UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF STUDENTS' SERVICES IN GA-EAST MUNICIPAL BASIC SCHOOLS

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Ernestina Domie, declare that this thesis, except for quotations and references contained in published works that have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

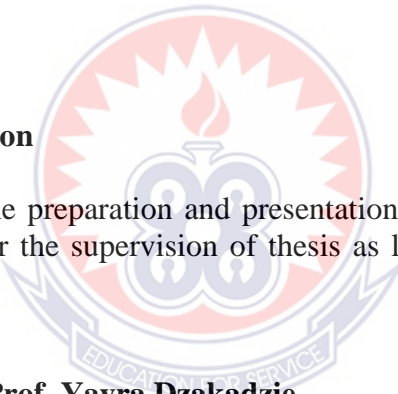**Signature:** ………………………………

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Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised under the guidelines for the supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Yayra Dzakadzie

Signature: ………………………………

Date: …………………………...…….…

DEDICATION

To my Husband, Mr. Senanu Agbozo, My Mother, Mrs. Christiana Domie, and my

Children, Edudzi, Seyram, and Etonam Agbozo.

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I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Yayra Dzakadzie of the Educational Foundation Department, University of Education, Winneba, for his mentorship, guidance, supervision, objective criticisms, suggestions, and corrections, which contributed immensely to the completion of my thesis, I am most grateful to him and appreciate all his time and energy in ensuring the completion of this thesis. I am also thankful to all my lecturers at the Department of Educational Administration and Management, especially Prof. Hinneh Kusi, Dr. Odei Tettey, and Dr. Judith Bampoe, for their excellent guidance and counseling, which have helped shape my horizon and experiences.
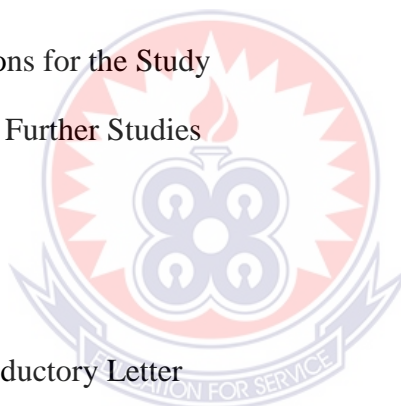
My sincere gratitude also goes to Dr. Alfred Kuranchie and Dr Isaac Aboagye (Department of Arts), University of Education, Winneba, whose advice and efforts facilitated the successful completion of my work. My husband, Mr Senanu Agbozo, and my kids (Edudzi, Seyram, and Etonam Agbozo) cannot be left out for the great sacrifices made throughout my study, also to my brothers and sisters, especially David Mensah and Akpene Domie, words cannot express my gratitude to you, David, for your sacrifices during my study. To my Sister-in-law (Eyram Agbozo), my friends (Divine, Bright Addia, Prosper), and my entire course mates, especially Akosua Ampofo, who have assisted me in diverse ways to climb the academic ladder, God bless you. I owe everything to you all, and I'm grateful. Finally, I am indebted to the Ga-East Municipal Education office, the selected schools within the municipality, and their heads, teachers, and JHS 3 students for allowing me to conduct my research/fieldwork in their schools. This study would not have been possible without their interest, ardent commitment, and involvement. I am utterly grateful to all authorities cited in this thesis for your rich literature.

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ABSTRACT

Using the SERVQUAL Theoretical model, this study examined the quality of education services provided by selected government schools in the Ga East Municipal Assembly. A cross-sectional descriptive study design was employed. A multistage sampling technique was used to sample the views of 200 students and 100 teachers. A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. It was found that except for the tangibility dimension of quality, which was determined to be of low quality per the study benchmark, the other four dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance recorded a high quality. Learners' satisfaction with that service's quality was reportedly low. The study revealed no statistically significant gender differences in students' satisfaction levels. Furthermore, an analysis of the predictive strength of each service quality dimension on learners' satisfaction revealed that, except for assurance and tangibility, which did have a statistically significant effect on satisfaction, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy, they did not have a statistically significant impact on learners' satisfaction. In terms of teacher support for service quality delivery, it was found that supervisory roles were provided, but the supportive roles for teachers remained inadequate. Schools in the municipality were recommended to concentrate on enhancing their tangibility (e.g., physical buildings). The Municipal Education Directorate should also support teachers in improving service quality delivery.
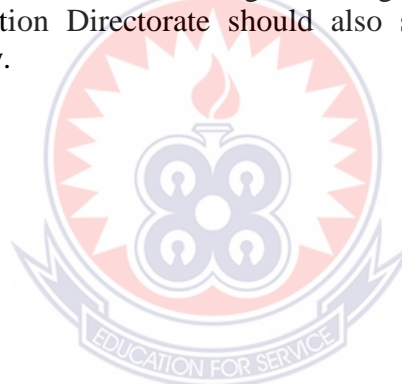
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the Study

Ghana's education system has undergone tremendous reforms since the post-colonial era, with the intention of improving education access and quality. Examples of such reforms include the proposed 10-Year Educational Expansion Plan in 1945, the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) for education, which aimed at achieving universal primary education, and the 1961 Educational Acts Policy, which sought to abolish tuition fees (Ampiah, Ghartey, Kwaah, Tsivanyo & Ababio, 2008). All these reforms bring to mind the desire on the part of the government to achieve quality education, which is believed to be low in Ghanaian public schools. Education entails the acquisition of knowledge, developing one's ability to reason, and engaging in value judgments intellectually (Kotei, 2015). It is an investment that requires the efforts of both the government and the private sector to make it a success (Usman, 2016).

Education in Ghana takes place at different levels, mainly primary, secondary, and tertiary, and these levels aim to improve the human capital of a nation (Ahiabor, 2017). Primary education in Ghana consists of 2 years of kindergarten, six years of primary, and three years of Junior High School (Ministry of Education, 2004). This study evaluates the quality of basic education in the Ga East Municipal Assembly. Primary education equips pupils (children) with the essential knowledge and skills to interact meaningfully within their society (Quansah, Sakyi-Hagan & Essiam, 2019). The emphasis on primary education stems from the fact that it lays the foundation for skills, knowledge, values, and attitude development in children. However, effective

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partnership between educational institutions, parents, and communities is needed to make basic primary education successful (Ahiabor, 2017).

Schools exist so society can achieve its objectives through teaching and learning (Usman, 2016). One of the considerations in the hearts of many stakeholders is the quality of education service in Ghanaian basic schools. According to Mmutle and Shonhe (2017), the quality of service is decided by the process used to deliver the service as well as the outcome of the service, which is made manifest after evaluation of the result of the service.

Quality education is something that all governments and stakeholders on the education front strive to achieve globally. Parasuraman et al. (1994) describe quality education service as the difference in service receivers' performance expectations and perceptions. Expectation refers to anticipations of those to whom service is being rendered and their appraisals of the provided services (Aboubakr & Boyounmy,2020). Different approaches and models are used in measuring expectations; some techniques or models are the Expectancy Disconfirmation Approach (EDA), the Technical and functional Dichotomy Approach (TFDA), etc. These approaches differ in the variable used in measuring the quality of service (Afrani, 2018).

Two broad topics have dominated Ghana's educational front: access and quality. While school management and parents firmly blame the government for doing little to achieve quality education, ministers vigorously defend it for doing its best (Kwakye-Ofosu, 2014). In addition to despair and uncertainty hovering around Ghana's education system, quality of education has become one of the key issues dominating the education debate in Ghana, and this is because of the unsatisfactory

performance of Primary School Pupils and its negative impact on Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results (Amponsah, 2012).

Also, some primary school teachers have raised concerns about the quality of basic education service delivery in Ghana, especially among government schools. Parents have also become very concerned about unsatisfactory results and the future of their wards, as most of them find it very challenging to read or write a single sentence correctly. This doubts their ability to pass the Basic Education Certificate Examination in the Ga-East Municipality.

The area was chosen for the study because the Municipal Medium-Term Development Plan (2018–2021) report, created under the new national development framework, identified poor quality education at all levels (including primary education) of public schools within the municipality as a significant challenge in the municipality (Ga-East Medium-Term Development Plan, 2018), etc. Based on this, the then-MCE took specific actions to close the disparity in educational service quality. However, there hasn't been any investigation into the current quality of education service delivery since the initiatives. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a study to determine how well education services are currently being delivered and what satisfaction is being derived by students at the basic school level.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The second goal set out in the Dakar Framework commits nations to providing good quality primary education for better cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes (UNESCO, 2015). This call to achieve quality education reflects challenges, hence the need to compel nations and governments to prioritize it (Ghartey-Ampiah-Gharty, Kwaah, Tsivanyo-Yiboe &Ababio Tawiah,(2008). However, researchers and

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management of schools in Ghana have been raising concerns about the country's declining state of basic education, with calls on the government and stakeholders to assist in reducing the challenges of the falling standards (Amponsah, 2012; Adomonline, 2014; Anzagira, 2015).

The issue of quality education remains an unresolved challenge facing the educational system within the African continent (UNESCO, 2015). Schaefer and Choen (2000) state that African countries are among countries with less than 50% of their children achieving literacy, numeracy, and life skills mastery. Boakey-Amponsah, Enninful, and Annin (2015) added that the poor quality of educational service delivery in Africa necessitates urgent calls and directives from the United Nations, school management, teachers, and parents to improve quality primary education.

Studies on whether significant disparities exist between males and females in their contentment with the quality of education are inconclusive. While specific investigations (Kristen, Edele, Kalter, Kogan, Schulz, Stanat & Will, 2011; Perry, Sakelsy &Sharsten., 2003; Sax, Byrant & Harper, 2005; Umbach & Porter, 2002) have identified a gender-related impact on learners' satisfaction, others (Dirkin, Mishra, & Altermatt, 2005; Hong, 2002; Mupinga, Nora, & Yaw, 2006; Witowski, 2008) have reached opposing conclusions. Consequently, this study aims to unveil fresh empirical insights into how students' gender influences their satisfaction levels concerning the quality of educational services provided.

In 2020, the National Schools Inspectorate Authority (NaSIA), in collaboration with the World Bank and the Government of Ghana, rolled out a five-year project titled "Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project (GALOP)"

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targeting all ten thousand (10,000) GALOP primary schools with low or least performing schools ranging from Kindergarten through to Junior High. The objective was to improve the quality of education in low-performing basic education schools and strengthen the education sector for equity and accountability in Ghana (National Schools Inspectorate Authority, 2021). According to the report, of the 1000 schools inspected, 55.2% were rated unsatisfactory for infrastructure, whereas 44.1% were rated inadequate for food safety. The report stated that Ghana as a nation appears to be struggling to build and maintain quality primary education because the report shows inconsistency in the quality of basic education delivery in the country and concludes that quality basic education is a challenge in Ghanaian basic schools (National Schools Inspectorate Authority, 2021).

On the municipal front, the Ga-East Municipality is not exempted regarding the quality of education and, for that matter, the quality of learner's services. A report by the Municipal Medium-term Development Plan (2018-2021) under the new national development framework stated poor quality education at all levels (including basic education) of public schools within the municipality as a critical challenge in the municipality (Ga-East Medium-Term Development Plan, 2018). Specifically, teacher quality, infrastructure, teaching and learning resources, etc., were some critical issues adduced from the report that contribute to the quality of education in the municipality.

To alleviate these challenges, the municipality rolled out several interventions to bridge the gap in quality education. For instance, the assembly has completed a 3-Storey, 18-Unit Classroom Block at Taifa Junior High School (JHS), constructed a 3-Unit Classroom Block for Kwabenya-Atomic M/A 5 Basic School, and a 2-Unit Semi-detached Teachers' Quarters at Adenkrebi. In addition, there is the continuation

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of a GETFund Project within the assembly supporting 100 brilliant but needy pupils, and further supported the Municipality's Best Teacher Awards Celebrations as well as the Municipal Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) clinic to complement the physical development projects. Also, within the period, the assembly delivered a total of 2,500 dual desks to basic schools in the municipality and initiated the School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAM), which brings stakeholders, students, teachers, Parent-Teacher Associations and School Management Committees (PTAs/SMCs), opinion leaders, community members, among others together to evaluate BECE results and set new targets (Hackman, 2016).

Despite these interventions, many children are denied quality primary education, which has resulted in mass illiteracy among children of primary school age, unacceptable Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results, and an overwhelming increase in anti-social behaviors in the municipality. In the face of concerns about the quality of learner services in the Ga-East Municipality, there is a need for new and up-to-date research to establish the current state of quality of primary education delivery in basic public schools in the municipality. This study will serve as a follow-up to assess the quality of primary education service delivery after providing all the infrastructure above.

1.3   Purpose of the Study

The study sought to assess the quality-of-education service delivery to Basic school students in the Ga-East Municipality using the Servqual Theoretical Model.

1.4   Objectives of the study

1. Assess the quality of education services delivered to basic school learners in the municipality.

2. Assess students' satisfaction with the quality of education services in the municipality.

3. Ascertain gender difference in students' satisfaction with quality education service delivery in the municipality.

4. Examine the predictive strength of each education service quality dimension on students' satisfaction in the municipality.

5. Assess teachers' perception of the effectiveness of the District Education Office in the Municipality in promoting quality education.

1.5   Research Questions

The following research questions underpinned the study;

1. What is the quality of education services delivered to basic school learners in the municipality?

2. Are students satisfied with the quality of education services delivered in the municipality?

3. What is the gender difference in students' satisfaction with quality education service delivery in the municipality?

4. What is the predictive strength of each education service quality dimension on learners' satisfaction in the municipality?

5. What is the District Education Office's effectiveness in promoting quality education in the Municipality?

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1.6   Significance of the Study

Firstly, the study adds to the existing literature on basic education in Ghana. There is existing literature on basic education in Ghana. Knowing that there existed a gap in the literature concerning the quality of basic education in the Ga-East Municipal Assembly, the completion of this study and its findings will go a long way to fill a gap in the literature with respect to the quality of basic education within the Ga-East Municipal areas in Ghana.

Furthermore, by highlighting the bias that could exist when students of various genders express happiness, a knowledge of how student satisfaction is related to one's gender will aid in the fight against gender bias. This can help with gender budgeting in elementary school policy formulation. Understanding how gender and satisfaction interact can help with interventions and tactics to enhance people's overall well-being and life satisfaction.

Also, the study serves as a reference point or baseline for further studies shortly. Thus, other scholars can use this study's findings as a reference point in discussing the quality of education. It also provides grounds for other scholars to build on the findings in this study through different approaches or methodologies. Furthermore, discussions about the quality of basic education have dominated the Ghanaian education sphere for some time now. Thus, while access to education seems to be achieved, quality is a challenge. Findings from the study will go a long way to inform basic education stakeholders in the country, especially the Ga-East Municipal Assembly, of the quality status of basic education in the municipal Based on the study findings, it is established that at the time of the study, quality of public basic education in the municipality was low.

Findings from the study will also inform basic school stakeholders like headteachers, PTA, and municipal education directorate who intend to improve student satisfaction regarding the best means to do so. Based on the study findings, it is clear which part quality of education impacts student satisfaction. Leveraging on that, quality can be a means of improving the quality of basic education within the municipality.

The study also has policy implications. Thus, critical educational stakeholders such as the government, municipal, and district chief executive can learn from this study's findings and develop policies to improve the quality of education in the municipality. This study finding throws a challenge for educational policymakers to be informed and, through the same study recommendation, learn how to improve the quality of education within Ga- -East Municipal Assembly. The insights gleaned from this study have the potential to inform evidence-based policy decisions and interventions that can lead to the sustainable improvement of education service delivery, ultimately benefiting the educational development and prospects of the learners in the Ga-East Municipality.

1.7   Delimitations of the Study

Although the study was conducted in Ghan and study focuses on assessing the quality of education services provided to basic school learners, specifically JHS 3 students, in the Ga-East Municipality of the Greater Accra Region. The study evaluates several variables, including education service quality dimensions (tangibility , reliabity , responsiveness, empathy and Assrucne of education service), students' satisfaction, gender differences in satisfaction, and teacher's perception of the District Education Office's effectiveness. The predictive strength of each

education service quality dimension on students' satisfaction is also examined. This research is limited to public government schools within the municipality and does not include private schools or learners from other educational levels (such as lower primary or upper primary). Additionally, only selected schools were part of the research, thus the findings may not necessarily represent the entire district's basic education system. This study sought to examine the quality of education in basic schools in the light of the SERVQUAL Model.

1.8   Limitations of the Study

Methodologically, the study relies solely on quantitative research methods, which may limit the depth of understanding of the participants' perceptions and experiences. Using structured questionnaires may restrict respondents from elaborating on their views compared to qualitative methods like interviews or focus group discussions. Another limitation is that the study only targets JHS 3 students and teachers, which may exclude other key stakeholders such as parents, educational administrators, and lower-grade students whose perspectives could provide additional insights into the overall quality of education services. Furthermore, due to time and resource constraints, the research was conducted in a limited number of government schools, reducing the generalizability of the findings to other schools in the Ga-East Municipality. Furthermore, the study employed a cross-sectional design, where all data was collected at a single point in time. This approach may limit the ability to capture changes or trends in education service quality and students' satisfaction over time, unlike longitudinal studies, which are better suited to observe such dynamics and often produce more comprehensive results. Additionally, the study was restricted to students and teachers in basic schools within the Ga-East Municipal Assembly. This means that the findings may not reflect the experiences of students or teachers

from other districts or municipalities, limiting the broader generalizability of the results.

1.9   Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five (5) chapters. Chapter One presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, purpose, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, and limitations. Chapter Two deals with a review of related literature; both primary and secondary sources are reviewed. The study methods and methodologies are presented in Chapter Three. Chapter Four presents the results and discusses the findings. Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Overview

The study sought to assess the quality of education service delivery to Basic school learners in the Ga-East Municipality in the Greater-Accra Region. The literature is reviewed under the following themes: Theoretical model and framework; conceptual framework; the concept of service quality and quality education; Satisfaction of quality educational services for students; gender and satisfaction of quality students' services; service quality and satisfaction of students; support systems for teachers in the delivery of quality education and summary of the literature.

2.1   Theoretical Model and Framework

The SERVQUAL model served as the study's foundation. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) developed SERVQUAL to gauge how customers feel about the caliber of service they receive from their suppliers (Mmutle & Shonhe, 2017). The SERVQUAL model's five service quality characteristics - reliability, responsiveness, tangibility, empathy, and assurance- were considered for this empirical study. Other scholars have contributed to the knowledge about the model, including (Erdiel & Yildiz, 2011).

When the model was first introduced, it included 97 items and ten (10) dimensions, according to Erdil and Yildiz (2011), who went back in time to explain the model's historical context. These parameters include dependability, responsiveness, competency, accessibility, courtesies, communication, credibility, security, comprehension or familiarity with the client, and tangibles. Each of the ten

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formal dimensions assessed customer anticipation and organization performance (Yarimoglu, 2014). The scale was later reduced to 35 items with seven dimensions. The scale has been restructured to have 22 items (Likert type) with five dimensions (Adil, Al Ghaswyneh & Albkour,2013). Niak, Cantasala, and Prabhakar (2010) argue that the model measures customers' expectations and opinions about a service. Yarimoglu (2014) believes the SERVQUAL model is the best as it evaluates customer perception of the service received. Modifying the scale while maintaining its vital goal of measuring opinion helped make the model relevant and helpful to changing times and seasons. This also indicated the model's flexibility, unlike some models, which happened to be rigid and irrelevant.

The model has been extensively engaged by academics (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Brook, Lings & Botschen, 1999; Carman, 1990; Edvardsson, Larsson & Setterlind, 1997; Lings & Brooks, 1998; Reynoso & Moore, 1995; Sahney, Banwet & Karunes, 2004). The SERVQUAL instrument was employed by Banwet & Datta (2003) to study educational institutions. Hill (1995) used the SERVQUAL model to examine the role of learners as chief consumers of higher education institutions. Ahmed, Nawaz, Ahmad, Ahmad, Shauk, Usman and Ahmed (2010) employed the SERVQUAL Model to study the influence of service quality on students. Sureshchandar, Chandrasekharan, and Anantharaman (2002), Shemwell, Yavas, and Belgin (1998), Cronin and Taylor (1992), and Bolton and Drew (1991) argue that quality is closely linked to customer satisfaction. Veloutsou, Daskou, and Daskou (2004) postulate that service quality is a crucial criterion learners use to decide which academic institutions to attend.

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The argument of the SERVQUAL model rests on the premise that consumers (who in this context are learners) appraise the quality of services received from an educational institution based on five measuring scales: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Though the instrument has five key themes, under the five themes are twenty-two (22) key points to help consumers of services appraise the service received, which in this study are learners (Tuan, 2012). The model can be used to measure both expectation and actual satisfaction. Customer expectations are views customers develop about how a particular service is received. Customer perception is formed through word-of-mouth communication, personal needs, experience, and external communication (Smith, 2020).

SERVQUAL model is criticized as (1) viable for measuring only utility services, and the scale should be subjected to a reliability test before application (Erdil & Yildiz, 2011); and (2) the model emphasizes more process delivery and lacks general acceptance on the part of scholars hence the recommendation for other models (Kang & James, 2004). In addition, Cronin and Taylor (1994) criticized the model for its limited theoretical support and empirical evidence; hence, critics suggest the SERVPERF model. Kang and James' (2004) criticism of the model as lacking a general acceptance can be described as weak as no theory or model has a universal acceptance. To some extent, the various criticisms of the model contributed to knowledge as these weaknesses led to developing other models to measure quality.

Despite its flaws and restrictions, SERVQUAL offers advantages that make it the ideal option for this inquiry. First, experts believe the SERVQUAL approach is preferred and perfect for determining how customers feel about the services they have received (Yarimoglu, 2014; Adil et al., 2013). Second, the model is widely used and

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recognized for evaluating consumer perception, and third, the instrument is simple to customize to a particular organization's characteristics or specific research needs. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). Factors cited in the debate of why the model is still helpful and used by educators include its widespread acceptance by academics and its adaptability to various organizational contexts. For instance, the model's convenience, versatility, and good measure of service received outweigh its limitations, which frequently tend to be more theoretical or abstract. The following segment includes a thorough overview of each model dimension and how they connect to determine the quality of the service obtained.

2.1.1 Reliability dimension of SERVQUAL model

In line with the model, reliability refers to the capacity of a firm to deliver services in an accurate and trustworthy manner (Anwowie, Amoako & Abrefa, 2015). In other words, the ability of a company to be dependable, ensure prompt delivery and speed, address complaints, and overcome anticipated problems are all factors in reliability. Yarimoglu (2014), on the other hand, explains that reliability, as it applies to the model, refers to how consistent the service deliverer is in performance and dependability, keeping records correctly and performing the service right at the designated time. A comparison of the definitions offered by Yarimoglu (2014) and Anwowie et al. (2015), who both have academic qualifications and speak on the same subjects, demonstrates that they approach reliability from different perspectives. As a result, Yarimoglu (2014) views dependability as a service provider's consistency rather than correctness, in contrast to Anwowie et al. (2015), who perceive reliability more regarding how accurate a service provider's service is. Accordingly, service reliability is not just about a service provider delivering what it promised but also

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about consistency in providing the service it claims to provide. Both authors offer distinct perspectives on what the reliability of service is.

Further on reliability, Hanh, Nguyen, Nguyen, and Oanh (2021) described the reliability of service quality as the ability of a firm (education in this context) to perform the exact kind of service that it promised to deliver dependably and accurately. In other words, it connotes the organization's ability to deliver what it says it will offer to the consumer or a client. Thus, the firm's ability to honor its promise. When a school can keep its word and adhere to the students' expectations about academic performance, the delivery of educational services, or the school's curriculum, the student's trust in the institution increases. Consumers and stakeholders are willing to pay for their wards to attend schools connected with good reputational standards and deliver on their promises.

Like Anwowie et al. (2015), Salami and Olannye (2013) define the reliability of services to encompass elements like a firm's capacity to offer accurate service to its clients, but Salami and Olaynny (2013) went further to broaden the concept of reliability to include the firm's hospitality and staff friendliness as well as the speed at which complaints are answered, in contrast to Anwowie et al. (2015) who focused on exact service delivery. Reliability is defined by Mmutle and Shombi (2017) as an institution's ability to provide services more accurately without making mistakes. As a result, the institution can offer its clients or customers the full range of services they were promised. Customer satisfaction and loyalty may suffer significantly if the customer is not given the same service advertised and promised. Furthermore, Brink and Berndt (2005) contend that an organization's dependability increases customers' perceptions of the product or service quality of the organization as a whole.

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It is clear from the numerous definitions of reliability and the variations in terminology mentioned above that the phrase "accurate delivery of service" describes how organizations deliver the exact service they committed to providing. This suggests that offering accurate services is synonymous with being reliable. The following sub-section covers an exposition on responsiveness as a SERVQUAL model dimension.

2.1.2 Responsiveness dimension of SERVQUAL model

Responsiveness, according to the model, refers to the ability of an institution to reply enthusiastically or respond to a call for assistance from a client in need rapidly. Naik et al. (2010) refer to responsiveness as an organization's ability to deliver service regularly and precisely. Mmutle and Shonhe (2017) added that responsiveness has to do with the willingness of an organization to help and respond to its customer's needs. Organizations are expected to match their customers' changing needs and expectations. Dale, Van der Wiele, and Van Lwaarden (2007) describe responsiveness under the SERVQUAL Model as the promptness of an establishment and its employees to give a hand to its customers,

which in this context refers to the learners and offers timely service uninterrupted. Responsiveness also covers services -oriented activities such as attentiveness and willingness of an institution to deal with a customer's (in this case, learner's) requests, queries, and prompt complaint resolution. Adil et al. (2013) define responsiveness from the macro level by focusing on institution delivery to customers and not at the individual employee level.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) define responsiveness as an organization's eagerness to assist clients and offer them services. Hanh, Nguyen, and Oanh Le (2021) concur.

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However, they broadened the definition of responsiveness to include additional metrics, including how soon businesses reply to every customer who requests assistance, how quickly, precisely, and meticulously staff carry out their duties, and how quickly businesses address all consumer complaints. When Purwoastuti, Endang & Walyani (2016) posited that responsiveness is not just about an organization's ability to assist customers but also how quickly or swiftly the service is delivered, they found support for this broader definition of responsiveness. This classification of a response as responsive or not depends on how quickly or swiftly it is delivered. A company cannot be said to be responsive if it responds to a customer at its discretion or convenience without following a well-defined policy. This is so that the service provider can record the time the service was requested and the time it was provided, which is essential to guarantee the consumer will find the information relevant. Giving feedback or responding to a complaint when the customer does not need such information or feedback cannot be described as responsiveness since it did not respond to the customer's needs at the right time.

According to Salami and Olannye (2013), service responsiveness also connotes the institution's preparedness to aid clients in finding a solution to their challenges encountered while consuming the institution's services. A firm's ability to provide speedy aid to customers when needed and the firm's ability to recover swiftly in the case of service failure are what he calls responsiveness. For this study, responsiveness will refer to how swift employees of selected schools respond to or assist students. This dimension will be measured with items such as the school authority's response to student inquiry, how quickly important announcements are communicated to students, and how swiftly teachers come to class when it's their time

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to teach. This study has yet to establish the effect and relationship between the responsiveness of education services delivery and learners' satisfaction.

A literature review on responsiveness defined responsiveness from the organization's point of view, while others referred to it as the macro level. As much as such a perspective is good and helpful, it fails to illuminate relating responsiveness to employees. This brings to mind Niak et al. (2010) perspective of responsiveness. Instead of focusing on organizational-level responsiveness, Niak et al. (2010) and Yarmouglu (2014) relate it to individual employee delivery. According to Niak et al. (2010) and Yarimoglu (2014), responsiveness is correlated with how enthusiastic staff are about giving service. Regarding the educational setting, this might refer to how enthusiastic or ready teachers are to assist students when necessary.

2.1.3   Tangibility dimension of SERVQUAL model

Tangibility connotes factors such as institutional physical appearance, environment, or ambiance. It specifically includes the status of an institution's office facility, office location, school layout, and characteristics of an institution's employees (Yarimoglu, 2014). In describing tangibility, Naik et al. (2010) added that it also includes all written documentation of the firm (including logos and branded identity) and physical assets, while Yarimoglu (2014) added that tangibility also has physical evidence and representations of the service to other customers in the service facility.

According to Brink and Berndt (2005), the tangibility dimension of an organization under the SERVQUAL model has to do with items such as facilities and equipment. This implies that the physical appearance of selected basic schools must be good-looking and satisfy the perception of customers visiting the facility. This is a vital part of customer satisfaction. In the events where the institution's facility is not

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clean or presentable, or it looks like nothing to write home about in the eyes of the customers, they will be influenced by what they see to make a negative judgment about the institution, which will affect the institution's customer base and profit in the end. An organization's tangibility also entails the facility and employees being friendly and in alliance with new technology.

Nguyen and Nguyen (2015) described the tangibility of service quality to consist of aspects of the education service delivery, such as the physical facilities under which tuition takes place, the kind of equipment or materials used to deliver tuition, and communication and teaching materials. They cited classrooms, libraries, dormitories, electricity, and water supply systems as tangible elements in education services. They strongly argued that providing a good training programmer with unfavorable situations, such as a lack of learning facilities and a lack of practice room, can render training less valuable or non-beneficial. This assertion by Hanh le et al. (2021) brings to mind how a lack of physical facilities in the school environment can adversely affect student satisfaction, teaching, and learning.

The facility and the employees are expected to be conducive and skilled because they are part of the organization. Employees are also expected to look smart and presentable. Equipment available to an organization plays a critical role in determining the service quality of the organization. Employees need to approach customers in the spirit of service provision. Focusing on equipment and teaching material implies that selected basic schools are expected to have the right equipment and teaching and learning material in their facility to positively influence customers' perceptions (Mmutle & Shonhe, 2017).

Tangibility in this study will be defined as the status of an educational institution's physical environment, including the ambiance, staff appearance, and state of teaching and learning equipment. Items under this dimension include whether the school building is conducive to student learning, the formation of teachers, the noise level in the school environment, and the state of school teaching and learning materials. Concerning this study, the effect of the tangibility of service on learner satisfaction is yet to be determined.

According to the discussion above, the physical attributes of an educational institution, for example, staff (employees) appearance or dress code, teaching and learning materials, environment, facility, or ambiance, which includes the status of an institution's office facility, location, school layout, and employee characteristics, are all factors that contribute to its tangible qualities. Physical qualities are significant since they are the first features of an educational institution that a customer or client sees before considering more abstract attributes like empathy, responsiveness, assurance, and dependability. Additionally, a solid training program combined with low-quality tangibles, like a shortage of study spaces and practice rooms, can hurt student satisfaction, teaching, and learning. Non-educational stakeholders should know the danger of ignoring a service's tangibility dimensions.

2.1.4 Empathy dimension of SERVQUAL model

Adil et al. (2013) described empathy as found in the SERVQUAL model to refer to the characteristics of care, support, love, and rapt attention that an institution delivers to its customers, whether education or financial. Other scholars have also defined empathy by including good communication, how easy customers access

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complaint tools, understanding customer plight and needs, and the rapt attention that customers enjoy.

In their study, Salami and Olannye (2013) defined empathy in service to include factors such as how easy it is to open an account or register in a school, the effectiveness of customer service, and the care an organization provides to its customers. Empathy measures the degree to which an organization provides care for its customers. One key challenge organizations face is their ability to exceed client requests and expectations. Empathy also concerns consideration and compassion given to an organization's client (Mmutle & Shonhe, 2017).

According to Ganguli and Roy (2011), empathy has a relationship with customer satisfaction, and this relation is a positive correlation. He argued that it is necessary for a firm's customers to have an option but to become dissatisfied with the service received, resulting in a fall in customer satisfaction. Thus, a customer will be happy being disrespected or not cared for by a service provider. One of the easiest ways to get a customer dissatisfied is not to show empathy to them. Therefore, empathy significantly affects customer satisfaction. Al-Marri Ahmed added that compassion not only satisfies customers but also makes it possible for the organization or service provider to establish a long-term relationship with the customer, thereby ensuring business continuity between the service provider and the customer. Karatepe (2011), in a study, confirmed the positive relationship existing between empathy of service quality and customer satisfaction and added that in the event of compassion, customer loyalty is also strengthened. If the customers can feel kindness, loyalty on the part of the customer will be assured. This makes empathy a

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significant influencer in the working environment. This study has yet to determine the effect and relationship between empathy and learners' satisfaction.

The discussion on empathy suggests that empathy is defined by the care, support, love, and attentiveness a business gives its clients. Education also refers to how simple it is to enroll a student in a school and how parents are treated when they visit their children's classrooms. When schools fail to achieve the empathy dimension, one result is a dissolution or split in the relationship between the school and the parents, significantly impacting student enrollment. Likewise, if a school can demonstrate empathy, it will be in a better position to maintain a relationship with parents, leading to a rise in student enrollment.

2.1.5   Assurance dimension of SERVQUAL model

Assurance, per the model, is seen as the ability of the employees to extend accurate, complete, and usable information to the customer to instill trust and confidence in them for the organization's benefit (Adil et al., 2013). Yarimoglu (2014) extends assurance to cover freedom from risk, danger, financial security, and confidentiality. According to Salami and Olannye (2013), assurance of service also includes factors such as the employee's competence, the level of courtesy of front-line staff, and the ability to instill trust and guarantee the security of their customers. Their study also found that assurance is the significant determinant of a customer's perception of a firm's service quality.

According to Mmutle and Shonhe (2017), assurance is the ability of a firm's workforce to enthuse the institution's customers with a strong belief and trust in the organization. Customers' judgment of service quality as good or poor is chiefly determined by how they recognize the services rendered based on their expectations.

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Terrible service offered to clients brings about disappointment or dissatisfaction, affecting an organization's assurance. When customers' judgment of an organization's assurance is high, customers turn to be loyal to the firm, thereby enhancing client retention.

Hahn, Benders, Fikkert and Snijders (2021) described assurance as synonymous with credibility, security, competence, and courtesy. He argued that assurance has to do with the knowledge and civility on the part of employees and the ability of the employees to instill trust and confidence in the customers of the organization, which in this context are students in the school. Therefore, it directly correlates with the performance of an organization's employees. To ensure assurance, organizations must make sure that employees who attend to customers (which in this context are teachers and school employees) are competent, knowledgeable about the service they deliver, and courteous in their approach to providing educational services to learners.

Assurance has become vital in education service delivery, and this is because an increase in demand for quality education is found to corroborate with an increase in demand for quality assurance, and an increase in learner's mobility within a school can be associated with the quality of assurance within the school. As Ryan (2015) posited, Quality assurance can be a tool to drive education organizations toward attaining excellence. Therefore, It is not surprising that quality assurance is related to learners' satisfaction.

According to Ehigie (2016), assurance of service is one of the core aspects of service quality and severely impacts customer satisfaction. A firm's ability to meet its assurance scale is more likely to trigger favorable customer perceptions. This facilitates the marketing of the organization and its services by the customers. Thus,

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as customers experience a high level of assurance from their service providers, they tend to resort to the basic unit of marketing by word-of-mouth to notify others in their close circle about the kind of service they have received. A high level of assurance also boosts customers' confidence and makes them feel they can depend on the service provider at any time without failure. This study is yet to determined the effect and relationship between service assurance and learners' satisfaction.

According to the assurance discussion, it makes sense to argue that assurance is the capacity of employees to provide customers with correct, complete, and usable information to foster their trust and confidence for the organization's advantage. This is a crucial factor in determining how a customer will judge a company's level of customer care. Regarding educational facilities, parents want to be sure that their children will receive the most outstanding education possible while still being able to afford the costs of their charges and other obligations. One can also argue that assurance is the same as trustworthiness, competence, professionalism, and civility. Education facilities must ensure that staff members are qualified, knowledgeable, and polite when providing learners with educational services to ensure assurance. Customers' confidence is increased, and they feel they can rely on the service provider without interference when there is a high level of certainty.

2.1.6 Application of SERVQUAL model in the study of quality service delivery

The dimension of the SERVQUAL model is expected to influence learners' perception and satisfaction with education services received from their schools. The various dimensions (empathy, assurance, tangibility, responsiveness, and reliability) and the levels of the education system (basic education) are expected to work together to achieve systemic educational goals. Therefore, the SERVQUAL dimensions

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constitute part of the quality that comes together to determine the quality status of an education service delivery and learners' satisfaction with the services received. The use of the model was informed by the fact that it is highly recommended and used in literature as the best tool for measuring the quality of service. Yarimoglu (2014) also argued that the SERVQUAL model is the best for evaluating customer perception of the service received. The theory's ability to study quality of service from five different perspectives and the fact that the study has been used and is generally acceptable for measuring quality of service influenced the researcher's choice of this theory.

2.2   Customers in Education Service Delivery

In defining the quality of education, there is a need to identify the customer in the education industry. A customer can be defined as an entity that offers money in exchange for a product or service acquired from an organization. This means a customer is born from a business transaction between an organization and an individual (Griffin, 1996). However, this definition by Griffin (1996) failed to recognize a customer at the individual level but focused on the customer at the organization level. This gap led to another definition of a customer offered by Etsel and Walker (1994), who defined a customer as an individual or a body responsible for deciding whom to purchase from. Griffin's (1996) and Etsel and Walker's (1994) perspectives of customers can be seen from two basic perspectives: the person and the organizational level. Both perspectives are essential for analytical purposes because customers might occasionally be individuals and organizations.

Unlike Griffin (1996) and Etsel and Walker (1994), who approach the concept of a customer from a broader perspective: organization and individual. Hill (1995)

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focused on and persuasively advocated for the primary consumer in the educational sector. He stated that because students are the ones who receive educational services and because educational service delivery is planned with students in mind, students are the central or critical customers in the educational sector. This makes the student a highly significant and crucial customer regarding the supply of educational services. Hill (1995) said that students should focus on what they expect from their educational institutions because they are the primary consumers of educational services.

On the other hand, Waugh (2002) disputes Hill's (1999) claim that students are the most crucial clients in the supply of educational services. According to Waught (2002), viewing students as the most significant clients in education service delivery presents the risk of creating an inaccurate impression of them. It is a false perception that it associates educational institutions with corporations. Although students are the prominent participants in the education service, there is a solid underlying presumption that industry, parents, the government, and society are all "customers" of education, and all should be treated as significant.

In light of this, it may be argued that the difference between Waugh (2002) and Hill (1995) is not about who is the customer when it comes to education service delivery and who is not, but instead about which customers are the most significant. Their argument contends that both add to the literature by providing various perspectives to customers of education services and emphasizing the multiple stakeholders in delivering educational services, such as students, parents, the community, and even the government. Stakeholders in the delivery of educational services are another name for these people.

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Above all, Al-Omoushe, Alrahahleh and Alabaddi (2015) explained who the customers of educational services are and gave a specific example of one of them. Interestingly, Al-Omoushe et al. (2015) and Hill (2006) agreed that students are considered end users/customers in educational institutions. Additionally, they mentioned two categories of clients: external (students, employers, taxpayers, the general public, and other academics from various schools) and internal (other instructors and service department staff). Although Al-Omoushe et al. (2015) and Hill (2005) all mentioned students as customers of education service delivery, Al-Omoushe et al. (2015) instead classified students as external customers of education service delivery rather than as the sector's most influential consumers. While presenting examples of customers for education service delivery, it is evident from the discussion that students are the consistent variable.

The customer in the education institution is defined as an entity (individual, group, person, or Organization) that offers money in exchange for a product or service acquired from an Organization. A customer as an entity implies that such entity can be a person, group, individual, or organization responsible for paying for service but may not necessarily be the end-user or direct beneficiary of the education service. An example is when an organization pays for employees' tuition fees or a guardian /parent pays for their ward to receive education services. Among all scholars. Furthermore, the topic of education service users makes it abundantly evident that, in addition to students, other stakeholders also act as clients for providing educational services. As mentioned, educational service delivery customers include teachers, the government, parents, communities, employers (teachers), taxpayers, members of the general public, instructors, and service department staff, to name a few. For the sake

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of this study, a person-in this case, a student-to whom a service or information is supplied, regardless of whether a charge is exchanged, is referred to as a customer

2.3   Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was adapted from a study by Milojevic and Radosavjevic (2019). The framework consists of two main variables-dependent (quality service delivery) and independent variables (which refer to the various dimensions of the SERVQUAL Model). However, the framework proposed also depicts how service quality influences student satisfaction (dependent variables).
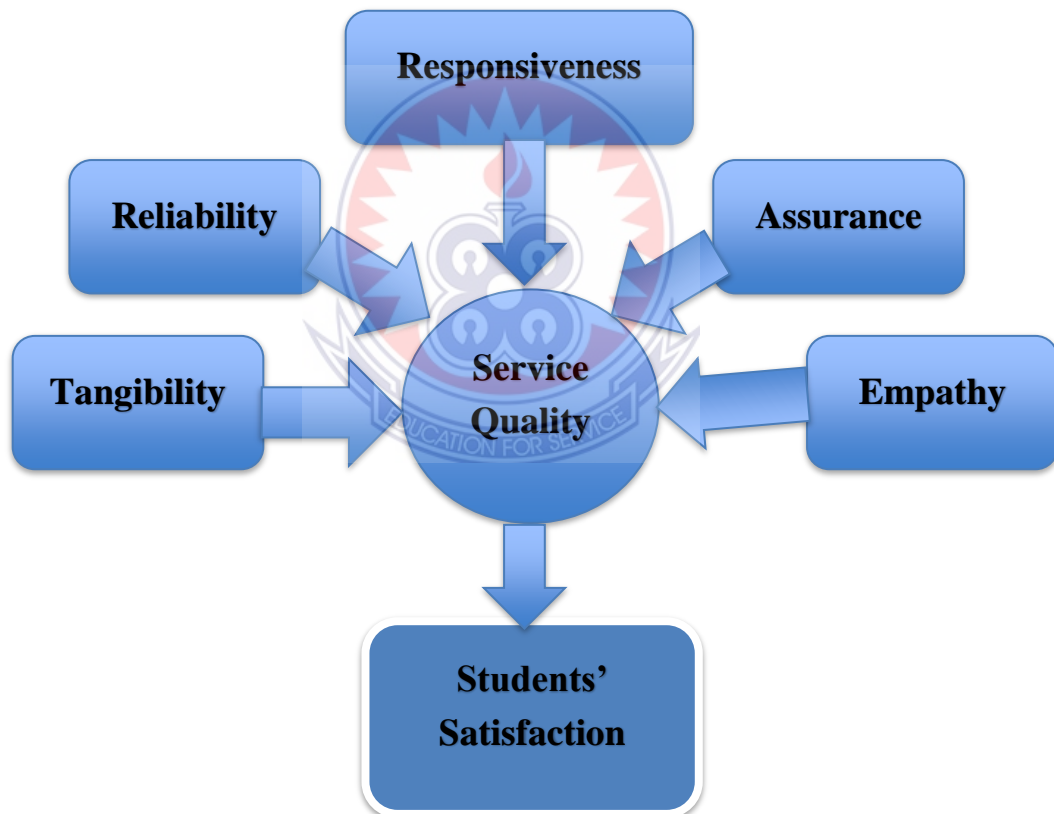
Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Milojevic and Radosavjevic (2019).

According to the study's conceptual framework, the SERVQUAL Model dimension consists of the elements or parts (Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy,

Tangibility, and Reliability) of the service quality model. These elements form the various parts of service quality that students in the school environment receive or enjoy. Together, these elements constitute quality education service delivery in schools. As students receive service from the school environment, their perception of quality is expected to be influenced, which is likely to translate into their satisfaction with the education service. Thus, each of the dimensions is expected to impact student satisfaction differently.

2.4   Quality Students' Services within the Framework of Quality of Education

Studies on the concept of service quality have been explored by scholars (Singgih & Sudibyo, 2017), and debate around service quality has been dominated by two leading schools of thought: the Nordic school whose argument is based on Grönroos's (2005), two-dimensional model, and the North American school of thought whose premise is based upon Parasuraman et al. (1988) in five-dimensional SERVQUAL model. Karatepe (2013) categorized quality of service into various components, such as physical environment quality and outcome quality (Karatepe, 2013). Bitner and Hubber (1994) defined service quality as "consumers' overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of the organization and its services" (p. 77). Bitner and Hubbert (1994) defined service quality from the individual perspective and not necessarily from an organizational or institutional point of view.

According to Krisana (1999), coming up with a definition for quality that captures all the meaningful concepts in it is very challenging. However, he defined service quality as the firm's ability to meet or exceed customer expectations. He further posited that the concept of quality embraces some key attributes. These attributes consist of security (confidence in physical safety), consistency (ability not

to fall out of the organization of the things they do), attitude (being polite), completeness, availability (service providers' ability to remain accessible to the client at all times) and training of service providers. Training service providers is critical in the sense that without training them, performance can fall below standards. Krisana (1999) concluded that for a service to be described as quality, such a service should be able to have all these eight attributes boldly manifested.

Musaba, Musaba, and Hoabeb (2014) provide a structural or institutional perspective to the concept of service quality by describing service quality as a "global judgment or attitude relating to the superiority of the service" (p. 535). Mmutle and Shonhe (2017) add that the greatness of service is associated with the process under which the service was distributed, and the result of service quality can only be revealed after assessing service outcome. They further define service quality as the ability of an institutional capacity to deliver products and services that are equal to the actual expectations of customers. Customers' actual expectation is first affected by customer perception of the service received.

Parasuraman, Zeithamal, and Berry (1988) described service quality mathematically as the difference between what customers were looking forward to receiving from the goods or services and their actual fulfillment with the services. After reviewing several works of literature on service quality, they concluded that:

1. Between service quality and quality of a good, service quality is very challenging for a customer to examine compared with the quality of goods.

2. Service quality can be known by comparing customer expectations with actual service performance.

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3. Quality is not based only on the outcome of a one-time event but a critical examination of a service delivery process. Zakari (2016), in studying student perception of service quality, pointed out some benefits organizations can derive from understanding the quality-of-service delivery. The benefit of understanding service quality includes;

1) Helping companies attract more and better customers to their business.

2) Firms take advantage of quality of service to build a positive reputation, leading to better returns in areas such as higher market share and better pricing than the competition.

3) This gives an organization the leverage to employ or find ways (e.g., market capture, market share, reputation, and price premiums) to achieve a better quality of service, mainly where quality is found to be low or poor.

4) Increase customer satisfaction and prove to customers that the firm cares for them, thereby ensuring customer loyalty.

5) Carefully managing quality of service results in a reduction in customer complaints, thereby boosting workers' morale and improving customer satisfaction.

Service quality, however, is one key indicator of organization growth. It is, therefore, not surprising that Parasuraman et al. (1988) argue that service quality and customer perception are separate concepts that are highly interrelated. Parasuraman et al. (1988) further postulate that quality of service is not based on a short-term, mental evaluation of an organization's service delivery approach. This is because they believe evaluating the quality of service being delivered by a firm based on a one- or two-day visit is impartial. For this study, quality of service is defined as a positive

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emotional response received as a result of consuming a good or experience from a service.

Quality of education is one topic that has been in the limelight for a long time as scholars, parents, communities, educators, and academics desire or strive to achieve even at the basic school level. It is a critical factor in the development of nations. However, the concept of quality education has been interpreted differently by various authors and stakeholders, resulting in the challenge of coming up with a universally accepted definition (Williams, 2001). To date, there is inconclusiveness concerning what quality education is, yet one can learn from many definitions offered by some scholars.

A report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1989) describes quality as good or excellent. Surprisingly, quality is synonymous with other words, such as excellent or good. Harvey and Green (1993) define quality based on criteria, such as something worthy, perfect, fit for purpose, or something that generates value for money or perfection. According to Harvey and Green, these criteria constitute what quality is. Downey, Frase, and Peters (1994) argue that quality is met when a consumer expectation is met or goes beyond the receiver's expectation at a particular point in time. The inconclusiveness to what quality connotes can be explained by the subjective nature of the concept, making its interpretation at the mercy of an individual (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1989).

Concerning the application of quality in education, Harvey and Green (1993) describe quality as a kind of education that is fit for purpose or results that depict value for money. Quality education is synonymous with words such as quality

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teaching or quality learning (Salameh, 2011), efficiency, effectiveness, and equity (UNICEF, 2000). Astin (1980) provides an alternative description of quality education by defining quality education based on an educational institution making input in students' intellectual and personal development. Based on this description, he establishes the quality of education as how an institution contributes to its learners' philosophical and personal growth, while Harvey and Green (1993) define the concept from a multidimensional perspective. Thus, value for money, fit for purpose, and something associated with excellence.

The quality of education is a critical concept in today's competitive educational circle. The dynamics of education keep changing, and it is the responsibility of academic institutions and their stakeholders to be concerned with the quality of service delivery in their schools (Kamble, 2015). Williams (2001) argues that quality education cannot be seen as one thing but as a bundle of factors, such as student achievement in-class assessments, public examinations, and learners' test results. Together, these factors describe the quality of education he posited. Further, he posits that a holistic appreciation of education quality should be done by considering quality education as a multi-faceted concept consisting of variables under the following themes - inputs variable, processes factors, outcomes of education (e.g., academic and cultural heritage), social preparation (societal trends and needs), and also personal development (personal and educational needs and interests).

Kundu (2016) broadly defines the quality of education by taking inspiration from Parasurama et al. (1994). SERVQUAL model. He describes the quality of education as a situation where all five elements in Parasurama et al. SERVQUAL model harmoniously collaborate to achieve a high output which includes: Tangibles

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(the state of the physical environment/facilities of the school such as signs post, comfortable classroom, spaciousness and cleanliness); Reliability (class and lesson schedules, lesson contents, academic services, curriculum structure and attendance control); Responsiveness (the swiftness and excellence at which an educational institution responds to a complaint received from individual and other stakeholders of the school); Assurance (the kind of competence delivered, staff likelihood to execute a task without failing, teaching capacity, professional experience and treatment provided by teachers to students and institution stakeholders, friendliness of administrative staff, etc.); and finally Empathy (the capacity of the education center to understand student plight, needs and ability to give the correct response to learners, the flexibility of curricula to the condition of learners, educational institution response to social demands, student participation, etc.).

On the other hand, Grisay & Mahlck (1991) argue that quality education entails the excellence of educational factors such as content and teaching methods, management of the education process, what students receive in the classroom, and innovation. They further posit that quality education depends on the kind of input made into the teaching process regarding the type of teachers, equipment, teaching, and learning materials rather than on how learners can achieve good results or grades. Using input as an indicator can be attributed to how easy it is to measure inputs (Grisay & Mahlc, 1991).

UNICEF (2000), in their report, describes the quality of education in five dimensions: learner health, the health of the education environment, content, process, and outcome. Quality education from the learner's health perspective refers to education's ability to ensure learners are healthy, nourished, and ready to engage in

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education with support from family and the community. Quality education from the environmental health point of view refers to the teaching environment's conduciveness, safety, protectiveness, and gender sensitivity. It also has to do with the ability of the education environment to provide enough teaching, facilities, and learning materials to support learners' tuition. From the content point of view, quality education entails the existence of relevant curricula, national goals for education, and outcome statements that translate those goals into measurable objectives, teaching and learning material that support learners to attain basic skills in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and talent for life.

Quality of education from the process perspective considers the process through which professional teachers engage with all learners with child-oriented methodologies in a classroom without facilitating disparity. The outcome dimensions of quality education have to do with how knowledge, skills, and altitude embedded in education are in synchrony with national educational goals and positive engagement in society (Motala & Pipho, 2000).

According to Garira (2020), quality education fits its purpose with the best inputs and processes, leading to excellent output. Garira (2020) added that further argues that achieving a universal basic education alone is not enough without providing quality education. He said completing quality education is critical to distinguishing between success and failure, which Steyn (2002) confirmed.

Hawes and Stephens (1990), in a study about quality primary education in low-income countries, posit three criteria under which quality education can be defined. These are efficiency of meeting set goals (making the best out of every input or tool available to improve on learners' standards in acquisition of knowledge,

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learning skills, critical thinking, and creativity), the relevance of the education to human and environmental needs and conditions (perspective, beneficial to the present and future needs of students and humanity in general) and how the education is related to the pursuit of excellence and human advancement (extra quality in terms of excitement in or happiness in the process of delivery education which is often rarely experienced by learners in the low-income country. This study defines quality education as a situation where all five elements in the SERVQUAL model harmoniously collaborate to achieve a high output.

2.5   Measuring Quality of Service

Literature indicates that much mental effort has gone into coming to terms with service quality and its dynamics for the past three decades. The challenge in a scholar's quest to come to terms with service quality is how to measure service quality (Kang & James, 2004). A review of available literature indicates that various scholars and authors have devised multiple frameworks to assess the quality of education. Examples of these frameworks include the integrated model of school effectiveness, which was proposed by Scheeren, Luyten & Van Ravens (2011), the proposed model for assessing the quality of education by Griffith (2008), Howie & Plomp (2002) factors related to Mathematics achievement model and Luong & Nieke's (2014) conceptualizing quality education from the paradigm of recognition framework among others.

The critical theme among all these proposed frameworks is that they provide an excellent source of ideas for understanding and measuring the quality of education. The limitation of these proposed frameworks is that they were developed without a systemic approach to conceptualizing the quality of education to enable a holistic

understanding of the quality of teaching and without a standardized integrated conceptual framework that focuses on the interconnectedness of the components of quality of education (which in this context is broken down into the SERVQUAL Model dimension). At the basic education level, there is likely to be little understanding of the overall quality system in primary education (Kenny, 2018).

In addition to the proposed quality models above, social scientists have developed other models to help measure service quality. Gronroos (1991) provides a dimensional framework for measuring the quality of services. According to Gronoos (1991), any effort to measure service quality should consider three main areas: the technical quality of service outcome, the functional quality of the encounter with the service providers, and the company's corporate image. Lehtinen (1982), on the other hand, argued that quality of service could be measured by measuring three main elements that he believes constitute quality service. Thus, one's ability to accurately measure these three factors will give information about the quality of services.

According to Lehtinen (1982), these dimensions consist of physical, corporate, and interactive quality. He explained that the material quality dimension of service quality covers examining the physical product or service being traded or provided by the organization or individual. Corporate quality relates to measuring the organization's image or brand in the public space. It is necessary to be informed by the public perception of the organization providing the service. It is expected that if the quality of service is good, the corporate image of the organization providing the service will be good. The reverse is also true.

According to Lehtinen (1982), the last dimension deals with interactive quality. This dimension measures the interactive outcome between the consumer and

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the service provider. This dimension is associated with the quality of service, not only the nature or status of the service received but also the process by which the service was delivered. It is expected that quality can also be affected if the transaction or interaction about the service or product is good. Quality is a subjective concept determined by the receiver or end-user of the product.

Parasurman et al. (1988) provided ten dimensions to help measure the quality of service. These ten dimensions are reliability, tangibility (captures the physical facilities of feature of the service delivery e.g. building, office space, compound etc.), understanding customer (how well the service provider makes effort to understand the needs of customers), competence (refers to service providers ability to possess or have the required skills and expertise, knowledge to deliver the service in question), credibility (trustworthiness and the extent to which the service provider is honest in his/her dealings), security (measure how free the service user or buyer is from risk after engaging in service with the providers), communication (how well the service provider keeps customer informed about the service in language that customers understand and can relate to), courtesy (measures the politeness, friendliness, respect of service provider or consists personnel of the organization), assess (measure show easy it is to contact the service provider or their personnel in the course of service delivery) and responsiveness (has to do with the willingness or readiness of service provider personnel to provide service). However, Parasuraman, Zeiithml, and Berry (1994) condensed the ten dimensions into five, mainly reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, under a five-point Likert scale, and these five dimensions have come to be known as the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL Model.

Other models proposed to measure quality include the SERVPERF Model developed by Cronin and Taylor (1992), the SERVQUAL Model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), the Expectancy Disconfirmation Approach (EDA), the Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) five dimension scale (physical, reliability, personal interaction, problem-solving, and policy) by Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Renetz (1996), the PCP hierarchical structure by Philip and Hazlett (1997), and the Performance-only approach (SERVPERF) (Temba, 2013).

The SERVPERF scale was developed to help measure service quality. SERVPERF scale was proposed at the same time that the SERVQUAL scale (Cronin and Taylor, 1992) was being set and was carved out from the same items in the SERVQUAL Scale. The only difference was that the SERVPERP is based on a performance statement grounded in empirical studies, while the SERVQUAL scale tends to focus on perception. Another variation between the two is that while the SERVPERF scale was developed and chosen to be the best fit for a broader spectrum cutting across the banking sector to other sectors such as pest control quality services and dry cleaning, the SERVQUAL scale is found to be a good fit for empirical studies in fast food and the banking sector.

In contemporary times, the SERVQUAL model has been used to apply to various phenomena in social science and has proven more credible. Detailed analysis of the SERVPERF scale shows that the scale was made up of performance (22 items consisting of the same 22 items used under the SERVQUAL scale), future purchase behaviors (items, overall quality), and satisfaction. Marketing literature indicates that the SERVPERF scale supports the performance-based measure and explains more of the differences in service quality compared to the SERVQUAL scale. The

SERVPERF scale includes items to capture performance and future purchases (Yarimoglu, 2014).

Brady and Cronin (2001) also devised a framework or a model for measuring service quality. The model measured service quality under four aspects. This is because they believed these four aspects give an impression of what quality is. The four items proposed consist of personal interaction quality, physical service environment quality, and outcome quality. Attitude, behavior, and expertise form interaction quality, ambient conditions, design, and social factors constitute physical environment quality, waiting time, tangibles, and valence form outcome quality. Brady and Cronin's (2001) service quality model have been engaged by Garcia and Caro (2010) in their empirical study to measure perceived service quality in the transport service industry. After using the model in their empirical analysis, they posited that Brady and Cronin (2001) is a combination of the Rust and Oliver model (1994) and Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz's (1996) RSQS hierarchical model. Hence, they described the model as hierarchically conceptualized and multidimensional.

Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) hold a different notion as to the dimensions of service quality. They posit that the quality of a service perceived by customers has three dimensions: functional (or process) dimension, technical (or outcome) dimension, and image dimension. This study aimed to propose a unified conceptual framework for the quality of education in schools that recognizes all the critical aspects of education that come together to determine the quality of education received by a learner, hence the SERVQUAL Model selection.

Also, the selection of the SERVQUAL Model as the viable model to measure the quality of service offered to learners in the Ga-East Municipal was based on the

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fact that the model has been extensively used in literature in assessing service quality on customer perceptions for various types of services (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Carman, 1990; Sahney, Banwet & Karunes, 2004; Brook, Lings & Botschen, 1999; Lings & Brooks, 1998; Edvardsson, Larsson & Setterlind, 1997; Reynoso & Moore, 1995). This integrated conceptual framework for the quality of education may also be used to find effective ways to improve education quality (Leshem & Trafford, 2007).

2.6   Satisfaction of Quality Educational Services for Students

While most student satisfaction studies focus on the customer's perspective, researchers face the problem of creating a standard definition for student satisfaction (Hom, 2002). Satisfaction can be described as end-users or consumers' response to service received as a result of service rendered to them. In other words, satisfaction is the kind of judgment consumers pass after consuming services rendered to them (Oliver, 1997). Oliver's definition of satisfaction renders satisfaction a subjective element that depends more or less on individual perception.

On the other hand, Howard and Sheth (1969) define consumer satisfaction as the user's mental evaluation of services or goods consumed based on the difference between what the consumer was expecting to get and what he received after finishing the service or goods. Howard and Sheth's description of satisfaction interprets satisfaction as the difference between expectation and what the customer or end-user received. Thus, depending on the outcome of the difference, one will be able to determine if one is satisfied or not. This also means that satisfaction is not based on what one expected but on what one received.

Hunt (1977) and Rust and Oliver (1994) interpret satisfaction from a more psychological point of view by defining it as a customer's emotional response based

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on how far customers believe that service consumption can generate positive feelings. Churchill and Surprenant (1982) propose that customer satisfaction is derived from comparing the expected reward and the actual cost of buying. The challenge with Suprenant's definitions is that they limit satisfaction only to what can be bought or purchased with purchasing power, and not all items received are purchased by individuals. Kotler and Clarke (1987) define satisfaction as a state of fulfillment on the part of a consumer as a result of an experience or outcome. Satisfaction is also considered the intentional performance that gives rise to one's gratification (Malik, Danish & Usman, 2010). Sapri, Kaka, and Finch (2009) point out that customers are the lifeblood of any organization; thus, customer satisfaction is so vital to the extent that failure of an organization to give it due attention can cost such an organization dearly.

According to Suchánek, Richter, and Králová (2015), customer satisfaction falls into two parts. First, customer satisfaction is the fulfillment that a customer derives from their experience after consuming a product or service from an organization. Secondly, customer satisfaction is an organization's output, and this output is necessary to make a profit. Suchanek, Richter, and Kralova (2014) describe satisfaction from the individual consumer's perspective and the organization's performance point of view. This description is holistic, as the two central units of analysis (individual and organization) are the two central bodies responsible for delivering consumer satisfaction. Suchanek et al. (2014) further posit that the quality of the product or service, the price of the product or service, and even the product's image are the main elements mostly affected by unfavorable customer satisfaction. Looking at the critical role of customer satisfaction in an institution, it is unsurprising

that it is an essential determinant of customers' loyalty to purchase more or remain as an organization's client.

Cengiz (2010) approaches the concept of customer satisfaction from a decision point of view and argues that it is a decision made by customers after experiencing a service or product. Cengiz's definition puts the concept under a more psycho-social perspective and further claims that customer satisfaction rests on the premise of the individual level of satisfaction or fulfillment. On the other hand, Jahanshahi et al. (2011) define customer satisfaction as a judgment passed by customers after carefully evaluating the service or product they have received during a service encounter with an enterprise. This indicates that customer satisfaction can be arrived at after taking in a product, goods, or service and not before and further portrays satisfaction as a mental evaluation arrived at after comparing values they received from a transaction to the perceived quality of service relative to the price of the product or service (Bostos & Gallego, 2008).

Gustafsson, Johnson, and Roos (2005) define customer satisfaction as an overall emotional response to the difference between what they anticipate and receive. Gustafsson et al. (2005) went further to state that customer satisfaction has a strong influence on customer loyalty. According to Kotler and Clarke (1987), satisfaction is an emotional condition a person feels due to what they have experienced, which is either equal to or above their expectation. Kotler and Clarker's (1987) description of satisfaction depicts satisfaction as a function of the relationship between one's expectations and perceived experiences. On the contrary, Carey, Cambiano, and De Vore (2002) believe that satisfaction on the part of learners is not just about what they

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have experienced but mental analysis of such experience against what learners perceive before the service/product consumption experiences.

Kunanusorn and Puttawong (2015) define satisfaction as an overall customer attitude towards a service provider. This attitude is determined by how impressed or disappointed consumers are after encountering a service or goods. They further argued that it is essential for higher education institutions to satisfy their customers (students) to ensure their high retention rate. For instance, a dissatisfied student will likely reduce the number of courses or drop out of university altogether.

Scribner, Baldwin and Gold (2001) reported that though there are many customers in an academic organization, students are the key customers of educational institutions. Illias et al. (2008) posit that student satisfaction is derived from the daily experience of the learner in the school environment. Satisfied students tend to engage in one critical activity, and that is the marketing institution in question through word of mouth (Gruber et al., 2010). It is, therefore, the responsibility of every academic institution to make every effort to meet and exceed students' expectations to ensure that they remain in business or else they fold out of business (Tuan, 2012). Even though it is risky to view students as customers, given the current trend where students are perceived as customers of educational institutions, it makes logical sense and moral right to describe them as customers of an academic institution (William, 2002).

According to a study by Banwet and Datta (2003), satisfied students are found to be loyal. They are likely to attend another lecture delivered by the same lecturer or opt for another course taught by them. The study revealed that students pay more attention to the result of the lecture (skills and knowledge received, capability of class

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notes and reading materials, etc.) than any other dimension. Kara and Deshield (2004) added that student satisfaction or dissatisfaction affects student retention or attrition.

Hasan, Llias, Rahman and Razak (2008) studied service quality (responsiveness, tangibility, reliability, assurance, and empathy) in educational institutions and student satisfaction. The study used the SERVQUAL Model to measure the quality of educational institution services. Out of the 230 bachelor's degree students served with the questionnaire, 200 participants responded to the study questionnaire. A questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument to collect primary data. Descriptive statistics were used to report on how students perceive the quality of services provided by the school. For the quality of the school services, it was revealed that the assurance dimension of the school recorded the highest score (4.44 on a 6-point scale). This was followed by responsiveness (4.09 on a 6-point scale), reliability (3.98 on a 6-point scale), tangibility and empathy (3.95 on a 6-point scale) respectively. The mean of service quality was found to be 4.07.

Dopeykar, Baodori, Mehdizadeh, Ravangard, Salesi and Hosseini (2018) conducted a study to measure the quality of dental services using the SERVQUAL Mode. The cross-sectional study used descriptive analysis to analyze data from 385 patients. The modified SERVQUAL questionnaire was to collect data. The study's findings showed that assurance (4.09 ± 0.6) recorded the highest value in terms of quality of service, while empathy (3.44 ± 0.8) recorded the lowest service quality values, respectively.

Milojevic and Radosavljevix (2019) conducted a study to measure the quality of service delivery in an educational institution using the SERVQUAL Model. One

of the study's objectives was to measure the perceived quality of service being received by students in the institution (universities in Serbia). The study's Perception analysis showed that the educational institution's reliability dimension was ranked first. This means more students were satisfied with the reliability of education service delivery in the school. This was followed by responsiveness (5.69, SD=1.03), empathy (4.49, SD=.83), tangibility (mean=3.72, SD=1.23), and assurance (mean=2.9551, SD=1.11), respectively.

Mansoor (2018) conducted a quantitative study to examine the service quality of public secondary schools in the Punjab Base using the SERVQUAL quality dimensions among 100 students in Okara, Junjab, Pakistan. Results from the study revealed that most of the Senior High School learners were more satisfied with the reliability (accuracy of service) and assurance (competence of teachers) in the school. In contrast, tangibility and empathy on the part of the school were recorded as the least satisfying element. The results showed that more students were satisfied with the school service's reliability dimension. In contrast, the flexibility dimension was recorded as the least comfortable factor on the part of the learners. The status of service quality of the selected schools in the Ga East municipal assembly of Accra, Ghana, has yet to be determined.

Mashenene (2019) surveyed to determine the effect of service quality on student satisfaction in Tanzania's higher education using a cross-sectional survey design. The study adopted the SERVQUAL model with five dimensions- tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance. The report from the study analysis showed that the dimension- tangibles dimension, reliability dimension, empathy dimension, and assurance dimension negatively affect students' satisfaction.

In Abili, Narenji, and Afarinandehbin's (2012) study, it was found that assurance and (mean =3.50) responsiveness (mean =3. 47) were the most dominant dimensions for students. Empathy (mean=2.25), reliability, and tangibility (mean-2.59) were found to be the most minor service quality provided by the schools. Also, according to the Friedman test, students found "Assurance" and "Responsiveness" to be the most critical dimensions of service quality, and after that, there were "Reliability," "tangibles," and "Empathy.

In Ghana, Anwowie, Amoako, and Adoma (2015) conducted a study to examine students' satisfaction with service quality at Takoradi Polytechnic in Ghana. The study showed that with respect to tangibility, about 94 percent of students agreed that the school facilities were not the best and that the school's state-of-the-art facilities needed improvement to enhance its education service delivery. About 85 percent of respondents agreed that the school's learning materials (. e.g., library books, handouts) were visually appealing. With respect to the analysis of the school service in terms of reliability, the perception of students concerning reliability was found to be very low in the school. In the areas of responsiveness of the schools, the study findings show that most respondents disagreed that the school provides prompt service to its students. In the areas of assurance, the majority of students interviewed had confidence and trust in the curriculum provided by the school and, therefore, agreed that the school curriculum is relevant to the contemporary demands and trends in the job market. The assurance dimension of the school service quality was found to be high.

Karim (2020) employed the SERVQUAL model to assess the quality of service delivery in the banking industry. The results from the study indicated that out

of the five dimensions, reliability (mean =4.43), assurance (mean=4.41), and empathy (mean=4.35) were the dimensions that recorded the highest average score in terms of quality of service delivery. These were followed by tangibility and responsiveness, which recorded an average score of 4.34. An average score of tangibles is 4.34, with reliability (4.43), responsiveness (4.34), assurance (4.41), and empathy (4.35). The average score for the variables was high, indicating that service quality in the banking industry was high.

A study by Fen and Lian (2005) found that both service quality and customer satisfaction positively affect customers' intention to return to trade with the same organization. This indicates how the connection between service quality and customer satisfaction is crucial in influencing the success and survival of any organization in the competitive market. The study by Fen and Lian (2005) confirms the association or link between service quality and customer satisfaction. On the other hand, Chien,Su and Su(2002). (2002) argued that some form of a link exists between both constructs and that an increase in one is likely to lead to an increase in another. They explained that because customer satisfaction depicts the customer's feelings about service quality, any change in any of the two constructs will likely affect the other.

Temba (2013) contended that customer satisfaction and service quality are not just items but a bundle of items, hence describing them as multi-dimensional. Temba further posited that when perceived service quality is high, there is a higher likelihood of increasing customer satisfaction, thereby establishing some form of corroboration between the two multidimensional constructs. This corroboration and relationship between the two constructs are also supported by Saravana and Rao (2007) and Lee, Lee, and Yoo (2000,) who also recognize that customer satisfaction is based on the

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level of service quality provided by the service provider. This study has yet to determine the relationship and effect of service quality on learner satisfaction.

2.7   Students' Gender and Satisfaction

The connection between service quality and satisfaction has become an emerging interest in academia because of these areas' strategic and significant relevance to enterprises (Azleen et al., 2008). Studies on the relationship between gender and other issues, such as economics, social, political, and managerial issues, have been done in many parts of the world. This study sought to find out if the satisfaction among students is the same or not.   Akpoiroro and Okon (2015) investigated students' gender and satisfaction with education service delivery in federal universities in south-south Nigeria. The study sampled 1700 students out of the total student population of 70,808 undergraduate students from 2008/2009 to 2011 /2012 academic year. The two critical variables for the study learner's satisfaction with the service delivery questionnaire recorded a test-retest reliability value of 71 (71%) to 83 (83%), which is highly recommended and acceptable.

Findings from the study reveal a significant difference between males and females in their satisfaction with education service delivery. The study findings revealed that gender sensitivity to education service delivery should be given keen attention at the universities. According to Kristen et al. (2011), gender influences how learners take in information and their specific needs in the school environment. In the classroom, while females often exhibit more vocals, males, on the other hand, tend to be more visually stimulated. Also, while females usually have a deep interest in reading body language, their male counterparts often have more desire for activities.

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Also, females are expected to express themselves in a way that is different from that of males.

Further review to determine if there is a difference between male and female students with respect to satisfaction found inconclusive results. While some studies found a significant gender difference in student satisfaction (Perry et al., 2003; Sax, Bryant & Harper, 2005; Umbach & Porter, 2002), other studies (Dirkin, Mishra, and Altermatt, 2005; Hong, 2002, Mupinga et al., 2006; Witowski, 2008; Ilias, Abu Hassan, Rahman & Yosoa, 2008; Carey, Combiano & De Vore., 2002; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009) done in other parts of the world found otherwise, thus found a non-significant difference between male and female students concerning their satisfaction.

Elhadary (2016) opined that gender does not play any role in determining learners' satisfaction in an academic institution. Thus, he found no relationship between learners' overall satisfaction and gender. However, Bowamn and Smedly (2012) argued that the satisfaction level differs concerning one's gender. Based on their study, they cited that women and students whose parents have undergone higher education tend to be more satisfied with the education services delivered to them at the university.

Tesema, Ready and Malone (2012) conducted a study to investigate the effect of gender on college student satisfaction and achievement using Midzided Midwestern Public University as a case study. The study collected data between 2001 and 2009 from a sample of 5223 senior students from five colleges at the university. The study revealed that gender has a significant effect on student satisfaction. With respect to the impact of gender on learners' satisfaction levels, it was revealed that a substantial difference exits in average overall satisfaction between learners (p-

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value=0.001). The difference could be explained by factors such as females often having a value system that tends to be more positively compassionate in their rating than males.

Women feel more supported by faculty educationally and individually, making them more satisfied in their academic pursuits (Chee et al., 2005; Sax, Bryant & Happer, 2005). Suppose students can be considered consumers in educational circles. In that case, students' satisfaction cannot be taken for granted, but it should be treated with the utmost attention (Maroo-Egido & Panades, 2008).

Mohammed, Hashim, Azer, Hamzah and Khalid (2020) conducted a study during the COVID-19 pandemic to investigate if there was a gender difference in students' satisfaction with online education service delivery in Malaysia. The study was exploratory, with a sample size of seven-hundred and forty-two final-year students in semesters four and five. That was collected through an online survey of nineteen programs of study from eight faculties. A t-test was employed to examine if there is a gender difference in students' satisfaction with education services. The study's findings showed no significant difference in satisfaction among male and female students.

Hasan, Illias, Rahman and Razak (2008) conducted an interesting study to determine if the level of learners' satisfaction and service quality is the same concerning demographic characteristics of students (age, race, and semester of learners). The study sampled 200 students pursuing bachelor's degrees from two universities. The study provided empirical findings with respect to the relationship between student demographic characteristics, student satisfaction, and service quality in selected schools in Malaysia.

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A study by Souter and McNeil (1996) found a relationship between learners' gender and satisfaction with service quality in Australian universities. (Australia). The study was quantitative. The study's findings revealed a significant relationship between gender and learners' satisfaction with service quality. Further analysis shows that the male gender group tends to be more satisfied than females when it comes to satisfaction with service quality.

The study by Joseph (1998) and Ham and Hayduk (2003) was conducted on the North Island of New Zealand and The United States, Respectively. These two studies revealed that no significant difference exists between satisfaction with service quality and one's gender. Thus, satisfaction with service quality is not different with respect to one's gender. Therefore, whether one is male or female does not determine the difference in satisfaction. In line with this study, it is yet to be determined if the level of satisfaction is the same for male and female students in selected schools.

2.8   Service Quality and Satisfaction of Students

Pedro, Mendes, and Lourenco (2018) studied how teaching methods and perceived quality service influence learners' satisfaction in higher education. The study aimed to establish the relationship between perceived quality (PQ) and student satisfaction. The study used a quantitative approach to solve the study question. Three hundred fifty-nine students from the Portuguese Faculty of Health Sciences were sampled, and their data was collected in Beira, Portugal. Data analysis was performed through a structural equation model. Findings from the study indicated that service quality is positively related to students' satisfaction in higher education.

Al-Azzam (2015) conducted a quantitative study to determine the effect of the service quality dimension on customer satisfaction in Arab banks in the Irbid city of

Jordan. The study evaluated the influence of quality on satisfaction. Dimensions used to measure quality were tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, empathy, and security. Quality was measured under a five (5) point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Simple random and convenient sampling was used to select 400 respondents who provided primary data for the study. Using SPSS version 19, multiple regression analysis was used to test the study hypothesis. Findings from the study showed that all five dimensions tested in the study influence customer satisfaction positively and have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction. Thus, all five dimensions of the SERVQUAL Model significantly (P>0.05) positively affect customer satisfaction. Tangibility recorded the highest form of quality. Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between the five dimensions and customer satisfaction. The work also found a statistically significant correlation (p <.001; two-tailed) with a positive linear association among the five independent variables.

Customer satisfaction should be viewed as a multi-dimensional concept, similar to service quality, according to Sureshchandar et al. (2002). This means that it can exist at many organizational levels and should be operationalized using the same criteria as service quality. Parasuraman et al. (1988) believe better-perceived service quality will result in greater customer satisfaction. In agreement with Saravana and Rao (2007) and Lee et al. (2000, p.226), who accept that customer satisfaction is based on the level of service quality offered by the service provider, they support the idea that service quality leads to customer satisfaction.

Fen and Lian (2005) discovered that both service quality and customer satisfaction had a favorable impact on customers' intentions to return to a firm, demonstrating that both factors are essential to the success and survival of any

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organization in the cutthroat market. This study established a strong connection between customer happiness and service excellence, in an investigation of the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, Chien, Su, and Su. (2002) concluded that there is a strong interdependence between the two constructs and that an increase in one is likely to increase the other. Additionally, they noted that service quality is more ambiguous than customer satisfaction because the former reflects the client's feelings about various interactions and experiences with a service provider. In contrast, the latter may be influenced by opinions about value (benefit in relation to cost) or by the experiences of others who may not have had as positive an experience.

Sultana, Islam and Das (2016) measured customer satisfaction using the SERVQUAL model. Using random sampling, the study survey collected primary data from 100 respondents sampled from Chittagong's five (5) most popular beauty parlors in Bangladesh. The study's main objective was to ascertain customer perception of the beauty parlor's quality of service in terms of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness assurance, and empathy. Inferential statistics, specifically linear regression analysis, was conducted using SPSS. From the study data collected, it was evident that out of the five-factor categories, the tangibility factor was significantly related to customer satisfaction. Also, customers were more satisfied with the tangibility dimension of service delivery because tangibility recorded the highest mean score. Therefore, the study recommended that beauty parlors focus more on the tangibility dimension of service delivery to improve the quality of service delivery.

Tuan Minah (2012) conducted a study to determine the effect of perceived service quality and price fairness on student satisfaction in higher education institutions in Vietnam. Perceived service quality was measured using the

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SERVQUAL Model dimension – tangibility, reliability, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance. The study adopted a quantitative approach, and a survey was used to collect primary data from four different higher education institutions, mainly Saigontech (SGT), University of Technical Education (UTE), and Ho Chi Minh City University Foreign Language and Information Technology (HUFLIT). A questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument, which covered four main sections –respondent's demographics, respondent profile, perceived service quality, perceived price fairness, and student satisfaction. SPSS was used to analyze the study findings. Findings from the study indicated that all five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model positively affect student satisfaction.

El-refae, Anati and Belarbi (2013), in their study of the relationship between service quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention, found a positive significant relationship between service qualities and satisfaction. Using a sample size of 1200 students, the study reveals tangibles (ß=.310, P=.00) and empathy (β=.380, P=.00) showed the most substantial effect on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention, followed by reliability (β=.22, P=00) and responsiveness (β=.10, P=.00). However, the assurance dimension was not found to play a significant role in predicting satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Carter (2009) examined the relationship between service quality perceptions and Taiwanese students' intentions to recommend their university to a friend or colleague. The study was conducted in Taiwan. Using class availability, professor`s knowledge, job advancement, facilities, and tuition. The study established that service quality significantly influences student satisfaction and recommendation intention. Therefore, service quality was found to significantly impact students` overall

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satisfaction and retention. Aldridge and Rowley (1998) argued that quality is different from happiness and that quality is a general attitude, whereas joy is linked to specific transactions. Others, however, say that the perceived quality of university services leads to overall satisfaction with the university (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Karim (2020) employed the SERVQUAL model to assess the quality of service delivery in the banking industry in Bangladesh. Even though this study was not situated in an academic institution, empirical findings from Karim's study can provide this study with some empirical evidence of how the SERVQUAL model dimension played out in other jurisdictions, as well as the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. A questionnaire was used to solicit primary data from the study respondents. The service quality model employed in the study captured service quality under five main dimensions –assurance, empathy, tangibility, responsiveness, and tangibility. Results from the study indicated that out of the five dimensions, reliability, assurance, and empathy recorded the highest average score regarding quality of education service delivery. These were followed by tangibility and responsiveness, which recorded an average score of 4.34. The study concludes that customer satisfaction depends on the service quality of any organization and established that a combination of tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy together significantly affect customer satisfaction. Therefore, service quality had a positive impact on customer satisfaction. The study concluded that quality service is essential to satisfying customer needs and wants.

A study by Abili et al. (2012) assessed the quality of education service delivery at the international branch of Amirkabir University in Tehran, Iran. The study result came out with exciting results. The study quantitatively measured

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reliability- how consistent the university is in offering education services as promoted. Assurance- which captures the knowledge level, intention, and skills as exhibited by an employee of the university; tangibility- which takes into consideration the physical structure of the school environment and its facilities, equipment, and personal empathy, effort made by the school and its staff to understand student through attention giving. The finding aligned with that of Arambewela and Hall's (2006) study, which found the tangibles construct to significantly impact overall satisfaction.

On the other hand, reliability and responsiveness of service quality recorded a p-value greater than 0.005, indicating that they do not significantly relate to learners in EPT university satisfaction. Studies have found that a positive perception of service quality significantly influences student satisfaction (Alves and Raposo, 2010). Satisfied students would, therefore, attract more students through word-of-mouth communication.

According to Hanaysha, Abdullah, and Worokka (2011), educational institutions are like other service providers whose success and growth are dependent on the students' perception. Thus, one of the most straightforward yet most powerful marketing strategies is through the creation of positive image about a school through positive word of mouth. According to Thomas (2011), customer perception is essential to an organization since services are intangible and largely depend on positive perception. Perception plays a vital role in determining customer satisfaction with a service delivered to them. In higher education, a university student may develop a wrong perception of service quality when the services provided fall below expectations, thereby leading to dissatisfaction, which may decrease the student's

loyalty. Thomas (2011) further postulates that student satisfaction is a vital antecedence and, as such, is a significant driver of student loyalty.

Mashenene (2019) surveyed to determine the effect of service quality on student satisfaction in Tanzania's higher education. The study used a cross-sectional questionnaire involving 200 students sampled from the college of business education, Dodoma Campus. The study adopted the SERVQUAL model with five dimensions- tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance. The study data were subjected to regression analysis to find the predictive strength of each SERVQUAL dimension on student satisfaction. The study analysis report showed that tangibles, reliability, empathy, and assurance dimensions negatively affect students' satisfaction.

Further analysis showed that tangibility, reliability, empathy, and assurance significantly affect student satisfaction. Zygiaris, Hammed, Ayidh Alsubaie and Ur Rehman's (2022) study indicated that empathy, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and tangibles have a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction, meaning they all contribute to customer satisfaction. Kwan and Ng (1999) examined the effects of students' perceived quality on student satisfaction. The study revealed that perceived service quality has a significant positive impact on students' satisfaction.

Ali and Mohammed (2014) examined the relationships between service quality dimensions and student satisfaction and found a positive significant relationship between service quality dimensions and student satisfaction. The study further investigated the critical factors in service quality dimensions that contribute to students' satisfaction. Using 120 graduate students from three universities in

Mogadishu, the findings revealed that reliability has the most vital relationship, followed by empathy, with tangibility recording the weakest connection.

Hassan, Ilias, Rahman and Razak (2008) also conducted a study that examined the relationship between the overall service quality dimensions and student satisfaction using a modified SERVQUAL questionnaire comprising 35 items. Two hundred undergraduate students from two private universities in Malaysia were sampled for the study. The study found that empathy elements established the most substantial relationships with students` satisfaction, followed by assurance factors. The findings further showed that these two dimensions were critical in explaining student satisfaction and that any effort to improve assurance and empathy will help students better evaluate their satisfaction.

Sultana and Das (2016) measured customer satisfaction using the SERVQUL model. Using random sampling, the study survey collected primary data from 100 respondents sampled from Chittagong, Bangladesh's five (5) most popular beauty parlors**.** The study's main objective was to ascertain customer perception of the beauty parlor's quality of service in terms of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness assurance, and empathy. Inferential statistics, specifically linear regression analysis, was conducted with the help of SPSS. From the study data collected, it was evident that out of the five-factor categories, the tangibility factor was significantly related to customer satisfaction. Also, customers were more satisfied with the tangibility dimension of service delivery because tangibility recorded the highest mean score.

2.9   Summary of Literature Review

Empirical review of service quality and satisfaction shows inconclusive results. Thus, results found by various authors tend to conflict with each other. Thus, while some found positive effects and relations, others found a negative association using the same variables and dimensions. Furthermore, a review of students' gender and satisfaction shows inconclusive results. Thus, while some scholars found a significant effect between gender and happiness, others found otherwise. This, therefore, necessitates the need for this study to determine if there are differences between students' gender and satisfaction. Furthermore, an empirical review of the effect of service quality and student satisfaction shows inconclusive results. Thus, while some studies found service quality to affect satisfaction, others found no statistically significant impact between the two variables. This study is therefore undertaken to fill this evidence gap.
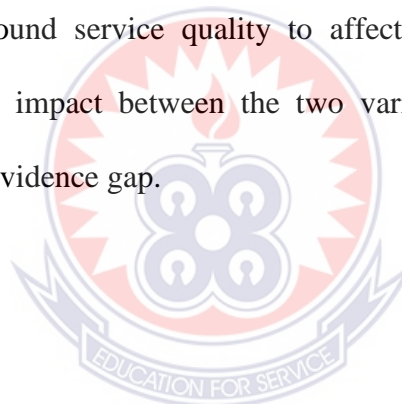
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Overview

This section explains the method used to analyze and deduce the findings. It also justifies selecting the various research methods and techniques. This session touches on themes such as philosophical paradigm, research approach research design, population, sampling and sampling techniques, data collection instrument, validity and reliability, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.1   Philosophical Paradigm of the Study

Regarding the philosophical framework, the quantitative research method adopted in this study aligns with positivism, which assumes that physical and social reality is independent of those who observe it (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Positivism as a concept denotes that which is "posited" or given, and has its root traced to the works of Francis Bacon in 1620 and was further significantly influenced by Auguste Comte in the early twentieth century (Blaikie, 2018). The positivist philosophical stand of the study centers the research on objective reality, which is to be observed or discovered. At the same time, the researcher is expected to be independent (removed) from what she is studying to avoid interfering with the study findings (Creswell, 2017).

3.2   Research Approach

Generally, the research approach can be qualitative, quantitative, or both. This study adopted a quantitative research method. Quantitative research aims to

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systematically investigate and explain the nature of the relationship between variables (Clissett, 2008). This study adopted a quantitative research approach to enable the researcher to determine how a change in one variable (service quality dimensions) will affect changes in other variables (learners' satisfaction). The quantitative research approach aims to systematically investigate and explain the nature of the relationship between variables-dependent and independent variables (Clissett,2008). The adoption of quantitative methods was also based on the research objectives, which sought to assess the quality of learners' service delivery using the SERVQUAL model. Therefore, the researcher deemed it expedient to resort to the quantitative method because the research objectives sought to determine the effect of two variables - service quality dimensions and satisfaction of learners.

Another factor that informed using a quantitative approach was the study's objective to determine the statistical relationship between variables. Thus, how changes in one variable affect changes in another variable. This choice of quantitative methodology was also informed by the fact that the techniques have been used extensively and successfully in previous studies (Mashenene,2019; Pedro et al.,2018). Given the pedigree of this method, the researcher considered this method to be very suitable for this thesis, hence the use of simple multiple regression analysis. This quantitative research method enabled the researcher to determine the relationship between variables.

3.3   Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to assess the conditions concerning the quality of learners' services in the Ga-East Municipality. The use of descriptive survey design was informed by the researcher's desire to present an

accurate picture of the quality situation in selected basic schools more simply and transparently so that everyone can relate to and read from them.

The researcher deemed it expedient to use a survey to collect primary data because it is widely considered in the literature as the most effective in attaining opinions, characteristics, actions, attitudes, and descriptions (Saunders & Thornhill, 2011; Sanda, Anigbogu & Molqus, 2016). Furthermore, using the survey method was imperative to capture the subjective experiences and opinions of the learners and other key stakeholders in the education system, facilitating a clearer understanding of the intricacies involved. The survey approach was selected to gain valuable insights into the diverse viewpoints and attitudes of the individuals involved. By presenting a well-rounded perspective, this methodology aids in identifying potential areas for improvement and facilitates evidence-based decision-making.

In addition, service quality in education delivery is a current phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher only measured the extent to which learners are satisfied with the quality of service in education delivery in the Ga-East municipality. Data collection for this study was done once from a large spectrum of respondents using a cross-sectional survey. The cross-sectional survey fits because the study does not intend to measure long-term impact but the quality of education service delivery within the Ga-East Municipal Assembly. In addition, the choice of the cross-sectional survey was informed by its ability to simultaneously gather a large amount of quantitative and standardized data from many participants. Given the importance of providing high-quality education to learners, this study is relevant to the current educational landscape. By evaluating the existing quality of education services in the Ga-East Municipality, this research contributes to developing effective strategies and

interventions to enhance the overall educational experience and foster positive learning outcomes for the students.

3.4   Study Area

The study area was the Ga-East Municipal in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. Ga-East Municipal Assembly is one of the twenty-nine districts in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. Formerly, it was part of the then-larger Ga District in 1988 until the eastern part of the district was split off to create the Ga East District in 2004; thus, the remaining amount has been renamed as Ga-West District. The municipality is located in the northern part of the Greater Accra Region. The municipality's administrative capital is Abokobi. The municipality forms part of sixteen (16) metropolises, municipalities, and districts in the Greater Accra Region, including Dome, Taifa, Kwabenya, Adenta, Oyarifa, Madina, Haatso, Ashongman, and Westlands, to mention a few. The municipality falls in the savannah agroecological zone. The weather pattern is bi-modal, with the average annual temperature ranging between 25.1^0C in August and 28.4^0C in February and March.

The Municipality has two (2) primary vegetation: shrublands and grasslands. The shrublands occur mainly on the western outskirts and the north towards the Aburi hills. They consist of a dense cluster of small trees and shrubs that grow to an average height of about five (5) meters. Human activities, including settlements have now infringed upon the grassland in the southern parts of the municipality.
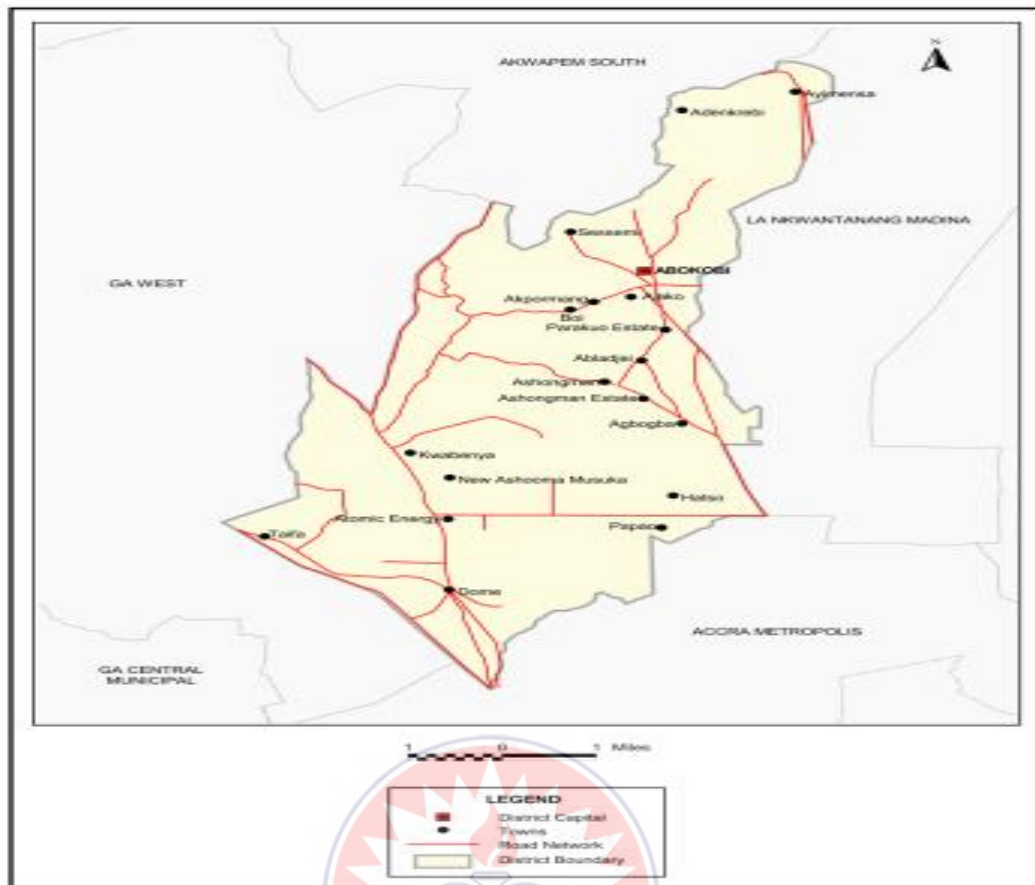
Figure 2: Map of Ga East Municipal Assembly

Source: Ga-East Municipality District Analytic Report (2012)

3.5 Population

The study population comprised JHS three (3) students and teachers in low-performing schools in the municipality. The study sampled an estimated population of 448 students and 170 teachers, which the municipal education office furnished the researcher with. The indices used were the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results within the Ga-East Municipal. Final-year JHS students have spent more time in the basic education system, making them more experienced and better positioned to evaluate the overall quality of education services they have received. By the time they reach the final year, they would have encountered or experienveed the quality of education service delivery enabling them to provide more informed. The

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JHS 3 students and their teachers were selected to respond to the study questionnaires due to their higher level of understanding compared to students in the first or second year of junior high school. Having spent more than two years in the school, they are in a better position to assess and provide insights into the quality of education services they have received

3.6   Sampling and Sampling Techniques

For this study, 300 respondents, 200 learners, and 100 teachers were sampled to respond to the study instrument. The researcher chooses 200 learners to respond to the research instrument based on Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson's (2010) suggestion that sufficient sample size for regression could be determined because the ratio of observations to independent variables should not fall below five. If this minimum is not followed, there is a risk of over-fitting. In line with this study, a sample size of 200 and an independent variable of 5 results in a ratio of more than 5. A higher conservative ratio of ten observations for each independent variable was reported as sufficient by Miller and Kunce (1973) and Halinski and Felt (1970).

In line with the above, the 200-sample size was large enough to perform a statistical analysis (e.g., independent t-test and regression analysis). Furthermore, the choice of 100 teachers was acceptable for descriptive analysis. The sample size (100 and 200|) was based further on the recommendation made by Morrison (1988), who posited that if you do not have enough time or money, a sample size of 100 and above is large enough to perform statistical analysis. Furthermore, teachers are sometimes reluctant to answer questions about the district or municipal education office or its officials.

Given the size and diversity of the population, a multistage sampling method was employed to select the study participants. Using the results of the Basic Education Certificate Examination as a categorization unit, stratified sampling was used first to divide the schools into two, thus, less-performing and well-performing schools. Based on their achievement, the schools were listed in a hierarchical order (well-performing, starting from one (1) to less performing, ending with thirty-one (31). Secondly, using a systematic sampling method, the button ten (10) underperforming schools with even numbers were chosen from the list of schools according to their hierarchical placement.

The researcher used a simple proportional sampling technique to give each of the learners in the participating schools an equal chance of being selected to avoid selection biases. The criteria for proportionating include population size and gender of learners. At each selected school, a sample frame was obtained from the headteacher. The unit of analysis was selected from the list using the lottery (without replacement) method. Numbers representing the unit were written on paper, folded, and placed in an opaque container. The container was thoroughly wobbled for some minutes, and a colleague was asked to pick the pieces of paper randomly based on the estimated size of the samples from each of the selected schools. Learners whose numbers were drawn automatically formed part of the study participants.

Criteria and quota sampling were used to select teachers. Thus, criteria sampling was used to select teachers who have taught in the school for more than one year. Then, quota sampling was used to select ten (10) teachers from each of the ten (10) schools. Quota sampling was used to give each school equal representation when it comes to sample size to ensure fair representation in the study and to avert the

challenging of getting a large number of teachers. Remembering that the study had a time constraint made it necessary to devise a more practical approach to selecting teachers, among which quota sampling is thought to be the most appropriate. A Table showing how the computation of a simple proportional sample for each school is found in Appendix D and Appendix E.

3.7   Data Collection Instrument

For this study, the researcher used a self-administered, close-ended questionnaire to gather primary data from the study respondents (learners and teachers). A close-ended questionnaire was selected as a data collection tool for this study to provide respondents with answers to choose from as they relate to the study in question (Ahiadeke, 2008). A close-ended questionnaire prevents respondents from going outside the research objective to give answers that do not fit into the research objective. It is also best suited for busy respondents who only have little time to sit with you during class hours or their lunch time. The study questionnaire was selected for this kind of study because it is a self-reported characteristic that guarantees confidentiality. Therefore, it can gather truthful responses about the information required from the respondents. A Likert scale was used to capture items and measure responses. The researcher resorts to the use of the Likert scale because it makes items or variables measurable. Also, it makes it easier for respondents to understand, making coding and interpretations easier (Amoah Mensah, 2016).

3.7.1   Learners' questionnaire

The students' questionnaire consisted of different types of questions: Demographic information of respondents followed by questions relating to qualities of education service delivery and learners' satisfaction. The study data collection

instrument used a five-point Likert scale to measure learners' opinions of service quality and satisfaction. Student questionnaires were in two main sections, sections A and B.

Section A of the learners' questionnaire consisted of questions about learners' demographic characteristics such as age, religion, and gender. For example, the religion of learners was measured under four items: Christianity, Islam, traditionalist and others. The age section of the questionnaire was in a continuous scale format where the student was to state their age.

Section B of the learners' questionnaire consisted of five dimensions - reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibility. To help the students understand the questions more, the various themes were defined on the questionnaire to enable the respondents to understand the questions more. Under section "B, all five dimensions of learners' quality of service received were measured under four items under a five-point Likert scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= moderately agree, 4= agree, and 5=strongly agree. Items selected to measure the various dimensions were adopted and modified to suit this study. This was so because the previous studies from which the questionnaire was adopted were not based on basic education services delivery, hence the need for a modality to suit the study.

3.7.2 Teachers' questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire also consisted of questions on respondents' demographics followed by questions that measure teachers' perception of the municipal's education office support systems to deliver quality education. While some of the headings in the question were measured under a 4-point Likert scale, others were measured under a five-point Likert scale. This is because the research

wanted the information from the study respondents and, for that matter, the teachers to align with the Likert scale, making coding more accessible. In addition, items in the teacher's questionnaire were adopted and modified to suit the study.

The teacher's questionnaire was categorized into two parts for easy and clear identification. The first part consisted of items measuring teachers' demographics, e.g., age, religion, gender, years of teaching, and qualification of teachers. The age of respondents was on a continuous scale, while religion consisted of three items-Christian, Muslim, and Traditionalist. Teachers' qualifications were measured under five items: SHS, certificate, diploma, first degree, and second degree. Finally, gender was measured under two items -male or female.

The second part of the teacher's questionnaire measured teachers' perception of municipal education office support in providing quality education. The office's effort was measured under four main headings: inspection role, supervision work, monitoring activities, and support from the municipality education office. The inspection role was measured under a four-point Likert scale: 1= not at all, 2= sometimes, 3= regular but not often, and 4= often. In contrast, the supervisory work was measured with four (4) items under a five (5)-point Likert scale, namely, 1= very poor, 2= poor, 3=moderately,4=good, and 5=excellent. Teachers' perception of monitoring activities was also measured with four items under a five-point Likert scale, namely 1= very poor, 2= poor, 3= moderately good, 4=good and 5 excellent. Lastly, the teachers' questionnaire measures the perception of teachers on municipal education office support towards delivering quality education. This was done with a five-point Likert scale under four main items: 1=very poor, 2=poor,3=moderately, 4=good, and 5=excellent.

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3.8   Reliability and Validity

The nature of the questions asked is critical to the reliability and validity of a study. To ensure the uppermost reliability of the research, relevant questions were made clear, easy to understand, and simple. This was to ensure the respondents understood the questions (reliability). Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire items.

Table 1: Internal consistency of instruments

Sub-scales	Number	R
Learners' questionnaire	24	.841
Teachers' questionnaire	16	.764

Source: Field survey (2022)

The Cronbach alpha for the twenty-four (24) learners' questionnaire items was 0.841, and the teachers' questionnaire was 0.764. All the sub-scales met the requirement for internal consistency and acceptability of the questionnaire, which is above 70% of the level of acceptability (Nunnally and Berstein, 1994).

This study's validity entailed ensuring the right target group (population sample) was sampled and a questionnaire administered to them. To address the face validity, the researcher painstakingly read the questionnaires and made appropriate corrections before they were given out. Comments from colleague researchers were also incorporated in the final draft of the questionnaires. Content validity was further enhanced by asking experienced experts in the field, such as the researcher's supervisor, to review the questionnaire before it was administered to the respondents. The rationale was to ensure that the research questions reflected what the study sought to achieve (validity). In addition, all data collected were analyzed objectively without

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bias. This was to make the study findings reflect the data obtained from subjects, making the study more reliable and valid.

3.9   Data Collection Procedures

Data collection took two primary forms: pre-testing the study instrument and primary data collection. Before the main data collection, pre-testing was conducted where 20 questionnaires were distributed to all respondents (10 students and 10 teachers) across the board to test the validity of the study instrument and to know if respondents could relate to the questions in the questionnaire. Students and teachers engaged during the pre-testing of the study came from two different public schools, namely, Immaculate Roman. Catholic Basic School and Anumle Cluster of Schools are all located in the Okai-Kai North District. The pre-testing was carried out based on the criterion of high and low-performing public schools in the district. The Cronbach alpha for the pre-test for the students' response was 0.839, while that of the teachers was 0.763. This reported reliability estimate surpassed the recommended 0.70 threshold of acceptability and appropriateness of the items (Nunnally& Berstein, 1994).

Concerning how the primary research data was collected, the researcher, first and foremost, with the help of her supervisor, ensured that the research topic was approved, after which a letter was secured from the researchers' department (Department of Educational Administration and Management) to the municipals' education office seeking permission to commence the study in their public schools. The municipal education office further gave the researcher a letter to the heads of sampled schools to conduct the study. This research used a personal distribution strategy to administer the questionnaire. This method was considered appropriate to

help increase the response rate. Respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire, which the researcher picked at various points.

Before respondents (learners and teachers) were handed a questionnaire, they were adequately informed, and their consent was solicited before engaging them in the study. In addition, respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants who qualified to participate in this study were also informed that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the questions. They were made to understand that no action would be taken against them if they withdrew.

On the day of the data collection, the researcher visited the selected schools during lunchtime and, with permission from the headmaster, handed over the questionnaires to respondents: learners and teachers purposely chosen for this study. Respondents (teachers) who requested to take the questionnaire away were allowed to do so, and the responses were picked up the next day or two. On average, the questionnaires were distributed and collected within two months. Respondents were also given the researcher's contact to call in case they had challenges with the study questionnaire. However, none called indicating that the questions were well framed with a high level of clarity.

3.10   Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis took the form of descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS version 26.00. Analysis of the quality of basic education service delivery took the form of descriptive statistics. At the same time, the regression test was used to determine the predictive strength of the SERVQUAL model dimension on learners' satisfaction using an error margin of 0.5. Specifically, Research

Questions One and Two were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Research question Three was analyzed using an independent samples t-test. Research question Four was analyzed using multiple regression analysis to determine the predictive strength of the five service quality dimensions on students' satisfaction. Research Question Five was analyzed using mean and percentages.

3.11   Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations of voluntary participation guided the study. This means that the participation of respondents in the study was voluntary and not under compulsion. A respondent who wished not to participate in the study were exempted. Also, an approval letter was obtained from the Department of Educational Administration and Management to the Human Resource Director of the Municipal education office and another letter from the Municipal Education Office to heads of selected basic schools seeking permission to conduct the research in the municipality and the schools, respectively.

Additionally, participants were fully informed of the study's goals (academic purpose) and told they could leave the study whenever they wanted without facing any repercussions. Additionally, anonymity was protected by ensuring no respondents' identities were captured in the data collection. The author verified this, who ensured no participants entered their names on the survey questionnaire.

The researcher made sure that teachers' and students' identities were not revealed to school administrators or the municipal office of education to protect the anonymity of the respondents' identities. The author also respected the participants and checked for plagiarism when gathering data and information.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Overview

This chapter presents the results and discusses the findings in relation to establishing literature. It begins with a descriptive summary of the demographic characteristics of participants (learners and teachers). The second section presents an analysis of the research questions.

4.1   Demographic Background of Learners

The demographic characteristics section of the study provides background information about the respondents in relation to their age and gender. For ease of analysis, the reported ages of the students were grouped into three groups 13-15 years, 16-18 years, and 19 years and above. Table 2 represents the analysis and output of learners who participated in the study regarding their age distribution.

Table 2: Learners' age distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage
13-15 years	95	47.5%
16-18 years	100	50.0%
19 years and above	5	2.5%
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data(2022)

From Table 2, it can be seen that ninety-five (47.5%) of the learners were in the age range of 13-15 years, one hundred (50%) were within the ages of 16-18 years, and only five (2.5%) of the learners were 19 years and above. The gender distribution of the learners is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistic for learners' gender distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	94	47%
Female	106	53%
Total	**200**	**100.0%**

Source: Field Data(2022)

In terms of gender distribution, ninety-four (47%) of the learners who participated in the study were males, while the remaining one hundred and six (53%) of the learners were females. In summary, more females participated in the survey than males. The most significant proportion of learners were females.

4.2 Demographic Background of Teachers

The teachers' demographic characteristics, such as age, religious affiliations, gender, years of experience, and educational status, are presented.

Table 4: Teacher's age distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
25 years and below	2	2
26 -30 years	10	10
31 – 35 years	22	22
36 – 40 years	33	33
41 – 45 years	14	14
46 – 50 years	8	8
51 years and above	11	11
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 4 depicts the age distribution of teachers who participated in the study survey. It can be seen that two (2%) of the teachers were 25 years or below. The table

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shows that the majority of the teachers, thirty-three (33%), were between 36-40 years of age. The age distribution of the teachers suggests that teachers in the municipality are pretty youthful. The religious affiliation of the teachers is reported in Table 5.

Table 5: Teachers' religious affiliations

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	78	78%
Muslim	18	18%
Others	4	4%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Field Data (2022)

As shown in Table 5, seventy-eight (78%) of the teachers were Christians, eighteen (18%) were Muslims, and the remaining four (4%) of the teachers belonged to other religious groups.

Gender distribution of the teachers in the municipality who participated in the study.
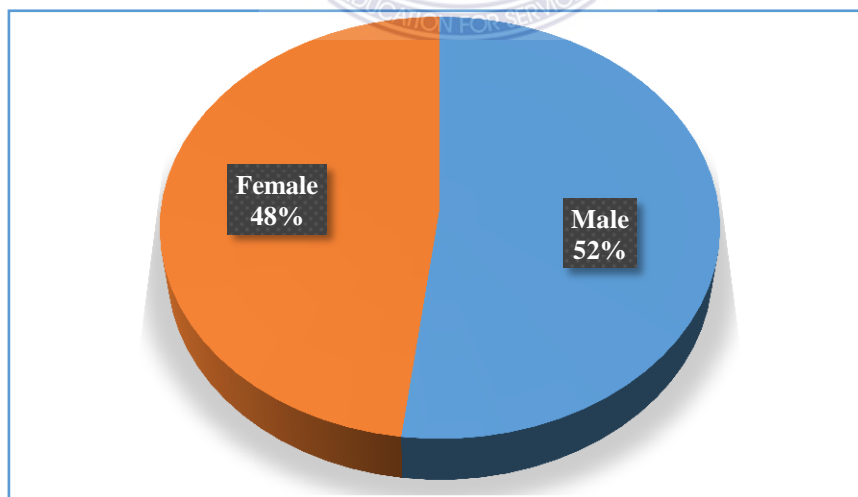
Figure 3: Teacher gender distribution

Source: Field Data (2022)

Figure 3 analyzes the gender distribution of teachers who participated in the study. From Figure 3, it can be inferred that out of the 100 teachers who participated in the survey, 52%, representing 52 teachers, were males, while 48%, representing 48 teachers, were found to be females. This means that more male teachers participated in the study than females. Table 6 provides an analysis of teachers' working experiences.

Table 6: Teachers' number of working experience

Years of teaching	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 years	17	17%
6-10 years	34	34%
11-15 years	18	18%
16-20 years	18	18%
21 years and above	13	13%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Field Data (2022)

From Table 6, it can be inferred that 17 (17%) of the teachers reported between 0-5 years of teaching experience, 34 (34%) of the teachers reported between 6-10 years of teaching experience, 18 (18%) reported between 11-15 years and 16-20 years of teaching experience respectively. Finally, 13 (13%) of the teachers who responded to the survey said they have 21 years and a more significant number of working experiences as teachers. The qualifications of the teachers are presented in Figure 4
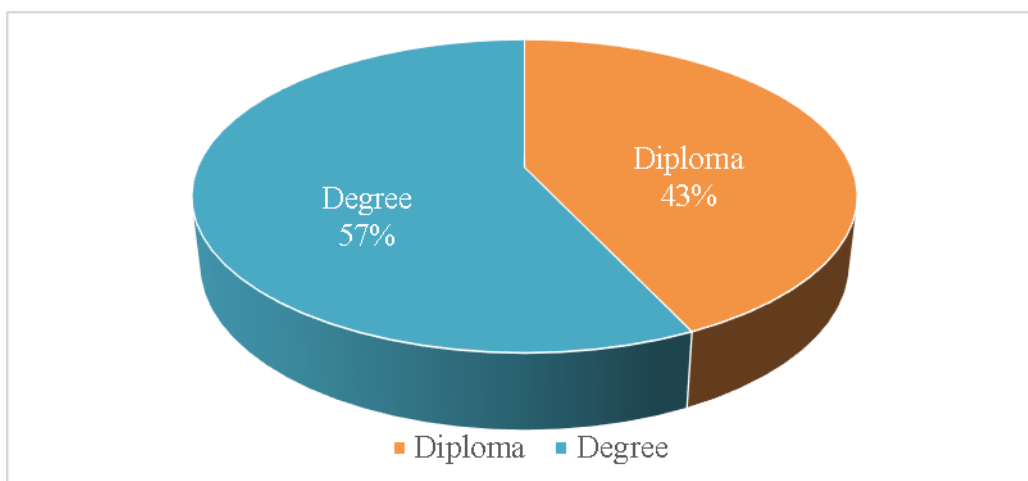
Figure 4: Teacher's respondent's qualification

Source: Field Data (2022)

From Figure 4, it can be inferred that most of the teachers who participated in the study had a first degree as their highest educational attainment (57%). In contrast, the remaining 43, representing 43% of the teachers, had Diploma Certificates.

4.3   Quality of Services Delivered to Basic School Learners

To assess the quality of services delivered to basic school learners in the municipality, research question one (1), "What is the quality of services delivered to basic school learners in the municipality?" was posed. The responses were categorized as "strongly agreed" or "strongly disagreed" based on the crude cut-off point 3.00. The result is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Learners' perceptions of quality of education services

Service Quality	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
Reliability	3.75	.87	Agreed
Responsiveness	3.78	.78	Agreed
Empathy	3.57	.98	Agreed
Assurance	3.74	.83	Agreed
Tangibility	2.69	.78	Moderately agreed
Total	**3.51**	**.85**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Data (2022).

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From Table 7, out of the five sub-scales used to measure service quality in basic schools, the learners agreed on four out of the five sub-scales. The highest responded subscale is responsiveness (M = 3.78, SD = .78). From the arithmetic mean computation of responsiveness, it can be deduced that teachers responding to learners promptly was dominant, followed by essential announcements being relayed quickly to learners, and teachers coming to class immediately it is time to teach. The second dominant subscale in the service quality reported among basic school learners in the Ga-East municipality is reliability (M = 3.75, SD = .87). It can be inferred that learners have easy access to teachers, tuition is exactly as promised, and teachers show genuine concern and sincere to teach learners.

Furthermore, the learners agreed on Assurance of Education Service Quality (M = 3.74, SD = .98). The result suggests that learners believed that their teachers are knowledgeable enough to respond to their needs, have high confidence in their teachers, and perceive that school authorities treat their needs in utmost privacy among others. More so, learners agreed on the empathy scale of the total quality service education delivery (M = 3.57, SD = .98). It can be inferred that in the Ga-East municipality, selected teachers do exhibit patience when handling complaints of learners, give individual attention to learners and learners' interest being given top priority.

However, learners, on average, moderately agreed on the tangibility subscale of the service quality delivery in the Ga-East municipality (M = 2.69, SD = .78). This implies that in terms of the tangibility of service delivery in selected schools, learners wanted to be more concerned about teachers presenting themselves in appropriate

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manners, followed by school having adequate teaching and learning equipment to facilitate education delivery and lastly noise level in the school.

4.4 Learners' Level of Satisfaction with Delivery of Quality Education Services

Research question two (2), "What is the level of learners' satisfaction with the quality of education services delivered in the municipality?" was posed to determine learners' satisfaction with the quality of services delivered to them. The result is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Perception of learners on their satisfaction with education service quality delivery

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
I am pleased with my academic achievement.	2.39	1.35	Disagreed
I regret being a student of this school.	2.71	1.69	Disagreed
This school has met all my expectations.	3.14	1.29	Agreed
I will recommend this school to others.	3.73	1.47	Agreed
Mean of Means and Standard Deviations	**2.99**	**1.45**	**Low**

Source: Field Data (2022). *Satisfaction: Low<3.00 and High>3.00.*

Overall, the estimated mean means of 2.99 and standard deviations of 1.45 suggest that learners have low satisfaction with the quality of education service delivery in basic schools in the Ga-East Municipality. Regarding specifics, learners perceived that the current quality of education service delivery in basic schools met their expectations (M = 3.14, SD = 1.29) and would recommend their schools to others (M = 3.73, SD =1.47). Another critical revelation was the fact that learners regret being a student of their respective schools (M = 2.71, SD = 1.69). Perhaps this revelation was made because the learners perceived that their schools had met their expectations. However, when academic achievement was added to the reported

expectation, it was found that most learners were not enthused about their academic achievement (M = 2.39, SD = 1.35).

4.5 Gender differences in Learners' Satisfaction of Quality of Education Services Delivery

Research question three (3), "What is the gender difference in students' satisfaction with quality education service delivery in the municipality?" was posed to ascertain whether or not learners' satisfaction with quality service delivery in the municipality would differ when they are classified according to gender. The independent samples t-test result is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Gender differences in reported quality of service delivery

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	T	Sig
Satisfaction of education Service Delivery	Male	94	3.03	.72	198	-1.483	.140
	Female	106	3.21	.93			

Source: Field Data (2022).   NS = Not Significant

The descriptive analysis in Table 9 revealed that female students (M = 3.21, SD = .93) differ from male students (M = 3.03, SD = .72) in the reported satisfaction with education service quality. However, to check whether this difference reached statistical significance, an independent samples t-test was conducted. First, Levene's test was performed to check for violations in the dataset. A t statistic assuming homogeneity of variance was computed, and it was ascertained that the dataset has not violated any assumption regarding the appropriateness of this analytical tool. This test found that variances in satisfaction of service quality delivery between the groups were equal, $F_{(2,198)}$ = .964, p = .327. The independent samples t-test revealed that though differences exist in the reported means, these differences do not statistically

differ in the reported satisfaction of quality-of-service delivery received by students in the Ga-East municipality (t (198) = -1.483, p = .140) despite the female students reporting slightly high mean scores compared to males. This suggests that the difference in the mean scores for both groups on the satisfaction of quality education service delivery was due to chance.

4.6   Predictive Strength of Education Service Quality Dimensions on Learners' Satisfaction

Research question four (4), "what is the predictive strength of each service quality dimension on learners' satisfaction of the quality education services delivered in the municipality?" examined the predictive strength of each service quality dimension on learners' satisfaction in the municipality. Education service quality was represented by the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL Model: Tangibility, Reliability, Assurance, Empathy, and Responsiveness, which were regressed against student satisfaction. These variables were tested using multiple regression to determine the effect of these dimensions (representing service quality) on the satisfaction of selected learners. Table 10 presents a summary analysis of the regression model.

Table 10: Summary analysis of regression model[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.521[a]	.271	.252	.725	1.567

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tangibility, Reliability, Assurance, Empathy, and Responsiveness

b. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with Quality-of-Service Delivery

The variables were measured at intervals, and both predictors and dependent variables were continuous. The scatter plot was used to check for linearity between

the variables. Given fixed Y, the probability distribution of X's is normal, i.e., the sample was drawn from a joint normal distribution. A histogram and a fitted normal curve or a Q-Q Plot were used to ascertain normality in the given distribution. Durbin-Watson statistics were used to check autocorrelation. From the rule of thumb, Durbin-Watson's **d** value of 1.5<d<2.5 shows there is no auto-correlation. From the test, D statistics was 1.567.

The Summary Model in Table 10 suggests that the predictors shared about 25.2% (Adjusted R^2 = .252) variances in the reported satisfaction with the quality-of-service delivery in the Ga-East Municipality. An ANOVA test was performed on the data set to determine whether the influence of Quality Service Delivery on learners' satisfaction reached statistical significance. The result is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Analysis of variance (ANOVA[a])

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	37.902	5	7.580	14.421	.000[b]
	Residual	101.973	194	.526		
	Total	**139.875**	**199**			

a. *Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with Quality-of-Service Delivery*
b. *Predictors: (Constant),* Tangibility, Reliability, Assurance, Empathy, and Responsiveness

The ANOVA test in Table 11 suggests that the strength of relationships between the predicting variables (Tangibility, Satisfaction with Quality-of-Service Delivery) and the outcome variable (students' satisfaction) have reached statistical significance (F (5, 194) = 14.421, p = 0.00). This implies that quality of education service delivery affects or links learners' satisfaction. The summary of the regression coefficient (Coefficients), indicating which of the predicting variables influences the outcome variable, is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Multivariate analysis of the predictive strength of service quality dimension on learners' satisfaction

Variable	β	t	p
Constant		*2.482*	*.014*
Reliability	.079	.880	.380
Responsiveness	.048	.549	.584
Empathy	.049	.544	.587
Assurance	.268	3.139	.002
Tangibility	.256	3.839	.000

Source: Field Data (2022).

Dependent Variable; Satisfaction, R^2=.271, Adjusted R^2=.252, P<0.05; N=200

As depicted in Table 12, the result shows that the independent variables explain only a 25.2% variation in the model. The results further revealed that out of the five independent variables included in the model, assurance (β = 3.139, p = .002) and tangibility (β = 3.839, p = .000) were significantly related to students' satisfaction. This means that any effort to increase students' satisfaction can be made by increasing the services of assurance and tangibility in most cases in the municipality. However, reliability (β = 0.880, p = .380), responsiveness (β = .549, p = .584), and empathy (β = .544, p = .587) were found not to relate to students' satisfaction, and this was because they recorded a p-value more significant than .005 (p<.005).

In terms of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, all the independent variables had a positive relationship with the satisfaction of the selected students. The regression equation for this model is **Y ⇒ .079+.048+.049+.268+.256 = 0.7**

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Regression l Equation

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \varepsilon$$

Y = observed values of student satisfaction.

X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, and X_5 for each observation indicate the values of the corresponding independent variables.

X_1= Reliability, X_2=Responsiveness X_3= Empathy X_4= Assurance and X_5= Tangibility

β_0= the intercept term,

β_1, β_2, β_3, β_4, and β_5 = regression coefficients for each of the independent variable.

ε = error component, which considers the unexplained variation in students' satisfaction that the independent variables do not represent.

4.7 Teachers' Perception of Municipal Education Service support for Quality Education

To determine teachers' perception of support systems available for the delivery of quality services to students in the municipality, the research question, "what is the perception of teachers about the support systems available for the delivery of quality education services to students in the municipality?" was posed. This section of the study presents findings on teachers' perceptions of what the municipal education office within the municipality is doing to help improve the quality of education in the municipality. Out of the many tasks mandated by law to be performed by the municipal's education officers, only four of the municipal's responsibilities were examined in this study – monitory role, supportive role, supervisory, and inspection.

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4.7.1 Inspection roles performed by the Municipal's Education Office in improving the quality of education service delivery

Table 13 presents findings about teachers' perception of the performance of the municipality's education office in terms of undertaking its inspection roles.

Table 13: Teachers' perception of the inspection roles in the municipality

Statements	Not at All	Someti mes	Regularl y but not often	Often
Inspection visits to assess how teachers teach in class.	0	66(66)*	18(18)	16(16)
Inspection to assess the performance of school heads.	0	53(53)	44(44)	3(3)
Inspection of condition and availability of teaching and learning materials.	0	76(76)	15(15)	9(9)
The municipal education office ensures that the school provides tuition strictly at the allocated time.	16(16)	22(22)	38(38)	24(24)

Source: Field Data (2022). *Percentages in parentheses*

From Table 13, it can be seen that about 16 percent of teachers who participated in the study were of the view that the municipality's education officers visit schools to assess how teachers teach in class often. However as many as 66% were of the view that the municipality's officers sometimes visit to determine how the teachers teach in class. Concerning the municipality's officer's inspecting and evaluating the performance of school heads, the study findings reveal that as low as 3% of the study respondents said they do it often. In comparison, as many as 76% were of the view that such inspections are done sometimes but not regularly. This means more respondents believed that the municipal education office sometimes visits the school to check the performance of the heads. While 24 % of teachers described the municipal education office visit as ensuring schools provide tuition strictly at the

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allocated times to be done often, about 38% believed that such inspections are done regularly but not often.

4.7.2   Teachers' perception of Municipals Education Officer supervision role

This section of the study sought to examine the performance of the municipal education officer in terms of supervision to ensure quality education service is delivered. The supervision role has to do with the interpersonal process in which the skilled overseer or supervisor helps the less experienced practitioner about his/her professional growth as well as his/her personal growth.

Table 14: Teachers' perception of municipal's education officers' supervision role

Statements	Very Poor	Poor	Moderately poor	Good	Excellent
Staff development	1(1) *	10(10)	53(53)	34(43)	2(2)
Instructional strategies	0(0)	3(3)	28(28)	61(61)	8(8)
Curriculum decisions	0(0)	17(17)	41(41)	38(38)	4(4)
Assessment and Evaluation	0(0)	13(13)	18(18)	51(51)	18(18)

Source: Field Data (2022).   *Percentages in parenthesis*

Table 14 analyses teachers' perception of Municipal education officers' performance in executing supervisory roles in basic schools in the Ga-East municipality. From Table 14, it can be inferred that regarding the municipal office supervising staff development of teachers, about 34% of respondents rated the office work as good, while 53% of the teachers rated the municipal office surpvervisin staff development as moderately good.. Also, in terms of providing supervising instructional strategies, 8% of teachers rated them as excellent, while about 3 % rated them as poor. Concerning the office performance regarding curriculum decisions, as high as 41% of teachers rated them as moderating good, and about 38 % described the

municipal office work as good. Regarding supervising assessment and evaluation, about 51% of the teachers rated it as good, while about 18% rated their work as excellent. None of the teachers rated the municipality's education office work of supervising assessment and evaluation as poor.

4.7.3 Monitoring activities/role performed by the Municipal Education's Office in ensuring the quality of education service delivery

This section of the study sought to examine the monitoring role performed by the Municipal Education office to improve education delivery. Monitoring involves the continuous process of overseeing and controlling the performance of an individual or a group of individuals to identify strengths and weaknesses and formulate practical proposals for action to be taken. This assessment examined the issues from the perspective of the teachers. Respondents rate the performance of the Municipal Office in executing this role under a five-point Likert scale: 1= very poor, 2= poor, 3= moderately good, 4= good, and 5=Excellent.

Table 15: Teachers' perception of monitoring activities/role of Municipal Education Officers

Statements	Very Poor	Poor	Moderately good	Good	Excellent
Monitoring teacher's performance after training/capacity building	11(11)*	37(37)	26(26)	26(26)	0
The number of required textbooks per pupil is adequate	18(18)	53(53)	23(23)	6(6)	0
Monitors to make sure teachers are qualified for the job	0	1(1)	43(43)	52(52)	4(4)
Mentor to make sure the number of learners per class is intact	0	9(9)	54(54)	34(34)	3(3)

Source: Field Data (2022)   *Percentages in parentheses*

Analysis from Table 15 revealed that out of the 100 teachers who participated in the study, non-described the municipal office monitoring teachers' performance after capacity building as excellent. About 48% of teachers described it as poor (very poor + poor). 53% of teachers also described the municipal office's role of making sure that the number of textbooks per pupil is adequate as poor. While about 43% of teachers rated the municipal office's task of monitoring to make sure teachers are qualified for the job as moderately good, about 52 % of teachers described this role as good. In terms of the municipal officer's role of monitoring to make sure that the number of students per class is intact, about 54% of teachers were found to be indifferent. In comparison, about 34 % of teachers described the municipal role as good.

4.8   Supportive Role of the Ga-East Municipal Office

This section of the study sought to examine the assistance that municipal education officials give to improve the teacher's method and strategies of teaching. Support defines the aid that municipal officials give to enhance the teachers' teaching methods and strategies. Respondents rate the performance of the municipal in executing this role under a five-point Likert scale: 1= very poor, 2= poor, 3= moderately good, 4= good, and 5= Excellent.

Table 16: Teachers' perception of the Municipal Education Office's supportive role in ensuring the quality of education service delivery in the municipality

Statement	Very Poor	Poor	Moderately Poor	Good	Excellent
Demonstration of lessons	4(4) *	12(12)	14(14)	15(15)	55(55)
In-service training programs	2(2)	1(1)	4(4)	23(23)	70(70)
The organization of peer learning	20(20)	22(22)	20(20)	19(19)	19(19)
Provision of teaching and learning materials	17(17)	17(17)	14(14)	23(23)	29(29)

Source: Field Data (2022).   *Percentages in parentheses*

From Table 16, it can be seen that as high as 55% of teachers rated the municipal office assistant as a demonstration lesson as excellent, while about 15% rated it as good. Regarding in-service training, about 70 % of teachers rated the municipal execution of this assistance as excellent, while 23% described it as good. Regarding the provision of teaching and learning material assistance, about 29% of teachers who participated in the study rated it as excellent, while 23 % of teachers rated it as good. While 20% of teachers rated the municipal education officer peer lesson organized as good, about 19% rated the peer lesson as excellent.

4.9   Discussions

This section presents discussions of the findings in relation to established literature.

4.9.1   Leaners' perception of quality of education service delivery in selected public basic schools

To ascertain learners' perceptions of the caliber of education services received from chosen junior high schools in the neighborhood, an analysis of learners' perceptions of the quality of education services was undertaken. The SERVQUAL

model's "five dimensions" were used to measure quality. The study results and previous studies are discussed in this section.

4.9.1.1 Reliability in the quality of education services provided

The goal of reliability was to find out from the students whether the school provided the kind of instruction it had promised or if it had proven intelligent and interested in helping its pupils with their academic issues. It also sought to ascertain how well the students could receive teacher assistance. Reliability is also impacted by the accessibility of teachers students may rely on for their education. According to the study's findings, the reliability of education services from students' perspective recorded a mean value of 3.75. This signifies that the student acknowledged the high quality in terms of dependability. This conclusion was based on the reliability mean value (M = 3.75), which exceeds the benchmark/cut-off (M = 3.00).

The high level of reliability indicates that students can easily reach their teachers when needed. This also suggests that students trust their teachers and that some can provide excellent instruction. The high level of reliability can further be explained by the public junior high school instructors in the country receiving more extensive training and also undergoing appropriate training to acquire the expertise, knowledge, and skills needed to teach their students effectively. Further, the headteachers in public schools strictly enforce rules that require teachers to be very diligent and provide students with the best possible education; headteachers carefully review teachers' lesson notes to ensure that they meet the required standards, a factor that results in consistent delivery of high-quality education that meets established criteria.

Furthermore, findings from this study conceding reliability (high level of reliability) confirm studies by Abu Hasan, Illias, Abd Rahman & Abd Razak (2008), Milojevic and Radosavljevic (2019), Mansoor (2018); Karim (2020) who found the reliability of education service delivery to be high in their studies. Using this study's cut-off point as the determinant of quality of service, this study contradicts the study findings by Abili et al. (2012) (M=2.59) and Anwowie et al. (2015), who found the reliability of service quality to be low.

Based on the mean values of the dimensions, it is evident that reliability had the second-highest mean value out of the five dimensions. This finding is inconsistent with previous studies conducted by Abili et al. (2012), which reported reliability as the dimension with the highest mean values (4.303 and 3.88, respectively) for service quality. The discrepancy in these study results could be attributed to the different institutions the studies focused on. While Abili et al. (2012) focused on higher education, this study concentrates on basic education delivery, which could explain the variation in results. Despite reliability recording the second-highest mean value (M= 3.75, SD=0.87), the learners agreed that it was of high quality, based on the study benchmark.

4.9.1.2 Quality of education service delivery - responsiveness

The study further examined the quality of education service delivery from the perspective of teachers' intention to assist students and provide prompt services. Responsiveness is necessary in education service delivery to students receiving the services. Findings from the study show that responsiveness of education service delivery recorded a mean value of 3.78.

According to the study benchmark, the quality of basic education delivery was high, and learners agreed with this assessment (as depicted in Table 7). The high quality of responsiveness can be attributed to teachers who carefully prepare lessons and are available to respond to students' questions even when school is not in session or during vacation. Additionally, teachers consider learners' needs and levels of understanding to ensure that the purpose of attending school is achieved at all levels. Teachers' ability to respond to learners in their language and culture helps to identify areas where they may be struggling and find ways to remedy these struggles. Comparing this study with others, it can be seen that the mean value recorded for responsiveness is in the same range as those obtained by Abu Hasan et al. (2008) (M = 4.09), Depeykar et al. (2017) (M>0.30), Milojevic and Radosavlievix (2019) (M = 5.69), Abili et al. (2012), and Karim (2020). Using this study's benchmark, it can be concluded that the responsiveness in these studies was high, which corroborates with the findings of this study. Interestingly, there is limited literature on studies that attempt to categorize quality into high or low. Additionally, this study's findings contradicted other studies conducted in different parts of the world, including studies by Anwowie et al. (2015), who found responsiveness to be low (using this study's cutoff point).

Regarding hierarchy, responsiveness recorded the highest mean value out of the five SERVQUAL dimensions, which contradicts Ferahtia's (2021) study of the quality of education service, where responsiveness was the second highest mean value out of the five SERVQUAL dimensions measured. Likewise, the hierarchical position of responsiveness in this study contradicted studies by Abili et al. (2021), where responsiveness was ranked fourth out of the five SERVQUAL dimensions measured. The high quality and high position of responsiveness can be explained by the fact that

public school teachers in Ghana strongly emphasize ensuring that learners understand what is being taught, which prioritizes responsiveness.

Additionally, in Ghana, there is a belief that a good teacher makes students understand what is being taught, and therefore, the same ridicule that society attached to tutors who failed to respond to students at the junior high school level makes teachers try to avoid being a victim thereby making public school teachers accountable for ensuring learners' comprehension. Teachers who fail to help students understand what they are teaching are often criticized by students and reported to school authorities for appropriate action to be taken. These factors discussed, to some extent, contribute to a high level of responsiveness in education service delivery in the study.

4.9.1.3 Quality of education service delivery - empathy

According to this study, empathy measures the care, passion, and love that learners receive during their education. This has a great influence on learners' ability to enjoy the teaching being offered to them (Ganguli & Roy, 2011) and also establishes a long-term relationship between students and teachers, which influences students ability to understand the concept being though (AL-Marri & Zairi, 2007) and creates a sense of togetherness among their learners and moves them together as a group and at the required speed within the classroom environment. Analysis of the empathy dimension of service quality in the study revealed that empathy (care and affection) on the part of teachers/schools towards learners was also high per the study cut-off point. (M>3=High, M<3.0=Low). The high-quality level of empathy can be explained by the fact that in public schools, teachers understand the state of the learners, knowing that most come from poor backgrounds.

Also, Ghana is a religious country, and its people, including teachers, believe that treating learners wrong has severe consequences for them; therefore, teachers tend to show them love in the eyes of religions to avert negative impacts on their lives. Teachers who fail to show love, care, and passion toward these learners are labeled wicked and lack parental affection. People in society often tend to disassociate themselves from them. These listed factors act as insensitive for teachers to show love and care to learners in government schools to be accepted in society.

On the other hand, the study findings concerning empathy corroborate with study findings by Hasan and Lias (2008) (M = 3.95), Dopeykar et al. (2017) (M = 4.34), Milojevic and Radosaljevix (2019), Karim (2020) (M = 4.34), and it contradict study findings by Wnayan et al. (2013), Mansorr (2018) who found the quality empathy on the part of student to be low.). Just like the finding of Abili et al. (2012) (M = 2.25), where respondents disagreed that quality was high. The difference in this study's findings compared to other studies done in different parts of the world could be explained by the level of education (junior high school) this study sought to examine and the nature of the school (government schools in Ghana). More studies need to be done to determine the state of empathy in public and private schools in Ghana.

Regarding hierarchy, it can be seen that responsiveness recorded the highest mean value out of the five dimensions. This implies how vital responsiveness is to learners in selected schools. This corroborates the study findings by Abilli, Narenji Thani, and Abili et al. (2012), who also found the reliability dimension of service quality to record the topmost mean (M = 4.303) and (M = 3.88), respectively. This means that responsiveness tops the service quality dimension of the selected schools. In other words, in the selected schools, teachers consistently deliver service to

students and can provide assured service as promised. Overall, the overall quality of education service received by the school's learners was high.

4.9.1.4 Assurance dimension of service quality

The assurance dimension was measured based on teachers' ability to provide accurate and usable information to learners. Assurance was assessed by examining learners' confidence in their teachers (Yarimoglu, 2014), teachers' competence in responding to learners' questions (Hahn, 2021), Li, as well as teachers' trustworthiness (Mmutle and Shonhe, 2017). Assurance is crucial to quality education as it is linked to student satisfaction (Ryan, 2015) and is a crucial aspect of quality (Ehigie, 2016), leading organizations to pay close attention to it.

According to the analysis of the assurance dimension of education services delivered to students in the municipality, the mean value of assurance was 3.75, indicating a high assurance quality. This suggests that teachers in the selected schools are knowledgeable, trustworthy, and able to respond to student questions. The high level of assurance can be attributed to the Ghanaian government's efforts to improve the quality of teacher training by enhancing the teacher training curriculum, requiring rigorous academic training, and passing a licensing examination before becoming qualified teachers. These measures were implemented due to public demand for the teaching profession to be as attractive as medicine, architecture, or business professions. Additionally, the strong bond between public school teachers and learners and the friendly and relaxed environment in public schools contribute to the high level of assurance. Furthermore, public school teachers' ability to counsel and mentor students beyond the classroom increases their trustworthiness to learners.

The study found that the high level of assurance in the selected government schools at the time of the study was consistent with the findings of previous studies by Abu Hasan et al. (2008) (M>4.0), Dopeykar et al. (2017) (M = 4.09), Karim (2020) (M = 4.41), Mansoor (2018), and Abili et al. (2012), all of which reported mean values above 3.0. The study's findings were also in line with those of Anwowie et al. (2015), which found that many students agreed that the assurance of service was high. However, using the study's benchmark of 3.0 as a threshold, the study's results on assurance contradicted the findings of Milojevic and Radosavlievix (2019), whose study recorded a mean value of 2.955, which falls below the study's quality threshold mean value.

Although assurance was of high quality with a mean value above the 3.0 benchmark, it occupied the fourth position in the hierarchical arrangement of the five dimensions. Students also agreed that the quality of assurance was high. This finding contradicts those of Abili et al. (2021), who placed assurance in the third position; Ferahtia (2021), who ranked it second; and Kwan et al. (2020), who found it to be the most critical dimension of service quality.

4.9.1.5 Tangibility dimension of service quality

The analysis of the tangibility dimension of education service quality revealed that it received a mean value of 2.69, indicating a low quality of tangibility. Tangibility fell below the study benchmark for high quality. The question arises is what explains the low quality of tangibility in schools. The first response could be that the government rarely renovates or refurbishes basic public schools. Furthermore, in Ghana, successive governments have focused on improving the quality of basic education by upgrading the curriculum, providing teaching and learning materials,

improving teachers' remuneration and skills, and not on refurbishing basic school infrastructure. Regarding infrastructure, the emphasis is on building new facilities to close the infrastructure gap rather than refurbishing old ones. This explains why most basic school facilities are in poor condition, with some even lacking basic facilities such as toilets.

Using this study benchmark as a yardstick, these findings align with previous studies by Abu Hasan et al. (2008) (M=3.95), Dopeykar et al. (2017), Milojevic and Radosaljevix (2019) (M=3.72, SD=1.23), Abili et al, (2012) (M=2.59), Anwowie et al. (2015), and Mansor (2018) where tangibility was found to be low. On the other hand, these findings contradict the study by Karim (2020), who found the tangibility dimension of service quality to be high in their research.

The variation in this study with other studies can be attributed to the nature of the schools involved (private and public). Private schools are more concerned about their image and brand and pay more attention to their outlook. Additionally, decisions to renovate or refurbish school facilities do not have to go through a lengthy bureaucratic process compared to public schools. In fact, in Ghana, public schools are hardly maintained or refurbished. The differences in geographical location and economic status of the countries involved could also explain the variation in the study findings.

4.9.2 Learners' satisfaction with service quality

The study's findings reveal a noteworthy trend in learners' satisfaction with the overall quality of service delivery. It was observed that, on the whole, students expressed a low level of satisfaction, although certain specific aspects garnered higher ratings. The study, however, did not delve deeper into the factors contributing to this

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lower level of satisfaction regarding the quality of education service delivery. This gap can be addressed by drawing insights from existing literature and empirical studies.

For instance, prior research has identified various factors that may influence the quality of education service delivery, potentially leading to lower satisfaction levels. Notably, Enilo and Ortega's (2022) study reported high levels of student satisfaction with the education they received, with many students even going so far as to recommend the school to their peers and family. This finding contradicts the current study's results, where despite the low satisfaction levels, most students still expressed a willingness to recommend the school to others.

Interestingly, this dichotomy aligns with the findings of Walker (2014) and Mihanvoiv, Batinić, and Pavičić Pavicic (2016), who emphasized that students are more likely to remain loyal to their current school and advocate for it when they are content with the quality of service offered. In the context of this study, it suggests that despite their dissatisfaction, students may still recommend schools due to pro-poor interventions like free tuition and feeding initiatives. This is further substantiated by the comparative affordability of government schools compared to private institutions and their social support programs.

Moreover, Anderson, Fornel, and Lehmann (1994) assert a direct link between student satisfaction and the quality of education service received. In cases where the quality is perceived as low, as seen in this study, a corresponding decrease in learners' satisfaction is to be expected. This correlation supports the current study's findings, where satisfaction and the perceived quality of education service delivery were rated low. Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of tangible elements,

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particularly the condition of school facilities, in shaping student satisfaction. Research by Okpa (2009) affirms a substantial positive correlation between the status of school facilities and student satisfaction.

In summary, it is evident that the low level of tangibility, as measured by the condition of school facilities and infrastructure, plays a pivotal role in influencing students' overall satisfaction. This provides valuable insights into the factors contributing to learners' perceptions of education service delivery and offers a foundation for further analysis and potential interventions to enhance their overall experience.

4.9.3 Learners' gender and satisfaction

There is ongoing debate about whether gender affects customer satisfaction with the quality of services provided to them (Akpoiroro and Okon, 2015; Bowman and Smedly, 2012; Elhadary, 2016; Kristen et al., 2011). To examine the influence of gender on learners' satisfaction with the quality of education, they received an independent samples t-test analysis was conducted. The study result, as presented in Table 9, showed that although females had a higher mean satisfaction score (M=3.21) than males (M=3.03), the mean difference was not statistically significant (t (198) = -1.483, p = .140). This implies no gender difference in learners' satisfaction with the quality of basic education the municipality provides. This suggests that any differences in the mean scores for both groups on the satisfaction of quality service delivery may be due to chance.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies investigating whether gender affects students' satisfaction with their education. These studies include Dirkin, Mishra, and Altermatt (2005); Hong (2002); Mupinga et al. (2006);

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Witkowski (2008); Ilias, Abu Hassan, Rahman, and Yosoa (2008); Carey, Combiano, and De Vore (2002); Strayhorn and Saddler (2009); Tesema et al. (2012); and Mohammed, Hashim, Azer, Hanzah and Khalid (2020). Additionally, the findings of this study contradict studies (showing significant differences) by Akpoiroro and Okon (2015), Perry et al. (2003), Sax, Bryant, and Harper (2005), and Umbach and Porter (2002), which found significant evidence of gender differences in students' satisfaction with education service quality. Studies by Bowman and Smedly (2012), Umbach and Porter (2002), Tesema et al (2012), Souter and McNeil (1996), Joseph (1998), and Ham and Hayduk (2003) also found significant differences between males and females in terms of satisfaction with education service delivery thereby confirming contradiction to this study For example, Umbach and Porter (2002) found significant evidence of gender differences in students' satisfaction with education service quality where male students had a higher and essential level of satisfaction compared to females learners in terms of quality of education.

The fact that learners in this state are not very interested in satisfaction with education services may cause the fact that one's satisfaction is not linked to one's gender. It can also be because the school treated all students equally and without prejudice, providing them the same happiness. Furthermore, the lack of significant differences in the quality of education services can be attributed to the equal opportunities for engagement provided to both male and female learners. This inclusive approach is particularly evident in government schools implementing gender-inclusive programs. These initiatives ensure that both male and female students have equal access and participation in various aspects of education delivery, including participation in extracurricular activities.

Additionally, the non-significant difference in education service delivery highlights the thoughtful curriculum design incorporating various perspectives and experiences. This inclusive approach creates a learning environment that resonates with both male and female students, ultimately leading to comparable levels of satisfaction across the board. Carefully considering diverse viewpoints contributes significantly to the overall educational experience, fostering a sense of inclusivity and satisfaction among all learners.

4.9.4 The effect of service quality dimension on learners' satisfaction

The study aimed to identify which aspects of service quality have an impact on students' satisfaction by examining the ability of each service quality dimension to predict student satisfaction. The findings indicated a statistically significant relationship between the quality of education delivery and students' contentment, implying that the satisfaction of elementary school students is linked to the quality of education services. It is unclear whether this is due to chance or whether all students receive equal treatment in public government schools. It is noteworthy that gender budgeting has not yet been adopted in the government's basic school education policy despite their intentions to do so. This conclusion is supported by previous research by Sureshchandar et al. (2002), Shemwell et al. (1998), Cronin et al. (1992), Veloutsou et al. (2004), Kwan and Ng (1999), Zygiaris et al. (2022),. These studies suggest that junior high school learners prioritize quality, and any change in quality is likely to impact service recipients' responses. Literature to find a reason for this effect was found to be rare. The current study's findings align with Karim's (2020) contention that customer satisfaction depends on the quality of the services they receive, leading to overall satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The following sections provide a

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detailed explanation of how each quality characteristic and learner satisfaction are related**.**

4.9.4.1 Reliability of education service and learner satisfaction

The study also sought to investigate the predictive power of reliability on student satisfaction in selected public schools. In terms of relationship, the study found that reliability has a positive relationship with learners' satisfaction. These findings corroborate the studies by Al-Azzam (2015), Tuan Minah (2012), Abas et al. (2012), and Hanh-Lee (2015). However, after analyzing the data, it was found that the reliability of current education service delivery did not statistically correlate with learners' satisfaction. This implies that despite the high quality, learners did not perceive teachers' ability to deliver an assured and precise service as significant enough to influence their satisfaction level. This is interesting because high reliability is expected to cause a significant change in learners' satisfaction.

One possible explanation is that public elementary school teachers are negatively perceived as not being good at delivering their tasks, which may result in the quality and reliability of their work not being recognized or appreciated. Another possible explanation is that the study benchmark was insufficient to generate a statistically significant effect. Further studies are needed to investigate why high levels of reliability do not translate into significant effects on student satisfaction. Also, a follow-up study can be conducted with a higher benchmark to test the situation again. It could be that the priority of these basic school learners is not education or that their happiness is more related to entertainment than education.

The study's finding that responsiveness has no statistical effect on learner satisfaction contradicts previous studies by scholars such as Al-Azzam (2015), Tuan Minah (2012), Abbas et al. (2012), Hanh-lee (2015), and Zygiaris et al. (2022), who

found reliability to have a significant impact on learner satisfaction. However, these findings support research by Sultan et al. (2016) and Milojevic and Radosavljevic (2019), which revealed no relationship between dependability and learners' satisfaction.

4.9.4.2 Responsiveness and learners' satisfaction

Table 12 revealed that responsiveness, which concerns teachers' willingness to provide prompt and helpful service to students, was positively related to student satisfaction. However, it was not found to be significant after analyzing the data, indicating that high levels of responsiveness did not predict students' satisfaction. This raises concerns about the reasons for this outcome, such as the government's or parents' lack of efforts to emphasize the importance of education. It is possible that people's disillusionment with the educational system or parents' lack of care for their children's education could also explain the results. As public confidence in education declines and education service delivery becomes unappreciated, the meaning of the adage "education is the key" is slowly eroding.

The findings of this study support the results of other studies, such as those by Sultan et al. (2016) and Milojevic and Radosavljevic (2019), which also found no statistically significant relationship between responsiveness and learners' satisfaction. These findings are consistent with studies by Al-Azzam (2015), Tuan Minah (2012), Abbas et al. (2012), Hanh-lee (2015), and Zygiaris et al. (2022), who found reliability to have a positive and significant effect on satisfaction.

4.9.4.3 Empathy and learners' satisfaction with the quality of education service received

The study aimed to investigate the effect of empathy on learners' satisfaction with the education services they receive. Empathy refers to how caring, concerned, and attentive teachers are to students' educational needs. After the analysis, the results showed that although empathy was positively related to learners' satisfaction with education services received, this relationship was not significant. This means that the high quality of empathy recorded in the school did not significantly influence students' satisfaction with the education services received. Further studies are needed to determine what could account for this. This finding is consistent with studies by Sultana et al. (2016) and Milojevic and Radosavljevix (2019), which found that the empathy dimension is statistically insignificant with satisfaction.

Further investigation into this situation found that it could be due to public school learners having little concern for education and the negative perception that teachers in public basic schools do not give their best compared to teachers from private schools regarding quality education services. This lack of appreciation on the part of learners in basic public schools means that, although they receive high levels of empathy from their teachers, they cannot translate it into satisfaction. Another reason is that, despite the high level of empathy, the many challenges associated with government schools cloud learners' minds, preventing them from enjoying the education services provided. Further studies on the relationship between the quality of education and student satisfaction, as well as the moderating role of types of schools (private or public), will help to shed light on this issue.

Comparative analysis of these findings with other studies reveals that this study's results contradict studies by Al-Azzam (2015), Tuan Minah (2012), Hanh-lee

(2015), Zygiaris et al. (2022), and Abass et al. (2012), which found a positive significant effect between empathy and learners' satisfaction with education services received. Furthermore, the study contradicts studies by Mashenene (2019), which saw a negative relationship between empathy and satisfaction.

4.9.4.4 Assurance and learners' satisfaction

In addition to the above-discussed quality dimension, the study further sought to determine the predictive strength of assurance on learners' satisfaction. Assurance per the study measured school teachers' ability to give students accurate and reliable information to instill confidence in them. Quality assurance dimension was revealed to significantly correlate with learners' satisfaction (P>0/002). The assurance dimension of quality of education is positively related to learners' satisfaction. The fact that these learners are teenagers highlights the importance of confidence to them in their academic path. This further demonstrated how teacher assurance might encourage students to study in class, given that student satisfaction is greatly influenced by how professors reassure them of their academic progress.

Also, assurance being significant to a large extent can be explained by Ghanaian parents' desire for assurance when making school-related decisions for their children. Parents of elementary school students are highly concerned about trust, and kids are happier when they can trust someone. The significant nature of assurance also implies that assurance-related items, which address students' confidence and trust in teachers and how student complaints and questions are handled confidentially, acknowledged, and respectively, are highly practiced in selected schools. Studies by Al-Azzam (2015), Hanh-lee (2015), and Tuan Minah (2012) similarly indicated a significant positive relationship between certainty and learners' happiness in their

studies, which were found to support this study. A study by Sultana et al. (2016), a study by Abbas et al. (2012), and a study by Milojevic and Radosavljevix (2019) indicated that assurance did not significantly link to student satisfaction is in direct opposition to this study.

4.9.4.5 Tangibility dimension of service quality

The tangibility (school physical facilities, nostril level, teaching material, and school personnel appearance) recorded a mean value of 2.69, indicating a low tangibility quality. According to the analysis of the tangibility dimension, the quality of education service fell short of the standards set for high-quality service in the study. Regarding basic education in Ghana over the years, successive governments have focused on improving quality by updating curricula, providing teaching and learning material, improving teachers' pay and skills, and not on infrastructure. This raises the question of what accounts for the low quality of tangibility in the schools. The first response could be that the government hardly renovates or refurbishes basic public schools when it comes to infrastructure. The focus is on developing new facilities rather than renovating existing ones to fill the infrastructure gap. This explains why most elementary schools' facilities are in poor shape, with some lacking basic amenities like restrooms and urinals.

Using this study as the yardstick, this finding is consistent with research by Abu Hasan et al. (2008) (M = 3.95), Dopeykar et al. (2017), Milojevic and Radosaljevix (2019) (M = 3.72, SD = 1.23), Abili et al. (2012) (M = 2.59), Anwowie et al. (2015), and Mansor (2018), where the tangibility component of service quality was not agreed to be high but relatively low. On the other hand, this study's findings disagree with those of Karim (2020), who concluded that it was high in their study. In

Ghana, public schools are hardly ever updated or maintained. Disparities in the countries may also explain the discrepancy in study results involving' economic and geographic standing.

4.9.5 Teachers' response to support services received from the municipality

The study further investigated the support the district education office provides to schools to ensure quality education service delivery. Findings show that concerning the inspection role in the municipality, most teachers believed that the district education service sometimes visits the school's Education office to assess how teachers teach in the class. This suggests that teacher evaluations are not a routine practice in all cases, but they do happen to some extent.

Furthermore, more respondents believed that the district education officer sometimes inspects the condition and availability of teachers and learning materials. However, regarding the municipal education office ensuring the school provides tuition exactly at the allocated time, most respondent teachers said this was done regularly but not often. Regarding inspection items, very few teachers are found to be done frequently.

The study's findings shed light on District Education Officers (DEOs) performance in their monitoring roles within the education system. Specifically, it was revealed that many respondent teachers described the DEO's performance as poor when it comes to monitoring teachers' performance after training and capacity building. Strikingly, none received an "Excellent" rating, indicating significant room for improvement in this facet of the DEO's responsibilities. Following this, the respondents also characterized the DEO's performance as moderately good and good, albeit to a lesser extent.

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Moreover, within the realm of monitoring, most teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the DEO's role in ensuring an adequate number of textbooks per pupil. Once again, none of them received an "Excellent" rating in this aspect, signaling a pressing need for improvement. This deficiency suggests that the district may not give adequate attention to guaranteeing that the required textbooks per pupil are sufficient.

Conversely, concerning the district's role in ensuring qualified teachers are available, the study's findings indicate that DEOs are generally influential. Many respondents described the DEO's performance as good, signifying their competence in ensuring teachers' qualifications. However, it's worth noting that some respondents expressed the DEO's performance as moderately poor, indicating that there is still room for enhancement.

In the context of the DEO's role in monitoring to maintain the appropriate number of learners per class, a notable portion of sampled teachers regarded this performance as moderately poor. On the positive side, a good number of respondents viewed it as good. This divergence in perception suggests that while there is room for improvement, the DEO's effectiveness in maintaining the desired number of learners per class is recognized to some extent.

In summary, the study underscores the need for DEOs to focus on enhancing their monitoring role, especially in areas where their performance is perceived as lacking, such as ensuring an adequate number of textbooks per pupil and maintaining the appropriate number of learners per class. At the same time, it acknowledges the DEOs' effectiveness in ensuring teacher qualifications and highlights the areas where

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their performance is viewed positively. This information can serve as a basis for targeted improvements and policy adjustments in the education system.

The study's findings have unveiled an interesting perspective on the roles and responsibilities of the district in promoting quality education service delivery. Notably, the majority of respondents viewed the district's supportive role in ensuring quality education through in-service training programs as excellent and good. Furthermore, in the realm of lesson demonstration, many teachers described the district's supportive role as excellent.

However, when it comes to peer learning organization, the sentiment among teachers was rather critical, with the majority characterizing the district's role as poor. This suggests a notable disparity in perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the district's efforts in promoting peer learning among educators.

In providing teaching and learning materials, the district education officer's role garnered appreciation from most teachers, who rated it as excellent. Nonetheless, it is important to note that while the majority had a favorable view of this role, the number of respondents was not extensive enough to imply a strong consensus across the entire respondent group.

A similar situation can be observed in the case of the district's organization of peer learning. While some teachers regarded it favorably, it's evident that the level of enthusiasm or conviction was not uniform across all respondents.

In summary, the study's findings showcase a positive perception of the district's roles in certain aspects of education, such as in-service training and lesson demonstrations. However, there is room for improvement in areas like peer learning organization, and it's crucial to acknowledge that the level of endorsement for specific

roles may vary among respondents. These insights provide valuable feedback for the district's education officers and can inform future strategies to enhance the quality of education service delivery.

Among the respondents, the majority attested that inspections to evaluate the performance of school heads occur 'Sometimes.' This insight unveils that the assessment of school head performance is a more prevalent practice than teacher assessments, although it has not yet reached a state of universality.

Furthermore, a substantial number (44) of respondents reported that these inspections occur 'Regularly but not often.' This suggests that assessing school head performance is a recurring practice, albeit not daily or weekly, indicating a consistent effort to monitor and improve their effectiveness. In contrast, a notably small number (3) of respondents indicated that these inspections occur 'Often.' This shows that frequently assessing school head performance is relatively rare, suggesting that it might be considered more of an exception than the norm in the overall assessment process.

In summary, the study highlights the varying frequency of inspections conducted to assess the performance of school heads. While most respondents indicated that these assessments occur 'Sometimes,' a significant portion reported them as happening 'Regularly but not often.' The small number of respondents who mentioned these inspections happening 'Often' emphasizes that frequent assessments of school head performance are relatively uncommon in the broader context. These findings provide valuable insights into the current practices and areas for potential improvement in the oversight and administrative processes within schools and will give you some information.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0   Overview

This section of the research report gives a summary of the research. It provides useful advice for improving unfavorable outcomes in light of the study's findings. It also provides information on the summary of the study, explores its ramifications, and offers solutions. The study's findings are included in this part as well. The summary version condenses the entire research report and highlights the key objectives and findings.

5.1   Study Summary

The study examined the quality of education service delivery to learners in Ga-East Municipal basic school using the SERVQUAL Theoretical model. The study was guided by five (5) objectives, which are (1) assess the quality of education service delivered to basic school learners in the municipality, (2) find out the student level of satisfaction with the quality of education service delivered to them in the municipality (3) find out if there is a gender difference in learners' satisfaction with the quality of education service (4) examine the predictive strength of each of the service quality dimensions on learner satisfaction in the municipality and (5) examined teacher's perception of the municipal education office roles or support they provide in ensuring quality of education service delivery. This quantitative study was conducted using a descriptive survey design. A sample of 300 respondents comprised of 200 students and 100 teachers, were chosen from selected government schools within the Ga-East municipality and were given questionnaires to complete. The study's data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 software. Simple frequencies, percentages, mean,

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standard deviation, an independent sample t-test, and multiple regression were the statistical tools used to analyze the data.

5.2   Key Findings

The quality of education service delivery results showed that the highest quality dimension/subscale was responsiveness, followed by reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibility, respectively. All dimensions of the service, except tangibility, exceeded the study's cut-off or benchmark value of 3.00. This means that all dimensions recorded high quality, except the tangibility dimension.

The study also analyzed the learners' level of satisfaction with education service delivery, which recorded an average mean of 2.99 and a standard deviation of 1.45, suggesting that learners have a low level of satisfaction with the quality of education service delivery in basic schools in the Ga-East Municipality.

An independent samples t-test revealed that males and females do not differ statistically in their reported satisfaction levels with service quality in the municipality. The findings suggest that the difference in the mean scores for both groups (male and Female) was due to chance.

Furthermore, the study found that out of the five dimensions presented, only two dimensions, tangibility and assurance, were statistically significant to student satisfaction. Both dimensions had a positive relationship with student satisfaction.

The study also revealed that more teachers receive support from the municipal office in terms of inspection, supervision, and supporting role in ensuring the quality of education service delivery in the municipality.

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5.3   Conclusion

Although the overall quality of education was found to be high, the study's benchmark assessment of each dimension of service quality revealed that, except for tangibility, which was low, all other dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance) recorded a high level of quality. These findings revealed the crucial contributions of tangibility in enhancing service quality. When school buildings are not conducive enough for learning, the environment is too noisy, and teaching and learning resources are inadequate, students' performance will continue to be low.

Learners' level of satisfaction with the quality of education service received was found to be low, with some students expressing disappointment with their academic progress. It is concluded that the learners in low-performing schools are not satisfied with the total service quality provided by their schools. It is concluded that the inadequacy of the tangibility dimension of service quality could contribute to the students' overall perception of satisfaction with service delivery in the municipality.

Analysis to determine whether there is a gender difference in students' satisfaction with the quality of the service in sampled public schools showed that this was not the case. As a result, both male and female students have comparable satisfaction levels with the service they received. It is concluded that the quality of education service delivery is not gender specific. Perhaps the service quality is seen as an intervention enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4).

The quality of the education service does, in general, impact student satisfaction, according to an attempt to forecast how the service quality component will affect student satisfaction. As a result, a learner's satisfaction is likely to be high when the quality of the education service is appropriately supplied, and vice versa.

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However, a detailed investigation of how each of the five factors affects students' pleasure revealed that only the tangible factors—school architecture, atmosphere, surroundings, and teachers' appearance—had no bearing on students' contentment.

A survey of teachers' thoughts on the support provided to the sample basic schools by the municipal education office to support a quality study produced contradictory results. Firstly, most educators believed that the municipal office rarely performed inspectional duties in sampled schools. Secondly, the district office's effectiveness as supervisors received generally positive reviews from the instructors as well, with more teachers saying that the district office did a mediocre job of overseeing schools, but they thought it did a great job of improving educational quality.

5.4   Recommendations for the Study

5.4.1   Low tangibility of service quality

Adverse findings in the analysis of the quality of education service delivery showed that tangibility related to infrastructural and school environment was found to be low or lacking in sampled schools. The study's findings also have important implications for how schools are managed because they show how well-managed the sampled government schools are. In some ways, it demonstrates the critical need for school management to pay attention to putting proactive and savvy school management practices in place to handle the problem. Based on the study findings, changes in school management practice are recommended; thus school administrators and education authorities in the Ga-East municipality are admonished to take tangibility and assurance management of their service delivery seriously as it can

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affect student satisfaction with the quality of education service being delivered to learners in the municipality.

Additionally, the researcher recommends that the chosen schools with poor tangibility, which indicates an unpleasant learning environment and negative municipal policies, prioritize investing in significant infrastructure upgrades even when few interventions have been made. This could involve establishing well-designed, secure, and practical buildings, playgrounds, libraries, and laboratories. To improve the learning environment, adequate seating, lighting, ventilation, and restrooms should be offered.

Also, the study suggests that regular repairs of the fundamental school infrastructure can address the low level of tangibility: Assuring that repairs, restorations, and cleaning are carried out promptly, effectively, and regularly will assist in maintaining the physical appearance and functionality of the schools and foster a healthy learning environment.

Furthermore, there should be adequate technology integration: schools should embrace technology to enhance the tangibility of their schools where school authorities such as the government (thought the Ministry of Education), Ga-East municipal Assembly, and school administrators are to provide computer labs or laptops for students, interactive whiteboards or projectors in classrooms, and internet connectivity to help enrich teaching methods, improve access to information, and foster digital literacy among learners.

Again, teachers should ensure a proper classroom layout by ensuring that classroom furniture and equipment are arranged to promote good sound propagation and reduce noise interference.

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It is also essential for school administrators to assess the specific noise sources in their schools and tailor solutions accordingly by consulting with acoustical experts or professionals in school facility design to seek their expert advice and provide further guidance that can help the school reduce its noise level.

Additionally, improving the educational environment can correct the poor tangibility noted under objective one. This requires the school to maintain green areas and school gardens. By establishing gardens, planting trees, or building outdoor leisure areas, school administrators can encourage environmental awareness and sustainability among students while also providing students with calming retreats on the school grounds.

Finally, tangibility can be improved by planning events, seminars, and parent-teacher association meetings to promote participation. This study suggests that school administrators, headteachers, and teachers should develop connections between the school, parents, and the local community. Volunteerism and support can help increase the school's palpability. Additionally, using this strategy, the already high dimensions observed for the other four dimensions will remain stable.

5.4.2 Enhancing satisfaction with the quality of education service received by learners

The low level of learners' satisfaction with the quality of the education services received prompted a swift change in management practices to proactive and strategic management practices, which have the potential to improve management practices by increasing learner satisfaction with service quality. Regarding the low level of satisfaction, school authorities of the chosen schools are advised to use measures like:

5.4.2.1 Parental engagement

To address the lack of learner satisfaction with the quality of the education services they received. The involvement of parents is necessary. The PTA at the schools can encourage parents to get involved in their children's education. Parents should be urged to assist and support their children's academic endeavors. At all costs, parents should refrain from insulting their children when they fall short of expectations. Instead, they should insist on using positive language and encouraging their children.

5.4.2.2 Personalized learning approaches

Personalized learning strategies should be implemented to cater to individual student needs and strengths. Also, the Provision of differentiated instructions, allowing students to learn at their own pace and level, is necessary to increase learners' satisfaction.

5.4.2.3 Enrichment programs and opportunities

Various extracurricular activities such as clubs (debates, etc.) and enrichment programs should be available, including enrichment programs and opportunities to cater to varied interests and skills. This effort by school heads and administrators will allow learners to expand their knowledge, discover new interests and potentials, and engage them in activities outside of the classroom, hence increasing their satisfaction level.

5.4.2.4 Celebrate achievements and progress

Honoring and celebrating students' academic and extracurricular accomplishments will be needed to increase the satisfaction level of learners. Establish

a method for rewarding hard work, growth, and admirable behavior. To increase kids' self-confidence and self-esteem, publicly display their efforts and accomplishments.

5.4.2.5 Clear communication and expectations along with regular evaluation and feedback system

Establish clear and consistent communication channels between teachers, learners, and parents. Communicate expectations, classroom rules, and academic goals. Regularly update parents on their learners' progress and provide opportunities for parent-teacher conferences. This should be implemented along with regular evaluations and added feedback systems put in place by the schools. They should also regularly evaluate and assess themselves, take the feedback they receive, and utilize it to guide their decision-making and make the required adjustments per the feedback.

Regarding students regretting to attend school and others expressing dissatisfaction with their academic performance respectively, it is recommended that the supportive teacher-learner relationship should be encouraged to seek solid teacher-learner relationships built on trust, respect, and empathy. Teachers should actively listen to learners, provide constructive feedback, and offer guidance and support. Foster a sense of belonging and create a safe space for learners to share their thoughts and concerns.

The ability of the schools to implement the chosen recommended management practices is necessary to put the current management of the schools in an influential position to ensure that students enjoy the learning environment.

5.4.3 Gender and learners' satisfaction

The survey results demonstrated no difference in the degree of satisfaction between male and female students with the services they received. This discovery has

ramifications for how particular schools are run because it requires school administration to fill the gaps by implementing this study's recommendation. The following suggestions are provided for the administration of specific schools:

5.4.3.1 Institution of gender-sensitive awareness and training programs

Despite the study's conclusion that there is no statistically significant gender difference in learners' satisfaction with the quality of basic education in the municipality, it is still crucial to implement a workforce development program for teachers and non-teaching staff in sampled schools to make sure they have the knowledge and abilities to manage a variety of student populations. These gender-sensitive workshops are designed to support educators in understanding the importance of treating all learners fairly and comprehending other points of view and cultural sensitivity. By fostering a climate of tolerance and sensitivity, institutions can enhance the overall learning environment for learners.

The study also recommends that gender-sensitive initiatives and interventions to improve girls' satisfaction with education services should not be a concern of selected school management as both males and females tend to have no difference in their level of satisfaction with education services being received. Regarding the present need for gender equality in education. These particular schools shouldn't be too close together. The resource can be shifted to other areas to help improve the quality of education service delivery in the school.

5.4.4   Quality of education service delivery impact on learners' satisfaction

Based on the study's findings, which indicated that only tangibility out of the five dimensions had no bearing on students' happiness, it may be concluded that the

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other four dimensions are also relevant. This helps leadership determine which areas of the sampled schools to concentrate on to affect student satisfaction.

First, since the analysis showed that assurance affects students' satisfaction, it follows that efforts to ensure that students are happy with the quality of the school's educational program should consider assurance methods. If school leaders wish to modify how satisfied students are with the quality of their education, it is advised that they concentrate on assurance measures. Focusing on the assurance dimension to change students' satisfaction with their education requires school leadership to maintain a positive and inclusive school climate. Fostering a positive, welcoming, and secure educational environment for all of the students. The head in charge should encourage cooperative behavior, peer support, and positive behavior. They should also develop and enforce anti-bullying policies to ensure a nurturing environment for learners.

Secondly, to increase student happiness through assurance elements, it is advised that the school's administration prioritize students' emotional well-being by offering counseling services, giving mental health assistance, and supporting social-emotional learning initiatives. Teachers and staff members should be taught to identify and respond to learners' emotional needs and provide opportunities for open conversation and expression. This service will increase learners' trust and confidence so they may enjoy the learning environment and give it their all.

Given that current responsiveness factors were also discovered to have a significant impact on student satisfaction, it follows that the sampled schools' leadership can increase students' satisfaction with the standard of their education by altering the responsiveness components in the institution. Therefore, the focus of school leadership must be on maintaining and even enhancing the current

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responsiveness measures in place. For instance, the headteacher or the school administration might ensure that teachers show up promptly for class when it is their turn to teach, respond promptly to students' questions, notify students of important announcements, or promptly address their questions. These elements make up the responsiveness dimension of education service quality. Since it was shown that they substantially impacted student happiness, the school should develop and enhance them to sustain it.

5.4.5 Improving District Education Officers' Role in Ensuring Quality Education in the Municipality

Concerning the recommendation for the Municipal Education Office's occasional or irregular visits to schools, the Ministry of Education should come out with a mandatory number of times that the Municipal Education Officer should undertake this duty in a month. The execution of this task can even possibly be tied to salary or some level of compensation to encourage the municipal education officer to take it seriously.

Also, the district office's moderately poor performance needs to be improved. To improve this situation, the district, as supervisors, should be up and doing and attach seriousness in discharging their duties. Regarding the district education performance regarding monitoring schools, more teachers rated the district office's performance as moderately good. They thought the district office's performance in boosting educational quality was excellent. Furthermore, something needs to be done regarding teachers' moderately good performance regarding the monitoring activities roles.

Implementing these recommendations, basic schools in Ga- East Municipal can enhance the tangibility and learners' satisfaction in their schools and school facilities, creating an environment conducive to learning, safety, and the overall development of the learners.

5.5   Suggestions for Further Studies

This study investigated the quality of education service delivery to learners of the Ga-East Municipal using the SERVQUAL Theoretical Model. However, this study suggests that further research is needed to investigate the quality of education service delivery using other models, such as SERRVPERF. The study further suggests that future research investigates if there is a difference in student satisfaction according to their religion and ethnicity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Introductory Letter

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
P.O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana   deam@uew.edu.gh

UEW/EAM/INT/27

Date:21ST JUNE, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We write to introduce **Enerstina Domie(202145013)**, a student on the M.Phil in Educational Administration and Management programme of the Department of Educational Administration and Management.

Enerstina Domie is currently working on a research project titled:

"ASSSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF STUDENTS IN SERVICE IN GA-EAST MUNICIPAL BASIC SCHOOLS USING SERVQUAL MODEL".

Please, give her the necessary assistance and co-operation.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Bampo (PhD)
Ag. Head of Department

www.uew.edu.gh

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Students

Dear student, kindly respond to the following question. There are **no** right or wrong answers to these questions**. Kindly respond to them as you w**ish**. This** document **is for academic** purposes **and no one will hold you responsible for what you tick on this paper.**
Section A
Respondents Demographics
Please answer the following questions as it applies to you. (Circle the right answer)

Q1. Age………………………………………….

Q2. Gender: 1. Male   2.   Female

SECTION B. Assessing Quality of Education Services

Reliability (the ability to deliver the assured service precisely and reliably). **of education service delivery in your school.**
Please tick the correct answer. 1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Moderately Agree   4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

		1	2	3	4	5
Q3.	The kind of tuition provided by the school is exactly what they promised					
Q4	School show genuine and sincere interest in resolving my academic issues					
Q5.	You can get in touch with any teacher for assistance and it will be provided					
Q6.	Schools provide tuition exactly the time as promised on the timetable					

Responsiveness (intention to assist students and provide prompt services.) of education service delivery
Please tick the correct answer-1 Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree 3. Moderately Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

		1	2	3	4	5
Q7.	Teachers come to class immediately it's their time to teach					
Q8	Teachers respond to student questions promptly					
Q9	School authorities respond to student enquiry swiftly.					
Q10	Importance announcements are quickly relayed to students					

Empathy (understanding and addressing the needs and emotions of students) **of education service delivery in your school.**
Please tick the correct answer- 1 Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Moderately Agree   4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

		1	2	3	4	5
Q11.	Teaching and non-teaching staff exhibit patients when handling my complaints.					

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Q12.	Individual attention is given to students					
Q13.	Students are handled in a very careful way					
Q14.	Students' interests are the school's priorities					

Assurance (measures put in place to ensure that students receive valuable education service deliver**).**

Please tick the correct answer. 1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree 3. Moderately Agree
4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Q15.	I have high confidence in your teachers					
Q16	Teachers are knowledgeable enough to respond to my questions					
Q17	Teaching staff are trustworthy					
Q18	Complainants/Issues received by my school authorities are treated with confidentiality					

Tangibility (physical facilities, personnel appearance and equipment.**) of school education service delivery**

Please tick the correct answer. 1 Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Moderately Agree   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Q19	The school buildings are conducive to learning					
Q20	Employees and teachers present themselves in an appropriate manner for their position. e.g. dressing, appearance					
Q21	Noise levels in the school are low					
Q22	The school have adequate teaching and learning equipment. e.g. maths equipment, library, laboratory, ICT lab					

SECTION C: Student Satisfaction

Please tick the correct answer. 1 Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree 3. Moderately Agree   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Q23	I am pleased with my academic achievement					
Q24	I regret being a student at this school					
Q25	This school has met all my expectations					
Q26	I will recommend this school to others					

THANK YOU!!!

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear teacher, kindly respond to the following questions. There are no correct or wrong answers to these questions. Kindly respond to them as you wish. This document is for academic purposes and no one will hold you responsible for what you tick on this paper**.**

SECTION A:

Respondents Demographics

Please answer the following questions as it applies to you. (Circle the right answer)

Q1. Age…………………………………………….

Q2. Religion   1. Christians   2. Muslims   3. Traditionalist
4. Others

Q3. Gender   1 Male   2.   Female

Q4. Years of practicing as a teacher....

Q5. Qualification

1. SHS   2. Certificate   3. Diploma   4. Degree   5. Masters

SECTION B:

Teacher's perception of Municipals' Education Service's support for Quality Education

Inspection- An inspection visit may be concerned either with the operation of the school or with the performance of the principal and teachers
Kindly rate   the "inspection   role" of the municipals' education in support of quality basic education in your school as:
1. Not at all   2. Sometimes   3. Regularly but not Often   4. Often

	Inspection role of the Municipal Education Office	1	2	3	4
Q8.	Inspection visits to assess how teachers teach in class				
Q9	Inspection to assess the performance of school heads				
Q10.	Inspection of the condition and availability of teaching and learning materials				
Q11.	Municipal Education Office ensures the school provides tuition exactly at the allocated time on the timetable.				

Supervision- is an interpersonal process in which the skilled overseer or supervisor helps the less skilled practitioner in relation to his/her professional growth as well as his/her personal growth (Barber and Norman, 1987; Carroll, 1996; Fowler, 1999; Holloway, 1995; Page and Wosket, 1994; Van Ooijen, 2000)

Please rate the supervision responsibility role as :1. Very Poor   2.Poor 3. Moderately 4. Good 5. Excellent

	Supervision work of the Municipal Education Office	1	2	3	4	5
Q14.	Staff Development					
Q15	Instructional Strategies					
Q16	Curriculum Decisions					
Q17	Assessment and Evaluation					

Monitoring - continuous process of assessing, evaluating, and controlling the performance of an individual or a group of individuals to identify strengths and weaknesses and formulate practical proposals for action to be taken (de Grauwe & Carron, 2007)

Kindly rate the monitoring role provided by the district education office in supporting quality education as:

1. Very Poor   2. Poor 3. Moderately 4. Good 5. Excellent

	Monitoring activities of the Municipal Education Office	1	2	3	4	5
Q18.	Monitoring of teacher's performance after training/capacity building					
Q20.	The number of required textbooks per pupil is adequate					
Q21.	Monitoring to ensure teachers are qualified for the job					
Q22.	Monitoring ensures the number of pupils per class is intact					

Support- Support is used to define the assistance that is given by district officials in improving the teachers' teaching methods and strategies (.)

Kindly rate the support role provided by the district education office in supporting quality education as:

- Very Poor   2. Poor 3. Moderately 4. Good 5. Excellent

	Support	1	2	3	4	5
Q23.	Demonstration lessons,					
Q24	In-service training programmes					
Q25	Organization of peer-learning					
Q26	Provision of teaching and learning materials					

THANK YOU!!!

APPENDIX D

Simple Proportion of Student to be selected from Each School

Low-performing schools selected.	Total form 3 final year students in each school	Simple proportional size from each school	Actual sample size used for the study
1.	56	25	25
2.	49	21.875	22
3.	47	20.98214286	21
4.	52	23.21428571	23
5.	38	16.96428571	17
6.	46	20.53571429	21
7.	45	20.08928571	20
8	32	14.28571429	14
9.	29	12.94642857	13
10.	54	24.107142866	24
Total:	448	200	200

APPENDIX E

Introductory Letter from Ghana Education Services

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the
number and date of this
letter should be quoted

My Ref. No. **GES/GEM/**

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MUNICIPAL EDUCATION OFFICE
GA EAST MUNICIPALITY
P. O. BOX AK 91.
ABOKOBI.

Phone: +233-0302938954

24th August, 2022

DISTRIBUTION:
ALL PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOL HEADS

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

This is to introduce to you Enerstina Domie, a graduate student, an MPhil student with the department of Educational Administration and Management at University of Education, Winneba.

She wishes to conduct a research in your school on the topic **'Assessment of quality of students in service in Ga-East Municipal Basic Schools using Servqual Model'**

Permission has been granted to enable her conduct a research in schools within the Municipality.

Please assist her to undertake her research.

Make sure she does not engage the students during instructional hours.

Thank you.

....
MR. WINFRIED ADDAE (HR)
FOR MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
GA EAST - ABOKOBI