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Service Quality, Price and Student Satisfaction in Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola. Adamawa State Nigeria

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Article Information

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ABSTRACT

Satisfying students is an important factor towards quality university education because students are the major customers of universities. This study analysed service quality, price and student satisfaction in Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola. The major objective is to assess the relationship between service quality, price and student satisfaction. The study used a sample size of 215 students from different departments and schools in the Modibbo Adama University of technology, Yola. The study analysed data using regression, Anova and independent t-test. The study found that tangibles, assurance and price were significantly associated with student satisfaction. The study recommends that management of Modibbo Adama University, Yola should engage qualified lecturers, universities should encourage departments to open student support services and management should consider continue with the current pricing.

Keywords: Service quality; price; student satisfaction; university.

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1. INTRODUCTION

University education is continuously being sought after by many individuals across the world. The desire for qualitative university education by individuals has drawn attention of scholars to examine the relationship between service quality and student satisfaction in universities [1,2,3]. Therefore, any undertaking to measure the quality of service in higher education could be diverse and complex. In attempting to measure perception of service quality by students, universities are confronted hv numerous measurement techniques. However, the major challenge is in the identification and implementation of the most suitable method for measuring service quality taking into cognisance the procedures and costs involved. In a typical higher institution of learning, there are different stakeholders. These include students, teaching and non-teaching staff, emplovers. government and its funding/supervisory agencies, auditors, and assessors, among others [4]. Consequently, each stakeholder has its own perspective on quality, which is in turn influenced by its own interest and goals. Of all the stakeholders, it is believed that the most significant customers of universities are students and their parents [2].

The quality of service in universities is of immense importance due to increase in the competition for applicants between universities. [5] argued that universities were increasingly engaging themselves to measure service quality in a professional way just like business organisations involved in services marketing. Increased competition and rapid changes in the educational environment coupled with numerous challenges have made universities to recognise the importance of student satisfaction to their survival. Hence. paying more attention on student satisfaction prepare universities to satisfy student needs and also enable them to develop a system for evaluating how effectively they meet or exceed such needs [6].

The Nigerian university system has gone through a lot of transformation since the establishment of the first university in 1948. Universities are now being established by the federal government, various state governments, faith-based organisations as well as private individuals all over the country. However, the Nigerian university system is besieged with numerous problems. These include: financial crisis, poor infrastructure, brain-drain, erosion of university autonomy, graduate unemployment, volatile and militant students' unionism, activities of secret cults, examination malpractices and sexual harassment [7]. Also, [8] contended that one major issue that has consequences on service quality in Nigerian universities is the inadequate number and quality of teachers. Analysing the problems from the perspective of universities of technology, [9] found that poor funding, inadequate and poor facilities, shortage of adequate and qualified academic staff. disproportionate class size and very little financial support to students in universities of technology in Nigeria, constitute major problems. These problems, coupled with the persistent rise in demand for university education led to the deregulation of the university system and the introduction of private universities. The main reason for licensing private universities in Nigeria is to among other things, increase access to university education, address the problem of scarce educational resources, raise alternative ways of funding university, improve the guality of university education, enhance efficiency, align with practice in other parts of the world and address the problem of irregular academic calendar [10-12]. It was expected that the deregulation of university education, which resulted in the licensing of new private universities will help address the myriad of problems being faced by the Nigerian university system. But it was soon discovered that deregulation also has its own resultant problems. For instance, private universities account for less than 7% of enrolment in Nigerian universities due to high tuition fees being charged by them [13]. Other problems include: profit-making motive, widening of social gap and sacrificing of quality for profits [12]. Given these challenges facing the university system in Nigeria, this study sets out to examine service quality and student satisfaction in Nigerian public universities using the Modibbo Adama University of Technology (MAUTECH), Yola, Adamawa State, Northeast Nigeria as a case study. Other authors like [12,9], have all carried out studies on quality in the Nigerian university system but none has focused on the combined effects of service quality and price in determining student satisfaction. Also, there has been no study that focuses exclusively on Adamawa state, Northeast Nigeria. Consequently, this study will also attempt to investigate the combined effects of both service quality and pricing on student satisfaction.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

- 1. To asses' relationship between service quality and student satisfaction of Modibbo Adama university of technology, Yola.
- To asses relationship between price and student satisfaction of Modibbo Adama University of technology Yola.
- 3. To reveal the gender difference in satisfaction among students of Modibbo Adama university of technology, Yola.

1.2 Statement of Hypotheses

The study will test the following hypotheses:

- H_{01:} Tangibles and student satisfaction of Modibbo Adama university of technology are not significantly related.
- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between reliability and student satisfaction of Modibbo Adama University of technology, Yola.
- H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between responsiveness and student satisfaction of Modibbo Adama University of technology, Yola.
- H₀₄: Assurance and student satisfaction of Modibbo Adama University of technology, Yola are not significantly related
- H₀₅: Empathy and student satisfaction of Modibbo Adama University of technology,Yola are not significantly related.
- H₀₆: There is no significant relationship between price and student satisfaction of Modibbo Adama University of technology, Yola.
- H₀₇: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction between student gender of Modibbo Adama University of technology, Yola.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Service quality could be defined as a reflection of the customer's perception of specific dimensions of services being provided by an organisation. [14]. [15], service quality has been defined as consumer attitude showing his perception of the overall superiority and excellence of a service provider. [16] argued that [17] were perhaps the first to define service quality as a measure of how well the level of service being delivered meets the expectations of the customer. There is a distinction between expected quality and perceived quality. In the context of customer satisfaction, perceived quality is always given considerable thought. According to [18], perceived quality is defined as "the consumer's judgment about an entity's overall experience or superiority". Thus, perceived quality is the customer's interpretation of the quality of service being received. Service quality could also be measured from past experiences. [19] state that "past experience provides a brief cognitive standard and helps in evaluating the standard of service quality of present and/or future service encounters".

Satisfaction has also been defined from various perspectives. For example, [20] define satisfaction as a state felt by a person who has experienced the performance of duty or a result that meets his expectations. [21] defines satisfaction as "the consumer's fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under or over fulfilment". This implies that satisfaction could be negative or positive. [22] state that "satisfaction is an ongoing, dynamic process". Thus, customer satisfaction can be achieved during the process of the consumption of the service, and not only after it has been consumed.

2.1 Service Quality and Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is a very important issue for all universities and their managements since it is used to measure quality. However, many quality experts believe that the measurement of student satisfaction at higher education institution is arguably one of the biggest challenges facing managers [23]. The university is an educational and a service providing entity, where the service is often produced and consumed at the same time. Therefore, university managements must consider how the quality of their services is being perceived by students and how the level of satisfaction of students is being enhanced by these services. In educational institutions like other service providing organisations, service quality has an impact on customer satisfaction [24]. In some cases, the dissemination of the right or the wrong information affects the expectations of quality. If what is communicated to the customer, does not match the experience, the result will be a negative perception of quality [25].

Parasuraman et al. [15] introduced the SERVQUAL scale. SERVQUAL stands for service quality. SERVQUAL is based on the assumption that there is a gap between expectations of the customer and perceptions of performance of the service. It has two parts with 22 items divided into five dimensions namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles.

The SERVQUAL scale has been utilised by some scholars in carrying out studies on student's satisfaction with varying results. According [3], social and physical factors of an institution's services could significantly influence the degree of attractiveness and the students' overall satisfaction. Social factors consist of student-faculty members' relationships, studentadministration members' relationships and student-student relationships. The physical factors represent the class size and the environment, technology used during the lectures, library and computer laboratory, wi-fi connections in the campus, cafeteria and all student related service facilities.

Pereda et al. [2], carried out a study on service quality and student satisfaction. The study focused on full-fee-paying postgraduate students from non-EU countries at one institution in the UK. A Q-sort and factor analysis were undertaken. Results of the study revealed that four factors of service quality: recognition; quality of instruction and interaction with faculty; sufficiency of resources; and aspects of physical quality play significant roles in student satisfaction. Students were also found to have attached much importance to their institution's reputation.

Hanaysha et al. [26] conducted a study on service quality and students in Malaysian universities. The findings generally indicate that the majority of students are satisfied with the facilities provided by universities and there was a strong correlation between all the five dimensions of service quality and student satisfaction.

Ali and Abdirisaq [27] carried out a study on student satisfaction in three universities in Mogadishu using both purposive and stratified sampling techniques. The result showed that there is a positive significant relationship between SERVQUAL dimensions and students' satisfaction. It was also found that empathy recorded a significant relationship with student's satisfaction.

Kontic [28] investigated the potential to apply the SERVPERF scale for assessing service quality in Serbia. The response of the students revealed that the most important dimensions were Assurance and Reliability, followed by Responsiveness and Empathy.

2.2 Price and Student Satisfaction

Price is any amount exchanged for the consumption of a commodity. [29] stated that the customer's perceived price can be considered to be what is given up or sacrificed to get a product or service. [30] defined price as the amount of money exchanged for a product or service, or the sum of the values that customers exchange for the benefits of acquiring the product or service. The price of the service can have a significant influence on customer's perceptions of quality and satisfaction.

Some scholars have carried out studies on the price and relationship between student satisfaction. For instance, [31] studied school quality, school cost, and the public/private school choices of low-income households in Pakistan and the result showed that even the poorest households use private schools extensively, and that patronage of private schools increases with increase in income. [32], using data on all U.S. public 4-year colleges and universities from 1991 to 2006, found that a \$100 increase in tuition and fees would lead to a decline in enrolment of about 0.25 percent. They also found little evidence that large tuition increases result in disproportionate enrolment responses. [33] carried out a study of education financing reforms in Nigeria and the results indicated that the household demand for university education is inelastic meaning increase in tuition fees/other charges does not significantly affect enrolments.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in higher educational institutes has attracted some scholars (3, 2 16). However, the framework of this study was based on modified SERVQUAL. [15] introduced the SERVQUAL scale. SERVQUAL has two parts with 22 items divided into five dimensions namely tangibles, reliability,



Fig. 1. Theoretical framework Source: Modified from Parasuraman et al. [15]

responsiveness, assurance and empathy. SERVQUAL defines five dimensions for service quality as follows:

- Reliability is the level to which the knowledge, skills learned and services are offered accurately and timely.
- (2) Assurance encompasses the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence to customers.
- (3) Responsiveness is the willingness to assist customers and provide prompt service. In difficult situations, it could be regarded as the ability to respond effectively.
- (4) Empathy refers to the attention and care that the institution may offer to customers as well as convenient operating hours.
- (5) Tangibles symbolises the appearance of buildings, equipment, and staff.
- (6) Price is introduced into the modified SERVQUAL for this study.

SERVQUAL scale has been extensively used in measuring service quality in higher education, for example, [34,16,35,27]. However, as stated earlier, this study utilises the modified SERVQUAL in which a new variable (Price) is introduced into the model. Consequently, the theoretical framework of this study is illustrated in Fig. 1 above.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The research design is confirmatory research through hypotheses testing. The study attempt to confirm the theoretical relationship between the independent and the dependent variable of the study. The study utilized regression, Anova and independent T-test to analyse the result.

This study adopts the survey method of research design. Cross-sectional primary data were through the administration obtained of questionnaire to students of Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola. The research instrument was designed using components of the SERVQUAL, instead of the 22 items, the researcher used 26 items and 4 items for pricing to cover the specific of university situation. Respondents were required to tick appropriate answers designed on a five-point Likert scale. "STRONGLY AGREE" Ranging from to **"STRONGLY** DISAGREE". Normality, collinearity, linearity and homoscedasticity were checked and found to be within the range to run regression. The model for the research was developed using regression analysis.

Regression model:

Where;

SS = Student Satisfaction TG = Tangible RE = Reliability RP = Responsiveness AS = Assurance EP = Empathy PR = Pricing

The regression equation is expressed as:

$$\hat{Y} = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3$$
, where

 \hat{Y} is the dependent variable and a (Alpha) is the constant or intercept.

 X_1 , X_2 , X_3 etc. are the independent variables and b_1, b_2, b_3 etc are the coefficient of the independent variables.

The variables employed in multiple regression are SS as dependent variable and TG, RE, RP, AS, EP, and PR as independent variable in testing the hypotheses

$$SS = \alpha + \beta_1 TG + \beta_2 RE + \beta_3 RP + \beta_4 AS + \beta_5 EP + \beta_6 PR + e$$

e is the error term.

4.1 Sample Size and Sample Technique

The researcher distributed 250 questionnaires and 230 were received out of which 15 was substantially unfilled, so the study used 215 respondents. The study used stratified random sampling techniques, the basis for strata was department and level of students.

4.2 Source of Data

The study used primary source of data. Data were obtained through the administration of questionnaire to students of Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola. The research instrument was partly adopted from [15] the SERVQUAL and adjusted to fit the area of the study and pricing aspect was drawn based on indepth analysis of available literature. Respondent were required to tick appropriate scale designed on a five point Likert scale. The auestionnaire is divided into three segments, section A contains the demographic data, and section B contains questions on the six independent variables while the last segment contains questions on satisfaction (independent variable).

5. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 shows the reliability of the research variables. Many scholars have argued what constitute a strong and weak reliability values, for example [36] pointed out that 0.70 cronbachs alpha value indicates a strong of reliability value and 0.35 indicates a low value. However, [37] observed that the minimum criterion for Cronbachs Alpha is 0.60.

Table 1. Reliability values for service quality, price and satisfaction

Construc	ct Reliability
TG	0.786
RE	0.731
RP	0.698
AS	0.778
EP	0.822
PR	0.759
SS	0.737
	Source: Field Survey, 2015

Source: Field Survey, 201

5.1 Analysis of Combined Effect

The Table 3 shows multiple correlation coefficient (R) 0.602 and the R square 0.363 that our independent variables explain 36.3% of the variability of our dependent variable. Also the Table 3 shows the independent variables statistically significantly predicts the dependent variable, F=19.717, P<0.005 (i.e. the regression model is a good fit for the data).

	SS	TG	RE	RP	AS	EP	PR
SS	1						
TG	0.396**						
RE	0.464**	0.448 ^{**}					
RP	0.457**	0.455**	0.561**				
AS	0.516**	0.372**	0.587**	0.609**			
EP	0.421**	0.353**	0.457 ^{**}	0.529**	0.538 ^{**}		
PR	0.233**	0.153**	0.178 ^{**}	0.104 ^{**}	0.217 ^{**}	0.078 ^{**}	
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.025	0.009	0.128	0.001	0.257	
Ν	215	215	215	215	215	215	215
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

Table 2. Correlations

Source: Field Survey, 2014

5.2 Test of Hypothesis 1

To test hypothesis 1 which states that there is no significant relationship between TG (tangibles) and (SS) student satisfaction in Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola. The outcome of multiple regression in Table 3 indicates a significant relationship between TG and SS, with P-Value 0.0027 which is < 0.05. This further explained that student of Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola were satisfied with the buildings, equipment's and the staff of the University.

The findings of this result is in line with the result in the findings of [2] which shows that physical quality plays a significant role in student satisfaction. It is also in line with [26,27] that there is strong correlation between Tangible and student satisfaction. The satisfaction of the student with TG is no doubt an obvious phenomenon considering high intervention by Nigerian government in university education in terms of funding that translate into building, equipment and staff development through Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND).

5.3 Test of Hypothesis 2

In testing hypothesis 2, which states that, there is no significant relationship between (RE) reliability and (SS) student satisfactions in Modibbo Adama university of Technology Yola. The result of multiple regression in Table 3 showed that students are not satisfied significantly with reliability construct in university education with P-Value of 0.084 which is > 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. The findings on RE is contrary to the findings of [27,28] that shows student were satisfied with RE construct.

5.4 Test of Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 states that, there is no significant relationship between (RP) responsiveness and (SS) student satisfaction. The result revealed that there is no significant relationship between RP and SS. This can be seen in Table 4, where tested statistical P- Value is 0.207 which is > 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states there is no significant relationship between the two variables is accepted. The findings is contrary to the findings of [27] that students are satisfied with service quality dimension in University education.

Table 5. Wodel Summary and ANOVA Statistics							
Model 1	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sig.
Summary	.602 ^a 7 ^a	0.363	0.344		-		
Regression				59.503	9.917	19.717	0.000 ^a
Residual				104.620	0.503		
Total				214			

Table 3. Model summary^b and ANOVA^b statistics

a. Predictors: (Constant), PL, PR, PM, PE, PD, PP, PC b. Dependent Variable: SS

Table 4. Standard coefficient result of the co	combined effect of variables
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Model		Unstanda	rdized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	Т —	Sig.
		В	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.566	0.276		2.051	0.042
	ŤG	0.170	0.076	0.145	2.227	0.027
	RE	0.142	0.082	0.130	1.737	0.084
	RP	0.105	0.083	0.099	1.267	0.207
	AS	0.266	0.090	0.234	2.967	0.003
	EP	0.120	0.068	0.123	1.762	0.079
	PR	0.108	0.053	0.117	2.052	0.041

a. Dependent Variable: SS

 $SS = \alpha + \beta_1 TG + \beta_2 RE + \beta_3 RP + \beta_4 AS + \beta_5 EP + \beta_6 PR + e$

SS = 0.566 + 0.170TG + 0.142RE + 0.105RP + 0.266AS + 0.120EP + 0.108PR + e

5.5 Test of Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 states that there is no significant relationship between (AS) assurance and (SS) student satisfaction. The multiple regression result revealed that there is significant relationship between AS and satisfaction since the statistical value of P is 0.003 which is < 0.05 as shown on Table 4 above. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This findings is associated with the findings of [26-28] of relevance of AS in SS.

5.6 Test of Hypothesis 5

In testing hypothesis 5, which states that EP (Empathy) and SS (student satisfaction) of Modibbo Adama University of technology, Yola are not significantly related. The statistical result in Table 4 shows that, the null hypothesis is maintained with p=0.079 which is > 0.05. None satisfaction of students on empathy dimension may be due to decades of strikes and crises in Nigerian university which eroded the mutual relationship between students and staff.

5.7 Test of Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 states that there is no significant relationship between (PR) price and (SS) student

satisfaction. Multiple regression was used in testing the hypothesis and the result indicates that there is relationship between PR and SS with statistical value of P=0.041 which is < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Pricing in Nigerian public universities especially to citizen are not exorbitant considering is not up to 10% of what private universities are charging as So, student being satisfied tuition fees. with pricing is the reflection of the low tuition fees and other charges. The findings reflects the findings of [32] that increase in tuition fees will lead to decline in satisfaction and ultimately decline in enrolment. Although, [31,33] that high tuition/ other charges does not dsignificantly affects satisfaction and enrolment.

5.8 Test of Hypothesis 7

The hypothesis 7 that states there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among gender. The study found that there is no significant mean difference between male and female students with university education satisfaction. As indicated with statistical values of 0.497 and 0.502 which are > 0.05, this can be seen in Table 6. Therefore, in hypothesis 7, the null hypothesis is maintained.

Table 5. Group statistics

	Gender	Ν	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
SS	Male	113	3.3805	.76408	.07188
	Female	102	3.2990	.98694	.09772

	Levene's test for equality of variances				t-tes	t for equali	ty of means		
	F	Sig.	т	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	95% cor interva differ	nfidence Il of the rence
								Lower	Upper
SS Equal variances assumed	7.638	.006	.681	213	.497	.08151	.11976	15455	.31757
Equal variances not assumed			.672	189.760	.502	.08151	.12131	15778	.32080

Table 6. Independent samples test

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6. CONCLUSION

Service quality in Nigeria universities has become a serious issue considering the complaint of stake holders on poor quality of graduate being produced by Nigerian public universities despite enormous high investment by government in the tertiary institution. This study has analysed the satisfaction derived by customers (students) in terms of quality of services rendered by Modibbo Adama University Technology, Yola through of modified SERVQUAL which included price. The study drew some implications for management to form the basis for policy and strategy in order to improve the quality of services rendered in Nigeria universities.

7. MANAGEMENT IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Management of the university should ensure more components of tangibles are enhanced even though the relationship between tangible and student satisfaction is significant, the correlation is not strong.

Management of Modibbo Adama University of technology needs to establish a strong base for students to feel services rendered to them as customers are reliable. As the result showed reliability and student satisfaction relationship is not significant, more needs to be done in places like having qualified lecturers, adhering to university calendar and insisting in error free record.

Management should ensure that lecturers are willing to help students, lecturers should never be too busy to respond to students and lecturers should always stick to their lecture time tables.

Assurance showed significant relationship with student satisfaction. Therefore university management should try more to maintain components of assurance to keep satisfying students.

The university should encourage departments to appoint student support officers in order to hasten friendly relationship between students and staff. The university authorities should also create more convenient operating hours for student.

Finally, the result indicated that students are satisfied with pricing in the university. Therefore

management should maintain the present trend in pricing.

8. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research work used small sample size, there is need in the future to expand the sample size. Also, the study was conducted in only one public university therefore there is a need to broaden the population to involve students of many other universities.

The study has not looked at the differences in variation among students in different levels and age, so future studies can analyse that.

9. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The researcher has not come across a work on assessing student satisfaction with university education in Nigeria using SERVQUAL or modified SERVQUAL, therefore the study has field the gap. Also, this study has contributed to cycle of literature on understanding the quality of services rendered in Nigerian public university, especially using modified SERVQUAL.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDIX

	Tangibles
٠	The school has modern and latest facilities/ equipment.
•	The school's physical features are visually appealing.
•	Lecturer/staff are neat in appearance
•	The school has good hostel accommodation
•	The school has good sporting facilities
•	Library has latest books and journals in your area
	Reliability
•	The school adheres to its academic calendar
•	When you have a problem, the school shows a sincere interest in solving it.
•	Lecturers respect lectures and exams schedules.
•	Courses are thought by highly knowledgeable lecturers
•	The school insists on error free records.
	Responsiveness
•	Lecturers/staff in the school tell you exactly when the services will be performed
•	The lecturers stick to their lecture Time.
•	Lecturers/staff in the school are always willing to help you.
•	Lecturers/staff in the school are never too busy to respond to your request.
	Assurance
•	The behaviour of lecturers/staff in the school instils confidence in you.
•	The Lecturers/staff of the school do not indulge in corrupt practices.
•	Lecturers/staff in the school are consistently courteous with students.
•	The lecturers/faculty has the intellectual capability to impart knowledge.
•	Students are not subjected to sexual harassment.
•	The school has a well-developed curriculum.
	Empathy
•	The school gives you individual attention.
•	The school has operating hours convenient to all students.
•	The school has lecturers/staff who give you personal attention.
•	The school has your best interests at heart.
•	The Lecturers/staff of the school understand your specific needs.
	Price
•	The school charges affordable tuition fees
٠	Accommodation is affordable
•	Prices of essential commodities are subsidized
•	Generally the cost of living in the campus is low
	Student satisfaction
•	You consider your school as the first choice.
•	You have been saying positive things about your school.
•	Lecturers/staff are doing excellent work.

- If given another chance, you will enroll in this school again. •

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