

Some years ago I carried out a research project on public service quality. The research was designed to show whether the investments in the new public service reforms were justified. The argument was that public service departments should deliver good public service; and the better the public service, the better the public service organization. I used the SERVQUAL instrument to measure public service quality in the new public service agencies and the traditional public service agencies. The expectation was that we would register better public service quality in the new public service agencies, and for the most part the results demonstrated that this is true. However, there was one significant and surprising result. Public service clients thought that they got superior service from the revenue collection agencies!

There are several possible explanations to that expected result. First, it is possible that the research design was flawed. On reflection, I willing to concede that there were some deficiencies in the research design, but it is was so flawed as to give an incorrect result. Second, as the SERVQUAL instruments measures expectations and perceptions of service quality, users of the revenue collection services may have had such low expectations of these departments that every service they receive is perceived to exceed their expectations.

Finally, maybe the revenue collections do provide better public service quality!

Used the revenue collection services today to finalize the income tax returns and complete the payment of taxes. As usual, I thought that I spent too much time in the line to complete the payments. Other than that, however, the service was rather good.