of qualified and adequate staff becomes necessary. To meet up with the educational readiness of students in South Africa and the international community, the issues with the availability of resources needed for their research projects should be sorted out (Manea, 2014). However, even if the materials are available but no adequate and qualified lecturers, it becomes difficult to achieve this goal.

> ***What does undergraduate students think about teaching materials at the Business Management Department of the University?***

In this segment, respondents indicate what they think about the teaching materials at the Business Management Department. The results reveal that the overall mean of 3.24 and the standard deviation (0.71) of the construct teaching material indicate that the majority of the respondents tend to be undecided about the statements used to measure teaching material. The results could mean that students are not sure if the teaching material provided are helpful or not, which means that they have a positive or negative perception about the teaching material provided in the university. The results further demonstrate that the majority of the respondents tend to agree mostly with the following statement "*Do you feel secure in your local language (e.g. isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, etc.) while studying in group work with other fellow students?*" (59.8%).

The implication of this result is that certain indices are crucial in rendering quality services to students at the department of Business Management. This ranges from one specific service rendered to another. For quality assurance purposes, provision of and access to teaching materials, which could enable lecturers to carry out their different obligations, are important. The distinction drawn from Table 4 is that the mean and standard deviation varies, indicating that teaching materials could foster quality services rendered. Teaching, learning, research and supervision of students cannot be feasible if there are no adequate teaching materials, which lecturers need to work with. Therefore, for the Business Management Department to advance in their support system on quality services to students, they need to be strategic in their plans to acquire teaching materials of both physical and virtual.

It can be noticed that local languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa, and isiNdebele, among others, do have an effect on the Standard English language, especially during the cause of interaction, studying, discussion and learning by the undergraduate students. The local languages have weakened learners and even made slower and not advance in their studies. The respondents attest that they feel more secure while studying in group work and with fellow students using the local language. This implies that undergraduate students love and cherish their local languages. It gives them a sense of belonging and security. It helps them not to be shy when discussing and sharing knowledge and ideas with one another.

The findings suggest that the use of the Standard English language is very in the present-day diversities of areas of specialisation and knowledge economy. However, local language is equally important, as there is a need for support in this regard. The provision of a tutor who could make learning more fascinating for undergraduate students becomes crucial. The rationale was on certain ideas/ phenomena taught by the lecturers, which the students could not understand very well. The provision of tutors could help translate to students in their local languages. Importantly, the author of this study suggests that, amidst the envisaged instance by respondents, the comfortability with the use of local language could result to lack of exposure, intimidation from fellow students and friends, family background and upbringing. However, even though the results affirm that the students feel comfortable with the use of their local language, it is also encouraged to be good users of the standard English language. It is envisaged that

the students would not tell where they could be tomorrow, and what possibilities would come their way. Parasuraman et al. (1985) refer to the Gaps Model, which has always been a major standard for the analysis of service quality determinants.

The analysis of Parasuraman et al. (1985) was on four factors, namely: expectations gap, standards gap, performance gap and communication gap. These are fundamental in assessing services rendered in any context and content. The responsibilities placed on the individual depends on what roles they have to play. Variables of adaptation among many people, shyness, languages (written and spoken), either for class work and other activities by students are part of the expectation gap. Sharabi and Davidow (2010) draw an analogy on certain factors, which could affect services rendered to students or customers. These factors include cost/ benefit problems, measurement issues in terms of satisfaction derived, efficiency and effectiveness of the operation/ service rendered, misplacement of trust by employees and managers, indiscipline, logistics and information technologies for service delivery which could militate against the achievement of quality service delivered to students (Sharabi & Davidow, 2010).

Table 3: Teaching materials at the Business Management Department

Teaching material	Mean	Std dev	Strongly Disagree	Disa gree	Unde cided	Agree	Strongly agree
	3.24	0.71					
Are there adequate study guides with information to supplement material for students at the Department of Business Management?	3.40	1.23	7	19	8	38	15
			8.0%	21.8%	9.2%	43.7%	17.2%
Frequent communication only in written and spoken English is a challenge for students.	2.67	1.32	17	33	9	18	10
			19.5%	37.9%	10.3%	20.7%	11.5%
Do you think your local language (e.g. isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, etc.) has an effect on the	3.14	1.38	11	27	5	27	17
			12.6%	31.0%	5.7%	31.0%	19.5%

standard English study?							
Do you feel secure in your local language (e.g. isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, etc.) while studying in-group work with other fellow students?	3.75	1.11	7 8.0%	7 8.0%	4 4.6%	52 59.8%	17 19.5%

7. Discussion of findings

It can be establish from the results that, the majority of participants were female and the age range of participants varied, but those with a high percentage are those between 22 and 26 years (64.4%). The study was a census study, hence it concentrated on third-year, undergraduate students at the Business Management Department in the university. Major findings from the study indicate that undergraduate students at the Business Management Department of the University have a positive perception about the quality service provided.

The Department of Business Management has modern facilities for quality services of teaching, learning, research and supervision. The physical facilities used by lecturers at the Department of Business Management are visually appealing to the undergraduate students and there are adequate and qualified teaching staff who could render quality services to the undergraduate students at intervals. The construct 'teaching approach' shows that the undergraduate students believe that the lessons they receive were given with passion for the job or an attitude and frustration. The Department of Business Management has every reason to comply with this service quality. The willingness, sympathy and ability to assist students in any way dependent on the obligation of the lecturer. The results indicate that undergraduate students are not sure if the teaching material provided is helpful or not. The results further demonstrate that the majority of the respondents tend to agree mostly that the feel secure in their local language (e.g. isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, etc.) while studying group work with fellow students.

The study established that, there were variances with regard to the results obtained in the service quality, teaching approach, and teaching material used for undergraduate students at the Department of Business Management and the university as a whole. Based on the provision of adequate support in terms of bursaries and materials in the library, the students were satisfied with the service quality rendered. The provision of bursaries and materials in the library attributed to the government of South Africa making adequate budgetary allocations to tertiary and research institutions across the

country. It can be noticed from the findings that there are adequate and qualified teaching staff at the Business Management Department. The provision of consultation hours given by lecturers and tutors, counselling and guidance was commensurate to available lecturers.

The issue of the use of local language among some students in the university results in a lack of exposure, intimidation by fellow students and friends, family background and upbringing in rural areas. However, this does not stop the goal of quality service to undergraduate students. There was a correlation between the variables of age, level of education and number of years spent in the university, which triggered the kind of service quality rendered. Amidst this findings, the study recommends consideration of a prospect theory, embedded in literature reviewed, by Parasuraman et al (1985), postulation, which consists of expected performance (EP) (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) and perceived performance (PP) (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy). This was in agreement with the results obtained in knowledge gaps in service quality delivered to undergraduate students at the Department of Business Management and the University as a whole.

8. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is based on the research question raised at the beginning of the where service quality is developmental in nature. This takes on the form of deeds, routines or work exerted to meet the customers' needs, which comprise reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility in relation to service delivery. Taking into consideration the findings of this research and literature reviewed, these recommendations were directed to service quality delivered to undergraduate students based on their information needs. The recommendations were identified by the researcher, as knowledge gaps in service quality delivered to undergraduate students at the Department of Business Management and the University as a whole.

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