

Relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Universities in Kenya

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Abstract

This article investigated the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in universities in Kenya. Dimensions of Organizational Culture that were addressed were Consistency, Involvement, Mission and Adaptability which were measured using Denison's Organizational Culture Survey. Service Quality dimensions measured were Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness using SERVQUAL. The study used survey research design which was quantitative in nature. Sample size comprised of 225 teaching staff in the business program in four chartered universities in Kenya. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. To measure the causal relationship, regression and correlation analyses were conducted. The study findings showed that there was a significant, positive relationship ($r=0.727$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$) between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in universities in Kenya. Organizational Culture had a significant influence ($r^2=0.529$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$) on Service Quality in universities in Kenya. The study recommended that the university leadership needs to streamline the working within departments, increase training of necessary skills, improve on communication, conduct regular consultation with employees and encourage employee involvement in planning process.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Service Quality, Universities

Introduction

Organizational Culture is useful in understanding and describing organizational life while influencing employee behaviour and attitudes at the organizational, team and individual levels (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013; Hartnell, Ou, & Angelo, 2011). Organizations which have a strong and positive culture are able to create an enabling work environment where employees develop, grow, innovate and operate at their full potential thus responding better to change (Robbins & Judge, 2012). Various scholars show that for an organization to have a strong and powerful competitive advantage within the business environment, Service Quality is vital (Givarian, Samani, Ghorbani, & Samani, 2013). In spite of this assertion, Service Quality has not been given the necessary attention by organizations (Al-Ibrahim, 2014). This is worrying since Service Quality in an organization is measured not only by the result but also by the delivery process and the actual service, especially in universities (Tsoukatos, 2014). Organizational Culture focuses on the soft management of human capital while also helping to provide stability to an organization and representing a much higher level of analysis (Ko, 2014; Siriram, 2012; Hartnell, Ou, & Angelo, 2011). Since universities are operating in extremely challenging and dynamic environments, attaining excellence and enhancing Service Quality provides a huge competitive advantage thus helping universities to set themselves apart from

their competitors (Chong & Ahmed, 2015; Arif, Ilyas, & Hameed, 2013; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2012).

Noting that universities exist in a dynamic business environment, there is a huge need for public universities to inculcate Organizational Cultures that will help them to achieve their goals. Rono and Kiptum (2017) add that since services offered by different universities in Kenya are similar, there is a need to create an Organizational Culture that assists the university to remain competitive so that the students are satisfied with Service Quality delivered. The focus on providing quality service to students has become a critical point for universities (Commission for University Education, 2016) especially since these students are primary consumers as well as informed customers. Universities have been challenged to become more flexible, responsive and efficient (Odero, 2017). Ultimately, a well-planned, well-maintained, positive, consistent and long-term Organizational Culture enhances stable and sustainable Service Quality that is in line with university's business objectives (Botha, 2016; Jo Ey & Yazdanifard, 2014).

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

The Systems theory of Management treats an organization as a set of distinct, inter-dependent and internal subsystems which need to be continually aligned and coordinated in the process of producing outcomes (Wehrich, 2013). In this study, the Denison's Organizational Culture model provides a systems approach that results in effectiveness of organizations ensuring universities are in a better position to fulfill needs of their customers (students).

The Service-Profit Chain theory assumes links within terms such as external Service Quality and customers' satisfaction, internal Service Quality and employees' satisfaction and other results such as loyalty and profitability (Kolar, Erčulj, & Weis, 2018). In this study, the Service-Profit Chain theory sits on the capability of an organization to cultivate a culture and work environment that is structured to fulfill and encourage staff to be highly productive.

Organizational Culture

Organizational Culture, as reported anonymously by employees, is seen as such a crucial factor in the performance of organizations that it has been recognized in an annual report by Fortune's '100 Best Companies to Work For' (Levering, 2016). Organizational Culture is a vital ingredient of performance by organizations and a great origin of long-term competitive advantage (Kenny, 2012). Organizational Culture focuses on the soft management of human capital while also providing stability to an organization and representing a much higher level of analysis (Ko, 2014).

Organizational Culture is defined as the underlying values, beliefs, and principles that serve as a foundation for an organization's management system. It is also the set of management practices and behaviors that both exemplify and reinforce those basic principles (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2014). To measure Organizational Culture, this study used an adapted version of Denison's Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS). The independent variables measured were Consistency, Involvement, Mission and Adaptability.

Consistency

This supplies a core source of consensus where the focal point is on a shared perspective and beliefs and a common assortment of management concepts. Consistency dimension has three

features namely core values, agreement and coordination & integration (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2014).

Involvement

Organizations that encourage participation of their members will exhibit higher levels of the Involvement dimension. Involvement dimension has three features namely empowerment, team orientation, and capability development (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2014).

Mission

Effective organizations actively follow a mission that gives clear message and guidelines for their employees. Employees understanding the organization's mission allows leadership of an organization to mold present behavior by imagining a chosen anticipated position. Mission dimension has three features namely vision, strategic direction & intent and goals & objectives (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2014).

Adaptability

Adaptability is the organization's ability to make adjustments internally as a reaction to circumstances that happen outside the organization. It also refers to the organization's prowess to convert the needs of the business environment into valuable efforts. Adaptability dimension has three features namely creating change, customer focus and organizational learning (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2014).

Service Quality

Whereas the interests of all the beneficiaries of Higher Education should be safeguarded, it is vital to note that provision of Service Quality is ultimately the responsibility of the universities (Dado, Rajic, T, Riznic, & Rajic, 2011). In universities, lectures are a fundamental service while auxiliary services, such as administrative and support, are helpful to create a wholesome learning encounter (Buultjens & Robinson, 2011). Since universities are operating in highly challenging and dynamic environments, attaining excellence and enhancing Service Quality provides a substantial competitive advantage thus helping universities to set themselves apart from their competitors (Chong & Ahmed, 2015). With the rise of student fees payable to the universities, education being categorized as a sought-after service, an increase in demanding students and the availability of university choices for students, the expectation for Service Quality has heightened (Kwek, Lau, & Tan, 2010).

Service Quality is defined as the contrast between what one expects to receive (expectations) and what one actually thinks they get (perceptions) (Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2016). To measure Service Quality, this study used an adapted version of SERVQUAL. The dependent variables measured were Responsiveness, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Reliability. Responsiveness refers to being eager to serve, being helpful and fulfilling service quickly and in time to students in universities. Assurance refers to being knowledgeable, kind and able to give assurance to students in universities. Tangibles refers to the physical appearance of equipment, personnel and library materials in universities. Empathy refers to showing interest and being sensitive to students in universities. Reliability refers to the ability to realize pledged service perfectly and reliably to students in universities.

Relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality

There have been many studies carried out to investigate the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in various industries globally. The studies have yielded mixed findings. These scholars have used various measurement models as well.

Al-Otaibi, Yusof and Ismail (2020) reviewed the connection between Organizational Culture and Service Quality among institutions of higher learning in Saudi Arabia and found that Organizational Culture has a significant influence on students' perceptions of Service Quality. Alshemmari (2020) found that there was a statistically significant relationship between prevailing Organizational Culture and the Service Quality provided by the Ministry of Industry and Trade in state of Kuwait. Gantsho and Sukdeo (2018) investigated the impact of Organizational Culture (measured using DOCS) on Service Quality (measured using SERVQUAL) on an organization in the energy industry in South Africa. The study found that Organizational Culture had a strong significant influence on Service Quality. Leontev (2017) in a study in a university of civil engineering in Russia, found a relationship between Organizational Culture and satisfaction of students while the employees (teaching staff, support staff) in the university gave greater importance to the quality of services delivered to the students and the crucial role played by these services for the university.

In Korea, Shin and Lee (2016) studied the impact of Organizational Culture types on Service Quality and customer satisfaction in military hospitals while Cho, Kim, Park and Cho (2013) established an indirect, theoretical relationship between Organizational Culture (measured using Competing Values Framework) and Service Quality (measured using an adapted form SERVQUAL) in Knowledge Intensive Business Services. In Uganda, Nakamya (2012) found a positive, significant relationship between the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality (measured using SERVQUAL) in a financial institution. Felly (2011) in a study on the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in the Insurance Industry in Malaysia, examined employees as respondents.

Despite the assertion of the importance of Service Quality, there has not been adequate attention by organizations (Al-Ibrahim, 2014). This is worrying since Service Quality in an organization has traditionally been measured using results/outcomes. However, recently there has been great emphasis on the delivery process and the actual service, especially in universities (Tsoukatos, 2014). Therefore, Organizational Culture is a pertinent concept to consider in enhancing Service Quality. Although Organizational Culture and Service Quality have been widely studied in various industries worldwide, a crucial gap exists in measuring organizational culture in universities (Coman & Bonciu, 2016). This is partly due to the notion that the Organizational Culture which is inculcated into students and employees is strikingly different from that in other service sectors (Ngacha & Onyango, 2017).

Additionally, it is worth noting that Denison's Organizational Culture Survey as a measure of Organizational Culture and its link with SERVQUAL as a measurement of Service Quality has been studied by a few scholars in diverse industries, with very a limited number in the field of higher education. This study validated the use of Systems theory of management and Service-profit chain theory in explaining the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality. This study also added to the body of knowledge by using only teaching staff in schools of business in both public and private chartered universities in Kenya.

Therefore, this study sought to explain the influence that the Independent Variable (Organizational Culture) has on the Dependent Variable (Service Quality). The various constructs and their relationships were illustrated in the following hypothetical model in Figure 1.

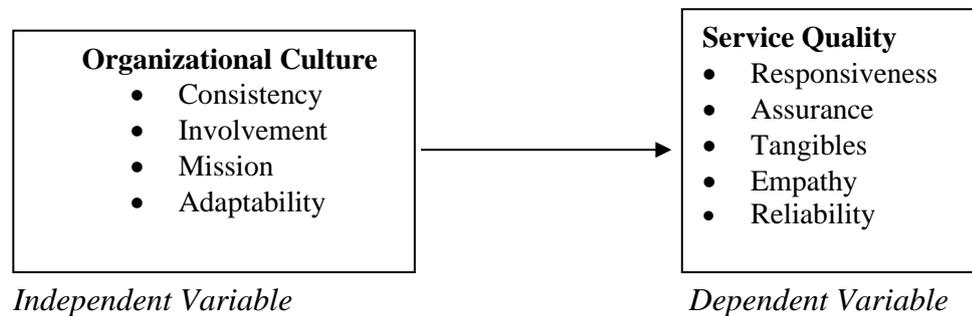


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Universities in Kenya*
- H₀₂: Consistency, Involvement, Mission and Adaptability dimensions of Organizational Culture have no significant relationships with Service Quality in Universities in Kenya*
- H₀₃: Organizational Culture has no significant influence on Service Quality in Universities in Kenya*
- H₀₄: Consistency, Involvement, Mission and Adaptability dimensions of Organizational Culture have no significant influence on Service Quality in Universities in Kenya*

Methodology

This study used the survey research design (Creswell & Pablo-Clark, 2011). This study was based on positivist approach which generally supposed that reality was objectively given, was explained by measurable variables which were independent of the observer (researcher) and utilized quantitative data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012).

The target population was the teaching staff in the business Cluster. The sampling frame in this study was obtained from the target population of 2,475 which comprised of teaching staff in the business cluster in all the 40 chartered Public and Private Universities in Kenya (Commission for University Education, 2016). The use of full-time teaching staff was supported through recommendations by Trivellas and Santouridis (2016).

Multi-stage sampling was used which was a fusion of convenience sampling, stratified sampling and proportionate sampling. Since this study's target population was 2,475 which is less than ten thousand, the formula given by Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) was adapted in this study. The study's sample size of 225 respondents was from 2 Public Chartered and 2 Private Chartered universities. The decision to study both Public and Private Universities was in line with literature by Arrieta and Avolio (2020) who conducted a study in a private university in Peru on factors affecting higher education service quality. They suggested that

future research needs to be carried out on public universities as well. Table 1 shows a summary of the study’s target population and sample size.

Table 1: Study’s Target Population and Sample size

“Business Cluster”	Target population	Sample Size
Public Chartered (23)	948	43
		44
Private Chartered (17)	1,527	69
		69
TOTAL	2,475	225

Source: CUE (2016)

This study adopted survey research design (Creswell & Pablo-Clark, 2011). To collect quantitative data, structured questionnaires were used. The questionnaires used a 5-point Likert scale with 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly agree. To measure the Independent Variable (Organizational Culture), 60-item Denison’s Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS) was adapted. To measure the Dependent Variable (Service Quality), 20-item SERVQUAL was adapted. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis at 95% confidence level.

Findings

Response rate was 84% which was calculated from the returned 189 questionnaires out of the sample of 225 respondents. This agrees with the assertions by Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2010) that a response rate above 70% is adequate for generalization of outcome of the findings.

Demographics of the study included teaching staff’s gender, type of university they taught in and the number of years of teaching. It is evident that the male respondents were more than the female while those in private universities were more than those in public universities. There were more respondents who taught for less than 10 years compared to those who had over 11 years teaching experience. A summary of demographics of the study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographics of the Study

Demographics	Frequency	Percentages
Female	85	45
Male	104	55
Public chartered universities	75	39.7
Private chartered universities	114	60.3
1 to 5 years of teaching	75	39.7
6 to 10 years of teaching	64	33.9
11 to 20 years of teaching	27	14.3
More than 20 years of teaching	23	12.2

Reliability analysis was conducted for the Independent Variables under Organizational Culture and the Dependent Variable which was Service Quality. The values for cronbach alpha were above 0.7 which showed the data collected was reliable. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Sub-variables	Cronbach alpha	No of items
Organizational Culture	Consistency	0.853	15
	Involvement	0.826	15
	Mission	0.798	15
	Adaptability	0.881	15
Service Quality		0.877	20

Correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in universities in Kenya as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlational Analysis between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Universities in Kenya

		Organizational Culture	Service Quality
Organizational Culture	Pearson Correlation	1	.727**
	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>		.000
	<i>N</i>	189	189
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	.727**	1
	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>	.000	
	<i>N</i>	189	189

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results of Pearson correlation showed that the correlation value was positive at 0.727, with a p-value of 0.000, which was significant at 1% level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Universities in Kenya.

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (*H₀₁*) was rejected. Therefore, Organizational Culture had a significantly positive relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in universities in Kenya. Correlation analysis was also conducted to establish the relationship between dimensions of Organizational Culture and Service Quality in universities in Kenya as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlational Analysis between Dimensions of Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Universities in Kenya

Dimensions of Organizational Culture		Service Quality
Consistency	Pearson Correlation	.649**
	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>	.000
	<i>N</i>	189
Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.654**
	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>	.000
	<i>N</i>	189
Mission	Pearson Correlation	.605**
	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>	.000
	<i>N</i>	189
Adaptability	Pearson Correlation	.599**
	<i>Sig. (2 tailed)</i>	.000
	<i>N</i>	189

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results of Pearson correlation showed that all the p-values were 0.000 which was less than 1% level of significance. Involvement had a significant positive relationship with Service Quality ($r=0.654$) while Consistency had a significant positive relationship with Service Quality ($r=0.649$). Mission had a significant positive relationship with Service Quality ($r=0.605$) while Adaptability had a significant positive relationship with Service Quality ($r=0.599$).

H₀₂: Consistency, Involvement, Mission and Adaptability dimensions of Organizational Culture have no significant relationships with Service Quality in Universities in Kenya.

Since all the p-values were less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (*H₀₂*) was rejected. Therefore, Consistency, Involvement, Mission and Adaptability dimensions of Organizational Culture had significantly positive relationships with Service Quality in universities in Kenya.

To analyze the structural relationship between Service Quality (Dependent Variable) and the Independent Variable (Organizational Culture), linear regression analysis was conducted and results were shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Universities in Kenya

Model Summary					
	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of estimate	
	.727	.529	.527	.332	
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	23.180	1	23.180	210.043	.000
Residual	20.637	187	.110		
TOTAL	43.816	188			

- a. Predictor: (constant), Organizational Culture
- b. Dependent variable: Service Quality

The coefficient of determination (R square) of this model was 0.529. This shows that Organizational Culture can only explain 52.9% of change in Service Quality. The results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed that the p-value of the F-statistic (210.043) was 0.000 which was less than the 5% level of significance. This shows a significant model.

H₀₃: Organizational Culture has no significant influence on Service Quality in Universities in Kenya

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (*H₀₃*) was rejected. Therefore, Organizational Culture had a significant influence on Service Quality in universities in Kenya. To analyze the structural relationship between Service Quality (Dependent Variable) and the Independent Variables, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted and results were shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis between Independent Variables and Service Quality

Model Summary					
	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of estimate	
	.731	.534	.524	.333	
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	23.383	4	5.846	52.641	.000
Residual	20.433	184	.111		
TOTAL	43.816	188			

- a. Predictors: (constant), Consistency, Involvement, Mission, Adaptability
- b. Dependent variable: Service Quality

The coefficient of determination (R square) of this model was 0.534. This shows that four dimensions of Organizational Culture can only explain 53.4% of change in Service Quality. The results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed that the p-value of the F-statistic (52.641) was 0.000 which was less than the level of significance of 0.05. This shows a significant model.

H₀₄: Consistency, Involvement, Mission and Adaptability dimensions of Organizational Culture have no significant influence on Service Quality in Universities in Kenya

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (*H₀₃*) was rejected. Therefore, all the four dimensions of Organizational Culture had significant influence on Service Quality in universities in Kenya.

Discussion

This study findings were in agreement with similar findings by Egdair and Abdelsalam (2020) who found a positive relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality. Pratomo (2020) in a study on high schools in Indonesia found a positive and significant relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality. This study findings were similar to a study done by Ssemugenyi, Asumwa and Kazibwe (2020) who found a significant positive relationship between Organizational Culture and customer Service Quality in Electrical energy sector in Kenya using both quantitative and qualitative data.

This study findings were also similar to a study by Jaya, Hafasnuddin and Majid (2019) who found a positive direct effect of Organizational Culture and Service Quality in a public hospital in Indonesia. This was further confirmed by Abu-Alhaija, Yusof, Hashim and Jaharuddin (2018) who established a positive relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality. This study’s findings are in agreement with Hadian (2017) who agrees that there is a strong relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality. However, the results contradict findings of a study in one-stop shops in Indonesia with employees and customers as respondents, that found that Organizational Culture had no significant effect on Service Quality (Indrastuti, Tanjung, Augstin, Rosmayani, & Hafni, 2020).

Conclusion

This research's main purpose was to investigate the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality. The researcher concluded that Organizational Culture had a significant and strong positive relationship with Service Quality. In addition, all four independent variables of Organizational Culture had significant positive relationships with the dependent variable (Service Quality). This relationship was demonstrated through the strong positive correlation coefficients.

Among the dimensions of Organizational Culture, Involvement had the highest value for correlation, followed by Consistency, Mission and lastly Adaptability. The study also concluded that Organizational Culture was a significant predictor of Service Quality. Additionally, the study confirmed that variation in Service Quality could be significantly explained using Consistency, Involvement, Mission and Adaptability dimensions of Organizational Culture.

Consequently, the university leadership needs to streamline the working within departments to be consistent with working within the university. There also needs to be training of necessary skills required in universities, effective and centralized communication, regular consultation and involvement in planning process. The university leadership needs to ensure that the strategic direction, mission, vision, goals of the university were distinct.

Further research should focus on other organizational variables that might explain Service Quality in universities in Kenya. There also needs to be more studies to be done on the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in a larger number of universities and with different sets of respondents to firmly confirm the relationship. This study may also be replicated in other industries regionally and globally.

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