

**CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF QUALITY OF SERVICE IN  
PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KISUMU CITY**

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FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
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## DECLARATION

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This project has been proffered with my favourable consent as the appointed supervisor.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>FPE</b>	Free Primary Education
<b>GoK</b>	Government of Kenya
<b>HR</b>	Human Resource
<b>KCPE</b>	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>NARC</b>	National Alliance Rainbow Coalition
<b>PPS</b>	Private Primary Schools
<b>PQ</b>	Perceived Quality
<b>SQ</b>	Service Quality
<b>UPE</b>	Universal Primary Education



## **ABSTRACT**

The survey sought to assess customers' perception of Quality of Service in Private Primary Schools in Kisumu City. Quality of Service is a significant aspect of customer satisfaction. Today, most organizations focus on providing the service quality in pursuit of increased customer satisfaction. The study was steered by the specific objective: To determine the perception of SQ of parents in private primary schools in Kisumu City with a view of identifying the main SQ attributes. Cross sectional descriptive survey design was employed to collect quantitative data from customers in 10 randomly selected PPS. This was done so as to get their expectations and perceptions on SQ which were then substituted in the SERVEQUAL Model. The literature on customers' perception of SQ in PPS was reviewed. To test for validity and reliability of the tools, the questionnaires were piloted to 6 study subjects. The outcomes of the pilot study were used to revise the study instruments with some items being deleted, others reframed and fine-tuned. The research instrument was then adopted and administered to solicit for responses from the selected subjects. The survey findings revealed that all the respondents indicated that they were seeking quality education for their children. 100% of the subjects affirmed that they were seeking excellent academic performance especially in the national examinations. Customers perceived the SQ offered in PPS as high with 90 percent of the customers indicating that their perception of SQ offerings were met. The outcomes further revealed that Tangible dimensions contributed most to customers' perception. Empathy was identified to contribute the least. The findings from the study are valuable to the government through the MoE in policy formulation in the context of improving SQ in PPS. The researcher recommends that MoE to continually inspect and regulate the private education sector to ensure quality education and protection of customers by weeding out rogue private schools. It also provided results that are useful to managers of PPS for effective strategic marketing planning: the provision of adequate facilities, staffing of teachers and non teaching staff, learning as well as teaching materials among others to improve SQ. The researcher therefore suggests that future studies need to focus on larger sample sizes by picking numerous PPS so as get conclusive data. The larger sample size would give a broader representation in the measurement of perception and expectation gaps.



# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Customers' perceptions differ from one customer to another and are dynamic in nature. Perceptions change from time to time and from one customer to customer depending on the service industry. Kotler (2009) notes that customers generally see what they expect to see and what they expect to see is more often than not based on acquaintance, prior experiences and prerequisite expectations held. Consumers often evaluate the superiority of service on an array of indicators. Price, store image, brand image and service environment are some of the didactic indicators that are inherent or extrinsic (Shiffman and Kanuk, 2009). Customers relate Service Quality during service potential, service process or outcome. Kandampully (1980) states that in each instance where a company provides a service to a customer, the customer then assesses the service offered. The customers establish the organization's images in their minds in regard to service quality. SQ is therefore critical in creating customer satisfaction and hence attached to customers' perception and expectations. According to Gronroos (1984) SQ is reliant on two variables: expected and perceived service.

This study was anchored on the Expectancy Value Model developed by Oliver (1980) postulates consumer contentment as a sense of fulfillment when comparing preliminary expectations with actual quality of acquired services. Consumers, therefore, arrive at attitudes towards various brands through attributes of evaluation procedure as highlighted in the Engel, Kollat Blackwell Model. The Engel, Kollat and Blackwell model (1968) states that the consumer's perception of a need ought to be satisfied through the acquisition and use of a product or service (Hawkins, Best and Coney, 2004). This kindles the search for information internally (memory), externally (neighbors, colleagues and friends) and from market sources. Further, the SERVQUAL model advanced by Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1985) which is extensively acknowledged for measuring SQ was utilized for this study. The assessment of SQ from the customers' perspective is represented as a multidimensional construct assessed by the SERVEQUAL model.

Concerns are rife that under FPE program, the standard of school inputs in public primary schools in Kisumu City continues to decline due over-enrolment of pupils. The Kisumu Education Report (2007) associates the launch of FPE in 2003 with the probable general decline in the quality of pedagogical inputs. Consequently, the standard of education offered in government-run primary schools has been negatively influenced by over-enrolment. Inadequate learning materials, pedagogical methods, teacher and facility inadequacy, poor sitting arrangement, sanitation, working space, examination and assessment among others are some of the negative multiple effects elicited by over-enrolment in public primary schools. PPS in Kisumu keep on growing in popularity among the urban wealthy, middleclass and even the poor owing to the perception that they offer quality education. Small-class sizes for individualized attention attract a good number of parents to PPS. This coupled with the quest for academic excellence especially in the national examinations is what drives customers to PPS.

### **1.1.1 The Concept of Perception**

Customers more often than not, see what they expect to see and what they expect to see is sometimes based on preconditioned expectations, familiarity and previous experiences. The process by which consumers pick, arrange and infer information inputs to construct meaningful pictures of the world is referred to as perception as defined by Kotler (2009). Perceptions are considered more predominant to reality since it greatly affects the consumers' actual behavior. SQ is connected to customer perceptions and expectations which are significant in creating customer satisfaction. Customers appraise and perceive the quality of service they receive using numerous and diverse dimensions across industries. This affects purchase intentions and satisfaction which are strongly influenced by the quality of service (Anderson and Fornell 1994).

Parasuraman et al (1991) postulates that perception is subjective and very personal and a set of stimuli may lead to very different perceptions in different individuals. SQ is described by numerous authors in terms of the gap between customers' perceptions as well as expectations. While customer expectation is what he/she was anticipating to receive in regard to service offered and customer perception is how the buyer analyses

the service that has been performed. Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry's (1985) research identified 5 definite dimensions of SQ that apply across diverse service contexts. SERVQUAL is the base of a global measurement devised for SQ constituting of tangibles, assurance, reliability, responsiveness and empathy. As stated by the proponents of SERVQUAL who presupposes that SQ is critical in determining the disparity between the expectations and perceptions of customers from the actual services delivered to customers. Customers perceive all the five dimensions of SQ as very important without regard for the kind of service being appraised as implied by outcomes from numerous surveys. After all, customers sharply contrast in their personalities, needs, and preferences while at the same time, their expectations are relentlessly changing. Furthermore, today's customers are informed and demand value for their money. Perception has strategy implications on firms since they influence buyer behavior. Product and service choices by consumers are usually based on what they perceive rather than on the objective reality. These perceptions consequently, affect consumer decision making process directly/indirectly (Balachandran, 2004).

### **1.1.2 The Concept of Service Quality**

The concept of SQ as described by Parasuraman et al (1991) is the ability of a product or service to meet customer's implied or stated needs. How exceptional a service meets or exceeds their expectations through the customers' perception is referred to as SQ (Czepiel, 1990). On the other hand, quality is the entirety of characteristics and features of products and services that bear on its capacity to suit implied or stated customers' needs in the view of Myer (2011). Customer satisfaction is a key fundamental concept of SQ. Zeithmal and Berry (2000) state that SQ is an attribute perceived extrinsically built on the customers' experience about the service as perceived through the process encounter. Therefore, making it a collation between perceived expectations and performance of a service. Customer perceptions, expectations, satisfaction and attitude are parameters that can be used to gauge SQ (Sachdev and Verma, 2004).

However, SQ is particularly complex to define, measure, control and communicate. Owing to the fact that services are often executed by people whose behavior is very

complex to standardize. To build successful strategies of differentiation, low cost and response, service industry need to manage quality. According to Kurma (2008), besides SQ being entailed in the final product or service, it also arises in the process of their manufacture and delivery. As a consequence employees' participation and commitment in process design is integral in generating the end product or service in especially in the andragogy sector. SQ is therefore, considered a fundamental aspect in service industry. Product differentiation which is reflected in quality is considered integral in overcoming competition given that entry barriers are minimal in service industry (Shiffman and Kanuk, 2009). This is because the superior the quality, the more ecstatic customers are. The quality of service and its mode of delivery provide crucial distinctive traits distinguishing one business from another.

### **1.1.3 The Education Sector in Kenya**

Education Sector in Kenya has tremendously grown since independence from informal to formal systems of learning. In the post-independent Kenya, private and public entities aspire to offer quality education. Kenya's system of education is four tiered: early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education in response to achieving the eight MDGs and currently the SDGs in diverse ways. Kenya's Sessional Paper number 10 (Republic of Kenya, 1965) where the state dedicated itself to the agenda of not only eradicating poverty, illiteracy and disease but also including them in most policy documents and other national development agenda.

Kenya Vision 2030 is the novel perennial development framework for the nation extending from the year 2008 to 2030 whose objective is to attain the rank of "globally competitive and prosperous country with a high quality of life by the year 2030". Enhancement of access to education, raising the quality, advancing the transition levels from primary to secondary schools and the significance of education constitutes the overall goal of Vision 2030 by eliminating mental incapacity. Special needs education was amalgamated into learning and training institutions as an additional objective of the strategic plan. The aim with this is to increase the school enrolment rate to 95%, attain an

80% adult literacy rate and transition rates to universities and technical institutions from 3% to 8% ( GoK, Kenya Vision 2030).

The impediments confronting Kenya's educational sector in the post-independent era have been addressed through commissions, committees and taskforces issuing recommendations and reports. The Gachathi Report redefined vocational policies, cultural aspirations, socio-economic and national unity. The abolishment of Advanced (A) level of secondary education, expansion of post-secondary training colleges, 8-4-4 model, establishment of Moi University and the institutionalization of the Commission of Higher Education are the recommendations from the Mackay Report (Republic of Kenya 1981). The 8-4-4 education model that recommends 8 years in primary school and 4 years each in secondary and tertiary education respectively is still in implementation and running concurrently to the newly launched Competency Based Curriculum. Therefore, the outcomes of a child's 1<sup>st</sup> 8 years in primary education play a crucial role in propelling him/her to other levels of education. Further, primary education promotes holistic development of the learner. This encompasses the growth and development of the mental, physical and spiritual capacities resulting to a useful and well adjusted member of the society (Njoroge and Bennaars, 1986).

Recommendations from the Ominde Report highlighted the need to reform the colonial-era education system by proposing a structure that will cultivate national unity and establishment of abundant labour force for national development (Republic of Kenya 1964). The Kamunge Report (GoK 1988) concentrated on improving financing, relevance and quality of education resulting to a scheme of sharing costs between parents, community and government. It is also in this report that primary schools were categorized into public/private schools. A proposition to replace the 8-4-4 System with Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training - TIQET was floated with an intention of integrating primary and secondary education as basic education as was advanced in the Koech Report (2000). Among the other recommendations adopted and implemented included the curriculum rationalization from 11 examinable subjects to 5 incorporating Life skills and HIV/Aids education.

Kenya is very much obligated in pursuing and realizing the FPE principle. The notion of UPE can be traced to 1948 when the UN decreed education as a basic right for all (Education for All Issues and Strategies, 1992). The schooling system eliminated severe obstacles to children's accessibility to education in schools by abolishing school fees and other levies (Okwach & Odipo, 1997). The resultant effect was the rise in the number of school going children with numerous schools becoming overpowered by the huge enrollments particularly in urban areas. The over 1,500,000 Kenyan children who beforehand were out of school due to lack of fees, joined primary schools in 2003 after the launch of FPE (UNESCO, 2005). The awarding of resources to schools was based on the number of learners enrolled.

FPE was introduced in 2003 through a campaign manifesto during the ascension to power by the NARC government (NARC Manifesto 2002). In full realization of UPE for all Kenyan children, the FPE scheme focused on addressing concerns on accessibility, retention, quality, relevance, equity, external and internal efficiencies experienced in the education system. The provision of FPE is based on the need for children to acquire literacy, numeracy and manipulative skills. Basic education makes life worthwhile in modern society by serving as the foundation for literacy, attainment of other basic skills, constructive social attitudes and values. It is also the function upon which are built other higher structures of modern education and training system. The Kenyan government has made it its agenda to achieve universal primary education so as to prepare people to play their full role in nation building.

The initiation of FPE came with myriad impediments, principal being the failure to guarantee that learners transited from class eight to Form One. To counteract this test, the government established Free Secondary Education (FSE) in 2008 with a view of fulfilling the Education for All (EFA) global strategy and commitment that grants all children universal education. With the intent of meeting the ever rising need for post primary education, the government endeavored to integrate it as part of basic education.



The development of day schools was then promoted by the government as an avenue of minimizing costs to parents while expanding access.

The key intent with provision of FSE is to guarantee that children from underprivileged families receive quality education that empowers and gives access for prospects for personal development towards becoming productive members of society (GoK Kibaki's speech, 2008:para 8). Inadequate funds, overcrowded classrooms and inadequate numbers of trained teachers among other impediments are gaps that numerous public schools are trying to cope with due to high population of pupils. Besides, scores of public schools are grappling with poor performance in national examinations. This situation has been aggravated by learners joining schools that are improperly prepared to admit them. All these challenges mentioned have aggravated and compromised the quality of education in some public schools.

Kenya aspires to offer an internationally competitive, quality education, training and research. University education is therefore intrinsically linked with the entire education spectrum from ECD, primary, secondary and technical education which is envisaged to match seamlessly. In this regard, technical colleges and universities are expected to provide the fundamental foundation on which the three pillars forming the basis of Kenya Vision 2030 is anchored (MoE, 2009). Swift development in university education opportunities has been witnessed in Kenya in the last decade. In the year 2000, five private and six public universities were granted charters. The government continues to grant charters and letters of provisional authority to new public and private universities to operate.

In 2011 alone, there were fourteen chartered private universities, seven public universities, fifteen constituent colleges, eleven independent universities operating with letters of provisional charter and two private universities operating with a certificate of registration. The cumulative number of universities stands at forty nine in the country (MoE 2012). Kenya's educational system is exam oriented that pupils and parents alike understand that success only comes when one excels in all the national exams (Belt

1986). At all levels learners do exams to proceed to the next level. Pupils sit the entrance exam to join class one, KCPE in class 8 to proceed to Form 1 and KCSE in Form 4 to join technical colleges and universities.

#### **1.1.4 Private Primary Schools in Kisumu City**

Independent schools also referred to as private schools are founded and run by Community Based Organization, non government organizations, faith based groups, corporate bodies, individuals or groups of entrepreneurs offering a spectrum of services including the Kenyan 8-4-4 curriculum, international curriculum (e.g. British, American, and German) and special needs education at a fee. The schools wholly depend on user fees for operational and developmental purposes.

The Kisumu City Education report (2007) posits that while FPE has enhanced consumption of primary education, it has at the same time faced innumerable challenges. For instance, the unexpected rise in pupil population continues to have far-reaching consequences in terms of existing physical facilities and human resources. With large classes, teachers cannot effectively manage pupils and supervise them effectively. This, impacts negatively on slow learners due to the minimal interaction between the pupils and the teacher. Pedagogical methods, learning materials, teacher and facility adequacy, sitting arrangement, working space, examination and assessment, sanitation, high pupil-teacher ratios and insufficient learning materials among other aspects negatively influence the quality of education in public primary schools in Kisumu City due to over enrolment of learners.

PPS presents an alternative system of education with better or more luxurious facilities in comparison to public schools (Otiende, 2000). The schools, therefore, offer a substitute to those defecting/shifting from public schools due to congestion in classrooms or poor SQ. PPS are located everywhere from the suburbs to slums, urban and rural areas, with each meeting the needs of its market segment. A large and growing number of students, even from poor households, are now enrolled in private schools in Kisumu City. PPS continue to increase in popularity among the urban wealthy, middleclass and even poor in Kisumu

City due to the view that they offer quality education. Small-class sizes for personalized attention draw most parents to PPS. This coupled with the pursuit of academic excellence especially in the national examinations, which induces customers' pursuit of private schools. Through the years, PPS in Kisumu have posted excellent performance in KCPE and they continue to do so even to date.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Consumers' consumption of any service largely depends on their perception about the SQ offering. Extant empirical literature on parents' perception of SQ in PPS is divergent. Some researchers argue that the leading basis for enrolment in PPS is the quality of service offered (Akaguri 2011, 2013; Oketch et. al.2010; Singh and Sarkar 2012). Other researchers dispute this and argue that private schools are profit making ventures and unregulated thereby not offering quality compounded by the fact that children may not achieve the basic competencies. (Nyambura 2011, Murname and Nelson 2007), Ball (2007) and Srivastava (2007) have argued that private schools proprietors convey their motivation as a combination of profit making, corporate social responsibility, philanthropy, serving the educational interests and aspirations of the public mostly the urban middle class.

PPS in Kisumu are perceived as offering better quality in terms of teaching, teacher attendance, school's performance, small class sizes, discipline compared with state-run schools as indicated in the Kisumu Education Report (2007). These factors paired with future occupation possibilities, instruction in English language and promotion rates to secondary schools were also mentioned as crucial determinants of parents' choice of PPS in Kisumu City. Even with superior physical resources, high teacher remuneration and trained staff, the overall academic performance of PPS in Kisumu City is still unimpressive with pupils presenting inadequacies in basic competencies. The perception that PPS offer quality education has increased its popularity among the urban wealthy, middleclass and even poor in Kisumu City. This belief is held by consumers casually, often through parents' informal social networks.

Various global and local surveys on the correlation between customers' perception and service quality in private schools have been conducted in schools in Europe and Asia. In their study, Jacob and Lefgren (2007) presented confirmed that parents of varied income standings had divergent preference in school choices. They substantiated the belief that more educated parents preferred a strong academic foundation while less educated parents have less tangible ideas about how quality education is accomplished. In another study, Denessen et al (2005) studied the value prescribed to an array of explanations for selection of school in the Netherlands where quality in education outstood all other elements.

Libent (2011) conducted a study to examine the determinants of parents' satisfaction in relation with the quality of pre-primary education in Ilala District, Dar es Salaam region, Tanzania employing the descriptive survey research design. Parents were more contented with process quality than structural quality of pre-primary education as was indicated by the survey findings. The type of school, parents' sex and education level extensively shaped their contentment with the quality of pre-primary education as was also indicated by the results from her study.

Locally, Nishimura (2008) assessed the perception of SQ in primary schools from the perspective of public primary schools in Kenya. The results showed that the parents and pupils perception of SQ offered in public primary school were constantly lower than their expectation with the administrators overrating the service delivery.

Tooley and Dixon (2005) argued that no matter how parents are underprivileged like in Kibera Slums, some devotedly enroll their children in independent schools even when a subsidized substitute from the government is available. This they explained was because parents trusted that their progeny will gain more and excel in education. Muganda's (2003) investigation on the perceptions of parents, teachers and head teachers on the quality of ECE offered by community pre-schools in Kakamega, Kenya disclosed that parents perceived the pre-schools' quality as inferior. For instance, teachers regarded contextual variables as reasonably good (space and furnishing, personal care routine,

activities and interactions. Parents on the other hand perceived them as mediocre. Similarly, Omondi (2013) did a study in Bondo District to determine parental satisfaction with the quality of pre-primary education which established inconsequential distinction in parents' level of satisfaction with the quality of pre-primary education between private and public pre-primary school parents.

In the same manner, a study conducted by Kathure and Juma (2007) exploring the existence of private schools serving low income earners in Nairobi and Kakamega indicated that parents in private schools were more satisfied with the quality of education offered to their offspring in comparison to those in public schools. Additionally, a survey by Mutisya, Oketch, Ezech, Ngware and Epari (2008) to investigate pupil mobility in schools showed that many parents in shanties within Nairobi moved their children from public to private schools due to perceived poor quality of education in government-run schools. The above researches were more focused on factors influencing parents' choice of schools. The outcomes illustrated certain leanings in parents' satisfaction with the quality of education between private and public school parents. Further, other researches were done among parents with children in pre-primary and secondary schools in Nairobi and Kakamega Districts whose results may only be applicable to parents in districts and schools of similar characteristics.

Lastly, Kimaita (2011) studied students' perception of SQ: a case study of School of Business at University of Nairobi. The findings revealed that the 5 determinants of SQ are important in measuring customers' comparisons of what is expected and delivered. A significant perceived service gap with the tangibles scoring lowly was highlighted as part of the study's findings. The findings further cited that the learning facilities at the School of Business were not adequately provided with students crammed into lecture halls. The researcher added that physical facilities e.g. lecture halls, lockers, desks and books have a direct bearing on service quality offerings. This research was limited to higher education institution and hence the findings cannot be all inclusive and generalized to capture the perceptions of customers in PPS.

Reviews of the studies show that they were carried out in different socio-cultural environments. Hence, they did not explore the area of perception of SQ in PPS in Kisumu City thereby, giving conflicting results in view of perception of SQ. This survey seeks to enhance understanding on parents' perception of quality of service in PPS in Kisumu City. The research sought to examine : What is the customers' perception of the quality of service of private primary schools in Kisumu City?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The goal of the research study was to measure customers' perception of quality of service of private primary school in Kisumu City, Kenya.

### **1.4 Value of the Study**

The exploration purposed to examine the perceptions of parents on SQ provided by PPS in Kisumu City. The obtained outcomes of this study will enhance the understanding of SQ dynamic s in PPS and hence be useful to a number of stakeholders. In academia, it will aid in identifying areas for further exploration while enhancing the framework of knowledge thereby improving service delivery in private schools. SQ as a subject matter is wide and there is a lot yet to be explored in this area, therefore, the need for exploration to ensure continuous improvement.

The report will also offer useful knowledge to management of PPS in identifying service attributes that perceived as important by consumers and improve on SQ gaps. The school management can also use the study findings to determine the areas that need assessment, restructuring and improvement of the quality of service to the expectations of the parents and rectify areas that exhibit below par quality.

The study is important to the GoK through the Ministry of Education which can use the information to advocate for quality customer-focused service in PPS through policy formulation. The findings from this study will help the MoE to standardize service delivery, regulate the private education sector and focus on the SQ offered by PPS. The information gathered from this study is useful in formulation of regulations that will aid

in regulating, streamlining the education sector and also protecting consumers of private education.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter Two reviews literature on the relationship between customers' perception on SQ highlighting the theoretical foundation review, conceptualization of the research variables on customers' perception of SQ in PPS in Kisumu City. This section ends by outlining the knowledge gaps of the texts reviewed.

### **2.2 Theoretical Foundation**

The concepts of customers' perception and SQ are important to this research. These two concepts were measured as part of the research as they were key concepts within the theoretical structure. Perception and SQ have been explained by using numerous theories. This study was guided by the Expectancy Value Model, Engel, Kollat and Blackwell model and SERVEQUAL model in determining customers' perceptions of SQ in PPS in Kisumu City.

#### **2.2.1 Expectancy Value Model**

The Expectancy Value Model developed by Oliver (1980) postulates that consumer satisfaction is more often than not viewed as a feeling of satisfaction when distinguishing his primary expectations with real quality received from services. Possibilities of consequences based on existing circumstances, prior experiences or other sources of information are further described as expectations by Oliver (1997).

On the other hand, Balachandran (2004) explains that any features that an individual predicts that is linked with a product or service is referred to as expectations. Therefore, customers' expectations are hypothesized to directly impact on both disconfirmation of beliefs and perceptions of performance. Consequently, expectations also affect post-purchase or adoption satisfaction indirectly by playing an intermediary role through the disconfirmation construct.



This theory is anchored on the concept that the customer can find information from the perceived performance of alternatives or from post-purchase experiences among other sources whenever a customer has expectation (or needs recognition) for a product or service. If the information gathered satisfied the customer, he or she purchases the product or service. Kotler (2009) enumerates expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation of beliefs and satisfaction as the four principal constructs that are entailed in this model. Therefore, the Expectancy Value model is anchored on the principle of perception that is an independent variable of this survey. Parents are regarded as the principal customers of PPS being that they not only select the type of school that their child attends but also pay for the services.

### **2.2.2 Engel, Kollat and Blackwell Model**

Engel, Kollat and Blackwell model advanced by James F. Engel, David T. Kollat, and Roger D. Blackwell (1968) explains that the consumer's perception of a want which must be satisfied through numerous variables in decision making ( Hawkins, Best and Coney, 2004). The Engel Kolatt Blackwell Model is acknowledged as a multi-mediational prototype due to the synergy of a number of variables displayed between consumers' exposure to the purchase related stimulus and the final decision outcomes.

During the need identification process, the consumer recognizes an incongruity between certain attractive alternative and their current state serving as an entry point to the Engel, Kollat Blackwell model. The process is thrust as a result of the interaction between processed stimuli inputs, environmental and individual variables. A pursuit for information both internally through the consumers' memory bank of previous experiences and also externally is then undertaken by the consumer once the need has been acknowledged

Information input, information processing, decision process stage, decision process variables and external influences constitute the five components of the Engel, Kollat Blackwell model. The buyer is exposed to a huge number of stimuli. Thus the consumers' behavior pattern is drawn from their openness to information input including

all kinds of stimulus both marketing (personal selling, publicity, advertising, demonstrations, point of purchase stimuli, store display) and also non-marketing sources (peers, family, friends). The different stimuli fight for the attention of the consumer while at the same time offering information that stimulates the decision making process. Environmental influences also impact consumers' search for information process.

Stimuli are obtained in the first stage comprising of consumer's exposure, attention, perception/comprehension, acceptance and retention of information. To provide meaningful information, these stimuli are then processed from exposure to retention stages. The consumer's attention and his/her exposure to stimuli including the adjunct information, establishes which of the stimuli he/she will focus upon. Thereafter, the consumer interprets and comprehends the stimuli, accepts it in his/her short term memory then saves it when the input is transferred to long-term memory.

The search ends when the consumer appraises the various substitutes available. Individual differences among customers impacts on the subsequent phase of choice and purchase. Lastly the resultant effect of the process was satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the product/service. This outcome not only functions as a response on the input but also affects the cycle again. Kotler (2007) posits that customers' choices are determined by individual differences, social influences and environmental influences with each directly or indirectly manipulating each stage of the decision making process.

### **2.2.3 SERVEQUAL Model**

The SERVQUAL model invented by Parasuraman et al (1985) is represented as a multi-dimensional principle that pre-eminently befits the assessment of SQ from the customers' viewpoint. The model conceptualizes SQ on the premise of the differences between customers' expectations with respect to the 5 attributes along with the perception of that which is really achieved. Parasuraman (1988) classified the ten determinants of SQ that may be associated to the service sector as; accessibility, communication, competence, courtesy, credibility, reliability, responsiveness, security, tangibles, understanding the needs of the customer.

These elements serve as a structure for examining and designing quality between the perceived and expected service. If the perceived service does not correlate with the expected service, then there could emerge a gap. Parasuraman et. al. (1988) disintegrated these elements into five attributes namely reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness. The 5 basic SQ elements are defined as- Empathy: this refers to the provision of caring, individualized attention to customers, Assurance: the knowledge and courtesy of the employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence, Reliability: The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, Tangibles: the appearance of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials, Responsiveness: Refers to ability to serve and have the customers' wellbeing at heart. Responsiveness is exhibited by being mindful of the customer, an authentic interest in them, their needs and comfort. In high skill industry like education, these 5 determinants tend to perform a central role in examining the SQ offered.

### **2.3 Customer's Perception of Quality of Service**

The general supremacy of a service or product in respect to its pre-determined function relative to other substitutes is referred to as perceived quality (Zeithaml, 2008). PQ is an insubstantial, general sensation about brand strength. Quality enhances the market share resulting in lower unit costs through economies of scale. Thus, securing the potential market area by providing a competitive edge over the rivals and inspiring customers.

SQ is the provision of services that fulfill or exceed the expectations of consumers (Lovelock, 2010). The purpose of SQ is to make the service consumption an outstanding experience thereby generating positive communication about the service by the consumer. High SQ is more probable to motivate positive WOM by existing customers hence strengthening the firm's own advertisements, giving them more credibility and further improving their reputation. Success at producing high quality services helps to build passion and self-confidence amongst staff members, a factor that is essential in quality delivery of services. Proponents of enhancing services have absolute confidence

in providing superior customer SQ as mechanism of remaining in business in the commercial world (Zeithmal et al 2008).

In view of the indefinable character of service, the appraisal of SQ before consumption is quite complicated. This is because the creation of services is undertaken simultaneously with its use. In order to add dimensions of quality, service providers need to adopt standards that will make the service tangible to the consumers. SQ emanate from the direction of the gap between the customers' expectations of service and appraisal of perception of service quality really provided and a basis that a consumer's evaluation is a function of the magnitude (Schiffman and Kanuk 2003).

Many inquests have been carried out to study the quality of service offered in the education industry in light of various SQ attributes. Several studies on private schools have been conducted in Europe, Asia with a little focus in Africa. Numerous studies have been conducted locally on perceived SQ in a number of higher institutions of learning, parastatals, public primary schools and many other service organization but not PPS. Nishimura (2008) assessed the perception of SQ in public primary schools in Kenya. A questionnaire was used to survey a sample of 20 primary school administrators, pupils and parents. The results showed that the parents and pupils perception of service quality provided in public primary school were consistently lower than their expectation and that administrators overestimated the service delivery. The findings also indicated that parents registered displeasure with the service due to classroom congestion, inadequate facilities hence tangibles scored lowly.

Kimaita (2011) studied students' perception of SQ: a case study of School of Business at University of Nairobi. The findings revealed that the 5 determinants of service quality are important in measuring customers' comparisons of what is expected and delivered. The outcomes indicated that there was a considerable perceived service gap with the tangibles scoring lowly. The findings further cited that the learning facilities at the School of Business were not adequately provided with students crammed into lecture halls. The

researcher added that physical facilities e.g. lecture halls, lockers, desks and books have a direct bearing on service quality offerings.

Lynn (2003) assessed the perception of SQ in a university from the perspective of both international students and administration. A questionnaire was used to survey a sample of 20 administrators and 100 international students studying in the School of Business. The results showed that students' perceptions of SQ offered in the university were consistently lower than their expectations. The study further revealed that the administrators overestimated the SQ delivered.

Kiange (2011) examined managers' perceptions on customers' expectations and perceived SQ using a case study of the hotel industry. The researcher recruited a sample of 30 managers in various hotels in Nairobi City. The findings of that study revealed that assurance, empathy and tangibles were considered as the most important attributes affecting SQ. This study was restricted to managements' perception of customers' expectations and therefore missed to consider customers' expectations. The results therefore did not regard the customers' view. It is important that future researches be conducted to establish if managers as well as customers' expectations and perceptions match.

#### **2.4 Summary of the Knowledge Gaps**

The empirical researches reviewed focused on the general scope of customers perceptions across various service industries with nominal empirical research conducted in perception of service quality in private primary schools. The literatures reviewed were subjective, contextual and varied. Customers from various service sectors have displayed different perceptions of service quality offered. It's imperative to observe that different service contexts gave diverse results. The reviewed researches in this study were conducted in other countries and counties. Similar researches in Kisumu County appear to be minimal or non-existent. This left a gap for the researcher to conduct the study on PPS in Kisumu County.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter indicates the design and methodology employed in conducting this exploration. It includes the research design, population sample design, data collection, analyses and presentation methods.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The design used for this study was the cross-sectional descriptive survey. Boyd, Westfall and Stasch (1990) state that a descriptive study helps at explaining the what, when and how of an incident which was the task of the exploration. The design facilitated the assembling of data from a multitude of parents in PPS in Kisumu City hence regarded as suited for this survey by the researcher. The justification for this design was founded on its capability to offer the suitable technique for systematic collection of data from respondents through administration of questionnaires to assess parents' perception of SQ of PPS in Kisumu City.

The researcher employed the descriptive research method since it controls and reports things the way they are. To aid the reader in understanding the data distribution, graphics namely graphs and charts are used for the survey. The descriptive research technique serves as an antecedent to quantitative research designs with the overall summary presenting some important pointers to what variables are worth testing quantitatively. Libent (2011) successfully used this design in assessing the attributes of parents' satisfaction with the quality of pre-primary education in Ilala District, Dar-es-Salaam Region, Tanzania.

### **3.3 Population of Study**

The intended demographic for this survey were parents of pupils in PPS in Kisumu City. The survey targeted parents from 5 divisions: Kisumu Township, Kisumu Central, Kisumu East, West and South West of Kisumu District of Kisumu County. Convenience sampling was used to decide on 10 schools with 2000 parents in the 5 Divisions in the district within Kisumu City. The selection of parents of different gender, educational

level and income was done using random sampling. The 2,400 parents registered in the schools' master registers in the 10 chosen primary schools was utilized for the selection of the subjects. 100 parents were selected for the study (10 parents from each of the selected 10 private primary schools).

### 3.4 Sampling and Sampling Size

The exploration applied a probability and non probability sampling design. Orodho (2003) states that a probability sampling scheme is one in which each entity in the demography has a likelihood of being picked in the sample with the probability being determined precisely. This sampling design was considered befitting for this survey since it offered all the respondents similar possibility of being picked as study respondents (Orodho, 2003). The researcher therefore established the sample size (n) from the formula below:

$$\text{Sample size } n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times q}{d^2}$$

$$(1.96)^2 \cdot (.5) (1-.5) = \frac{.9604}{.0009} = 1067.11 - 1067$$

Confidence level of 95%

Where d=level of statistical accuracy

z= no. of standard deviation units of sampling distribution corresponding to desired levels

q=1-p target population of and z=1.96 for 95% confidence level

The researcher then from the sample size of 1067 selected 100 respondents; 50 males and 50 females using convenience sampling. The researcher preferred this method for identifying the study elements from each participating private primary school since parents could easily be located during school events. The 2,400 parents recorded in the schools' master registers in the 10 chosen primary schools was used for the selection of the subjects. 100 parents were selected for the survey (10 parents from each of the selected 10 private primary schools). The researcher formed the sampling frame by listing and numbering all the private primary schools in the district from 000 to 100 then randomly selected the 10 schools from which the study elements were drawn.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

The survey acquired primary data by employing a self-administered questionnaire developed from the SERVQUAL instrument. According to Kothari (2009), the questionnaire technique helps in the gathering of correct and reliable information since respondents answer questions freely without any influence. The instruments were piloted before being distributed to the respondents and self administered by the researcher using the drop and pick later method. Data collection technique therefore involved the application of semi-structured questionnaires containing both closed and open ended questions. The survey was in two parts: Questions in part A were general in nature mainly demographic or personal while section B questions were structured to attend to the purpose of the research, capture the perception index and level of SQ dimensions expected by parents. Perception Index using a five point Likert scale was developed and employed with 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest, since it was relatively easy to develop and use.

### **3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation**

The survey utilized descriptive statistics data analysis method comprising of percentages, frequency distributions, means and standard deviations to analyze statistical data congregated using closed- ended questions. The data was first edited in order to sieve any unnecessary information that may have been supplied by the respondents. In editing, the researcher tested the data for validity, consistency, accuracy and uniformity. After the data had been edited, it was analyzed using tabulations and graphs. The data was then be grouped to determine those parameters that are closely related that also made it easier for the researcher to draw conclusions from there. The service in PPS will be assessed through the following formula to calculate the gap between perceptions and expectations:  
 $SQ_i (\text{feature}) = P_i - E_i$  (1)

Where SQ=Service Quality

i=each feature/determinant

P= Customers' Perception score

E= Customers' Expectation score



## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the data analysis, study outcomes and discussions in a bid to address the study objective. The survey was aimed at assessing customers' perception of quality of service in private primary schools in Kisumu City. The chapter then concludes with the discussion of the analyzed results.

### 4.2 Response Rate

In the overall, survey questions were disseminated to 100 parents by applying the drop and pick later technique. 96 questionnaires were appropriately and completely responded to, then further used in the data analysis process. A response rate of 96% was achieved.

#### 4.2.1 Background information

This section provided the findings from primary sources on the background information of respondents in terms of: the name of school, age bracket, gender, year of joining the school as a parent, the quantity of children the respondent has in the school, the reason for choosing the school, the number of pupils per class, type of services offered by the school and the school fees range. This information was paramount in building the nature of the respondents' perceptions of SQ in PPS in Kisumu City. The outcomes are indicated as shown in Table 4.1

**Table 4.1 Respondents' Profile**

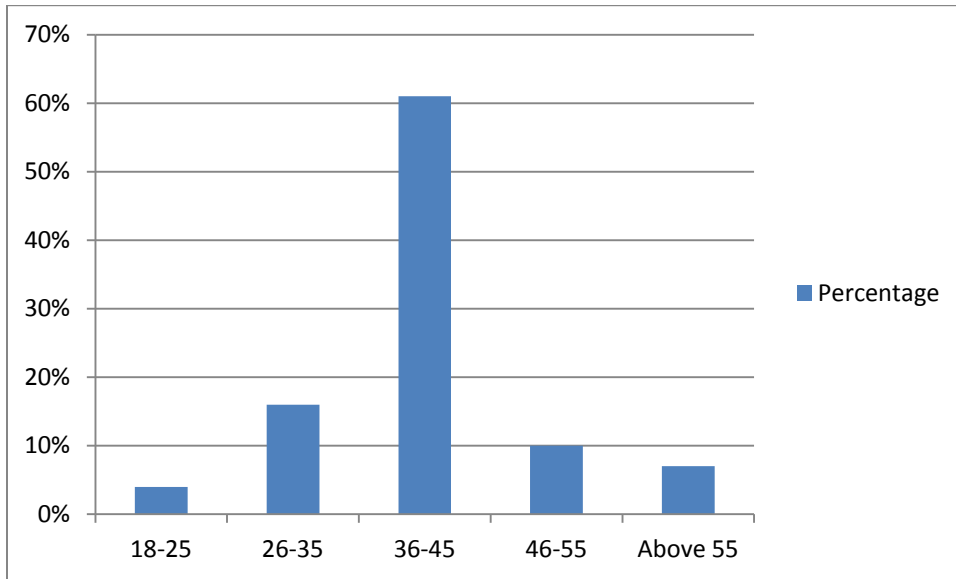
<b>Age</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-25	4%
26-35	16%
36-45	61%
46-55	10%
Above 55	7%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	28%
Female	68%
<b>Year of joining school</b>	
2006	5%
2012	24%

2013	12%
2014	15%
2015	18%
2016	8%
2017	18%
<b>Other children in the school</b>	
Yes	51%
No	49%
<b>No. of pupils per class</b>	
Below 100	99%
Between 100-200	1%
<b>Services provided by PPS</b>	
8-4-4 System	90%
GCE/International curriculum	10%
Computers & Foreign languages	12%
Swimming & other sports activities	16%
Integrating education & Religion	24%
<b>School fees range</b>	
0-Ksh.1000	12%
1001-10,000	26%
10,001-50,000	32%
Above 50,000	30%

**Source: Research data, 2017**

Table 4.1 indicates that out 96 parents who participated in the study, 68 were female while 28 were male. A great segment of the subjects were of the age range of 36 to 45 at 61%. On the year of joining the private primary school, the table shows that 24% of the respondents enrolled to the schools in 2012. The continued consumption of services at the school depicts satisfaction with the service quality offering. The table further indicates that the respondents who had more than one child in the school were 51% indicating repeat consumption of the service. 99 of the study subjects indicated that the small class population of below a hundred pupils for individualized-teachers' attention was attracted them to the school.

**Diagram 1: Age Range Distribution**



#### **4.2.2 Age and Gender of the Respondents**

Age and gender affects customer perceptions, purchase decisions and evaluation of service quality. The different age brackets and genders have different perceptions, tastes and preferences for the services provided in private primary schools. Diagram 1 shows that males accounted for 32% while females 68% of all the study subjects, therefore implies that a large quantity of the study subjects were female of 36-45 age bracket. The females within the 36-45 age bracket showed dissatisfaction with the physical facilities offered in the private primary schools.

#### **4.2.3 Year of joining school as a parent**

It was necessary to seek this information to establish the duration the respondent had been consuming services at the school to determine retention, loyalty and satisfaction levels. It implies therefore that 24% of the respondents joined the private primary school in 2012, while 5% in 2006, 12% in 2013, 15% in 2014, 18% in 2015, 8% in 2016 and 18% in 2017. The continued consumption of services at the school can be construed as satisfaction with the service quality offering hence loyalty.

#### **4.2.4 Other children in the school**

Respondents who had other children in the school were 51% while 49% had only a child in that PPS indicating repeat consumption of services and confidence that the school was providing quality service. The more number of children a parent had was a significant precursor of repeat-purchase behavior and loyalty. It can be presumed that if the respondents were not satisfied, they could have enrolled the other children in a different school. Previous experience with a service influenced expectations and perceptions of services received.

#### **4.2.5 Reasons for choice of school**

Majority of the respondents indicated that they were seeking for quality education for their children. 100% of the subjects affirmed that they were seeking excellent academic performance especially in the national examinations. The desire for a holistic education that integrates academics and co-curriculum activities where the gifts and talents of a child can be spotted, nurtured and developed is a driving force for choosing PPS. Moreover, 99% of the study subjects responded that classes had below 100 pupils for individual teacher attention and contact guaranteeing excellent academic performance. 90% of the customers indicated that their school provided 8-4-4 system of education while 10% preferred international curriculum. The schools also offer computers and foreign languages as was indicated by 12 % of the study subjects, 16% stated that their school offered swimming and other sports while 24% reported that the school integrated education and religion.

Customers desire for holistic development of the child by integrating academics and co-curriculum activities. PPS in Kisumu operate in very competitive environment hence the need to differentiate, attract and retain its customers. 12 % of the subjects affirmed that they pay school fee range of Kshs.0-1000, 26% Kshs.1001-10,000, 32% Kshs.10, 001-50,000 and 30% Above 50,000. Majority of the respondents used price to equate quality with some customers willing to pay premium fee for the children's education in PPS because of the perceived service quality. Some customers relied on school names/brand and reputation to serve as a means of indicating quality.

### 4.3 Customers Expectations and Perceptions of Service Quality

The research's purpose was to evaluate respondents' expectations and perceptions that they would anticipate from PPS that delivers service quality. The subjects were required to grade their expectations using a Likert Scale on a range of 1-5:1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree. Customers' expectations and perceptions are rated using the 5 point Likert scale and analyzed through 22 statements. The mean and standard deviation were then applied to examine the data from the responses as:

**Table 4.2 Determinants of Customers Expectations on SQ**

Determinants Statements	N	Expectations		Perceptions	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Physical facilities are attractive	96	4.135	0.64	3.716	0.89
2.Modern looking facilities	96	4.771	1.21	3.77	0.786
3.Employees appearance	96	4.012	0.74	3.865	0.601
4.Communication materials	96	3.683	1.01	3.743	0.875
5.Consistency of service	96	3.913	0.93	3.358	0.95
6. Problem solving interest	96	4.853	0.945	3.694	0.87
7. Perform service right the first time	96	4.897	0.956	3.097	0.65
8.Provides service when it promises	96	4.857	0.943	3.689	0.83
9. Accuracy of records	96	4.245	0.64	3.755	0.95
10.Employees behavior	96	4.198	0.93	3.841	0.54
11. Assurance, Safety & security	96	3.986	0.932	3.643	0.88
12.Courtesy by employees	96	4.973	1.09	4.011	1
13.Knowledgeable employees	96	4.959	1	3.769	0.83
14.Communicate when events will be performed	96	3.697	0.8	3.849	0.74
15.Prompt service provision	96	3.981	0.948	3.524	0.54
16.Offer help to the child	96	3.954	0.839	3.884	0.75
17.Respond to requests promptly	96	3.487	0.76	3.434	0.95
18.Individualized attention to the child	96	4.376	0.786	3.686	0.83
19.Adequate number of employees	96	3.597	0.942	3.347	0.82
20.Competence of employees	96	4.375	1.08	3.168	0.57
21.Have child's best interests at heart	96	3.98	0.61	3.395	0.85
22.Convenient school operating hours	96	3.754	0.93	3.463	0.91

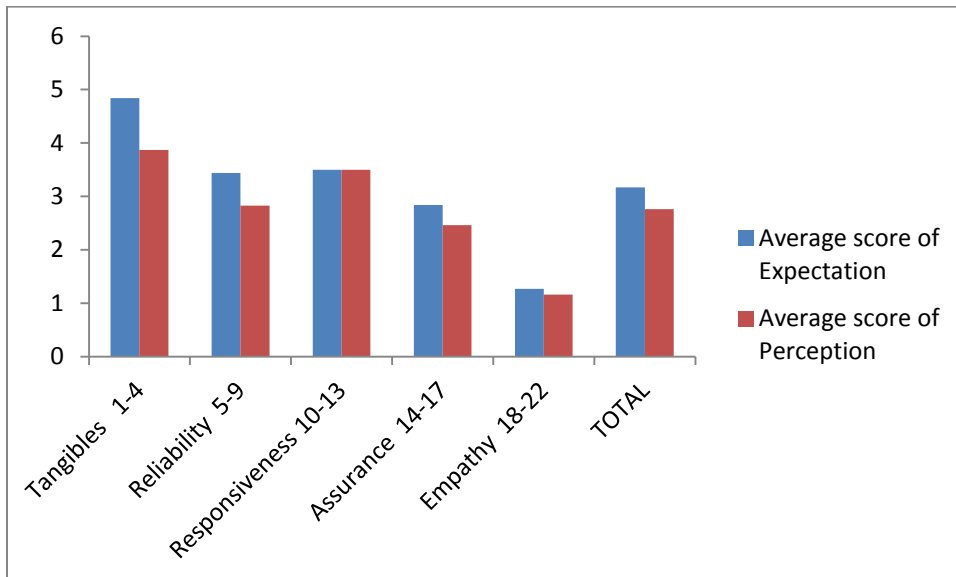
From the respondents' synopsis of expectations and perceptions as pointed out in Table 4.2, none of the attributes scored 0.5-1.5. It can be deduced then that all these attributes contributed fairly to customers' perception of SQ. Some of the attributes with less than 3.5 but greater than 2.5 can be termed as neutral and affected the SQ provided and they Includes: Competence of employees (M=3.16), Adequate number of employees (M=3.34), Convenient school operating hours (M=3.46) and Consistency of service (M=3.3). Attributes with a mean score of less than 4.5 and greater than 3.6 fairly influenced perception of quality of service. These attributes include physical facilities (M=3.7), Modern looking facilities (M=3.7), Employees appearance (M=3.8), Communication materials (M=3.7), Problem solving interests (M=3.6), Keeping promises (M=3.6), Accuracy of records (M=3.7), Employees behavior (M=3.8), Assurance, safety and security (M=3.6), Courtesy of employees (M=4.0), Knowledgeable employees (M=3.7), Communicate when events will be performed (M=3.8) and Individualized attention to the child (M=3.6). The results further showed that none of the determinants extremely influenced customers' perception of SQ since none of the determinants scored greater than 4.6 as indicated in the summary table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2: Summary of Mean Scores of Expectations and Perceptions**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Average score of Expectations</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Average score of Perceptions</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Tangibles 1-4</b>	4.54	±0.21	3.87	±0.25
<b>Reliability 5-9</b>	3.44	±0.28	2.83	±0.19
<b>Responsiveness 10-13</b>	3.5	±0.29	3.5	±0.29
<b>Assurance 14-17</b>	2.84	±0.20	2.46	±0.17
<b>Empathy 18-22</b>	1.27	±0.16	1.16	±0.09
<b>TOTAL</b>	3.17		2.76	

**Source: Research Data (2017)**

**Diagram 2: Comparison of the Respondents' Expectations and Perceptions of SQ**



**Source: Research Data (2017)**

Using the SERVEQUAL instrument with  $SQ = P_i - E_i$ , the result shows a disparity of 0.41 between customers' expectations and perceptions. This symbolized that the customers' expectations are greater than the perceived SQ received. Customers posted high expectations on the physical attributes of the school and the cadre of teachers employed by the school at scores of 4.84 and 3.44 respectively. Majority of the respondents suggest that the schools have to improve their physical facilities (classrooms, playground, boarding facilities) and employ and retain competent teaching staff to ensure service quality. Tangibles ranked highly among the study subjects while empathy ranked as the least significant dimensions of SQ.

The research findings further indicate a positive effect on all the attributes of SQ; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy with regression coefficients of 0.868, 0.917, 0.866, 0.812, 0.879 respectively. It was also found that an entity's increase in the tangible determinant would produce 0.087 for reliability at 0.098, responsiveness at 0.085, assurance at 0.813, empathy at 0.879 would increase in customers perceptions while taking all the other variables constant at zero. In addition, resulting to customer perception scoring 5.344. All the SQ attributes were rated highly by

the study participants with the Tangibles contributing most towards customers' perception of SQ. This was superseded by Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance and Empathy was noted to contribute the least.

#### **4.5 Discussion of Findings**

This research surveyed customers' perception of SQ in PPS in Kisumu City. Majority of the respondents indicated that they were seeking for quality education for their children. 100% of the subjects affirmed that they were seeking excellent academic performance especially in the national examinations. The results, further, indicated that tangibles contributed significantly to customers' perception of SQ in PPS. This was followed by Responsiveness, Assurance, Reliability and Empathy which was noted to contribute the least. All the service quality attributes were rated highly by the study participants with tangibles contributing most towards customers' perception of service quality. Therefore, all the SQ attributes are considered vital and should not be ignored by the private education sector. The outcome of this survey corresponds with those of Kiange (2011), Kimaita (2011), who considered the Tangible attribute as having an effect on customers' perception of service quality.

Tangibles, Assurance, Reliability and were statistically significant having recorded p-values of  $<0.05$ , while Empathy and Responsiveness registered p-values  $>0.05$  hence being statistically insignificant. Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1985) in their survey classified the service quality dimensions into 5 attributes that pertain to a multiplicity of service contexts. These include tangibles of service, the appearances of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication material. Using the SERVQUAL model, the differentiation between the expected and perceived SQ on this dimension scored a -0.97. The entire universe of respondents expressed strong preference for PPS, however, they are not satisfied with the low teacher turnout and existing physical facilities.

Responsiveness as defined by Zeithmal (2003) is the enthusiasm that employees demonstrate by providing and facilitating customers in receiving prompt service. This determinant scored same value of 3.50 in expectations and perceptions, posting a



difference of +0. It indicates, therefore that the respondents were fully satisfied with this aspect with the school employees being courteous and knowledgeable thereby instilling confidence in the respondents. The need for excellent performance in academics and more particularly in the national examinations has necessitated the demand for parents to enroll their children to PPS.

Majority of the parents perceive that private primary schools offer service quality and thereby improving the education outcomes of their children. Based on the findings by Tooley and Dixon (2005), Kathure and Juma (2007) that revealed that parents in private primary schools were satisfied with the quality of education offered and especially academic excellence. Their findings are consistent with those of this study that indicated that 94% of the study subjects were delighted with the general SQ offered by PPS while 6% held contrary opinion. SQ is what drives and shapes the perceptions and preferences of customers' for private primary schools over public school and on the other hand one private school over another. Comparison of the SQ expected, perceived and delivered indicates that there is a gap. This gap explains the parents' dissatisfaction with the SQ offered in PPS.

80% of the respondents affirmed that services provided by PPS met their expectations since they provided value for money, good academic performance, one-one teacher/pupil interaction. Provision of text books, learning materials, safe and secure environment, improved physical facilities school feeding programs are some of the expectations that the respondents hoped to obtain from the PPS which they actually did. These findings agree with that of Charles (2011) which revealed that parents of private school children scored significantly high in quality of instructional program, school climate and teacher quality. The respondents further gave suggestions on how the schools can improve SQ as: Improve physical facilities, Employ and retain competent teaching staff, improve school transport system, introduce lunch feeding program, introduce computer studies, foreign languages and additional after-school programs.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter sums up the whole research by presenting an elaborate discussion of findings in relation to the research questions formulated in the study, draws conclusions based on the research objective and recommendations.

### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The aim of the research was to assess customers' perception of quality of service offered in private primary school in Kisumu City. The researcher self administered the questionnaires which were issued to 100 parents using drop- and- pick later method. 96 participants returned their questionnaires dully filled. The findings therefore can be summarized as: The need for excellent performance in academics and more particularly in the national examinations has necessitated the desire for parents to register their children in PPS. Majority of the parents perceive PPS as offering SQ and thereby improving the education outcomes of their children. 94% of the subjects were delighted with the overall SQ offered by PPS while 6% held contrary opinion. SQ is what drives and shapes the perceptions and preferences of customers' for PPS over public school and likewise one private school over another.

The main SQ attributes considered important by the respondents were Tangibles, Reliability and Assurance that took a fundamental task in the perception of customers in PPS. These three attributes scored highly in the p-values of less than 0.05. Responsiveness and Empathy were considered non important having scored p-values greater than 0.05. All the same all the 5 dimensions scored highly among the respondents. Most of the respondents stated that services provided by PPS met their expectations since it provided value for money, good academic performance, one-one teacher/pupil interaction. Provision of text books, learning materials, small class sizes, safe and secure environment, improved physical facilities school feeding programs are some of the expectations that the respondents hoped to receive from the PPS. The respondents further gave suggestions on how the school can enhance SQ as: Improve physical facilities,

Employ and retain competent teaching staff, improve school transport system, introduce lunch feeding program, introduce computer studies, foreign languages and more extra curriculum activities.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Results from the study indicated that physical facilities, competent staff, communication materials, problem solving, promptness in service delivery, flexible fee payment mode, safety and confidence rated highly among the respondents. The study also revealed that Tangibles, Reliability and Assurance play an integral role in shaping the customers' perceptions of SQ. The findings concur with the results of a study conducted by Omondi (2013) showed that the five dimensions had significant impact on customers' perception and satisfaction. The outcome of this survey further, corresponds with those of Kiange (2011), Kimaita (2011) who considered the Tangible attribute as having an effect on customers' perception of service quality. The SERVEQUAL model identifies gaps between customers' expectations against their perceptions of the actual performance of the service.

Based on these findings, parents were to some extent satisfied with the SQ offered in PPS in Kisumu City. The result from the respondents' point of view indicated that there is a gap between expected and perceived SQ offering by PPS. 94% of the respondents hold that PPS offer SQ while 6% are dissatisfied with the SQ offering. Indicators of customer satisfaction and loyalty in the education industry included repeat purchases of the services (enrolling other children in the school) and the number of years with the school. It can be concluded that parents with high scores on perceptions of quality were likely to be satisfied with the five dimensions of SQ offered in PPS.

### **5.4 Recommendations for Practice and Policy**

In light of the findings of the study, the researcher, therefore, recommends to the management of PPS to enhance all the five attributes of service quality: Tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The schools should enhance the 5 dimensions of SQ due to their positive impact on customer perception and satisfaction.

Therefore, resulting in the improvement of customers' perception of SQ in PPS. Management of PPS needs to conduct market research to understand what shapes perceptions and preferences/ choices of parents towards enhancement of all the determinants of SQ to attain customer satisfaction.

PPS need to offer competitive remuneration to its staff, to attract and retain competent teaching staff. Resource allocation should be towards Tangibles more since it has the highest impact on customer perception. School managers also should avail adequate pedagogical and learning materials to ensure quality pedagogy. Of importance, too, is the training of the management and employees in delivery of SQ and customer care to enable them identify customers' needs and strategies to meet their expectations. Similarly, communication materials should be improved for it influences customers' perception.

### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

The investigator ran into a few shortcomings in the course of conducting this study. Chief of these is the strong feelings of suspicion expressed by the school directors and head teachers even after making plain to them the purpose of the study. Many of the schools showed reluctance and resistance in taking part in the study coupled with skepticism and suspicion of the possible use of the information obtained from the parents. To instill confidence among the school administration and parents, the researcher ensured that informed consent and cooperation was sought. Codes were used to conceal the identity of the participating school and parent. In addition, the participants were also assured that the data obtained would be used for the purpose of the study.

The descriptive research adopted for this study may have reflected a certain level of bias to the results due to the absence of statistical tests. The selected sample size was small that yielded results that are less widely generalizable to other groups. The results of this research were limited to ten private primary schools in Kisumu City. Additionally, the sample size for this survey was 100 parents which was considered small. This illustrates, therefore, that outcomes of this survey can neither be generalized to the all the PPS in Kenya nor all over the globe. The research having been conducted in Kisumu City, whose

findings might not be representative of the SQ situation in all PPS in Kenya or beyond. Moreover, the findings are opinions and perceptions of the respondents and cannot be generalized.

### **5.6 Suggestion for further study**

Taking cognizance of the above mentioned drawbacks, the researcher therefore suggests that future studies ought to consider adopting other research designs to get a comprehensive look at the phenomenon. Quantitative design can be used in future studies since it can be tested by statistical approaches. Considering that this study used a small sample size, the researcher suggests that in order to arrive at more concluding data, future explorations may focus on larger sample size. Selection and inclusion of more PPS in the study is another possibility for consideration by future researchers. A larger sample would give a broader representation in the measurement of perception and expectation gaps in the analysis of service quality.

The results of the present research were limited to ten private primary schools in Kisumu City. Similarly, the sample size of this study was 100 parents was considered inadequate. This signifies, therefore, that the findings of this research cannot be generalized to the all the PPS in Kenya or over the globe. Therefore, future studies may concentrate on larger sample size and selecting additional PPS so as to realize concluding data. Excellent academic performance plays a vital role in choice of school. However, the SERVEQUAL model did not explicitly look at academics per se. Future studies could investigate academic performance solely as an indicator of SQ in PPS. This inquisition investigated the perceived SQ among parents and did not factor in the perceptions of the pupils who are in direct consumers of the service. Assessing service quality from the perspective of the school managers and teachers would provide good ground for future research.

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## **Appendix 1: Authorization Letter**

## Appendix 2: Research Questionnaire

### PART 1: Respondent's General Information

This questionnaire has been designed to collect information from parents in selected Private Primary Schools in Kisumu City. It's meant for academic purposes only. The questionnaire is divided in 3 sections. Section 1 seeks to capture the demographic profile about you as a respondent while Section 2 seeks to identify the parents' expectation and Section 3 on perception of service quality. Kindly provide answers to the following questions by ticking [✓] against the most suitable alternative or giving narrative responses in the spaces provided. All information in this questionnaire will be treated in the strictest confidence. It's meant for academic purposes only.

1. Name of the School: .....
2. Age 18-25[ ] 26-35[ ] 36-45[ ] 46-55[ ] Above 55[ ]
3. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
4. In which year did you join the school as a parent? .....
5. Do you have any other child (ren) in this school? Yes[ ] No[ ]
6. Reason of sending your child (ren) to this school.....
7. How many pupils are in your child's class currently?  
Below 100  Between 100-200  Between 200-500  Above 500
8. What services does this private primary school provide?  
8-4-4 system   
GCE/International curriculum   
Computer and foreign languages   
Swimming and other sports activities   
Integrating education and Religion   
Others (specify).....
9. School fees range: 0-Ksh.1000[ ],1001-10,000[ ],10,001-50,000[ ],Above 50,000[ ]

### PART II: CUSTOMERS EXPECTATIONS ON QUALITY OF SERVICE

Based on your experience as a customer/parent, please indicate your expectation of the Service Quality you would anticipate from a private primary school that delivers service quality. Please indicate the extent which you think such a school would possess the features described by each statement. If you feel a dimension is not at all essential for quality, circle the number 1, if you feel a dimension is absolutely essential for Service Quality, please circle 5 but if you feel are less strong, circle any of the numbers in the middle.

<b>Statement: I Expect,</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. The physical facilities at the school be attractive and appealing.					
2. The physical facilities at the school be modern looking.					
3. The school employees to appear neat.					
4. The materials associated with school i.e. brochures are visually appealing.					
5. That when the school promises to do something by a certain time it does so.					
6. That when I/my child has a problem, the school shows sincere interest in solving it.					
7. The school to perform the service right the first time.					
8. That the school provides its services at the time it promised to do so.					
9. That the school to insist on error-free records.					
10. I expect that the behavior of the employees at the school to instill confidence in me/my child.					
11. That I /my child feel safe in our transaction with the school.					
12. That the school's employees are consistently courteous with me/my child.					
13. That the school's employees have the knowledge to answer my questions.					
14. That the school to inform me when certain events/services will be performed.					
15. That the school's employees will provide me/my child prompt service.					
16. That the employees at the school are willing to help me/ my child.					
17. That the employees at the school will respond to my requests promptly.					
18. That the school gives me/my child individualized attention.					
19. That the school has employees who give me/my child personal attention.					
20. The school to have my best interest at heart.					
21. That the school understands my child's specific needs.					
22. That the school has convenient operating hours for me/my child.					

2.2 Do you think the services provided by the private primary school meet your expectation?

Yes  No  Kindly explain.....

2.3 What are any other expectations you expect to receive from the school?.....

.....

**PART III: PERCEPTION ON THE QUALITY OF SERVICE**

This section deals with how you feel about the aspects of quality of service in private primary schools. Please indicate the extent which you believe the school possesses the features described by each statement where “1” means you strongly disagree while “5” means you strongly agree, but, if you feel are less strong, tick [√] any of the numbers in the middle.

<b>Dimensions of Service Quality</b>	<b>Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1.1 Tangibles	The school has all the essential physical facilities.					
1.2 Tangibles	The school’s physical facilities are good looking.					
1.3 Tangibles	The school’s employees are neat and well groomed.					
1.4 Tangibles	The communication materials are visually appealing.					
2.1 Reliability	When the school promises to do something by a certain time it does so.					
2.2 Reliability	When a child /you have a problem, the school shows sincere interest in solving it.					
2.3 Reliability	The school provides its services right the first time.					
2.4 Reliability	The school insists on error-free records.					
2.5 Reliability	The school provides services at the time it promises to do so.					
3.1 Responsiveness	The behavior of the school employees instills confidence in me and my child.					
3.2 Responsiveness	I and my child feel safe in our transactions with the school.					
3.3 Responsiveness	The employees at the school re consistently courteous with me/my child.					
3.4 Responsiveness	Employees at the school have the knowledge to answer my questions.					

4.1 Assurance	The behavior of the school employees instills confidence in the pupils.					
4.2 Assurance	You and your child feel safe in the school.					
4.3 Assurance	The school's employees are consistently courteous with you.					
4.4 Assurance	The school employees have the knowledge to respond to your questions.					
5.1 Empathy	The school gives your child individualized attention.					
5.2 Empathy	The school's operating hours are flexible.					
5.3 Empathy	The school has my child's and my best interests at heart.					
5.4 Empathy	The school understands my child's specific needs.					
5.5 Empathy	The school's operating hours are convenient to me and my child.					

3.2 Are you satisfied with the overall service quality offered by the private primary school?

Yes [ ]      No [ ]

3.3 Give your suggestions how the school can improve service quality

.....  
.....

### Appendix 3: List of Private Primary Schools in Kisumu City

Makini School-Kibos	Little Elites P. School	M.A. Junior Academy	Kisumu Day Academy	Bishop Mark Kariuki Academy
Makini School-Migosi	Temudo P. School	Jans Junior Academy	Shady Garden Academy	CITAM Schools-Kisumu
Migosi SDA School	Jalaram Academy	Disciples of Mercy –Special Unit	Mt.Carmel Academy	Kamakowa Academy
Marigold Springs Academy	Braeburn School	Brilliant Kids Academy	Pinochio Academy	Citadel Academy
Aga Khan P. School	Plainsview Academy	Hillside Academy	Living Streams Academy	Bridges Academy
Kisumu Junior School	Hekima P. School	Josana Academy	Kisumu Elite Academy	Manyatta Preparatory School
Golden Elite-Tom Mboya	Disciples of Mercy School	Christ Church Academy	St.Pius Primary School	Citystar Academy
Golden Elite-Ogango	Urzuai Academy	Polyview Academy	Covenant Academy	Westmont Academy
Roseva Academy	All Saints Academy	Kings and Queens School	Greenview Academy	Happy Home Academy
Al Muumunin	Bhayani Pri. School	Faith Preparatory	Herolda Pri School	Jamaa Pri.School
Johnson Academy	Kisumu Hillside Academy	Kisumu Eastlands	Madoma Korando School	Mkendwa Upper Hill Academy
New Generation School	Overcomers Academy	New Generation Academy	Penn State Academy	Rehema Academy
Rainbow Primary	Ring Road Academy	Sharon Star Academy	Singh Sabha Academy	Solem Academy
St. Annes	St. Bridget's	St. Elizabeth	St. James	St. Francis
St. Patrick's Junior Academy	St. Pius School	St. Andrews Academy	St. Ettiene Royal P. School	St. Florence Academy
Sapphire Academy	St. Judes	St. Matthews	Brima	The Stars
Precious	Children of God	St. Flamingo	St. Dorca	Elezandro ECD
Sister Sarah	Baby Shine	Destiny	Magadi Fisheries	St. Johns Academy
Bridge Intl. Koyango	Young Star	Goshen Preparatory	Genesis Introductory	Shalem Gardens Academy
Kisumu Glory	St. Lukes ACK	Rainbow	Simeonewberry	Atlantic Academy
St.Agatha Academy	Magadi Academy	Elyon Learning Centre	Busy Bees Academy	Carinel Academy
Happy Kids Academy	Lilishine Academy	Delphines Academy	Premier Light Academy	Glad Toto Academy
Toto Academy	Brainy Stars	Hellington	Mt.Zion	Hope ECD
Sister Betty Academy	St.Florance	Wonderland Premier	Happy Hearts Academy	Kidstar Academy
Valsy Academy	Hall ECD	Mild Star School	St.James Academy	Marie Care ECD and Primary School

All Star P.School	Five Star	BrightonsAcademy	Shady Garden P.Sc	Inventist School
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