

STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION: THE ROLE OF STUDENTS' SATISFACTION SURVEY.

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Abstract

The study sought feedback from students as major stakeholders with regard to quality assurance for improvement. The outcome would help develop appropriate strategies to involve students in the quality assurance process. The survey involved 200 final year students from eight departments of the College of Science of KNUST. The Survey Instrument was a questionnaire. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16) software was used to analyze the data. From the results, 94.4% of the sampled students were ready to recommend KNUST to a prospective applicant while 90.4% were also ready to join the Alumni Association. The results also show that students were informed about major decisions taken at the department or college level by their class representatives, but they were not happy about the way they were involved in the day to day management of the department/college. Also, students were attended to properly anytime they visited the college/department offices. However, they had a perception that, their concerns about policies and decisions were not addressed properly. Furthermore, Officers at the various departments were rated very high on their professionalism and friendliness. However, there is the need for improvement with regard to Time-consciousness and Empathy.

Introduction

According to Howard (2010), surveys of citizens' satisfaction with public services have become popular in recent decades. The rise of citizen surveys reflects several megatrends in governance and administration. There is a growing emphasis on ensuring that public services reflect the needs and preferences of citizens, rather than internal priorities of administration. Surveys of citizen's satisfaction have been around in North American public services since the 1970s. Service charters which are used in modern strategic management of public institutions are also becoming popular. Torres (2006) postulates that the basic concept of the service charter deals with drawing up a quality-assurance strategy that offers a type of consumer guarantee in order to make providers more responsible to consumers through consultations and more accountable to government and the community through performance monitoring.

As centre of higher learning, universities have always regarded quality as a crucial factor in building reputation and winning admiration and support from the public. Until recently, universities were perceived as honest, self steering, self censoring and quality conscious centres of learning but questions began to be raised as to whether this traditional trust was well founded and still valid. (University of Dar es Salaam Quality Assurance Policy, 2007). Materu (2007) states that, every nation and its tertiary education graduates are competing in an environment shaped by their own local and national needs as well as international expectations and standards. With globalization, the impacts of international standards are increasing and public demand for transparency, accountability and value for money are on the rise. Higher Educational Management and Policy makers are therefore

challenged to set appropriate standards of their own which draw on and reflect the unique history, needs and expectations of their stakeholders (Students, Parents, National Supervisory Agencies, Employers, Governments, etc).

Quality is a University acknowledged factor in its service delivery. It is also something that everybody pays attention to in any transaction of goods and services. There have always been different conceptions of higher education and what its basic purpose should be. Therefore, the notion of quality in higher education is very much tied to a person's understanding of the purpose of such education. As part of implementation of its Quality Assurance strategy, the University of Dar es Salaam for example has instituted students' satisfaction survey among others to ensure quality. (University of Dar es Salaam Quality Assurance Policy, 2007).

It is in the light of this that this survey was to get inputs from students as a major stakeholder with regard to the level of satisfaction they have derived from attending the University as part of the quality assurance process and positive image building and re-branding of the University. This would give students the opportunity to evaluate the College(s) and the inputs derived would assist management in improving its services at the College(s) and the University as a whole.

According to Okpala et al. (1993), evaluation is a process of gathering valid information on attainment of educational objectives, analyzing and fashioning information to aid judgment on the effectiveness of teaching or an educational programme. The evaluation process helps managers make critical decisions about how to improve the implementation of their programmes and/or the management of their organization. Evaluation, when used regularly, is a powerful management tool that can give information to help one make the right decisions about how to manage one's programmes so that, one can continue to provide high-quality services that meet the clients' needs.

Objectives

Students' satisfaction surveys are organized regularly and systematically to give students the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience of attending an institution or a course/programme. The objectives of this survey are to:

- i. get feedback from students as major stakeholders with regard to Quality Assurance for improvement,
- ii. enable the University Relations Office to identify potential threats with regard to student satisfaction and develop appropriate strategies to re-brand the University,
- iii. ensure that students are involved in the quality assurance process,
- iv. make appropriate recommendation(s) based on the finding(s) for management.

Methodology

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The survey involved 200 final year students from eight departments from the College of Science. Twenty five (25) students were purposefully selected from each department. This was due to the large number of students in some departments as compared to small numbers in others. This ensured that students were selected from each department. Out of the 200 questionnaires administered, 178 were returned. The departments involved were Physics, Biochemistry and Biotechnology, Mathematics, Chemistry, Optometry and Visual Science, Food Science and Technology, Environmental Science and Theoretical and Applied Biology.

Survey Design and Instruments

The Survey Instrument was a questionnaire. Most of the items of the questionnaire were close-ended to give the final year students the opportunity to answer it with ease. Few

of the items were open-ended and aimed at giving the respondents opportunity to express their thoughts.

Validation and Reliability of Instruments

The questionnaire was content validated by an experienced researcher (Registrar) and other Assistant Registrars. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final questionnaire. To ensure reliability of the questionnaire, the test-retest technique was used. Samples were given to National Service Persons in the University Relations Office to answer to check if it would give the same or better results when used.

Procedure for Data Collection

The Acting College Registrar, the Assistant College Registrar and Administrative Personnel at the Provost's office of the College of Science assisted in the administration of the questionnaire.

Analysis of Data

The data was analyzed by the Information Communication Technology (ICT) Department of KNUST. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16) software was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data. The data were presented in percentages using simple tables.

Results and Discussions

Findings from the survey are presented as follows:

Departments

The departments and number of respondents are presented in Table 1 below;

Table 1: Departments of Respondents

Departments	Frequency	Percent (%)
Physics	23	12.9
Biochemistry & Biotechnology	25	14.0
Mathematics	19	10.7
Chemistry	24	13.5
Optometry & Visual Science	24	13.5
Food Science & Technology	14	7.9
Environmental Science	24	13.5
Theoretical & Applied Biology	25	14.0
Total	178	100.0

Gender

The gender of the respondents is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Gender of Respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	117	65.7	65.7	65.7
Female	61	34.3	34.3	100
Total	178	100.0	100	100.0

Students involvement in Governance

The Table 3 below shows analysis of students' involvement in the governance of the College.

Table 3: Students' involvement in Governance

Areas of involvement	All the time		Some times		In some cases		Never at all		No Comment	
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Class reps' involvement in decision making processes	10.7	19	33.7	60	31.5	56	21.3	38	2.8	5
Students allowed to speak their minds	16.3	29	25.8	46	35.4	63	20.2	36	2.2	4
Dissemination of major decisions by class rep's to students	19.7	35	34.3	61	25.3	45	19.7	35	1	17.8
Students' general appreciation for their involvement in managing the College/ Department.	3.9	7	20.8	37	35.4	63	37.1	66	2.8	5

From Table 3 above, it could be seen that, 19.7% of the students said, they were **all the time**, and 34.3% said they were **sometimes** informed about major decisions taken at the department or college level by their class representatives; but 19.7% said that they were **never at all** happy about the way they were involved in the day to day management of the department/college.

Service delivery at College/Department

Analysis of responses with regard to service delivery at College/Department is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Service delivery at College/Department

Service delivery	All the time		Some times		In some cases		Never at all		No Comment	
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Proper reception of students at College/Department offices	24.2	43	48.9	87	21.9	39	5.1	9	0	0
Students always received the information they wanted at the College/Department offices.	24.2	43	37.1	66	32.0	57	4.5	8	2.2	4
College/Department decisions/policies communicated to students on time.	13.5	24	44.9	80	30.9	55	8.4	15	2.2	4
Proper address of concerns and misgivings about policies and decisions.	5.1	9	32.0	57	41.6	74	18.5	33	2.8	5

From Table 4 above, it could be seen that, 24.2% and 48.9% said, they were attended to properly by the staff of the College/Department offices **all the time** and **sometimes** respectively. Again, 24.2% and 37.1% of the respondents also said that they always received the information they needed at the College/Department offices **all the time** and **sometimes** respectively. However, 18.5% indicated that, their concerns and misgivings about policies and decisions were **never at all** addressed properly and on time.

Rating of the officers at the various offices of the College/Department

Analysis of rating of officers at the College/Department levels are presented in Table 5 below

Table 5: Rating of the officers at the various offices of the College/Department

Attributes	Excellent		Very Good		Good		Needs improvement		No Comment	
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Professionalism	10.1	18	42.7	76	30.3	54	15.2	27	1.7	3
Responsiveness	3.9	7	30.9	55	41.6	74	21.3	38	2.2	4
Reliability	5	9	23.6	42	51.7	92	16.9	30	2.8	5
Empathy	5.6	10	23.6	42	42.7	76	24.2	43	3.9	7
Resourcefulness	8.4	15	28.1	50	36.5	65	23.6	42	3.4	6
Duty consciousness	10.1	18	29.8	53	41.6	74	15.7	28	2.8	5
Friendliness	12.4	22	36.5	65	32.0	57	17.4	31	1.7	3
Time-consciousness	5.6	10	22.5	40	41.0	73	29.2	52	2.8	5

From Table 5 above, officers were rated very high (52.8%) on **professionalism** (10.1% and 42.7% for Excellent and Very Good respectively). Again, 48.9% rated them high on **Friendliness** (12.4% and 36.5% for Excellent and Very Good respectively). However, 29.2% and 24.2% said there is the need for improvement with regard to **Time-consciousness** and **Empathy** respectively.

Satisfaction from Teaching and Learning process

Analysis of responses for satisfaction which students derived from the teaching and learning processes are presented below in Table 6

Table 6: Satisfaction from Teaching and Learning process

Attribute	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Not satisfied		Undecided	
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Knowledge received	32	18.0	106	59.6	32	18.0	8	4.5
The type of tuition that made students decide to offer their programme	23	12.9	98	55.1	43	24.2	14	7.8
Adequate lecturers for all courses	25	14.0	87	48.9	61	34.3	5	2.8
The teaching materials made available for learning	8	4.5	67	37.6	92	51.7	11	6.2
Learning environment (lecture rooms and facilities)	18	10.1	61	34.3	92	51.7	7	3.9
The mode of delivery of lectures (Teaching methods)	15	8.4	107	60.1	47	26.4	8	4.5
Materials that were given to students (lecture notes)	15	8.4	90	50.6	45	25.3	9	5.1
The mode of assessment	14	7.9	90	50.6	63	35.4	11	6.2

From Table 6 above, it could be seen that, **77.6%** were **satisfied** with the **knowledge** they had received; **68.5 %** were **satisfied** with the **mode of delivery of lectures** and **68.0%** were **satisfied** with the **type of tuition that made them decide to offer that programme**. However, 51.7% of the students were **not satisfied** with the **teaching materials that were made available for learning** as well as the **learning environment (lecture room and facilities)**.

Rating of Lecturers in the various courses

Analysis of rating of lecturers in the various courses is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Rating of Lecturers in the various courses

Attribute	Excellent (%)	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Needs Improvement (%)	No Comment (%)
Professionalism	35 19.7	104 58.4	26 14.6	11 6.2	4 2.2
Reliability	28 15.7	91 51.1	50 28.1	6 3.4	3 1.7
Confidence	50 28.1	79 44.4	41 23.0	4 2.2	4 2.2
Empathy	17 9.6	68 38.2	74 41.6	14 7.9	5 2.8
Resourcefulness	36 20.2	72 40.4	52 29.2	13 7.3	5 2.8
Duty consciousness	37 20.8	76 42.7	56 31.5	7 3.9	2 1.1
Trustworthiness	39 21.9	75 42.1	53 29.8	7 3.9	4 2.2
Time Consciousness	26 14.6	82 46.1	55 30.9	12 6.7	3 1.7
Fairness	20 11.2	73 41.0	57 32.0	25 14.0	3 1.7

From Table 7 above, lecturers were rated very high (78.1%) on **professionalism** (19.7% and 58.4% for Excellent and Very Good respectively). Again, 72.5% rated them very high on **Confidence** (28.1% and 44.4% for Excellent and Very Good respectively).

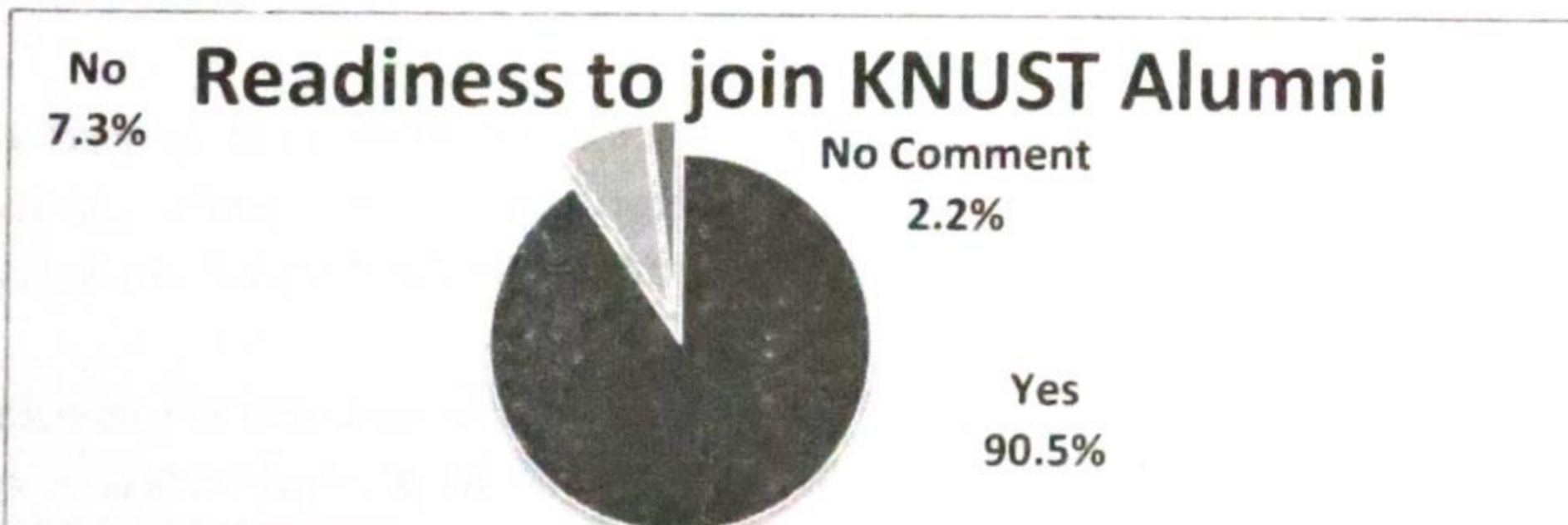
Whilst 66.85% rated them high on **Reliability** (15.7% and 51.1% for Excellent and Very Good respectively), 14.0% said that there is the need for improvement with regard to **Fairness**.

Readiness to join KNUST Alumni

Table 9: Join KNUST Alumni

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	161	90.5
No	13	7.3
No Comment	4	2.2
Total	178	100.0

Pie Chart



From Table 9 above, it could be seen that, **90.4%** are ready to join the **Alumni Association**.

Recommend KNUST to Prospective Applicants

Table 10: Recommend KNUST to Prospective Applicants

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	168	94.4
No	6	3.4
No Comment	4	2.2
Total	178	100.0

From Table 10 above, it could be seen that, **94.4%** were ready to **recommend KNUST** to prospective applicants.

Conclusion

From the analysis of results, it could be concluded that

- i. Students' acknowledged being informed about major decisions taken at the Department or College level by their class representatives, but they were not happy about the way they are involved in the day to day management of the Department/College.
- ii. Students believed they were attended to properly anytime they visited the College/Department offices. Again, they always received the information they needed at the College/Department. However, they had a perception that their concerns and misgivings about policies and decisions were not addressed properly and on time.
- iii. Officers at the various departments were rated very high on their professionalism and Friendliness. However, there was the need for improvement with regard to Time-consciousness and Empathy.
- iv. Students were satisfied with the knowledge they had received as well as the mode of delivery of lectures. They were also satisfied with the type of tuition that made them to decide to offer that programme. However, they were not satisfied with the teaching materials that were made available for learning as well as the learning environment (lecture room and facilities).
- v. Lecturers were rated very high on Professionalism. Also, they were rated high on their Confidence and Reliability. However, there is the need for improvement with regard to Fairness.
- vi. There is the need for improvement in all the facilities and services the University provides Library, ICT, Sports, Medical Care, accommodation for Residential students (Hall of Residence), private accommodation for non-Residential students and campus safety and security.
- vii. Students are prepared to join the Alumni Association and are also ready to recommend KNUST to potential applicants.

Recommendations

- i. It is recommended that, Students Satisfaction Survey should be instituted as part of Quality Assurance measures in higher education management. This would enable Management at both the College and the main Administration to appreciate students' concerns and integrate them in planning.
- ii. It is also recommended that, Public Relations courses should be organized on regular basis for all staff. This would enable them to give better and improved services to students and other clients of the University since the University is going to face competition from private Universities very soon.
- iii. Courses should be regularly organized for Lecturers and other Administrative staff in Assessment, Pedagogy, Counselling among others to ensure that, there is improvement in teaching and learning.
- iv. Furthermore, there is the need for improvement in all the facilities and services which the University provides (Library, ICT, Sports, Medical Care, accommodation for Residential students (Hall of Residence), private accommodation for non-Residential students and campus safety and security. This would enable students to get value for money as part of quality assurance measures in modern University administration.
- v. Lastly, workshops and seminars should be organized for class representatives in the discharge of their work. This would ensure that they properly inform their fellow students about outcomes of meetings which they attend.

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