

**TEACHERS AND STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY  
IN NON FORMAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN  
MOMBASA DISTRICT AND ITS ENVIRONS.**

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A Management Research Proposal submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Award of Master of Business Administration Degree (MBA) School of Business, University of Nairobi.

**NOVEMBER, 2009**

## DECLARATION

This Management Research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree course in any other university.

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## DEDICATION

This Project is dedicated to my late father, Luka Daudi who believed in and embodied the notion that education was truly the best gift and foundation you could ever give a child and also to my late brother, John Dadacha whose memories I shall always treasure.

To my wonderful husband Isaac, who never once complained in spite of the many late evenings I spent studying. You are truly my blessing beyond measure.

Charlie and Eileen, if mum could do it, so can you!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Almighty God for His goodness, mercies and faithfulness to me throughout the duration of my studies and my project.

I would also sincerely like to appreciate the invaluable contribution and guidance given to me by my supervisor, Mrs. Mary Kinoti who has gone beyond the call of duty in assisting me complete the project.

Similarly I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my colleagues and classmates especially Gladys Wamiori who pressed me to complete the project and the countless people who encouraged, inspired and helped me want to do better.

Lastly, my heartfelt appreciation goes to my husband Isaac and children Charles and Eileen. May this academic milestone help you aspire for greater things.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION-----	ii
DEDICATION-----	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT-----	iv
LIST OF TABLES -----	x
LIST OF FIGURES -----	xii
ABBREVIATIONS -----	xiii
ABSTRACT -----	xiv
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION-----</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background-----	1
1.1.1 The concept of perception-----	2
1.1.2 Service Quality-----	3
1.1.3 Non- formal education in Kenya-----	4
1.2 Statement of the problem-----	6
1.3 Objectives of the study-----	9
1.4 Importance of the study-----	9
1.4.1 Teachers and Students-----	9
1.4.2 Non Formal Education Providers-----	9
1.4.3 The Government-----	9
1.4.4 The International Community-----	9

## **CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1	Introduction-----	11
2.2	Perception-----	12
2.3	Factors Influencing Perception-----	13
2.3.1	Internal/Consumer Factors-----	14
2.3.2	Input-Nature of the Stimuli-----	16
2.4	The Perceptual process-----	16
2.5	Quality-----	17
2.6	Service quality-----	19
2.6.1	Service Quality Dimensions-----	21
2.7	Perceived Service Quality-----	27
2.8	Service Quality Gaps-----	27
2.9	Quality of Service models applied to teaching-----	32
2.10	Summary of Literature Review-----	32

## **CHAPTER THREE : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-----34**

3.1	Research Design-----	34
3.2	The population of the study-----	34
3.3	Sample and sample design-----	34
3.4	Data collection method-----	34
3.5	Data Analysis-----	35

<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 Introduction	36
4.2 Demographics of the Teachers and students	37
4.2.1 Gender distribution of the teachers and students respondents	37
4.2.2 Teachers and students duration in the current school	37
4.2.3 Teachers and students respondents ages	38
4.3 Teachers and students expectation of service quality	38
4.3.1 Tangibles	39
4.3.2 Reliability	40
4.3.3 Responsiveness	41
4.3.4 Assurance	42
4.3.5 Empathy	43
4.3.6 Average expectation of Teachers and students	44
4.4 Assessment of perception of the respondents	45
4.4.1 Tangibles	45
4.4.2 Reliability	46
4.4.3 Responsiveness	47
4.4.4 Assurance	48
4.4.5 Empathy	48
4.4.6 Overall perception of Teachers and students	49
4.4.7 Combined perception of Respondents	50
4.5 Differences between respondents Expectation and perception of Non-formal Schools	50

4.5.1	Tangibles-----	50
4.5.2	Reliability-----	51
4.5.3	Responsiveness-----	52
4.5.4	Assurance-----	52
4.5.5	Empathy-----	53
4.6	Overall difference between Respondents expectations and perception of Non-formal schools-----	54
4.7	Critical or main Attribute of Service quality in NFE-----	55
4.8	SERVQUAL Results (P-E)-----	56
4.8.1	Students SERVQUAL results-----	58
4.9	Service quality gap-----	58
 <b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS-----</b>		<b>60</b>
5.1	Introduction-----	60
5.2	Discussion-----	60
5.3	Perceived Service Quality-----	61
5.4	SERVQUAL Results-----	62
5.5	Conclusions-----	63
5.6	Limitations of the study and suggestions for further Research-----	63
5.6.1	Limitations-----	63
5.6.2	Suggestions for further research-----	64
 <b>REFERENCES-----</b>		<b>65</b>
 <b>APPENDICES-----</b>		<b>70</b>



APPENDIX I-----	70
APPENDIX II-----	71
APPENDIX III-----	78
APPENDIX IV-----	85
APPENDIX V-----	86

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	SERVQUAL MODEL
Table 2:	Respondent Rate of Teachers and Students
Table 3:	Gender Distribution of Teachers and Students Respondents.
Table 4:	Teachers and Students duration in current school.
Table 5:	Teachers and students ages.
Table 6:	Teachers and students expectations on Tangibles
Table 7:	Respondent expectations on the reliability factors.
Table 8:	Teachers and students expectations on responsiveness factors.
Table 9:	Respondents expectations on assurance factors.
Table 10:	Respondents expectation on empathy factors.
Table 11:	Overall respondents expectations of the 5 factors.
Table 12:	Respondents perceptions of tangibles factors.
Table 13 :	Table on respondents reliability perceptions.
Table 14:	Respondents perceptions on the responsiveness dimensions.
Table 15:	Respondents perceptions on the assurance dimensions.
Table 16:	Respondents perceptions on empathy dimension.
Table 17:	Overall perception of teachers and students.
Table 18 :	Average combined perception of respondents.
Table 19:	Difference between respondents expectations and perceptions of tangibles.
Table 20:	Differences in reliability attributes.
Table 21:	Differences in responsiveness attribute.

- Table 22: Differences in assurance attribute.
- Table 23: Differences in empathy attribute.
- Table 24: Differences in respondent perceptions and expectation.
- Table 25: Ranking of the most important service quality attribute for respondents.
- Table 26: Teachers SERVQUAL results.
- Table 27: Service quality gaps.

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

**Fig 1: The Perceptual Process**

**Fig 2: Service Quality Gaps**

**Fig 3: Seven Service Quality Gap.**

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>AID</b>	-	<b>Agency for International Development</b>
<b>BSI</b>	-	<b>British Standards Institute</b>
<b>CBO</b>	-	<b>Community Based Organizations</b>
<b>CESA</b>	-	<b>Comprehensive Education Sector Analysis</b>
<b>EFA</b>	-	<b>Education for All</b>
<b>GOK</b>	-	<b>Government of Kenya</b>
<b>ICT</b>	-	<b>Information Communication Technology</b>
<b>ISO</b>	-	<b>International Standards Organisation</b>
<b>K.E.B.S</b>	-	<b>Kenya Bureau of Standards</b>
<b>K.I.E</b>	-	<b>Kenya Institute of Education</b>
<b>MDG</b>	-	<b>Millennium Development Goals</b>
<b>MEO</b>	-	<b>Municipal Education Office</b>
<b>MOEST</b>	-	<b>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</b>
<b>MOU</b>	-	<b>Memorandum of understanding</b>
<b>NACECE</b>	-	<b>National Centre for Early Childhood Education</b>
<b>NFE</b>	-	<b>Non-Formal Education</b>
<b>NGO</b>	-	<b>Non Governmental Organization</b>
<b>OOS</b>	-	<b>Out of school children</b>
<b>TIQET</b>	-	<b>Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training</b>
<b>TQM</b>	-	<b>Total Quality Management</b>
<b>UK</b>	-	<b>United Kingdom</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	-	<b>United Nations Children Education Forum</b>

## ABSTRACT

Education has always been heralded as the key liberator to the ills that have bedeviled mankind since the dawn of time. These ills are poverty, ignorance and disease. The vital role played by formal education towards the uplifting of standards of living, enhancing social well-being and social economic development in a country cannot be overlooked. This undoubtedly led to the over-emphasis on the formal sector of education at the expense of the complementary and alternative modes of accessing educational opportunities, which were pushed to the back burner. With the realization that governments must work in tandem with the other stakeholders and development partners to attain the EFA 2015 goals for the provision of quality education, non-formal schools are now getting their day in the sun.

The quality, relevance and contribution of this sector have now come to the fore especially due to the fact that it is positioned as an educational vehicle that targets the lower strata in society. Quality especially in the service industry is critical to attaining a competitive edge especially in this era of financial prudence and financial recession that is affecting every sphere of society. In addition the rapidly changing economic landscape that organizations find themselves in calls for the best Human capital available to utilize the scarce resources in the most productive and profitable way

The research was about the teachers and students perceptions of service quality in non-formal educational institutions in Mombasa District and its environs. The study sought to establish the perceptions of the teachers and students with a view to identifying the main

service quality attributes considered most important. The study will be beneficial to all educational providers as this can be a basis for making rationale investment decisions to foster service quality in the schools. The Literature review was discussed at great length which comprised of reference to books journals and reports and the internet.

The research methodology comprised the site of the study, the population, data collection instruments and data analysis. The data was analyzed and the results presented according to the data collected from non formal schools in Mombasa and its environs. The data analysis was done by use of percentages and frequencies, mean and standard deviation. The findings obtained were concluded and recommendations made by the research based on the results. The finding identified the most important service quality dimension to be the reliability factor and the least important to be the empathy factor.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

As the business world becomes increasingly more competitive and complex, the demand for better educated and trained human capital also grows in tandem. This realization has necessitated many individuals, organizations and governments to invest heavily in human resource development knowing that those well trained will be best placed to manage the scarce resources more efficiently and effectively (World Bank Report, 1995). Thus the key role played by quality education in the overall socio-economic development of any nation need not be over-emphasized. It is only through the provision of quality education that technological and industrial advancement can be pursued, maternal and infant mortality reduced, improved governance and poverty reduction be established (UNDP, Report, 1997)

However by the start of 1990, the startling and grim realities of the education sector globally were that over 100 million children including 60 million girls still had no access to primary schooling. More than 100 million children and countless adults failed to complete basic education programs and that millions more, satisfied the attendance requirements but failed to acquire essential skills and knowledge from the education offered. (World Declaration on Education for all and Framework for action, Jomtein 1990). Due to this educational crisis, it was realized that an expanded vision of education was required to enable those out of school gain access to quality education. (Article 2. World Declaration on Education for all, 1990). This meant that other complementary and alternative systems of education other than mainstream formal education needed to be embraced to cater for the learning needs of out- of- school (OOS) children or adults.

The Koech Report (2000) commissioned by the then President of Kenya, Daniel Arap Moi was unique in many ways. This report recognized that the education sector, be it the formal or the non-formal has both strengths and great potential of contributing to the economic and social developmental needs of the country. This report was unique in the sense that it was the first report that recognized the non -formal education as a complementary and alternative route to attaining and accessing education. As a result in the mid 90's , there was considerable increase in investment in



education and training by the government and other partners which included parents, communities, civil societies, private investors and donors in the non – formal education sector . The upsurge in investment in this educational subsector brought to the fore, pertinent issues relating to the relevance and quality of education. (National Report on the Development of Education in Kenya, 2001)

In this era of intense competitive pressure, service organizations including educational institutions such as schools, be they formal or non-formal face considerable challenges in not only meeting but also in exceeding customers expectations of service quality. Even in the absence of a tangible product, educational service providers must make commercial decisions with regard to profit margins, targeted market segments whilst ensuring that quality of service is not compromised.

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

The word 'perception's origins can be traced to the Latin word 'percepio' which means receiving, collecting or the action of taking possession or comprehending with the mind or senses. This in essence is how an individual sees the world around them. Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) describe it as the process through which individuals select, organize and interpret stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. A stimulus here is any input or unit to any of the senses. Thus perception is how information about the world is received by the senses and analyzed and made meaningful Hornby, (1995). Kibera and Waruingi (1988) described it as the process during which meaning is attributed to incoming stimuli through the human senses. London (1970) adds that perception is to see, hear, touch, smell or taste something and to organize and derive meaning from it.

Steuart (1978) defines it as a process by which people interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world around them. Luthans (1992) clarifies that perception is an interpretation of reality and not an exact recording of it. Thus perception is unique to individuals and is subjective in nature. Individuals may have different perceptions about the same event or happening, depending on the interpretation given by each individual as per their needs, values and expectations. (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004).

Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) further add that there are four aspects to perception that cannot be overlooked. The first being selective exposure. This basically refers to consumers deliberately

avoiding or blocking out those messages which are considered painful or unpleasant and instead seeking out those pleasant messages. The next important aspect is selective attention. This refers to the attention consumers give to a stimulus. The intensity of the attention given to a stimulus determines the degree or acuteness of the perception. The degree to which attention is given depends on the individual needs and wants; this in effect means that irrelevant stimuli can then be ignored. The third aspect is perceptual defense where consumers subconsciously block out a stimulus that is deemed to be psychologically threatening. Lastly is perceptual blocking where consumers block out stimuli in order to protect themselves from harm. This reiterates the notion that perception is a highly individualistic, subjective and selective process that is shaped by an individual's expectations, motives, needs and wants. (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004).

### **1.1.2 Service Quality**

Quality can be broadly defined as superiority or excellence. The aim of any quality experience is to make the consumption of the service as memorable as possible. Lovelock (1981) adds that providing services that consistently meet or exceeds customers' expectations is the key to overcoming most of the problems faced in the service market.

The rationale of focusing on service quality is pegged upon the following three tenets: firstly is the economic rationale which is the profit or gains acquired by the company through good quality. Secondly customers are demanding more quality services and products than ever before. As a result Leonard and Sasser, (1982) assert that making service quality has become a must for any organization. Consumers have also grown more aware of quality and consumer "watch dog" associations have become a force to reckon with especially due to their vigilance in the surveillance and monitoring of service quality Woodruffe, (1995). Lastly, is the competitive argument. An organization can only be truly competitive if it is able to lower its costs and improve on productivity (Anderson and Zeithaml, 1984; Phillips, Chang and Buzzell, 1983). Thus quality is one of the most important issues in the marketing of services and so cannot be ignored (Odawa, (2004).

Lovelock (1981) stresses that organizations should strive to focus on service quality for the perception of quality can be a basis for attracting clientele to their establishments or premises. High quality perception can be used to charge premium prices, enabling price discrimination between

different consumer groups .Quality is thus one tactic that organizations can embrace to ensure customer satisfaction and achieve customer retention.

Service quality has become the new buzz word in many organizations. It has become especially important in the wake of intense competitive pressure and challenges that have characterized numerous organizations. Cronin and Taylor (1992) cite that the delivery of higher levels of service quality is a tactic that is predominantly employed by service providers to effectively carve out a niche for them in the competitive market and maintain a measure of competitive advantage. Kellogg et al (1997) assert that service quality has been growing in prominence because of its direct relationship to cost, financial performance, customer satisfaction and retention. Organizations with a reputation for consistently high quality can sustain an enviable competitive advantage in the service market place.

### **1.1.3 Non-formal education in Kenya**

Coombs (1973) defines non-formal education as any organized, systematic educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve identifiable learning objectives of a distinct clientele. The Commonwealth Secretariat (1972) has defined non-formal education as an organized learning activity outside the structure or framework of the formal education system that consciously aims at meeting specific learning needs of particular sub-groups in the community. Paulston (1972) defines it as the structured, systematic, non-school educational and training activities of relatively short periods of time in which the sponsoring agencies seek concrete behavioral changes in fairly distinct target populations.

The Agency for International Development (AID), describes it as the myriad of means and approaches other than those of the formal school structure, by which work related skills, knowledge and attitudes are acquired, updated and adapted. The word organized implies that the non-formal education (NFE) is planned in a pattern of sequence with an established aim, a specific outcome and a curriculum. Thus NFE is both systematic and structured. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology MOEST (2003) defines it as a flexible, complementary access to education where existing conventional formal educational systems is impossible. The term flexible denotes that it is not standard in its delivery or facilitation methods, approaches and techniques. By its nature it is supposed to be learner-centered and learner specific. A Non-formal Education stakeholders'

meeting held at The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) in 2003 also came up with a similar definition of Non-formal education as one which aims at consciously meeting specific learners' goals.

Gathenya (2003) states that in practice, diverse programme realities place non-formal education anywhere on a continuum from informal through non-formal to formal education. She further argues that in some cases NFE appears to be running almost parallel to the formal education system while in some cases it is hard to see any difference. Lynch (1997) states that in many instances there are no clear-cut definitions of non-formal education, as many educational activities may encompass both formal and non-formal modes of delivery; however the diversity lies in its substantive and pedagogical dimensions and its organizational arrangements and locations. It is for these very reasons that the NFE sector is overlooked, underestimated and underfunded. Bagayoko (1999) explains the classification of educational service delivery into formal, informal and non-formal were based on the perceived failure of formal schooling in terms of both internal and external efficiency explained by ever-rising costs and lack of relevance.

For this research, the definition and distinction that will be given to non-formal education are those spelt out by the Municipal Education Office (2008), which assert that officially recognized non-formal schools are schools or centers that are community based, registered with any government department, offer a formal curriculum, have opened a special school account with banks. In addition these are schools that have signed an MOU with the Municipal Education Office and are based in Mombasa's informal settlement areas. It must also have a school Management Committee and is willing to be subjected to Government auditing procedures.

The basic non-formal education subsector in post independent Kenya has largely evolved with little recognition, attention and support. It has actually suffered from neglect relative to its formal counterpart. This neglect was as a result of the erroneous belief that children belonged to and could only be best served by the formal system of education. Digolo (2003) considered this view as a myopic approach to education. The development of the non-formal education in Kenya received impetus only after the 1990 Jomtein-Thailand World Conference on Education for all (EFA) which concluded that it was the right of every individual to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. This meeting thus provided the framework for action to

meet basic learning within which the non-formal education could be planned and implemented for those without any access to formal education opportunities.

The 1990's was also a period when Kenya was grappling with a number of economic challenges that had negatively impacted on the provision of social services including education. It was against this background of alarming high school drop-out rates, escalating costs, reduced incomes and widespread poverty that the creation of non-formal educational institutions became inevitable Yildiz, (1999). The Comprehensive Education Sector Analysis (CESA) (1994) was explicit in the identification of the unmet education needs of the Out Of School (OOS) children. It acknowledged Non-formal Education as a viable option to attaining EFA. On the basis of the identified needs of the OOS children and to ensure the provision of basic non-formal education, the Government of Kenya established a NFE project in 1994. This was part of the GOK-UNICEF programmes of co-operation 1994-1998 (MOEST 2004). The end result being that the urgent need for a NFE policy being established, was found to be paramount. The MOEST responded by setting up a NFE desk at the Ministry.

Despite the MOEST lukewarm approach to NFE, numerous Individuals, communities and faith-based organizations came together to take action in response to the unmet educational needs of the out of school (OOS) children and youth both in the rural and urban areas. These initiatives came to be known as non-formal schools as they provided literacy and numeracy skills to the disadvantaged out of school youth and adults. These valiant efforts were borne from the realization that firstly, EFA would not be achieved if left solely to the government. Secondly there was a glaring need for different approaches for the provision of a more flexible education that would make it accessible and attractive to economically disadvantaged learners.

Although the first non-formal school was established in Mombasa way back in 1965, it is interesting that this approach to education is still fairly misunderstood and confused for a substitute or parallel system to formal schools rather than an approach to complement formal education in order to achieve education for all (EFA). (Gathenya, 2003)

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Since independence, the Kenyan Government has addressed challenges facing the education sector through Commissions, Committees and Taskforces. The first Commission, after independence,

came up with the Report of the Kenya Education Commission also known as the Ominde Report, (1964) that sought to reform the education system inherited from the colonial government with a view to make it more responsive to the needs of independent Kenya.

The Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies also known as the Gachathi Report, (1976), focused on redefining Kenya's educational policies and objectives, giving consideration to national unity, and economic, social and cultural aspirations of the people of Kenya. It resulted in the Government support for 'Harambee' schools and also led to the establishment of the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE).

The Report of the Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya also known as the Mackay Report, (1981) led to the removal of the advanced (A) level of secondary education, and the expansion of other post-secondary training institutions such as village polytechniques

The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and beyond also referred to as the Kamunge Report, (1988) focused on improving education financing, quality and relevance. This led to the policy of cost sharing between government, parents and communities. Between 1990 and 2000 there was a significant increase in the number of non-formal schools in Kenya partly in response to the educational crisis of the 1990 and the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the mid 1990's which brought about cost-cutting measures that placed a great burden on parents

The Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya as known as the Koech Report, (2000) was mandated to recommend ways and means of enabling the education system to facilitate national unity, mutual social responsibility, accelerated industrial and technological development, life-long learning, and adaptation in response to changing circumstances. This report recognized the need for an all inclusive integrated approach to education that catered for all strata of society. This was the first commission that gave credence to non-formal Education as a way in which those disadvantaged could access education opportunities.

Although Kenya pledged itself to six of the Dakar Declaration (2000) on Education for all, it continues mainly to emphasize on the formal sector, while NFE which is an alternative, complementary and supplementary approach to achieving this goal is left or pushed to the periphery and left to NGO's, CBO's and religious organizations. Thus the teachers and students who attend the NFE, are somewhat left isolated. In addition, NFE despite its seeming setbacks continues to increase in popularity especially among the urban poor. Thus it is imperative to find out the teachers and students perceptions of the service quality of education in such institutions. Similarly the study wishes to establish if indeed these institutions are not only offering the disadvantaged children access but also quality education.

A study on the perception of teachers was done by Opera (2002). The study focused on the extent to which teachers perceived their needs were satisfied. The study was limited to examining the views of those teachers in the formal education sector only. Other studies done on perception but in other non educational areas include unpublished MBA thesis by Misumi (2003) and Sailewu (2001). Other studies on perceived service quality by Maina (2001), Mwaura (2002), Kiura (2006) and Chebotibin (2006) were on the matatu industry, mobile phones services and the dairy industry respectively. Their findings cannot be applied to the non-formal education sector as they are industry specific.

There are a number of research studies into Non-formal education in Kenya. Pre-eminent among them is that conducted by Ekundayo (2001) who presented findings of the Non-formal education situation in the three major towns in Kenya namely Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. The study generated significant data on a hitherto unmapped area of non-formal education in Kenya. However there has been no known study to the researcher, done on the perception of teachers and students towards the quality of education offered in the non-formal schools known to the researcher and this research wants to fill that gap.

Which then begs the following research questions?

- 1) What are the perceptions of service quality of teachers and students in non-formal institutions in Mombasa?
- 2) Which are the most important attributes of quality service in non formal education institutions?

3) What are the service quality gaps between the teachers and students expectations and perceptions of quality of service?

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are to:

1) Establish the perception of service quality of teachers and students in non-formal educational institutions in Mombasa with a view to identifying the main attributes of service quality in NFE.

2) Determine the service quality gaps between the teachers and students' expectation and perception of service quality rendered in the NFE.

### **1.4 Importance of the study**

The results of this study will be beneficial to:

#### **1.4.1 Teachers and students**

The teachers and students in the NFE centers as the findings of this research will shed light on the pertinent aspects of service quality in their schools and identify service gaps which will then serve as a basis for corrective measures.

#### **1.4.2 Non Formal Education Providers**

The study will be of value to the providers of NFE, as the findings on the service quality perceptions of teachers and students can be a basis for implementing better quality approaches towards the attainment of Education for All (EFA) by 2015

#### **1.4.3 The Government**

This study will be relevant to the government so that definite linkages between the formal and non formal education sub-sector can be sought to reduce the gap between the educational sub sectors by 2015 in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

#### **1.4.4 The International community**



The study will give the relevant international and donor organizations feedback on how successful their effort have been in the promotion of not only access but also quality education for the disadvantaged in Mombasa district and its environs.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

Ndegwa (1996) and Masinde (1986) define services as activities that benefit or satisfactions which are offered for sale without leading to a physical transfer of its title. The definition implies that though the entity or service under consideration is intangible, its benefits or satisfactions can be readily perceived by individuals.

While it is widely recognized that marketers of services experience difficulties in understanding and controlling quality, it must be acknowledged that service quality has increasingly been receiving much prominence because of its relationship to the bottom line and customer retention Kellogg et al (1997). Service quality has become a formidable force that firms use to carve a niche for themselves in the intensely competitive global market. Cronin and Taylor (1992) assert that nowadays firms are increasingly under substantial pressure to not only meet but also to exceed customers' expectations. Thus despite the lack of a tangible product, even service organizations like schools must offer quality services in an attempt to increase market share, profit margins and volume of services delivered.

Service quality is not easy to measure in a precise manner. The nature and unique characteristics of services can have an impact on quality issues. These characteristics include the intangibility of many services. This means that it can be very difficult for service quality to be measured and assessed as it is not a physical object. The next unique characteristic of services is the inseparability of the service itself from the service provider. This highlights the critical role of people in the service transaction, and their influence on quality levels. Thirdly the heterogeneous nature of service means that a service can never be exactly repeated and that there will always be a variation to some extent. Thus quality can prove to be quite elusive. The perishable nature of service can lead to customer dissatisfaction if demand can't be met. Kotler (1985) also asserts that services unlike products can't be stored on shelves for later use.

Lastly, the measurement of service quality becomes more abstract when compared to tangible goods because its measurement relates to aspects of perception, expectation and experience which are in the realm of the subjective.

In addition, consumers have grown more aware of quality and consumer “watch dog” associations have become a force to reckon with especially due to their vigilance in surveillance and monitoring of service quality for the protection of the consumers, (Woodruffe, 1995).

The rationale of focusing on service quality is pegged upon the following three tenets: firstly is the economic rationale which is the profit or gains acquired by the company through good quality. Secondly customers are demanding more quality services and products than ever. According to Leonard and Sasser, (1982) making service quality a must for any organization. Lastly, is the competitive argument. An organization can only be competitive if it is able to lower its costs and improve on productivity (Anderson and Zeithaml, 1984; Phillips, Chang and Buzzell, 1983). Thus quality is one of the most important issues in the marketing of services and so cannot be ignored (Odawa, 2004).

The needs and expectations of customers are critical factors in assessing service quality. The adoption of a marketing and customer focus orientation throughout the organization will ensure that service provided not only meets but exceeds customer expectations.

## **2.2 Perception**

Perception is the process by which an individual select, organizes and interprets information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world Kotler (2000). This in essence means that our perceptions color the way we interpret our world

Gray and Starke (1984) talk of perception as a term used to describe how individual’s “see” their environment and the elements operating within. They add that individuals act and react on the basis of their perception and not on the basis of objective reality. A person’s perceptual process is a mechanism that helps him/her adapt to a changing environment Champoux, 1996).

Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) define perception as a dynamic psychological process responsible for attending to organizations and interpreting sensory data. We perceive the world around us in different ways. It is our personal perception of that reality that shapes and directs our behavior and

not some objective understanding of the external reality. Human behavior is thus a function of the way in which we perceive other people and events in the world.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000), assert that reality is a totally personal phenomenon based upon the individual's perception of what is "out there". We perceive the world around us in different ways. Kibera and Waruingi (1998) define perception as a process by which people receive, interpret and remember information coming from the world around them. Thus it is the process by which consumers' attribute meaning to incoming stimulus received through the five senses.

Perception is also described as a cognitive process that lets a person make sense of stimuli from the environment. These stimuli affect all senses; sight, touch, taste, smell and hearing. Berelson and Steiner (1987) define perception as a complex process by which people interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Thus our perceptions help us make sense of our world.

Perception is a very complex cognitive process that yields a unique picture of the world, a picture that may be quite different from reality Luthans (1998). Our perception of the world serves as the basis for our actions. According to Arnold and Feldman (1995), perception has to do with the way in which we receive messages and interpret the information. They add further that what people do depends to a large extent upon which of the many perceptual inputs they attention to, as well as how the inputs and messages are interpreted and understood.

Kotler et al (1999) adds that perception depends not only on the physical stimuli (input) but also on the stimuli relation to the surrounding fields (external) and on conditions within the individual (internal).

### **2.3. Factors influencing perception**

As mentioned earlier individuals are subjected to a number of influences that tend to shape their perceptions. Ngahu (2003) reports that these factors affect all phases of perception but external factors tend to have more influence on the selection phase while internal factors have more influence on the interpretive phase.

Consumers' perception of an object or event is the result of the interaction of the two types of factors. Notably, the stimulus factors which are characteristics of the physical objects for example

size, color, weight or shape and consumer factors which are characteristics of the individuals included for example sensory processes, past experiences with similar items and basic motivations and expectations.

### **2.3.1 Internal / Consumer Factors**

Arnold and Feldman (1995) argue that there are a variety of personal characteristics that influence our perceptions and that the more ambiguous the objects of our perception are, the greater the influence of these personal factors on our perceptions. These are the characteristics of the perceiver. The perceiver has a tendency to use him or herself as a basis for perceiving others. Some of the most important internal factors affecting influencing perception are:

#### **Expectations**

It affects the way someone will perceive an object or event. People see what they expect to see and this is usually based on familiarity, previous experiences or on pre-conditioned set (expectations) for example, if Ike says X is bad, I expect X to be bad. Stimulus that contrast sharply with expectations often receive more attention than those that conform.

#### **Motives**

They also influence consumers' perception of events. A motive can serve to increase or decrease the probability that a stimulus will be perceived. If a need is sufficiently stimulated or aroused in an individual, then it activates behavior intended to satisfy this need (Stanton, 1991).

#### **Needs**

People tend to perceive things they need or want. The stronger the individuals need, the greater the tendency to ignore unrelated stimuli in the environment. Thus there is a heightened awareness of stimuli that are relevant to one's interests and needs. Therefore an individual's perceptual process simply attunes itself more closely to those elements in the environment that are important to that person, (Kotler, 1995).

## **Past experience**

The process of learning from past experience influences perception. It does so by creating a readiness to perceive an object, event or a person in a certain way. If a person has a good experience using a particular product, this affects how he will perceive that product even if it changes slightly. Assael (1998) also notes that changing long-standing consumer perception is very tricky and is generally a mistake. Consumers form perception pertaining to a product from personal experience with the product, what others say, what he sees and many other factors. Marketers must therefore work on product attributes and quality to enhance positive perception (Schiffman, 2000).

## **Self concept and personality**

Self-concept also distorts consumers interpretation and hence perception. This is because self concept forms the basic frame reference we use in perceiving things and people around us. Consumers tend to give added perceptual weight to advice coming from sources they respect.

Leavitt (1972) notes that the perceived world is organized around the perceived self for an individual. Consumers are likely to seek those products that uplift their self-esteem, and are congruent with his personality. This helps reduce perceived risk in the products that he buys. According to the Journal of Consumer Research (2001), personality affects the way people perceive others. Chung (1981) indicates that individuals who perceive themselves realistically can function effectively without being defensive of their shortcomings.

## **Attitudes**

They are our pre-disposition towards given aspects of the world. Attitude provides the emotional basis of our inter-personal relations and identification with others. Some attitudes are persistent and enduring yet some are subject to change. Attitudes are acquired from parents, teachers and peer groups.

Our attitudes have a powerful influence upon what we pay attention to, what we remember and how we interpret information for example people's perceptions to technological innovations are strongly influenced by their attitudes towards school.

## **Emotions**

A person's emotional state strongly influences the perceptual process. When people are highly agitated, frustrated or angry their perceptual processes become impaired. People actually don't hear or see things at times because their emotional state may be causing them to ignore any input that they are receiving. Information is often distorted or ignored when a person is under high levels of stress. Existence of stress impedes/impairs the person's capacity to process and perceive information that he/she may be receiving. This could arise from deadlines, time pressure and crises.

### **2.3.2 Input –Nature of the Stimuli**

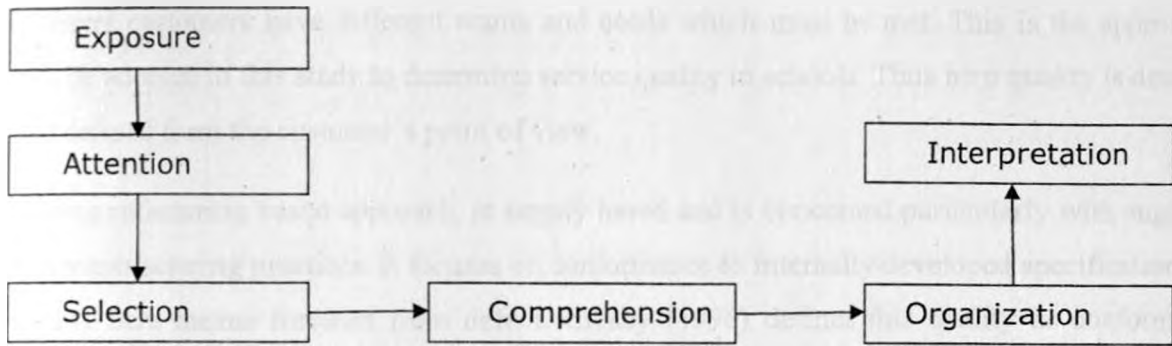
The intensity of stimuli accentuates its perception, the more intense a stimulus; the more likely it is to be perceived asserts Palmer, (2000). For example, the more a firm emphasizes that its products are good; the more likely consumers will perceive them as so. However, marketers should ensure that their product quality and performance meet the claims made in the advertisements. The nature of the stimulus can also affect how consumers perceive a product.

Marketing stimulus include a number of variables that affect consumers perception. Some of these are the nature of product, its physical attributes, the package design, the brand name, the advertisement and commercials. To get consumers attention, advertisers can use large size advertisements, position by placing an advertisement in the upper half page and novelty by using eye-catching photos or illustration. These structural factors influence consumers' perception. Studies show that a brand in the upper shelf in supermarket receives 35% more attention than those on the lower shelf (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). Other stimulus characteristics affecting perception include color, smell, and taste. The ideal situation would be that the primary determinant of a person's perception of any entity would be the actual characteristics of the entity itself, be it physical objects, people or even more abstract things.

### **2.4 The Perceptual Process**

It involves knowing how perceptions are formed and how they influence attitude and behavior. The figure below illustrates the perceptual process by showing how objects, events and people in the environment are received into our perceptual field, and how they are selected, organized and interpreted (Ngahu, 2003).

**Fig 1: The perceptual process**



Source: *Kibera and Waruingi (1998); Fundamentals of Marketing; an African Perspective. K.L.B, Nairobi.*

## 2.5 Quality

Quality implies luxury or excellence. It has also been described as fitness for use and is closely linked to customer satisfaction and loyalty. It has also been defined as freedom from defects or deficiencies. ISO (1986) defines quality as the total of features and characteristics of a product and service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Slack et al (2001) qualifies this by defining quality as the degree of fit between customers' expectations and their perception of the product or service. Quality is considered a company's lifeline to ward off competition and gain a competitive advantage. Thus quality is an organizations best assurance of customer allegiance, a company's strongest defense against competition and the only path to sustained growth and profitability. (Woodruffe, 1995)

Gavin (1988) identifies 5 perspectives on quality, the first perspective being the transcendent view of quality. This approach is synonymous with innate quality, a mark of uncompromising standards and high achievement. This view states that people learn to recognize quality only through the experience gained from repeated exposures. This is important in works of art and literary experiences. The second view is known as the product – based approach. It sees quality as a precise and measurable variable .Differences in quality reflect the differences in the amount of an ingredient or attribute possessed by a product .This view is totally objective and it fails to account for differences in tastes and needs.



The user based definition, starts with the premise that quality lies in the eyes of the beholder. It equates quality with maximum customer satisfaction. This subjective perspective recognizes that different customers have different wants and needs which must be met. This is the approach that will be adopted in this study to determine service quality in schools. Thus here quality is determined and defined from the customer's point of view.

The manufacturing based approach, is supply based and is concerned particularly with engineering and manufacturing practices. It focuses on conformance to internally developed specifications. Thus quality here means freedom from defect. Crosby (1996) defines this quality as conformance to requirements. He determines proof of service as flawless, perfect or zero defects. The value based approach defines quality in terms of value and price. It is obtained by considering the trade off between performance (and conformance) and price. Quality here is thus defined as affordable excellence.

The most relevant approach in defining and measuring quality to this study is the user based approach. The idea being that quality is subjective and will be strongly linked to the individual's needs and expectations; it recognizes that consumers have different criteria for judging service quality depending on their needs and wants. The user-based approach equates quality with maximum level of satisfaction.

Woodruffe (1995) asserts that quality is "free" that is, getting it right first time round, costs far less than providing remedies or corrective action when services fail to meet customers required standards. Better quality services can attract premium prices. Woodruffe (1995) asserts that consumers are prepared to pay a higher price for services that fulfill all their expectations criteria. Thus the marketing implication for organizations is that they should strive for quality as it can be a means of changing a premium and obtaining price discrimination.

Determining what makes a quality service is not easy and differences between service organizations mean that there is no single set of factors that can produce universally recognizable standards of quality. Woodruffe (1995) adds that services are most importantly, a process and this element of it being a process can be investigated and developed to meet specified standards. The Total Quality Management philosophy (TQM) has for its main focus, the interaction between people and systems. This philosophy aims at integrating quality in all aspects of the organization.

As a result of the emphasis on quality, standards were developed mainly for adherence within the production and manufacturing contexts. However, nowadays with the increasing emphasis on international quality standards and certification, the development of quality systems have grown to embrace all functions of the organization, not just production and operation. Some of the other functions include marketing, finance and administration. Examples of national and international quality performance standards include KEBS (Kenya Bureau of Standards) and ISO 9000. These standards take into cognizance the fact that quality is really that perceived by the customer. BSI (British Standard Institute) 5750 breaks down quality into the following simplified areas; quality should be functional not restructured. It should reflect the overall business activities of the organization. It adds that quality is a team concept. The true definition of quality will be unique to every organization as no two organizations will operate in an identical manner. Quality is situation specific and the parameters of what constitutes high quality can change over time.

## **2.6 Service quality**

In this era of intense competitive pressure, service organizations ranging from hospitals to schools face significant pressures and challenges in not only meeting but also in exceeding and surpassing customers' expectations. It is for this very reason that service quality has been receiving greater scrutiny and prominence in organization. Kellogg et al (1977) point out the reason for the interest lies in the obvious relationship between providing quality service and reducing overall costs. Keaveny (1995) claims that focusing on service quality, will bolster financial performance, customer satisfaction and finally ensure customer retention.

Service quality is also known as the lifeline of organizations because embracing a quality preposition within an organization will ensure its survival and continuity in this era of fierce competitiveness and turbulence. This is reason why organizations are all about having an enduring service quality value proposition that is not only visible but also discernible to customers.

Service quality is one of the powerful tools that companies can use to gain a competitive advantage especially in this era of intense competition. Lovelock (1996) concedes that delivering high quality service is closely linked to growth and profits. Many organizations nowadays embrace service quality as they realize that the benefits far outweigh the costs of implementation.

Kotler (1996) and Lovelock (1996) observes that maintaining high service quality standards benefit an organization as companies will have fewer customers to replace, less corrective work to do, fewer inquiries and complaints to handle and less employee turnover. This not only gives the organization a competitive advantage but also boost staff morale.

Lovelock (1981) adds that providing services that consistently meet or exceed customers' expectations is the key to overcoming most of the problems faced in the service market. While it must be acknowledged that determining service quality in a service business, such as in the education sector is more complex to assess, than it is for the manufacturing sector, it is still possible to define and determine quality. This is due to the fact that service quality can be defined by an individual's perception of that service Parasuraman et al (1985). This has great managerial implications as it implies that service quality must be something that customers readily perceive during the service encounter.

Delvin and Dong (1994) also assert that service quality is defined from the customer's perspective. Thus although organizations provide quality processes and functions ultimately it is the customers perception of quality that should matter. This will then entail organizations keeping up with feedback from customers on a real time basis and taking remedial corrective measures. In determining quality, customers compare their service experience to their expectations of that service i.e. its performance. Christopher et al (1997) acknowledge that the satisfaction of a customer with a service can be defined by comparing perception of service received with expectation of service desired. When expectations aren't met, service quality is deemed unacceptable. When expectations are confirmed by perceptions then quality is deemed as satisfactory. Zeithaml et al (1990) asserts that poor service quality by service firms revolve around not knowing what the customers' expectations are. Service quality can thus be defined as the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service. If expectations are greater than perceptions, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence it leads to customer dissatisfaction, (Parasuraman et al, 1985)

Service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customers expectations, which Christopher et al (1997) qualifies to be the ability of the organization to meet or exceed customers expectations. Customers' expectations may be defined as the desires or wants

of customers. That is what they feel a service provider should offer rather than would offer. This is measured in terms of the extent to which performance as perceived by the customer, meets or exceeds levels of expected services. This calls for a proper understanding and measurement of customers' expectations and an identification of any gaps in service quality.

Quality which means superiority or excellence is defined in terms of the customers' subjective opinion. This subjective opinion that customers have after experiencing a service encounter is known as perceived quality. Gronroos (1990) suggests that the perceived quality of a service is the result of an evaluation process in which customers compare their perceptions of the service delivery and its outcome against what they expected. Marketers know that consumers will often judge the quality of a product or service on the basis of a variety of information cues that they associate with the service or service, Schiffman and Kanuk, (2004). These cues can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. The intrinsic cues concern physical characteristics such as size and color while the extrinsic characteristics are more concerned with physical attributes that are external such as price and brand image. The expectations of the product or service are based upon the cues from word of mouth referrals, past experiences and promises in advertisements. Once actual delivered service is as expected or supersedes what was expected, then the service is said to be of high quality.

### **2.6.1 Service Quality Dimensions**

Gronroos (1982) postulated that there are 2 types of service quality that exists. These are the technical and the functional types of service quality. The technical type of service quality involves what the customer is actually receiving from the service and the functional quality, involves the manner in which the service is delivered. This simply refers to what one is receiving and how the service is being delivered or executed. The functional type of service quality alludes to the fact that our determination of quality is not necessarily only due to the superiority of the service encounter but on the very people who are charged with the responsibility of delivering that service. Service quality can't be divorced from the people executing the service encounter. The management implications are that organizations must have only the best people, handling customers. Gronroos (1982) asserts that a distinction needs to be made between the process of service delivery (functional quality) and the actual output (outcome) which is the technical quality. The intangible, multifaceted nature of many services makes it harder to evaluate the quality of service compared to

a good. To compound the issue, customers are often involved in the service production. Gronroos (1982) suggests that the perceived quality of a service is the result of an evaluation process in which customers compare their perception of service delivery and its outcome to what they expect. In trying to understand service quality Gronroos (1982) introduced the first comprehensive model of service quality. Parasuraman et al (1985) amplified the model and refined Gronroos framework and came up with what is now popularly known as the SERVQUAL model. Parasuraman et al (1988, 1991) developed the SERVQUAL, which is a 22 item instrument that includes a 5 series or attribute dimension. The SERVQUAL model originally contained 10 attributes that were considered to be the determinants of quality. These ten determinants of quality were tangibles, which essentially referred to the appearance of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel and printed material. The second determinant of service quality according to Parasuraman et al was the reliability attribute. This referred to an organization's ability to perform promised services dependably and accurately. The third attribute that Parasuraman identified was the responsiveness of the organization. This called for an evaluation of an organization's willingness to help customers and providing prompt services. The fourth dimension or attribute in the determination of quality is competence. Here the customer is expected to evaluate whether the organization possesses the required skill and knowledge to perform the services. The next determinant of quality identified is courtesy, politeness, respect and friendliness of contact personnel. The inclusion of the people factor reaffirms the important role played by the customer contact personnel in the determination of quality.

Other remaining four attributes include credibility, security, accessibility and communication of the organization. These 10 attributes or determinants of quality were considered as the important attributes in the measure of service quality. Later research by Zeithaml et al (1988), revealed that the 10 attributes could then be divided into 5 main dimensions that could be consistently applied across companies and industries. These 5 dimensions are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. These 5 dimensions have come to be regarded as the generic dimensions of service quality. Saunders et al also referred to these 5 dimensions as the components of perceived service quality.

The SERVQUAL has been tested and used to measure service quality in various contexts for example banking, public service, professional service and hospitals among others. The service

quality model or SERVQUAL was designed to measure the gap between the customers' expectations of services and their perception of actual services delivered. The gaps were formed based on the customers perception of the five dimensions mentioned earlier that is; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility. These 5 attributes were found to be the cornerstone for the other attributes or dimensions. Parasuraman et al (1985) indicates that consumer quality perceptions are influenced by a series of 5 gaps occurring in organization. The SERVQUAL models include 5 possible causes of gaps that may lead to customer dissatisfaction with service.

Below is the SERVQUAL model containing the 10 dimensions.

**Table1: SERVQUAL MODEL**

Quality Dimension	Samples of question to ask
<p><b>Tangibles:</b></p> <p>Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, printed and visual materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are facilities attractive?</li> <li>• Are staff dressed appropriately</li> <li>• Are written materials easy to understand</li> <li>• Does technology look modern</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reliability:</b></p> <p>Ability to perform promised service dependably and accurately</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a response is promised in a certain time, does it happen?</li> <li>• Are exact specifications of client followed?</li> <li>• Are statements or reports free of error?</li> <li>• Is service performed right the first time?</li> <li>• Is level of service same at all times of a day and for all members of staff?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responsiveness:</b></p> <p>Willingness to help customers to provide prompt service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When there is a problem, does organization respond to it quickly?</li> <li>• Are staff willing to answer client questions</li> <li>• Are specific times for service accomplishments given to client?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are public situations treated with care and seriousness</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competence:</b></p> <p>Possession of required skill and knowledge to perform service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can staff provide service without fumbling around?</li> <li>• Are materials provided appropriate and up to date?</li> <li>• Can staff use the technology quickly and skillfully</li> <li>• Does the staff appear to know what they are doing?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Courtesy:</b></p> <p>Politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do staff member have a pleasant demeanor?</li> <li>• Does staff refrain from acting busy or being rude when clients ask questions?</li> <li>• Are those who answer the telephone considerate and polite?</li> <li>• Do staffs observe consideration of the property and values of clients?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Credibility</b></p> <p>Trustworthiness, believability, honesty of the service provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does service organization have a good reputation?</li> <li>• Do staff members refrain from pressuring the client?</li> <li>• Are responses given accurate and consistent with other reliable sources?</li> <li>• Does organization guarantee its services?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Security:</b></p> <p>Freedom from danger, risk or doubt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it safe to enter the premises and to use the equipment?</li> <li>• Are documents and other information provided for the client held securely?</li> <li>• Are use records of clients safe from authorized</li> </ul>

	use?
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p> <p>Approachability and ease of contact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How easy is it to talk knowledgeable staff member when client has a problem?</li> <li>• Is it easy to reach the appropriate staff person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ -In person</li> <li>▪ -By telephone</li> <li>▪ -By email</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are services access points conveniently located</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication:</b></p> <p>Listening to customers and acknowledging their comments: Keeping customers informed in a language they can understand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When client contacts service point, will staff person listen to their problem and demonstrate understanding and concern?</li> <li>• Can staff explain clearly the various options available to a particular query?</li> <li>• Do staff avoid using technical jargon when speaking with clients</li> <li>• Does staff member call if scheduled appointments will be missed?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Understanding the customer:</b></p> <p>Making the effort to know customers and their needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does someone on staff recognize each regular client and address them by name?</li> <li>• Do staffs try to determine what clients specific objectives are?</li> <li>• Is level of service and cost of service consistent with what client requires and can afford?</li> <li>• Are service providers flexible enough to accommodate to client's schedule?</li> </ul>

Source: *Adapted from SERVQUAL, an instrument for measuring quality service developed by Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry and described in their book, Delivering Quality Service: Balancing customer perceptions and Expectations, Free press, 1990*



As earlier mentioned Parasuraman et al identified these 10 dimensions as a criteria that could be used by consumers in evaluating and measuring service quality. In subsequent research, they , Parasuraman et al found a high degree of correlation between several of these variable and so consolidated them to 5 broad dimensions namely ,tangibles (appearance of physical elements),Reliability (dependable ,accurate performance), Responsiveness (promptness and helpfulness),Assurance (competence, courtesy, credibility and security, Empathy-(easy access ,good communications and customer understanding. To measure the customer satisfaction with various aspects of service quality, they developed, the SERVQUAL which is based on the premise that customers can evaluate a firm service quality by comparing their perception of its services with their own expectations.

The SERVQUAL is seen as a generic measurement tool that can be applied across a broad spectrum of service industries. The scale contains 22 perceptions items and a series of expectations of the companies. Respondents are asked to record their perception of a specific company whose services they have used when perceived performance ratings are lower than expectations, it is an indication of poor quality and the reverse is true of good quality

However although it has been criticized for its generic dimensions, the achievement of SERVQUAL lies in its ability in identifying some of the key underlying constructs in service quality. However critics do highlight the difficulty in measuring customer's perceptions of quality and the need to customize dimensions. The SERVQUAL instrument of Parasuraman et al (1988) that measures service quality along five factors forms the cornerstone on which all other work have been built Sureshchander, Rajendra & Anatharaman,(2002). Researchers and managers of service firms concur that service quality is a measure of how well the service level matches customers' expectations. To complete the definition of service quality it must be emphasized that the measure of performance is essentially a measure of perceived performance. In other words, it is the customer's perception of performance that counts rather than the reality of performance. Thus where quality is concerned, perception is reality.

For this study, the focus therefore will be on the consolidated five dimensions namely tangibles , empathy, responsiveness, reliability and assurance as these are considered the key cornerstones that constructs of measure of service quality can be derived from (Parasuraman et al, 1988 )

## **2.7 Perceived Service Quality**

Perceived service quality is most often described as the discrepancy between customers' expectations and perceptions of performance Gronroos, (1983): Lewis and Booms, (1983): Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, (1985, 1988, and 1991). This is because of the inherent physical intangibility of services which makes mental processing extremely important but difficult. Service quality has to be separated from the level or service quantity as this is purely quality. The quality of service varies daily from, service provider to service provider and from customer to customer According to Zeithaml (1988), perceived quality is different from actual quality, a higher level abstraction rather than a specific attribute of a product, a global assessment that in some cases resembles attitude and a judgment usually made within consumers evoked set.

Perceived quality is firstly a perception by customers of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to intended purpose, relative to alternatives. Zeithaml (1988) adds that perceived quality cannot be objectively determined in part because it is a perception and also because judgment about what is important to customers is involved. Perceived service quality represents the customers' judgment of an organization services based on their overall experience of the service encounter. Understanding how customers arrive at this evaluation i.e. Whether or not they are satisfied with a specific service is important for service marketing management.

## **2.8 Service Quality Gaps**

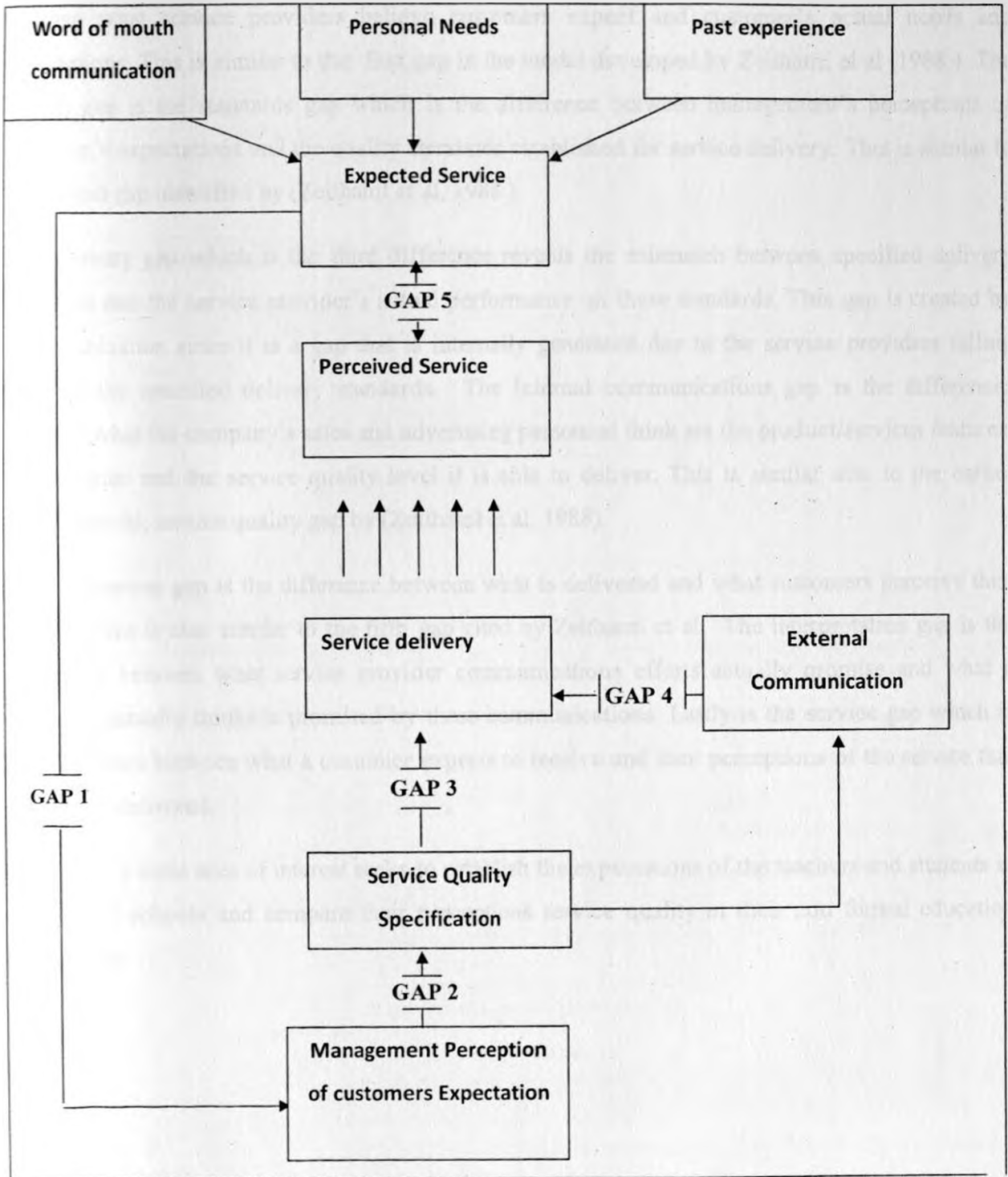
Ongoing market research needs to be undertaken to reveal customer expectations and perceptions and this will lead to reducing service quality gaps. These gaps arise whenever there is a discrepancy between the customers' expectations and the service actually delivered. Service quality gaps can arise internally especially when managers don't fully know what customers expect or when they are not fully committed to tailoring the services to meet customers' expectations .It can also arise when the performance of service delivering personnel fail to fulfill customers expectations. For quality to be realized, service delivery must match the expectations of customers at that point in time and in relation to that specific transaction.

The Gaps model is a useful tool in identifying and correcting service quality problems. . If one accepts the view that quality entails consistently meeting or exceeding customer's expectations , the service providers mandate is to balance customer's expectations and perceptions and to close any gaps between the two. The size of the gap indicates where improvements should be made, thereby facilitating in the establishment of clear standards for service delivery.

Zeithaml, et al (1988), identify 4 potential gaps within the service organization that may lead to a 5<sup>th</sup> and most serious final gap which is the difference between customer's expectation and their perception of service outcome. The first gap arises due to management not knowing what customers expect. This gap can be reduced if a market research orientation is adopted in an organization. The second gap arises as a result of managements' expectations of service quality not matching the service quality specifications. This invariably leads to wrong or ill-defined service quality standards. The third gap that arises is known as the service performance gap. It arises as a result of the service delivered by the organization falling short of the customers' expectation. This has great implication for the organization as it means that they must constantly strive to maintain superior quality in all their service encounters.

Gap four arises when the organizations promise of offerings and service do not match delivery. In such a case an accurate and appropriate marketing communication mix is required. The communication must be relevant and accurate, not one that overstretches unattainable promises. The last gap is the difference between the perceived quality and expected services. The key to narrowing this gap is to reduce or close gaps 1 to 4. This can be done through integrating a customer focus orientation, In addition an appropriate system design and a trained work force that is committed to delivering outstanding customer service every time must be adopted.

**Figure 2: Service Quality Gaps Model**



SOURCE: A Parasuraman, Valarie.A, Zeithaml and Leonard, L.Berry, "A conceptual model of Service Quality and its implications for future Research," *Journal of marketing* 1985.pg 44.

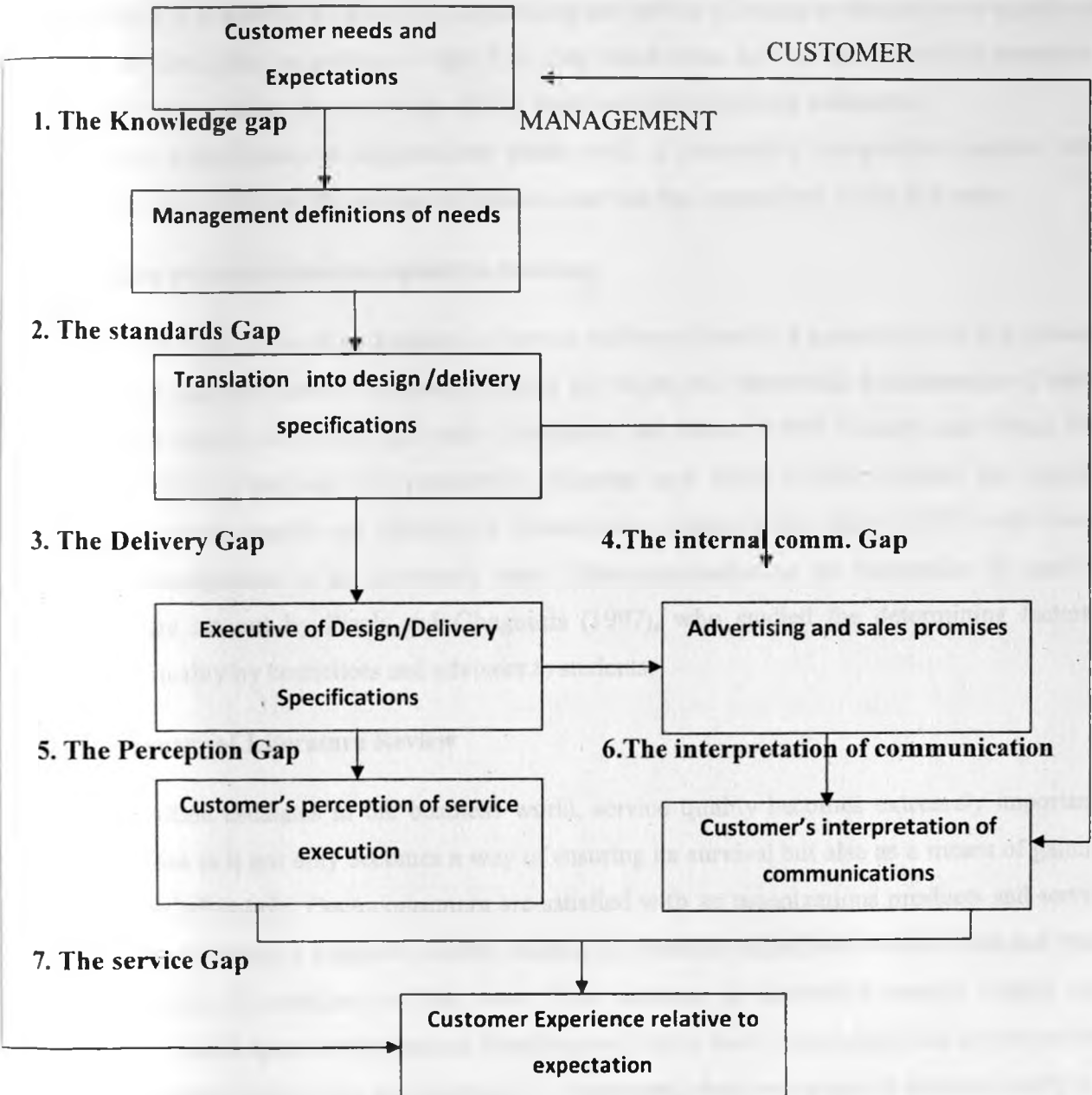
Lovelock, (1994) identifies seven gaps, the first being the knowledge gap which is the difference between what service providers believe customers expect and customer's actual needs and expectations. This is similar to the first gap in the model developed by Zeithaml et al (1988 ). The second gap is the standards gap which is the difference between management's perceptions of customer's expectations and the quality standards established for service delivery. This is similar to the second gap identified by (Zeithaml et al, 1988 ).

The delivery gap which is the third difference reveals the mismatch between specified delivery standards and the service provider's actual performance on these standards. This gap is created by the organization since it is a gap that is internally generated due to the service providers falling short of the specified delivery standards. The Internal communications gap is the differences between what the company's sales and advertising personnel think are the product/services features, performance and the service quality level it is able to deliver. This is similar also to the earlier mentioned 4th service quality gap by (Zeithaml et al, 1988).

The perception gap is the difference between what is delivered and what customers perceive they receive. This is also similar to the fifth gap cited by Zeithaml et al. The interpretation gap is the difference between what service provider communications efforts actually promise and what a customer actually thinks is promised by these communications. Lastly is the service gap which is the difference between what a customer expects to receive and their perceptions of the service that is actually delivered.

This study's main area of interest seeks to establish the expectations of the teachers and students in non-formal schools and compare their perceptions service quality in their non formal education institutions.

**Figure 3: Seven Service Quality Gap**



Source: The 7 Gaps model by Christopher Lovelock, Product Plus, New York; Mc Graw-Hill, 1994, page: 112

Organizations must continually conduct service quality audits as it provides an assessment of what is currently happening within the organization. Such audits will reveal how near or far the organization is in getting it right. That is matching the service offerings to the customer expectation. Quality is "free" that is, getting it right first time round costs far less than providing remedies or taking corrective action when services fail to meet customers required standards.

Comparing performance to expectations works well in reasonably competitive markets where customers have sufficient knowledge to choose a service that meets their needs and wants.

## **2.9 Quality of service models applied to teaching**

Because the work of teaching consists of service delivery, there is a growing trend that considers teaching as a special case of customer service for which the theoretical fundamentals of service quality and market orientation are valid (Fernandez and Meteo, 1992; Giacobe and Segal, 1994; Stafford, 1994). Applying this perspective, Giacobe and Segal (1994) adapted the model of evaluating service quality put forward by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1995) to the case of teaching management at the university level. Other approaches to the perception of quality in teaching are set out by Plank and Chagouris (1997), who studied the determining factors of perceived quality by councilors and advisors to students.

## **2.10 Summary of Literature Review**

As competition escalates in the business world, service quality becomes extremely important to organizations as it not only becomes a way of ensuring its survival but also as a means of gaining a competitive advantage. Once consumers are satisfied with an organization's products and services, then firms can charge a premium thereby reaping the benefits of healthier bottom lines and greater profit margins. In addition to this, once firms embrace a discernible service quality value proposition that is apparent throughout, then firms will have fewer complaints, less corrective work, greater customer satisfaction and retention. To customers, their perception of service quality is the reality. Thus firms must constantly strive to ensure that customers' expectations of service quality are met if not exceeded as this forms the basis upon which their perceptions are made. This has great managerial implications since it will require firms to be proactive in terms of evaluating and monitoring what really matters to customers. Upon realizing service quality gaps firms should strive



to bridge or reduce the gaps as these could potentially be areas where customers experience dissatisfaction.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This is a descriptive survey study which aimed at determining the perceptions of quality of education by students and teachers in Non-Formal educational institutions in Mombasa. Donald and Donald (1998) assert that such a descriptive study is concerned with finding out, who, what, when, where and how of a phenomenon. This kind of research design has been used by Njoroge (2003) Mwangi and Mwendab (1986) and Oduwa (2004) in related studies.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), descriptive research determines and reports the way things are. It attempts to describe such things as possible behavior, attitudes, values and characteristics.

### The Population of the Study

The population of interest in this study consisted of all Non-Formal Education Schools in Mombasa District. There were 13 Non-Formal Schools within this District. According to the Mombasa District Education Office (2000), the total population of the students is 3012 and 190 teachers. The study adopted the Mombasa Municipal Education Office's classification of a non-formal school.

### Sample and sample design

A sample size of 104 students and 30 senior teachers were taken for this study to represent the total population. Stratified random sampling was used to select the students and teachers to be included in the study. The population had two strata namely the students and teachers.

### Data Collection Method

Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire which was given to students and teachers and picked up later by the researcher. The questionnaires were administered through the door-to-door and collection later method. The questionnaire consisted of 4 parts. The first part contained questions aimed at obtaining demographic data on respondents and schools. The second part



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This was a descriptive survey study which aimed at determining the perceptions of quality of service by students and teachers in Non-Formal educational institutions in Mombasa. Donald and Pamela (1998) assert that such a descriptive study is concerned with finding out who, what, when and how of a phenomenon. This kind of research design has been used by Njoroge (2003) Mwaura (2001), Mwendah (1986) and Odawa (2004) in related studies.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), descriptive research determines and reports the way things are. It attempts to describe such things as possible behavior, attitudes, values and characteristics.

#### **3.2 The Population of the Study**

The population of interest in this study consisted of all Non Formal Education Schools in Mombasa District. There were 13 Non Formal Schools within this District. According to the Mombasa Municipal Education Office (2009), the total population of the students is 3612 and 190 teachers. This study adopted the Mombasa Municipal Education Office's classification of a non-formal school.

#### **3.3 Sample and sample design**

A sample size of 104 students and 30 senior teachers were taken for this study to represent the total population. Stratified random sampling was used to select the students and teachers to be included for the study. The population had two strata's namely the students and teachers.

#### **3.4 Data Collection Method**

The primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire which was given to students and teachers and picked up later by the researcher. The questionnaires were administered through delivery and collection later method. The questionnaire consisted of 4 parts. The first part contained questions aimed at obtaining demographic data on respondents and teachers. The second part

contained questions to determine the expectations on quality of service by teachers and students offered. The third statements designed to obtain the factors considered important in the assessment of quality of service. Lastly the fourth part contained questions to establish the perception of teachers and students on the quality of service in this educational subsector.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze part 1 of the questionnaire. Mean and standard deviations were used to analyze and compare data on part 2 and 4 of the questionnaire to establish the perceptions of service quality in Non- Formal schools. Visual representations like tables were also used to present the analyzed data.

*(The following table is extremely faint and its content is illegible. It appears to be a data table with multiple columns and rows.)*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
...	...	...
...	...	...
...	...	...

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the findings and possible interpretation of the study based on information gathered after the research study carried out in the selected non-formal schools. The chapter deals with the analysis, presentation and interpretation of the data collected during the research. The data collected was edited coded and analyzed for easy understanding of the findings. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze data on the general information. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to determine the perceptions of teachers and students to the quality of services offered in the non –formal schools.

From the 104 questionnaires sent out to the students of the various non-formal schools and the 30 questionnaires sent to the teachers of the schools, the response rate obtained from the students was 77% while the teachers had a response rate of 76%. This translates to an average of 77 % from both respondents and this response rate is deemed satisfactory. Table 2 illustrates the response rate as per the research.

**Table 2: Response rate of Teachers and students**

Category	Total population	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teachers	30	23	76
Students	104	80	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>77</b>

Source: Research data (2009)

## 4.2 Demographics of the Teachers and Student

Table 2 shows the gender demographics of the teachers and the students' respondents from the various non-formal schools selected for the study.

### 4.2.1: Gender Distribution of the teachers and students respondents

The table below illustrates the gender distribution of the teachers and students in the non-formal schools. According to the research data, the majority of the respondents were female for both the teachers and students. In the case of the teachers, 65% of the respondents were female while 35 % were male. For the case of students, the female respondents were 60% while the male respondents were 40%.

**Table 3: Gender distribution of teachers and students respondents**

<b>Gender distribution profile of the respondents</b>				
	<i>Teachers</i>		<i>Students</i>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Male</b>	8	35%	32	40%
<b>Female</b>	15	65%	48	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

### 4.2.2: Teachers and students duration in the current school

Table 4 shows the teachers and students length of time in the current non-formal school. According to the table, the vast majority of teachers and students have been in the current non-formal school for less than 5 years. At least 78 % of the teacher respondents and 58% of the students' respondents have been in the present school for less than 5 years. None of the student respondents had been in the school for more than 10 years due to the obvious fact that the normal length of stay is 8 years in the primary section.

**Table 4: Teachers and students duration in the current school**

Respondents duration in current school				
	<i>Teachers</i>		<i>Students</i>	
Category	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
under 1 year	2	9%	5	6%
under 5 yrs	18	78%	46	58%
under 10 yrs	2	9%	29	36%
over 10 yrs	1	4%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

#### 4.2.3: Teachers and students respondents' ages

The results show that majority that is 39% of the teachers were aged between 36-40 years while the majority representing 55 % of the students respondents were 14 years of age. In the case of the teachers there was only 1 respondent over 51 years while there was no student over 19 years of age.

**Table 5: Teachers and students ages**

Respondents ages					
<i>Teachers</i>			<i>Students</i>		
Age in years	Frequency	%	Age in years	Frequency	%
20-25	3	13%	12	4	5%
25-30	2	9%	13	18	23%
31-35	5	22%	14	44	55%
36-40	9	39%	15	10	13%
41-45	1	4%	16	3	4%
46-50	2	9%	18	1	1%
Above 51	1	4%	19	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

#### 4.3 Teachers and students expectations of service quality

The teachers and students were asked to fill in their expectations of quality of service using a five point likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5 ) to strongly disagree (1 ). The expectations were

based on the five series dimensions of service quality namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

For this study a mean score of  $< 1.5$  implies that expectations on these attributes were rated as very poor and they strongly disagree that the attribute is not an important attribute in quality of service measurement. A mean score of  $1.5 - 2.5$  implies that the attribute is ranked as poor and thus the respondent disagree that it is not an important attribute in the evaluation of service quality. A mean score of ranging from  $2.51 - 3.5$  shows that their expectations of service quality on those attributes were quite fair. A mean score of  $3.51 - 4.5$ , indicates that the attribute was rated as a good measure or attribute of quality service and so the respondents would have high expectations of these attributes in their service encounters. An average mean score of  $>$  than  $4.51$ , gives the indication that the attribute is rated as very good and so the respondents will have very high expectations that these attributes would be present or discernible in their service encounters.

A standard deviation of  $< 1$  implies that there weren't any significant variations in the responses of the respondents. A standard deviation of  $>$  than  $1$  implies that there were significant variations in the responses.

#### 4.3.1 Tangibles

**Table 6: Teachers and students expectations on Tangibles**

<b>Respondents Expectations</b>					
<b>TANGIBLES</b>					
<i>Factor No</i>	<i>Attributes/Factors</i>	<i>Teachers</i>		<i>Students</i>	
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>
1	Modern Equipment	3.26	0.77	4.14	0.84
2	Physical Facilities	4.04	0.69	4.11	0.66
3	Neat personnel	3.87	1.07	4.11	0.86
4	Communication	4.04	0.79	4.18	0.73
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.77</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

Table 5 gives findings on the expectations of the teacher and student respondents. It also confirms that the 4 items selected under the tangibles are generally highly ranked as dimensions that measure

quality of service. The students had a consistently high rating of over 4 in all the tangibles dimensions suggesting that they had high expectations of the service quality . An examination of the standard deviation also reveals that there weren't any significant variations in their responses. This is because a standard deviation of less than 1 denotes that there were no significant variations in the responses.

The findings also reveal that the highest ranked quality dimensions, among the tangibles, for the teachers, were the visual appeal of the communication materials such as learning and visual aids and the physical facilities of the school. The average mean score for the 2 dimensions were 4.04. This implies that the communicational materials and the physical facilities in the school were attributes that the teachers considered highly important, in their expectations of what an excellent school would have. For the tangible attribute on neatness of personnel, there was a standard deviation of 1.07 for the teachers and 0.86 for the students. This reveals that not all teachers viewed neatness of personnel as a strong indicator or determinant of service quality.

In the case of the students, the most highly ranked tangible dimension was the visual appeal of the communicational materials with a mean score of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 0.86, revealing that the students had high expectations of this tangible attributes. The standard deviation was less than 1 in all the factors that make up the tangibles. This indicates that there were no significant variations in the students' expectations, so deductions can be made that generally the tangibles are considered as an important service quality dimension.

#### 4.3.2 Reliability

**Table 7: Respondents expectations on the reliability factors**

RELIABILITY		Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Factor No</i>	<i>Attributes/Factors</i>	<i>Teachers</i>		<i>Students</i>	
5	Fulfillment of service promise	4.61	0.5	4.49	0.69
6	Problem solving	4.52	0.65	4.45	0.76
7	Doing things right	4.61	0.69	4.16	0.8
8	Dependability	4.17	0.88	3.86	0.92
9	Error free record	4.13	0.79	3.53	1.07
<b>Average</b>		<b>4.41</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>0.85</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

For the reliability dimension, most of the scores were high with the factor obtaining a mean score of 4.41 for the teachers and a mean score of 4.1 for the students. The highest ranked attribute under the reliability factor for the teachers, was getting things done right, first time around. This obtained a mean score of 4.61 and a standard deviation of 0.69 showing that there were no significant variations in the responses. This suggests that getting things done right was considered as a prerequisite to quality education.

On the part of the students, the highest ranked reliability factor was the fulfillment of the schools promise to deliver. This is due to the fact that academic issues take prominence among students as this is the reason they are in school in the first place. This attribute obtained a mean score of 4.49 which is very high attesting to its importance. It had a standard deviation of 0.69, revealing that there was not significant variation in the responses. The quality dimension that had the least average mean score for this reliability dimension among the teacher respondents was the error-free records which had a mean score of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 0.77. Interesting enough it also obtained the least mean score among the student body with a mean score of 3.53 .The standard deviation of 1.07 for the instilling confidence in the students attribute, shows that there was significant variation among the student respondents.

### 4.3.3: Responsiveness

**Table 8: Teachers and students expectations on responsiveness factors**

RESPONSIVENESS		Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Factor No</i>	<i>Attributes/Factors</i>	<i>Teachers</i>		<i>Students</i>	
10	Teacher's responsiveness.	3.96	0.78	4.23	0.84
11	Prompt services	4.09	0.59	4.24	0.68
12	Helpfulness of staff	4.35	0.92	4.43	0.63
13	Timely intervention	4.35	0.98	4.3	0.62
<b>Average</b>		<b>4.19</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>0.69</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

Responsiveness which was the third service quality construct in the 5 service quality attributes was also highly rated revealing that it is indeed an important factor in the expectation of service quality. Among the teacher respondents, the highest rated responsiveness attribute in their expectations of



service quality was the teachers' willingness to help and their timely responses to problems. Both these obtained a mean score of 4.35 and a standard deviation of 0.92 and 0.98 respectively.

For the student respondents the highest mean score was obtained in the teachers' willingness to help, quality construct. The mean expectation score for this attribute was 4.43 and it had a standard deviation of 0.63. The attribute with the least mean score for the reliability dimension for the students was the teachers responsiveness to their requests for assistance. This attribute had a standard deviation of 0.83, since it is below 1 it indicates that there weren't any significant variations in the responses.

#### 4.3.4: Assurance

**Table 9: Respondents expectations on the assurance factor**

ASSURANCE		Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Factor No</i>	<i>Attributes/Factors</i>	<i>Teachers</i>		<i>Students</i>	
14	Instilling confidence	4.48	1.01	4.05	0.94
15	Safety	4.13	0.92	4.03	0.99
16	Courtesy	4.17	0.66	3.99	0.86
17	Knowledgeability	4.26	0.42	4.09	0.86
<b>Average</b>		<b>4.26</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.91</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

The fourth service quality attribute among the 5 factors mentioned earlier, is assurance. The analysis reveals that in the case of the teachers there was generally a high expectation of the attribute in their assessment of service quality. The average means score for all the dimensions that make up the assurance attributes stood at 4.26. This gives an indication that the attribute was highly ranked and highly considered in the perception of service quality.

The students generally had high expectations of the assurance attributes. The average mean score for this attribute was 4.04 with Knowledgeability of teachers being the most highly ranked attribute. The standard deviation of 0.91, shows that there were no significant variations in the responses.

### 4.3.5: Empathy

**Table 10: Respondents expectations on empathy**

<b>EMPATHY</b>		Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Factor No</i>	<i>Attributes/Factors</i>	<i>Teachers</i>		<i>Students</i>	
18	Individual Attention	4.39	0.51	4.09	0.84
19	Convenience timings	4.78	0.51	4.25	0.74
20	Flexibility	4.52	0.75	4.31	0.8
21	Customers interest	4.26	0.58	4.3	0.8
22	Customer needs	4.39	0.55	4.28	0.64
<b>Average</b>		<b>4.47</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.76</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

The analysis of the empathy attribute reveals that it was an important aspect in the consideration of quality since it consistently obtained a mean score of 4.47 for the teachers and 4.25 for the students. The highest ranked attribute among the teachers was convenient timings with a mean score of 4.78 for the teachers. The least in rank among the empathy attributes was catering for student's interest which had a mean score of 4.26 for the students.

In the case of the students, the most highly ranked attribute among the empathy attributes was catering for their customers' needs with a mean score of 4.30 while, individualized attention had the lowest mean of 4.09 among the students. Most of the responses had standard deviations of less than 1, indicating that there were no major differences or variations in the responses.

#### 4.3.6: Average expectations of Teachers and students

Table 11: Overall respondents' expectations of the 5 factors

Factors	Teachers		Students	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Tangibles	3.8	0.83	4.14	0.77
Reliability	4.41	0.7	4.1	0.85
Responsiveness	4.19	0.82	4.3	0.69
Assurance	4.26	0.75	4.04	0.91
Empathy	4.47	0.58	4.25	0.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>0.80</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

The overall expectation summary for both teachers and students shows that the overall mean score for all the 5 consolidated attributes were generally quite high. For the teachers, the average mean score was 4.23 giving a clear indication that these attributes are perceived as important expectations of service quality.

The students also had an average mean score of 4.17, which shows that these attributes too, were considered as important expectations in service quality. In both cases the standard deviation was 0.74 and 0.81 for the teachers and students respectively. This suggests that there were no great variations in terms of the teachers and students expectations of service quality.

#### 4.4 Assessment of Perceptions of the respondents

For this study a mean score of  $< 1.5$  implies that perceptions of these attributes were rated as very poor and that respondents strongly disagree that the attribute is not highly perceived as an attribute during the service encounter. A mean score of  $1.5 - 2.5$  implies that the perception of the attribute is ranked as poor. A mean score of ranging from  $2.51 - 3.5$  shows that their perceptions of service quality on those attributes were quite fair. A mean score of  $3.51 - 4.5$ , indicates that the perception of the attribute was rated as good. An average mean score of  $>$  than  $4.51$ , gives the indication that the attribute is perceived and rated as very good and so the respondents will have very high perceptions that these attributes are discernible in their service encounters.

A standard deviation of  $< 1$  implies that there weren't any significant variations in the responses of the respondents. A standard deviation of  $>$  than  $1$  implies that there were significant variations in the responses.

##### 4.4.1 Tangibles

**Table 12: Respondents perceptions of Tangibles**

<b>Respondents Perceptions</b>					
<b>TANGIBLES</b>					
<i>Factor No</i>	<i>Attributes/Factors</i>	<i>Teachers</i>		<i>Students</i>	
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>
1	Modern Equipment	3.26	1.03	3.65	1.35
2	Physical Facility	4.04	3.17	0.76	1.01
3	Neat personnel	3.87	3.3	0.96	0.94
4	Communication	3.26	0.94	3.79	0.85
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.61</b>	<b>2.11</b>	<b>2.29</b>	<b>1.04</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

Generally the tangibles attributes had an average mean of 3.24 and 3.15 for the teachers and students respectively. In addition it had a standard deviation of 0.92 and 1.04 for the teachers and students respectively. Hence, this means that the respondents had a fair perception of the attributes.

For the teachers, the highest ranked factor was the neatness of personnel with a mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.96. The least ranked factor was physical facility with a mean of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 0.76.

For the students, the highest factor was also neatness of personnel with a mean of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 0.94. The lowest ranked factor was modernity of the equipment with a mean of 3.65 and a standard deviation of 1.35. This standard deviation of more than 1 reveals that there were significant variations in the responses for this attribute.

#### 4.4.2: Reliability

**Table 13: Table on respondents' reliability perceptions**

RELIABILITY		Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
<i>Factor No</i>	<i>Attributes/Factors</i>	<i>Teachers</i>		<i>Students</i>	
5	Fulfillment of service promise	3.61	1.07	4.23	0.87
6	Problem solving	3.65	1	4.38	0.86
7	Doing things right	3.78	0.83	4.08	0.95
8	Dependability	3.65	0.79	4.08	0.98
9	Error free record	3.35	0.85	3.5	1.2
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.61</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>0.97</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

There was generally a high average mean score of the perception of 3.61 among the attributes under the reliability dimension. The most highly rated attribute among the teachers was found to be "doing things right" with a mean of 3.78 and standard deviation of 0.83. The lowest ranked attribute was the error free record with a mean of 3.35 denoting a fair perception and a standard deviation of 0.85.

There was also a high perception of 4.05 among the attributes under the reliability construct for the students. The most highly ranked attribute was the problem solving ability of staff which had a mean of 4.38 and a standard deviation of 0.86. The results show that there were generally no significant variations in the responses.

The lowest ranked attribute among the student body within the reliability dimension was also error free records with a mean of 3.50 and standard deviation of 1.20. The mean score represents that the perception of quality of service among the students were quite fair.

#### 4.4.3: Responsiveness

**Table 14: Respondents Perceptions on the responsiveness dimension**

RESPONSIVENESS		Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Factor No	Attributes/Factors	Teachers		Students	
10	Teacher's responsiveness.	3.09	0.7	3.21	1.05
11	Prompt services	3.7	1.02	3.95	1.08
12	Helpfulness	3.7	0.73	3.89	1.08
13	Timeliness of intervention	3.91	0.74	4.19	0.97
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>1.05</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

Both the teachers and students responses reveal a fair perception of service quality with the average of the mean score of 3.60 and 3.81 which is fairly good. The highest ranked attributes among the teachers was found to be timeliness of intervention with a mean of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 0.74. The lowest ranked attribute among the teachers is the teachers' responsiveness which had a mean of 3.09 and a standard deviation of 0.70 therefore showing their perception is rated as fair.

In the case of the students, the most highly ranked responsiveness attribute is the timeliness of teachers' invention with a mean of 4.91 and a standard deviation of 0.97. The lowest ranked attribute among the students was found to be the teachers responsive with a mean 3.21 and standard of 1.05. This implies that the students' perceptions of this attribute were fair, there was a significant variation in the responses as implied by the standard development of more than 1.

#### 4.4.4: Assurance

**Table 15: Respondents Perceptions on Assurance dimensions**

ASSURANCE		Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Factor No	Attributes/Factors	Teachers		Students	
14	Instilling confidence	3.78	0.89	3.33	1.24
15	Safety	3.61	0.85	3.79	1.35
16	Courtesy	3.91	0.99	3.26	1.45
17	Knowledgeability	3.43	0.72	3.95	0.93
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.68</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>1.24</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

Generally the perception on the assurance attribute was rated as fair with an average mean of 3.68 and 3.58 for the teachers and students respectively. This attribute had a standard development of 0.86 and 1.24 for the teachers and students respectively. From the students standard deviation we can deduce that there was significant variation in the responses.

The mostly highly ranked attribute factor among the teachers was courtesy with a mean of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 0.99. The lowest ranked factor was Knowledgeability with a mean of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 0.72.

Students on the other hand ranked Knowledgeability as the most important factor with a mean of 3.95 and a standard of 0.93. The least ranked assurance attribute was courtesy with a mean of 3.26 and a standard development of 1.45. This shows that the factor courtesy was perceived as fair. However of interest is the significant variation as evidenced by the standard development of over 1.4.

#### 4.4.5: Empathy

**Table 16: Respondents perceptions on Empathy dimension**

EMPATHY		Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Factor No	Attributes/Factors	Teachers		Students	
18	Individualized Attention	3.83	0.76	3.7	1.07
19	Convenience of timings	3.87	0.82	3.83	1.04
20	Flexibility of timings	3.7	0.84	3.93	1.22
21	Caters for Customers interest	3.61	0.87	4.06	1.08
22	Caters for Customer needs	3.87	0.76	4.15	0.84
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.78</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>1.05</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

Generally the responses reveal that this attribute was perceived as good, with an average mean of 3.87 for the teachers and 3.93 for the students, and a standard deviation of 0.82 for the teachers and 1.05 for the students. This reveals that there was considerable variation in the responses of the students.

For the teachers, the most highly perceived factor was convenience of timing and catering for customers and students needs, with a mean score of 3.87 with a standard deviation of 0.82 and 0.87

respectively. The least highly ranked attribute was catering for the customers interests with a mean of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 0.87.

In the students' case, the highest ranked attributes was catering for the students need with a mean of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.07. This reveals that there was a considerable variation of responses. For the school management it would mean that more readily perceivable courtesy towards the students would have to be embraced.

#### 4.4.6: Overall Perceptions of Teachers and Students

**Table 17: Overall perceptions of Teachers and students**

Factors	Teachers		Students		Variations	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Tangibles	3.61	2.11	2.29	1.04	1.32	1.07
Reliability	3.61	0.98	4.05	0.97	-0.44	0.01
Responsiveness	3.6	0.8	3.81	1.05	-0.21	-0.25
Assurance	3.68	0.86	3.58	1.24	0.1	-0.38
Empathy	3.78	0.81	3.93	1.05	-0.15	-0.24
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>0.124</b>	<b>0.042</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

The overall perception summary for the teachers and students, of the five service quality dimensions, reveal that there wasn't much of a discrepancy between the teachers and students perceptions of service quality. The average mean score for the five factors was 3.66 for the teachers and 3.53 for the students as opposed to their average expectation score which was 4.23 and 4.17 for teachers and pupils respectively. The average standard deviation stood at 1.11 for the teachers and



1.07 for the students again showing that though there were significant variations between the responses the variations in the score between the two groups of the respondents were negligible.

#### 4.4.7: Combined Perceptions of respondents

**Table 18: Average Combined Perceptions of respondents**

Average Perceptions of teachers and students					
	Teachers	Students	total	Average	
	Mean				
	Per	Per			
<b>Tangibles</b>	3.25	3.74	6.99	<b>3.50</b>	
<b>Reliability</b>	3.61	3.96	7.57	<b>3.79</b>	
<b>Responsiveness</b>	3.6	3.95	7.55	<b>3.78</b>	
<b>Assurance</b>	3.68	3.58	7.26	<b>3.63</b>	
<b>Empathy</b>	3.78	3.93	7.71	<b>3.86</b>	
<b>averages</b>	3.584	3.832			

Source: Research Data (2009)

The table above reveals the combined average means of the perceptions of the teachers and students. For the tangible attribute the combined average perception was 3.50. This score shows that there is a discernible difference between the overall expectations and perceptions. Thus it is right to say that there was a perceived gap. The reliability attribute had a combined mean perception of 3.79, while the responsiveness attribute had a combined average perception of 3.78. The assurance and empathy attribute had a combined mean perception of 3.63 and 3.86 respectively.

#### 4.5: Differences between Respondent's Expectations and Perception's of Non Formal Schools

The following section will examine the differences between the respondents' expectations and their perceptions along the 5 dimension series.

##### 4.5.1: Tangibles

Perceived Service quality is the difference between the expectations and perceptions of the individual during the service encounter. An examination of the differences in the respondents' expectations and perceptions does reveal that there is indeed a perceived service quality gap among

both respondents. Also of interest is that the differences seem more apparent among the teachers in this tangibles dimension.

**Table 19: Differences between Respondent's Expectations and Perception's of Tangibles**

Difference between Respondent's Expectations and Perception								
Tangibles								
Factor No	Teachers				Students			
	Mean		Std dev		Mean		Std dev	
	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per
1	3.26	3.26	0.77	1.03	4.14	3.63	0.84	1.38
2	4.04	3.17	0.69	0.76	4.11	3.66	0.66	1.01
3	3.87	3.3	1.07	0.96	4.11	3.86	0.86	0.96
4	4.04	3.26	0.72	0.94	4.18	3.79	0.73	0.85

Source: Research Data (2009)

#### 4.5.2: Reliability

**Table 20: Differences in Reliability attributes**

Reliability								
Factor No	Teachers				Students			
	Mean		Std dev		Mean		Std dev	
	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per
5	4.61	3.61	0.79	1.07	4.49	4.24	0.69	0.86
6	4.51	3.65	0.5	1	4.45	4.38	0.76	0.86
7	4.61	3.78	0.65	0.83	4.16	4.08	0.8	0.95
8	4.17	3.65	0.69	0.93	3.86	3.9	0.92	0.98
9	4.13	3.35	0.88	0.85	3.53	3.21	1.07	1.2
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.97</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

Table 19 above reveals again that there exist disparities between the teachers and students perceptions and expectations in all the factors that make up the reliability attributes. However an examination of the extent of the disparity of the perceptions between the teachers and students shows that the disparity is more pronounced among the teacher respondents compared to the students.

### 4.5.3: Responsiveness

**Table 21: Differences in Responsiveness attribute**

Responsiveness								
	Teachers				Students			
Factor No	Mean		Std dev		Mean		Std dev	
	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per
10	3.96	3.09	0.99	0.7	4.23	3.95	0.84	1.05
11	4.09	3.7	0.78	1.02	4.24	3.75	0.68	1.08
12	4.35	3.7	0.59	0.73	4.43	3.89	0.63	1.08
13	4.48	3.91	0.92	0.74	4.3	4.19	0.82	0.97
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>1.05</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

Generally from the research data, it is clear that again there are discrepancies between the teachers and students perceptions and expectations in the responsiveness attributes. For the teachers the mean score for their perceptions of the responsiveness attributes stood at 3.6 while their expectations had a mean score of 4.22. The students' perception mean scores for all the dimensions of the responsiveness attributes stood at 3.95 as compared to their expectations of 4.3.

### 4.5.4: Assurance

**Table 22: Differences in Assurance attribute**

Assurance								
	Teachers				Students			
Factor No	Mean		Std dev		Mean		Std dev	
	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per
14	4.13	3.78	0.98	0.89	4.05	3.33	0.94	1.24
15	4.17	3.61	1.01	0.85	4.03	3.79	0.99	1.35
16	4.26	3.91	0.92	0.99	3.99	3.26	0.86	1.45
17	4.26	3.43	0.66	0.72	4.09	3.95	0.86	0.93
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>1.24</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

The above scenario again reveals that there is an obvious difference between the respondents' expectations and their perception of the Assurance attribute. Again the disparity is more apparent among the teachers rather than the students. Among the assurance attribute the teachers' mean

average expectation was 4.21 and a mean average perception of 3.68 revealing again that there was a perceived difference in the service delivery. In the case of students, the mean average expectation was 4.04 and a mean perception of 3.58. Again, this reveals that there was a perceived variation in terms of the respondents' perceptions and expectations as far as the assurance attribute is concerned.

#### 4.5.5: Empathy

**Table 23: Differences in Empathy attribute**

<b>Empathy</b>								
	<b>Teachers</b>				<b>Students</b>			
<b>Factor No</b>	<b>Mean</b>		<b>Std dev</b>		<b>Mean</b>		<b>Std dev</b>	
	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Per</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Per</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Per</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Per</i>
18	4.39	3.83	0.42	0.76	4.09	3.7	0.84	1.07
19	4.78	3.87	0.51	0.82	4.25	3.83	0.74	1.04
20	4.52	3.7	0.75	0.84	4.31	3.93	0.8	1.22
21	4.26	3.61	0.58	0.87	4.3	4.06	0.8	1.08
22	4.39	3.87	0.55	0.76	4.28	4.15	0.64	0.83
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.47</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>1.05</b>

Source: Research Data (2009)

The research data reveals that indeed there are differences between the teachers and students expectations and perceptions and that the differences are more glaring among the teacher respondents than among the students. Broadly speaking, the empathy attributes as revealed a similar trend of having a perceived gap between their expectations and perceptions. In the case of the teachers, the mean average expectation was 4.47 and the mean average perception was 3.78 showing again that there was a perceived service quality gap.

The students had a mean average expectation of 4.25 and a mean average perception of 3.93. Again this is in keeping with the findings in the other attributes. This implies that there were similarities in terms of the perceived service quality gap among the respondents.

#### 4.6: Overall Difference between Respondent's Expectations and Perception's of Non Formal Schools

**Table 24: Differences in respondents' perceptions and expectation**

Attribute	Teachers				Students			
	Mean		Std dev		Mean		Std dev	
	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per	Exp	Per
Tangibles	3.8	3.25	0.81	0.92	4.14	3.74	0.77	1.05
Reliability	4.41	3.61	0.7	0.94	4.1	3.96	0.85	0.97
Responsiveness	4.22	3.6	0.82	0.8	4.3	3.95	0.74	1.05
Assurance	4.21	3.68	0.89	0.86	4.04	3.58	0.91	1.24
Empathy	4.47	3.78	0.56	0.81	4.25	3.93	0.76	1.05
Totals	21.11	17.92	3.78	4.33	20.83	19.1	4.03	5.36
Averages	4.222	3.584	0.756	0.866	4.166	3.83	0.806	1.072

Source: Author (2009)

Table 23 above reveals that indeed there are significant discrepancies between the expectations and the perception of both the teachers and the students. The overall mean of the teachers' expectations was 4.22 as compared to their average perception of 3.58. This gives an indication that there was a perceived service quality gap. For students it would also be equally correct to say that there were significant disparities between their expectations and perceptions as evidenced by the difference between the average expectations and the perceptions.

#### 4.7 Critical or Main attributes of service quality in NFE

In trying to establish the most pertinent issues in the teachers and students perception of service quality, the respondents of the study were given 22 statements which hinged upon the 5 series service quality construct of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Respondents were asked to rank them in order to their importance. Below is the result of the analysis.

**Table 25: Ranking of the most important service quality attribute for respondents**

Ranking of the SERVQUAL Results of the Respondents									
	Teachers			Students			Average		
	Importance			Importance			Importance		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
<b>Tangibles</b>	17%	30%	13%	16%	31%	23%	17%	31%	22%
<b>Reliability</b>	65%	17%	0%	33%	13%	18%	49%	15%	8%
<b>Responsiveness</b>	9%	26%	22%	24%	5%	6%	17%	16%	19%
<b>Assurance</b>	9%	17%	13%	23%	31%	10%	16%	24%	19%
<b>Empathy</b>	0%	9%	52%	5%	20%	44%	3%	15%	33%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Research Data (2009 )

In trying to rank the most important service quality attribute among the teachers, the attributes were listed from one to five and the respondents were then asked to rank the two most important service quality attributes and also indicate which the least important attribute in their evaluation was. The 5 series attributes were tangibles which were represented by number 1, reliability which was represented by number 2, responsiveness was represented by number 3, assurance was represented by number 4 and lastly empathy was number 5.

From table 24, it can be seen that a majority of the respondents considered the number 2 attribute which represented reliability as the most important feature with 65%, of the teacher respondents. The second most highly ranked attribute was tangibles with 30% and lastly empathy was ranked as the least important feature of them all with a 52 % score among the teacher respondents. Therefore we can conclude that in terms of the perception of quality, reliability is the most important quality factor to the teachers in the determination of what constitutes quality of service.

In trying to rank most important service quality attribute among the students, the attribute were listed from one to five and the respondents were asked to rank them.

This again reveals that the majority of the student respondents considered the reliability attribute as the most important service quality feature. 33 % of the respondents choose it as the single most important attribute. It was followed by tangibles with 31% and the least important feature was considered to be empathy. Thus it would be right to say that the most important service quality attribute to both teachers and students is reliability with 49 % of the total student and teacher population choosing it as the most important service quality attribute. The second being tangibles with 31 % of the respondents identifying it as the second most important feature of service quality. The least important attribute, collectively among the teachers and students was empathy.

#### 4.8: SERVQUAL results (P-E)

It is quite apparent from the analysis done on the expectations of respondents, that majority of them agree that the SERVQUAL items describe service quality in non-formal schools. A majority of the responses fell between agrees (4) and strongly agrees (5). Ranking of the statements according to their means or standard deviation give the same results, revealing that most of the respondents regarded the items to contribute to their expectation of service quality. An analysis of the perceptions reveals that their perceptions fell short of their expectations thus it is correct to say that majority of the respondents had negative scores. The SERVQUAL scores are arrived at by subtracting the respondents' perceptions (P) from their expectations (E). Thus the SERVQUAL gap can be measured or expressed as (P- E). The result of the calculation shows just how far or near the organization is in fulfilling or meeting the respondents' perception of service quality. A negative score shows the mismatch while a positive one shows the fit between expectations and perceptions.

**Table 26: Teachers SERVQUAL results**

CASE NO	P-E
1	-0.36
2	-0.09

3	-0.82
4	0.32
5	-1.27
6	-0.77
7	0.00
8	-0.55
9	-0.91
10	0.00
11	-0.41
12	0.05
13	-1.50
14	0.00
15	-0.64
16	-0.36
17	-1.27
18	-1.23
19	-0.91
20	-1.27
21	-1.05
22	-0.95



23	-1.18
<b>Sum</b>	<b>-15.18</b>
<b>average</b>	<b>-0.66</b>

**Source: Research Data (2009)**

The teachers total SERVQUAL score was -15.181818. If this is divided by the number of teachers i.e. 23 we get a SERVQUAL score of 0.660079 or 66 %. The results indicate that 66 % of the respondents' scores were negative. The above table displays the individual and total SERVQUAL "gap" analysis scores. The results show that 66% of the respondents' scores were negative, reflecting the view that there is a negative P-E.

#### **4.8.1: Students SERVQUAL results**

The students total SERVQUAL score was -0.201818. When this figure is divided by the 80 student respondents, we get a SERVQUAL score of -0.252273 or 25 %. The student SERVQUAL score reveals the individual and total SERVQUAL "gap" analysis score. It also reveals that 90% of the respondents scores were negative reflecting, the view that there is a negative P-E. However it must be noted that the students had a smaller (P – E ) difference as compared to the teachers. This could be due to the fact that there student respondents were younger and therefore may not have been as exposed to quality services as the teachers.(Refer to Appendix V).

#### **4.9 Service quality gap**

Service quality gaps arise whenever there is a discrepancy between the customers' expectation and the service delivered. Service quality gaps arise internally especially when managers don't fully know what customers want. The gaps model is a useful tool in identifying and correcting service quality. It also helps managers focus on the key areas that can bring about dissatisfaction with a service. In trying to identify the service quality gap that exists between expected service and outcome of the service delivered. I examined the differences between the ideal expectations of the service which is represented by the number 5 against the average perception mean score for each of the 5 service quality dimensions. The difference reveals the service quality gap, which management can use as a basis for corrective action.

**Table 27: Service quality gaps**

<b>Gap between Perfection and Perception</b>				
	<i>Mean</i>		<i>Difference/Gap</i>	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Perception</i>		<i>%</i>
<b>Tangibles</b>	5	3.25	1.75	35%
<b>Reliability</b>	5	3.61	1.39	28%
<b>Responsiveness</b>	5	3.6	1.40	28%
<b>Assurance</b>	5	3.68	1.32	26%
<b>Empathy</b>	5	3.78	1.22	24%

Source: Research Data(2009)

The table above shows that there are indeed service quality gaps that exist. The most prominent service quality gap according to the findings are those among the tangibles, which has a discrepancy of 35 %. The reliability and responsiveness factors have a difference of 28 %, while the assurance factor has a difference of 26 %. Empathy which happens to be the last of the five series dimension has a discrepancy of 24%. This means that management needs to put measures in place that ensure that the gaps are reduced . Such measures include investments in the physical facilities of the schools in question.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction.**

This chapter presents the discussion, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The findings have been discussed in accordance with the objectives of the study. The objectives of the study were to determine the perceptions of teachers and students towards the quality of services offered in the non formal schools in Mombasa district and its environs. This was done by establishing the expectations of both the teachers and the students and comparing them to their perceptions of the service encounter. The study also sought to identify whether there were perceived service quality gaps or disparities between their expectations and their perceptions.

In this study, the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al (1988) was used to assess service quality in the education sector with particular reference to the non formal sector. The SERVQUAL model proposed five service qualities attributes namely tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy along which service quality could be measured.

#### **5.2 Discussion**

The objectives of this study is to establish the perception of the service quality of teachers and students in NFE in Mombasa and its environs with a view to identifying the main service quality attributes study that are most important to the population in the study. Secondly the study sought to identify the service quality gaps between the teachers and students expectations and perceptions.

In achieving the first aim of the study, the findings showed that the most the teachers and the students concurred that the 22 statements were important service quality attributes. This conclusion was arrived at by the fact that both the teachers and the students had high scores in the expectations of service quality. These high scores in the expectation section implies that the attributes were considered important attributes or determinants of service quality. Secondly the findings show that the teachers and students perceptions on the service quality of the NFE were lower than their expectations on all 22 items/ statements. This suggests that the respondents, that is the teachers and the students, expectations were not fully met or exceeded. From our discussion earlier on when expectations are not fully met, then the customer could be said to experience dissatisfaction. From

the data analyzed in chapter four it is evident that there was a discernible gap between the respondents' expectations and their perceptions of the service quality in the schools.

The research findings also show that the most important service quality attribute to both the teachers and the students was the reliability factors. The reliability factors include the delivery on the promises of education made. It also entails the school management showing a genuine interest in solving the individual problems faced by the students.

The attributes on tangibles was considered to be the second most important service quality factor among the teachers and the students. Tangibles refer to factors such as the attractiveness and visual appeal of the physical facilities, equipment, and presentation of the staff i.e. how groomed and neat they are, and finally it also embraces the visual appeal of the learning aids and materials e.g. books and computers. These findings have managerial implications for the schools since investments should be made in improving the physical amenities and situations of the non-formal schools as it is an important consideration in the assessment of service quality.

The findings also reveal that these non-formal schools must make do their promises of providing quality educational services in a conscientious and timely manner so that students reap maximum satisfaction from the service encounters.

The least rated factor was the empathy factor among the teachers and the students. As earlier mentioned service encounters cannot be devoid of the service delivery personnel. It implies the critical role played by service people in the customers' perception of service quality. Thus non-formal schools must ensure that they improve on the people skills or soft issues, as it is still also an important determinant of service quality.

### **5.3 Perceived Service Quality**

The analysis reveals illustrate the difference between the expectations and perceptions of the respondents. From the findings it was quite evident that there was a discernible difference between the respondents' expectations and perceptions. Thus it would be correct to say that there was a mismatch between the respondents' expectations and perceptions.

Zeithaml (1988) asserts that perceived service quality is the discrepancy between the customers' expectations and their perceptions of the service encounter. From the data analyzed in the previous chapter this discrepancy was apparent.

The average expectation for both students and teachers was high revealing that they both considered the 22 items in the SERVQUAL as important dimensions of quality and so had high expectations of the same.

Their perception of the actual service quality in the formal schools was however lower, meaning that most respondents had a negative P-E SERVQUAL score. The fact that their perceptions were lower than their expectation implies that the respondents perceived a service quality gap in all the attributes. There were negligible instances where expectations matched perceptions. Obviously this means that the school management needs to improve on the quality of service quality so that it is readily discernible to the respondents.

#### **5.4 SERVQUAL Results**

Both the teachers and student respondents had a negative P-E SERVQUAL score. Majority of the teachers and students had a negative SERVQUAL score. The findings show that more teachers registered negative SERVQUAL scores as compared to the students. This could be explained by a number of factors including the fact that the students being younger than the teachers had had fewer or limited quality service encounters as compared to the teachers and as such were not as discerning as the teachers as to the determinants of quality service.

The management implication of this negative P - E is that there is an actual discrepancy between the respondents' expectations and perceptions which needs to be bridged or reduced in order to reduce the service quality gap and increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention..

The total SERVQUAL gap score was (-0.661818) for the teachers and (-0.221818) for the students, indicating that there was a disparity between the students and teachers perception of quality vis-à-vis their expectations service quality.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

This study sought to investigate the perception and expectation of the teachers and students with regard to quality in the education sector. According to the results most teachers and student respondents agree that service quality is at least a five dimensional construct of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. This conclusion is based on the high rankings of the 22 components of the SERVQUAL Model.

The study also established that the respondents' perceptions did not match or exceed their expectations. Thus there was a distinct perceived service quality gap in all the 22 items. Needless to say the managerial implications are quite clear; the school management needs to improve on all aspects of its service delivery especially on the two identified key areas of service quality, reliability and tangibles.

The SERVQUAL revealed that generally the customers' perception and expectations of service quality in the education sector is markedly different and negative. This may have far reaching consequences since investments in quality by schools may not necessarily be interpreted as contributing to quality by their students. Hence schools would need to remain dynamic by continually assessing their student and teachers expectations and perceptions of the service encounters. This in the long run will be beneficial to the schools as it will be an empirical basis upon which to make investment in the "right" attributes i.e. those that are important for the teachers and students perception of quality.

## **5.6 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research**

This part of the study discusses the limitations of the study and includes suggestions for further research.

### **5.6.1 Limitations**

Resource and time constraints were the major limitations of the study. A larger sample would also have been more preferable. In addition some students feared to give their views due to victimization or that their identities may be known. The phenomenon of service quality is also fairly elusive and dynamic in nature; therefore what is perceived as quality may not be so in another epoch. A snapshot approach therefore is limiting.

## 5.6.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Since this was a study of the perceptions and expectations of service quality in the education sector, a larger sample of at least 400 respondents is required to make the empirical results be easily generalized to other non-formal sectors, which are critical to the economy. In addition further research could be conducted on the teachers and students perceptions in post primary non formal institutions.

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**APPENDICES: APPENDIX 1**

**Letter of Introduction**

**Ruth Galgalo**

**University of Nairobi**

**Bandari Campus**

**P.O.Box 80493**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: COLLECTION OF RESEARCH DATA**

I am a Post Graduate student at the University of Nairobi, Bandari campus; School of Business Studies pursuing a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) degree. I am conducting a Management Research into,

**“Teachers and students Perceptions of Service Quality in Non Formal Educational Institutions in Mombasa and its environs”**

You have been selected to take part in this study. I therefore request you to assist me by filling in the attached questionnaire. The information you give will be treated in the strictest confidence and is purely for academic purposes. The final report will by no means bear your name.

A copy of the final report will be availed to you upon request, your assistance and co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Ruth Galgalo

(Student)

Mary Kinoti

Lecturer/Supervisor

School of Business

## APPENDIX II: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been designed to collect information from senior teachers of selected Non-formal schools in Mombasa. It is meant for academic purposes only.

The questionnaire is divided into 4 sections. Section 1 seeks to capture the demographic profile of the respondents, while section 2 seeks to identify the teacher's expectation of service quality. Section 3 will seek to establish the most important factor. Section 4 will seek to establish the teacher's perception of the quality of service rendered in their non-formal school.

Please complete each section as instructed. Do not write your name or any other form of identification on the questionnaire. All the information in this questionnaire will be treated in the strictest confidence

### Part 1: General Information

- 1) Name of the school \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What is your age \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What is your gender \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Please indicate how long you have been a teacher In this school
  - A) Under 1 year
  - B) Under 5 year
  - C) Under 10years
  - D) Over 10years

## Part II: Quality of Service Questionnaire

Based on your experiences as a teacher please indicate your expectations of the quality of service, you would expect from a non-formal school that delivers excellent quality of service. Please indicate the extent to 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 determination, circle the number 1, if you feel a dimension is absolutely essential for excellence in quality of service, please circle 5. If your feelings are less strong, circle one of the numbers in the middle.

### Key

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree or disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The equipment of excellence Schools will be modern looking					
2	The physical facilities of an excellent schools be attractive and visually appealing					
3	Teachers of excellent schools will be groomed and neat in appearance					
4	Learning materials/aids will be attractive and visually stimulating in a quality school					
5	Excellent schools should deliver on their promises of Education					
6	When problems arise in an excellent school, the school management should show a genuine interest in solving it.					
7	Excellent schools will get things done right first time around e.g. the introduction of a new syllabi					

8	Quality non -formal schools will provide education opportunities at the times they promise to do so				
9	Excellent non- formal schools should have error free school records e.g. certificates.				
10	Teachers in excellent schools will be certain about the delivery of the subject content i.e. when syllabi will be completed.				
11	Teachers in excellent non- formal schools will be punctual in giving services to students.				
12	Teachers in excellent schools will be willing to assist and help out students				
13	Teachers in such excellent schools will be ever ready to respond to students requests.				
14	The behavior and demeanor of teachers in Excellent non –formal schools will instill confidence in students.				
15	Students of excellent non –formal schools will feel at ease –that is free from danger and intimidation in school.				
16	Teachers in excellent schools will be courteous /polite at all times.				
17	Teachers in non –formal schools will be knowledgeable and informed enough to answer students’ questions.				
18	Excellent non –formal schools will give students individual attention				
19	Non –formal schools of excellence will have convenient timings				
20	Excellent non –formal schools will have flexible timings to accommodate the learning needs of the students				
21	Excellent non –formal schools will have the best interest of its students and teaching fraternity at heart.				
22	The staff at excellent non – formal schools will				



understand the specific needs of its school community					

**PART III**

Listed below are five factors relating to schools and the services they offer. We would like to know how important each of these factors is to you, when evaluating the service offered by an educational institution. Please allocate a total of 100 points among the five factors according to how important each factor is to you. The more important a factor is, the more points you allocate to it. Please ensure that the points you allocate to the five factors add up to 100

NO	FACTORS	POINTS OUT OF 100
1	The appearance of the non formal schools, physical facilities ,equipment Personnel and communication materials	
2	The non- formal school ability to deliver educational services dependably and accurately	
3	The non –formal schools willingness to help students and provide a prompt service	
4	The knowledge and courtesy of the schools staff and their ability to convey trust and confidence	
5	The caring ,individualized attention the school provides to its school community	
	<b>TOTAL POINTS ALLOCATED</b>	

**(Please enter the feature number)**

Which one feature of the above five is most important to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Which feature is second most important to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Which feature is the least important to you? \_\_\_\_\_

**PART IV**

The following set of statements relate to your perception of the non-formal school you are teaching in. For each statement, please indicate the extent to which you believe the school has the features described by the statement. Once again circling a 1 means that you strongly disagree and 5 means you agree strongly. There is no right or wrong answers; we are interested in the number that best reveals your perceptions

**Key**

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neither agree or disagree
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	The equipment of excellence Schools will be modern looking					
2	The physical facilities of an excellent schools be attractive and visually appealing					
3	Teachers of excellent schools will be groomed and neat in appearance					
4	Learning materials/aids will be attractive and visually stimulating in a quality school					
5	Excellent schools should deliver on their promises of Education					
6	When problems arise in an excellent school, the school management should show a genuine interest in solving it.					
7	Excellent schools will get things done right first					

	time around e.g. the introduction of a new syllabi					
8	Quality non -formal schools will provide education opportunities at the times they promise to do so					
9	Excellent non- formal schools should have error free school records e.g. certificates.					
10	Teachers in excellent schools will be certain about the delivery of the subject content i.e. when syllabi will be completed.					
11	Teachers in excellent non- formal schools will be punctual in giving services to students.					
12	Teachers in excellent schools will be willing to assist and help out students					
13	Teachers in such excellent schools will be ever ready to respond to students requests.					
14	The behavior and demeanor of teachers in Excellent non –formal schools will instill confidence in students.					
15	Students of excellent non –formal schools will feel at ease –that is free from danger and intimidation in school.					
16	Teachers in excellent schools will be courteous /polite at all times.					
17	Teachers in non –formal schools will be knowledgeable and informed enough to answer students’ questions.					
18	Excellent non –formal schools will give students individual attention					
19	Non –formal schools of excellence will have convenient timings					
20	Excellent non –formal schools will have flexible					

	timings to accommodate the learning needs of the students					
21	Excellent non –formal schools will have the best interest of its students and teaching fraternity at heart.					
22	The staff at excellent non – formal schools will understand the specific needs of its school community					

## APPENDIX III:

### STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been designed to collect information from students of selected Non-formal schools in Mombasa. It is meant for academic purposes only.

The questionnaire is divided into 4 sections. Section 1 seeks to capture the demographic profile of the respondents, while section 2 seeks to identify the students' expectation of service quality. Section 3 will seek to establish the most important service quality factor. Section 4 will seek to establish the student's perception of the quality of service rendered in their non-formal school.

Please complete each section as instructed. Do not write your name or any other form of identification on the questionnaire. All the information in this questionnaire will be treated in the strictest confidence

#### PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1) Give the name of the school \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) What class/ grade are you in \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) Give your age \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) What is your gender \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) Using the category below please indicate how long you have been in this institution
- A) Under one year      B) Under two years      C) Under 5 years      D) Under 7 years

#### Part II: Quality of Service Questionnaire

Based on your experiences as a student please indicate your expectations of the quality of service, you would expect from a non-formal school that delivers excellent quality of service. Please indicate the extent to 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 determination, circle the number 1, if you feel a dimension is absolutely essential for excellence in quality of service, please circle 5. If your feelings are less strong, circle one of the numbers in the middle.

**Key**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree or disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	The equipment of excellence Schools will be modern looking					
2	The physical facilities of an excellent schools be attractive and visually appealing					
3	Teachers of excellent schools will be groomed and neat in appearance					
4	Learning materials/aids will be attractive and visually stimulating in a quality school					
5	Excellent schools should deliver on their promises of Education					
6	When problems arise in an excellent school, the school management should show a genuine interest in solving it.					
7	Excellent schools will get things done right first time around e.g. the introduction of a new syllabi					
8	Quality non -formal schools will provide education opportunities at the times they promise to do so					
9	Excellent non- formal schools should have error free school records e.g. certificates.					
10	Teachers in excellent schools will be certain about the delivery of the subject content i.e. when syllabi will be completed.					
11	Teachers in excellent non- formal schools will be					

	punctual in giving services to students.					
12	Teachers in excellent schools will be willing to assist and help out students					
13	Teachers in such excellent schools will be ever ready to respond to students requests.					
14	The behavior and demeanor of teachers in Excellent non -formal schools will instill confidence in students.					
15	Students of excellent non -formal schools will feel at ease -that is free from danger and intimidation in school.					
16	Teachers in excellent schools will be courteous /polite at all times.					
17	Teachers in non -formal schools will be knowledgeable and informed enough to answer students' questions.					
18	Excellent non -formal schools will give students individual attention					
19	Non -formal schools of excellence will have convenient timings					
20	Excellent non -formal schools will have flexible timings to accommodate the learning needs of the students					
21	Excellent non -formal schools will have the best interest of its students and teaching fraternity at heart.					
22	The staff at excellent non - formal schools will understand the specific needs of its school community					

**PART III**

Listed below are five factors relating to schools and the services they offer. We would like to know how important each of these factors is to you, when evaluating the service offered by an educational institution. Please allocate a total of 100 points among the five factors according to how important each factor is to you, the more important a factor, the more points you allocate to it. Please ensure that the points you allocate to the five factors add up to 100

NO	FACTORS	POINTS OUT OF 100
1	The appearance of the non formal schools, physical facilities ,equipment Personnel and communication materials	
2	The non- formal school ability to deliver educational services dependably and accurately	
3	The non –formal schools willingness to help students and provide a prompt service	
4	The knowledge and courtesy of the schools staff and their ability to convey trust and confidence	
5	The caring ,individualized attention the school provides to its school community	
<b>TOTAL POINTS ALLOCATED</b>		

(Please enter the feature number)

Which one feature of the above five is most important to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Which feature is second most important to you? \_\_\_\_\_



Which feature is the least important to you? \_\_\_\_\_

#### PART IV

The following set of statements relate to your perception of the non-formal school you are learning in. For each statement, please indicate the extent to which you believe the school has the features described by the statement. Once again circling a 1 means that you strongly disagree and 5 means you agree strongly. There is no right or wrong answers; we are interested in the number that best reveals your perceptions

#### Key

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree or disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The equipment of excellence Schools will be modern looking					
2	The physical facilities of an excellent schools be attractive and visually appealing					
3	Teachers of excellent schools will be groomed and neat in appearance					
4	Learning materials/aids will be attractive and visually stimulating in a quality school					
5	Excellent schools should deliver on their promises of Education					
6	When problems arise in an excellent school, the school management should show a genuine interest in solving it.					
7	Excellent schools will get things done right first					

	time around e.g. the introduction of a new syllabi					
8	Quality non -formal schools will provide education opportunities at the times they promise to do so					
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13	Teachers in such excellent schools will be ever ready to respond to students requests.					
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17	Teachers in non -formal schools will be knowledgeable and informed enough to answer students' questions.					
18	Excellent non -formal schools will give students individual attention					
19	Non -formal schools of excellence will have					

	convenient timings					
20	Excellent non –formal schools will have flexible timings to accommodate the learning needs of the students					
21	Excellent non –formal schools will have the best interest of its students and teaching fraternity at heart.					
22	The staff at excellent non – formal schools will understand the specific needs of its school community					

**APPENDIX IV: NON FORMAL SCHOOL/CENTRES DATA**

	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>ENROLMENT</b>
1	Northgate	189
2	Pent Rose	289
3	Frere Town	154
4	Furaha	154
5	Mnazi Moja	310
6	St.Richards	205
7	Ujamaa	251
8	Al-Hihra	345
9	Universal	172
10	Vision Of Hope	215
11	Nuru Community	595
12	SOS Children Village	438
13	Mwokeni Children Center	295

**Source: Mombasa Municipal Education Office (2009)**

## APPENDIX V; STUDENTS SERVQUAL RESULTS

CASE No	P-E
1	-0.24
2	-0.27
3	-0.41
4	-0.36
5	-0.18
6	-0.47
7	-0.13
8	-0.18
9	-0.31
10	-0.77
11	-0.14
12	-0.09
13	-0.59
14	-0.41
15	-0.51
16	-0.24
17	0.00
18	-0.58

19	-0.35
20	-0.54
21	0.14
22	-0.15
23	-0.04
24	0.03
25	0.05
26	-0.36
27	-0.64
28	0.05
29	-0.32
30	-0.91
31	-1.09
32	-0.95
33	0.00
34	-0.05
35	-0.23
36	0.18
37	-0.45
38	0.05

39	-0.09
40	-0.05
41	0.00
42	0.05
43	-0.98
44	0.14
45	-0.42
46	-0.38
47	-0.25
48	0.00
49	-0.18
50	0.00
51	-1.09
52	-1.01
53	-1.08
54	-0.64
55	-0.65
56	-0.62
57	-0.64
58	-0.51

59	-0.36
60	-0.09
61	0.00
62	-0.64
63	-0.51
64	-0.20
65	0.00
66	-0.03
67	-0.32
68	-0.31
69	-0.32
70	-0.22
71	-0.91
72	-0.81
73	-0.74
74	-0.91
75	-1.09
76	-1.04
77	-1.02
78	0.00



79	-0.10
80	-0.07
<b>sum</b>	<b>-20.18</b>
<b>average</b>	<b>-0.25</b>

**Source: Research data (2009)**