

# **AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS AND JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE AT ELDORET LAW COURTS**

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## **Abstract**

*Kenya has undertaken a number of judicial reforms specifically to realize an effective justice system which is considered a fundamental right to its citizens and to reinforce confidence in the country's legal system. Throughout the country questions that called for judicial reforms revolved around trust in judicial administration, quality of service, independence of courts and efficiency in the delivery of justice. Judicial reforms experiences are an indication that more information is required to assess and evaluate trends among the different courts in the country making judicial decisions. However, in effect little is known about the trends in the court performance throughout the country. This study therefore addressed the service quality dimensions of court performance recognizing that effectiveness and efficiency are critical issues in the judicial reform agenda. The study was based on the courts inability to eliminate client*

*complaints as established by the Office of the Judiciary Ombudsperson (OJO) which were 9,776 in 2011/2012 and 9,093 complaints in 2012/2013. Eldoret Law Court alone has cumulative complaints by users of the judicial system totaling to 6,473 cases filed from 1992 to 2014/2015 period yet to be concluded. Service quality dimensions (based on the SERVQUAL model) were chosen because they can be quantitatively measured using objective data. Data was collected from a stratified sample from a population of 1815 respondents composed of convicts, remandees, advocates and child convicts. Using the five dimensions of service quality, the study found reliability, empathy, responsiveness, assurance, and tangibles explained 2% of overall service quality at the Eldoret Law Courts and an insignificant relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Important differences and similarities between the samples appeared when service quality dimensions were examined across the sample. Convicts and remandees had reported lower perceived service quality outcomes, than did the advocates and child convicts. The study provided insight into the achievements of judicial reforms in the country.*

*Keywords: Service Quality Dimensions, Customer Satisfaction, Justice, Performance, Rater*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Many countries around the world are carrying out legal and judicial reforms as part of their overall growth and development programs. The economic and social improvement cannot be achieved and sustained without respect for the rule of law, improvement in the democratic space, and effectual fortification of human rights as broadly defined by a well-functioning judiciary that not only interprets and enforces the laws equitably but must also be efficient. An effective judiciary should be predictable, resolves cases in a rational time frame, and is easy to get to by the public (World Bank Technical Paper 430, 1999)

Many developing countries, however, find that their judiciaries advance inconsistent case law and carry a large backlog of cases, thus eroding individual and property rights, stifling private sector growth, and, in some cases, even violating human rights. Delays affect both the fairness and the efficiency of the judicial system; they impede the public's access to the courts, which, in effect, weakens democracy, the rule of law and the ability to enforce human rights (WTP430, 1999). To solve these problems, governments across the world are launching judicial reforms purposely to improve access to justice, increase fairness and efficiency of their judiciaries. Effective reforms can only be realized by understanding both the current weaknesses of their judiciaries and the effects of past reforms. These can be achieved through

a comparative court performance data that is quantitatively and qualitatively monitored and evaluation of the reforms so that future plans and reforms can be designed (International Consortium for Court Excellence, 2008).

In addition to governments, such performance evaluations are also increasingly being demanded by civil society and inter-governmental entities interested in promoting judicial accountability and transparency. Through this information, civil society is more able to effectively demand, and participate in, judicial policy reforms and the improvement of democratic governance. Similarly, multilateral lenders backing such reforms find they have little information to use in project evaluation (International Consortium for Court Excellence, 2008).

Justice system to the public includes positive characteristics, as well as flaws, that are obvious to all users. Users develop a series of service delivery perceptions based on their personal experiences and information gathered from their surroundings. Moreover, given the multiple and diverse stake holders involved in adjudicative service delivery, i.e. plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses, victims, users and professionals; there are different levels of expectations in terms of service quality. In this sense, Judiciaries must take on the responsibility for developing and promoting flexible and informal channels for judicial users to freely make suggestions on, and complaints against, system or staff performance.

This way, the judicial system would have a direct feedback mechanism supporting sustainability and continuous improvement. Judiciary service quality level is linked to users' satisfaction provided their real needs and expectations are taken into account and judicial system managers recognize service staff importance in having a positive impact on user satisfaction. Adjudicative services provided by judiciaries consist of a high degree of confidence-based attributes and people contact, highlighting the importance of raising judicial staff's awareness of the fact that service quality is entirely contingent on their performance. Moreover, a high performance level is actually expected from them by judiciary users on account of their public servant role. Hence, understanding the underlying features typical of judicial servants' paradigm could be used in persuading court staff to evolve towards a service-oriented mind-set.

Delivering excellent service sustains customers' confidence and is essential for a competitive advantage. In this study, service quality is defined as the difference between customers expectation for service performance prior to the service encounter and their perception of the service received. Judiciary users' quality of service in comparison to the quality of manufactured products is quite difficult to be assessed as it considers not only the results but also the process through which it is delivered.

Article 159 of the Constitution of Kenya, requires that justice shall be done without delay to all persons irrespective of their status. Most importantly, the Constitution mandates the

Judiciary as the custodian of justice to take effective steps to reduce the obstacles that hinder public access to information; ensure proximity and physical access to courts; and simplify court procedures so that all litigants can understand and effectively participate in court processes. For many ordinary people, satisfaction with the Judiciary has been hampered by delays in determining cases.

In his progress report on the transformation of the Judiciary: The first hundred and twenty days, 2011, the honourable Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court of Kenya observed that *“this has been an institution in the vice-grip of a crisis of public confidence (Mutunga, 2011)”*.

The public feels, perhaps rightly so, that a large portion of the problem of rising crime rates can be traced to inefficient courts. Long delays in the resolution of cases and mounting case backlogs add to the generally negative perception that common folk have about courts. In (High Court at This study therefore undertook to explore how the Judiciary can use SERVQUAL to transform into a service entity which effectively, efficiently, independently and expeditiously dispenses justice to all thereby enhancing public satisfaction. It is also aimed at winning back public confidence in which the public will always respect the Judiciary’s opinions and decisions even when they disagree with those opinions and decisions.

There are other measures of service quality such as the international framework for court excellence (IFCE) which is a quality management system designed to help courts to improve their performance by integrating performance management with the integral components of the IFCE. It describes eleven focused, clear, and actionable core court performance measures aligned with the values and areas of court excellence of the IFCE which analyses the key question “How are we performing?” These are the court user satisfaction measure where the percent of court users give their assessment about how the court provides procedural justice in terms of accessibility, fairness, accurateness, timeliness, knowledgeable of service providers, and courteousness during service delivery. The second aspect includes access fees where the tool measures the accessibility as defined as the average court fees paid for the case, case clearance rates, On-time case processing rates, pre-trial custody, the average elapsed time criminal defendants are jailed awaiting trial, court file integrity, case Backlog, trial date certainty, employee engagement, compliance with court orders, and the cost per case in terms of money expenditures per case in terms of net cost per finalization (ICCE, 2008). However, for the purposes of this study five dimensions of service quality were used to measure performance.

## Service Quality Dimensions

A number of attempts have been made in defining and measuring quality and much of this effort is mainly from the provision of goods to the consumers. According to the existing Japanese philosophy, quality refers to zero defects or doing something right for the first time. The term quality has been operationalised differently by different authors. For example, Crosby (1979) defines quality as "conformance to requirements." On the other hand, Garvin (1983) measures quality by establishing the incidence of "internal" failures determined by observing manufactured products before distribution from the factory. The "external" failures incur in the field after a unit has been installed (Garvin, 1983). The two studies concur that knowledge about quality of goods is inadequate in understanding service quality.

Parasuraman, et. al. (1985) posits that there are three well-documented characteristics of services which are intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability that must be recognized for a full understanding of service quality. The first study found that most services are intangible because they are performances rather than objects and that precise manufacturing specifications relating to uniform quality can hardly ever be set (Bateson 1977, Berry 1980, Lovelock 1981, Shostak 1977).

On the other hand, most services cannot be counted, measured, inventoried, tested, and confirmed in advance of sale to assure quality because of intangibility. The firm may well find it difficult to understand how consumers recognize their services and assess service quality (Zeithaml, 1981). Secondly, services with a high labour content, are heterogeneous and their performance varies between; producers, customers, and each time they are produced. A desire for uniformity of personnel character in any organization is difficult to achieve in order to realize a uniform quality in service delivery promise because what the firm intends to deliver may be entirely different from what the consumer receives (Booms and Bitner, 1981).

Finally, where labour services are provided, service quality in service delivery arises in the process of interaction between the client and the service provider from the service firm (Lehtinen and Lehtinen 1982). However, a firm may also have less managerial control over quality in services where consumer involvement is strong because the client affects the process as in the case of salon services. In these situations, the consumer's describes what and how it should be done and this becomes critical to the quality of service performance. From the foregoing observations, one can infer that service quality is more difficult for the consumer to assess than goods quality as service quality perceptions result from a comparison of consumer expectations with actual service performance.

Service quality dimensions are instrumental in measuring service quality. The most widely used measure is based on a set of five dimensions which have been consistently ranked

by customers to be most important for service quality, regardless of service industry. These dimensions are defined by the measurement instrument and include; tangibles which relates to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials; reliability which explains the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

Others are responsiveness which implies ones willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, assurance which requires employees to have sufficient knowledge and courtesy in addition to the employees' ability to convey trust and confidence while executing their responsibilities. Lastly, empathy requires employees to care and provide individualized attention while serving clients. The five dimensions of service quality measured by the SERVQUAL Instrument (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985).

In spite of the SERVQUAL model's growing popularity and widespread application, SERVQUAL has been subjected to a numerous theoretical and operational criticisms. Firstly, it has faced definitive objections in that it has been inappropriately based on an expectations disconfirmation model rather than an attitudinal model of service quality. Secondly, it does not build on existing knowledge in economics, statistics and psychology (Buttle, 1996).

Another critique of the SERVQUAL is that it's based on the disconfirmation model that is widely adopted in the customer satisfaction literature. In this literature, customer satisfaction (CSat) is operationalised in terms of the relationship between expectations (E) and outcomes (O). If O matches E, customer satisfaction is predicted. If O exceeds E, then customer enchantment may be formed. If E exceeds O, then customer dissatisfaction is indicated.

According to Cronin and Taylor (1992; 1994 as cited in Buttle, 1996) SERVQUAL is paradigmatically flawed because of its ill-judged adoption of this disconfirmation model. The two authors claim that "Perceived quality", "is best conceptualized as an attitude". They criticized Parasuraman *et al.* for their indecision to describe perceived service quality in attitudinal terms, despite the fact that Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) had earlier claimed that service quality was "similar in many ways to an attitude". Cronin and Taylor (1992; 1994) argue that many studies have attempted to differentiate service quality from consumer satisfaction, even while using the disconfirmation format to measure perceptions of service quality and that it has not been consistent with the differentiation expressed between these constructs in the satisfaction and attitude literatures.

### **Customer Satisfaction in Judiciary**

Kenya's Judiciary used to discharge its mandate through the Judicial Service Commission with the power and authority highly centralized. Further, the accountability mechanisms were weak, reporting requirements absent, weak structures, inadequate resources, diminished confidence,

deficient in integrity, weak public support and literally incapacitated ability to deliver justice (*National Council for Law Reporting*, 2016). The new 2010 Constitution has radically altered the state of Judiciary where the court system has been decentralized with the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal having their own Presidents and the High Court having a Principal Judge as heads of the respective Institutions.

The Judiciary has institutionalized Performance Contracting (PC) by establishing a fully fledged directorate of performance management. The PC is Result-Based Management (RBM) methodology that has been implemented by the Executive Arm of the Government. RBM is a participatory team based approach designed to achieve defined results by improving programme and management efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency. Performance based management practices are now applicable to both judicial and administrative staff. In order to promote sound management practices, the judiciary has also established Transformation Steering Committee where all stakeholders in the judicial system are represented. An Ombudsperson was appointed purposely to receive and respond to complaints by staff and the public while the Chief of Staff was appointed to oversee the establishment of the Executive Office of the Chief Justice and facilitate the CJ's numerous roles.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Kenya Judiciary continuously monitors its service through the performance benchmarks and through the Office of the Judiciary Ombudsperson (OJO) which is an accelerated grievance/feedback management mechanism that was established in August 2011 under the Office of the Chief Justice. The office is mandated to receive complaints/feedback from the public for and against judicial officers and staff, staff against fellow staff and staff against the Judiciary (employer).

Public complaints to the Office of the Ombudsperson about the judiciary in Kenya were 9,776 in 2011/2012 and 9,093 in 2012/2013. Investment in further training, culture change workshops, and technology has been undertaken purposely to eliminate or substantially reduce number of complaints in the judicial service. However, similar complaints by the clients of the judicial system still continue every year. Irrespective of all the efforts by Kenya's Judiciary, Eldoret Law Court alone has cumulative complaints by users of the judicial system manifested in among other complaints the 6,473 cases filed from 1992 to 2014/2015 period yet to be concluded.

This study therefore sought to establish the source of such complaints and why the judiciary has not been able satisfy its customers despite judicial reforms due to the existing large number of complaints from a generally dissatisfied public. The study sought answers by

examining the quality of services offered by the Judiciary by interrogating the service quality model by investigating the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction at Eldoret Law Courts in Kenya.

### **Research objective**

To establish the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction at Eldoret Law Courts

### **Research Hypotheses**

There is no significant relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction at Eldoret Law Courts.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Assimilation - Contrast Theory**

This was the main theory of the study and the major proponent was (Anderson (1973) and in which context of post exposure product performance of judicial reforms was based. Sherif, Muzafer and Carl I. Hovland (1961) discussed the assimilation and contrast theory effect on performance and suggested that it was within the collection of customer's latitude of acceptance, despite falling short of expectation. The discrepancy was disregarded, but assimilation it was suggested would operate such that performance would be deemed as acceptable. If performance falls within the latitude of rejection, contrast would prevail and the difference would be exaggerated hence the product or service would be deemed unacceptable.

The assimilation - contrast theory was proposed as another way of explaining the relationships among the service quality and customer satisfaction dimensions (variables) in the conception model. This theory is a combination of both the assimilation and the contrast theories and the paradigm posits that satisfaction is a function of the magnitude of the discrepancy between expected and perceived performance. Using assimilation theory, it explains that the consumers will tend to assimilate or adjust differences in perceptions about product performance to bring it in line with prior expectations but only if the discrepancy is relatively small. Assimilation - contrast theory was used in the study to understand the growing public complaints and in effect to assess its robustness. A combination of the assimilation and the contrast theory paradigms had applicability in the study on customer satisfaction. The strength of the expectations was applied to determine whether assimilation or contrast effects were positively observed.

### **Contrast Theory**

The major proponents of this theory were Hovland, C., Harvey, O., Sherif (1957) and was later used by Dawes *et al.*, (1972). They define contrast theory as the tendency to magnify the discrepancy between one's own attitudes and the attitudes represented by opinion statements. In this study, the contrast theory presented an alternative view of the consumer post usage evaluation process that was presented in assimilation theory. The theory was used in the study to understand the relationships between service quality and post service evaluations. This was critical in interpreting the results as to whether it led to the opposite predictions for the effects of expectations (service quality dimensions) on customer satisfaction. On the other hand, while the assimilation theory posits that consumers seek to minimize the discrepancy between expectation and performance, contrast theory holds that a surprise effect leads to the discrepancy being magnified or exaggerated.

Further; according to the contrast theory, any discrepancy of experience from expectations will be exaggerated in the direction of discrepancy. If the court raised expectations for example in service delivery, and then a customer's experience is only slightly less than that promised, the service would be rejected as totally unsatisfactory. Conversely, under promising in service delivery and over delivering will cause positive disconfirmation and would therefore also be an exaggeration. The theory was found suitable the customer satisfaction variable in this study because customers expect justice to be delivered expeditiously if it is to comply with the justice reforms in the country.

The main criticism of this theory is that it has been used more in marketing literature than in any discipline and in addition the theory predicts customer reaction instead of reducing dissonance and in effect the consumer often magnifies the difference between expectation and the performance of the product/service.

### **Equity Theory**

This theory is built upon the argument that man's rewards in exchange with others should be proportional to his investments. This theory was first renowned in a research by Stouffer and his colleagues in military administration (Stouffer *et al.*, 1949). In this study, the theory was used to establish whether court customers suffered 'a relative deprivation' of (equity) as the reaction to an imbalance or disparity between what an individual customers perceived to be the actuality and what they believed should be the case, especially where own situation was concerned. In other words, the equity concept suggests that the ratio of outcomes to inputs should be constant across participants in an exchange. This theory was found to be suitable for this study as it effectively addresses the customer satisfaction variable and the main objectives of legal reforms

in the country. As applied to customer satisfaction research, satisfaction is thought to exist when the customer believes that outcomes to input ratio is equal to that of the exchange person.

The major short coming of this theory is that in the handful of studies that have examined the effect of equity on customer satisfaction, equity appears to have a moderate effect on customer satisfaction and post - purchase communication behaviour.

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

### **Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Satisfaction**

A variety of past studies have been conducted to assess service quality. Much of the initial work in developing a model to assess service quality came from Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985 who noticed that discrepancies existed between organisations and customer perceptions of the service quality delivered. They developed the SERVQUAL scale, consisting of 22 expectation and 22 perception questions, which were rated on a seven point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The study suggested that when the perceived experience was less than the expected experience, it implied less than satisfactory service quality. After two stages of purification, the SERVQUAL scale was adapted from a model with a reduction from ten dimensions to five dimensions namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) given an acronym RATER (Buttle, (1996). The simplified RATER model allowed customer service experiences to be explored and assessed quantitatively and has been used widely by service delivery organizations. Nyeck *et al.*, (2002) stated that the SERVQUAL measuring tool had been used by several researchers to examine numerous service industries such as healthcare, banking, financial services, and education and “appears to remain the most complete attempt to conceptualize and measure service quality”. The foregoing studies departs from the current study which was rated on the five rated scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree,

Service quality is an increasingly important priority for public as well as private institutions. As a concept, it has aroused considerable interest and debate in the research literature because of the difficulties in both defining and measuring it with no overall consensus emerging on either. Asubonteng *et al.*, (1996) indicated that, because service provision in the public sector is more complex, it is not simply a matter of meeting expressed needs, but of finding out unexpressed needs, setting priorities, allocating resources and publicly justifying and accounting for what has been done. The problem facing a service provider who does not directly deliver a service to the customer is how to analyse the service quality gap. Empirical evidence has therefore shown that a solution for this problem is to use the SERVQUAL scale and identify the areas where expected customer service level is not achieved in each of the five dimensions.

The results from the SERVQUAL scale could then indicate where a gap analysis is required. However, this study did not undertake this procedure of gap identification.

The SERVQUAL scale focuses on the fifth service quality gap, which is the discrepancy between customer expectations and their perceptions of the service delivered; when customer expectations are greater than perceptions. Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) believed that by using their performance minus expectations theory, they would be able to analyse and close this gap. In the continuum, managers and employees would then know what the customer requirements were and would establish a plan to close the gap. Once the plan of action is in place for a certain amount of time they would conduct the study again to see if they were any closer to closing the service quality gap Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988). This was a good plan because it allows an organisation to see how far away they are from closing the service quality gap. If the research was to be conducted again and the results would be more positive and then the organisation would know it is heading in the right direction. However, if the results are negative then the organisation would then know that the plan they have implemented needs to be altered.

Wanjau *et al.*, (2012) explored the factors affecting provision of service quality in the public health sector in Kenya. They focused on employee capability, technology, communication and financial resources using the Gap Model in Service Quality developed by Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988). The descriptive design method was used and data was collected using closed and open ended questionnaires administered on 103 respondents, comprising; sixteen doctors, thirty two nurses, twenty nine clinical officers, fourteen laboratory technologists and twelve pharmacists at Kenyatta National Hospital which is the largest referral hospital in Eastern & Central Africa. Data was analysed by regression analysis. The study revealed that low employees capacity, low technology adoption, ineffective communication channels and insufficient funds affect delivery of service quality to patients in public health sector affected health service quality perceptions, patient satisfaction and loyalty.

Agyei and Kilika (2013) in their study sought to determine the relationship between reliability of service quality and customer loyalty in mobile telecommunication service industry in Kenya. Three hundred and twenty (320) Kenyatta University students drawn from five of its campuses were selected for the population of the study. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and regression analyses were used to test the association of the SERVQUAL/RATER model dimensions, and a significant relationship was found between service quality and customer loyalty.

Al-Aali, Khurshid, Nasir, and Al-Aali (2011) measured the service quality of mobile phone companies operating in Saudi Arabia by using the SERVQUAL instrument. The objective of this study was to measure the perception of consumers towards the service quality of the three mobile service providers in Saudi Arabia. The study found that there were differences in customers' perceptions in almost all the dimensions. This study was based upon the data collected only from undergraduate and graduate students at King Saud University in Riyadh who are of a different status and no staff or employee was involved. This study is different from the current study which respondents were convicts, remandees, child convicts and advocates. The only similarity with the current study was that it dealt with a population or respondents were accessible and had a good understanding of service quality on the services studied. The Saudi Arabia study used the confirmatory factor analysis results where the findings showed that two dimensions namely reliability and responsiveness were able to show a clear differentiation in customers' minds regarding these dimensions. When the two added dimensions of network quality and competitive advantages were added, a high level of significance was realized upon being subjected to the MANOVA analysis. However the empathy dimension showed an overlap with assurance and tangibility while the customers had no clear differentiation for empathy dimension. Unlike the current study, which used descriptive statistics, regression analysis and ANOVA which Al-Aali et al (2011) did not consider.

Reliability as a service quality dimension is the ability of a firm or organization to perform the promised service dependably and accurately or delivering on its promises. The firm must perform the service right at the first time and honour its promises as some of the issues which need to be performed by service providers to achieve reliability (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).

Cavana et al. (2007) studied the developing zones of tolerance for managing passenger rail services quality in New Zealand by employing SERVQUAL model and reported that service quality dimensions (tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and reliability) should be considered in order to see its impact on customers of the service provider. However, their findings suggested that convenience and reliability do not have any significant relationship with customer satisfaction, while assurance, empathy and responsiveness have a strong relationship with the satisfaction level of customers.

Lai (2004) found a significantly positive relationship between satisfaction of customers and service quality dimensions of tangibles, empathy and assurance. Some findings have been proven by the works of Cronin and Taylor (1992). Findings of Ahmed et al. (2010) suggest that there is no significant relationship with empathy and customer satisfaction, but service quality dimensions of assurance, reliability, tangibles and responsiveness have a positively significant relationship with satisfaction.

Baumann et al. (2006), in his research, concluded that the effectiveness of the service provider's attitude and empathy of staff leads to higher degree of customer satisfaction, and in return, customers recommend others to use this service. He further concludes that effective attitude and empathy have a long term impact on customer satisfaction and future repurchase intentions, while empathy has a short term relationship with satisfaction and repurchase intentions. The empirical literature therefore provided gaps in terms of mixed findings that this study attempted to fill.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study used a descriptive design directed at making careful observations and detailed documentation of a phenomenon of interest. These observations were subjected to the scientific method in an effort for possible replication and therefore considered more reliable. This study involved service customers at Eldoret Law Court within Uasin Gishu County in the Rift Valley part of Kenya which serves Uasin Gishu County and parts of Kakamega, Trans Nzoia and Elgeyo/Marakwet Counties. The study focused on accused persons who are in prison custody, remandees; advocates and parties who have pending children cases.

The population of this study is 1815 respondents who comprise of 775 convicts 460 remandees and 450 parties with pending children cases and 130 advocates registered and practicing in Eldoret town for the last the five years. The above population was selected because they were easily accessible and represented a large and growing number of convicts in prisons. In addition, they have a good understanding of service quality dimensions provided by the judiciary.

Stratified random sampling was used to obtain the sample size ensured that the four categories of respondents were adequately sampled to facilitate comparison among the groups using the Yamane method (Yamane, 1967). Using a 95% confidence interval and 0.05 as the value of  $e$ , the sample size of 328 respondents was obtained.

Data was collected at the point of service delivery using an on-the-spot-administered self developed Five Point Likert-scale questionnaire containing a set of formalized closed ended questions (Likert, 1932).

A pilot test was carried out to establish both validity and reliability of an instrument and a cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84 was obtained which was within the recommended at least more than 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951)

## ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT ELDORET LAW COURTS

In establishing the relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction, descriptive statistics for perceptions, correlation and regression analyses were run. A five point likert scale was used to interpret the responses in all cases which were awarded as follows; strongly agree response was awarded 5 and strongly disagree was awarded 1. Within the continuum was 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral and 4 for agree. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the data. The analysis considered the standard deviations to establish the level of disagreement or dispersion among the respondents such that where the standard deviation was higher among the respondents, a corresponding level of disagreement was implied.

### Descriptive Statistics for the Perceptions

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Reliability

STATEMENTS	Advocates		Children		Convicts		Remandees	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
1 When judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court promise to do something; they do it	4.14	0.655	3.78	0.791	2.87	1.433	2.56	1.439
2 When a customer has a problem, judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court show a sincere interest in solving it	3.86	1.062	4.01	0.803	2.80	1.476	2.82	1.445
3 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court perform the service right the first time	3.90	0.553	3.77	0.779	2.66	1.316	2.60	1.418
4 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court insist on error free service	3.62	0.973	3.46	0.997	2.73	1.363	2.84	1.368
5 Judicial officers in this court dispose cases expeditiously	4.00	1.000	3.68	0.864	2.33	1.362	2.53	1.422

Table 1 shows the mean values of customers' satisfaction based on reliability as services quality dimension. The highest mean is 4.14 for the question on judicial officers and judiciary staff promises to do something was more acceptable to advocates and children than to convicts and remandees.

The response of respondents' extent to which they agreed with the given statements concerning reliability is provided. The study found that the advocates agreed that when judicial officers and judiciary staff promise to do something, they do it with the mean of 4.14 and standard deviations of 0.655. Parties with pending children cases' response had a mean of 3.78 and standard deviation of 0.791. This implies that the level of disagreement was low among this

group. The convicts had a mean of 2.87 and a standard deviation of 1.433 while the remandees had a mean of 2.56 and standard deviation of 1.439 respectively. The level of disagreement was high among these groups and increased in the order of; advocates, parties with pending children cases, convicts and highest with remandees. Notably standard deviations were very strong in the cases of convicts and remandees.

Regarding the issue of whether judicial officers and the judiciary staff have interest in solving clients problems, the advocates had a mean of 3.86 and standard deviation of 1.062; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 4.01 and standard deviation of 0.803; the convicts had a mean of 2.80 and standard deviation of 1.476 while the remandees had a mean of 2.82 and standard deviation of 1.445 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff in the court perform the services right the first time, the advocates had a mean of 3.90 and standard deviation of 0.553; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.77 and standard deviation of 0.779; convicts had a mean of 2.66 and standard deviation of 1.316 while remandees had a mean of 2.60 and standard deviation of 1.418 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff in the court insist on error free service, the advocates had a mean of 3.62 and standard deviation of 0.073; the the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.46 and standard deviation of 0.997; convicts had a mean of 2.73 and standard deviation of 1.363 while remandees had a mean of 2.84 and standard deviation of 1.368 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers dispose off their cases expeditiously, the advocates had a mean of 4.000 and standard deviation of 1.000; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.68 and standard deviation of 0.864; convicts had a mean of 2.33 and standard deviation of 1.362 while remandees had a mean of 2.53 and standard deviation of 1.422 respectively.

The study findings from the descriptive statistics above shows significant relationships between reliability and customer satisfaction on the side of advocates where judicial officers and judiciary staff promised to do something and where judicial officers disposed off the cases expeditiously. This was not the case with the responses from children, remandees and convicts qualifying the study to have mixed findings. For the responses from children, remandees and convicts, the study findings were consistent with that of Cavana et al. (2007) who suggested that reliability was relevant but not have a highly significant relationship with customer satisfaction which was inconsistent with the responses from the advocates.

The above findings are partially consistent with that of Agyei and Kilika (2013) who found a significant relationship between service quality and customer loyalty in the telecommunication

service industry in Kenya when the advocates responses are considered. The findings will be inconsistent if the convicts and remandees responses are considered. However, the above findings about reliability are consistent with the findings of Al-Aali et al (2011) who found differences in customers' perceptions on the service quality dimensions exist.

Table 2: Assurance

STATEMENTS	Advocates		Children		Convicts		Remandees	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
1 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court make me feel safe and satisfied in their transactions with this court	4.25	0.639	3.87	0.774	2.58	1.504	2.78	1.594
2 Decisions made by Judicial officers in this court are fair and consistent	3.90	0.553	3.84	0.883	2.72	1.276	2.57	1.375
3 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court instil trust and confidence in their customers	4.15	0.587	3.69	1.014	2.81	1.296	2.21	1.322
4 Persons who are charged in this court are granted equitable bond terms	3.55	1.276	3.39	0.912	2.68	1.436	2.09	1.358
5 Court fees in this court is affordable	3.55	1.099	3.81	1.080	2.28	1.328	1.91	1.348

The study found that the advocates and the parties with pending children cases agreed that they were safe and satisfied with the court transactions with the mean of 4.25 and standard deviations of 0.639. Parties with pending children cases response had a mean of 3.87 and standard deviation of 0.774, the convicts had a mean of 2.87 and a standard deviation of 1.433 while the remandees had a mean of 2.58 and standard deviation of 1.504 respectively while the remandees had a mean of 2.78 and standard deviation of 1.594. The level of disagreement increased in the order of; advocates, the parties with pending children cases, convicts and highest with remandees. Notably standard deviations were very strong in the cases of convicts and remandees.

Regarding the decisions made by Judicial officers in this court being fair and consistent advocates had a mean of 3.86 and standard deviation of 1.062; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 4.01 and standard deviation of 0.803; the convicts had a mean of 2.80 and standard deviation of 1.476 while the remandees had a mean of 2.82 and standard deviation of 1.445 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff in the court instil trust and confidence in their customers the advocates had a mean of 3.90 and standard deviation of 0.553; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.77 and

standard deviation of 0.779; convicts had a mean of 2.66 and standard deviation of 1.316 while remandees had a mean of 2.60 and standard deviation of 1.418 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether persons charged the court are granted equitable bond terms the advocates had a mean of 3.62 and standard deviation of 0.073; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.46 and standard deviation of 0.997; convicts had a mean of 2.73 and standard deviation of 1.363 while remandees had a mean of 2.84 and standard deviation of 1.368 respectively. The response to the question as to whether Court fees in this court is affordable the advocates had a mean of 4.000 and standard deviation of 1.000; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.68 and standard deviation of 0.864; convicts had a mean of 2.33 and standard deviation of 1.362 while remandees had a mean of 2.53 and standard deviation of 1.422 respectively.

The study findings from the descriptive statistics above shows significant relationships between reliability and customer satisfaction on the side of advocates only where advocates felt safe and satisfied in their transactions with this court and Judicial officers and judiciary staff instilled trust and confidence. This was not the case with the responses from children, remandees and convicts qualifying the study to have mixed findings. For the responses from children, remandees and convicts, the study findings were not consistent with that of Cavana et al. (2007) who suggested that assurance has a highly significant relationship with customer satisfaction which was only consistent with only two responses from the advocates.

Table 3: Tangibles

STATEMENTS	Advocates		Children		Convicts		Remandees	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
1 This court does not have waiting and court rooms that are properly equipped	3.80	1.399	3.56	1.430	2.82	1.564	3.06	1.594
2 The physical facilities in this court are visually appealing	1.90	0.912	2.85	1.274	2.91	1.371	2.34	1.420
3 The physical facilities in this court are suitable to the physically challenged	1.60	1.095	2.33	1.298	2.49	1.342	2.34	1.263
4 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court are well ordered	4.05	0.605	3.73	1.106	3.02	1.428	2.69	1.572
5 This court is within reasonable distance from the customers it serves	2.58	1.387	3.29	1.100	2.94	1.424	2.55	1.470
6 This court has an information desk and information brochures	3.11	1.449	2.90	1.392	2.82	1.420	2.30	1.319
7 Procedures and processes in this court are digitized	2.58	1.346	2.67	1.327	2.37	1.396	2.33	1.429
8 Staff in this court have necessary performance benchmarks to that assist them in dispensing justice expeditiously	3.05	1.191	2.81	1.231	2.32	1.453	2.18	1.466

The study found that the advocates and the parties with pending children cases agreed that they the court does not have a waiting and court rooms that are properly equipped with the mean of 3.80 and standard deviations of 1.399. The parties with pending children cases response had a mean of 3.56 and standard deviation of 1.430, the convicts had a mean of 2.82 and a standard deviation of 1.564 while the remandees had a mean of 3.06 and standard deviation of 1.594 respectively. The level of disagreement increased in the order of; advocates, children, convicts and highest with remandees. Notably standard deviations were very strong in all the cases of respondents.

Regarding the court physical facilities being visually appealing, advocates had a mean of 1.90 and standard deviation of 0.912; the the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 2.85 and standard deviation of 1.274; the convicts had a mean of 2.91 and standard deviation of 1.371 while the remandees had a mean of 2.34 and standard deviation of 1.420 respectively. The response to the question as to whether the physical facilities in the court were suitable to the physically challenged, the advocates had a mean of 1.60 and standard deviation of 1.095; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 2.33 and standard deviation of 1.298; convicts had a mean of 2.49 and standard deviation of 1.342 while remandees had a mean of 2.34 and standard deviation of 1.263 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff are organised, the advocates had a mean of 4.05 and standard deviation of 0.605; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.73 and standard deviation of 1.106; convicts had a mean of 3.02 and standard deviation of 1.428 while remandees had a mean of 2.69 and standard deviation of 1.572 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether Court was within reasonable distance from the court servers, the advocates had a mean of 2.58 and standard deviation of 1.387; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 1.100; convicts had a mean of 2.94 and standard deviation of 1.424 while remandees had a mean of 2.55 and standard deviation of 1.470 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether Court has information desk and information brochures, the advocates had a mean of 3.11 and standard deviation of 1.449; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 2.90 and standard deviation of 1.392; convicts had a mean of 2.82 and standard deviation of 1.420 while remandees had a mean of 2.30 and standard deviation of 1.319 respectively

The response to the question as to whether procedures and processes in the court are digitized, the advocates had a mean of 2.58 and standard deviation of 1.346; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.327; convicts had a

mean of 2.37 and standard deviation of 1.396 while remandees had a mean of 2.33 and standard deviation of 1.429 respectively

The response to the question as to whether staff in the court had necessary performance benchmarks to assist them to dispense justice expeditiously, the advocates had a mean of 3.05 and standard deviation of 1.191; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 2.81 and standard deviation of 1.231; convicts had a mean of 2.32 and standard deviation of 1.453 while remandees had a mean of 2.18 and standard deviation of 1.466 respectively.

The study findings from the descriptive statistics above shows significant relationships between reliability and customer satisfaction on the side of advocates only where advocates found the judicial officers and judiciary staff well ordered. This was not the case with the rest of the responses from advocates, children, remandees and convicts qualifying the study above average that tangibles did not have significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction. The study findings were inconsistent with that of Lai (2004) who found a significantly positive relationship between satisfaction of customers and service quality dimensions of tangibles.

Table 4: Empathy

STATEMENTS	Advocates		Children		Convicts		Remandees	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
1 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court are welcoming to customers	4.14	0.655	4.04	0.898	2.83	1.498	2.69	1.570
2 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court treat all customers equally regardless of status	3.76	0.889	3.85	1.133	2.45	1.422	2.41	1.326
3 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court give customers personalised service	3.10	1.513	3.23	1.368	2.77	1.324	2.30	1.335
4 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court are corrupt	1.95	0.805	1.88	1.051	3.15	1.578	2.86	1.556
5 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court understand the customers' individual needs	3.60	0.940	3.56	1.001	2.55	1.399	2.38	1.448
6 Business in this court starts on time	2.90	1.513	4.30	0.822	2.59	1.475	2.57	1.611

The study found that the following responses to the question over whether the judicial officers and judicial staff in the court were welcoming to customers. The advocates and the parties with pending children cases agreed with the means of 4.14 and standard deviations of 0.655, and a mean of 4.04 and standard deviation of 0.898 respectively. The convicts had a mean of 2.83 and a standard deviation of 1.498 while the remandees had a mean of 2.69 and standard deviation of 1.570.

The question to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff treated the customers equally regardless of status, advocates had a mean of 3.76 and standard deviation of 0.889; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.85 and standard deviation of 1.133; the convicts had a mean of 2.45 and standard deviation of 1.422 while the remandees had a mean of 2.41 and standard deviation of 1.326 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff in the court gave customers personal service, the advocates had a mean of 3.10 and standard deviation of 1.513; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 2.77 and standard deviation of 1.324; convicts had a mean of 2.30 and standard deviation of 1.316 while remandees had a mean of 2.60 and standard deviation of 1.335 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff in the court were corrupt, the advocates had a mean of 1.95 and standard deviation of 0.805; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 1.88 and standard deviation of 1.051; convicts had a mean of 3.15 and standard deviation of 1.578 while remandees had a mean of 2.86 and standard deviation of 1.556 respectively

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff understood the customers individual needs, the advocates had a mean of 3.60 and standard deviation of 0.940; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.56 and standard deviation of 1.001; convicts had a mean of 2.55 and standard deviation of 1.399 while remandees had a mean of 2.38 and standard deviation of 1.448 respectively

The response to the question as to whether business in the court starts on time, the advocates had a mean of 2.90 and standard deviation of 1.513; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 4.30 and standard deviation of 0.822; convicts had a mean of 2.59 and standard deviation of 1.475 while remandees had a mean of 2.57 and standard deviation of 1.611 respectively.

The study findings from the descriptive statistics above shows significant relationships between empathy and customer satisfaction in one response of advocates where advocates found the judicial officers and judiciary staff were receptive to customers. However, the rest of the responses from advocates, children, remandees and convicts qualifying the study above average that empathy did not have significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction. The study findings were inconsistent with that of Lai (2004) who found a significantly positive relationship between satisfaction of customers and service quality dimensions of empathy. The study was also inconsistent with the findings of Lai, 2004; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Ahmed et al., 2010; and Baumann et al., 2006 who found a significantly positive relationship between satisfaction of customers and service quality dimensions of empathy.

Table 5: Responsiveness

STATEMENTS	Advocates		Children		Convicts		Remandees	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
1 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court are too busy to respond to customers' requests	2.55	1.191	1.97	1.032	2.84	1.518	2.89	1.582
2 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court give quick service	3.90	0.968	3.77	0.916	2.48	1.281	2.18	1.427
3 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court tell customers exactly when services will be delivered	3.10	1.071	3.75	1.066	3.02	1.312	2.44	1.354
4 Judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court keep customers waiting for an unnecessary long time before service is delivered	2.45	0.999	2.04	0.993	3.18	1.560	2.99	1.711
5 Calls, emails and letters to this court are answered promptly	2.80	1.056	3.13	1.125	2.33	1.261	2.28	1.344
6 If my case in this court is adjourned or service is delayed; reasons for the delay are explained	3.55	1.276	3.83	1.062	2.73	1.432	2.04	1.439

The responses to the question that judicial officers and staff in the court were too busy to respond to the customers' requests were as follows; the advocates had a mean of 2.55 and standard deviation of 1.991, the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 1.97 and standard deviations of 1.032, the convicts had a mean of 2.84 and a standard deviation of 1.518 while the remandees had a mean of 2.89 and standard deviation of 1.582.

The responses to the question that judicial officers and staff in the court offered quick service, the advocates had a mean of 3.90 and standard deviation of 0.968, the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.77 and standard deviations of 0.916, the convicts had a mean of 2.48 and a standard deviation of 1.281 while the remandees had a mean of 2.18 and standard deviation of 1.427.

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff in the court tell the customers exactly when services will be delivered, the advocates had a mean of 3.10 and standard deviation of 1.071; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.75 and standard deviation of 1.066; convicts had a mean of 3.02 and standard deviation of 1.312 while remandees had a mean of 2.44 and standard deviation of 1.354 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether judicial officers and judiciary staff in the court keep customers waiting for unnecessarily long time before service is delivered, the advocates had a mean of 2.45 and standard deviation of 0.999; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 2.04 and standard deviation of 0.993; convicts had a mean of 3.18 and standard deviation of 1.560 while remandees had a mean of 2.99 and standard deviation of 1.711 respectively.

The response to the question as to whether calls, emails and letters to this court are answered promptly, the advocates had a mean of 2.80 and standard deviation of 1.056; the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.13 and standard deviation of 1.125; convicts had a mean of 2.33 and standard deviation of 1.216 while remandees had a mean of 2.28 and standard deviation of 1.344 respectively

The response to the question as to whether reasons for adjourned cases or delayed services are properly explained, the advocates had a mean of 3.55 and standard deviation of 1.276; parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 1.062; convicts had a mean of 2.73 and standard deviation of 1.432 while remandees had a mean of 2.04 and standard deviation of 1.439 respectively.

The study findings from the descriptive statistics above shows no significant relationships between responsiveness and customer satisfaction as provided by the responses from advocates, children, remandees and convicts. The study findings were inconsistent with that of Cavana *et al.* (2007) and Ahmed *et al.*, (2010) who found a significantly positive relationship between satisfaction of customers and service quality dimensions of responsiveness.

### Descriptive Statistical Analyses

The perceptions were measured based on the Likert scale (Likert, 1932) that ranges from “1” for strongly disagree, “2” for disagree, “3” for uncertain, “4” for agree and “5” for strongly agree. Table 6 shows a summary of the descriptive statistics for the means for all the tested dimensions of perception namely reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Reliability

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Advocates	104	3.90	0.876
Children	402	3.74	0.864
Convicts	653	2.68	1.399
Remandees	345	2.67	1.417
Valid N (listwise)	88		

Overall statistical findings show agreement that the court services are reliable with the advocates registering the highest mean of 3.90 and standard deviation of 0.876 while the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 0.864. The responses were very low among the convicts with a mean of 2.68 and standard deviation of

1.399 and the remandees' responses that registered a mean of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.417.

Table 7: Assurance Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Advocates	100	3.88	.913
Children	397	3.72	.951
Convicts	651	2.61	1.378
Remandees	340	2.31	1.429
Valid N (listwise)	82		

The overall statistical findings on assurance show low agreement within all the respondents. For example the advocates registered the highest mean of 3.88 and standard deviation of 0.913 while the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 0.951, the convicts with a mean of 2.61 and standard deviation of 1.378 and the remandees' responses that registered a mean of 2.31 and standard deviation of 1.429. This finding was mixed and consistent to some extent with that of Nyangweso *et al.*, (2014) which indicated that some customers were satisfied with the attributes of assurance though it was based on a small a sample size.

Table 8: Tangibles Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Advocates	157	2.83	1.423	2.024
Children	631	3.01	1.342	1.801
Convicts	736	2.72	1.465	2.146
Remandees	522	2.48	1.462	2.139
Valid N (listwise)	125			

The overall statistical findings on tangibles showed low scores within all the respondents. For example the advocates registered the highest mean of 2.83 and standard deviation of 1.423 while the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 1.342, the convicts with a mean of 2.72 and standard deviation of 1.465 and the remandees' responses that registered a mean of 2.48 and standard deviation of 1.462. This finding was inconsistent with that of Nyangweso *et al.*, (2014) which indicated that most customers were satisfied with the attributes of tangibility though it was based on a small a sample size.

Table 9: Empathy Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Advocates	120	3.06	1.197
Children	466	3.08	1.298
Convicts	725	2.76	1.424
Remandees	420	2.47	1.514
Valid N (listwise)	96		

The overall statistical findings on empathy show the following from respondents. The advocates registered the mean of 3.06 and standard deviation of 1.197 while the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.08 and a standard deviation of 1.298 the convicts with a mean of 2.76 and standard deviation of 1.424 and the remandees' responses that registered a mean of 2.47 and standard deviation of 1.514. The level of agreement was low and inconsistent with that of Karitu & Oloo (2014) which found that empathy among other dimensions has a great impact on customers in the hotel industry.

Table 10: Responsiveness Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Advocates	125	3.24	1.298
Children	471	3.48	1.316
Convicts	736	2.72	1.465
Remandees	417	2.53	1.481
Valid N (listwise)	99		

The overall statistical findings on responsiveness show the following from respondents. The advocates registered the mean of 3.24 and standard deviation of 1.298 while the parties with pending children cases had a mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 1.316 the convicts with a mean of 2.726 and standard deviation of 1.465 and the remandees' responses that registered a mean of 2.53 and standard deviation of 1.481. This finding is inconsistent with the findings of Manani *et al.*, (2013), Auka *et al.*, (2013) and Martey and Frempong (2014) which revealed a significant relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction.

### Correlation Analysis

The correlation analyses evaluated the linear relationship between the service quality dimensions. Table 11 shows based on the dependent variable for the relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction.

Table 11: Correlations of Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Satisfaction

		Correlations					
		Reliability	Assurance	Tangibility	Empathy	Responsiveness	Satisfied
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	1497					
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	.564**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
	N	1446	1494				
Tangibility	Pearson Correlation	.018	.033	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.510	.219				
	N	1399	1400	1954			
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.092**	.089**	.040	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.103			
	N	1392	1387	1625	1748		
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.009	.058*	.025	.173**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.746	.031	.320	.000		
	N	1380	1376	1610	1623	1731	
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.031	.031	.034	.128*	.002	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.587	.587	.559	.025	.971	
	N	310	310	298	306	297	312

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

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A high correlation (0.564\*\*) was established between reliability and assurance followed by (0.092\*\*) which is a correlation between reliability and empathy, (0.089\*\*) between assurance and empathy and (0.058\*) between empathy and responsiveness. All these correlations were positive and not statistically significant as the p-values were less than 0.05. The study further reported a positive but weak correlation between responsiveness and customer satisfaction at (0.002), a correlation of (0.031) for reliability, assurance and customer satisfaction respectively. There was another weak correlation of (0.034) between tangibility and customer satisfaction. However, a fairly strong correlation was found between empathy and customer satisfaction. The study therefore found weak but positive relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction.

The correlations were only statistically significant for reliability and assurance for the correlations between reliability 0.587, assurance 0.587, responsiveness 0.971 and tangibility 0.559 with customer satisfaction since the (p-value) is more than (0.05) where the study failed to

reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no significant relationship between the four service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. However, there no statistically significant relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction at (0.025) which was less than  $p= 0.05$  and the study rejected the null hypothesis that there was a significant relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction. This finding was inconsistent with that of Cavana et al. (2007) found empathy among other service quality dimensions to have strong relationship with customer satisfaction.

Table 12: Regression of service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction analysis Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.140 <sup>a</sup>	.020	.005	.309	.020	1.381	4	276	.241

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

b. Dependent Variable: Satisfied

Table 12 presents the relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction and the results indicate that ( $R^2$ ) was 0.020 which meant that the service quality dimensions explained 2% of the variation in service quality dimensions with 98% of the variations remaining unexplained. The p-value = 0.241 which was more than 0.05 therefore qualified the study not to reject the null hypothesis but to reject the alternate hypothesis. That there was no significant relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction in judicial service at the Eldoret law courts. These findings were inconsistent with those of Lai (2004); Manani *et al.*, (2013); Auka *et al.*, (2013); Karitu & Oloo (2014); Nyangweso *et al.*, (2014) and Martey and Frempong (2014) who found a significantly positive relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Relationship between Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Satisfaction

Based on the descriptive statistics, customer service satisfaction was based on the services received at Eldoret Law courts as experienced by the categories of respondents namely advocates, children, remandees and convicts. The study of perceptions of service quality dimensions were used to measure the customer satisfaction and markedly, this study established that, all the service quality dimension had means that significantly varied between 4.50 and 2.31 from the likert scale of measurement.

The five questions used to measure reliability provided a mean of the highest satisfaction by the advocates at 3.90 compared to the remandees least satisfaction at 2.67. These means are far below the 4.5 threshold implying that service delivery in Eldoret law courts was less reliable. Out of the five questions used to measure assurance as a service quality dimension, the highest mean score was 3.88 from the advocates while the least average score of 2.31 from the remandees. These means were below the 4.5 satisfaction threshold meaning that customers' satisfaction levels were low based on this variable.

Considering the eight questions used in measuring tangibility, the highest mean score for this factor was 3.01 where the most satisfied of the respondents were parties with pending children cases and the least satisfied were remandees. These means fall below 4.5 level of expected satisfaction implying that the court's physical facilities were least visually appealing.

The average scores for the five questions used to measure empathy had the highest mean score of 3.08 by the parties with pending children cases while the lowest mean score was by remandees at 2.47. The means fall far below the 4.5 implying that employees at the Eldoret law court do not offer individualized customer service. Finally, the average mean score from the five questions used to measure responsiveness was 3.48 by parties with pending children cases compared to the remandees 2.53. The means fall far below the 4.5 implying that employees at the Eldoret law court do not provide prompt customer service. On average this study found that all the respondents were not satisfied with the quality of services rendered at Eldoret law courts and the remandees were the least satisfied as measured by the service quality model. The above findings clearly show that there is a relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. These findings were consistent with those of Lai (2004) who found a significantly positive relationship between satisfaction of customers and service quality dimensions of tangibles. These findings are consistent with those of Lai (2004); Manani *et al.*, (2013); Auka *et al.*, (2013); Karitu & Oloo (2014); Nyangweso *et al.*, (2014) and Martey and Frempong (2014) who found a significantly positive relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

The study assessed the quality of service delivery dimensions and their effect on customer satisfaction at Eldoret law courts. Generally, the responses to service quality dimensions used to measure the performance of the legal services provided at Eldoret law courts established that the customer satisfaction is relatively low. All items measuring the service quality dimensions gave an average score of less than 4.5. By comparing the average scores to the scale of

measurement, service performance is agreed by customers to be low to all the questions provided.

The services are not reliable meaning that there is a need to make the courts more reliable by ensuring that judicial officers and judiciary staff in this court perform the service right the first time. Secondly court fees should be reviewed as some respondents felt that they are unaffordable and the court ought to grant fair bond terms as some respondents felt that the court does not offer just bonds terms. Employees' behaviour is below expectations as customers are not given equal attention. The court's physical facilities are not attractive, appealing and friendly to the physically challenged. Equipment for service operations is not efficient.

Notwithstanding the low average scores on the level of service, performance varies from one dimension to the other. Among the dimensions, tangibility ranked first as the highest performance of the legal services. However Eldoret Law courts is inconsistent in the delivery of services as promised at every time and all time trying to be as inaccurate as possible with more error in record keeping. The courts procedures and processes are not digitized while calls, emails and letters from customers to this court are not answered promptly.

It can be concluded from the analysis that customers are not satisfied with the services of the Eldoret Law courts. However the differences between the scores require the Judiciary to revise its quality service strategy with particular attention to improve all the SERVQUAL dimensions to ensure customers satisfaction.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study has generally established that service quality and customer satisfaction are important determinants in sustaining the overall performance system of the judicial system. There are therefore some suggestions for the judiciary derived from the findings of this research to help improve customer satisfaction.

To improve service quality the judicial management should constantly monitor and improve all channels through which judicial services pass regularly. In that context, competence planning of employees is necessary by setting employees targets to be achieved daily so that it can be measured over judicial benchmarks. This can be enhanced through a regular Service Delivery Assessment framework by strengthening enquiries and suggestions from customers using the level of satisfaction based on service quality dimensions. Competence planning will help the judicial system in setting targets and measuring the performance by using a performance measurement tool and evaluate the amount of work employee can deliver each

day. This will inform the court about the areas that have been given less attention, so that plans and reforms can be made for improvement.

Lastly service quality dimension improvement is recommended especially where the service quality dimensions did not meet the customers' satisfaction. This requires enhancing employee motivation that is very critical to achieve the judicial service goals and objectives. The judicial service commission must appreciate the importance legal research and analysis on judicial service delivery which cannot be neglected on how other efficient systems work. Consequently, the judicial staff must always consider that a good customer service can eliminate the flaws or loop holes of overall service system.

This study had some limitations in that only one court that is Eldoret Law Courts was the only court studied, secondly not all court users were surveyed and out of the total 328 questionnaires, only 7 were not returned and 9 were rejected because they were either not filled entirely, had half-filled questions or were answered more than once. Lastly, the litigants with pending criminal cases and were either out on bond or had pending civil cases were important respondents for this study but were not studied and their satisfaction level could not be assessed.

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