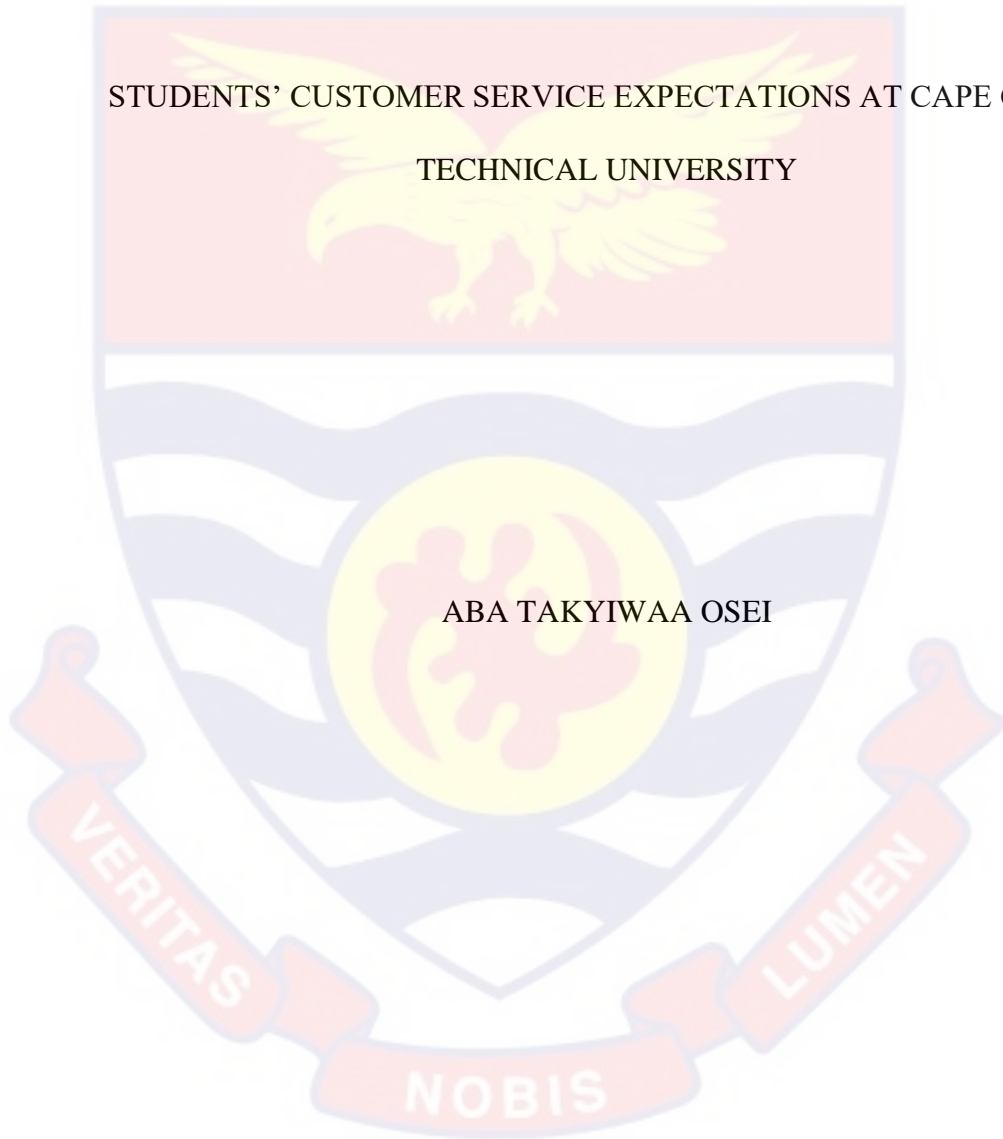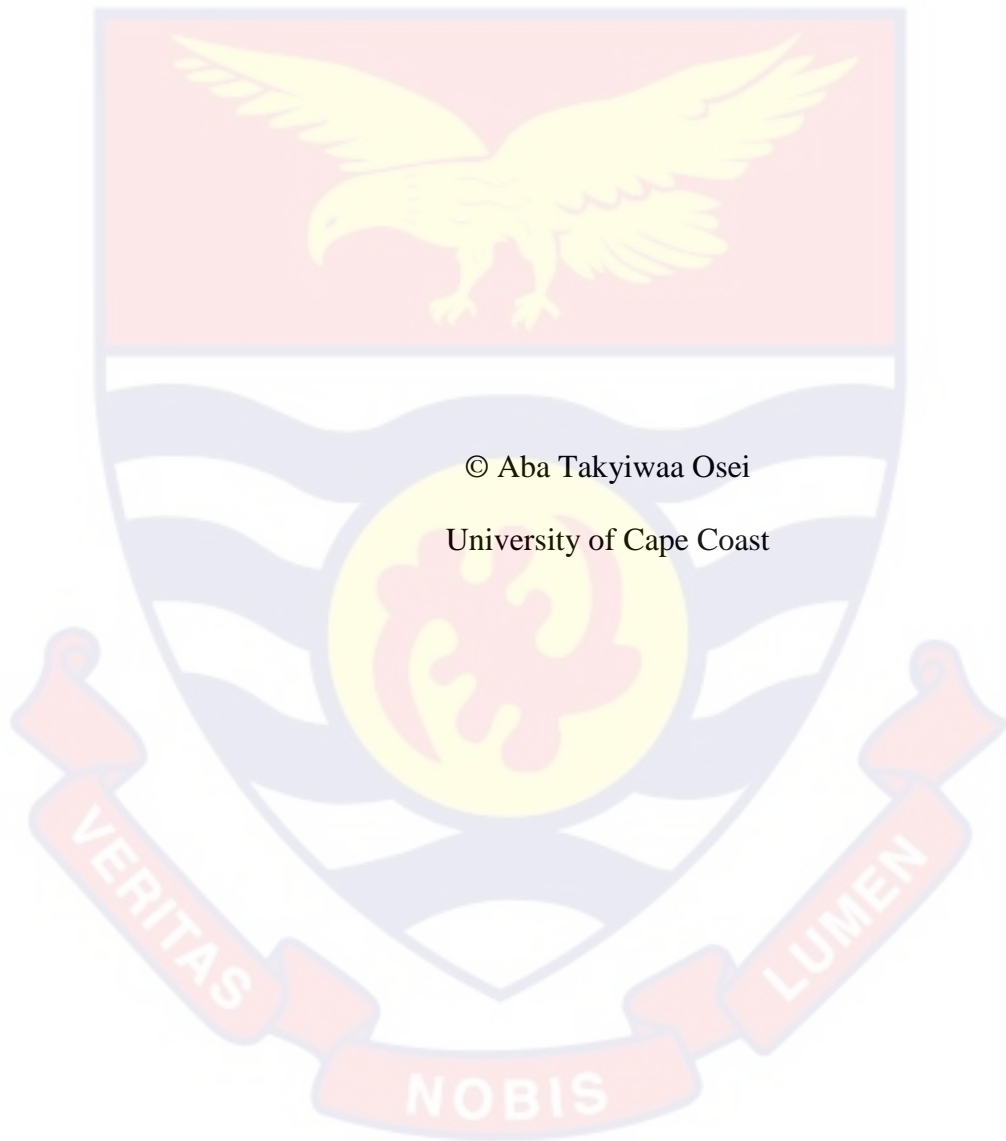UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENTS' CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPECTATIONS AT CAPE COAST

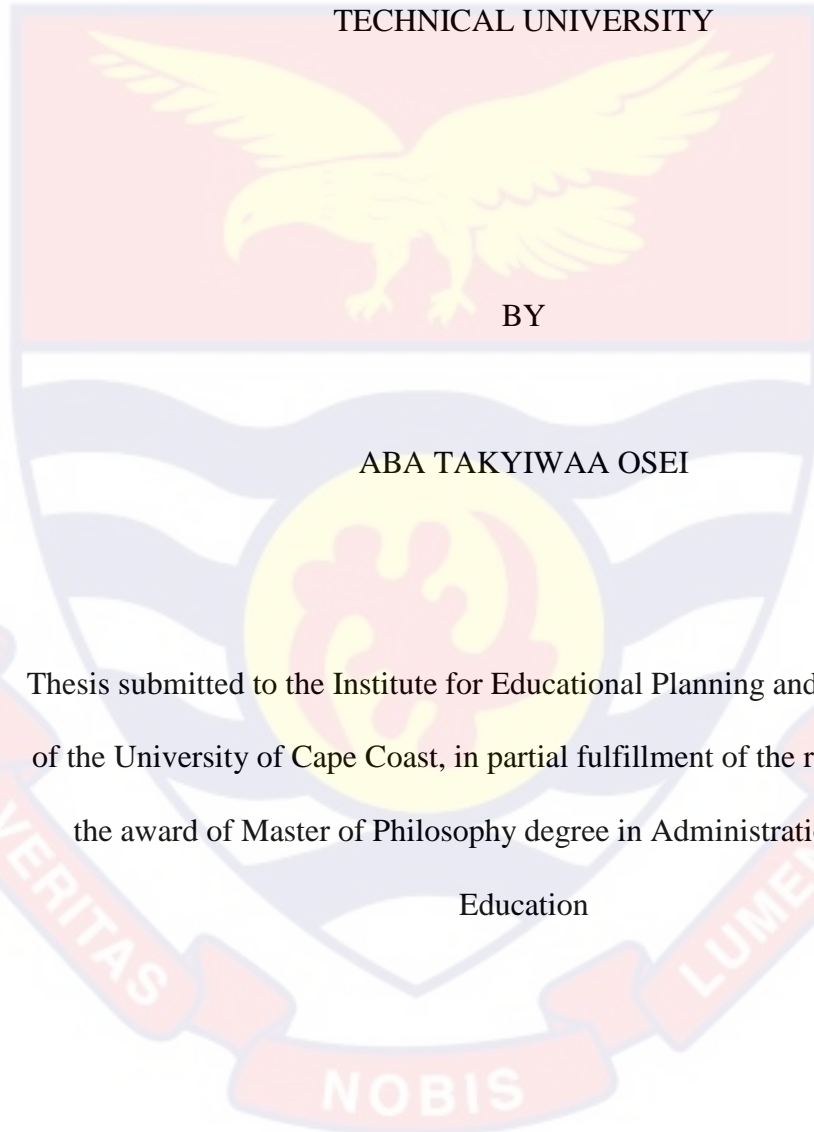TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

ABA TAKYIWAA OSEI

2023

© Aba Takyiwaa Osei

University of Cape Coast

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENTS' CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPECTATIONS AT CAPE COAST

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

ABA TAKYIWAA OSEI

Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration

of the University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Administration in Higher

Education

DECEMBER 2023

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature……………………………   Date……………………

Name: Aba Takyiwaa Osei

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature……….……………. Date……………….

Name: Prof. Rosemary Bosu

Co-supervisor's Signature………………………. Date……………………

Name: Dr. Michael Boakye-Yiadom

ABSTRACT

The study explored students' customer service expectations at Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU). This was necessitated by the absence of empirical evidence concerning students' claims of disappointments relating to some services provided by the university. The methodological design underpinning the study was the phenomenological qualitative strategy of inquiry. The study further adopted the purposive sampling technique to identify participants who could elucidate the prevailing circumstances surrounding the themes in the study. The, data was collected from sixteen students eight level 100 HND regular students and eight Level 300 HND regular students) using semi-structured interview guide to conduct two separate focused group discussions. To complement the responses from students, data was also taken from six staff members using semi-structured interview guide to conduct one-on-one interviews. The responses were transcribed and analysed thematically. The findings were that majority of services that CCTU provides and their manner of delivery had fallen short of students' expectations because generally, students had high expectations of the services before they experienced the services. Consequently, one key conclusion drawn was that Technical University managements are reacting to a plethora of factors presently exerting pressure for change to meet students' expectations, especially, for accommodation. The study recommended that the Governing Council and Management of CCTU should partner with construction companies, banks, state and private enterprises such as Ecobuild Consult and Stanbic Bank to build more halls on CCTU campus thereafter, review the housing and accommodation policies.
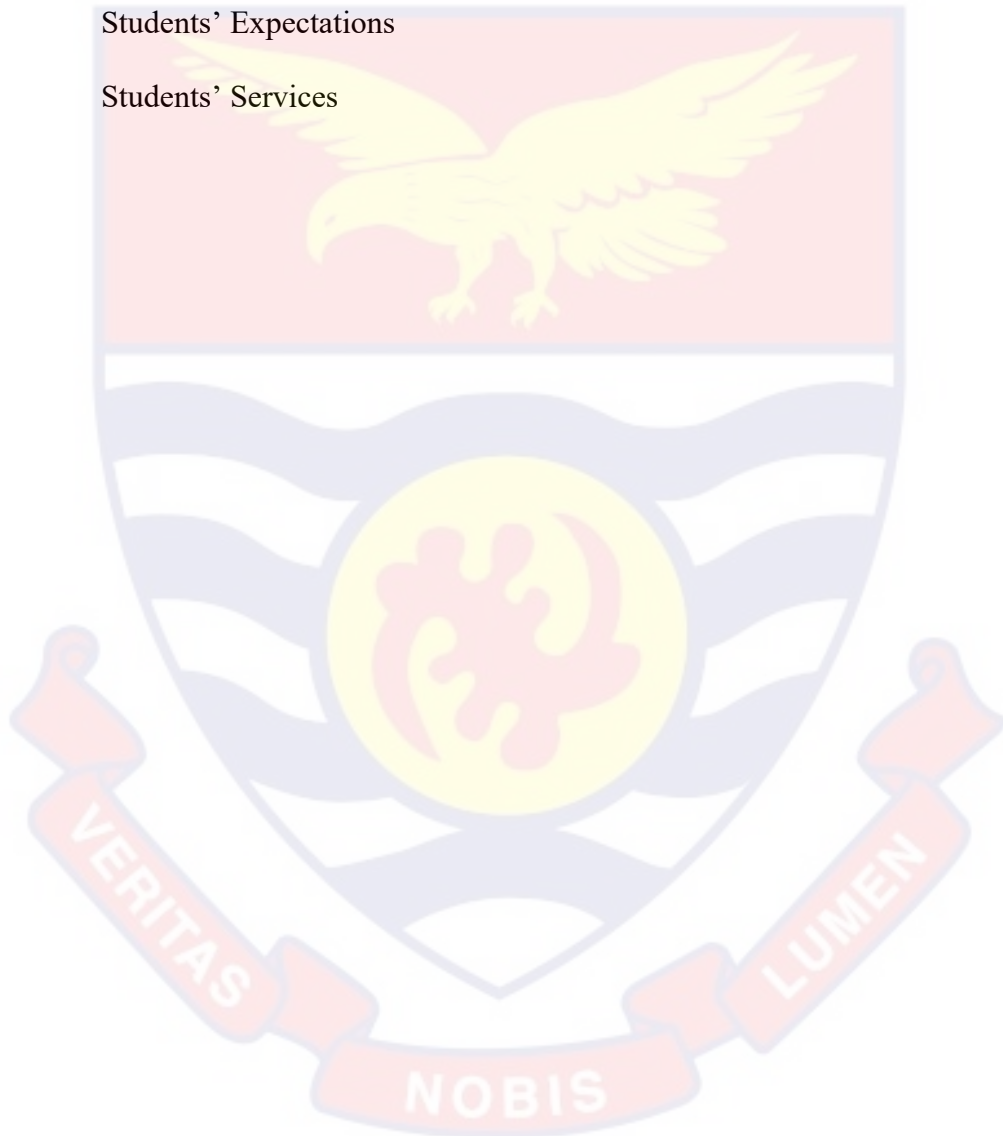
KEY WORDS

Customer

Service Quality

Students

Students-as-Customers

Students' Expectations

Students' Services

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Rosemary Bosu and Dr. Michael Boakye-Yiadom for their time, patience and useful suggestions in the course of writing this thesis.

My sincere appreciation goes to the staff and students of Cape Coast Technical University who consented to participate as respondents for the study and to Mr. Michael Magnus Bentil who was my boss at the time of reading this programme.

Lastly, I am very thankful to the staff of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, Mr. Ebenezer Kobina Mensah, Mr. Samuel Kofi Adjepong, Mr. Kwabena Adutwum, Mrs. Janet Amoah and all those who helped in making the writing of this thesis a success.
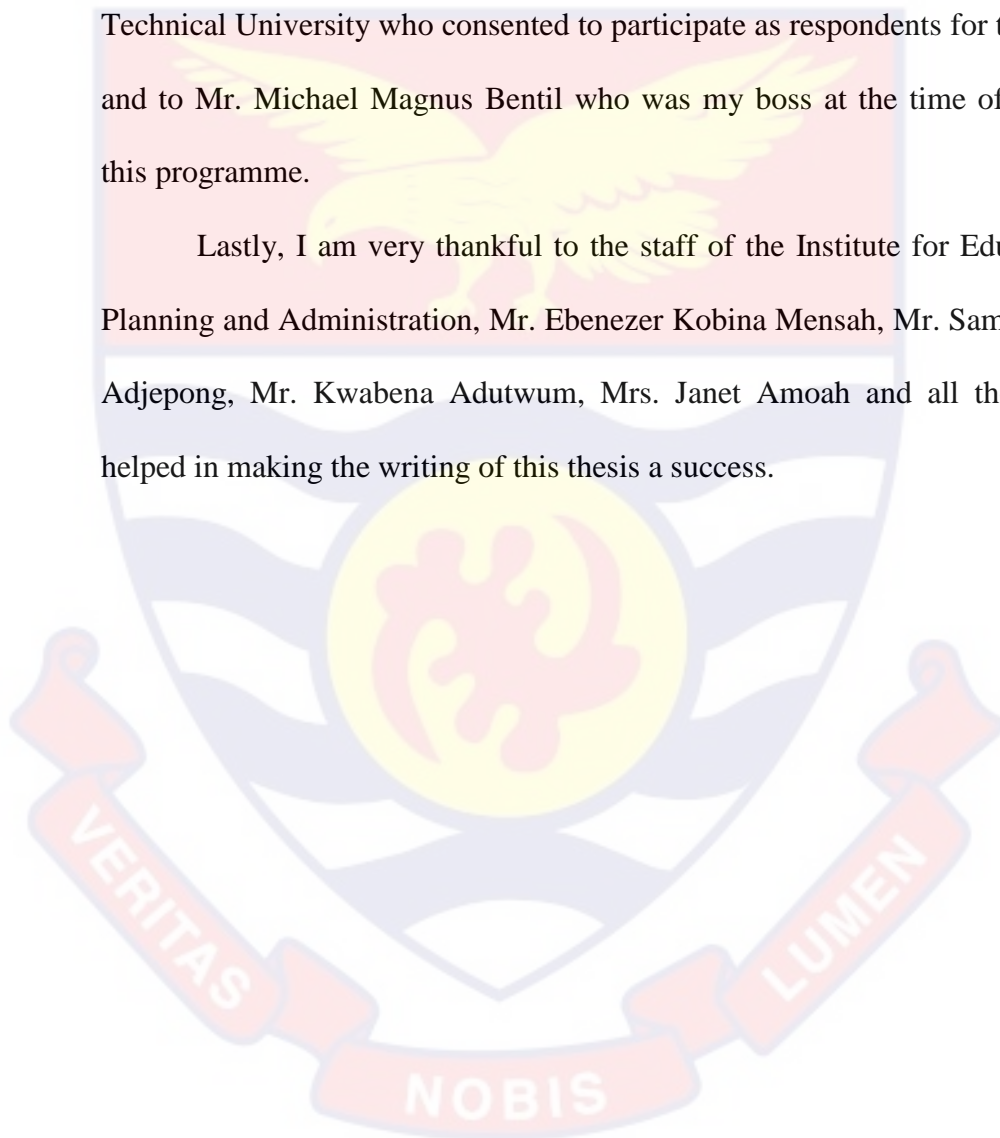
DEDICATION
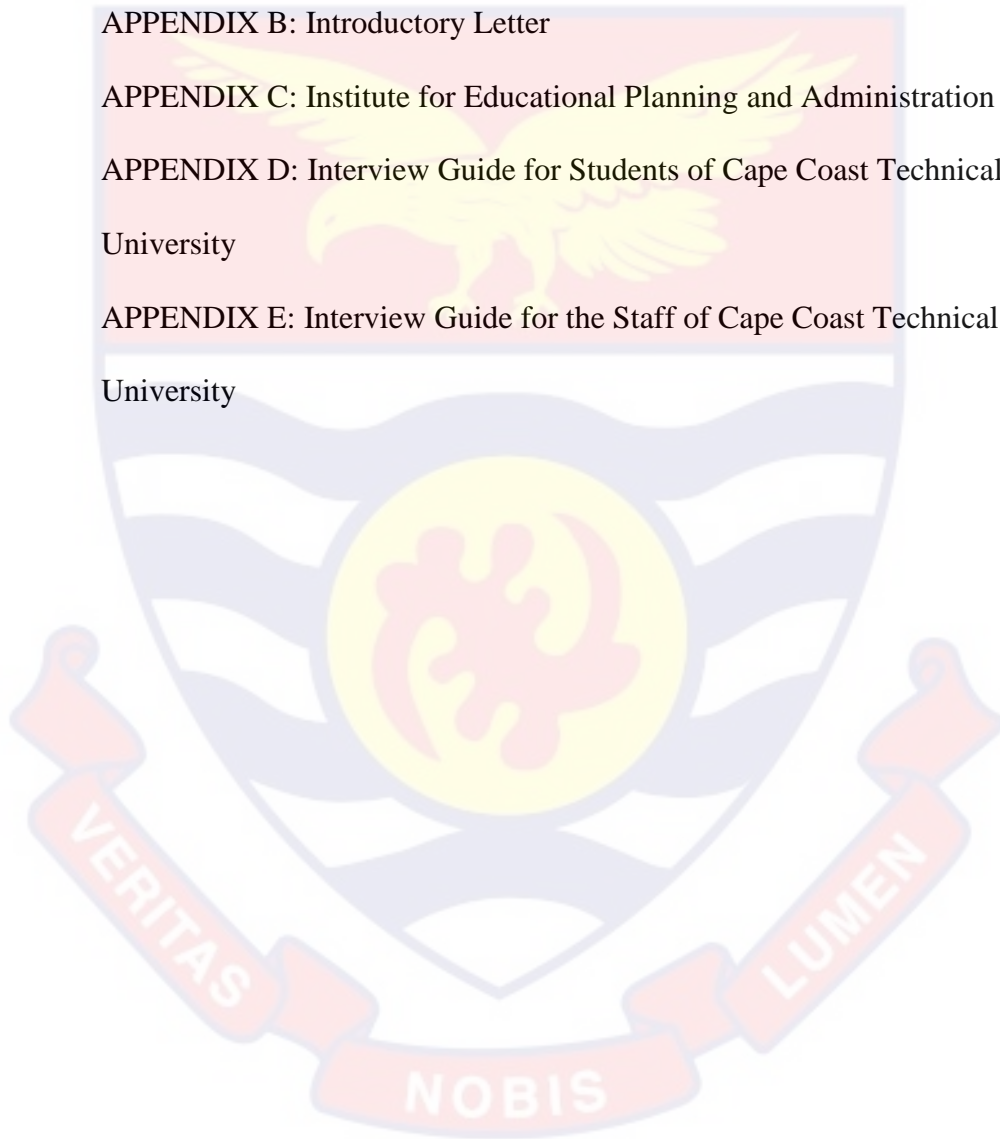
To my late father, mother, husband and children

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

xi

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCTU	–	Cape Coast Technical University
COTVET	–	Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
DAPQA	–	Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance
FGR	–	Focus Group Respondent
GETFund	–	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GNPC	–	Ghana National Petroleum Corporation
GTEC	–	Ghana Tertiary Education Commission
HE	–	Higher Education
HEIs	–	Higher Education Institutions
HiEdQUAL	–	Higher Education Quality
HND	–	Higher National Diploma
IEPA	–	Institute for Educational Planning and Administration
ICT	–	Information and Communication Technology
IR	–	Interview Respondent
NABPTEX	–	National Board for Professional and Technician Examination
OECD	–	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PNDC	–	Provisional National Defense Council
SERVQUAL	–	Service Quality
SERVPREF	–	Service Preference
TTU	–	Takoradi Technical University

TU	–	Technical Universities
TUAAG	–	Technical University Administrators Association of Ghana
TUSAAG	–	Technical Universities Senior Administrators Association of Ghana
TUWAG	–	Technical University Workers Association of Ghana
TVET	–	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCC	–	University of Cape Coast
UNESCO	–	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	–	United States of America
VALCO	–	Volta Aluminium Company Limited

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Optimum utilisation of educational services by students makes them excel wheareas underutilsation of educational services due to inadequacy matters contributes to student unrest and dissatisfaction. Consequently, students require key educational services from their respective universities in order to actualise their expectations and educational aspirations. Unfortunately, observations over the years have been that it appears students of technical universities in Ghana have persistently expressed disappointment in services such as accommodation, departmental administrative and internet services provided them. Although such issues have been discussed during departmental meetings, management meetings and open forums, there has not been any empirical evidence to support such claims made by students of Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU). While not particularly explored in Ghana, specifically CCTU, management could consider expectations of students as they tackle students' disappointment concerns regarding the university's services provided them. This study, therefore, attempts to explore students' customer service expectations at CCTU.

Background to the Study

Customer services have been part of corporate culture and businesses around the world. Organisations and institutions have put systems in place to ensure that existing and potential customers are retained. Hsu, Lin, Tseng and Wang (2011) posited that customer relations are part of the quality of services that organisations are supposed to provide to their clients. They added that the differences in service or product provision may lead to competitive edge but

customer services project the organisation in a much competitive edge than the services and products they render or sell. Hsu *et al*. (2011), however emphasied that it is more fitting to have a sufficient amount of satisfaction to assess that consumers have genuinely accepted the services offered, taking into account the subjective nature of customer service. Pinto and Fonseca (2014) also provided reasonable facts on why customer services should be a priority in organisations. Pinto and Fonseca (2014) explained that customers are the lifeblood of every organization that has a reason to exist in the near future and should genuinely be pampered.

While customer service is important to organisations, Pinto and Foseca (2014) postulated that customer interaction, quality control and customer satisfaction have been linked to the success of organisations including those that engage in education service provision and organisations that supply tangible goods. Kalpana and Sudharani (2012) argued that in marketing literature customer satisfaction is one of the pillars to ensure organisational growth. Kalpana and Sudharani (2012) cited Crosby (1991) and maintained that understanding what the customers expect will provide the organisation with some zeal to achieve their initial step in delivering service quality and satisfaction. In effect, organisations are required to provide the needed customer services that are required to satisfy their customers indeed. Is that the case in education institutions and for that matter higher education institutions (HEIs)?

Clothey and Eres (2013) were of the view that customer satisfaction which is seen in corporate set-up can also be seen in educational institutions. The authors further explained that the perceived quality in schools of

education differ broadly among institutions and that the development of education without positioning the students as customers would lead to institutional challenges which might sometimes lead to demonstrations on campuses. Worldwide, higher education faces the challenge of improving student satisfaction and educating people who have acceptable shared interests. This responsibility can be projected in the services that HEIs regularly provide to their customers (students). In their paper, Kapur and Crowly (2008) discussed the economic effect of higher education and its impact on institutional growth in developing countries. They also argued that in many of these countries, the inadequate higher education institutions, the scarcity of funding and the lack of trained faculty certainly incapacitates efficient and effective provision of needful educational resources to students. Thereby, eventually causing sequential decline in the development of higher education institutions in developing countries. This implied that developing countries, Ghana inclusive, deny students (customers) of service quality with reason of inadequate institutions and educational facilities. Notwithstanding, servicing customers (students) does go beyond providing facilities. In other words, higher education institutions (HEIs) have to deliver quality that is compatible with the students' expectations and needs because both the students and their parents are looking for added value for their money (Smith, Smith & Clarke, 2007).

To be certain on measures to be adopted in providing students with quality services, the current trends in higher education and its environment need to be observed. According to Sharabi (2013), the emerging culture of the university is one in which education is treated as a commodity and in which

universities operate as corporate entities or 'enterprise' institutions selling educational 'products'. Consequently, Sharabi further stressed that in today's environment, HEIs need to become more efficient and participate in a competitive global market where client expectations are continually rising. In addition, Durkin and McKenna (2011) noted that informing the marketing of higher education to younger people is rising in developed countries and that marketing principles have been applied in universities in developed countries due to the increase in competition. Likewise, Nixon, Scullion and Hearn (2018) had noted that marketisation in HEIs had become a key principle and universities had obliged to engage in self-promotion and marketing much more intensively than in the past. This increase in competition has highlighted the need to create and manage distinct brand identities (Durkin & McKenna, 2011). Consequently, according to Nixon *et al*. (2018), in the quest to gain a competitive edge, universities differentiated themselves in many ways in terms of academic programmes and research that they offered.

Students enroll in university programmes for disparate reasons and their reasons for continuing, or discontinuing, their studies are complex. As a result, universities in all countries are under increasing pressure to improve retention rates for students, especially between the first and second year of their programmes of study (Crisp *et al.*, 2009). In affirmation, Durkin and McKenna (2011), again pointed out that by improving their efforts to attract and retain students in both foreign and domestic markets, rivalry has forced universities to take marketing values more thoroughly into account.

One important way that universities could use to achieve improved retention rates for students is by employing the necessary tools in making

4

teaching and learning easy and appealing. Is that the case in Africa? Nell and Cant (2014) argued that in South Africa many higher education institutions (HEIs) are clearly unaware of the quality of service they offer. This, they said, implicate the students' attitudes towards the institution. The quality of the services that HEIs are supposed to provide is sometimes compromised due to student's high demand for services, especially, during admission periods.

Thus, to allow a smooth and successful running of affairs in universities in the African setting, certain educational logistical sub-systems need to be present. Also, in order to actualise their expectations and educational aspirations, students require from their respective universities the provision of some key educational services (Deloitte University, 2015). Examples of such services are transportation, food services, accommodation and record keeping. In light of this, research has indicated that amongst the provision of variety of services, along with complementing facilities, to students by tertiary institutions are administrative services, teaching, library services, on-campus retailing, computing facilities, counselling/ welfare service, career and placement services, catering and sports and recreational services Hill (as cited in Kotzé & Plessis, 2003). Furthermore, Alhassan, Kinder and Sulemana (2014) also purported that common support services for tertiary students include quality instruction, availability of quality learning materials, knowledgeable faculty, tuition, adequate computer laboratories, safe and secure campus, residential facilities, hospitality and feeding facilities, linking roads and transport facilities, communication support systems, disability friendly facilities, guidance and counselling and administrative support services. It is worthy to note that without these above-mentioned

logistical support systems in educational institutions, the success of students could be negatively affected. The vice-versa was proven by studies on attrition rates in Australian universities, (Kift & Nelson, 2005; & McKenzie & Schwitzer, 2001), which reported that support services helped students cope, decreased the probability of disappointment and withdrawal, especially for students who were discovered to make prevalent use of support services.

Nevertheless, one may ask whether only offering educational support services to students is enough. Not yet enough but there is one more necessary thing to look which is the expectations of students before they enroll in the institutions, during the period of their studies, just before they complete their programmes of study and sometimes even after they have completed their programmes of study.

Some studies have brought to bear the expectations of students. For instance, Kalpana and Sudharani (2012) found that students expected administrative diligence in the administrative functions of their universities. They indicated that, students expected their university administrators to follow six (6) dimensions of service quality in terms of location, academics, infrastructure, image, cost and personnel which have been further explained in the second chapter of the current study. Sanaz and Xu (2015) stated that students generally expect to be involved in their universities' decision making process. Also according to Fontaine (2014), students expect their HEIs to be loyal to them by providing quality services to students and that students expectations signigicantly influence the determination of service quality in HEIs.

Common remarks made by the above authors regarding expectations of students were that students' expectations vary from among universities and can be managed to the advantage of universities. Their studies agreed that although managing students' expectations was a tough task to handle, it improved academic performance of students and the overall performance of HEIs because when students' expectations were met, they became satisfied and committed to the championing of their insitutions' image. However, when students' expectations are not met, demonstations and student crisis occur.

The writers recommended that expectations of students should be reviewed yearly, should be improved by further studies and should be used as part of improving service quality in HEIs.

Given the analogies drawn from the studies, competitiveness existing among HEIs can be escaped by using students' expectations and their perceptions of service quality to develop informed strategies to be adopted in gaining a competitive edge. Thus, the importance of studying students' customer expectations of Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU) cannot be overlooked in the instance that CCTU is aiming at gaining a competitive edge among Technical Universities in Ghana.

Moreover, the student body had become much more diverse (in terms of social class, gender, ethnicity and age) as their numbers have grown (Nixon *et al*., 2018). Due to the dynamic nature of their lives on university campuses, students are becoming highly assertive and critical in light of the varied alternatives in institutions. Therefore, the whole system of higher education performance needs to be improved (Mizikaci, 2006). In other words, systems, procedures and services in HEIs require more student-centred orientations to

7

enable students better appreciate higher education while the HEIs concerned gain competitive edge.

As Wagenaar (2014) rightly said, the concepts of student centred and active learning, have obtained a central place in current debates about higher education. Throughout the last four decades, there have been an attempt by scholars to discuss the rise of the student-as-customer orientation and the ways in which it has altered higher education. This idea of 'students-as-customer' has recently come to supersede other views of the relationship between the student and the institution (Saunders, 2014). The author further explained that the customer conceptualisation gives students a sense of power to shape their education and have their voices heard, as well as makes faculty and administrators "accountable" to students. It is therefore not surprising that, in their research, Oluseye, Tairat and Jeje (2014) found that poor customer relationship management in Nigerian universities leads to student unrest and dissatisfaction.

In contrast, the concept of 'student-as-customers' have been opposed by some reseachers and have also debated against it (Bunce, Baird & Jones, 2017; Watjatrakul, 2014; Finney & Finney, 2010; Courtney & Courtney, 2012). For example, there was a discussion during the emergence of the student-as-customer orientation, that the power derived from a customer identity is not necessarily the power to shape one's education in a positive way. Instead, student-as-customer orientation also leads students to participate in intensive educational experiences and to be confronted with alternative understandings of the environment. Also, Bunce, Baird and Jones (2017) opined that if students are considered as customers, academic rigor disappears.

Students that see themselves as clients retain attitudes and participate in behavior that is not conducive to achievement (Courtney & Courtney, 2012; Finney & Finney, 2010). For instance, Bunce *et al*. (2017) were of the view that academic calendars are sometimes distorted by the actions of students as a result being disregarded as cherished customers by their HEIs.

Owing to the fact that students sometimes need to be treated in satisfactory manner, HEIs have always been monitored by councils to efficiently and effectively promote services to their students. Nowadays, HEIs have put in place sections and units to handle students' grievances. However, there is ongoing debate on whether these sections and units are able to deliver their services to students satisfactorily.

Meyer and LeBlanc (2005) opined that there is stressing discrepancies in the relationship between the quality of service that employees of higher education institutions believe students receive and the quality of service reported by students. Meyer and LeBlanc (2005) were of the view that the point of customer contact between frontline employees and students lies in the customer-oriented services provided to students. The authors added that the Boundary-Spanning Theory provides an association with service relationships while putting the customer (students) as the reasons for the existence of these institutions. Sanaz and Xu (2015) have continually stated that students have a large range of degrees and better chances to choose their preferred university. In effect, Sanaz and Xu (2015) noted that globalisation and market pressure in the education sector have propelled HEIs to constantly review the need for economic accountability and performance improvement. It should be remembered that many universities seek to increase the number of students

9

admitted as a way of raising their funds while the admitted students are treated as clients.

What is shaping the students-as-customers as initiative? Over the years, customer services have been linked to corporation that produces goods and services to the general public. With growing competition in many of the industries, it became vital that organisations establish customer services units and sections to enable their valuable customers easily access services and products they patronise. Meyer and LeBlanc (2005) noted that several marketing studies have shown that servicing customers is one of the critical things to handle. Hence, losing a customer as a result of poor customer relations or poor service is a major blow to an organisation. Likewise, the application of the 'students-as-customers' concept in higher education institutions have become critical following many uprising on campuses of HEIs. Student unrests are often due to poor conditions of services or issues relating to dissatisfaction of institutions' policies and procedural activities. Like Sanaz and Xu (2015) and Meyer and LeBlanc (2005) rightly stated there are always differences with respect to the quality of service perception the students receive as well as the quality of services that the service providers actually provide. For such reason, it has become necessary for gaps of this nature to be filled using modern and international best practices through 'students-as-customers' phenomenon.

As it stands, the most HEIs specifically technical universities have deficiencies in employing student-centred strategies and procedures in their services. Technical education in Ghana has seen transformation over the years and the number of students has increased tremendously. A review of the

literature on technical universities provided the backdrop for defining the general orientation and key characteristics of a technical university. In general, technical universities provide the world of work with knowledge and training, and students are qualified to acquire a high standard of self-employment or employable skills for salary (Agyei-Boakye, Quayson & Nutassey, 2014). In 2016, through the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), the Government of Ghana, begun the process of upgrading all polytechnic institutions into technical universities though different from the traditional universities (Adei, 2018). The upgrade was aimed at repositioning the polytechnics within the tertiary education system which necessitates an extension of their mission.

It is expected that the establishment of technical universities would lead to a more diversified higher education environment with strong differentiations between missions. Ghana had ten technical universities spread throughout the country's length and breadth. To be more specific, these ten technical universities were located in the regional capitals of the then ten (10). Budu-Smith (2014) wrote that as the pressure on the traditional universities increases, polytechnics (now technical universities) have been projected to absorb students with specific interests in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). To actualise this mission, the management of these institutions ought to consider adapting the 'students-as-customers' phenomenon and aim at providing quality services to their students (customers).

11

Statement of the Problem

Previous studies (Guilbault, 2016; Saunders, 2014; Bunce, Baird & Jones, 2017; Arat, 2011; Paricio, 2017) focused on the use of approaches such as customer relationship management approach, free-market logic, customer orientation and market orientation to assess students as customers of their higher educational institutions. However, the situation is not known in Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU). Aside from the use of approaches, other studies also included the use of perceptions of students and staff of higher educational institutions to explore the concept of students-as-customers (Finney & Finney, 2010; Kavakas, 2013). Furthermore, these studies did not consider the expectations of the students in question.

Research has substantiated that when students' expectations are known in situations, especially student support services (accommodation or residential, administrative and ICT), it provides authorities with worthwhile judgements leading to consequential actions and inactions which, most often, help to avoid or minimise instances of student unrest (Bunce, Baird & Sian, 2017; Kalpana & Sudharani, 2012; Nell & Cant, 2014). This study therefore focused on students' expectations.

Additional concerns were that while students remain primary beneficiaries of education and maintaining a laudable relationship with them is a necessity for customer service, a study by Oluseye, Tairat and Jeje (2014), concluded that poor relationship management between students and staff of Nigerian universities leads to student unrest and dissatisfaction. The case not being too different in Ghana, Boakye-Yiadom (2012) found that there is student-staff tension on university campuses and Ghanaian universities use an

12

administrative-centered model of student affairs practice which is often bureaucratic and less student-centered. This, therefore, evokes that Ghanaian universities consider nothing more of students than just "students" as they have always been known.

The situation seems no different in Cape Coast Technical University because, over the years, the researcher has witnessed students of the university persistently express disappointment in services such as accommodation, departmental administrative and internet services provided them. Only during departmental meetings, management meetings and open forums have such issues been discussed. Empirical evidence supporting such claims made by students of Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU) is however lacking. Given the backdrop in literature and additional concerns raised, this current study set out to explore students' customer service expectations at Cape Coast Technical University.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore students' customer service expectations at Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the available services provided to students at Cape Coast Technical University?

2. What expectations do students have in relation to student services that Cape Coast Technical University needs to provide?

3. What challenges do students face in accessing available students' services of Cape Coast Technical University?

Significance of the Study

First, the findings will create awareness on students' customer service expectations in the CCTU. Due to the meagre literature on the concept and its practice in HEIs in Ghana, findings of this study will be resourceful to HEIs in Ghana. This is because, awareness on students' customer service expectations will inform the authorities and staff in Ghanaian universities to develop strategies that will enhance services in order to meet some expectations of students. Meeting some expectations of students through improving services rendered will eventually minimise student crisis.

Secondly, the findings of the study shall be communicated to authorities of HEIs in Ghana through presentations at workshops, seminars, conferences and through the writing and publishing of related articles. Doing this shall project the understanding of the concept to University authorities and further encourage them to better appreciate students' customer service expectations, better relate to students' concerns and to predict students' behaviours well enough when they encounter undesired challenges with student services on campus.

Finally, the findings of the study will serve as a source of principal document to other researchers who are interested in conducting further studies on students' customer service expectations in CCTU.

Delimitations

In terms of content, the study focused on students' customer service expectations in the CCTU. The study concentrated on three services which were accommodation, departmental administration and internet services. This was based on the researcher's observation that students of CCTU often

14

express their distres on the afore-mentioned three services than the remaining services.

Also, available literature were all foreign based and did not reflect the situation in the Ghanaian universities (Nadiri, Kamdampully & Hussain, 2009; Yilmaz, Demircan, Bal & Koskan, 2010; Le Roux and Van Rensburg, 2014; Lomas, 2007).

Geographically, the study was delimited to Cape Coast Technical University in the Central Region because the researcher's observation, as stated in the previous paragraph, that eventually necessitated this study was particularly faced by students of CCTU.

The student population included the regular first year and the third year Higher National Diploma (HND) students of CCTU. These students were selected for three main reasons. One reason was that the CCTU had been running HND programmes for a longer period, hence, have gained much of the university's resources and effort in attaining a certain standard than the remaining programmes (the non-tertiary, first degree and postgraduate programmes). Another reason was that while CCTU had only one (1) hostel which absorbed only regular first year students, these regular first year students entered the university with a set of expectations useful for this study. In addition, the regular third year students were included in the population for the study because they had spent additional years in the university and were more informed in areas that the study sought to concentrate as far as the research questions were concerned.

Another delimitation was that only those staff in offices where accommodation, departmental administration and internet services were

provided for students were included in the study. The staff were the hostel administrator, a staff in the Directorate of Information Communication and Technology, the departmental administrators and the administrator in the Office of the Dean of Students' Affairs. The Office of the Dean of Students' Affairs could not be ignored because the Office offers services that addresse general issues which are of concern to students.

Limitations

The study had certain limitations, some of which were the following. Being a qualitative study, the results herein were applicable only to the students in Cape Coast Technical University. In other words, broad generalisations cannot be made. However, since the study brings to bear an in-depth understanding of the concepts in students' customer service expectations, it becomes resourceful only to interested researchers and practitioners of Ghanaian higher educational institutions.

Again, the integration of biases, beliefs, and values up-front in the study weakens the study design. Notwithstanding, the researcher executed member checking to ensure vality of results obtained. Thus, after transcribing the audio recordings, respondents were made to read through the transcripts for confirmation purposes that the researcher had presented the actual or true information as was narrated by the respondents.

Also, although very necessary to achieve authentic results, the data collection and data analysis procedures involved were time-consuming and labour-intensive because the researcher took time to explain the questions in the interview guides to respondents for easy understanding and cooperation.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the current study For the purpose of the current study the following terms have been defined and conceptualised.

Customer service – Kavakas (2013) provided a definition for customer service to mean turning a customer into a satisfied customer. Here, customer service refers to the act of providing students in higher education institutions (HEIs) with quality services such as instructional services, communication services, campus security services, health services and housing services during the academic programme. This includes but not limited to the use of communication to sell the services of HEIs to its cherished students to get them satisfied as perceived (Malik, 2012).

Higher education institutions refers to technical and the traditional universities that have been accredited by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission..

Students – according to Fitchel *et al*. (2011), students refer to persons that have been enrolled in higher education institutions and have applied themselves to the intensive intellectual engagement of the institutions they have enrolled in. In our case, the students refer to persons admitted by CCTU to read HND programmes.

Customer as used in this study refers to students of CCTU to whom services are rendered. The definition of students can be applied to customers since they can be used interchangeably for the purpose of the study.

Students' expectations represent a set of clear pre-conceived ideas of quality educational services that CCTU should provide to students to enable them successfully go through their education.

17

Organisation of the Rest of the Study

The study was organised into five chapters. Of the rest of the four, Chapter two presented the review of related literature, with emphasis on specified concepts, the conceptual framework, the theoretical review as well as related empirical studies on the research questions that guided the study. Chapter three paid attention to the research methods employed. This comprised the research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data processing and analysis. Chapter four concentrated on the discussion of the results on the basis of the research questions formulated to guide the study. Eventually, Chapter five provided a summary of the research process, key findings, conclusions, recommendations based on the findings of the study and suggestions for further research.

18
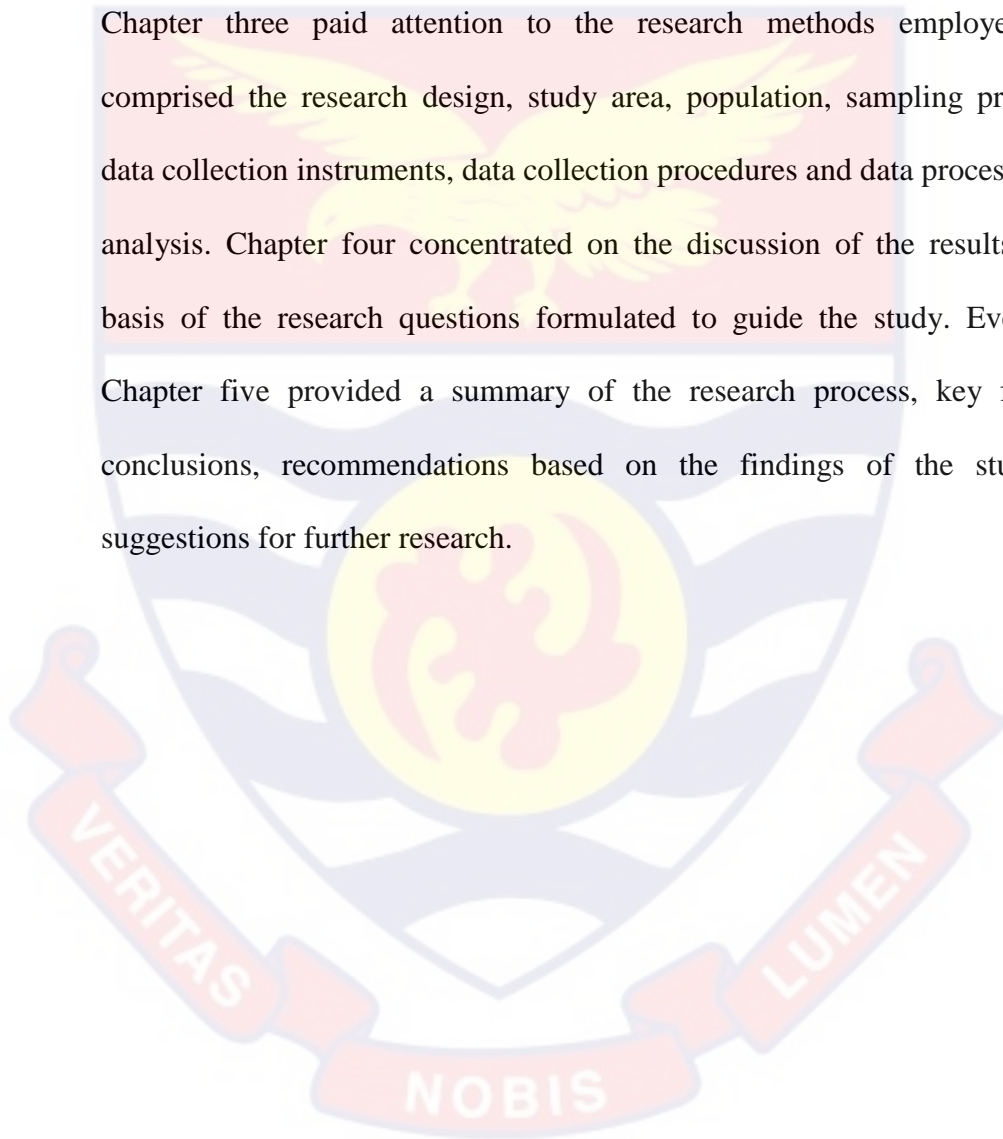
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The current study examined the variable students-as-customers and sought to examine the expectations of students in Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU). The most important pillars of HEIs were students support services, teaching and research (Berlin Declaration on the Social Dimension, 2011). However, the inadequacy of students support services by the institutions of higher education had been one of the major barriers preventing many students from achieving higher education (Dennis, 2011). The rapid increase in enrollment as well as diversity of students, competition among institutions to attract more students, and focus on students retention forced the higher educational institutions to provide all embracing student support services (Arambewela & Maringe, 2012; Morgan, 2011). This chapter reviewed related literature on the study, concepts, principles and theories. As a preliminary step in this study, a literature review was presented that summarized the existing literature on these three important subjects. This chapter was organized into sections as follows: theoretical review and conceptual review. The current chapter was concluded with a summary section.

Theoretical Review

This section provided two basic theories that supported the research topic. Service marketing theory and the SERVQUAL theory were selected as the theoretical foundation of the current study. It was important to note that the section provided implications of the selected theories and how they support

19

the current study. Treating students as customers required some level of marketing concepts and theories and hence the service marketing theory provided the underlying basis for exploring students' customer service expectations at Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU). The SERVQUAL theory also tried to examine how total quality management cannot be applied to the services provided by technical universities. The three types of services which the study examined bothered on accommodation, departmental administrative and internet services. Considering the users of these services as active customers required some level of quality management in the service provision. The SERVQUAL theory highlighted these concepts.

Service Marketing Theory

Service marketing became important in the world due to its contribution to global development. Service marketing theory and its development can be traced to Christopher Lovelock who was an adjunct professor at the Yale School of Management. Service marketing derived its root from the definition of service. Lovelock, Vandermerwe, Lewis and Fernie (2016) gave a traditional definition of service. Service means a performance offered by one party to another (Lovelock *et al*., 2016). They further defined service as an economic activity intended to create value and provide benefit for consumers at a particular period, venue and as a result of bringing about a desired change. The two definitions provided by Lovelock *et al*. can be related to the services provided by Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU). In fact, service as a performance or act offered by one party (the administrators) to another party (the students). In the current study the services involved were accommodation, departmental administrative services and internet services.

20

Marketing the afore-mentioned services to students depended on the relationship that such marketing yielded.

Edwardsson (2012), linked service marketing to activities and interactions which were co-created with the customer. Here, Edwardsson (2012) was of the view that activities that were created by way of service should be done by getting the customer involved. In HEIs the provision of services to students sometimes depended on the availability of the service and the demand for it. However, getting the students involved was sometimes relegated. For Edwardsson (2012), the intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability characteristics of services were such that they cannot be provided without the customer involvement. While considering students as customers of services provided in technical universities, it was also important to note that the services cannot be provided without their involvement. Anisa (2012) responded to a study that was done in 2011 which tended to revisit the services marketing theory and its application to financial services provision. Anisa (2012) noted that the unique features of service marketing always created challenges on its effectiveness. Anisa (2012) further validated different models about the significance of service marketing and its implication today.

Anisa (2012) stated that the uniqueness of the service provided affected its marketing, in that, the target consumers of such services also influenced how these services can be marketed. This had resulted in the resurfacing of the service marketing theory. It was argued by Anisa (2012) that the differences in service marketing in different location and institutions changed over time and that firms competed on the basis of the services that they provided. Gronroos (1982) also posited that the development of general

21

theories or frameworks for service marketing followed two different paths. One path was services offered by service companies that rather needed to be treated as products offering companies. The other path was that services were different in comparison with physical products and that service marketing concepts and models had to be developed in a more service-like direction. These and many more implications had shaped the discussion of the service marketing theory and its implications in the provision of services in HEIs, especially technical universities in Ghana i.e. Cape Coast Technical University.

Are university students really customers? This question was asked in the study of Svensson and Wood (2007), a study aimed at differentiating illusion and delusion. On whether students were really customers, the findings of the study pointed out that the use of marketing metaphors indiscriminately and the appropriateness to use them in students-university relationship was questionable. Svensson and Wood disagreed with the notion that students can be considered as customers in higher education. In fact, the study disagreed to the use of marketing metaphors to describe students-customers relations.

Slightly different from Svennson and Wood's opinion was that of Hunt and Arnett (2006), who developed explanatory foundations to the marketing theory and argued that developing relationship marketing through the provision of services to persons can improve the business strategy of the organization. In effect, they stated that while developing business strategy, relationship marketing of the services or products should be considered as part of them. Ramya (2015) pointed out that marketing of services had moved away from the normal developing, selling and delivery of products to

22

establishing a progressive maintenance of mutually satisfying long-term relationships with customers. Application of Ramya (2015) concepts were that service providers of technical universities and for that matter Cape Coast Technical University had to develop a relationship with their customers and a mutual one of course. These customers were the students of the university. Maxim (2009) posited that relationship had become a new trend in service delivery and that relationship marketing had gathered a new momentum in service marketing and delivery. Catoiu and Tichindeleon (2012) argued that a framework for delivering a paradigmatic marketing theory depended on the service and relationship marketing theory. These concepts and advocates actually told how important service marketing had become in the 21st century.

Cusumano, Kahl and Surez (2008) pointed out that the lack of theory to explain the services delivery in HEIs had led to limitations in their provision. In fact, Cusumano *et al*. (2008) argued that limited access to HEIs was created as a result of growing demand in HEIs which had brought about the relegation of the concept and ideologies of students-as-customers. Kanagal (2013) stated that competitive marketing strategy depended on the relationship built with customers. We had always maintained that building good student relationship in a marketing environment can promote peace and tranquillity in most major campuses. Also, building good student relationship in a highly competitive market depended on the fact that students in HEIs needed to be considered as customers for the services provided to them. The expectation of students in HEIs can be achieved by a good service marketing theory and relationship building. Moller and Halinen (2000) stated that the way relational service marketing had been neglected in the mainstream marketing theories

23

was a worry and that the importance of building relationship with customers through service delivery was important for institutional growth.

In support, Mercer-Mapstone *et al.* (2018) stated that students-staff relationship was one of the challenge students faced in higher education. The findings of Oluseye *et al.* (2014) noted that the varieties of challenges that students went through were due to lack of customer relationship Management approach as a result of poor attitude of personnel in higher education. Considering students as customers required customer relationship Management approaches which were sometimes difficult to implement in higher education institutions.

Palmatier (2008) also projected some history in his concept paper and traced the importance of relationship marketing in business exchanges to Homeric Greece. Hui (2006) saw service marketing and relationship marketing as paradigm shift and argued on the basis of positivism. Hui (2006) critiques were that the positivist nature of theorizing marketing based on microeconomic models ignored the factor of relationship in a marketing process and its strategic implications in human interactions in an exchange process. In fact, marketing theories and its application in HEIs had always depended on demand and supply for the services in those institutions. Not until now, marketing concepts and their application in HEIs had always been limited especially when the demand was still high and students' admissions always exceeded the capacity of institutions.

SERVQUAL Theory

Service quality in higher education institutions (HEIs) had been linked to the SERVQUAL Model. SERVQUAL Model is simply Service Quality

24

Model. According to Soutar and McNeil (1996), SERVQUAL is a tool that has proven to be useful for understanding the concept or idea of service quality based on customer opinions. Oldfield and Baron (2000) also posited that SERVQUAL was a well-known and much used instrument for measuring customer perceptions of service quality. They explained that SERVQUAL was an instrument designed to explore what were considered to be the elements of service quality and the extent to which the elements were viewed by customers because customers could see and experience various tangible elements associated with a service. Brochado (2009) affirmed that SERVQUAL was a model that defined service quality in terms of the difference between customer expectations and performance perceptions.

SERVQUAL Model enabled researchers to measure and evaluate gaps that existed between service expectations of customers and their perceived service experiences (Soutar & McNeil, 1996). Also, Brochado (2009) agreed that SERVQUAL had theoretical foundations in the gaps model and rated SERVQUAL as the most practical model for the measurement of service quality. Thus, they referred to SERVQUAL as a service marketing instrument that was useful in evaluating the performance of tertiary education institutions.

Originally, the SERVQUAL model was developed by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1985) in their concept paper which has now made gains in empirical literature. Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) coined the term SERVQUAL as theoretical model in testing the quality of service provision in higher education institutions. The model pointed out the expectation of people and the performance of the services provided to them. For Parasuraman *et al*. (1985), service quality was defined as the difference between customer

25

expectations and performance perceptions. Here, they argued that service provision can be measured with a scale of 22 items which had been empirically tested in many jurisdictions.

The SERVQUAL model provided some items that can actually influence the expectation and the performance of service provided by institutions of higher education. In measuring service quality, Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) stated five key variables as dimensions in quality delivery measurement. In other words, Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) measured the reliability of their scale of measurement and concluded that service quality can be measured by: (i) non-academic aspects, (ii) academic aspects, (iii) reputation, (iv) access, and (v) programme issues. These five variables, with further explanations in the sections below, together determined whether or not the institutions were delivering a quality service to clients or students. Customers of HEIs and for that matter Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU) were not exempted when it came to the application of Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) SERVQUAL model.

Before proceeding to the explanations of the five variable, it was appropriate to provide a brief information on the rationale for the establishment of CCTU. In the strategic plan of Cape Coast Technical University (2017-2022), Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU) being one of the leading Technical Universities in Ghana, had been entrusted the responsibility to help solve the yawning educational gap that had deepened between what industry actually requires and the learning that took place in Ghanaian Higher Educational Institutions. Responsibility, of which CCTU continually endeavours to build capacity in Technical Vocational Education

and Training (TVET), backed by entrepreneurship with new orientation in the area of skills acquisition and competency-based training. CCTU was driven by the vision to lead Technical University in Ghana and globally offerred high quality career-oriented programmes in engineering, applied sciences, applied arts, technical and vocational education, applied research and consultancy for national development. The mission statement guiding CCTU was the commitment to imparting technical and vocational skills to students and participants in the pursuit of national development, in the areas of Engineering, Applied Sciences and Applied Arts, Technical and Vocational education through knowledge transfer and partnership with industry and commerce.

Reverting to the five key variables for measuring service quality, the non-academic aspect of the SERVQUAL model tried to explain the services that were provided to students in order to help them comply with their study obligations (Soutar & McNeil, 1996). Here, the institution ought to provide essential services that could promote conducive learning atmosphere and environment. Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) pointed out that non-academic services could be provided by non-academic staff of the institution. For the purpose of this study, the Technical Universities Senior Administrators Association of Ghana (TUSAAG), Technical Universities Administrators Association of Ghana (TUAAG) and Technical Universities Workers Association of Ghana (TUWAG) in the CCTU had been identified to be providing diverse non-academic roles. The non-academic services provided included planning of the University's activities, preparation and dissemination of correspondences, broadcasting of information, records keeping services,

27

transport services, food services, development and management of facilities, maintenance activities and landscape services (Saunders, 2014).

The academic aspect of the model relied on the responsibilities of the academic staff. Expectations of students from their lecturers and academic supervisors could also determine the quality of academic services provided in the institutions (White, 2007). The academic services may include drawing of academic calendars, developing, mounting, accrediting and facilitating programmes of study and facilitating seminars that develop the students practically and academically. For technical universities, the focus was on providing students with competency based training and practical technical and vocational skills (Boateng, 2019). Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) pointed out that responsibilities of academicians went beyond the lecture theatres. Rather, students expected their lecturers to do more than just lecturing and setting tests. For instance, in institutions where student numbers were limited, groups of students had been assigned to lecturers for academic mentorship purposes. Students' expectations and performance of academic lecturers had sometimes left a gap due to the huge number of students assigned to lecturers (Lalwani, 2000).

What about reputations? The service quality of institutions depended hugely on the reputations of the institution in question (Boice-Pardee, Soisson & Richardson, 2018). Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) stated that each institution should promote its own professional image. Professional image of institutions played a major role in their development and organisations spent money to protect and defend their images globally (Durkin & Mckenna, 2011). Malik, Ghafoor and Iqbal (2012) also posited that a high-profile university was one

that had embraced the reality of diversification such that the physical facilities existing on the university's campus, the content of programmes of study, structures and modules of instruction, teaching and learning materials used for instruction, support services and administrative systems that were useful and friendly to diverse calibre of students.

The 'access' aspect of the SERVQUAL model was linked to 'convenience'. Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) explained that the institution should be approachable, easy to contact, and readily available to deliver. There was always a missing link that prevented institutional access (Andrlic & Budic, 2011). Today all higher educational institutions have website that provide information for both continuous and prospect students. For example, students can access all information of the institution in a single platform. It was important to note that access can create opportunity for students to manage their expectations and can provide a way of ensuring that the institution performed as expected (Durkin & Mckenna, 2011).

While creating access through convenience, Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) averred that providing and offering wide range of reputable academic programmes using flexible structures and procedures can also be useful in measuring the quality of services of the institutions.

The implication of this theory to the current study relied on the fact that considering students as customers required service quality (SERVQUAL) model. Oldfield and Baron (2000) argued that sometimes students' perceptions and expectation of service quality in their institutions did not comply with the SERVQUAL model. Baron and Oilfield (2000) tested the performance of the model leaving the expectation aspect and concluded that perception of service

29

quality changed over a period of the study. Batinic, Pavicic and Mihanovic (2016) claimed that students' satisfactions with housing or accommodation affected their performance. Here Batinic *et al*. (2016) argued that the application of the SERVQUAL model to accommodation services in HEIs affected students' performance. De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010) also examined the reliability of the SERVQUAL in South African Institutions. De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010) findings were that the measure of service quality in higher education was a multidimensional construct loading on thirteen (13) factors with a high reliability coefficient and validity.

Hassan, Rahman and Razak (2008) applied the service quality model to student satisfaction in private higher education institution. Hassan *et al*. (2008) stated that the factors that contributed to students' satisfaction can be associated with the Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) model which provided supporting evidence.

Sanaz and Xu (2015) also noted that what students expected generally was by involving them in decision making process. The model suggested that students were generally satisfied when they were engaged in the decision-making process of the institution. The model did not only prove to be efficient but also very effective in testing the hypotheses associated with students' satisfaction and expectations of the services provided by HEIs. Narteh (2013) did a study on the determining factors of students' allegiance in the Ghanaian banking industry by using the SERVQUAL model. Narteh (2013) found that the satisfaction with bank services, image of bank, availability of bank services and apparent service quality were major determinants of students' bank loyalty. Still using the SERVQUAL model, Hadi, Mona and Sepideh

(2013) researched on perceived service quality and student satisfaction in the International Business School of UniversitiTeknologi Malaysia. The aim of their study was to investigate the relationship of factors (advising, curriculum, teaching quality, financial assistance and tuition costs and facilities) which were of perceived service quality with student satisfaction. Hadi, Mona and Sepideh (2013) found a positive and significant correlation between the afore-stated factors and student satisfaction; thus, the quality of those service factors had a significant impact on student satisfaction. The finding suggested that it was important for operators of higher education institutions to increase the quality of services being offered to their students because doing so increased levels of student satisfaction.

Nontheless, Soutar and McNeil (1996) averred that total quality management in higher education cannot be achieved due to its comprehensiveness and that total quality management initiatives for tertiary institutions were much wider and deeper than the SERVQUAL model.

Sharabi (2013) stated that managing and improving higher education service quality depended on Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) model and its application had achieved several results. In fact, the study by Sharabi (2013) showed that service provisions in higher education institutions depended on the coordination of management of the institutions and that the problems in the service quality model prevented the improvement of service quality in higher education institutions. Sharabi (2013) stated that SERVQUAL model can further be improved to capture new items since the demand in higher education kept changing and the fact that majority of higher education in the world were more dynamic than before. Agbanu, Ahiase and Sonyo (2018)

31

averred that students' satisfaction was influenced by course evaluation, administrative focus and instructor's performance and these have been considered as part of the SERVQUAL model. Fitsilis, Gerogiannis and Tsinidou (2010) stated that the factors that influenced service quality in higher education as perceived by students and expected by them differed and may include but not limited to accommodation services, internet services, and academic services. Annamdevula and Bellamkonda (2016) pointed out that student perceived that quality of services did have effect on student satisfaction, loyalty and motivation in Indian universities.

Akareem and Hossain (2016) noted that the determinants of quality education were previous results, parent's education, students' scholarship and extracurricular activities. According to Abdulai and Corner (2010) the quality dilemmas considered in higher education affected the way they were delivered in these institutions. Elken and Stensaker (2018) stated that in conceptualizing quality of work in higher education, SERVQUAL was a model that needed to be exploited. It was argued that quality education depended on the SERVQUAL model. Elassy (2013) stated that quality enhancement in higher education can be done by expanding the SERVQUAL model. Brochado (2009) noted that there were several instruments to measure service quality in higher education and the SERVQUAL model was one of the instruments used to measure quality of services in HEIs. The review of the SERVQUAL model can be applied to the concept of students-as-customers. Considering students as customers in higher education required HEIs to apply the model to enhance the quality of services provided to students. The model had been applied to dispute the perceptions of administrators and the expectations of students in

32

higher education regarding service quality. The current study applied the same model in Cape Coast Technical University.

Higher Education and Students-as-Customers

Over the years higher education (HE) had become the lifeblood of persons who wanted to advance progressively in the academic ladder. Woodall, Hiller and Resnick (2014) reported that the competitiveness in the global universities had led these institutions into consumerist pressure and marketing environment. As such, these universities would then have to adopt progressive norms to make their institutions competitive to attract and retain students who had been categorized as customers in most highly and graded universities in the world. Kossam's (2014) opinions on higher educations and students-as-customers went beyond the views of Woodall *et al*. (2014) provided above. Thus, higher education was not a new phenomenon in the world education cycle. The concept of higher education in the world emancipated the students' ideologies on how they should be treated on campuses of HEIs. Deans of students in most HEIs had developed policies on students' administration and on matters that related to provision of quality services to these students. It was always imperative to note that students were the lifeblood of HEIs and their maintenance or retention went beyond the issuing of academic certificates to them (Woodall *et al*., 2014).

History of "Students-as-Customers"

Kossam (2014) stated that HEIs governance started in the early 1971 which led to the promotion of eleven (11) systems that could provide a definition of complete HEIs. According to Saunders (2014) the conceptualization of students-as-customers, often signified by the purchasing

of educational services, had always been present in American HE. In the course of time, the United Kingdom (UK) had also moved down the American path and had adopted the students-as-customers as part of students' affairs administrative practices in their universities to the extent that a group of UK based universities had settled for the idea that the customer was always right (Nixon *et al*., 2018). Eagle and Brennan (2007) posed a question on whether students can be well-thought-out as customers. Eagle and Brennan (2007) argued that so long as these students paid an increasing share of their tuition cost, they should be considered as customers and that the definition should not be polarized. Clayson and Haley (2005) partly agreed and noted that students who paid substantial part of their fees should be considered as customers. The authors defended that, there was the underlying belief to note that it was the same situation as people who paid for services were considered as customers. Otherwise, they further argued, the concept of customers should be defined to exclude students of HEIs if there was self-evident that education was intrinsically different. Finney and Finney (2010) considered students as customers in an exploratory study in the United States of America (USA). However, they arrived at a different conclusion. They concluded that when students viewed themselves as customers, they were likely to develop some egotistical attitudes and behaviours that impeded their academic success. Notwithstanding, the authors further mentioned that building student satisfaction was most importantly needed in these HEIs.

The implication of Finney and Finney (2010) study was that so long as students saw themselves as customers, there were tendencies that they may act against authorities and governance systems in their HEIs. According to White

(2007), the perception that the customer was always right had frequently been discussed among students in HE in Australia. The author explained that this had led to many Australian Universities undergoing structural reforms and policies initiations to the extent of improving the services they rendered to these students who sometimes carried themselves as active customers to their HEIs. As White (2007) posited the changes in the global context with respect to improvement in higher education and the global creation of mass markets for learning had initiated a new world order towards ensuring that students were treated well as customers to enhance the competition process. Saunders (2014) applied the free-market logic to college students and came out with a concept that enhanced the students' perception as customers. For Saunders (2014), neoliberalism in education in the advanced world had promoted the concepts of students-as-customers.

The argument on whether to consider students as customers in HEIs had led to many misconceptions which were being resolved in global literature today. Following the study of Janardhana and Rajasekhar (2012) many countries had modified their assessment and accreditation requirements and had placed students in the centre of issuing accreditation. Students-as-customers had now come to stay in most tertiary institutions. Today, customer care lines had been implemented in many institutions rendering 24 hours call service to listen to students' complaints and providing support services to these customers hereby referred to as students. Infrastructure in HEIs should promote developments in students' culture and also provide enabling environment for students to get satisfied with infrastructural developments in their HEIs. Today, HEIs remain resolute and have been resilient in their

35

service delivery and this can only be traced in the advanced economies. In our local institutions where, infrastructural development was a challenge, quality services that were often demanded by students were always limited and the expectation of students (customers) continued to remain a hypothesis (Janardhana & Rajasekhar, 2012).

DeShields, Kara and Kaynak (2018) latest study on students-as-customers considered students as business customers and applied Herzberg's two factory theory to their satisfaction and retention in HEIs. They argued that there was changing nature of the higher education marketplace and the continuous demand for quality services had made these institutions to apply the customer-oriented principles used in the business sector to reform their service delivery. According to the authors, administrators in HEIs had accepted the notion that the enhancement and the success of students' education were the major reason for their existence as higher education institutions. DeShields *et al*. (2018) however, noted that the determinants of students' satisfactions of services provided by these HEIs were assumed to impact the business student college experience. The focus had always been on the practices adopted by the administrators to ensure that students in HEIs had benefited from the services they paid for since HE had never been cheap as claimed. It was important to note that HEIs, for that matter, universities in the world were themselves competitors and their ability to satisfy and retain students can be traced to the theory of Herzberg.

Arat (2011) defined some extents to which students can be considered as customers. For Arat (2011), there were three things to be considered when it came to students as customers and these included: (i) higher education

provides service and becomes a business, (ii) higher education does not exactly provide service and never becomes a business, and (iii) higher education provides service which is one of a kind and partially becomes a business. Doing business in higher education institutions required customers for the business to survive and this applied to higher education institutions where students were considered as customers. Arat (2011) wrote that higher education was multifaceted as compared to a regular business in a service industry. Similarly, Nixon *et al*. (2018) were of the view that in the midst of high competition facing HEIs in terms of students, revenue and status, it was important to consider students as customers because students played an important role as "change agents" by challenging the established modes of learning and contributing to making learning more exciting and relevant. Kavakas (2013) also argued that the criteria to consider students as customers started in the early 1976 by a study that was done by Fromm. In 1993, Fromm (1976) developed a concept paper that sought to propose that education was a commodity and as a commodity it can be bought. Buying education as a commodity required some level of satisfaction that would make the people (students) to continue its usage. Kavakas (2013) argued that the new trend was marketization which was based on the system of competition among universities for the recruitment of students. It can therefore be said that students can be considered as customers.

Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion (2009) stated that transformation of students into consumers had long been argued to be based on the availability of HEIs. In Sub-Saharan Africa, considering students as customers had become a problem owing to the fact that facilities and infrastructure were not

available for the vast number of people who applied for admission each year. The drive for competition in most international universities had led to increased market orientation in many countries. Attracting students and retaining them had become a necessity for administrators in HEIs to practice. Molesworth *et al.* (2009) claimed that if HE is considered as a market then the learners' needs should be addressed rather than a public good. Fromm's (1976) ideas had become more relevant in this area because they are connected to consumer culture and ideas about placing students in the heart of education. Literature, therefore, supported the tendency to believe that students can be considered as customers. As time went on students developed some perceptions about their role in their HEIs and as a result demanded quality services from their institutions. It was important to note that students had long been considered as customers and the concept had come to stay, thus, HEIs were improving their services (Molesworh *et al.*, 2009).

From the literature and above discussions, it could be deduced that the application of marketing strategies to Higher Education was necessitated by the high competition among universities and this had eventually brought about the consideration of the concept of students as customers of HEIs.

HEIs Students' Expectations of Technical University Services

Students' expectations in HEIs went beyond the normal academic work provided by their institutions. Tagoe (2013) pointed out that managing today's HEIs had become a complex task and very challenging. Students' expectations in their HEIs in the West Africa sub-region had changed significantly and these sometimes posed a challenge in meeting the students' expectations in some of these HEIs. For Tagoe (2013) the difficulties in

38

meeting students' expectations had become a common challenge borne by management and administrators of HEI. Over the years, private institutions had tremendously increased in number and the competitions among these private and public HEIs had paved room for provision of service quality to some students though some of their expectations might not be met. Students' expectations may include but not limited to counselling, coordination, students' academic support, mode of assessment, timetabling of classes, examinations and tests and the provision of conducive learning atmosphere on various campuses of education.

Indeed, the aforementioned support services cannot be done with and students certainly have expectations or ideas of what to expect once they enrolled in a school. For instance, regarding students' expectations towards administrators and their services to students, Willower (2017) did a study that presented how students viewed their school administrators, why they had such views and went on to find out expectations of students concerning administrators. Willower's (2017) study was a comprehensive study on education students' perceptions of school administrators and came out with some key policy initiations about how students viewed these administrators. The students were of the view that these administrators had the final say and that their views were always upheld relegating the consents of the students (Willower, 2017). As to whether the students liked or disliked their university administrators, majority of the students pointed out the fact that sometimes the decisions made by these administrators were unwelcomed and that caused their dislike for their university administrators. This also made the students perceive the school administrators as authoritative in nature. It appeared that

sometimes, the negative perceptions of students about their school administrators or authorities hindered students' expectations of their administrators and authorities. Willower's (2017) arguments on whether students' expectation could be met by these perceived authoritative administrators of their institution was fairly examined. It was then found that majority of the students believed that the administrators were not spearheading their expectations.

Heck, Johnsrud and Rosser (2000) structured a study on effectiveness in higher education through the improvement in assessment procedures and stated that in evaluating students, their expectations should be considered. Soutar and McNeil (1996) pointed out that one of the things that HEIs should do to meet students' expectations was to develop an understanding among employees of HEIs that total quality management was a concern in meeting customers' or students' requirements. Students expected their HEIs to provide quality services to them in return of the fees that they paid (Du Plooy & De Jager, 2006). However, in most public institutions, it was only the academic user fees that was paid hence those moneys were usually channelled where authorities deemed as most important. This usual practice of HEIs authorities created an instance whereby students bore an intense pressure of the responsibility to actually demand for quality support services. This should not have been the case because the expectations of students needed to be met so long as they were made to pay for services rendered. Du Plooy and De Jager (2006) explained that, the expectations of students in one HEI vary from the expectations of students in another HEI. Also, the kind of services required by students in HEIs differs. Therefore, it is up to the management and

administrators of these HEIs to examine their students' expectations in order to make relevant provisions for them since their (students) revolutions can lead to closure of these institutions.

What then are the expectations of students' in HEIs? Kuhn (2004) noted that students in India Universities were concerned about the counselling services these universities provided them with. In the study, students indicated that the counselling role provided by their universities had transformed significantly. It was explained that the counselling services had included more functions such as guidance on career paths, helping all students to make contacts with local businesses for part-time jobs, administering achievement tests and assisting in maintaining order in the schools through disciplinary interventions. However, the students expected more to be done (Kuhn, 2004). In their views, the misconceptions of the activities in these universities can further be eliminated through counselling activities provided by their universities. Kuhn (2004) findings went back to Heck *et al*. (2000) about some of the quality services needed in HEIs. While both Kuhn (2004) and Heck *et al*. (2000) pointed out that total quality management and customer services to students were needed, it was argued that students' expectations went beyond counselling in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO (2002) remarked that the provision of services to students needed to be professionally communicated and the sharing of information on best practices, exchanges, internships and conferences should meet majority of students' expectations. UNESCO (2002) called for a major paradigm shift in effort to enhance the delivery of higher education in every country in the

41

world. This intent was met by the fact that the traditional method of delivering higher education degrees should include greater effort in addressing basic needs of students. The needs referred to a comprehensive set of out-of-classroom student services and programmes. It was further explained that, the expectations of students were not limited to academics, but also included services that were non-academic in nature (UNESCO, 2002). It was, therefore, worthy to note that the provision of non-academic services to students of HEIs required the satisfaction and endorsement by students.

Fernando, Lalitha and Weerasinghe (2017) made some concluding remarks on students' satisfaction in HE and stated that there had been contradictory dimensions with respect to the quest of ensuring that students' expectations were met. Fernando *et al*. (2017) pointed out that several models and theories had been channelled to improve the service provision for students (customers) and had resulted in the adoption of several models in HEIs all over the world. The models that Fernando et al. (2017) were referring to included the following: (i) student satisfaction model by Pascarella and Tetezini (1991), (ii) SERVQUAL Model by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1985), (iii) happy productive theory by Dollard, Cotton and DeJonge (2002) and (iv) Noel-Levtiz student satisfaction index by Noel-Levtiz (1994). According to Fernando *et al*. (2017), all these models had been tested in their respective capacities and had shown to be the model for ensuring students' satisfactions in HEIs. Notwithstanding, these models had proven to be effective in efforts towards getting students satisfied as long as they wanted their expectations to be met. Managing students' expectations always

42

depended on institutions' interest and ability to get students satisfied Fernando *et al*. (2017) aversed.

While contemplating on students' expectations in HEIs, Batinic, Pavicic and Mihanovic (2016) did a comprehensive study on the link between student's satisfaction with faculty, students' life and students' performance. In their study, Batinic *et al* (2016) came out with a set of framework theories that improved students' level of expectations. Batinic *et al*. (2016) highlighted on the key development on students' satisfactions and expectations of the faculty's work and demonstrated the key proponents of students' expectations and satisfactions. For Batinic *et al*. (2016), students' expectations and satisfactions in HEIs revolved around the following models and theories, conceptual model for satisfaction by Alves, Mainardes and Raposo (2010), satisfaction framework by Hanssen and

Solvoll (2015) and higher education performance index by Abdullah (2006). It was quite understandable for students to expect their faculties to provide them the kind of services they wanted but it also depended on the type of HEIs these students found themselves. Students' expectations and their level of satisfaction as noted by Batinic *et al*. (2016) relied on the customer satisfaction approach adopted by some of HEIs and that had become a central role in the world of business and education as well. To this point, getting the students' satisfied was same as meeting their expectations and this had been used as a catalyst to measure the performance of HEIs.

Batinic *et al*. (2016) pointed out that average student's expectation was getting satisfied with university bodies and services, teaching, teaching methods and academic reputations. When these expectations were not met, it

affected the average student's performance, and put a dent of their level of satisfaction in such institutions (Batinic *et al*., 2016). Topal (2016) did a survey study when students needed to get or be done to be satisfied and pointed out that managing student's expectations went beyond academic works. While a study done in India by Topal (2016) focused on the application of social networks in communications in HEIs to meet students' expectations, Kalpana and Sudharani (2012) stated that institutions' quality factors that met students' expectations focused on infrastructure, image branding, location cost and personnel and overall satisfaction by previous students. These fundamentals determined the satisfaction level of these students anytime they make attempt to enrol in any HEIs. While it was important to emphasize on the core mandate of this HEIs, customers' satisfactions had become a central idea in most institutions because students wanted to be treated as such in this dynamic and advancing economies (Kalpana & Sudharani, 2012). It had, therefore, become important to manage students' expectations in these HEIs knowing very well that their agitations can lead to cost.

Mandate of Technical Universities in Ghana

Technical universities in Ghana started as second cycle institutions until they were elevated to the tertiary status in 1992 (Newman, 2013). Not until now, polytechnics were providing academic services in a second cycle status (issuing secondary school level certificates) in areas such as applied arts, applied social sciences, technology, commerce and any other discipline the authority by law or policy may determine. According to the Ministry of Education (2014), the conversion of polytechnic institutions into technical universities had broadened their scope and had led to calls for the development

44

in this universities and Cape Coast Technical University is not an exemption. Technical education combined practical skills, attitudes, values and knowledge needed at any work place (Boateng, 2019). Ablakwah (2016) stated that polytechnic education, now technical university, had the objective to promote technical and vocational education and training, technology transfer and skills development to enhance the economic development in a country.

The Technical Universities Act, Act 2016 Act 922 had the aims for the establishment of technical universities. According to section 3 sub-section 1 of the Act, the aims of a technical university were to provide higher education in engineering, science and technology-based disciplines, technical and vocational education and training, applied arts and related disciplines as the Council of the Technical University may, in consultation with the National Council for Tertiary Education determine in accordance with some specified principles also indicated in the Act. For Boateng (2019) technical universities covered courses and programmes in engineering, architecture, town planning technology, management, pharmacy and applied arts and crafts, hotel management and catering services. Ablakwah (2016) pointed out that polytechnic-trained graduates should be practical oriented as compared to their colleagues in the traditional universities. Mandate of technical universities can be traced back to a study that was done by Lalwani (2000) who argued that technical education gave more practical approach to students' training. It was always important to know that technical universities in Ghana originated from the conversion of polytechnic institutions to technical universities in Ghana. Ten (10) polytechnics were converted to technical universities including the Cape Coast Technical University which was used in this study.

45

Ablakwah (2016) argued that the conversion of polytechnic into technical university was not a matter of rebranding but to provide more hands down training and skills acquisitions to meet the growing needs of the Ghanaian industry. This was likely to lead to a change or increase of students' expectations. Boateng (2019) suggested that the amendment of the law and regulations of technical educations would promote access and provide eligibility for students to make advances in technical education. The lack of understanding of the difference between traditional universities and technical universities had led to many students actually abandoning the technical universities for traditional universities. Boateng (2019) noted that the technical universities were not the first-choice institutions of many students. The author added that public recognition of the usual Higher National Diploma (HND) was quite low and public awareness of the usefulness of the HND needed to be done to increase students' participation in these universities. Agyefi-Mensah and Edu-Buandoh (2014) mentioned that by far technical education had been promoted and even other educational programmes were being ran in technical institutions, hence, allowing equal access to education. It was important to note that technical education equipped students with skills necessary and useful for the development of a country, Ghana inclusive, thus technical education should be devoid of the stigma that society had placed on it (Nutassey & Newton, 2014). Given this instance, technical education had become a service rendered by technical universities and their students needed to be treated as customers. The service provision of these institutions as stated by Agyefi-Mensah and Edu-Buandoh (2014) was usually practical driven and involved competency-based training.

46

Prior to their conversion into technical universities, Polytechnics in Ghana were governed by the Seven Hundred and Forty-Fifth Act of the Republic of Ghana, Act 2007, (Polytechnics Act, 2007, Act 745), the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination (NABPTEX), the NABPTEX Act 492, Act 1994. The board was said to have oversight responsibilities over technical education in Ghana, thereby providing regulatory framework and policies to enhance the provision of technical education services in Ghana. Agyefi-Mensah and Edu-Buandoh (2014) did a study on the implication of the new Polytechnics Act, 2007, Act 745 for curriculum development and review in Ghanaian Polytechnic. The study was comprehensive and tried to envisage how the new Act would comprehend the technical education in Ghana. Agyefi-Mensah and Edu-Buandoh (2014) advocated that capacity building lied in the hands of institutions administering technical education. They added that technical and vocational education and training (TVET) involved the educational process that imparted general knowledge through technologies, related sciences and practical skills. In their view, technical education should provide practical training services to students (customers) in an effort to enrich their competencies and enhance their employability.

While Agyefi-Mensah and Edu-Buandoh (2014) were examining the institutional focus of these polytechnics in line with their curriculum developments, Boakye-Agyeman (2006) noted that technical education in Ghana should be more practical oriented in their service delivery so that they do not shift focus from their core mandate. For Boakye-Agyeman (2006) technical education can be considered as a service institution since their line of

47

productivity was intangible in this new era. Technical education had long been considered as service provision due to their core mandate as provided by the Polytechnics Act, 2007, Act 745. The service provided by these technical universities was intended to much as possible; build the practical skills and competencies of their students. Newman (2013) stated that technical education had evolved and regenerated cognitive services that helped transform the society. Citing a UNESCO (2001) report, Newman (2013) asserted that technical education had become critical for development of skills and empowerment of generations for sustainable development agenda.

Indeed, Newman (2013) argued that the importance of technical education in HEIs was what had influenced the frequent upgrading of technical education to a status which had become more comprehensive and practical oriented. Alhassan, Kinder and Sulemana (2014) stated that technical education had empowered students to become self-employed as well as entrepreneurs and also provided opportunities for self-reliance development. In effect, technical education was the service that these institutions provided that made the students gain the sense of usefulness that they wanted.

Availability of Students Services in Technical Universities

Universities in Ghana provided a wide range of academic and non-academic services to their students. Alhassan, Kinder and Sulemana (2014) developed a concept paper in attempt to harness the challenges that these technical or polytechnic institutions went through and how they can manage the service delivery to the level that these students expected from them. Alhassan *et al*. (2014) pointed out that service availability and provision in most technical education institutions were limited due to inadequate facilities

in these institutions. They further remarked that the problem of inadequate facilities had contributed to restriction on students' admissions and provision of technical education. While students might not be the only focus for technical universities in Ghana, students form the majority of their clients. Consequently, technical universities needed to ensure availability of services and ensure that students were satisfied with the services provided. Alhassan *et al*. (2014) noted some key fundamental services that were usually available in technical universities in Ghana. The services included but was not limited to accommodation services, departmental services, internet services, and supervisory services. They noted that students' expectations varied significantly with respect to these services.

Accommodation Services

Accommodation was one of the services provided by Cape Coast Technical University. In the current study, the accommodation services looked at the available facilities, its management and what students' expectations of accommodation services were. Alhassan *et al*. (2014) emphasized that rectors as supported by vice rectors, registrars, planning officers and students' representative council together were required to ensure that students in higher education were provided with appropriate accommodation till they completed their programmes of study. Over the years the inadequacy of accommodation facilities in some technical universities had resulted in what was called in-out-out-out shift system. This meant that students were offered accommodation on campus in their first year of enrolment by the university. After completion of first year, students were then asked to pack out from the university's accommodation facility and search outside campus for their preferred private

accommodation throughout their remaining years as students of the university concerned.

However, Newman (2013) was of the view that when students moved far from campuses of education, it created high tendencies for academic work to be disrupted. It was explained that most students lose focus and attention on their academics when they stay outside their universities' campuses.

On another hand, Bashir, Sarki and Samidi (2012) considered the service quality and its application in Malaysian Universities' hostel accommodation services. Bashir et al. (2012) stated that there was a perception on service quality of the accommodation services provided by universities in Malaysia. Using the Parasuraman et al. (1985) model of service quality, the results supported the applicability of the framework and all the hypotheses supported the theory SERVQUAL. Accommodation services provided by universities in Malaysia were deemed to be appropriate since they were all in support of the reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. They argued that for hostel and hall management service quality should be paramount. There were always control services that management of higher education should provide to students. The perception of students about the quality of services provided to them by institutions of higher education can improve their academic performance. In fact, according to their study, students in universities in Malaysia were more particularly of the view that service quality in accommodation services depended on its demand hence considering students as customers would improve the service provision.

Directing focus to local situation in Cape Coast Technical University, one may ask, are students of Cape Coast Technical University satisfied with

50

the current accommodation services provided to them? It is essential to answer this question, but what do students also expect from the few accommodation facilities available to them. Students' expectations in accommodation services can be linked to their demands. Boakye-Agyeman (2006) pointed out that what actually makes students satisfied in traditional universities was the available accommodation provided to them, thus, the struggle to find accommodation affected students' academic progression. Agyefi-Mensah and Edu-Buandoh (2014) also mentioned that planning in technical institutions should include policies on how students can be accommodated on campuses since technical education had come to stay.

Consequently, the provision of accommodation services to students should encompass facilities that promote the culture of conducive learning atmospheres.

Departmental Administrative Services

The Cape Coast Technical University run on the school system which were further divided into academic departments, each headed by Heads of Department (HoDs) and supported by one administrator each. According to the Cape Coast Technical University Statutes, statutes 14 subsection 3, 'the Registrar shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Technical University …' Also according to the Scheme of Service for Staff of Technical Universities, 'the Registrar shall be in charge of all administrative, secretarial and human resource management functions of the University …' Consequently, all administrators within the university reported to the Registrar who was the overall Administrative Secretary of the University. Melbourne Institute of Technology (2010) provided that the role of academic

51

administrative officers included reception, supervising subordinates, assisting in student engagement activities, employing effective students' records keeping system(s), assisting in student counselling and assisting in developing effective and suitable time timetabling.   Other roles of an academic department administrative officer indicated were coordination of administrative activities like departmental meetings and forums, provision of some aspects of human resource activities like mentoring interns and supporting the implementation of operational action plans. In effect, the mandate of academic departments were to provide specific academic instructional services that were directly related to students' programmes of study and to provide administrative support services that enhanced their studies while they were members of the department.

From the literature reviewed, departmental administrative services were expected to be executed in a manner that promoted inclusive learning and development. Some services expected of departmental administrators included client service experience, degree qualification in relevant field, good writing skills, good communicative skills, team contributor, high level of computing skills especially in Microsoft Office, pro-activeness and general management skills like delegation and supervision.

Internet Services

In the modernised world, literacy in computing had become a necessary part of a student's life (Forbes & Ngi, 2008). From the basics of education to the higher education level, computer literacy and ethical or safe use of the internet had been inculcated into the curriculum in all the stages of education in order for the educated to be conversant with the appropriate

application of computer literacy to create befitting innovative solutions to problems (Forbes & Ngi, 2008).

More importantly, technical students required computer literacy and internet surfing literacy to enable them explore varieties of educational materials (literature and audio-visuals) that will equip them with the knowledge in their fields of study (Boateng, 2019).

However, the provision of the appropriate or required logistics that supported computer literacy on university campuses was a great deal of financial responsibility (Hill, 1995). The ability of a university to raise funds internally, by donations, by synergy with Information and Communication Technology Companies or by government funding programmes to install the enabling facilities for computer and internet surfing literacy became a great advantage for the university in the midst of high competition existing among HEIs (Hill, Lomas & MacGregor, 2003). This was because having the enabling logistics and training capacity for computer literacy and internet surfing added to branding and goodwill which paved way for attracting prospective students, improving on students' retention rates, significantly influenced students' satisfaction positively and significantly influenced students' perceived service quality, all of which propelled a university to gain a strong competitive edge (Soutar & McNeil, 1996).

Internet services were provided under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Directorate of CCTU. Students of CCTU only had access to internet services when they visited the ICT laboratory. Unfortunately, the university had no policy on the internet services and its usage for the students. Over the years, students' expectations had led to some

53

many agitations which had resulted in the improvement in the quality of internet services provided in the ICT laboratory of CCTU. The current study sought to examine students' expectations, perceptions and challenges with respect to the internet service provision.

Core Services Available to Students

Several studies have examined the availability of student support services in various institutions of higher education particularly among universities. For instance, studies conducted by Hasan, Ilias, Rahman and Razak, (2008) examined the availability of student services and the relationship between service quality dimensions and overall service quality (tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy) and students' satisfaction. The study revealed that services such as academic support services, internet and library services, financial support services and accommodation were among the major services that were available for students to patronize. The results further noted a significant and positive relationship between tangibility, assurance, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy and overall service quality to students' satisfaction.

Another research done by Abbasi, Malik, Chaudhry and Imdadullah (2011) assessed the availability and the level of student satisfaction with current services offered by Pakistani universities. Abbasi *et al*. (2011) found that ten core services: teaching, administrative/management support, transportation, library, computer labs and general labs, accommodation, medical; sports, prayer/religious facilities, and class room facilities were readily available for students to use. However, the findings further revealed that the students were dissatisfied with many core services and facilities that

54

were available in the universities used in the study. On the other hand, it was found that the students in the universities under study gained satisfaction with transportation, class room and prayer facilities. The researchers recommended that necessary action should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the facilities and support services which were the teaching, administrative support, library, laboratories, accommodation, medical, and sports facilities in order to help students have a relatively easy school and educational experience (Abbasi *et al*., 2011).

Reference can also be made to a study conducted by Jones and Meyer (2012) on the availability and access to administrative support services among distance learning students in selected public colleges and universities in the United States of America (USA). According to the study, administrative services were readily available for students but the difficulty lied in the accessibility of the administrative support services. Jones and Meyer (2012) then recommended that accessibility should be improved by linking students to all necessary administrative student support services online via the distance learning office home page.

A more recent study conducted by Narasappa and Kumar (2018) investigated the availability and the use of information resources and information services by teachers and students of pre-university colleges in Shivamogga, India. The findings of the quantitative study showed that, majority of the teachers represented by 50.94% visited their university's library daily. In the same study, majority of the respondents indicated by 38.99% were satisfied with their university's library location and reading room facilities. The study further showed that the 56.61% of the teachers

disagreed with the availability of library building in pre-university colleges and only 8.17% of the teachers strongly agreed to availability of library building. The study suggested that the Department of pre-university board, should set minimum standards including librarian recruitment, minimum budget, computers, internet facility, library automation and collection of books and physical facilities for the college libraries.

Higher education had many branches and service demand which included but not limited to accommodation services, internet services, departmental services, shuttle services, administrative services and counselling and guidance services. However, the type of services that one intended to study were selected and set against the SERVQUAL model because it became empirically and practically impossible to study the entire services provided by higher education institutions (Elken & Stensaker, 2018). Consequently, several scholars had settled on key and pressing issues that required service quality testing and their findings had further provided avenue for several research (Batinic *et al*., 2016; Saunders, 2014; Brochado, 2009; White, 2007; Oldfield & Baron, 2000; Soutar & McNeil, 1996).

Essentially, the afore-mentioned services which included teaching, administrative support, library, laboratories, accommodation, medical and sports services available to students in their universities did not appear to be the underlying focus of the students. Rather, the quality and effectiveness of the services and their impact on the students' satisfaction and educational experiences seemed to be the matter of major concern.

Students' Expectations of Services Provided in HEIs

Managing students' expectation was one of the tough issues in higher education. Over the years, administrators in higher education had established policies and communication systems to address students' grievances in higher education and development. Bunce, Baird and Jones (2017) stated that students' expectations in higher education can be managed effectively to improve academic performance in HEIs. Bunce *et al*. (2017) conducted a quantitative study on the concept of students-as-customers and what impact that concept had on the academic performance of students. The focus of the authors was on managing students' expectation to help improve their academic performance. Deriving findings through consumer orientation, their views were that average number of students expected some level of administrative diligence in administrative functions. Bunce *et al*. (2017) further stated that in England universities, students' expectancy affected their academic performance. The use of survey method by Bunce *et al*. (2017) revealed that the mediation model of consumer orientation on the relationship between students' expectation and academic performance can be extended beyond England.

Kalpana and Sudharani (2012) outlined some key services that students expected their institutions to provide them with. That study was done in India and the students pointed out that they expected university administrators to follow the six (6) dimensions of service quality (Kalpana & Sudharani, 2012). The six (6) dimensions were location, academics, infrastructure, image, cost and personnel. In fact, their study derived its root from the SERVQUAL theory and the basics were that students expected the location of the university

57

to be of convenience and they also preferred the university to be in province or regional capitals. In the study, the students also expected that the location of the university should project the quality of services provided. The focus was further placed on the infrastructure of the institutions and it was found that the students expected their current institutions to have had conducive lecture theatres, nice accommodation facilities, good roads and sound library systems (Kalpana & Sudharani, 2012). Kalpana and Sudharani (2012) adopted the independent sampled t-test to determine if there was a significant difference between students' perceptions and expectations.

Expanding the study of Kalpana and Sudharani (2012), Clothey and Eres (2013) did a study in two independent universities on the perceived service quality and expectation in higher education schools. Clothey and Eres adopted the factor analysis and in conclusion, they stated that service quality differed significantly in the two universities. They then argued that functional quality in the forms of departmental works and professors-lecturers were important factors affecting the students' perception of service quality. Clothey and Eres further noted that the most important factors that can influence students' expectation of service quality were competence of staff, honesty and reliability. Pointing to the findings of Kalpana and Sudharani (2012), what differed in the two studies was the methodology. While Kalpana and Sudharani (2012) used independent sample t-test in their analysis, the current scholars used factor analysis to determine the factors that influenced students' perceptions and expectations in HEIs. It was seen from the two studies that there were differences between institutions when it came to students'

perceptions and expectations of service quality. The two studies also suggested that students' expectations can be improved by further studies.

Students' Expectations and Perceptions of Service Quality in HEIs

The concept of considering students as customers in institutions of higher education had become a marketing philosophy. Durkin and Mckenna (2011) stated that the increased competition among institutions of higher education had led to the provision of customer-oriented services to clients referred to as students in this study. They said that the concept of marketing was gaining ground in universities since students' expectations had become a demand and supply characteristic and required constant management.

Richardson and Soisson (2018) stated that when customer service met higher education, there was always committed students to help champion the image of that higher education. Hence, according to the authors, it was always advisable to study students' perception and expectation in such institution yearly. Richardson and Soisson were of the view that to promote the brand of a corporate institution, its customers were never left out. Here, the argument they were putting across was that students in higher education contributed enormously to the branding of the institutions. One thing they pointed out was that perception of students and expectations of students can both be manageable.

Nyenya & Bukaliya (2015) stated that it was always advisable to compare students' expectations with the students' perceptions of service quality in higher education. In Zimbabwe universities, Nyenya & Bukaliya (2015) findings suggested that the administrators needed to improve the service quality in the selected institutions. Not until now, higher education in

Zimbabwe was considered to be producing high performing students until the gap between students' expectations and perceptions were examined.

What then, actually determined students' perceptions of some of the services provided in higher education? Nell and Cant (2014) argued from responses of 200 students in a South African university that students' perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of services provided by the university were slightly above average. In a quantitative analysis, Nell and Cant (2014) found that there was a significant association between overall students' satisfaction and total responsiveness with respect to service quality. With the use of Spearman's rho correlation test, their study established a positive association between students' satisfactions and students' expectations of quality of services provided at the university.

Nonetheless, there were no definite conclusion on whether the application of SERVQUAL instruments was enough to retrieve students' perceptions and expectations of the service quality of such institutions. For instance, while Richardson and Soisson's (2018) study did not conclude on service quality, Sanaz and Xu (2015) did not make mention of SERVQUAL but used a different approach in meeting students' expectation.

Abdul, Bejan & Kai (2017) argued that changes in higher education always created tensions between university leaders and academic with respect to service provision. The findings pointed out that academics perceived payment of tuition fees and poor services in higher education had left students with no choice but to demonstrate in a customer-like behaviour. The finding was that when students' expectations were not met it led to demonstration on campuses. It was argued on the basis of Abdul *et al*. (2017) that service quality

60

in higher education when provided to meet students' expectations reduced students' agitations on campuses of higher education institutions. The study was based on qualitative research methods powered by the use of Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) model and theory. Here, they used the interpretive approach in analysing the data.

Fontaine (2014) stated that addressing the expectation of students required loyalty and hence majority of students expected their university to be loyal to them with respect to the service quality they provided to them. In the views of Fontaine (2014) increased competition convinced management of higher education to retain current students. Here, the retention of existing students depended on the service quality in these institutions.

Students' expectations and perceptions about service quality in higher education have been examined by scholars but with different conclusions. Service quality in higher education institutions had several dimensions and that depended on the particular service that the study focused on. Despite the SERVQUAL model that had been developed to assist in examining students' expectations and perceptions in higher education institutions, other models had been developed such as the SERVPREF model and the HiEdQUAL model. All of which had been defined to provide reasonable judgement on service quality in higher education institutions. Several gaps had been established in many previous studies and in attempt to fill these gaps they also led to other gaps with respect to students' expectations and perceptions about the service quality.

Moreover, students' expectations and students' perceptions of service quality clearly appeared to be the key areas that informed the marketing

strategies to be adopted by HEIs while they strived to maintain competitiveness. It was evident that students' expectations differered among universities and different methods of enquiry provided different expectations of students, although it was maintained that students' expectations had a significant bearing in determining service quality in HEIs (Bunce *et. al.,* 2017).

Application of service quality in higher education with respect to accommodation services, internet services and departmental services continued to be areas that remained highly unexploited. It was important to note that the current study sought to examine the expectation of students in higher education with special reference to the service quality theory and model developed.

Challenges Faced by Students in Accessing Services in HEIs

Akçayir (2017) investigated what students thought about social services in higher education. The focus was on students' perception, expectations and concerns about social services as well as the challenges they faced. Such a study was done in Turkey and the key findings were that at every point in time Turkish students were not satisfied with the social services provided them. Akçayir (2017) clearly pointed out that service provision in higher education was strictly monitored and hence affected their progress in the university. Applying a mixed method, both quantitative and qualitative research methods, it was discovered that students in Turkey had been going through stress in accessing departmental services. Through a face-to-face interview, the study concluded that students' perceptions and expectations can create challenges when their expectations were met. Andrlic and Budic (2011)

argued that measuring students' satisfaction in higher education was sometimes faced with challenges as students were always expecting new things. Andrlic and Budic (2011) stated that application of service quality in higher education required extensive study as students' challenges regarding service quality kept on increasing.

Du Plooy and De Jager (2006) stated that the most service quality challenges were based on how the hypothesis was tested and that service quality model only facilitated the service quality in higher education but its implementations relied on the service providers. Arroyo and Orozco (2017) argued that there was emotional challenge in the education service provision and these were linked to inadequate access to facilities and departmental services. Arroyo and Orozco (2017) pointed out that co-creating services in university education was influenced by factors that affected students' progress. Oluseye *et al.*, ((2014) noted that the varieties of challenges that students went through were due to lack of customer relationship management approach in higher education. Considering students as customers required customer relationship management approaches which were sometimes difficult to implement in higher education institutions. According to Steele and Ryan (2014), students wanted their universities to be among the top universities globally. Steele and Ryan (2014) stated that the most difficult issue confronting them was lack of internationalization.

Richter, Walsh and Wilson (2010) studied the confusion of students when they were regarded as customers in higher education institutions. The study was based on what the university was currently offering and what the students expected from the university. One of the basic challenges that was

unravelled was the university's inability to meet students' expectations. Richter *et al.* (2010) stated that students in higher education operated in certain customer oriented logic and required satisfaction from the service provided to them. What actually got students satisfied in higher education institutions? In the view of Richter *et al.* (2010) certain theoretical perspectives hindered the service quality to students and that service quality did not necessarily lead to consideration of students as customers. Challenges in accommodation services, departmental services, internet services and sometimes library services affected the service quality of higher education institutions. These challenges according to Richter *et al.* (2010) were multifaceted and required comprehensive research and development policies to mitigate them.

Subrahmanyam and Raja (2012) outlined some students' challenges in a study they did in India using a model called HiEdQUAL. Some of the challenges tested, based on the model, were teaching course content, administrative services, academic facilities, campus infrastructure and support services. Mercer-Mapstone, Marquis and McConnell (2018) argued from a different perspective and stated that students-staff relationship was one of the challenges that students faced in higher education. Mercer-Mapstone *et al*. (2018) used collaborative autoethnographic methods to explore the data. Azuma and Marie (2018) stated that the low students' satisfaction in higher education was as a result of poor partnership. The poor partnership among students and departmental staff in higher education contributed to low performance. Brown (2006) stated that factors driving students' satisfaction were institutional image, infrastructure and tangible services. Brown grouped

64

the challenges into humanware and hardware. For humanware, it was made known that people and processes posed challenges to students' activities and for the hardware, inadequate infrastructure was perceived as challenges in educational sector. Azam (2018) pointed out that in Saudi Arabia, building on service quality dimension was becoming a challenge in most HEIs and this was due to increasing number of students.

Mosahab, Mahamad and Ramayah (2010) did a comparison of service quality gaps among teachers and students as internal and external customers. Quality gaps with respect to services provided to students were negative. Mosahab *et al*. (2010) findings posited the challenges in the five dimensions that service quality measured. The gap in service quality was sometimes due to the challenges faced in those institutions. For Mosahab *et al*. (2010), the gaps created in service quality delivery were sometimes manageable and that accommodation services, internet services and departmental services had gaps that were created based on expectations and perceptions. It was stated that the largest and smallest differences between students and teachers viewpoint were responsiveness and tangibility dimensions. These arguments were further exploited by Akomlafe and Ibijola (2014) in Nigeria and the findings brought in more misconceptions about service quality in higher education institutions. Here, the study pointed out that there were significant differences between staff and students' perception of the level of students' participation in university governance and the level of organizational effectiveness. Given the finding, it was concluded that that significant difference which existed created more gap in the system.

Guilbault (2017) argued that marketing in higher education continued to be controversial on whether students can be considered as customers with majority of scholars disputing such claim. The vast challenges faced by administrators in administering higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa had raised some many controversial debates on whether students had the privilege to be considered as customers or be treated as such. Guilbault (2017) made some pronouncement about challenges facing higher education institutions. For Guilbault (2017), there was extreme accommodation challenge which had resulted in limitation in students' admissions. In the study limitation, it was observed that application of customer-focused-orientation in higher education limited students' admission as the focus was on quality service rather than admitting majority of students. Ajao (2010) stated that there were always gaps with respect to quality services provided in tertiary schools. The gaps were identified to be the difference between service quality with respect to accommodation services, library services and departmental services. In effect the expectations of students and perceptions of the quality services provision always differed at all levels (Ashish, Kumar & Sagar, 2015). Arnold (2018), however, noted that strengthening support services improved students' performance but noted that challenges in higher education institutions affected the transitioning of students into various careers. Letcher and Neves (2016) argued that students' satisfaction in higher education cannot be met when there were challenges in higher education. For Letcher and Neves (2016), it was always important to address students' challenges before testing for their satisfaction with service quality in higher education.

Alves & Raposo (2005) posited that students' service expectations kept on growing. As a result, managing challenges in higher education had also been affected. Using a factorial analysis, the study pointed out that students' expectations were mainly formed and related to learning, career, reputations and library services delivered by administrators in higher education. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD (2002) argued that responding to student expectations, university administrators needed to fix challenges in their various institutions. OECD (2002) stated that there was a general challenge in respect to accommodation, and the fact that services rendered by hall masters and house masters did not actually meet students' expectations. While it was not always the case in advanced countries, it was pointed out clearly that in Sub-Saharan African higher educations, there was limitation in the accommodation services provided to students in higher educations. Finch, Kaka and Sapri (2009) stated that factors that affected the level of satisfaction of students in higher education were enormous. Finch *et al*. (2009) argued that educational facilities' service quality was without challenges and hence managing students' level of satisfaction with respect to higher educational facilities services required students' consent. Thus, factors affecting students' satisfaction were bookstores, food services, gym facilities and library services. They argued that these services required constant repackaging to fix the challenges they created.

Forbes and Ngi (2008) noted that considering education as a service required the understanding of university experience through the service logic. According to Forbes and Ngi (2008), the gap model of service quality existed in higher education hence affected the quality of services provided to these

67

students. There was always a dimension of service quality that posed a challenge to students' expectations. Purcell (2008) stated that the most active challenge that affected service quality is considering the autonomy of higher education institutions. The autonomy of higher education was an indication that service quality can be compromised. In compromising service quality, majority of students were admitted, consequently, accommodation services, departmental services and internet services were always affected. Manea and Iatagan (2015) stated that the quality of educational services in Romania was centered on laboratory services, libraries, equipped classrooms and matters relating to staff-student relationship. These services were considered to be service preferences of students thus service quality needed to be built around them. For Manea and Iatagan (2015), when students' expectations of these services were not met, there were challenges that came with them. The challenges were sometimes due to access, inadequate facilities, and inconvenience.

Students were always looking out for new services and while HEIs endeavoured to meet students' expectations and manage their perceptions, students tended to encounter a lot of challenges on campus when their expectations were not met. As a result, students' expectations required extensive study. The current study exploited some of the key issues involved.

The focus of the current study was limited to accommodation services, departmental services and internet services provided by Cape Coast Technical University. This study tried to read scientific meaning into students' complaints concerning the provision of the above services to students. Considering students as customers had ignited debate around the world and

provision of customer-oriented services to students had also raised touchline misconceptions about whether or not students of higher education institutions can be considered as customers with varying findings and reports.

Summary of Literature Reviewed

This chapter was centred on the literature review of the study discussed and the theoretical framework of the study. Two theories backed the current study and these were the SERVQUAL model or theory and the service marketing theory (relationship theory). The study was of the view that application of SERVQUAL model in the current study provided insight on students' customer service expectations since several studies had tested the model using different research methods.

It was vital to note here that, although many works had been done on the field of student customer expectations, some literature gap still existed. The gap resulted from the fact that none of the studies were conducted in Ghana, especially on technical universities. The chapter emphasized the research gap created by scholars with respect to improving service quality in higher education institutions by considering students' customer service expectations when developing student services. The service (accommodation, administrative and ICT) quality of institutions, specifically CCTU depended hugely on the reputations of the institution in question with regards to professional recruitment.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The current study examined the concept student-as-customers and further sought to examine the expectations of students in Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU). This chapter provided an overview of the research methods for the study. It discussed the research design; study area; population; sampling procedure; data collection instruments; data collection procedures; data processing and analysis; and ethical considerations.

Research Design

In the words of Gill and Johnson (2010), a study design is a plan that guides and supports the researcher in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting research observations. However, the choice of a particular design according to Creswell (2003) is the coefficient of the research problem and the research approach which is the chosen research design (phenomenology). In this study, phenomenological qualitative study design, based on semi structured in-depth interview, was used. Lester (1999) explained phenomenological study as a powerful method for understanding and describing the meaning of events and subjective experiences of the human sphere. It set aside the researcher's hypothesis and emphasizes on describing participants' personal experiences as much as possible rather than explaining them. Phenomenological qualitative study design takes a fresh perception towards the phenomenon under study. With this understanding at hand, phenomenology therefore helped to understand and describe the subjective experiences of students. This design also helped in gaining insights into the

70

challenges faced by students in their quest to access services provided at the Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU).

According to Creswell (2007), a phenomenological study "described the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 57). In other words, it focused on describing a phenomenon that all the participants had experienced, such as students' customer service expectations. The purpose of the phenomenological method was to "reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence" (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). To achieve this goal, the researcher identified students' customer service expectations at CCTU as a phenomenon for the study.

Phenomenological design in qualitative research had various strengths. One strength was the ability of the researcher to use his or her motivation and personal interest to fuel the study. Maxwell (2013) contended that this was a benefit when the researcher was stimulated by a strong interest in the phenomenon as a result of previous experiences that will assist in completing the study (p. 24). Another strength was how data was collected. The emergent fashion of shifting during the interview process was a way of yielding data (Choy, 2014; Creswell, 2014). Through subjective, direct responses, the researcher was able to gain first-hand knowledge about what participants experienced through broad and open-ended inquiry (Patton, 2002; Maxwell, 2013; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Revisions can be made along the way as new experiences emerge giving the researcher the ability to construct themes and patterns that can be reviewed by participants (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 9).

Though phenomenological qualitative studies provided compelling research data, there were limitations. For one, and perhaps, the concern of many was bias (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2002). The researcher's role must include the integration of biases, beliefs, and values up-front in the study (Janesick, 2011). A second limitation was that the process can be time consuming and labor intensive (Creswell, 2014; Janesick, 2011). The copious amount of data that had to be analysed could be a disadvantage. Researcher should understand this before assuming a phenomenological qualitative study (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2002). Further, the individual circumstances that data was collected from cannot be generalised (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Finally, there were limitations linked to credibility and reliability; or as Rudestam and Newton (2015) advised, it was the researcher's responsibility of convincing oneself and one's audience that the findings were based on critical investigation (p. 131).

Thus, to avert the limitations of bias associated with the use of phenomenological qualitative studies, the researcher utilized peer review or debriefing and member checking validity procedures.

On the basis provided by Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Cohen and Miller, 2000), the researcher used peer review or debriefing where the entire research process and data collected were reviewed by the academicians (researcher's supervisors and research assistants in the IEPA) who were well versed in research methodologies. The peer reviewers provided the researcher with useful and eye-opening critiques that pushed the researcher to be more precise in the conduct of the study and in the writing of the study.

72

Again, the researcher used member checking as another measure to ensure validity and true representation of the narrative provided by participants. This validity approach was considered given that researchers (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Cohen & Stanzack, 2000) had established that member checking was key for proving the credibility of a narrative account whereby the transcriptions were taken back to the study participants to enable them confirm whether or not the overall narrative accounts were realistic and accurate.

After transcribing the recordings from the focus group discussions held with student participants and the recordings from the interviews held with staff respondents, the researcher printed out copies or duplicates of the focus group transcriptions that corresponded to each student participant group. The prints out were eight (8) copies for each of the eight (8) student participants for the first year focus group and eight (8) copies for each of the eight (8) student participants for the first year focus group. The researcher also printed out one (1) copy or duplicate each of the transcriptions from the interviews done with each of the six (6) corresponding staff participant. The printed copies of transcriptions from the focus group discussions held with the first year students were distributed to each of them to verify the texts as true representation of their responses during the discussion held and to indicate corrections where there was a mismatch in the text as compared to their responses during the discussion held. The same process for member checking was done for the third year student participants and the staff participants. The distribution of transcriptions and their collection from all respondents took

about two (2) weeks after which the researcher viewed the corrections and effected them before proceeding to the data analysis process.

Study Area

The study was carried out at the Cape Coast Technical University (formerly Cape Coast Polytechnic) in the Central Region of Ghana. The school was established in 1984 as a second cycle institution. In 1986 the school operated under the Ghana Education Service to offer intermediate courses leading to the award of non-tertiary certificates. However, the enactment of PNDC Law 321 in 1992, the institution was upgraded to tertiary level, being a Polytechnic, to run programmes for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND). The Polytechnic was eventually converted into a Technical University in the year 2016 following an Executive approval for upgrading Cape Coast Technical University in conformity with the Technical Universities Act, 2016, (Act 922). At the time of the study, the Cape Coast Technical University had three Schools and thirteen (13) academic departments with a student population of over two thousand (2000) pursuing various programmes in Engineering, Business and Applied Sciences and Arts.

The researcher selected CCTU as the study area for the research because although it was established as far back as 1984 and had undergone phases of transformation since then students seemed to talk more of their disappointment upon enrolling. CCTU students also frequently reported of their astonishment about the situation that CCTU, old as it were, had only one hall/ hostel of residence for students. Given these reasons and the lack of empirical evidence of students' claims provided better of the phenomenon of the study.

Population

The target population for the study consisted of all students of the Cape Coast Technical University and all staff of Cape Coast Technical University. According to the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (2019) and the Directorate of Human Resource (2019), the estimated total target population was 2609 comprising 2237 students and 372 staff. Table 1 presented gender characteristics of target population for the study.

Table 1: Target Population

Description		Male	Female	Total
Students	Level 100	374	276	**650**
	Level 200	514	507	**1,021**
	Level 300	308	258	**566**
Staff		218	91	**372**
Total				**2,609**

Source: Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance and Directorate of Human Resource (2019)

The accessible population for the study was made up of the level 100 Higher National Diploma (HND) regular students, the level 300 HND regular students and selected staff (the hostel administrator, the departmental administrators, a staff in the Directorate of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and the administrator to the Office of the Dean of Students' Affairs,) of CCTU. Only the HND students were considered for the study because HND programmes had been in existence for much longer years than the Access and Degree progammes. Additional reasons were that, while only first year students had the chance of accessing accommodation at the University's hostel facility both groups of students (first year students and third year students) entered the university with a set of expectations useful for the study. Furthermore, the level 300 HND regular students had spent more

years on the University's campus and had rich information regarding students'

customer service expectations at CCTU. For the selected staff, the hostel

administrator, the departmental administrators, a staff in the Directorate of

Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and the administrator to

the Office of the Dean of Students' Affairs, were considered because they

were directly providing accommodation, departmental administration and

internet services, respectively, to students. The Office of the Dean of Students'

Affairs could not be ignored because the Office offers services that addresses

general issues which are of concern to students.

Table 2 presents gender characteristics of accessible population for the study.

Table 2: Accessible Population

	Population Units	Male	Female	Total
Students	Level 100 HND Regular Students	249	216	**465**
	Level 300 HND Regular Students	308	258	**566**
Staff	Administrator to Office of the Dean Students' Affairs	-	1	**1**
	Staff in ICT Direcorate	1	0	**1**
	Hostel Administrator	0	1	**1**
	Departmental Administrators	5	8	**13**
Total		**563**	**484**	**1,047**

Source: Field Data (2019)

Sampling Procedure

The study used the purposive sampling technique to select participants.

Purposive sampling, also called judgement sampling referred to the deliberate

selection of participants owing to specific preferred qualities or characteristics

that participants possessed (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Devers and

Frankel (2000) posited that purposive sampling enhances the understandings

of selected individuals or groups' experience(s) for propounding theories and

76

concepts. It can also be inferred that purposive sampling enabled the researcher to ensure gender diversity and to cover all key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter. The study used a sample size of 22 participants comprising eight (8) level 100 HND regular students, eight (8) Level 300 HND regular students and six (6) staff (Creswell, 2014; Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008).

Creswell (2007) provided a recommendation that data collection in phenomenological studies should consist of indepth interviews with five (5) to twenty-five (25) participants who had all experienced the phenomenon. The 22 participants sampled for the study rightfully had experiences regarding students' customer service expectations at CCTU.

To arrive at two groups of eight (8) students with one group representative of all first year HND students and another group representative of all third year HND students, two students each (one first year and one third year) were selected from eight oldest departments under the three Schools of the university. Consequently, from the School of Business, one first year student and one third year student each were selected from the Department of Secretaryship & Management Studies, the Department of Marketing Studies and the Department of Accountancy Studies. From the School of Applied Sciences and Arts, one first year student and one third year student each were selected from the Department of Fashion Design and Textiles Studies, the Department of Hotel, Catering and Institutional Management (HCIM) and the Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Studies. From the School of Engineering, one first year student and one third year student each were selected from the Department of Electrical/Electronic Engineering and

the Department of Building Technology. Five (5) males and three (3) females made up the group of eight first year student participants whilst three (3) males and five (5) females made up the group of eight third year student participants.

Table 3 presents the sample of students and staff used for the study.

Table 3: Sample of CCTU Students and Staff

	Population Units	Population	No. Selected	Male	Female
Students	Level 100 HND Regular Students	465	8	5	3
	Level 300 HND Regular Students	566	8	3	5
Staff	Administrator to Office of the Dean Students' Affairs	1	1	0	1
	Staff in ICT Direcorate	1	1	1	0
	Hostel Administrator	1	1	0	1
	Departmental Administrators	13	3	1	2
Total		**1,047**	**22**	**10**	**12**

Source: Researcher's field survey (2019)

Reason leading to the sampling of eight (8) level 100 HND regular students and eight (8) Level 300 HND regular students for two separate focus group discussions was drawn from Gill *et al.* (2008). In their book the authors wrote that the ideal size for a focus group is six to eight participants because a small group is likely to result in limited discussion while a large group can be cantankerous. Furthermore, the first year students had the chance of accessing accommodation at the University's hostel or hall facility and both groups of students (first year students and third year students) entered the university with a set of expectations useful for the study. The level 300 HND regular students

who were selected had spent more years on the University's campus and had rich information regarding students' customer service expectations at CCTU.

The six (6) staff (three females and three males) who were purposively sampled for individual interviews were as a result of the services they rendered to students of CCTU which were relevant to the study. The hostel administrator, the departmental administrators and the longest serving staff in the Directorate of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) were considered because they were directly providing accommodation, departmental administration and internet services, respectively, to students. Three (3) departmental administrators were also sampled according to the longest serving period of the administrators in the departments under each of the three Schools (School of Business, School of Applied Sciences and Arts and School of Engineering) of the University as at the time of data collection. By doing this, the researcher arrived at selecting one longest serving departmental administrator each from among the departmental administrators for the departments under each of the three Schools. Also included among the staff participants was the administrator to the Office of the Dean of Students' Affairs who could not have been ignored because the Office of the Dean of Students' Affairs offers services that addresses varieties of issues which are of concern to students.

Precisely, the 22 participants were selected because they had the requisite characteristics and knowledge about students' customer service expectations in CCTU which gave the researcher the detailed exploration and understanding of the central theme of the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Some researchers had established that individual interviews were the most widely-used data collection strategy in qualitative research particularly for taking accounts of participants' thoughts, attitudes, beliefs and knowledge about a given phenomenon (Nunkoosing, 2005; Macdonald, 2006; Lambert & Loiselle, 2008). More importantly, it had been explained that interviews were more appropriate where very little was known about the phenomenon under study and thereby requiring detailed insights from individual participants (Gill *et al.*, 2008). Notwithstanding, research had also provided that focus group discussions among participants were suitable for exploring a range of phenomena or for developing a rich understanding of participants' opinions about a phenomenon (Van Teijlingen & Pitchforth, 2006; Lambert & Loiselle, 2008).

Consequently, based on relevant literature reviewed, the researcher designed two instruments which were used for the data collection. The two instruments were focus group discussion guides for student participants and semi-structured interview guides for staff participants since there was scanty local literature available on students' customer service expectations and particularly in Cape Coast Technical University. The data collection method was a decision based on the study's underpinning design, the participants to be studied and the research emphasis which was the essence of human uniqueness (Patton, 2002).

The focus group discussion guide was used to obtain data from the student participants who were purposively selected and placed in two (2) separate groups for purposes of the data collection. There were eight (8) level

100 students in one group and eight (8) level 300 students in another group. As based on a recommendation by Gill *et al*. (2008) that the ideal size for a focus group should be six to eight participants as the coordination of larger groups were likely to be problematic. Also, the level 100 students had a fresh and first-hand expectations and experiences to share regarding the University's accommodation system because they had the chance to access the University's accommodation facility. The level 300 students, on the other hand, had spent more years on the University's campus thus they had rich information regarding students' customer service expectations at CCTU.

According to Zabala and Mukherjee (2017), focus group discussion was widely used in conservation research unlike some of the other relatively lesser known techniques. Focus group discussion was perceived to be a "cost-effective" and "promising alternative" in participatory research offering a platform for differing paradigms or worldviews (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick & Mukherjee, 2018). However, homogeneity was challenged by some researchers since unfamiliar participants can give honest and spontaneous views and can overcome pre-existing relationships and patterns of leadership in the group (Thomas *et al*. as cited in Nyumba *et al*.,2018). In the view of Krueger and Casey (2000), recruitment can be expensive, difficult, and continued to be a source of contentious debate.

The researcher constructed the focus group discussion guide which had two parts. The first part elicited demographic data from participants and contained three (3) items. The second part had three (3) sections, each section corresponded to one research question in order of appearance and contained sixteen (16) items. The first section of the second part of the guide contained

eight (8) items and obtained data on available services provided to students. The second section of the second part obtained information on students' expectations in relation to services provided and contained four (4) items. The third section of the second part of the guide elicited information on challenges that students faced in accessing services and contained four (4) items. The two separate focus groups that were used consisted of eight (8) students each. One group bearing the first year students participants were five (5) males and three (3) females. The other group bearing the third year students participants were three (3) males and five (5) females. The students participants of each group were of different academic departments and offered different HND programmes.

On the other hand, the semi-structured interview for the staff participants was adequately guided as, according to Kadjornboon (2012), the semi-structured interview guide was a list of open-ended questions that the researcher uses during an interview. The semi-structured interview guide was appropriate for eliciting in-depth accounts of opinions and experiences of participants on a phenomenon under study (Kadjornboon, 2012). According to Creswell (2014), semi-structured interview helped a researcher to freely use probes (prompts used to obtain response clarity or additional information). Interviewing was a strategy of collecting important information needed for analysis of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013).

The researcher designed the semi-structured interview guide which had two (2) parts. The first part elicited demographic data from participants and contained five (5) items. The second part had three sections, each section corresponded to one research question in order of appearance and contained

nine (9) items. The first section of the second part contained two (2) items and obtained data on available services provided to students. The second section of the second part of the guide obtained information on students' expectation in relation to services provided and contained four (4) items. The third section of the second part of the guide elicted information on challenges that students face in accessing services and contained three (3) items. Six (6) staff (4 females and 2 males) were sampled and enagaged for individual interviews. They were sampled as a result of the services they rendered to students of CCTU which were relevant to the study. The hostel administrator, three longest serving departmental administrators one from each school in the University and the longest serving staff in the Directorate of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) were considered because they were directly providing accommodation, departmental administration and internet services, respectively, to students. The Administrator of the Office of the Dean of Students' Affairs was also included because that office addressed varieties of issues which were of concern to students.

Pre-Testing of Instruments

Pre-testing or pilot testing of research instrument was regarded as a trial or small-scale version of using the instrument to collect data in an area representative of the actual study area for adequate preparation towards the actual study (Polit & Hungler, 2003).

Pre-testing was beneficial in ensuring the level of validity and reliability of data collection instrument. It provided an advance warning about a potential breech of research protocol, choices that may lead to failure of the research project and whether proposed methods were appropriate or not too

complicated. Also, for purposes of developing research ideas and enabling researchers to assess whether the interest necessitating the study may also be of interest to the intended participants of the study, pilot testing had been proven to be useful.

To further check for their trustworthiness, authentication and credibility, the data collection instruments were pre-tested at the Takoradi Technical University (TTU) because, in line with what Creswell (2007) posited in his book, TTU shared similar operational systems and policies, similar economic and social characteristics with CCTU. Hence, participants from TTU were used for the test due to the similar characteristics in facilities or services and similar categories of students offering similar programmes of studies as were in CCTU.

The data collection instruments were field tested on eight (8) students and five (5) staff of TTU. The focus group discussion was pre-tested on two groups of students (four students each comprising two females and two males for both 1st year group and 3rd year group) of TTU while the semi-structured interview was pre-tested on five (5) staff of the same University (two females and three males). The staff for the pre-test entailed one hall administrator, two departmental administrators, one staff at their ICT Directorate and the administrator in the Office of the Dean of Students' Affairs of TTU.

Upon pre-testing the instruments, items that were seen to be inappropriate or infridged upon the confidentiality of participants were either deleted or modified. Items which were unclear were further evaluated and simplified to ensure that they befitted the research questions and not ambiguous to intended participants. Also, respondent's validation included

inviting participants to comment on the interview transcripts whether they were the true recording of what transpired during the interview. After further corrections were adhered, the instruments were finally approved for use for the study.

Validity

Cohen and Stanczak (2000) explained that construct validity had to do with ensuring that the articulation of the theories and concepts in the study agreed with other constructions in related literature. The understanding here was that it was important for a wider literature search to be done. Consequently, the literature coverage for this study was comprehensive but focused on very relevant details that helped to bring out the meanings of the concepts involved. With the keen interest of the researcher complemented by astute directives of supervisors and the contributions gathered through peer reviews, the concepts relating to students' customer service expectations were well spelt out in the literature review and eventually in the interview guides to enhance participants' understanding of the items therein.

Furthermore, content validity was determined by the expert judgment of the supervisors who severally reviewed and commented on the focus group discussion guide and the semi-structured interview guide. Materials considered inaccurate or inappropriate and particularly infringing upon the confidentiality of participants were either deleted or modified. Items on the guides which were unclear, biased or deficient were further scrutinised and evaluated by the supervisors while still ensuring that the items fitted the subjects they had been assigned to. Unclear items were corrected as well as misplaced items were properly placed under relevant sub-topics.

85

Data Collection Procedures

An introductory letter was obtained from the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), University of Cape Coast (UCC) and submitted to the Management of Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU) to introduce the researcher and to further seek their approval to collect data in the institution.

The period for data collection was during the inception of the COVID-19 era thus it was mandatory that the researcher followed a number of protocols instituted by the World Health Organisation and the Ghana Health Service hereafter indicated in Appendix A.

In the quest to establish rapport with participants prior to the conduct of the focus group discussions and the interviews, the student participants were visited on the CCTU campus and the staff participants were visited in their offices. During this visits, participants were given prior information on what the study was about and their concerns were addressed. Also, the venues, dates and time period for the conduct of the interviews and focus group discussions were agreed on.

When the appointments for the interviews and focus group discussions were due, the staff participants were met in their offices where the interviews took place, thus participants felt at ease to express themselves. For the focus group discussions, the student participants were met at a comfortable, quiet and private area on CCTU campus which was free from distractions. The venue for the discussions was wide enough for effective ventilation and social distancing as required by COVID 19 protocols outlined in Appendix A.

Participants were also made aware of the use of a tape recorder as well as taking of field notes.

For purposes of assuring respondents on confidentiality of their responses, the participants were assigned pseudonyms or participant identification numbers. Creswell (2003) posited that pseudonyms were assumed names assigned to research participants by the researcher during data collection in a qualitative study for reasons of anonymity which was a vital ethical safeguarding. The six (6) staff participants were assigned IR#1 to IR#6 which represented Inverview Respondent number one to Interview Respondent number six. The first year student participants were assigned, FGR#1 to FGR#8 which implied Focus Group Respondent number one to Focus Group Respondent number eight. This identification numbering continued for the third year student participants such that they were assigned FGR#9 to FGR#16 which referred to Focus Group Respondent number nine to Focus Group Respondent number sixteen.

Before each interview and discussion begun, the participants were again informed about the study details. They were then served with consent forms for completion. Following the completion of consent forms, the study ensured that the participants were taken through all the individual items for further clarification where required. By so doing, this gave the researcher the opportunity to also familiarise herself with the items so that the session would appear more natural. The interviews and discussions were successfully conducted at different times according to agreed schedule.

With the services of a moderator, the focus group discussions were kept focused and the study ensured that all participants had ample opportunity

to contribute. The participants were thanked immediately afterwards and with their full consent and permission, audio recordings were taken and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The verbatim transcription was necessary for avoiding bias and for useful future reference. The data collection was completed within 3 weeks.

Data Processing and Analysis

In research, after data collection was done, it was important to subject the data to analysis and interpretation. To analyse data, all audio taped interviews collected were first transcribed verbatism. This was done, manually, by listening to each audio recordings by one sentence at a time and typing out each sentence one after the other. The transcription for each audio recording or each interview was typed on separate sheets and saved appropriately for easy identification.

Afterwards, each transcribed data was organised to reduce the large amount of information. Organisation of the data was done by aligning each bit of data to the corresponding research question. The data was then analysed by thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was one of the most common forms of analysis within qualitative research (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). It emphasised on pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns of meaning (or "themes") within data. According to Guest *et al.* (2012) themes referred to the parts of data that repeatedly occured and this was often realised after transcribing the data.

Drawing patterns or themes from the organized data enabled the study to make logic or sense out of the verbal data collected. Moreover, thematic analysis was considered more appropriate because the researcher aimed to

organise the responses of the participants and determined which pattern of response stood out.

Thematic analysis was done by following the six (6) phases of thematic analysis laid down by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the researcher became familiar with the data collected. This involved repeated reading of the data in an active way while searching for meanings and patterns therein for the eventual listing of ideas about the data. The second step was to generate initial codes from the repeated reading of the transcribed data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Generating these initial codes involved identifying features of the data (semantic content or latent) that appeared interesting to the researcher while referring to "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After generating these codes from the data, the researcher searched for themes that were in the data. At this phase, the researcher focused the analysis on the broader level of themes, rather than codes. This involved sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Also, the researcher tried to establish the relationships that existed in the themes. The fourth step was to review the themes that were found. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), reviewing themes involved the refinement of the emerging themes. During this phase, it became evident that some candidate themes were not really themes, while other themes collapsed into each other (separate themes forming one theme). Also, others were broken down into separate themes. In this way, it was easy to identify and categorise major themes and sub themes. The fifth phase

involved defining and naming the themes that were present in the data. At this point, there was the need to then define and further refine the themes that were presented for analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This meant identifying the essence of what each theme was about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captured. The final phase of this approach involved producing the report on the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The report of the thematic analysis was written to outline the salient information gathered from the data. The report provided a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the information in the data within and across the themes.

Ethical Considerations

An approval letter was obtained from CCTU informing IEPA of their consent to the research activity. Copies of such letter was received by the researcher and subsequently made available for the perusal of concerned persons who were the Director of ICT Directorate, Director of Human Resource Directorate, Dean of Students' Affairs, Administrator of the University Hostel, Heads of Academic Departments considered for the study, Administrators of Academic Departments considered for the study and the President of the Students' Representative Council. Upon perusing the letters, the concerned persons as mentioned verbally informed the researcher of their agreement for the data collection to be carried out.

Prior to the interviews and focus group discussions, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their voluntary participation was elicited. Participants were further assured of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity through copies of consent forms served to them by the researcher

for their acceptance and completion. As was indicated in the consent forms, the participants also had the liberty to participate or not and to withdraw their consent at any time without any repercussion. Consequently, before the commencement of the interviews, participants' consent were sought. Data gathered was kept confidential.

Chapter Summary

This chapter dealt with the discussion of the methodology that was adopted for the study. The phenomenological qualitative study design was employed for the study. Purposive or judgemental sampling technique was used to sample 22 respondents for the study. Semi-structured interview guides were used to access in-depth responses from participants. A comprehensive literature coverage and the expert judgement of supervisors and peers accounted for the validity of the research instruments. The research instruments were adequately field tested and thoroughly reviewed. Data collection procedures adhered were focus group discussions for student participants and semi-structured interviews for staff participants. Thematic analysis, which according to Guest *et al.* (2012) is one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research, was applied to the data collected for the eventual production of a report.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore students' customer service expectations at Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU). In this section, the outcomes of the study into students' customer service expectations at Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU) was shown and deliberated on according to the research questions. The data obtained from the focus group discussions and interviews were transcribed and analysed. The data were analysed qualitatively in accordance with the six (6) phases of thematic analysis propounded by Braun and Clarke (2006). Participants' experiences and feedback added insight to the research questions posed in this study. By listening to and analysing the experiences of these participants, valuable information was obtained about students' customer service expectations. The findings of the study are highlighted under themes that corresponded to the research questions:

1. What are the available services provided to students at Cape Coast Technical University?

2. What expectations do students have in relation to students' services that Cape Coast Technical University needs to provide?

3. What challenges do students face in accessing available students' services of Cape Coast Technical University?

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The results of this qualitative study were based on interviews of twenty-two (22) participants comprising eight (8) level 100 HND regular students, eight (8) level 300 HND regular students and six (6) staff from different departments and sections at CCTU. The demographic characteristics of the participants included their gender and department. These elements were explored in order to offer a foundation for distinguishing amongst answers.

According to the gender distribution of the total number of participants, there were eleven (11) males representing (50%) of the total number of participants and eleven (11) females representing (50%) of the total number of participants. It can therefore be acknowledged that there were equal representation of females and males participants in this study. Considering the balanced gender categorisation data, the study assumed that the responses provided for the study into students' customer service expectations were fairly illustrative of both males and female perspectives.

Staff participants interviewed for this study were from different departments and sections namely the University Hall/ Hostel, Directorate of Information Communication and Technology (ICT), Office of the Dean of Students' Affairs, the Department of Secretaryship and Management Studies in the School of Business, the Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Studies from the School of Applied Sciences and Arts and the Department of Building Technology in the School of Engineering.

The academic programmes of student participants in the focus group discussion also varied. From the School of Business, each of the selected two students read HND Secretaryship & Management Studies, HND Marketing

Studies and HND Accountancy Studies. From the School of Applied Sciences and Arts, each of the selected two students read HND Fashion Design and Textiles Studies, HND Hotel, Catering and Institutional Management (HCIM) and HND Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Studies. Also from the School of Engineering, each of the two selected students read HND Electrical/Electronic Engineering and HND Building Technology.

The demographic description of the participants involved is illustrated in table 4.
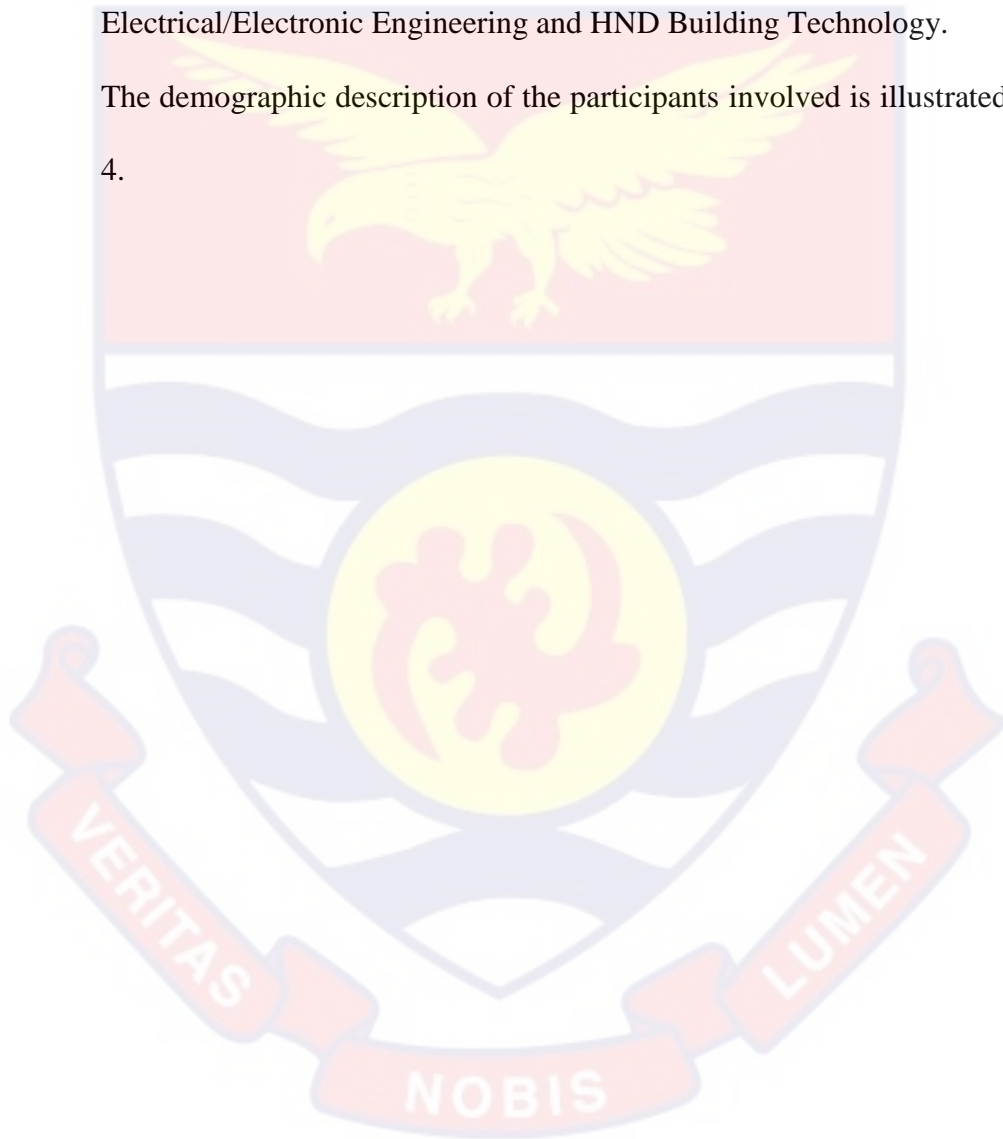
Table 4: Demographics of Respondents

Category	School	Department (Dept.)	Gender	Participant ID
Staff		Office of Dean of Students' Affairs	Female	IR#1
		Directorate of Information Communication & Technology (ICT)	Male	IR#2
		University Hall/ Hostel	Female	IR#3
	School of Business	Dept. of Secretaryship and Management Studies	Male	IR#4
	School of Applied Sciences and Arts	Dept. of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Studies	Female	IR#5
	School of Engineering	Dept. of Building Technology	Male	IR#6
Level 100 Students		Dept. of Secretaryship and Management Studies	Male	FGR#1
	School of Business	Dept. of Marketing Studies	Female	FGR#2
		Dept. of Accountancy Studies	Male	FGR#3
		Dept. of Fashion Design & Textiles Studies	Male	FGR#4
	School of Applied Sciences and Arts	Dept. of Hotel, Catering & Institutional Management	Female	FGR#5
		Dept. of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Studies	Male	FGR#6
	School of Engineering	Dept. of Electrical/ Electronic Engineering	Female	FGR#7
		Dept. of Building Technology	Male	FGR#8
Level 300 Students		Dept. of Secretaryship and Management Studies	Female	FGR#9
	School of Business	Dept. of Marketing Studies	Female	FGR#10
		Dept. of Accountancy Studies	Male	FGR#11
		Dept. of Fashion Design & Textiles Studies	Female	FGR#12
	School of Applied Sciences and Arts	Dept. of Hotel, Catering & Institutional Management	Female	FGR#13
		Dept. of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Studies	Female	FGR#14
	School of Engineering	Dept. of Electrical/ Electronic Engineering	Male	FGR#15
		Dept. of Building Technology	Male	FGR#16
		Total		**22**

Source: Researcher's field survey (2020)

Analysis of Main Data

Analysis of the main data was obtained from focus group discussion and interview in line with the research questions. The responses were presented in themes and supported with direct quotations. Each respondent acknowledged having an early exposure to at least one service by way of observing, experiencing or hearing about the service. They all discussed the important roles of the services and some participants briefly narrated relevant encounters they had on campus.

Findings

This aspect of the chapter dealt with the presentation and discussion of the major findings that emerged from the research. These main results were organised and discussed in accordance with the research questions posed.

Research Question One: What are the available services provided to students at Cape Coast Technical University?

The first research question sought to find out the services that were available and provided to the students of CCTU. The focus was on the kind of services available, what was provided, student patriotism of the services, and the student impression of the services provided. Out of the data collected for this research question three (3) themes emerged;

1.   Services that support students' academic work.

2.   Services that support students' accommodation issues.

3.   Services that support students' health and counselling needs.

Theme one: Services that support students' academic work

The services that support students' academic work mainly comprised ICT services with critical focus on Wi-Fi or internet, laboratory use for

96

practical lessons, lecture halls, administrative support services, records keeping services and teaching logistics. FGR#2 asserted that:

"*Some major services provided to students include teaching and learning, ICT laboratory services, internet services, library services and administrative support services.*"

FGR#11 in one focus group further said that:

"*Academic services to students, accommodation services to students, administrative services to students, sanitation services and healthcare services to the students are some of the services available to students of CCTU.*"

While students expressed that most of the services provided on CCTU campus were associated with their academic work, a staff of the University confirmed that by mentioning some responsibilities that linked to the academic progress of students. Some responses from staff of the University were:

We prepare students' certificates and detailed results. The preparation of introductory letters for students for data collection in other establishments is also our responsibility. We assist in the preparation of course outlines for our students, keeping of students' records and their correspondence, preparation of timetables for students. We make available to students some teaching and learning materials such as board markers, board cleaners and projector. **IR#5**

When it comes to semester registration for students, we make provision the Information Management System needed for them to register their various courses, as well as, generate their

index numbers. Just recently, because of the COVID-19, we created e-learning platforms for students. We also provide internet for students to enable them do their research and to facilitate their studies. **IR#2**

I assist students in filling their semester registration forms. I also file copies of their fee's receipts and their admission letters. Providing both past students and current students with reference letters and recommendation letters are my roles too. I also assist students with issues concerning their results and their courses registration. Also, I assist students with their re-sit examinations issues. **IR#4**

From the responses, students actually received services that facilitated their academic activities and staff of the University also directed efforts towards assisting students with services relevant to their academic endeavours.

Theme two: Services that support students' accommodation issues.

This theme sought to explain accommodation services rendered to students of CCTU. Students' responses indicated that services such as provision of amenities like water, electricity and internet; sanitation; recreational facilities, affordable University Hall/ Hostel fee; room and bed capacity; and availability of private hostels of choice near the University's immediate boundaries.

Participants further gave a description of services they received from CCTU hostel accommodation. Thier responses were that the University hostel/ hall rooms were limited in number for even first year students, no tables in the

balconies for cooking, irregular water supply, no standby generator in times when there was power cut, etc. FGR#9 and FGR#13 reported respectively;

> "*Our school has only 1 hostel on campus for students, even meant for only the 1ˢᵗ year students and the rooms are not even enough to accommodate the 1ˢᵗ years. You have to cook inside as there are no balconies. Water supply is not regular at all.*"

> "*I have stayed in the University hostel before. The fee is quite more affordable than some of the private hostels. Over there, the cleaners sweep and clean the washrooms on week days only, when you experience electrical or plumbing faults, you log it and the University maintenance staff come to fix it later.*"

Irrespective of the relatively lower accommodation fee at the University hostel/ hall, other participants preferred the private accommodation even when they were in their first year.

For instance, FGR#15 narrated:

> "*I preferred to stay in a private hostel because, to me, 4 students in a room is too much and I hear they even want to make it 6 students in each room, I don't like the idea.*"

FGR#2 also indicated that she was shocked to know that the school was having only one (1) hostel/hall while other Universities had more halls/hostels to accommodate their students.

Given that students were aware of the University Hall/ Hostel and the availablitity of private hostels, staff of the University regarded the single hall on campus as unfortunate for its limited room and bed capacity. Nonetheless,

according to participant IR#3, each year, some first year students filled up the rooms in the hall and others use private accommodation.

The study found that although CCTU had just a single accommodation facility cited on campus for mainly first year students, basic amenities were supplied. Also, in that single accommodation facility, maintenance services were rendered, accommodation fee were quite lower, rooms and bed capacity were present although inadequate.

Theme three: Services that support students' health and counselling needs.

Among the responses from participants of the study were services that were directed at the health and counselling needs of the students. This theme explored the health services and counselling services that were needful for the well-being of students as participants mentioned the presence of a University Clinic on campus for their health concerns and the presence of a Guidance and Counselling Unit which was an office on campus meant to address their personal or sensitive issues.

Participants mentioned that services that were offered at the University Clinic included general consultation, laboratory, records keeping, eye services, dental services and public health services. One respondent, FGR#7, mentioned that there was the Univesity Clinic that offered general health consultations and laboratory services. She further opined that the clinic also offered specialty services like eye and dental healthcare. Others responded as follows:

> *"There is a clinic for general consultation, eye health and*
> *dental health. The clinic has a laboratory, the charges are high*

100

for some of us. At times, we see unursing mothers too in some corner with the public nurses." **FGR#4**

Regarding the health services, participant IR#6 confirmed that there was a clinic situated on the University campus. He added that both students and staff used the facility because they offered basic healthcare consultation services, drugs dispensary and laboratory services. Another participant, IR#1, confirmed that the clinic was there to serve both students and staff on general healthcare issues, eye healthcare, dental healthcare, public healthcare, laboratory services and drug dispensary too.

For the counselling, students were not particularly sure of the types of issues addressed by the unit but they were certain that the students could enter there to seek advice on diverse personal issues that negatively affected their peace on campus. Some assertions were as followed:

"The University, has the Guidance and Counselling Unit. I remember, during our orientation programme, one woman was introduced as the University Counsellor and she briefly spoke about the need to relate well each other and avoid unnecessary distractions. But I have not been there before. Some friends of mine said there is only one staff in that office." **FGR#6**

"I realise the only time I get to hear about the Guidance and Counselling Unit is when orientation is being held and some weeks after, when that Unit circulate notices to invite us for career planning and guidance." **FGR#10**

" We were told about the Guidance and Counselling Unit. However, I feel one may be shy to just go there. I perceive this

101

unit to be a ladies thing because the girls usually have issues even when there is none. Frankly, the counselling staff can lose credibility with students if issues reported to them are not properly dealt with." **FGR#8**

It was found that students knew about the presence and availability of the University Clinic and the Guidance and Counselling Unit on campus, however due to reasons of confidentiality, low publicity and cost involved (for the clinic services), students seldom patronized them.

The findings of the current study confirmed the findings of Alhassan *et al*. (2014) that some key fundamental services were usually available in technical universities in Ghana. The services included but was not limited to accommodation services, departmental administrative services, internet services, health services, departmental laboratory services and library services. Additionally, the findings were akin to the findings of Hasan *et al*. (2008) that services such as academic support services, internet and library services, financial support services and accommodation were among the major services that were available for students to patronise.

Evidently, the findings indicated that Cape Coast Technical University provided key services such as Wi-Fi and internet, laboratories for practical lessons, lecture halls, administrative support services, sanitation and utility services to support students with their academic work. The study proceeded to reveal that the University supported students with their accommodation concerns by accommodating most first-year students in the University Hostel/ Hall while keeping affordability within financial capacity of most students and keeping focus on manageable student-to-bed-ratio, provision of amenities like

water, electricity, internet, sanitation and recreational facilities. It was further deduced that the University provided staff and facilities to cater for the health and counselling needs of students although characterized by various shortcomings.

Research Question Two: What expectations do students have in relation to student services that Cape Coast Technical University needs to provide?

A central objective of this research question was to understand the expectations that participants of this study had regarding services that Cape Coast Technical University needed to provide. Data gathered focused on understanding how the respondents initially perceived the services before they actually experienced the services or got to know the actual services being offered in the University. Two themes generated from student participants' responses were;

1.   Expectations in relation to services provided

2.   Quality of services provided

Theme One: Expectations in relation to services provided

During the group interviews participants were asked, "when you were admitted to study in Cape Coast Technical University, what expectations did you have in relation to student services that the University needs to provide". Most of the participants expressed moderate and sufficient expectations with regards to the accommodation services at the University, internet services and departmental administrative services. For instance, FGR#1 of the focus group discussion said:

"I expected the University to provide students with accommodation such that most students will be in University Halls which I expected to bear rather neat facilities. I also expected good internet, provision of student loan facility, high security surveillance and transport services."

FGR#14 also asserted that she expected the University to provide students with furnished rooms, fast internet, timely certificates, detailed results on time upon completion of school and more. Some additional expectations expressed were as followed:

"*I was expecting that the rooms in the University Hall were two in a room but coming to meet four in a room, I had to turn to the private hostel facility though usually very expensive. Because with four in a room, the time you want to sleep, is when someone is having visitors; and the time you want to learn, is when someone wants to listen to music or sleep with the lights off.*" **FGR#9**

*I also expected our Departmental administrators to be more friendly and receptive to students. When we need copies of certain documents on our files, we expect that the copies would be made in the office for us but we are often asked to go make the copy and return the file copy to the office. **FGR#2***

From their responses, it could be inferred that both groups of participants in the focus discussions had similar expectations of services that the University provided. It seemed that students' paramount expectations were directed at the accommodation facility on campus as a number of participants

104

mentioned that they expected to be accommodated in the University Hall with furnished rooms, less student-to-room-ratio and regular supply of basic services such as water, electricity, internet connectivity and sanitation. This confirmed the recommendation by Agyefi-Mensah and Edu-Buandoh (2014) that since technical education had come to stay, planning of Technical Universities should include policies on how students could be accommodated on campuses.

Next, it was realized that students' expectations were also directed at the internet connectivity on campus, as they expected a regular internet connectivity while on campus in order to facilitate their search for information relevant to their studies and campus life endeavours. This also confirmed Forbes and Ngi's (2008) and Boateng's (2019) findings that computing and internet literacy had become a necessary part of students' lives such that they enabled students to explore varieties of educational materials that equipped them with the knowledge in their fields of study.

Aside expectations for accommodation and internet connectivity which were predominant in their responses, students also expected a more friendly and convenient administrative support services.

They even expected additional services that they needed from the University. Participants mentioned that they expected services such as educative extra-curricular activities or competitions, on-campus part-time job training, subsidized transport services between campus and neighbouring communities where the private hostels were located, student loan facilities and extended hours for library services.

The narrated expectations of students suggested that it was expedient for HEIs to build accommodation facilities on campuses with regular supply of amenities and to ensure a regular internet connectivity on campus.

Similar narratives by staff confirmed students' expectations of services the University needed to provide. The following were some critical statements made:

> *Generally, students expect to receive their certificates and detailed results on time when they complete school. Apart from that, students usually expect to have their course handouts free of charge. They also expect to acquire a great amount of knowledge by the time they complete their programmes of study such that they can be productive in the field of work.* **IR#2**
>
> "*Students normally expect good accommodation, place of comfort, good mattress good ventilations, constant supply of water and electricity, neat washrooms, a very conducive environment to study and access to the internet.*" **IR#6**

Again, participant IR#1 also reiterated:

> "*Students simply expect to acquire their certificates and practical knowledge for use in the job market. For the internet, students expect to enjoy a faster internet such that a student who is coming to do his/her registration expects that the process runs smoothly to be able to register, print and go.*"

The study further explored explanations to whether the services being provided by Cape Coast Technical University sufficiently met students' expectations or not. Some responses given were:

"For the University Hall, the internet and practical training, my expectations are not really met. For my department administrative services, my expectations are moderately met. Aside that for the teaching and learning is good because our lecturers really teach and ensure we understand the lessons so my expectations for theoretical learning aspect is met." **FGR#9**

"For the internet, my expectations have not been met because I was expecting it since my 1ˢᵗ year in the University. However, it is here now but not efficient and not stable. For the University Hall my expectations have not been met. For my department administrative services, my expectations are moderately met because instead of computerizing our records, the manual work is too much there." **FGR#12**

From the claims made by participants, expectations of students were met for their departmental administrative services and theoretical teaching of lessons. The study further arrived at a finding that students' expectations for the University Hall services were not met because of low standard washrooms, unreliable supply of water and electricity as they were usually off for almost a whole week, amidst more challenges that required improvement. Also, students' expectations towards internet connectivity were not met owing to irregularities and fluctuating nature of the campus internet connection. However, these stance can change as cautioned by Oldfield and Baron (2000) that, by applying the SERVQUAL model, students' views of services change over a period of time.

Responses were similar for most of the participants, thus, findings suggested that students seemed to be nursing grievances that also appeared threatening to their campus lives which eventually dainted their satisfaction. This sounds a word of caution regarding that by the application of the SERVQUAL model, Batinic *et al*. (2016) avers that students' performance is affected by their satisfaction status regarding housing and accommodation services in HEIs.

On the other hand, it was interesting to know that the staff of the University could not agree with the students. They, explained by saying that:

"We do our best to provide the amenities, I mentioned earlier, that students need in this hall. Where there are any issues, the students report things that they are not comfortable with. We then engage them in conversation and listen to their complaints. We then liaise with concerned offices or personnel to ensure that their problem (s) is/are solved for them." **IR#3**

"Although student-lecturer disputes are often settled within a short time, students' expectations are usually met halfway due to instances where the office has to wait for the visit or response of other parties (landlords or colleague) involved. However, the students are often satisfied with the outcomes." **IR#1**

"In my opinion, we meet students' expectations because we make sure that even when they are not on campus, we compute their results and provide relevant information to them through their various whatsapp platforms." **IR#4**

According to staff, they perceived that students' expectations regarding accommodation, internet and administrative services were met although more improvement to better the services were required. In contrast, from students' perspectives, their expectations were not met. For instance, there was internet service, however students were not able to use it to their maximum satisfaction. Most participants expressed worry about the services as they were not up to the standard communicated to students prior to their admission. Similarly, Willower's (2017) study on education students' perceptions of school administrators arrived at a finding that majority of the students believed that the administrators were not spearheading the expectations of students because while students believed that their expectations were not met, administrators were of the view that students were adequately provided with services.

Theme two: Quality of services provided

This theme sought to describe the quality perceptions of participants about the services provided at CCTU. This theme attempted to illustrate how students perceived the quality of services they received at CCTU. After interacting with participants, their responses showed that, services provided at CCTU were generally of poor quality, especially for the internet and the University Hostel/ Hall services. Some responses supporting the findings were as followed:

> *"For the internet, the quality is bad because the link fluctuates.*
> *The poor sanitation provided at the University Hall makes the*
> *quality bad. But, my department administrative services are of*

good quality because of the good record keeping system."

FGR#4

*"For the internet, the quality is low because it is not stable. For the University Hall the quality is bad for reasons of poor provision of amenities. For my department administrative services and the teaching of lessons, the quality is good because the administrators are good with records keeping and the lecturers teach the theory aspect of lessons well." **FGR#6***

*"For the University Hall, the internet and practical training, the quality is poor. For my department administrative services, the quality is fairly good maybe more than average. Aside that, the quality for the teaching and learning is good." **FGR#1***

From the narratives, students' claims were supported or measured by underlying reasons or factors. Per the concept inculcated in the development of the SERVQUAL model, Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) explained that service quality was defined as the difference between customer expectations and performance perceptions. Thus, students measured their expectations of the services against their experiences of the services (reflected by performance of the services) to arrive at their conclusions or opinions about the quality of the services involved.

Although, according to the students' responses, the quality of the internet and accommodation services in the University Hostel were poor and needed improvement, this was not so for administrative services in their various departments.

The central objective of this study was to understand expectations of services that student participants in this study experienced and to understand how they perceived the services offered. From the narratives, it appeared that students tended to demand services that they initially expected and they proposed the delivery of some services that they realized other students were enjoying in other universities that they perceived to be helpful. The impression here was that, the expectations of students had a link with their demands. As a result, enhancing service delivery to students required an appreciable consideration of their demands in order to establish strategies for effective students' customer service management. However, difficult as it was to consider the demands of students, Tagoe (2013) explained that meeting students' expectations had become a common challenge borne by leadership of HEIs due to changes that occured over time. Consiquently, it was not out of the ordinary that in some instance, the university was not capable of meeting students' expectations and so the service quality seemed poor.

The findings of the current study corroborated with the findings of Batinic *et al*. (2016) that customer satisfaction approach adopted by some of HEIs had become a central role in the world of business and education as well. To this point, getting the students' satisfied was same as meeting their expectations and this had been used as a catalyst to ensure a measure of performance of HEIs. Batinic *et al*. further pointed out that average student's expectation was getting satisfied with university bodies and services, teaching, teaching methods and academic reputations. When these expectations were not met, it affected the average student's performance, and put a dent in their level of satisfaction in such institutions.

In the view of Kalpana and Sudharani (2012), institutions' quality factors that met students' expectations focused on infrastructure, image branding, location cost and personnel and overall satisfaction of previous students. These fundamentals determined the satisfaction level of potential students anytime they made attempt to enroll in any HEIs. While it was important to emphasize on the core mandate of HEIs, the attention of university leadership should be drawn to the fact that customers' satisfactions had become a central idea in most institutions because students wanted to be treated as such in this dynamic and advancing economies.

In a nutshell, most students expected the existing services to be more enhanced and fit for current trends of students' needs. Notwithstanding the stance of students, staff of the University partially agreed with the students because, to them, that they often tried to meet students halfway. Participants expressed worry about services such as accommodation and Wi-Fi connectivity as they were not up to the standard communicated to students prior to their admission. Students also expected additional services such as transport services and recreational facilities. Participants generally perceived or indicated that the services provided were of poor quality, especially for the internet and the University Hostel/ Hall services.

Research Question Three: What challenges do students face in accessing available students' services of Cape Coast Technical University?

Throughout the study, the participants' responses pointed out that students faced challenges in accessing services offered to them at CCTU. Each respondent noted having early exposure to the services and discussed their observations, experiences and opinions about the challenges they faced when

112

they were admitted. The theme of challenges that students faced in accessing services and situations that contributed to the challenges were described below in two parts. Also included were views of staff on what brought about the challenges that students were facing:

1. Services difficult to access

2. Availability challenges

Theme One: Services difficult to access

It cannot be denied that students were often confronted with several challenges in life and of no exception were the students in CCTU. Undoubtedly, accessing available services with some ease, as a student, was part of the developmental process in education (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). The SERVQUAL model postulated that 'access' created opportunity for students to manage their expectations and even paved way for institutions to perform as expected. However, it seemed that CCTU could not take advantage of this strategy thus, participants discussed services that were difficult to access through their lived experiences in the CCTU setting.

Each participant reflected upon a story, moment, or experience in CCTU about the challenges they went through in accessing some services in CCTU. During the focus group discussions, the services that were most spoken of as usually difficult to access were the University's accommodation, internet connectivity, ICT laboratory, the University library and departmental laboratories. In their submissions, only one participant made mention of departmental administrative services.

Accessibility challenges related to internet connectivity and the ICT laboratory on campus were that there was unreliable internet connectivity, the

113

ICT laboratory was often closed, and majority of the computers in the laboratory were faulty. Intertwined in participants' responses were other accessibility challenges linked to services such as departmental administrative services, departmental laboratories and library:

"Students do not get to use the Wi-Fi since it's always not working, it is on and off; we don't use the ICT or computer laboratory because most of the computers there are not functioning, they are spoilt." **FGR#6**

"We have very slow and weak internet connectivity because the link is not regular, the access codes are often changed and I've noticed that people from neighbouring communities also come to use it so it creates pressure on the network. As for our ICT laboratory, the computers there are almost useless." **FGR#3**

"Students are unable to use the ICT or computer laboratory at will, the Wi-Fi, the accommodation provided by the University as it is only 1 hostel, and the library too." **FGR#5**

"Unfortunately, students in this University have very limited access to a number of services. Prominent ones are the library, internet, the accommodation system and even the department laboratory." **FGR#11**

"I often feel ashamed when discussing with students of other Technical Universities in my neighbourhood back at home. How is it that students in this University cannot access Wi-Fi for assignments and the library for further personal studies? There are white elephant computers in our department

114

laboratory, one cannot use the few computers there as they do

not have the required software programmes and even chairs to

*sit on." **FGR#16***

Additional accessibility challenges mentioned were related to the accommodation facility on campus which was the University Hall. Reasons were that while the rooms were not enough, they experienced unreliable water supply due to inadequate water storage system, unreliable electricity supply due to the absence of generator set and there were also poor sanitation and maintenance services especially in the washrooms which deterred students from accessing the washrooms. For instance, participant FGR#3 asserted:

"Although, the University Hall is open for first year students,

the rooms available are very minimal in number. This causes

less accessibility to first year students."

Also, participant FGR#12 asserted that the washrooms in the University Hall/ Hostel were often broken-down and unclean which resulted in having the washrooms locked-up at most times, thereby, posed difficulty for students to access the washrooms in the University Hall/ Hostel.

Almost all participants mentioned that the services that were often difficult to access were the internet facility and securing a room in the University Hostel/ Hall. Responses of both groups of student participants affirmed claims that the internet facility and the accommodation provided by the University were rather difficult to access.

Also mentioned were accessibility challenges faced towards the library services and finding appropriate materials to read in the University library. This could not be left out as a number of the respondents mentioned that the

materials at the university library were outdated, the shelving system was rather poor, there were no electronic library system to assist students with research and that the library was often closed too early even during examination periods. One response was:

"*One cannot find relevant books for additional information or self-tutoring. We cannot go there to study in the evenings when there are no lectures and we are free to study.*" **FGR#4**

Commenting, FGR#6 reiterated that materials found at the library were archaic thus not relevant to their studies and the shelving system was poor and made search for books really difficult.

During the discussions, only one participant, FGR#15, mentioned that some administrators at were unfriendly and that made it difficult to approach them for assistance. Other participants did not express concern with or say anything about having accessibility challenges with administrative services in their departments. Consequently, it could mean that not much accessibility challenges encountered by students were associated with administrative services at their departments.

From the explanation of "access" given by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), the import here was that, based on inconveniencies suffered by students through their lived experiences, students considered the afore-mentioned services as not easy to gain owing to specific factors or reasons given in their narratives.

Moreover, from participants' submissions, one could understand that difficulty in accessing the internet, University Hall/ Hostel, ICT laboratory, departmental laboratories and library were disadvantageous to students'

116

academic success. This was because students said that they needed the internet, ICT laboratory and their departmental laboratories to facilitate their studies, they also needed rooms in the university hall but the rooms were inadequate and the library was closed too early meanwhile the materials there were very old with bad shelving system.

Theme Two: Availability challenges

From responses given by participants, it appeared that students relied on some information they had received on the availability of services provided by CCTU prior to their admission into the University. In their concept paper on harnessing the challenges of polytechnic institutions, Alhassan *et al*. (2014) pointed out that service availability and provision were limited due to inadequate facilities in the institutions. Similarly, among the challenges faced by CCTU students were non-availability of additional halls of residence on campus except for just one University Hall, non-availability of reliable internet connectivity, non-availability of functioning computers and relevant accessories at the University's ICT laboratory and inadequate office space and logistics for departmental administrators.

The main availability challenge that was reported to be associated with the accommodation system on campus which was only one University Hall/ Hostel with limited room capacity, even for accommodating first year students on campus, such that most first year students had to seek private accommodation. Contributions made during discussions with participants on availability challenges associated with the University Hall included:

117

"There is only one University Hall and it is the only accommodation facility right on the University campus. Imagine, how many of us will that hall accommodate?" **FGR#1**

"The University Hall is only one. Not much of us can be accommodated there. When you are there, you will not be paying water and electricity bills every now and then but it's unfortunate it is just one hall." **FGR#7**

"Only one University Hall is available in this school. How come? I was surprised to come and meet this. Something should really be done about it." **FGR#10**

Aside availability challenges with the University Hall, there was also availabililty challenges with the internet and the ICT laboratory. Participants opined:

"Our internet network is so poor. Usually it is not available at all for use. The link sometimes does not appear, and few times when it appears, it is low or inactive." **FGR#13**

"It's almost as if we do not have internet here. Not easy, we buy data each day to enable us do our work. Even the ICT lab is often not helpful because most of the computers are spoilt. So, functioning computers are not available in adequate quantity to support students." **FGR#11**

"Much has already been said and they are right. Internet connectivity is hardly available. Useful computers and accessories of good conditions are not available at the ICT

118

laboratory. These two services should be looked at by authorities." **FGR#14**

The SERVQUAL model recorded 'non-academic aspects' and 'academic aspects' as among the variables by which service quality can be measured. In their submission, Parasuraman *et al*. (1985) the variables put together determined whether or not institutions delivered quality services to students.   Taking cognisance of the narratives given by students, the SERVQUAL model confirmed that unavailability additional University Halls, internet connectivity and ICT laboratory services negatively affected students' campus lives.

Unfortunately, some student participants claimed that generally, there were unresolved challenges with the services, so students often got disappointed, frustrated and withdrawn. Participant FGR#9 reported:

"*We often find ourselves avoiding the use of some services because we know we shall definitely encounter problems with the University Hall, the ICT laboratory, the washrooms on campus, and others.*"

Responses gathered from staff participants resonated with the claims made by the students, especially, in connection with the retardation of modernized technological advancement in the delivery of administrative support services. The study showed that the University's intercommunication system had been broken down for long, inadequate supply of basic administrative tools and gadgets and delayed administrative responsiveness. Some other critical statements supporting these findings were as followed:

119

The seats in my office are in a bad state and gives me backaches. The printer in my office is malfunctioning and retards workflow. I sometimes call on the Information Technology Technicians to come fix the problem, but they usually delay in coming. Again, my department has inadequate offices for lecturers, most of our lecturers do not have offices and they are compelled to hang around in wait for their lecture periods. The washrooms are also in a very unfriendly state, the toilet bowls are spoilt, there are leakages in the sinks and pipes. I also feel bothered that the classroom furniture for the students are breaking down. All these challenges have been communicated to the authorities through memoranda and even with follow-ups, but nothing has been done about them. **IR#5**

Sometimes, the tools to execute the work that you are supposed to render to students are not available. Laptops or desktops, printers and photocopier machines. Also, we may need internet to maybe just check something online or do some update or help someone or work remotely for a student or a staff. However, all the time, we improvise ways to solve these challenges. The other challenge is that sometimes, some of the staff do not understand how we operate and the work that we are doing. Sometimes you give your maximum energy in doing a lot of things for the students, but they often do not understand us. **IR#2**

Throughout this study, participants expressed worry about the stress they went through in accessing services as students and delivering services as staff of the university. For both students and staff, accessibility challenges negatively affected output. Example, Newman (2013) found that students' academic works were disrupted when they resided far from their university's campuses. Arroya and Orozco (2017) contributed that there was emotional challenge in the education service provision and this was linked to inadequate access to facilities and departmental services.

The findings showed that the challenges the students faced were mainly related to access and availability of services. These services included University's accommodation, internet, ICT laboratory, the University library and departmental laboratories. Availability challenges included inadequate accommodation facilities on CCTU campus, poor facilities at the University's ICT laboratory and unfavourable conditions at the University's library. Staff participants also communicated their challenges in delivering services to students and the strategies they had improvised in their offices to reduce the effect of the challenges on the students.

The study findings were in line with the findings of Richter *et al.* (2010) that challenges in accommodation services, departmental services, internet services and sometimes library services affected the service quality of higher education institutions. According to Richter *et al.* (2010), these challenges were multifaceted and required comprehensive research and development policies to mitigate them. Similarly, the findings supported the findings of Subrahmanyam and Raja (2012) that some of the challenges regarding administrative services, academic facilities and campus

infrastructure as tested based on the SERVQUAL model depended hugely on service quality strategies implemented in higher education institutions.

Chapter summary

This chapter presented the results and discussion of the study. A sample of 22 participants were involved in the study. The study identified themes of available services being services that supported students' academic work, services that supported students' accommodation issues and services that supported students' health and counselling needs. The findings on expectations of services provided was described in two parts by participants as expectations in relation to services provided and the quality of services provided. However, the study revealed that students faced challenges in accessing services offered at CCTU. The study recorded two themes from the findings associated with the challenges. The themes covered services difficult to access and availability challenges.

122
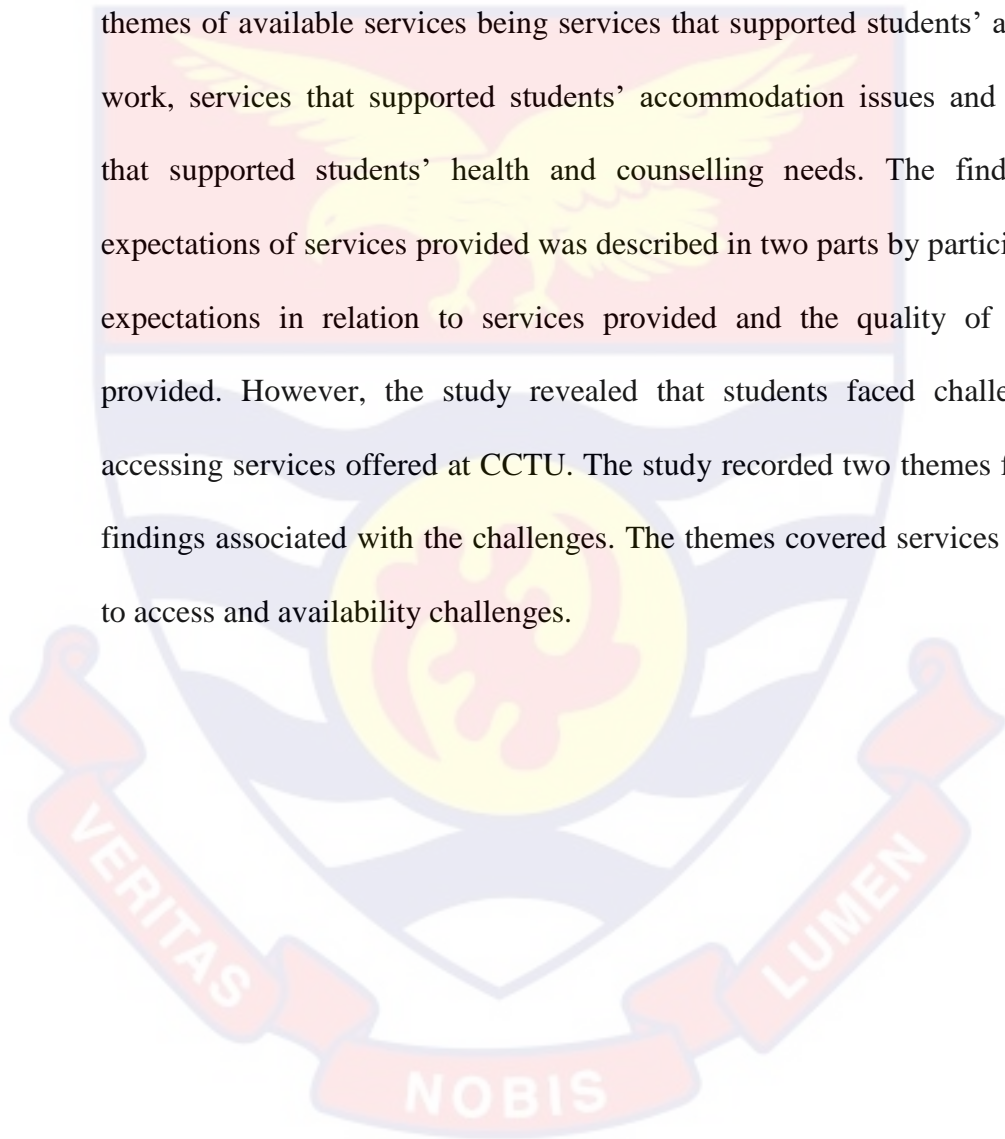
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This section presented the summary of the study that highlighted the key research questions guiding the study, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations of the study. Suggestions for further research were also given in this chapter.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to explore students' customer service expectations at Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU).

Research Questions

1. What are the available services provided to students at Cape Coast Technical University?

2. What expectations do students have in relation to students' services that Cape Coast Technical University needs to provide?

3. What challenges do students face in accessing available students' services of Cape Coast Technical University?

Literature related to the study was also reviewed on key areas such as concept principles and theories. As a preliminary step in this study, a literature review was presented that summarized the existing literature on important subjects such as higher education, students-as-customers, students' expectations in technical university services, mandate of Technical Universities in Ghana, available services (accommodation, administrative and internet services) and challenges hindering the accessibility of the services provided to students. A phenomenological qualitative study design was chosen

for the study. A sample of twenty-two participants from Cape Coast Technical University were selected via purposive sampling for the study. Data was collected through the use of interview and focus group discussion guides. The qualitative data obtained was transcribed and analysed thematically.

Key Findings

Key findings that emerged from the study were as followed:

The study found that students considered some services rendered by CCTU supported their academic work, other services supported their accommodation issues and there were services that supported students with health and counselling needs. According to the responses gathered, ICT services, especially internet or Wi-Fi connectivity, departmental laboratory use for practical lessons and the library services were some services that supported students with their academic work. Services that supported students with accommodation issues included availability of University Hostels; affordability of the University's hostel fee; room and bed ratio; provision of amenities like water, electricity and internet; sanitation and maintenance services. Regarding services that supported students with health needs, mention was made of general health consultation, laboratory, records keeping, eye services, dental services, drug dispensary and public health services. For their counselling needs, students revealed that they only knew about the presence and availability of the Guidance and Counselling Unit on campus. They said that they knew of only one staff who was usually introduced to students during orientation programmes for fresh students. Critically, participants' comments about the services were that not all services that were

purported to be available were actually available and those services that were actually available were inadequate in nature.

The result of the study further made evident the various expectations that students had in relation to students' services that Cape Coast Technical University needed to provide. The findings were presented under two themes; expectations in relation to services provided and the quality of services provided. The study found that students expected regular internet connectivity on camputs to enable them search for information relevant to their studies and general endeavours. Students also expected more than one hall of accommodation to be situated on campus. They further expected that the University Hall/ Hostel had furnished rooms, less student-to-room-ratio and regular supply of basic services such as water, electricity, internet connectivity and sanitation. Again, the study found that students expected a more friendly and convenient administrative support services. Participants included the mention of their expectations for additional services that students needed from the University; educative extra-curricular activities or competitions, on-campus part-time job training, subsidized transport services between campus and neighbouring communities where the private hostels were located, extended hours for library services and student loan facilities.

Generally, students expressed disappointment about the internet services and the accommodation system that CCTU offered to students as they were not up to the standard they had expected upon relying on information communicated to them prior to their admission. Thus, findings showed that, service quality for the Internet and the University Hostel/ Hall were of poor

125

quality, although this was not so for administrative services in their various departments.

Finally, the study found that students faced some challenges with some services offered to them at CCTU. Student participants responses produced two themes; services that were difficult to access and availability challenges. Students expressed how difficult it was for them to access the University's accommodation, internet, ICT laboratory, the University Library and departmental laboratories. They further explained that inadequate room capacity, poor sanitation and maintenance services, unreliable water supply and unreliable electricity supply were some challenges that crippled their accessibility to the University Hostel facility. Also, they experienced great challenges in accessing the internet because the network was very inconsistent. For the ICT laboratory, students could not fully access the place was often closed and majority of the computers were faulty. Even more, students could not access the University Library owing to outdated materials stocked in there, poor shelving system, absence of electronic library services and early closure of the library even during examination periods. Availability challenges encountered by students included, no other than just one University Hall on campus with limited rooms, non-avalability of reliable internet connectivity, non-availability of useful computers in the ICT laboratory and non-availability of current literature at the University Library. Responses from staff participants resonated claims made by students as the study found that staff were confronted with inadequate logistics thus often improvised to reach solutions.

Conclusions

Based on the findings the following conclusions were drawn:

First, Cape Coast Technical University provided some basic services that supported students' academic needs, accommodation needs and health and counselling needs. Since CCTU was providing some basic services to students, it meant that the University already had some basic structures, facilities and staff to enable the provision of the services. However, it seemed that the structures and facilities were woefully inadequate in terms of number, regularity and efficiency. Hence, interventions such as an advanced or reliable internet connectivity system; relevant reading and electronic materials for stocking the University library; additional halls of residence on campus with better supply of amenities, sanitation and maintenance plans; subsidized health policies for students and guidance programmes for students were required.

Second, findings showed that students' expectations in terms of theoretical lessons and departmental administrative-support services were met. Rather, their expectations for accommodation, internet, ICT training, departmental laboratories for practical/ competency-based training and library facilities were not met. Consequently, students were confident about theoretical knowledge they had on their fields of study complemented by administrative-support services provided in their departments. However, students' seemed to have possessed a rather less professional confidence owing to less practical training, less ICT training they acquired and unreliable internet connectivity coupled with unfavourable library facilities and limited choice of accommodation facilities. Such situations badly affected students in the highly competitive and challenging world.

Third, recounts were made of additional services that students expected from the University. Some additional services found needed and expected by students were educative extra-curricular activities or competitions, on-campus part-time job training, subsidized transport services between campus and neighbouring communities where the private hostels were located, student loan facilities and extended hours for library services.

Fourth, challenges were mainly related to accessibility, availability, adequacy and efficiency of accommodation, internet connectivity, laboratories, and library services. This suggested that a high level of financial commitment was required by the University Council and Management to alleviate the challenges.

Recommendations

The ensuing suggestions were made based on the outcomes of the study. Of major concern to students was the limited accommodation facility on CCTU campus with inadequate room capacity, unreliable supply of amenities, poor sanitation and seldom maintenance services. It was, therefore, suggested that the Governing Council and Management of the University should expand the existing single University Hall/ Hostel and build additional halls of residence cited on campus to accommodate a greater number of students within the boundaries of the university campus. This could be achieved by soliciting funds, expert ideas, expert designs and varying contributions of building and furnishing materials through partnering with highly recommended construction companies, banks and state enterprises. Mention can be made of few companies such as David Walter Limited, Ecobuild Consult, Tarak Company Limited, Stanbic Bank, UniBank, Société Générale

Bank, the Volta Aluminium Company Limited (VALCO), Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) and Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund).

Following the recommendation for the expansion of the already existing accommodation facility and the building of additional halls of residence on campus, the Governing Council and Management of the University should assign the Residence and Housing Committee to review the housing/ accommodation policy and procedures to befit the advancement or new developments. Also recommended was, the Residence and Housing Committee should review the systems or policies involving the supply of basic amenities, sanitation and maintenance services to ensure that they were regularized for the betterment of students' campus lives and the progress of the University.

In addition, Management of the University should improve existing services to students and expand the scope of services by adding other services such as educative extra-curricular activities or competitions, on-campus part-time job training, subsidized transport services between campus and neighbouring communities where the private hostels were located, student loan facilities and extended hours for library services. Ideas on details and needs specifications of students regarding improvement of existing services and the suggested additional services should be sought from the CCTU student body and students of other Technical Universities through a survey and solicited ideas from staff of CCTU. Surveys should be conducted by the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) of Cape Coast Technical University.

Further recommendation made was that, amidst the review and improvement of existing services and the creation of additional services, the Management and DAPQA of CCTU should consider holding open forums to elicit students' expectations of the services and consider the use of some ideas gathered from students' responses during the forums. By so doing, student crisis and unrests would be minimized to promote campus tranquility and create fertile grounds for gaining a competitive edge over other Universities nationwide.

Lastly, in order to alleviate the accessibility and availability challenges on existing services, Management of the University should assign the committee responsible for the review of the University's Strategic Plan to develop achievable action plans in phases with budgets and include them in the Strategic Plan and annual budgets. This would enable Management to direct some attention and financial commitment towards enhancing the accessibility and availability of the services.

Suggestions for Further Research

For further research, the study may be replicated in other technical universities in Ghana using mixed methods research approach for best understanding of the problem characterized by prevailing trends of students' expectations and needs.

REFERENCES

Abbasi, M. N., Malik, A., Chaudhry, I. S., & Imdadullah, M. (2011). A study on student satisfaction in Pakistani universities: The case of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Pakistan. *Asian Social Science, 7*(7), 209.

Abdul, J., Bejan, A., & Kai, K. (2017). Consumerisation in UK higher education business schools: higher fees, greater stress and debatable outcomes. *Higher Education, 10*(2), 12-23.

Abdulai, A., & Corner, T. (2010). Delivering higher education to meet local needs in a developing context: The quality dilemmas. *Quality Assurance in Education, 18*(3), 191-208.

Abdullah, F. (2006). HEdPERF versus SERVPERF. *Quality Assurance in Education*, *13*(4), 305-328.

Ablakwah, O. S. (2016). *Conversion of polytechnics to technical universities in Ghana.* A Speech delivered by Deputy Minister of Education at the 23rd National Delegates Congress of the GNUPS, Accra.

Adei, S. (2018). *Enhancing the development of Ghana through technical and vocational education and training (TVET): The role of technical universities.* Paper presented at Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi, Ghana, 13 September 2018.

Agbanu, P. G., Sonyo, E., & Ahiase, G. (2018). Examining Factors Influencing Student Satisfaction In Distance Education in Ghana: A Study of the Institute for Educational Development and Extension, University of Education, Winneba. *The Online Journal of Distance Education e-Learning, 6*(1), 33-44.

Agyefi-Mensah, S., & Edu-Buandoh, K. (2014). The Implications of the new Polytechnics Act, 2007 (Act 745), for Curriculum Development and Review in Ghanaian Polytechnics. *International Journal of African and Asian Studies, 4*, 63-70.

Agyei-Boakye, I., Quayson, E., & Nutassey, K. N. (2014). The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) stigma in developing countries: The case of the furniture sector in Ghana. *Developing Country Studies, 4*(26). Retrieved from www.iiste.org.

Ajao, O. S. (2010). Repositioning for quality services delivery in tertiary institutions: the role of accountants. *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal, 4*(2), 335-354.

Akareem, H. S., & Hossain, S. S. (2016). Determinants of education quality: What makes students' perception different? *Open Review of Educational Research, 3*(1), 52-67.

Alhassan, E., Kinder, T., & Sulemana, I. (2014). Polytechnic education in Ghana: management delivery and challenges. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention, 1*(6), 411-424.

Akçayir, M. (2017). What do students think about SNSs in education? University students' perceptions, expectations and concerns regarding educational uses of SNSs. Australia Journal of Education Technology, *33*(5), 91-106.

Andrlic, B., & Budic, H. (2011). Measuring students' satisfaction and its importance for improving marketing mix of services in higher education. *Annals & Proceedings of DAAAM International, 22*(1), 61-62.

Anisa, J. (2012). Services marketing theory revisited: an empirical investigation into financial services marketing. *Journal of Business and Management, 4*(4), 36-45.

Akareem, H. S., & Hossain, S. S. (2016). Determinants of education quality: What makes students' perception different? *Open Review of Educational Research, 3*(1), 52-67.

Akçayir, M. (2017). What do students think about SNS in education? University students' perceptions, expectations and concerns regarding educational uses of SNS. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 33*(5), 91-106.

Akomolafe, C., & Ibijola, E. (2014). Staff and Students' Perception of Students' Participation in University Governance in Ekiti and Ondo States, Nigeria. *International Journal of Learning Development, 4*(2), 73-81.

Alhassan, E., Kinder, T., & Sulemana, I. (2014). Educational reforms and the role of polytechnic education in the socio-economic development of Ghana. *Africa Development and Resources Research Institute (ADRRI) JournaL, 11*(2), 29-52.

Alves, H., Mainardes, E. W., & Raposo, M. (2010). A relationship approach to higher education institution stakeholder management. *Tertiary Education Management, 16*(3), 159-181.

Alves, H., & Raposo, M. (2005). *Marketing higher education: Students' service expectations.* Munich, Germany: University Library of Munich.

Annamdevula, S., & Bellamkonda, R. S. (2016). Effect of student perceived service quality on student satisfaction, loyalty and motivation in Indian universities: development of HiEduQual. *International Journal of Innovation, Management, 11*(2), 488-517.

Arambewela, R., & Maringe, F. (2012). Mind the gap: staff and postgraduate perceptions of student experience in higher education. *Higher Education Review, 44*(2), 63-84.

Arat, M. (2011). To what extent the student is a customer. *International Journal of Social Sciences Humanity Studies, 3*(1), 293-306.

Arnold, W. W. (2018). Strengthening College Support Services to Improve Student Transitioning to Careers. *Journal of College Teaching Learning, 15*(1), 5-26.

Arroyo, J. C., & Orozco, F. C. E. (2017). Students' loyalty in higher education: The roles of affective commitment, service co-creation and engagement. *Cuadernos de Administración, 33*(57), 96-110.

Ashish, T., Kumar, R. P., & Sagar, P. (2015). *An impact of education marketing on enrolment of students at private management colleges in Kathmandu*. Unpublished Manuscript, Ace Institute of Management, Pokhara University.

Azam, A. (2018). Service quality dimensions and students' satisfaction: A study of Saudi Arabian Private Higher Education Institutions. *European Online Journal of Natural Social Sciences, 7*(2), 275-284.

Azuma, F., & Marie, J. (2018). Partnership support for departments with low students' satisfaction. *Students Engagement in Higher Education Journal, 2*(1), 70-79.

134

Bashir, S., Sarki, I. H., & Samidi, J. (2012). Students' perception on the service quality of Malaysian universities' hostel accommodation. *International Journal of Business Social Science, 3*(15), 213-222.

Batinic, A. B., Pavicic, J., & Mihanovic, Z. (2016). The link between student's satisfaction with faculty, overall, students' satisfaction, with student life and student performance. *Review of Innovation and Competitiveness, 2*(1), 37-60.

Berlin Declaration on the Social Dimension. (2011). *Recommendations for strong student affairs and services in Europe.* International Bologna Conference – The Social Dimension, July 11-13, 2011; Berlin, Germany.

Boakye-Agyeman, A. (2006). *Polytechnic education in Ghana: The case of the HND estate management programme.* Paper presented at the 5th FIG Regional Conference. March, Accra, Ghana.

Boakye-Yiadom, M. (2012). *Perceptions of the Work of Deans of Students in Selected Ghanaian Universities.* Ohio University,

Boateng, E. (2019). *The impact of management and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial activities of university graduates in Ghana.* Retrieved from http://ir.knust.edu.gh/xmlui/handle/123456789 /11681.

Boice-Pardee, H., Soisson, E., & Richardson, E. (2018). *Customer service in higher education: A practical guide* (1st ed.). Denver, CO: Academic Impressions.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101.

Brochado, A. (2009). Comparing alternative instruments to measure service quality in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education, 17*(2), 174-190.

Brown, R. M., & Mazzarol, T. (2006). *Factors driving student satisfaction and loyalty in Australian Univesities: the importance of institutional image.* Paper presented at the 20th Annual Australia & New Zeland Academy of Management Conference.

Budu-Smith, J. (2014). The need for polytechnics to assert and create a niche for themselves among tertiary institutions in human resource development. *Journal of Polytechnics in Ghana, 1*(1), 14-22.

Bunce, L., Baird, A., & Jones, S. E. (2017). The student-as-consumer approach in higher education and its effects on academic performance. *Studies in Higher Education, 42*(11), 1958-1978.

Cape Coast Technical University (2007-2011). *Cape Coast Technical University strategic plan.* Cape Coast, Ghana: Cape Coast Technical University.

Cape Coast Technical University (2017-2022). *The strategic plan of Cape Coast Technical University.* Cape Coast, Ghana: Cape Coast Technical University.

Cape Coast Technical University (2019). Cape Coast technical university statutes. Cape Coast: Governing Council of Cape Coast Technical University, Cape Coast Technical University.

Cape Coast Technical University (2019). *Cape Coast Technical University students' admission brochure: 2018/2019 academic year.* Cape Coast, Ghana: Cape Coast Technical University.

Cape Coast Technical University (2020). *Cape Coast Technical University Vice Chancellor's 2020 report.* Cape Coast, Ghana: Cape Coast Technical University.

Catoiu, I., & Tichindelean, M. (2012). Relationship marketing-Theoretical consideration. *Annales Universitatis Apulensis: Series Oeconomica, 14*(2), 655-689.

Choy, L. T. (2014). The strengths and weaknesses of research methodology: Comparison and complimentary between qualitative and quantitative approaches. *OSR Journal of Humanities Social Science Computer Review, 19*(4), 99-104.

Clayson, D. E., & Haley, D. A. (2005). Marketing models in education: Students as customers, products, or partners. *Marketing Education Review, 15*(1), 1-10.

Clothey, R., & Eres, F. (2013). Perceived service quality in schools of education: a comparative study between Drexel University and Gazi University. *American International Journal of Social Science, 2*(7), 6-15.

Cohen, M. J., & Stanczak, D. E. (2000). On the reliability, validity, and cognitive structure of the Thurstone Word Fluency Test. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology, 15*(3), 267-279.

Courtney, M., & Courtney, A. (2012). *Science and engineering education: Who is the customer*? New York: Cornell University.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Lincoln: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2014a). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2014b). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Into Practice, 39*(3), 124-130.

Crisp, G., Palmer, E., Turnbull, D., Nettelbeck, T., Ward, L., LeCouteur, A., Sarris, A., Strelan, P. & Schneider, L. (2009). First year student expectations: Results from a university-wide student survey. *Journal of University Teaching Learning Practice, 6*(1), 11-26.

Cusumano, M., Kahl, S., & Suarez, F. (2008). A theory of services in product industries. *Center for eBusiness@ MIT–Paper, 242*.

De Jager, J., & Gbadamosi, G. (2010). Specific remedy for specific problem: measuring service quality in South African higher education. *Higher Education, 60*(3), 251-267.

Deloitte University Press. (2015). *Success by design: Improving outcomes in American higher education.* Deloitte Press: United States America.

Dennis, S. L., & Osterholt, D. A. (2011). Holistic support that promotes student learning. *New England Journal of Higher Education*, *7*(3), 11-21.

DeShields, O. W., Kara, A., & Kaynak, E. (2005). Determinants of business students' satisfaction and retention in higher education: applying Herzberg's two-factor theory. *International Journal of Educational Management, 19*(2), 128-139.

Devers, K., & Frankel, R. (2000). Study design in qualitative research—2: Sampling and data collection strategies. *Education for health*, *13*(2), 263-271.

Dhliwayo, K. (2014). The Internal Customers Perceptions Of A Multi-Campus University System In Zimbabwe. A Case Of Great Zimbabwe University. *International journal of scientific technology research, 3*(2), 324-330.

Directorate of Academic Planning. (2019). *Population of Students in Cape Cost Technical University.* Cape Coast Technical University: Cape Coast.

Directorate of Human Resource. (2019). *Population of Staff in Cape Cost Technical University.* Cape Coast Technical University: Cape Coast.

Du Plooy, A., & De Jager, J. (2006). Student's expectations of service quality in tertiary education: A comparison between prospective and current students. *Professional Accountant, 6*(1), 10-19.

Durkin, M., & McKenna, S. (2011). Informing the marketing of higher education to younger people. *Irish Marketing Review, 21*(1), 41-47.

Eagle, L., & Brennan, R. (2007). Are students customers? TQM and marketing perspectives. *Quality assurance in education, 15*(1), 44-60.

Edwardsson, M. P. (2012). *Media processes for content production: Studies of structures and climate impacts, computer science and communication.* Stockholm, Sweden: KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Elassy, N. (2015). The concepts of quality, quality assurance and quality enhancement. *Quality Assurance in Education, 23*(3), 250-261.

Elken, M., & Stensaker, B. (2018). Conceptualising 'quality work'in higher education. *Quality in Higher Education, 24*(3), 189-202.

Ereş, F., & Clothey, R. (2013). Perceived service quality in schools of education: A comparative study between Drexel University and Gazi University. *American International Journal of Social Science. October, 2*(7), 6-15.

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of theoretical Applied Statistics, 5*(1), 1-4.

Fernando, S., Lalitha, S., & Weerasinghe, I. M. S. (2017). Students' satisfaction in higher education literature review. *American Journal of Educational Research, 5*(5), 533-539.

Finch, E., Kaka, A., & Sapri, M. (2009). Factors that influence student's expectation level of satisfaction with regards to higher educational facilities services. *Malaysian Journal of Real Estate Volume, 4*(1), 34-51.

Finney, T. G., & Finney, Z. R. (2010). Are students their universities customers? An exploratory study. *Education and Training, 52*(4), 276-291.

140

Fitsilis, P., Gerogiannis, V., & Tsinidou, M. (2010). Evaluation of the factors that determine quality in higher education: an empirical study. *Quality in Education, 18*(3), 227-244.

Fonseca, F. J., & Pinto, C. S. (2014). From the classical concept of Services to Service Systems. *Procedia Technology, 16*, 518-524.

Fontaine, M. (2014). Student Relationship Management (SRM) in higher education: Addressing the expectations of an ever evolving demographic and its impact on retention. *Journal of Education Human Development, 3*(2), 105-119.

Forbes, J., & Ngi, I. C. (2008). Education as service: the understanding of university experience through the service logic. *Journal of Marketing of Higher Education, 1*(1), 1-26.

Frankel, R., & Devers, K. (2000). Study design in qualitative research—1: Developing questions and assessing resource needs. *Education for health, 13*(2), 251-261.

Gill, J., & Johnson, P. (2002). *Research methods for managers.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups. *British dental journal, 204*(6), 291-295.

Gronroos, C. (1982). *Strategic management and marketing in the service sector.* Bromley, UK: Chartwell-Braff.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Validity and reliability (credibility and dependability) in qualitative research and data analysis.* London, UK: Sage Publications.

Guilbault, M. (2016). Students as customers in higher education: reframing the debate. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, 26*(2), 132-142.

Guilbault, M. (2018). Students as customers in higher education: The (controversial) debate needs to end. *Journal of Retailing Consumer Services, 40*, 295-298.

Hadi, M., Mona, A., & Sepideh, F. (2013). Perceived service quality and student satisfaction in higher education. *Journal of Business and Management, 12*(4), 65-74.

Hanssen, T.-E. S., & Solvoll, G. (2015). The importance of university facilities for student satisfaction at a Norwegian University. *American Journal of Educational Research, 5*(5), 533-539.

Hasan, H. F. A., Ilias, A., Rahman, R. A., & Razak, M. Z. A. (2008). Service quality and student satisfaction: A case study at private higher education institutions. *International Business Research, 1*(3), 163-175.

Heck, R. H., Johnsrud, L. K., & Rosser, V. J. (2000). Administrative effectiveness in higher education: Improving assessment procedures. *Research in higher education, 41*(6), 663-684.

Hill, F. M. (1995). Managing service quality in higher education: The role of the student as primary consumer. *Quality Assurance in Education, 3*(3), 10-21.

Hill, Y., Lomas, L., & MacGregor, J., (2003). Students' perceptions of quality in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education, 11*(1), 15-20.

Hsu, S. L., Lin, Y. H., Tseng, M. L., & Wang, R. (2011). Evaluation of Customer Perceptions on Airline Service Quality in Uncertainty. *Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences, 25*(3), 419-437.

Hui, K. C. (2006). *Relationship marketing: Is it a paradigm shift.* Retrieved from http://www.kchui.com/articles/Relationship_marketing_Paradigm _ Shift.pdf.

Hunt, S. D., Arnett, D. B., & Madhavaram, S. (2006). The explanatory foundations of relationship marketing theory. *Journal of business industrial marketing, 21*(2), 72-87.

Jan, A. (2012). Services marketing theory revisited: an empirical investigation into financial services marketing. *International Journal of Business Management Sustainability, 4*(4), 36-45.

Janardhana, G., & Rajasekhar, M. (2012). Customer satisfaction versus Infrastructural facilities in the realm of higher education: A case study of Sri Venkateswara University Tirupati. *Journal on Educational Psychology, 6*(1), 53-68.

Janesick, V. J. (2010). *Stretching exercises for qualitative researchers.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Jones, S., & Meyer, K. A. (2012). The "virtual face" of distance learning at public colleges and universities: What do websites reveal about administrative student support services. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 15*(4), 54-67. Retrieved from https://www. learntechlib. org/p/76594.

Kadjornboon, A. B. (2012). Using interviews as research instruments. *London: Sage Publications*.

Kalpana, M., & Sudharani, D. R (2012). Students' expectation, perception and satisfaction towards the management educational institutions. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 2*(1), 401-410.

Kanagal, N. B. (2013). Promotions as market transactions. *Journal of Management Marketing Research, 13*, 1-13.

Kapur, D., & Crowley, M. (2008). Beyond the ABCs: Higher education and developing countries. *Center for Global Development Working Paper*(139).

Kavakas, D. (2013). Students as consumers: Identifying study abroad destination choice influences for marketing purposes. *American College of Thessaloniki*. Retrieved from http://www.aieaworld.org/assets/docs/studentsasconsumers.pdf.

Kift, S. M., & Nelson, K. J. (2005). Beyond curriculum reform: Embedding the transition experience. In Brew, A., & Asmar, C. (Eds.) *HERDSA Conference 2005* (pp. 225-235). Australia, New South Wales: University of Sydney.

Kossam, D. (2014). The internal customers' perceptions of a multi-campus university system in Zimbabwe. A case of Great Zimbabwe University. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research, 3*(2), 1-7.

Kotze, T. G., & Du Plessis, P. (2003). Students as "co-producers" of education: a proposed model of student socialisation and participation at tertiary institutions. *Quality assurance in education, 11*(4), 186-201.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). A practical guide for applied research. *A practical guide for applied research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kuhn, L. A. (2004). *Student perceptions of school counselor roles and functions.* retrieved from https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Student-Perceptions-of-School-Counselor-Roles-and-Kuhn/6e1c327 327cc5cc4776n7e07a4911 2b 65392db541.

Lalwani, G. (2000). *Technical education in Africa*. Unpublished manuscript.

Lambert, S. D., & Loiselle, C. G. (2008). Combining individual interviews and focus groups to enhance data richness. *Journal of advanced nursing, 62*(2), 228-237.

Le Roux, A., & Van Rensburg, R. J. (2014). Student perceptions of customer experience in a higher education environment. *Acta Commercii, 14*(1), 1-9.

Lester, S. (1999). An introduction to phenomenological research. retrieved from https://www.rgs.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?nodeguid=7ad9b8 d4-6a93-4269-94d2-585983364b51&lang=en-GB.

Letcher, D. W., & Neves, J. S. (2010). Determinants of undergraduate business student satisfaction. *Research in Higher Education Journal, 6*, 1.

Lomas, L. (2007). Are students customers? Perceptions of Staff. *Quality in Higher Education Journal, 13*(1), 31-44.

Lovelock, C. H., Vandermerwe, S., Lewis, B., & Fernie, S. (2011). *Services marketing*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Business School Heriot-Watt University.

Macdonald M.E. (2006) Qualitative interviewing: a few whats, hows and whys. *Paper presented at a Videoconference Meeting of the CIHR Strategic Training Program in Palliative Care Research*, Montreal, QC.

Malik, M. E., Ghafoor, M. M., & Iqbal, H. K. (2012). Impact of brand image, service quality and price on customer satisfaction in Pakistan telecommunication sector. *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 3*(23), 123-129.

Malik, S. U. (2012). Customer satisfaction, perceived service quality and mediating role of perceived value. *International Journal of Marketing Studies , 4*(1), 68-76.

Manea, N. P., & Iatagan, M. (2015). Perceptions of PhD students regarding the quality of educational services of Romania. *Procedia-Social Behavioral Sciences, 191*, 1735-1739.

Maxim, A. (2009). Relationship marketing–A new paradigm in marketing theory and practice. *Analele Stiintifice ale Universitatii" Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iasi-Stiinte Economice, 56*, 287-300.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

McKenzie, K., & Schweitzer, R. (2001). Who succeeds at university? Factors predicting academic performance in first year Australian university students. *Higher education research development, 20*(1), 21-33.

Melbourne University. (2010). *Roles of academic administrators.* Melbourne: Australia.

Mercer-Mapstone, L., Marquis, E., & McConnell, C. (2018). The 'partnership identity' in higher education: Moving from 'us' and 'them' to 'we' in student-staff partnership. *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal, 2*(1), 12-29.

Meyer, M. K., & LeBlanc, Y. (2005). School Food Service Employee and Students Perceptions of Service Quality: Application of the Boundary Spanner Theory. *The Journal of Child Nutrition & Management, 29*(1), 54-63.

Mihanović, Z., Batinić, A. B., & Pavičić, J. (2016). The link between students'satisfaction with faculty, overall students'satisfaction with student life and student performances. *A Journal of Economic Social Research, 2*(1), 37-60.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). Fundamentals of qualitative data analysis. *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Ministry of Education (MoE). (2014). Report of the Technical Committee on Conversion of the Polytechnics in Ghana to Technical Universities. Accra, Ghana: MoE.

Mizikaci, F. (2006). A systems approach to program evaluation model for quality in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education, 14*(1), 37-53.

Molesworth, M., Nixon, E., & Scullion, R. (2009). Having, being and higher education: The marketisation of the university and the transformation of the student into consumer. *Teaching in higher Education, 14*(3), 277-287.

Möller, K., & Halinen, A. (2000). Relationship marketing theory: its roots and direction. *Journal of marketing management, 16*(1-3), 29-54.

Morgan, M. (2012). The evolution of student services in the UK. *Perspectives: Policy Practice in Higher Education, 16*(3), 77-84.

Mosahab, R., Mahamad, O., & Ramayah, T. (2010). Comparison of service quality gaps among teachers and students as internal and external customers. *International Journal of Marketing Studies, 2*(2), 13-20.

Nadiri, H., Kandampully, J., & Hussain, K. (2009). Students' perceptions of service quality in higher education. *Total Quality Management, 20*(5), 523-535.

Narasappa, K. C., & Kumar, P. D. (2018). Availability and Use of Information Resources and Services by Teachers of Pre-University Colleges in Shivamogga District: A Study. *Library Philosophy Practice*, *12*, 23-36.

Narteh, B. (2013). Determinants of students' loyalty in the Ghanaian banking industry. *Total Quality Management, 25*(2), 153-169.

Nartey, B. (2012). Determinants of students' loyalty in the Ghanaian banking industry. *The TQM Journal, 25*(2), 153-169.

National Board for Professional and Technician Examination (NABPTEX) (1994). NABPTEX Act, 1994 (Act 492). Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education.

National Council for Tertiary Education (2019). Scheme of service for staff of technical universities. Accra: National Council for Tertiary Education.

Nell, C. E., & Cant, M. C. (2014). Determining student perceptions regarding the most important service features and overall satisfaction with the service quality of a higher education institution. *Management: Journal of Contemporary Management Issues, 19*(2), 63-87.

Neuman, D. J. (2013). *Building type basics for college and university facilities*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Newman, E. K. (2013). The upgrading of teacher training institutions to colleges of education: Issues and prospects. *African Journal of Teacher Education, 3*(2), 2-14.

Ng, I. C., & Forbes, J. (2009). Education as service: The understanding of university experience through the service logic. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, 19*(1), 38-64.

Nixon, E., Scullion, R., & Hearn, R. J. S. i. H. E. (2018). Her majesty the student: marketised higher education and the narcissistic (dis) satisfactions of the student-consumer. *Studies in Higher Education, 43*(6), 927-943.

Noel-Levtiz, M. (1994). Student satisfaction model and achievement in Higher Education. *Procedia- Social Behavioral Sciences,65,* 141-150.

Nunkoosing, K. (2005). The problems with interviews. *Qualitative Health Research, 15*(5), 698-706.

Nutassey, A.-B. I. Q. E., & Newton, K. (2014). The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Stigma in Developing Countries: The Case of the Furniture Sector in Ghana. *Developing Country Studies, 4*(26), 80-89.

Nyenya, T., & Bukaliya, R. (2015). Comparing students' expectations with the students' perceptions of service quality provided in open and distance learning institutions in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland east region. *International Journal of Research, 2*(4), 45-53.

Nyumba, T., Wilson, K., Derrick, C., & Mukherjee, N. (2018). The use of focus group discussion methodology: insights from two decades of application in conservation. *Methods Ecological Evolution, 9*(1), 20–32.

Oldfield, B. M., & Baron, S. (2000). Student perceptions of service quality in a UK university business and management faculty. *Quality Assurance in Education, 8*(2), 85-95.

Oluseye, O. O., Tairat, B., & Jeje, O. E. (2014). Customer relationship management approach and student satisfaction in higher education marketing. *Journal of Competitiveness, 6*(3), 49-62.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2002). *Responding to students expectations*. Paris, France: OECD Publications.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-OECD. (2002). *Development. Education at a glance.* retrieved from http://www.oecd. org/education/skills-beyond-school/educationataglance2002-home. htm.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1986). SERVQUAL: A multi-item scale for measuring customer perception of service quality. *Journal of Retailing,* 12-40

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., & Berry, L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality. *Journal of Marketing, 49*(4), 41-50.

Paricio, J. (2017). Students as customers: a paradigm shift in higher education debate. *Journal on Culture, Power and Society, 131*(3), 137-149.

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1991). Studying college students in the 21st century: Meeting new challenges. *The Review of Higher Education, 21*(2), 151-165.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (5th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Pinto, C. S., & Fonseca, F. J. (2014). From the classical concept of services to service systems. *Procedia Technology, 16*(2), 518-524.

Polit, D. F., & Hungler, B. B. (2003). *Nursing research: Principles and methods* (5th ed.). Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.

Polytechnics (2007). Polyetchnics Act, 2007 (Act 745). Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education.

Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) (1992). PNDC Law, 1992 (Law 321). Accra, Ghana: Republic of Ghana.

Purcell, W. (2008). *Balancing the needs and expectations of society with the autonomy of higher education institutions*. Paper presented at Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, France, 8-10 September 2008.

Rahim, M., Osman, M., & Ramaya, T. (2010). Comparison of service quality gaps among teachers and students as internal and external customers. *International Journal of Marketing Studies, 2*(2), 13-20.

Ramya, J. (2015). Customer experience in supermarkets and hypermarkets–A comparative study. *Journal of Business Management, 17*(11), 116-123.

Richardson, E., & Soisson, E. (2018). *Elevating customer service in higher education: A practical guide*. Denver: Academic Impressions.

Richter, P., Walsh, S., & Wilson, R. (2010). *The student as confused customer?: Competing models of the Higher Education 'student experience'.* Paper presented at SRHE Annual conference: Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?, Newcastle University, Newcastle, United Kingdom, 2010.

Rudestam, K., & Newton, R. (2015). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content process* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

Sanaz, F., & Xu, H. (2015). Revising students' decision-making process. International *Journal of Management Science and Business Administration, 1*(10), 70-78.

Saunders, D. B. (2014). Exploring a customer orientation: Free-market logic and college students. *The review of higher education, 37*(2), 197-219.

Sharabi, M. (2013). Managing and improving service quality in higher education. *International Journal of Quality Service Sciences, 5*(3), 309-320.

Smith, G., Smith, A., & Clarke, A. (2007). Evaluating service quality in universities: a service department perspective. *Quality assurance in education, 15*(3), 334-351.

Soutar, G., & McNeil, M. (1996). Measuring service quality in a tertiary institution. *Journal of Educational Administration, 34*(1), 72-82.

Steele, D., and Ryan, P. (2014). *Students perceptions of internationalization in higher education.* Unpublished manuscript.

Stewart, S. K. (2012). *Principal change facilitator style and student achievement: A study of schools in the Middle.* UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones. 1635. retrieved from https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations/1635.

Subrahmanyam, A. & Raja, S. B. (2012). Development of HiEdQUAL for measuring service quality in Indian Higher Education Sector. *International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology, 3*(4), 412-416.

Svensson, G., & Wood, G. (2007). Are university students really customers? When illusion may lead to delusion for all! *International journal of educational management, 21*(1), 17-28.

Tagoe, C. N. (2013). *The future and relevance of Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions: Towards higher education transformation.* Dakar, Senegal: TrustAfrica.

Technical Universities (2017). Scheme of Service for Staff of Technical Universities (June 2017). Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education.

Technical Universities (2016). Technical Universities Act, 2016 (Act 922). Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education.

Technical Universities (2017). Technical Universities Harmonised Statutes (April 2017). Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education.

Topal, A. D. (2016). Examination of University Students' Level of Satisfaction and Readiness for E-Courses and the Relationship between Them. *European Journal of Contemporary Education, 15*(1), 7-23.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO. (2002). T*he role of student affairs and services in higher education: A practical manual for developing, implementing and assessing student affairs programmes and services; Follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris 59 October 1998).* Paris, France: UNESCO.

Van Teijlingen, E., & Pitchforth, E. (2006). Focus group research in family planning and reproductive health care. *BMJ Sexual Reproductive Health, 32*(1), 30.

Wagenaar, R. (2014). Competences and learning outcomes: A panacea for understanding the (new) role of Higher Education? *Tuning Journal for Higher Education, 1*(2), 279-302.

Watjatrakul, B. (2014). Factors affecting students' intentions to study at universities adopting the "student-as-customer" concept. *International journal of educational management*, *28*(6), 676-693.

White, N. R. (2007). 'The customer is always right?': Student discourse about higher education in Australia. *Higher Education, 54*(4), 593-604.

Willower, D. J. (2017). Education students' perceptions of school administrators. *The School Review, 70*(3), 332-344.

Woodall, T., Hiller, A., & Resnick, S. (2014). Making sense of higher education: students as consumers and the value of the university experience. *Studies in Higher Education, 39*(1), 48-67.

154

Yilmaz, H., Demircan, V., Bal, T., & Koskan, O. (2010). Students perceptions of academic and institutional service quality at the Faculty of Agriculture: The case of Suleyman Demirel University, Turkey. *African Journal of Business Management, 4*(6), 1107-1115.

Zabala, A., Sandbrook, C., & Mukherjee, N. (2018). When and how to use Q methodology to understand perspectives in conservation research. *Conservation Biology, 32*(5), 1185-1194.
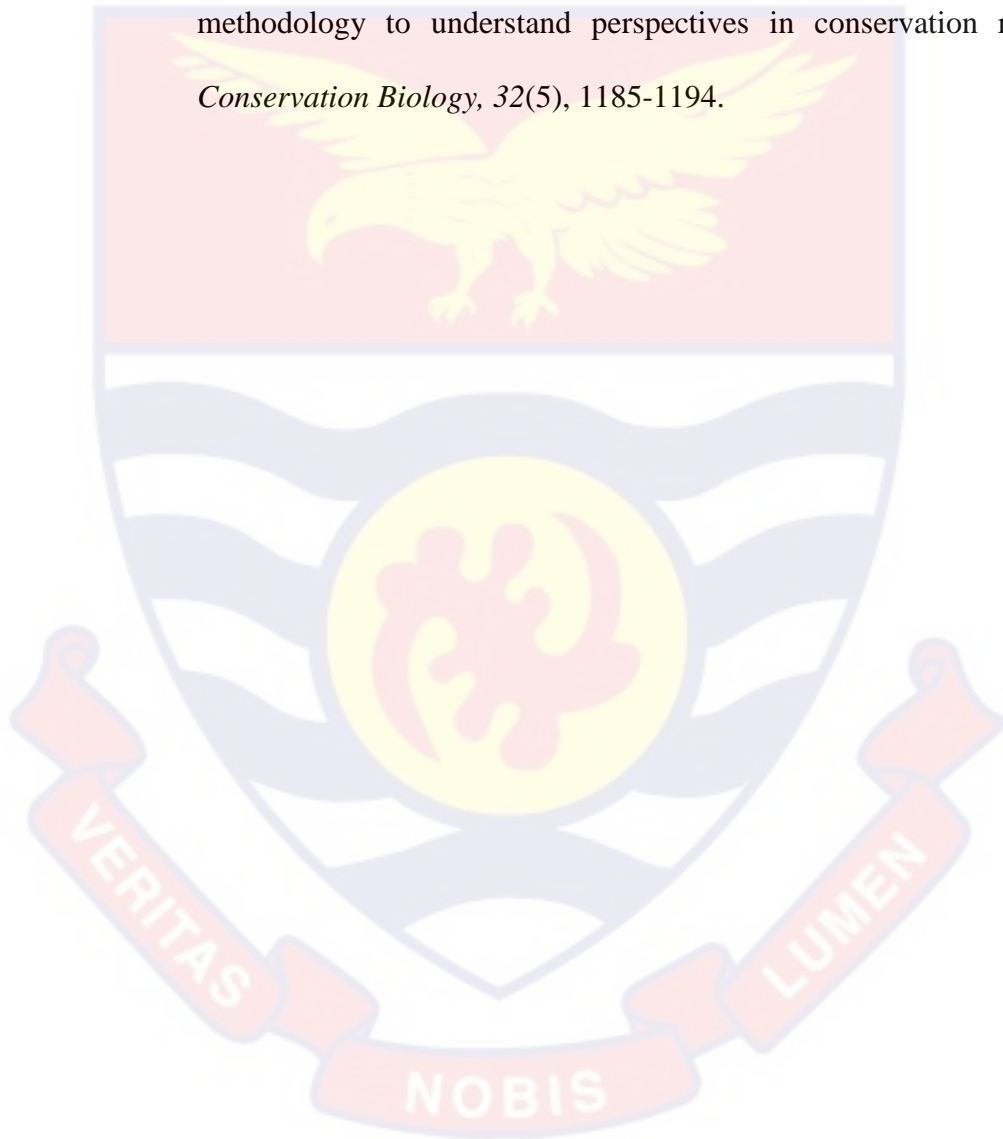
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Observation Of Coronavirus (Covid-19) Protocols During Data Collection

According to health experts under the auspices of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by coronaviruses. Common symptoms of COVID-19 included fever, cough, colds, headaches and difficulty in breathing. Treatment for this disease was yet to be discovered and approved.

The disease was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020 by WHO (Ministry of Health, 2020). Ghana, eventually, recorded its first two cases on March 12, 2020. Subsequent to the onset of coronavirus (Covid-19) in Ghana, certain mandatory protocols have been insisted;

a. Regular handwashing under running water

b. Using alcohol-based hand sanitizers on hands as often as possible

c. Maintaining social distancing of 1 meter or more

d. Wearing of nose or face masks

e. Using of tissue to wipe sweat or body fluids and disposing into the bin immediately afterwards

f. Using of tissue to cover the mouth when coughing and to cover the nose when sneezing and disposing into the bin immediately afterwards

g. Avoiding shaking of hands

These and many more protocols were broadcasted, telecasted and circulated in institutions, nations and worldwide. CCTU was not an exception, the management of the institution issued several circulars to the university community to propagate the existence of COVID-19 and to ensure that members diligently observed the protocols involved.

Handwashing systems were installed at various points on the University campus while nose masks and alcohol-based hand sanitizers were received from the government to be distributed to all members of the University community.

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND

ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

Consent to Participate in the Study

Introduction

This study is a requirement for the award of a Master of Philosophy degree by IEPA/UCC. The goal of the study is to elicit responses from students and staff regarding students' customer service expectations at Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU).

Purpose of Study

- The study aims to explore students' customer service expectations at Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU).

Confidentiality

- This study shall be anonymous-The researcher will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity.
- The records of this study shall be kept strictly confidential-Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information shall be coded and secured using a password protected file.
- The responses to the interview guide are for the researchers reporting purposes only-You will not see your written responses on any media outlet.
- The researcher will not include any information in any report the researcher may publish that would make it possible for you to be identified.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw from Study

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely yours.
- You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without it affecting your relationship with the researcher.
- You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the study at any point during the process.
- You also have the right to request that the researcher should not use any of your responses in the research.

Right to Ask Question and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about the study and to have those questions answered by the researcher before, during and after the research.
- If you have further questions/and or concerns, please feel free to contact the researcher on 0249229804

158

Consent

Your signature below indicate that you have agreed to participate in this research study, and that you have read and understood the information provided herein.

Participant's Name:……………… Date:…………… Participant's Signature:……………..

Researcher's Name:……………… Date:…………… Researcher's Signature:……………..

159

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS OF CAPE COAST

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

Demographics

Gender (interviewer to indicate)

1. What is your programme of study?
2. What department does your programme of study fall under?
3. What is your level?

What are the available services provided to students at Cape Coast Technical University?

1. What are the major services available to students of Cape Coast Technical University?

2. Which services are available to students of Cape Coast Technical University but students refuse to patronize?

   3.b. Why do you think this happens?

3. What are the major services that are not being provided to students of Cape Coast Technical University but are necessary for students' university life?

4. As a student of Cape Coast Technical University, how do you think the institution is making efforts towards providing additional services to students?

5. How would you describe the University's hostel accommodation services?

6. In your opinion, how would you describe the availability of the University's internet services to students?

7. As a student of Cape Coast Technical University, how would you describe your department's administrative services?

8. What is your overall impression about the availability of services provided to students of Cape Coast Technical University?

160

What expectations do students have in relation to student services that Cape Coast Technical University needs to provide?

9. When you were admitted to study in Cape Coast Technical University, what expectations did you have in relation to student services that the University needs to provide? *(probe further to cover the three services in the study)*

10. As a student, how would you explain whether the services you are being provided with sufficiently meet your expectations or not?

11. How would you describe the quality of services provided to students in Cape Coast Technical University?

12. How would you describe efforts being made by the University's authorities to meet students' expectation with respect to services being rendered to students?

What challenges do students face in accessing available students' services of Cape Coast Technical University?

13. As a student, how do you consider, in general, the accessibility of services provided in Cape Coast Technical University? *(does the services usually require a student to go through a bureaucratic processes?)*

14. Which services are usually difficult to access by students of Cape Coast Technical University? *(probe further to cover the three services in the study)*

15. What challenges makes those services usually difficult to access by students in Cape Coast Technical University?

16. How are the challenges being resolved/ how were the challenges resolved?

I have come to the end of the interview. I thank you once again for your time and valuable insights. Before I take leave of you, I humbly ask you to say if there are other issues, comments and suggestions worth mentioning and/or discussing regarding this research, that have not been explored in this interview?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE STAFF OF CAPE COAST

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

Demographics

Gender (interviewer to indicate)

4. What is your designation?

5. How long have you worked in Cape Coast Technical University?

6. What department or section do you work as a staff of Cape Coast Technical University?

7. How long have you worked in your current department or section?

8. Do you serve students of your institution as part of your official duties?

What are the available services provided to students at Cape Coast Technical University?

1. What services does your office render to the students of Cape Coast Technical University?

2. How are these services made available to the students of Cape Coast Technical University?

What expectations do students have in relation to student services that Cape Coast Technical University needs to provide?

3. What are students' expectations in relation to the services that Cape Coast Technical University offers to them?

162

4. What are students' expectations in relation to the services that your office render to them?

5. In your opinion, how does your services meet students' expectations? *(Probe further as to whether the respondent considers that students' expectations have been met or otherwise.)*

6. What strategies have your office put in place to ensure that your services meet students' expectations?

What challenges do students face in accessing services of Cape Coast Technical University?

7. What challenges do you encounter while rendering services to the students of Cape Coast Technical University?

8. What challenges do students encounter while accessing your services to them?

9. What strategies have your office put in place to ensure that your services are made accessible to students of Cape Coast Technical University?

I have come to the end of the interview. I thank you once again for your time and valuable insights. Before I take leave of you, I humbly ask you to say if there are other issues, comments and suggestions worth mentioning and/or discussing regarding this research that have not been explored in this interview?

163