Abstract: This study assesses the quality of service at the ICT Centre in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, from the students’ perspective. A survey methodology was used and a modified SERVQUAL questionnaire was adopted to explore students’ expectations and perceived service levels along a five-point likert scale. One hundred and five copies of the questionnaire were administered and 93 responses obtained. The results showed that the students rated the overall service quality of the ICT Centre as average. The students were satisfied with the Centre staff being competent in their delivery and in responding to students’ questions. They were also satisfied with the Centre staff giving them personal attention. Factors identified as influencing service quality were found in the inability of staff to give prompt service to students, to fulfill promises to students and to tell students when services were to be performed. Lack of up-to-date hardware and software was also a weakness. A major issue unsatisfactory to the students was the unreliability of their Internet services; the bandwidth allocated was small. The study has been reported in two parts; the details of the survey have been reported in Part 1, i.e., this study; and Part 2 summarizes, discusses and analyses the survey report.

Keywords: Expectations and perceptions of service, Ghana university, quality of service, service quality dimensions, service quality measurement, SERVQUAL

INTRODUCTION

Currently, services dominate the economies of the world’s developed countries. Service represents over eighty percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and labour force in the United States alone (Spohrer and Maglio, 2008; Bitner and Brown, 2008). In spite of this, there is relatively little formal focus within companies, governments and universities on service research, service excellence and service innovation. Services are provided through interaction with customers. They cannot be assessed in advance, but only when they are provided. The quality of a service depends to some extent on the way in which the service provider and the customer interact. How the customer perceives the service and what the provider thinks they provide, both depend largely on their personal experiences and expectations (Hinson, 2006).

The quality of a service is a major factor in satisfying the customers of a particular organization. It refers to the extent to which the service fulfills the requirements and expectations of the customer. To be able to provide quality, the supplier should continuously assess how the service is experienced and what the customer expects in the future. What one customer considers normal could be considered a special requirement by another customer. The results of the service assessment can be used to determine if the service should be modified, if the customer should be provided with more information, or if the cost of the service should be changed (Van Bon et al., 2004). This situation equally applies to services delivered by Information and Communications Technology (ICT) centers.

An effective assessment of the Quality of Service (QoS) provided by an ICT centre should take into consideration how clients perceive the ICT services. When the service provider understands how the clients evaluate its services, it can then identify how to manage these evaluations and how to influence them in a desired direction. It does not matter what an organization believes about its level of service, what the customer thinks about both the process and the outcome of service is the important issue in the delivery of quality service to clients.

The UCC ICT centre: Considering that ICT has been fully adopted in Africa, it is essential that African universities develop educational programmes to address the need for a workforce that is fluent in ICT. Most African universities are rather poorly positioned in terms of ICT (Obuobi et al., 2006). In 1995, Ghana, for example, had full Internet connectivity. Despite this, growth in ICT services and usage in Ghana’s universities is still lagging (Afari-Kumah and Tanye, 2009). This study addresses the usage of ICT services at
the ICT Centre of the University of Cape Coast (UCC) - one of the public universities in Ghana established in 1962 (Adzobu, 2011).

The UCC ICT Centre was commissioned in 2003 to train students in all aspects of computer literacy (University of Cape Coast, 2009). The Centre provides services to a large population, as a result, there seemed to be less emphasis on quality of service delivery with long queues of students waiting to use facilities. Another problem often encountered by students was slow Internet connectivity speed. (Incidentally, all of Ghana’s public universities invested together in VSAT technology. The costs of deploying this technology, securing a license and its operation are high. And so, the bandwidth allocated for Internet access to UCC was one megabit per second as against 10 megabits/sec proposed by Laudon and Laudon (2010) as the required bandwidth for ICT Centers).

Students therefore get frustrated and dissatisfied about the staff not giving them individualized attention when they need help on the facilities at the Centre; the commitment of the Centre in helping and providing services promptly; the appearance of the physical facilities, equipments, personnel and communications materials and the ability of the Centre to perform services dependably, accurately and consistently (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2007). There is therefore the need to assess the quality of services at the Centre so that problems that students face can be addressed and also, to help improve the overall service quality of the ICT Centre.

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to assess the quality of service at the ICT Centre of the University of Cape Coast from the student’s perspective and to make recommendations for improving on service quality (Adzobu, 2011). The specific objectives were to:

- Assess the service quality at the Centre by measuring the gap between perceptions and expectations of students who use the place
- Determine which aspects of service quality are important to the students
- Determine factors influencing the quality of services at the Centre
- Make recommendations on how to improve on the level of service quality

The study will provide information on the gap between students’ perceptions and expectations of ICT services and their views on the ICT Centre’s services. This will enable the university authorities and the management of the Centre to develop the right strategies to close the perceived service quality gap and hence improve on the quality of service delivery.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**Quality of service:** The measurement of quality is usually made during the process of service delivery. Customer satisfaction with a service can be defined by comparing perceptions of service received with expectations of service desired. Exceptional quality is achieved when expectations are exceeded. Quality of service is deemed unacceptable when expectations are not met. Incidentally, expectation is intangible. Parasuraman et al. (1991) stated that the expectations of service quality provided to clients are the client wishes or needs, or what the service supplier should provide.

On the other hand, the perception of service quality performance refers to services executed at the very moment the consumer interacts directly with the services. Therefore, the perception of service quality is a consequence of an evaluative perception of the customer, when interacting with the service at a specific moment in time.

The Gaps model of service quality: The Gaps model of service quality by Parasuraman et al. (1985) was adopted and adapted as the theoretical framework for this study. In the Gaps model, quality of service is a function of the differences (gaps) between expectation and perceived performance along quality dimensions. Service quality is determined by the formula $Q \approx PS - ES$, where $Q$ is perceived quality and $PS$ and $ES$ are the resultant ratings for perceptions and expectations respectively (Arshad and Ameen, 2010). Unlike quality of goods, which can be easily measured objectively, service quality is an intangible construct that may be difficult to measure. Parasuraman et al. (1985) research revealed that service quality stems from a comparison of customers’ expectations of service or desires from the service provider with their perceptions of the actual service performance. Ten dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding or knowing the customer and access) were extracted from their research in terms of customer perceived service quality. In subsequent research, they found a high degree of correlation between the ten dimensions and reconstructed them into five-tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Based on their findings, they developed a quality of service model (Fig. 1) Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2004).

The model (which we have adapted for our ICT Centre-student environment) consists of five gaps:

- **Gap 1:** The difference between what the students expect and what the ICT Centre perceives about the students’ expectations
- **Gap 2:** The difference between the Centre’s perceptions of student expectations and the
translation of those perceptions into service quality specifications and design

- **Gap 3**: The difference between standards of service quality and the actual service delivered to students
- **Gap 4**: The difference between the services delivered to students and the promises of the Centre communicated to the students about its service quality
- **Gap 5**: The difference between students’ expectations and perceived service

Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) stated that the key gap is Gap 5. Gaps 1-4 will influence the extent of significance of Gap 5. The magnitude of each gap will have effect on service quality. The students’ satisfaction with the service at the Centre can therefore be determined by comparing perceptions of service received with expectations of service desired (which is Gap 5). The quality of service is determined by the formula \( Q = PS - ES \), where \( Q \) is perceived quality and \( PS \) and \( ES \) are the resultant ratings for perceptions of service and expectations of service respectively (Arshad and Ameen, 2010).

According to Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2004), when customers’ (here, students’) expectations, \( ES \), of service are less than perceptions, \( PS \), (i.e., \( ES < PS \)), then service is perceived to be of exceptional quality. This therefore implies that \( PS - ES \) yields a positive value for service quality, \( Q \). Quality of service is deemed unacceptable when the customers’ expectations are not met. This leads to a low service quality yielding a negative value. In addition, when customers’ expectations of service are confirmed by perceived service, quality is satisfactory, that is, \( ES = PS \), i.e., \( PS - ES \approx 0 \).

As stated earlier, customers (students) use five dimensions to form their judgments of service quality, which is based on a comparison between expected and perceived services. These dimensions are:

- **Tangibles**: Tangibles refer to the appearance of the ICT Centre’s physical facilities, equipments, personnel and their communication materials. The condition of the physical surroundings (e.g., cleanliness) is a tangible evidence of the care and attention that are exhibited by the Centre as a service provider.
- **Reliability**: Reliability is the ability of the Centre to perform the promised services both dependably and accurately. Reliable service performance means that the service is accomplished on time, in the same manner and without errors every time.
- **Responsiveness**: Responsiveness is the willingness of the ICT Centre to help students and to provide prompt service. Keeping students waiting creates unnecessary negative perceptions of quality.
The SERVQUAL model: SERVQUAL (for service quality) is a tool for the assessment of quality of service and was developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985). It is used to measure customer expectations and perceptions regarding the five service quality dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy). The model evaluates quality of service using two instruments; SERVEXP (service expectations) which assesses client and supplier expectations related to the service and SERVPERF (service performance) which assesses client and supplier perception of performance regarding the service provided (Van Dyke et al., 1999).

SERVQUAL use in ICT: The SERVQUAL model has been used quite extensively by researchers. Lai et al. (2007) applied the SERVQUAL instrument in China’s mobile communication service. Khan (2010) used a structured SERVQUAL questionnaire to measure mobile phone customers’ perceptions about service quality in Pakistan. Roses et al. (2009) applied SERVPERF to a large Brazilian retail bank and evaluated the perception gaps of service quality between IT service providers and their clients. Bidgely et al. (2010) also researched into identifying service quality dimensions in an IT department of a sports organization using SERVQUAL. Badri et al. (2005) applied SERVQUAL to measure the quality of service of Information Technology (IT) centres in higher education institutions in the United Arab Emirates. Smith et al. (2007) also conducted a survey research to measure perceived service quality in universities using the SERVQUAL instrument.


METHODOLOGY

The main traditional approaches to conducting research are the quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. For our study, the survey research method was adopted, as it allows the results to be generalized from the sample perspective to the entire population. It also facilitates the correlation of both quantitative and qualitative data (Bryman, 2008).

Population and sample size: According to Neuman (2006) a population is the conceptual idea of a large group of people, events or things from which a researcher draws a sample to which results from a sample are generalized. There were three distinct groups of users in the University of Cape Coast community who used the ICT Centre. They were the administrative staff, the teaching and research faculty and the students. Our research focused on the student group with a resident undergraduate population of 15,789 (University of Cape Coast, 2010).

Sampling is the process by which a proportion of a population is carefully selected for a study in order to help extend knowledge gained from the study of the part to the whole population from which the part was selected. The characteristics of the sample must therefore, closely reflect those of the population. In our study, the sample size used was 100 students out of 15,789.

Data source: Data for the study was obtained from primary and secondary sources. The main primary data source was from structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from SERVQUAL questionnaire developed by Parasuraman et al. (1991). It contained three sections, A, B and C. Section A contained biographic data of respondents, B consisted of 20 statements (four on each of the five service quality dimensions) enquiring the expected (Table 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13) and perceived (Table 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12) level of services on a five point scale ranging from 1, “strongly disagree” to 5, “strongly agree” and section C required additional comments from respondents. There were both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The open ended questions were used where respondents’ opinions were needed and where respondents were to make distinctions that were not possible with closed questions. Secondary data was from journals, textbooks and the Internet.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study assessed the quality of service at the ICT Centre in the University of Cape Coast, (UCC) Ghana, from the students’ perspective. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the gap between perceptions and expectations of students who use the Centre?
- Which dimensions of service quality were important to the students?
Table 1: Age of the respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>2 (3.7%)</td>
<td>4 (10.5%)</td>
<td>6 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>48 (88.9%)</td>
<td>33 (86.8%)</td>
<td>81 (88.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>4 (7.4%)</td>
<td>1 (2.63%)</td>
<td>5 (5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54 (100%)</td>
<td>38 (100%)</td>
<td>92 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Level of the students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student level</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>24 (44.4%)</td>
<td>17 (44.7%)</td>
<td>41 (44.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>6 (11.1%)</td>
<td>4 (10.5%)</td>
<td>10 (10.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>23 (42.6%)</td>
<td>13 (34.2%)</td>
<td>36 (39.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>1 (1.9%)</td>
<td>4 (10.5%)</td>
<td>5 (5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54 (100%)</td>
<td>38 (100%)</td>
<td>92 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2: Age of the respondent

- What are the factors influencing the quality of services at the Centre?
- How would the level of service quality at the Centre be improved?

Out of the 105 copies of the questionnaire sent out to the students, 93 were returned providing a response rate of 89%. The results cover the background of the students (gender, age, level, faculty or school) and their expectations, perceptions and remarks on the quality of service at the UCC ICT Centre.

Gender and ages of the students: Out of 93 students who participated in the survey, 54 (58%) were males and 39 (41%) were females. The sample thus contained a higher percentage of males than females. This is reflected in the UCC students’ gender distribution statistics of 67.1% male to 32.9% female (University of Cape Coast, 2010). This implied that both sexes were well represented in the study.

The ages of the respondents were also analyzed (Table 1, Fig. 2). The majority of respondents (both sexes), 81 (88%), were in the age range of 20-29. This shows that the respondent population was made up of mainly young adults who could perceive the state of a service and accurately assess it.

Level of study and faculty of respondents: Results in Table 2 and Fig. 3 show the level of students from first year (Level 100) to final year (Level 400). Most of the respondents were from Level 100 (44.5%) and Level 300 (39.1%). The remaining two levels, 200 and 400, provided 10.9 and 5.4%, respectively of the respondents. The highest number of students was from level 100 and the least from level 400.

The results in Table 3 and Fig. 4 show respondents’ faculty or school. The highest number of students were from the Faculty of Arts, 34 (36.6%), followed by the Faculty of Education (28%). Biological Science students were the least in number (3.2%). The results indicated that undergraduates from all faculties or schools of the university participated in the survey.

Expectations and perceptions of service quality: Respondents were asked to use the service quality attributes of the five SERVQUAL dimensions
Table 4: Tangibles dimension-perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Quality Attributes (SQA)</th>
<th>Perception and frequency of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware (equipment) and software are up-to-date.</td>
<td>5 (5.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ICT centre’s physical facilities are visually appealing.</td>
<td>3 (3.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees of the ICT centre are well dressed and appear neat.</td>
<td>2 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The appearance of the physical facilities at the ICT centre keeps up with the kind of services provided.</td>
<td>2 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Tangibles dimension-expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Quality Attributes (SQA)</th>
<th>Perceptions and frequency of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ICT centre should have up-to-date hardware (equipment) and software.</td>
<td>3 (3.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The physical facilities at the ICT centre should be visually appealing.</td>
<td>1 (1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees at the ICT centre should be well dressed and appear neat.</td>
<td>6 (6.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ICT centre should have a physical appearance that keeps up with the kind of services provided.</td>
<td>4 (4.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) to express their opinions on their expectations and perceptions on the quality of service delivered by the ICT Centre. A likert scale was used with responses strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), not sure (NS), agree (A) and strongly agree (SA).

Tangibles dimension: The students responded to questions on their perceptions and expectations on the physical attributes of the ICT Centre. The questions were on the visual appeal of the Centre, up-to-date hardware and software, the appearance of the physical facilities as well as personnel and communications materials. The results in Table 4 and 5 show the frequency distributions of the perceptions and expectations of the respondents with regards to the Service Quality Dimension (SQD) “tangibles”.

Under perception scores, the highest frequency scores were found under A, ‘agree’. Physical facilities of the Centre that are visually appealing obtained the highest score of 44 (52.4%), followed by employees that are well dressed and neat in appearance, 40 (48%), physical appearance that kept up with the kind of services provided 32 (37.6%) and up-to-date hardware and software 25 (29.1%).

Under the expectation scores, the highest frequency scores were found to come under either A, ‘agree’ or SA, ‘strongly agree’. The highest score was for up-to-date hardware and software 67 (72.0%), followed by employees that are well dressed and neat in appearance 46 (50.5%), Physical facilities of the Centre are visually appealing, 40 (44.4%) and this was affirmed by 38 (42.2%) other respondents. Materials associated with the service such as pamphlets were visually appealing, 37 (41.6%) and this was also affirmed by 36 (40.4%) other respondents. Under tangibles, respondents’ expectations of all service quality attributes were higher than their perceptions. This implies that the students’ expectations were not met.

Reliability dimension: The students were asked to indicate their perceptions and expectations with regards to the ability of the ICT Centre to perform service dependably, accurately and consistently. The results in Tables 6 and 7 show the frequency distributions of the perceptions and expectations of the respondents with regards to the Service Quality Dimension (SQD) “reliability”.

Under the reliability dimension, high frequency scores for perceptions of three of the Service Quality Attributes (SQAs) came under ‘agree’ and one, (The ICT Centre providing services at the promised time) scored the highest, 33 (46.5%) under SA, ‘strongly agree’.

The highest expectation frequency scores for three of the Service Quality Attributes (SQAs) under reliability were found under SA, ‘strongly agree’. These were that the employees should be able to show sincere interest in solving students’ problems, 66 (72.5%), the ability of the employees at the Centre to fulfill their promises, 55 (61.1%) and on time 48 (56.5%). The SQA, the ability of the ICT Centre staff to perform services right the first time, scored 27 (31.8%) and was under ‘agree’. It was inferred, therefore, that although
the respondents agreed that services at the ICT Centre were reliable their expectations of services were greater than their experiences.

**Responsiveness dimension:** The students were asked to indicate their perceptions and expectations with regards to the commitment of the ICT Centre in helping them and providing services promptly. The results in Table 8 and 9 show the frequency distributions of the perceptions and expectations of the respondents with regards to the attribute “responsiveness”.

All the highest perception frequency scores for the SQAs of responsiveness were found under A, ‘agree’. The highest was ‘The employees of the ICT Centre are always willing to help students’, scoring 36 (41.4%). It was inferred that respondents were unanimous that the ICT Centre was responsive to their needs.

All the highest expectation frequency scores for SQAs of responsiveness were under SA, ‘strongly agree’. Here also, the highest score was obtained by ‘The employees should always be willing to help students’, scoring 55 (64.7%). The expectations of
The respondents under the service quality dimension “responsiveness” were very high compared to their perceptions. Their expectations were not met.

Assurance dimension: The respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions and expectations with regards to:

- The evidence of the employee staff’s knowledge of their services to be rendered
- Their courtesy towards student customers
- Their ability to convey trust and confidence into the students

The results in Tables 10 and 11 show the frequency distributions of the perceptions and expectations of the respondents with regards to the attribute “assurance”. The frequency distribution of perceptions scores of respondents for SQAs of assurance showed that the highest scores were all under $A$, ‘agree’. ‘The employees at the ICT Centre being polite to students’ scored the highest, 43 (51.8%), among the four attributes. The respondents had confidence in the personal ability of the employees to deliver quality service.

All the highest expectation frequency scores for the SQAs of assurance were under $A$, ‘strongly agree’. The highest score was obtained by ‘Employees at the ICT Centre should have the knowledge to do their jobs well and to answer students’ questions”; scoring 55 (64.7%).

Respondents’ assessment of the Centre’s quality of service with regards to assurance was positive but their expectations were higher.

Empathy dimension: The students were also asked to indicate their perceptions and expectations about the ability of the ICT Centre to provide individualized attention to them. Their responses are shown in Table 12 and 13. These are frequency distributions of the perceptions and expectations of the respondents with regards to the service quality dimension “empathy”. The frequency distribution of perception scores of the respondents for the SQAs showed that the highest scores were all under $A$, ‘agree’. The ‘ICT Centre staff understand the specific needs of students’ scored the highest 36 (43.4%), among the four attributes.

The highest expectation frequency distribution scores of the SQAs for empathy were under both $A$,
The students at UCC rated the overall service quality of the ICT Centre as average. This assessment was derived from the Gaps model where the overall mean gap score was -0.73. The students were satisfied with the ICT Centre staff being competent in the delivery of quality service and in answering students’ questions. They were also satisfied with the ICT Centre staff being neat and well dressed and giving them personal attention.

Weaknesses that adversely influenced the quality of service were found in the inability of staff to give prompt service to students, to fulfill promises to students and to tell students when services will be performed. Lack of up-to-date hardware and software was also a weakness. The major issue disliked by students with respect to the quality of service at the Centre was the unreliability of their Internet service. The bandwidth allocated was small—one megabit per second (1 Mbps). The quality of service dimension of responsiveness was found to be the most important to students among the five dimensions.

### Table 13: Empathy dimension-expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Quality Attributes (SQA)</th>
<th>Perceptions and frequency of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The employees at the ICT centre should give students individual attention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ICT centre should have operating hours which are convenient to all students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees of the ICT centre should give students personal services.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT centre staff should understand the specific needs of students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SQAs ‘The employees at the ICT Centre should give students individual attention’ and ‘The employees at the ICT Centre should give students personal services’ had scores 36 (41.4%) and 28 (32.9%), respectively. These were under A, ‘agree’. The others were under SA, ‘strongly agree’. These were SQAs ‘the ICT Centre should have operating hours which are convenient to all students, 45 (54.2%) and ‘ICT Centre staff should understand the specific needs of students’, 39 (44.8%).

Although the respondents had a positive perception with respect to the service quality dimension “empathy”, their expectations were higher than their perceptions.

It was observed generally, that there were discrepancies between expectations of respondents and their perceptions on all the SERVQUAL dimensions; expectations were higher than perceptions. This meant that the expectations of quality of service delivery were not met by the ICT Centre.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study assessed the quality of service at the ICT Centre of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, from the students’ perspective. The objectives were to determine which dimensions of service quality are important to students, to determine factors influencing the quality of service and to make recommendations for improving the quality of service at the Centre.

The SERVQUAL instrument (derived from the Gaps model) was identified for measuring service quality at the Centre. Although the SERVQUAL instrument had been criticized and some limitations identified, it is still the most appropriate and widely used instrument for assessing service quality in different types of service industries. The survey research design was adopted for the study. Data was collected using questionnaires. One hundred students were sampled out of a student population of 15,789 for the study. The study has been reported in two parts; the details of the survey have been reported in this study (Part 1) and Part 2 summarizes, discusses and analyses the survey report.

The results from the research showed that the students at UCC rated the overall service quality of the ICT Centre as average. This assessment was derived from the Gaps model where the overall mean gap score was -0.73. The students were satisfied with the ICT Centre staff being competent in the delivery of quality service and in answering students’ questions. They were also satisfied with the ICT Centre staff being neat and well dressed and giving them personal attention.

Weaknesses that adversely influenced the quality of service were found in the inability of staff to give prompt service to students, to fulfill promises to students and to tell students when services will be performed. Lack of up-to-date hardware and software was also a weakness. The major issue disliked by students with respect to the quality of service at the Centre was the unreliability of their Internet service. The bandwidth allocated was small—one megabit per second (1 Mbps). The quality of service dimension of responsiveness was found to be the most important to students among the five dimensions.

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