

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ON THE QUALITY OF JUDICIAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY COURTS IN KANO METROPOLIS

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DOI:

ABSTRACT

Many citizens seem to be unhappy and dissatisfied with the quality of judicial services provided by courts in Nigeria. This paper aims at obtaining public perceptions on the quality of judicial services provided by the courts in Kano metropolis and examines how members of the public belonging to different gender, social classes and educational backgrounds vary in terms of their perception on the quality of judicial services provided by the courts in Nigeria. Efforts are made to identify the major problems bedeviling the courts. The target groups used were males and females adult residents of Kano metropolis and a sample size of 208 was drawn. Multi stage cluster sampling method was used in selecting the respondents, structured questionnaires were administered to 200 respondents; and in-depth interview was conducted on 2 judicial officers, 1 police prosecutor, 2 plaintiffs, 2 defendants, and 1 inmate awaiting trial that were selected using purposive sampling technique. The quantitative data were processed using the SPSS and frequencies, percentages and chi-square value obtained in the analysis. The qualitative data were used to complement the quantitative data gathered. The study reveals that the public have negative perceptions on the quality of judicial services provided by Nigerian courts. This is mainly due to rampant corruption and failure of the judicial personnel to adhere to professional ethics. Variation was discovered among the respondents belonging to different gender as females expressed more dissatisfaction with the quality of judicial services provided by courts than their male counterparts. However, no significant relationship was found among the respondents in terms of their perceptions and their social class or level of education. It was also discovered that corruption was the major problem that accounted for the public dissatisfaction with the quality of judicial services provided by these courts. The paper, thus, recommends that for quality judicial services to be provided by Nigerian courts, the problem of bribery and corruption must be tackled via close monitoring of the judicial personnel; that thorough vetting of the candidates seeking for employment into the Nigerian courts should be made; and that proper sanctioning mechanisms and modern techniques for investigating office abuse by the judicial personnel be provided.

Keywords: Public Perceptions, Quality Judicial Services, Courts, Judicial Personnel