



An examination of service quality and its impact on customer retention – A Case Study of Trust Academy

SUBMITTED IN PART FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MARKETING DEGREE IN THE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

GILBERT RALPH MADZIVA

STUDENT NUMBER: P 007 4250 T

SUPERVISOR: MR. J.M HABVANE



AUGUST 2009

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DATE	ACCESSION	CLASS No.
14/10	SC 091177	HF5415 .55 MAD



Abstract

This study examines the construct of service quality in the marketing of services. Services, being broad by nature, the research had a narrow focus on investigating service quality and its impact on customer retention in an educational setting. The objective was to determine the important factors that customers consider when evaluating an education service offering as well as to establish whether there is a link between the level of perceived service quality and repeat purchase intentions.

A case study approach was adopted and Trust Academy selected as the unit of analysis. The research reviewed literature on service quality published by various authors so as to create a conceptual framework of the study. Empirical evidence from past research works on service quality was considered and used a guide in the collection of primary data. The data collection instruments were an interview guide for face-to-face interviews that were as part of the pilot study and a survey questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL model. Out of a total of 266 survey questionnaires, 125 were distributed to high school students, 117 to business school students and 24 to ICT students. The overall response rate was 76%. When considered separately, the response rate for the high school was 87%, 58% for the business school and 100% for the ICT students.

The findings led the researcher to conclude that customers of the Academy evaluate service quality using basically the same criteria and that reliability and assurance were the most important aspects that customers consider when evaluating the service quality of educational institutions. The research also established that customers' perceptions of the institution's service quality have an impact on customer retention.

The research recommends that Trust Academy has to adopt, among other customer focused service quality initiatives, strategies that lead to perceptions that reflect a highly reliable, responsive and adaptive organisation. In addition, it stands to benefit from enhancing its service quality image by developing a technology based customer relationship management programme that will help the Academy to have a more mutually rewarding relationship with its customers.