

Received : February, 15, 2023  
Accepted : February, 17, 2023  
Published : April, 14, 2023

**Conference on Management, Business,  
Innovation, Education and Social Science**  
<https://journal.uib.ac.id/index.php/combines>

## **The Role of Service Quality Influence on Students' Satisfaction in Tanzanian Higher Learning Institutions: A Preliminary Investigation**

***Victor William Bwachele<sup>1</sup>, Yee-Lee Chong<sup>2</sup>, and Gengeswari Krishnapillai<sup>3</sup>***

Email of author correspondence : [chongyl@utar.edu.my](mailto:chongyl@utar.edu.my)

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Business and Finance, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Perak, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Business and Finance, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Perak, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Business and Finance, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Perak, Malaysia

### **Abstract**

From a student's perspective, the essential functions of a higher learning institution (HLI) include providing students with the teaching and learning infrastructures lodgings, assigning experts to sharpen students' theoretical and applied knowledge and critical thinking skills, and offering social, cultural, and athletic activities. However, as public financial support is shared among many HLIs in Tanzania, the HLI needs to increase its monetary fund through tuition collection. Quality services that meet the student's expectations increase the student's satisfaction which in turn encourages the enrollment of future students through the spread of positive word of mouth about the HLI. In analysing how the HLIs students have defined service quality dimensions and satisfaction, the researcher collected qualitative data from 15 final-year students from science, social science, and business disciplines. They were analysed using content analysis. The result shows that researchers can use additional items to measure specific service quality dimensions: perceived transparency and trust in an institution on top of the conventional (service quality, (SERVQUAL)) items measured by past researchers. In addition, the researcher identifies two additional service quality dimensions: perceived transparency and trust in an institution. This article explains how researchers can use service quality dimensions pertinent to the study environment to find more systematic to enhance the literature on service quality.

**Keywords:** Perceived transparency, SERVQUAL dimensions, Student satisfaction and trust in an institution.

### **Introduction**

The total count of enrolled students in Tanzanian higher learning institutions (HLIs) increased from 14 in 1961 to 100,858 in the 2021/22 academic year (Tanzania Commission for Universities, TCU, 2021). To satisfy the government's goal of creating a skilled local workforce that can propel the expansion of the local economy, the number of public and private HLIs in

Tanzania has expanded from one to 51 complete public and private universities and university colleges (TCU, 2021). However, the increasing count of HLIs is forcing the eligible HLIs to secure only a small portion of public financial support in funding the HLI's operation and research development costs. For sustainability, HLIs must obtain supporting funds from students' tuition fees. However, increasing tuition fees is not viable unless the HLI is a long-established and reputable institution.

On the other hand, it is more feasible to increase student enrollment by providing quality student services. When the quality of services can meet students' expectations, the students become more satisfied (Getahun, 2019), which encourages the spread of positive word-of-mouth and enrollment of new students. Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) is collaborating with the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) to find ways to improve the quality of student services in HLIs (TCU, 2021).

In selecting a prospective HLI for enrollment, potential students are evaluating the student services provided by an HLI: teaching and learning infrastructures; availability of experts to sharpen student's theoretically and applied knowledge and critical thinking skill; and offering social, cultural, and athletic activities that can develop student's non-academic talents like communication and leadership skill, and teamwork spirit (Mgaiwa, 2018). However, a viable plan for measuring and publishing students' perceptions and expectations of the quality of student services a specific HLI should provide is not disclosed for public viewing. Also, students have been communicating with their e-social networking in the Jamii forum (2020) to disseminate and discuss their dissatisfaction with the student services and their HLI. If the HLI intends to capture higher domestic and international student enrollment, it is essential to understand how the students define service quality dimensions.

Adopting the dimensions of service quality and its items is not wise, as students behave differently worldwide. The current article aims to assess the applicability of the items used in earlier studies and to find new prospective items or additional dimension variables that researchers may use to measure specific service quality characteristics. Therefore, this study aims to discuss and suggest a systematic approach to better understanding Tanzanian HLIs students' behaviour. This study aims to discuss and recommend a systematic approach that can understand the Tanzanian HLIs student's behaviour better so that the current authors can appraise the applicability of items used in past studies; and identify additional dimension variables or potential new things that researchers can use to measure specific service quality dimension. In this article, Section 1 specifies the information gap, Section 2 identifies the literature deficit, Section 3 covers the methods used to collect and analyse data, Section 4 shows and discusses the results, and Section 5 concludes the article.

## **Literature Review**

In measuring the quality of student services provided by HLIs, the service quality (SERVQUAL) model has been used in literature to measure how the respondents evaluate the five service quality dimensions – tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy – and how the dimensions related to the respondent's satisfaction (Gabriel, 2012; Jiewanto, Laurens, & Nelloh, 2012; Mashenene, 2019; Mbise, 2015; Mbise and Tuninga, 2013; Mwiya et al., 2017; Mwongoso et al., 2015; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1998). The original SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) (cited in Gabriel, 2012), explained

that the researchers measured the quality of service by ten dimensions: dependability, preparation, capacity, availability, politeness, communiqué, trustworthiness, safety, comprehension, and tangibility. The researchers criticised the model as some dimension variables cannot be quantified, and items used to measure the variables also overlapped (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1995). As a result, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1990) modified the model's theoretical framework and adjusted the ten dimensions to five: tangibility, assurance, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness. The modified SERVQUAL model also explained that the five dimensions relate to satisfaction. Several past studies have examined the relationship between the five service quality dimensions and satisfaction in the education context (Mashenene, 2019; Mwiya et al., 2017; Karwati, Sukardi, & Syafruddin, 2019; Twum, Adams, Budu, & Budu, 2022; Sheng, & Fauzi, 2022; Chikazhe, Makanyeza, & Kakava, 2022; Yilmaz, & Temizkan, 2022) and non-education context like banking service (Usman, Pitchay, & Zahra, 2021; Haron, Subar & Ibrahim, 2020), (2) broadcasting and electronic media (Arshad & Khurram, 2020; Shin, 2020), (3) systems and signal behaviour industries (Chancey, Bliss, Proaps, & Madhavan, 2015), and (4) business and economics (Hofmann & Strobel, 2020).

Unfortunately, many past studies in the education context were merely adopting the modified SERVQUAL model theoretical framework in measuring how the five-dimension variables were related to respondent satisfaction (Mashenene, 2019; Mbise, 2015; Mbise et al., 2013; Mbise & Tuninga, 2013; and Mwongoso et al., 2015). Researchers have made little effort to enrich the modified SERVQUAL model's framework with additional variables that are relevant and can serve as an independent predictor dimension variable. Higher education service quality substantially impacts student satisfaction, so institutions should set up systems to gather feedback from students to identify the service quality dimensions that matter to them and make the required adjustments to those dimensions.

Therefore, this signifies why the SERVQUAL model needs to be enriched by researchers. Also, researchers made little effort to identify other items that can measure service quality (Ravichandran, Prabhakaran, & Kumar, 2010). As the world has changed, students have become more aware and informed, and adding other variables to the traditional SERVQUAL model is very important to HLIs.

## **Research Methods**

According to Chow (2020), a qualitative technique is the most appropriate strategy for eliciting students' satisfaction and service quality signifiers.

## **Sample Selection**

The study focuses on HLI finalist students in Tanzania who have used HLI services. Tanzania's mainland is geographically divided into six zones, each with its own set of regions (central zone consisting of Dodoma, Singida, and Tabora regions; coast zone consisting of Dar es Salaam, Lindi, Mtwara, Morogoro, and Pwani regions; lake zone consisting of Mwanza, Kagera, Mara, Shinyanga, and Simiyu regions; northern zone consisting of Arusha, Manyara,

Tanga and Kilimanjaro; southern zone consisting of Iringa, Mbeya, Njombe, Rukwa, Ruvuma, and Songwe; western zone consisting of Katavi and Kigoma regions).

Two HLIs, one public and private, were purposively chosen from the lake zone. The researcher chose fifteen respondents for the study, ten from one HLI and five from the other HLI. The 15 students were chosen among the leaders of student government because are well conversant with the students affairs, and they are the ones who receive student complains in the first place.

Interview invitations were sent to the HLI's administration at the shortlisted HLIs through email. Fifteen final-year students who were interested responded positively. After setting up meetings, the author visited the HLIs to meet with the respondents. The researcher conducted individual interviews to lessen the impact on other respondents. Table 1 contains a collection of the open-ended questions used to determine the participants' essential beliefs.

**Table 1: The Elicitation of Student's Perception of Their Satisfaction and Service Quality through Open-Ended Questions**

Service quality dimensions	Open-ended questions
Experience with HLI services	"Noted you are the final year student in this institution, have spent XX years here. Could you share some of your key experiences with the university?" Experiences - can be both positive and negative. What was the ending of this incident? If you had a negative experience, how did you address or was the issue solved?
Students' Satisfaction with HLI services	"Are you happy with this institution? How would you rate your satisfaction?" If not, what are you planning during your study tenure at this institution?
Service Quality Dimensions	"What are quality services in your opinion/ understanding? How do you find the quality of services at this institution?" 1. What is your opinion/ experience of the sufficiency of tangible equipment like classrooms, actual equipment like computers, projectors, classrooms, labs and other resources like library resources, printing materials, internet connection, and other teaching aids provided by your institution? 2. Do you consider their service provision to be reliable? e.g., institution keep their promises  3. Do they respond to the students? i.e., response rate, e.g. prompt services and willingness 4. Do the staff or management have the knowledge, competence, and courtesy when dealing with the student's inquiries, complaints, suggestions, etc.? Any individual staff? 5. Do you receive caring and individualised attention? For which specific services?
Additional Problems encountered	Are there any other problems that you encounter? Are these problems, or how are these problems affecting your perception of the institution's overall service?

Each interview session lasted somewhere between 30 and 45 minutes. Before beginning the interview, the researcher gave the interviewees a brief explanation of the research's goal and assurances that any information made known would be kept anonymous and confidential. The finalists' noticeable comments were produced by transcribing and content analysis of the feedback gathered throughout the interview.

## Data Analysis

By assessing the presence of specific words or concepts that can reflect specific meanings and relationships, the researcher utilised content analysis to create the index for each critical opinion (Bengtsson, 2016; Hosen, Chong & Lau, 2021; Miles et al., 2018). It is crucial to contextualise and decontextualise the meanings of the raw data by going over the materials from the cross-examination once again to understand the message the respondents want to convey (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017; Hosen, Chong & Lau, 2021).

This approach entails several reflection processes so the authors can reproduce each participant's hidden meaning. After determining the senses, the writers organised the primary purposes into the applicable themes, codes, and categories (see table 2).

**Table 2: Developing the themes, codes, and categories for each noticeable opinion**

Theme and meaning of the text	Codes	Categories
<b>Experience with HLI services</b>		
<i>Theme 1: Experiences with HLI services and how it/were addressed and solved</i>		
· My experience at this institution is negative (10)	SQ	Service quality problem
	SQ	
· My experience at this institution is positive (5)		
<b>Students' Satisfaction with HLI services</b>		
<i>Theme 2: Happiness and satisfaction with the current institution of study</i>		
· I am satisfied with the student services provided by the institution (3)	S1	
· My choice to enrol at my university was a wise one (5)	S2	
· I am satisfied with my decision to attend this institution (5)	S3	
· In the future, I will recommend my relatives and friends to attend this institution (4)	S4	Satisfaction Problem
· If I had a choice to study again, I would still enrol in this institution (2)	S5	
· I am happy with my decision to enrol in this institution (5)	S6	
· I am happy with my experience as a student at my university (10)	S7	
	S8	
· I did the right thing by choosing my university (5)		
<b>Service Quality Dimensions</b>		
<i>Theme 3a: Opinion/experience on the sufficient of the equipment provided by the HLI</i>		
· My university has the latest/current teaching and learning types of equipment like computers, projectors, classrooms, and labs (5)	T1	
· My university has up-to-date and enough library resources (8)	T2	

· My university has physical facilities (e.g. buildings and furniture) safe to be used (3)	T3	Tangibility Problem
· My university has enough printing materials (5)	T4	
· My university has up-to-date and accessible internet connections (3)	T5	
· The materials at my university (e.g. pamphlets and study material) suit the image of the university (5)	T6	
<i>Theme 3b: About institution keeping its promises</i>		
· When my university says it will complete a task by a specific deadline, it follows through (3)	Rel1	(6) Reliability Problem
· Lecturers are generally reliable: Keep time / don't cancel classes	Rel2	
· Lecturers have a proven capacity to teach and a high level of proficiency (6)	Rel3	
· Lecturers show their concern in solving student problems (6)	Rel4	
· My university maintains detailed records (e.g., accounts, academic reports, student results, and so on) (3)	Rel5	
<i>Theme 3c: Prompt services and willingness to help students</i>		
· My university tells students when the requested services will be rendered (5)	Res1	Responsiveness Problem
· Students receive fast (prompt) service delivery from the university personnel (5)	Res2	
· Lecturers at my university are willing to assist students (5)	Res3	
· University personnel are not too busy with other kinds of stuff when asked to reply quickly to students' demands (5)	Res4	
<i>Theme 3d: Staff or management having the knowledge, competence, and courtesy when dealing with the student's inquiries, complaints, suggestions</i>		
· Students can trust the personnel of the university. (4)	A1	Assurance Problem
· Personnel at my university inspire confidence in students. (5)	A2	
· Personnel at my university are considerate (7)	A3	
· Personnel at my university receive adequate support from University management to improve the services rendered. (8)	A4	
<i>Theme 3e: Receiving caring and individualised attention for specific services.</i>		
· Students receive individualised attention from administrative personnel (e.g. doing something extra for students) (6)	E1	Empathy Problem
· Lecturers give students individual attention. (8)	E2	
· Personnel at my university know what the needs of their students are (e.g. recognising students as clients). (5)	E3	
· The university personnel have the student's best interests at heart. (5)	E4	
· The university personnel are easily accessible to students (e.g. available to see or contact by phone, email, WhatsApp, etc.) (4)		

**Additional Problems encountered**

*Theme 4: Problems and how they are affecting your perception of the institution's overall service.*

student	· The institution's subjects are implemented transparently (5)	PT1	
	· The entire <i>process</i> of specific student services like an internship or student exchange or accessing the library's e-reading materials is transparent. (2)	PT2	
	· The students can see the <i>progress and situations</i> of specific services like the arrangement for internship/student exchange or application to change tutorial class/ leave of absence. (2)	PT3	Perceived Transparency Problem
	· The university transparently handles services like handling student appeals or complaints. (3)	PT4	
	· There is sufficient disclosure of the Information to student services like library resources/ sports activities/ medical services/counselling services (2)	PT5	
	· The student services provided by the university can meet my interest. (2)	T1	
	· The university allows students to make use/utilise the student services like co-curricular activities/ internet access/ computer and printing facilities (3)	T2	Trust Problem
	· The university performs its role of providing student services very well (4)	T3	

() displays the number of respondents who stated the respective service quality dimension. After that, the researcher quantified qualitative data using the procedures outlined in Table 4.

## Results and Discussion

Table 3 summarises the demographic features of the population. Sixty per cent of the respondents were under the age of 25, while forty per cent were above the age of 34. Again, 87 per cent of respondents said they had only been at the HLI for 3–4 years, 13 per cent said they had stayed for 5–6 years, and no students had stayed for more than six years. Regarding residence, 13 per cent remained in the university dormitory. At the same time, the bulk of respondents (more than 70 per cent) lived off-campus, and just 13 per cent specified others, implying that they were staying with their family or relatives at their homes. As a result, the male made up more than half of the respondents. In comparison to the other age groups, most respondents were young and only attended university for a brief time before graduating.

**Table 3: The Demographic profiles of the respondents**

		Frequency Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	67
	Female	5	33
	Total	15	100
Age	18-24	9	60
	25-34	5	33
	35-44	1	7
	>45	0	0
	Total	15	100
Experience at HLI	3-4yrs	13	87
	5-6yrs	2	13

	>6	0	0
	Total	15	100
Residence	Dormitory	2	13
	Off-Campus	11	73
	Other	2	13
	Total	15	100

Table 3 lists the signifiers for each unique viewpoint elicited from respondents during the interview. It shows that ten respondents had a poor experience with the services provided by HLI, compared to just five respondents who said they had a great experience with the services offered by their HLIs. The table indicates that a more significant number of respondents were dissatisfied with the services provided by their HLIs. In terms of pleasure and satisfaction with their current institution of study, more than half of the respondents were dissatisfied with their current institution on at least every service quality dimension in each theme. Another respondent from private institution A, who had spent three years at that institution, said:

*"This institution is improving by building some classes; however, the efforts are insufficient. For example, when I started studying at this institution, I found a seven-story building completed; the elevators have not worked since then. Therefore, the students have to walk to the upper floors for lectures. Besides, toilets in that particular building are not working. Hence, if you need to use a toilet service, you must walk downstairs and find toilets in different structures. (Interview: Informant 6, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021)."*

The participants agreed that the current teaching and learning facilities and resources were insufficient to meet the needs of today's students. Respondents demonstrated that instructors do not show attention to resolving student difficulties and do not maintain track of time, resulting in class cancellations. Despite promises, the university did not act quickly enough to improve some students' services, such as internet connectivity at a specific campus. Some individuals also stated that their university did follow through on its promises after a long period of inaction.

They said that the staff was uninterested in assisting them and that they waited as long as they could to respond. Furthermore, staff members were slow to respond to students' questions at the faculty's administrative and accounting offices. Again, academic and non-academic personnel did not provide replies addressing the student's concerns, and they did not treat respondents respectfully while answering questions. The behaviour is likely due to staff employees' lack of familiarity with HLI's product offers. In other words, the staff's competency and civility were in question. Overall, the team was hesitant to devote time to providing each student with loving and specialised attention. As a result, this manifested in the informant's claims, who had the following to say;

*"There are severe problems in receiving, caring and offering individualised attention. For example, some Heads of the Department and subject coordinators are using foul language in responding to students' queries. The admission, finance and accounts offices, and security officers, also do not use decent language to correspond with students. Particularly at the account's office, they respond to students as if they are not public officials; it is like someone is running his shop. (Interview: Informant 1, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021)."*

Furthermore, the study's participants' remarks suggest that their universities are not forthcoming in informing students about the availability of current and upcoming student services. In addition, the participants' ambiguous views arose when the process for obtaining specific student services was not fully described. Students also asked if their university transparently handled their appeals or complaints.

Furthermore, most participants had little faith in the university's plans to deliver student services that would improve their happiness, welfare, safety, or health. For example, not all institutions have printing facilities, and those that do are often located far from the faculty or campus. In addition, the participants had no idea how or where to get first-aid assistance.

**Table 4: Elicited service quality dimensions frequencies**

Codes	Categories/descriptors of beliefs	Frequency count*	%**	%***
<b>Experience with HLI services</b>				
<i>Theme 1: Experiences with HLI services and how it/were addressed and solved</i>				
Experience with HLI	1) My experience at this institution is negative	10	67.00	67
	2) My experience at this institution is positive	5	33.00	33
Subtotal		15	100	
<b>Students' Satisfaction with HLI services</b>				
<i>Theme 2: Happiness and satisfaction with the current institution of study</i>				
Student Satisfaction	1) I am satisfied with the student services provided by the institution	3	7.69	20
	2) My choice to enrol at my university was a wise one	5	12.82	33
	3) I am satisfied with my decision to attend this institution	5	12.82	33
	4) In the future, I will recommend my relatives and friends to attend this institution	4	10.26	27
	5) If I had a choice to study again, I would still enrol in this institution	2	5.13	13
	6) I am happy with my decision to enrol in this institution	5	12.82	33
	7) I am happy with my experience as a student at my university	10	25.64	67
	8) I did the right thing by choosing my university	5	12.82	33
Subtotal		39	100	
<b>Service quality dimensions</b>				
<i>Theme 3a: Opinion/experience on the sufficient of the equipment provided by the HLI</i>				
Tangibility	1) My university has the latest/current teaching and learning types of equipment like computers, projectors, classrooms and labs	5	17.24	33
	2) My university has up-to-date and enough library resources	8	27.59	53

	3) My university has physical facilities (e.g. buildings and furniture) safe to be used	3	10.34	20
	4) My university has enough printing materials	5	17.24	33
	5) My university has up-to-date and accessible internet connections	3	10.34	20
	6) The materials at my university (e.g. pamphlets and study material) suit the image of the university	5	17.24	33
Subtotal		29	100	
<i>Theme 3b: About institution keeping its promises</i>				
Reliability	1) When my university says it will complete a task by a specific deadline, it follows through	3	12.50	20
	2) Lecturers are generally reliable: Keep time / don't cancel classes	6	25.00	40
	3) Lecturers have a proven capacity to teach and a high level of proficiency	6	25.00	40
	4) Lecturers show their concern in solving student problems	6	25.00	40
	5) My university maintains detailed records (e.g., accounts, academic reports, student results, and so on)	3	12.50	20
Subtotal		24	100	
<i>Theme 3c: Prompt services and willingness to help students</i>				
Responsiveness	1) My university tells students when the requested services will be rendered	5	25.00	33
	2) Students receive fast (prompt) service delivery from the university personnel	5	25.00	33
	3) Lecturers at my university are willing to assist students	5	25.00	33
	4) University personnel are not too busy with other kinds of stuff when asked to reply quickly to students' demands	5	25.00	33
Subtotal		20	100	
<i>Theme 3d: Staff or management having the knowledge, competence, and courtesy when dealing with the student's inquiries, complaints, suggestions</i>				
Assurance	1) Students can trust the personnel of the university.	4	16.67	27
	2) Personnel at my university inspire confidence in students.	5	20.83	33
	3) personnel at my university are considerate	7	29.17	47
	4) Personnel at my university receive adequate support from university management to improve the services rendered.	8	33.33	53
Subtotal		24	100	
<i>Theme 3e: Receiving caring and individualised attention for specific services.</i>				
Empathy	1) Students receive individualised attention from administrative personnel (e.g. doing something extra for students).	6	21.43	40
	2) Lecturers give students individual attention.	8	28.57	53

	3) My university's personnel know what their students' needs are (e.g. recognising students as clients).	5	17.86	33
	4) The university personnel have the student's best interests at heart.	5	17.86	33
	5) The university personnel are easily accessible to students (e.g. available to see or contact by phone, email, WhatsApp, etc.)	4	14.28	27
Subtotal		28	100	
<b>Additional variables</b>				
<i>Theme 4: Problems and how they are affecting your perception of the institution's overall service.</i>				
Perceived Transparency	1) The institution's subjects are implemented transparently	5	35.71	33
	2) The <i>process</i> of specific student services like an internship, student exchange, or accessing the library's e-reading materials is transparent.	2	14.29	13
	3) The students can see the <i>progress and situations</i> of specific student services like the arrangement for internship/student exchange or application to change tutorial class/ leave of absence.	2	14.29	13
	4) The university transparently handles services like handling student appeals or complaints.	3	21.43	20
	5) There is sufficient disclosure of the information to student services like library resources/ sports activity/ medical services/counselling services	2	14.29	13
	Subtotal		14	100
Trust in an Institution	1) The student services provided by the university can meet my interest.	2	22.22	13
	2) The university allows students to use/utilise the student services like co-curricular activities/ internet access/ computer and printing facilities.	3	33.33	20
	3) The university performs its role of providing student services very well.	4	44.44	27
	Subtotal		9	100

\* Represents the number of respondents who mentioned the respective noticeable opinion;

\*\* Represents the frequency count of an evident view divided by the total number of frequency counts of all the individual themes of a service quality construct;

\*\*\* Represents the frequency count of a noticeable opinion divided by the total number of respondents, which is 15.

Unfortunately, many past studies in the education context were merely adopting the modified SERVQUAL model theoretical framework in measuring how the five-dimension variables were related to respondent satisfaction (Mashenene, 2019; Mbise, 2015; Mbise et al., 2013; Mbise & Tuninga, 2013; and Mwongoso et al., 2015). Researchers have made little effort was taken to enrich the modified SERVQUAL model's framework with additional variables that are relevant and can serve as an independent predictor dimension variable. Higher education service quality significantly influences student satisfaction; therefore, institutions should put in place mechanisms to collect student feedback to determine the service quality dimensions of

interest to their students and make the necessary improvements on the relevant service quality dimensions. Therefore, this signifies why the SERVQUAL model needs to be enriched. Also, little effort was taken to identify other items that can measure service quality (Ravichandran, Prabhakaran, & Kumar, 2010). As the world has changed, students have become more aware and informed, and adding other variables to the traditional SERVQUAL model is very important to HLIs.

As a result, extra variables of perceived transparency and trust in an institution have been included in the modified SERVQUAL model after the data analysis to assess the level of satisfaction or discontent among students who have used HLI services. Perceived transparency is a metric that assesses how positive respondents' impressions of their institution's overall offerings are. Trust in an institution, on the other hand, indicates how people feel about their institutions.

After analysing the contents of the preliminary data, the following themes emerged: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, perceived transparency of student services, trust in the institution, and student satisfaction.

## Conclusions

The study's participants were dissatisfied with the services offered by their HLIs, as evidenced by the findings. The essential signifiers in this study must be investigated further in the main study, which will include a bigger pool of participants. After validating the significance of the respective signifiers' effects in the primary study, policymakers might devise an intervention policy to stifle negative signifiers while strengthening or facilitating the emergence of positive ones.

The major goal of this paper is to emphasise the contribution to the literature on service quality that results from using a service quality model with additional variables as a theoretical research framework. The SERVQUAL Instrument of Parasuraman et al. (1985), which claims to assess the relevant elements of perceived quality across service industries based on five categories: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles, has gotten the most attention (Onditi & Wechuli, 2017). On the other side, the SERVQUAL model with extra variables can provide more comprehensive data. The researchers must identify perceived transparency and trust in an institution signifier that were not explored in the original SERVQUAL model to determine why respondents have formed certain reactions to the newly included constructs of perceived transparency and trust in an institution.

In conclusion, before the structural relationship between the SERVQUAL model and other constructs can be examined, it is critical to elicit and analyse the signifiers of service quality dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles) in the preliminary study. Details on how to elicit and analyse the signifiers of service quality dimensions, on the other hand, were barely covered in the literature, particularly in the domain of perceived transparency and trust. As a result, this article aims to help academics comprehend the importance of combining the SERVQUAL model with other factors such as perceived transparency and trust, as well as how a more structured method may be utilised to elicit and measure student satisfaction indicators.

This research, however, is not without flaws. Because not all HLI finalists were willing to discuss their experiences with the researcher about the HLI service, some potential responders

may have been eliminated for this study by accident. Furthermore, respondents may not have stated all the crucial indicators of their students' satisfaction during the interview sessions. As a result, interviewers must be taught how to elicit signifiers of hidden opinions.

## References

- Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. *NursingPlus Open*, 2, 8-14.
- Chancey, E. T., Bliss, J. P., Proaps, A. B., & Madhavan, P. (2015). The role of trust as a mediator between system characteristics and response behaviours. *Human factors*, 57(6), 947-958.
- Chikazhe, L., Makanyeza, C., & Kakava, N. Z. (2022). The effect of perceived service quality, satisfaction and loyalty on perceived job performance: perceptions of university graduates. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 32(1), 1-18.
- Chow, L. S. (2020). *Impact of Indian Muslim Restaurants' hygienic Atmosphere on Diners' satisfaction: Extending the Expectation Disconfirmation Theory*. (Doctoral dissertation, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman).
- Erlingsson, C., & Brysiewicz, P. (2017). A hands-on guide to doing content analysis. *African Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 7(3), 93-99.
- Gabriel, E. (2012). Assessment of mobile phone service quality by customers and service providers: The case of St. Augustine and Mzumbe Universities and network providers in Tanzania (Doctoral dissertation, Kenyatta University - Kenya).
- Getahun, A. (2019). The Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: A Case Study of Commercial Bank of Ethiopia Adama City.
- Hofmann, Y. E., & Strobel, M. (2020). Transparency goes a long way: information transparency and its effect on the professoriate's job satisfaction and turnover intentions. *Journal of Business Economics*, 90(5), 713-732.
- Hosen, M., Chong, Y. L., & Lau, L. S. (2021). The role of salient beliefs influence on Malaysian academics' intention to publish in indexed journals. *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science*, 26(1), 63-81.
- Jiewanto, A., Laurens, C., & Nelloh, L. (2012). Influence of Service Quality, University Image, and Student Satisfaction toward WOM Intention: A Case Study on Universitas Pelita Harapan Surabaya. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 40, 16-23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.03.155>
- Karwati, S., Sukardi, S., & Syafruddin, S. (2019, April). The Study of Quality Service of Education in Public Vocational Schools in Using ServQual Model. In *3rd Asian Education Symposium (AES 2018)* (pp. 385-387). Atlantis Press.
- Mashenene, R. G. (2019). Effect of service quality on students' satisfaction in Tanzania Higher Education. *Journal of Business Education Journal*, 2(2), 1-8.
- Mbise, E. R. (2015). Students' perceived service quality of business schools in Tanzania: A longitudinal study. *Quality Issues and Insights in the 21st Century*, 4(1), 28-44.
- Mbise, E. R. & Tuninga, R. S. J. (2013). The application of SERVQUAL to business schools in an emerging market: The case of Tanzania. *Journal of Transnational Management*, 18(2), 101-124.

- Mgaiwa, S. J. (2018). The paradox of financing public higher education in Tanzania and the fate of quality education: The experience of selected universities. *Sage Open*, 8(2), 2158244018771729.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2018). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Sage publications.
- Mwiya, B., Bwalya, J., Siachinji, B., Sikombe, S., Chanda, H., & Chawala, M. (2017). Higher education quality and student satisfaction Nexus: Evidence from Zambia. *Creative Education*, 8, 1044-1068. [doi.org/10.4236/ce.2017.87076](https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2017.87076)
- Mwongoso, A J., Kazungu, I. & Kiwia, R.H. (2015). Measuring service quality gap in higher education using SERVQUAL model at Moshi University College of Cooperative and Business Studies (MUCCoBS). Implications for improvement. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 3(6), 298-317.
- Onditi, O. E. & Wenchuli, T. W. (2017). Service quality and student satisfaction in higher education institutions: A review of literature. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 7(7), 328-335.
- Parasuraman A, Zheitmal VA, Berry LL (1998). SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale For Measuring Consumer Perceptions Of Service Quality. *J Retailing*.64(1):12-40.
- Parasuraman, A. Zeithaml, V. A & Berry, L. L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implication for future research. *Journal of Marketing* 49, 41 – 50
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. & Berry, L. L. (1990). Five imperatives for improving service quality. *Sloan*.
- Ravichandran, K., Prabhakaran, S., & Kumar, S. A. (2010). Application of Servqual model on measuring service quality: A Bayesian approach. *Enterprise Risk Management*, 2(1), 145.
- Sheng, M. L., & Fauzi, A. A. (2022). Responding to a disruptive health crisis for higher education institutions: service quality and perceived safety effects on student satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 1-23.
- Tanzania Commission for Universities (2021). *Undergraduate Admission Guidebook for 2021/2022 Academic Year (For Holders of Form Six Qualifications)*. Dar es Salaam: TCU.
- Twum, K. K., Adams, M., Budu, S., & Budu, R. A. A. (2022). Achieving university libraries user loyalty through user satisfaction: the role of service quality. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 32(1), 54-72.
- Yılmaz, K., & Temizkan, V. (2022). The Effects of Educational Service Quality and Socio-Cultural Adaptation Difficulties on International Students' Higher Education Satisfaction. *SAGE Open*, 12(1), 21582440221078316.