

Service Quality Evaluation: A Systems Thinking Approach

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ABSTRACT Institutions of higher learning have introduced innovative strategies to attract and retain fee paying students. One of the strategies has been the rendering of a quality service to a student-centred environment. The goal of this paper is to report on the use of Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) and Critical Systems Heuristics (CSH) techniques in gaining a greater understanding of the issues associated with evaluation of service quality at a university in South Africa. The study adopts a qualitative paradigm whereby an action research approach was implemented. A purposive convenience sampling technique was chosen and the findings of the study revealed that the participants had gained a greater understanding of the issues associated with evaluation of service quality via the use of the techniques employed in the study. The contribution of this paper is in the demonstration of SSM and CSH techniques applied and the lessons learned from the application thereof.