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**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND SERVICE  
QUALITY IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA**



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## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND SERVICE QUALITY IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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### ABSTRACT:

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to compare the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality between public and private universities in Kenya.

**Methodology:** The methodology of this study comprised of descriptive and causal research designs. The target population was 2,475 teaching staff in the 23 chartered public and 17 chartered private universities in Kenya. Sample size comprised of 225 teaching staff in the business program in two chartered public and two chartered private universities in Kenya. The collected questionnaires were 189 (Public 75, Private 114) which resulted in a response rate of 84%.

**Findings:** The study findings showed that, in universities in Kenya, there was a significant difference in means of Organizational Culture between public (mean=3.60, p-value=0.000<0.05) and private (mean=4.13, p-value=0.000<0.05), with private universities having a higher mean. The study findings showed that, in universities in Kenya, there was a significant difference in means of Service Quality between public (mean=3.68, p-value=0.000<0.05) and private (mean=4.18, p-value=0.000<0.05), with private universities having a higher mean. The findings also showed that Organizational Culture has a positive, significant relationship with Service Quality in both public ( $r=0.649$ , p-value=0.000<0.05) and private ( $r=0.587$ , p-value=0.000<0.05) universities, where the relationship was stronger in public universities compared to private universities. Organizational Culture has a significant influence on Service Quality in Public universities ( $r^2=0.421$ ) and in Private universities ( $r^2=0.345$ ). The study concluded that there is indeed a significant, positive relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in both public and private universities in Kenya. The Study also concluded that Organizational Culture was a significant predictor of Service Quality in both public and private universities in Kenya.

**Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy:** This study made an outstanding contribution to theory by validating use of systems theory of management. The study also contributed greatly to theory by showing a significant relationship between Organizational Culture (using DOCS) and Service

Quality (using SERVQUAL) as measurement instruments in public and private universities in Kenya. This study recommended that leadership in public universities needs to emulate the culture in private universities so that there is higher service Quality for the students. Also, leadership in private universities need to improve on how they use their strong and positive organizational culture to deliver Service quality to its students amidst the unique challenges they face.

**Keywords:** *Organizational Culture, Service Quality, Public universities, Private universities*

## INTRODUCTION

Organizational Culture is useful in understanding and describing organizational life while influencing employee behaviour and attitudes at the organizational, team and individual levels (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013; Hartnell, Ou, & Angelo, 2011). Organizations which have a strong and positive culture are able to create an enabling work environment where employees develop, grow, innovate and operate at their full potential thus responding better to change (Robbins & Judge, 2012). Various scholars show that for an organization to have a strong and powerful competitive advantage within the business environment, Service Quality is vital (Givarian, Samani, Ghorbani, & Samani, 2013).

In spite of this assertion, Service Quality has not been given the necessary attention by organizations (Al-Ibrahim, 2014). This is worrying since Service Quality in an organization is measured not only by the result but also by the delivery process and the actual service, especially in universities (Tsoukatos, 2014). Organizational Culture focuses on the soft management of human capital while also helping to provide stability to an organization and representing a much higher level of analysis (Ko, 2014; Siriram, 2012; Hartnell, Ou, & Angelo, 2011). Therefore, Organizational Culture is an important concept to consider in enhancing Service Quality.

Since universities are operating in extremely challenging and dynamic environments, attaining excellence and enhancing Service Quality provides a huge competitive advantage thus helping universities to set themselves apart from their competitors (Chong & Ahmed, 2015; Arif, Ilyas, & Hameed, 2013; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2012). A well-planned, well-maintained, positive, consistent and long-term Organizational Culture enhances stable and sustainable Service Quality that is in line with university's business objectives (Botha, 2016; Jo Ey, & Yazdanifard, 2014).

## Statement of the Problem

Public and Private universities are operating in a dynamic business environment and highlight the need for public universities to inculcate Organizational Cultures that will help them to achieve their goals. Rono and Kiptum (2017) add that since services offered by both public and private universities in Kenya are similar, there is a need to create an Organizational Culture that assists the university to remain competitive so that the students are satisfied with Service Quality delivered. The focus on providing quality service to students has become a critical point for public and private universities (Commission for University Education, 2016) especially since these students are primary consumers as well as informed customers. Public and Private universities have been challenged to become more flexible, responsive and efficient (Odero, 2017). This study therefore sought to compare the relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in public and private universities in Kenya.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical framework

This study was grounded on the Systems theory of Management which views an organization as a set of distinct, inter-dependent and internal subsystems which need to be continually aligned and coordinated in the process of producing outcomes (Weihrich, 2013). The interdependencies in organizations can effortlessly become complicated that a simple occurrence in one subsystem may result in weighty, unplanned outcomes in some other areas in the organization. An organization depends on its outside circumstances which are a part of an extensive system, for example the industry where it operates, the national economy and the society at large (Chikere & Nwoka, 2015).

In this study, Denison's Organizational Culture model and SERVQUAL model provide a systems approach that results in effectiveness of organizations (universities) are in a great position to satisfy needs of their customers (students). In that process, the systems approach also identifies sectors in the organization (university) that require enhancement, the inter-relations within university staff (mainly teaching staff). Internal design of sub-systems (Faculty/Schools) promote successful operations thus ensuring that universities operate effectively in the higher education industry.

### Organizational Culture

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

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

*Consistency dimension* supplies a core source of consensus where the focal point is on a shared perspective and beliefs and a common assortment of management concepts. Consistency dimension has three features namely core values, agreement and coordination & integration. Organizations that encourage participation of their members will exhibit higher levels of the *Involvement* dimension. *Involvement* dimension has three features namely empowerment, team orientation, and capability development. *Mission dimension* emphasizes employees' understanding the organization's mission allowing leadership of an organization to mold present behavior by imagining a chosen anticipated position. *Mission dimension* has three features namely vision, strategic direction & intent and goals & objectives. *Adaptability dimension* is the organization's ability to make adjustments internally as a reaction to circumstances that happen outside the organization. *Adaptability dimension* has three features namely creating change, customer focus and organizational learning (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2014).



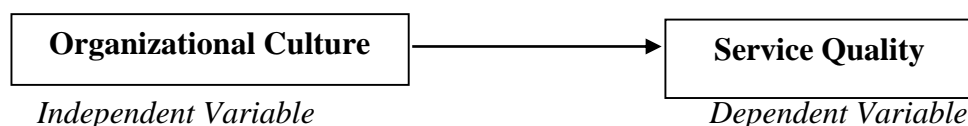
## Service Quality

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

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

## Relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality

Despite the assertion of the importance of Service Quality, there has not been adequate attention by organizations (Al-Ibrahim, 2014). This is worrying since Service Quality in an organization has traditionally been measured using results/outcomes. However, recently there has been great emphasis on the delivery process and the actual service, especially in universities (Tsoukatos, 2014). Therefore, Organizational Culture is a pertinent concept to consider in enhancing Service Quality. Although Organizational Culture and Service Quality have been widely studied in various industries worldwide, a crucial gap exists in measuring organizational culture in universities (Coman & Bonciu, 2016). This is partly due to the notion that the Organizational Culture which is inculcated into students and employees is strikingly different from that in other service sectors (Ngacha & Onyango, 2017). A well-planned, well-maintained, positive, consistent and long-term Organizational Culture enhances solid and feasible Service Quality that conforms with organizational goals (Botha, 2016; Jo Ey & Yazdanifard, 2014). The hypothesized relationship was shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## STUDY HYPOTHESIS

*H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in means of Organizational Culture between Public universities and Private universities in Kenya*

*H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in means of Service Quality between Public universities and Private universities in Kenya*

*H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Public Universities in Kenya*

*H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Private Universities in Kenya*

*H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant influence of Organizational Culture on Service Quality in Public universities in Kenya*

*H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant influence of Organizational Culture on Service Quality in Private universities in Kenya*

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used the descriptive and causal research designs. This study was based on positivist approach which generally supposed that reality was objectively given, was explained by measurable variables which were independent of the observer (researcher) and utilized quantitative data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012).

The breakdown of the study's target population was shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Study's Target Population**

<b>"Business Cluster"</b>	<b>Teaching staff</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Public Chartered (23)	948	38.3%
Private Chartered (17)	1,527	61.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,475</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Source: CUE (2016)**

The target population was the teaching staff in the business Cluster in all the 40 chartered universities in Kenya where there are 23 public universities and 17 private universities. The sampling frame in this study was obtained from the target population of 2,475 which comprised of teaching staff in the business cluster in all the 40 chartered Public and Private Universities in Kenya (Commission for University Education, 2016).

The breakdown of the study's sample size was shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Study's Sample Size**

<b>"Business Cluster"</b>	<b>Teaching staff</b>
Public Chartered 1	43
Public Chartered 2	44
Private Chartered 1	69
Private Chartered 2	69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>225</b>

To calculate the sample size, multi-stage sampling was used which was a fusion of convenience sampling, stratified sampling and proportionate sampling (Coman & Bonciu, 2016). Since this study's target population was 2,475 which is less than ten thousand, the formula given by Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) was adapted in this study. The study's sample size of 225 respondents was from 2 Public Chartered and 2 Private Chartered universities.

The researcher collected and analyzed quantitative data. To collect quantitative data, structured questionnaires were used while for qualitative data, structured interviews were conducted. The questionnaires used a 5-point Likert scale with 1-Strongly disagree, 3-Neutral and 5-Strongly agree. To measure the Independent Variable (Organizational Culture), 60-item Denison's Organizational Culture Survey was adapted. To measure the Dependent Variable (Service Quality), 20-item SERVQUAL was adapted. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis at 95% confidence level. The results of the analysis were presented using tables.

## **RESULTS**

The comparative results for the study's response rate and demographic data in Public and Private universities in Kenya was broken down in Table 3.

**Table 3: Study's response rate and demographic information**

	Public 1	Public 2	TOTAL (Public)	Private 1	Private 2	TOTAL (Private)
	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>
<b>Response rate</b>	40	35	75	53	61	114
	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>
<b>Female</b>	20	13	33	22	31	32
<b>Male</b>	20	22	42	30	31	45
	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Freq</i>
<b>1-5 years</b>	13	8	21	15	39	54
<b>6-10 years</b>	15	11	26	20	18	38
<b>11-20 years</b>	9	7	16	9	2	11
<b>Above 20 years</b>	3	9	12	9	2	11

The response rate was 84% which was calculated from the returned 189 questionnaires out of the sample of 225 respondents. This agrees with the assertions by Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2010) that a response rate above 70.0% is adequate for generalization of outcome of the findings.

Demographics of the study included gender, type of university and years of teaching. There were fewer female teaching staff in public (40.3%) and private (41.5%) universities compared to their male counterparts in public (59.7%) and private (58.5%) universities. There were fewer teaching staff at the public universities (42.5%) compared to those at the private universities (57.5%). The results indicate a high academic staff level for both public and private universities in the business cluster. As for the years of teaching in the universities, there were 68 teaching staff in private universities who have taught for between one and ten years while there were 43 teaching staff in public universities who have taught for the same period. This is in contrast to 14 teaching staff in public universities who have taught for over eleven years compared to 9 teaching staff in private universities.

### **Descriptive statistics**

This study compared the means for Organizational culture (Independent Variable) and Service Quality (Dependent Variable) among Public and Private universities as shown in Table 4.



**Table 4: Comparative means as per type of university**

(a) DESCRIPTIVES					
	Universities	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error
<b>X</b>	Public	114	3.60	0.309	0.036
	Private	75	4.13	0.297	0.028
	<b>Total</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>0.396</b>	<b>0.029</b>
	Universities	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error
<b>Y</b>	Public	114	3.68	0.504	0.058
	Private	75	4.18	0.351	0.033
	<b>Total</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.483</b>	<b>0.035</b>
(b) ANOVA					
		Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sig.
<b>X</b>	Between groups	12.412	12.412	136.521	0.000
	Within groups	17.002	0.091		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29.414</b>			
<b>Y</b>	Between groups	11.063	11.063	63.164	0.000
	Within groups	32.753	0.175		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43.816</b>			

**X**=Organizational Culture; **Y**=Service Quality

For **Organizational Culture**, the results showed that for Public universities, the mean for was 3.60 (Standard Deviation=0.309; Standard Error=0.036) while for Private universities the mean was 4.13 (Standard Deviation=0.297; Standard Error=0.028). The p-value of the F-statistic (136.521) was significant at 5% level of significance (p-value=0.000<0.05).

*H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in means of Organizational Culture between Public universities and Private universities in Kenya*

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>) was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in means of Organizational Culture between public universities and private universities in Kenya.

For **Service Quality**, the results showed that for Public universities, the mean was 3.68 (Standard Deviation=0.504; Standard Error=0.058) while for Private universities the mean was 4.18 (Standard Deviation=0.351; Standard Error=0.033). The p-value of the F-statistic (63.164) was significant at 5% level of significance ( $p\text{-value}=0.000<0.05$ ).

*H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in means of Service Quality between Public universities and Private universities in Kenya*

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in means of Service Quality between public universities and private universities in Kenya.

### Correlation analysis

This study conducted comparative correlation analysis for relationship between Organizational culture (Independent Variable) and Service Quality (Dependent Variable) among Public and Private universities.

The comparative correlation analysis results for Public chartered universities in Kenya was shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Correlation between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Public universities**

		Organizational Culture	Service Quality
<b>Organizational Culture</b>	Pearson correlation	1	.649**
	Sig (2 tailed)		.000
	N	75	75
<b>Service Quality</b>	Pearson correlation	.649**	1
	Sig (2 tailed)	.000	
	N	75	75

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

For **Public universities in Kenya**, Organizational Culture was positively and significantly related to Service Quality ( $r=0.649$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000<0.01$ ).

*H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Public Universities in Kenya*

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) was rejected. Therefore, there is a significantly positive relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in public universities in Kenya.

The comparative correlation analysis results for Private chartered universities in Kenya was shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Correlation between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Private universities**

		Organizational Culture	Service Quality
<b>Organizational Culture</b>	Pearson correlation	1	.587**
	Sig (2 tailed)		.000
	N	114	114
<b>Service Quality</b>	Pearson correlation	.587**	1
	Sig (2 tailed)	.000	
	N	114	114

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

For **Private universities in Kenya**, Organizational Culture was positively and significantly related to Service Quality ( $r=0.587$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000<0.01$ ).

*H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in Private Universities in Kenya*

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H<sub>04</sub>) was rejected. Therefore, there is a significantly positive relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in private universities in Kenya.

### Regression analysis

To compare the structural relationship between Service Quality (Dependent Variable) and Organizational Culture (Independent Variable) between Public universities and Private universities, linear regression analysis was conducted. This was shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Comparative linear regression analysis of Organizational Culture and Service Quality**

Model Summary					
Type of univ	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of estimate	
Public	.649	.421	.414	.386	
Private	.587	.345	.339	.286	

ANOVA					
Type of univ		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Public 1	Regression	7.926	7.926	53.176	.000
	Residual	10.881	.149		
	TOTAL	18.807			
Private 1	Regression	4.805	4.805	58.875	.000
	Residual	9.141	.802		
	TOTAL				

Dependent Variable=Service Quality; Independent Variable=Organizational Culture

For **Public universities in Kenya**, R squared was 0.421. This showed that the overall model could only attribute 42.1% of change in Service Quality to Organizational Culture. The p-value of the F-statistic (53.716) was 0.000 which was lower than the level of significance of 0.05 which implied this model is significant.

*H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant influence of Organizational Culture on Service Quality in Public universities in Kenya*

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H<sub>05</sub>) was rejected. Therefore, Organizational Culture has a significant influence on Service Quality in public universities in Kenya.

For **Private universities in Kenya**, R squared was 0.345. This showed that the overall model could only attribute 34.5% of change in Service Quality to Organizational Culture. The p-value of the overall fitted model was 0.000 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05 which implies an overall significant model.

*H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant influence of Organizational Culture on Service Quality in Private universities in Kenya*

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{06}$ ) was rejected. Therefore, Organizational Culture has a significant influence on Service Quality in private universities in Kenya.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study findings on the number of teaching staff are in contrast with results by Commission for University Education (2016) who reported a higher number of teaching staff in public universities than those at private universities. This is combined with a lot of inter-university activity by the academic staff with a majority of academic staff contracted on permanent status in public universities. The study findings on the gender of the teaching staff match the results indicated by Commission for University Education (2016) who state that there is a smaller number of female academics thus a relatively small pool of female mentors.

The study concluded that the differences in means of both Organizational Culture and Service Quality in both Public and Private universities was significant. However, the means for Private universities of both variables were higher than that of Public universities. This was in line with Hashim and Mahmood (2011) who conducted a similar study in public and private universities in Malaysia and found that the Service Quality in public universities was lower than that in private universities. The study concluded that there was a significant, positive relationship between Organizational Culture and Service Quality in both Public and Private universities in Kenya. However, the correlation value was higher in public universities compared to private universities. The study further concluded that Organizational Culture was a significant predictor of Service Quality in both public and private universities in Kenya.

This study recommended that leadership in Public universities needs to emulate the culture in private universities so that there is higher service Quality for the students. Also, leadership in private universities need to improve on how they use their strong and positive organizational culture to deliver Service quality to its students amidst the unique challenges they face. Further studies may be conducted on a larger number of public and private universities so as to establish causality. This comparative study may be replicated in other educational institutions and in other developing countries as well.

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