

ABSTRACT

Public Service Quality in Jamaica's Executive Agencies: An investigation of the Dissonance between Employees' and Customers' Perceptions

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Since the implementation of the executive agency concept, *agencification*, in the Jamaican public service, there have been mixed responses to questions regarding the level of service delivery in these executive agencies. This thesis examines whether there is congruence between the perceptions of the employees of Jamaica's executive agencies and their customers regarding the agencies' service quality. This mixed method study takes into account the views of the agencies' customers, lower level employees and senior managers. Using a modified SERVQUAL instrument, both employees and customers of the executive agencies were surveyed with both groups asked to give their perception of service quality in the agencies. Further, in-depth interviews with the agencies' senior managers were conducted with a view to addressing specific questions regarding the feasibility and continuity of this approach. This thesis finds that there is dissonance between the perceptions of the employees and customers regarding service quality. There are significantly more employees than customers who rated the agencies' service as 'good'. This dissonance suggests that improving service quality in Jamaica's public service entities may be more challenging than anticipated, if the gaps are not identified and business processes created or adjusted to close these gaps. This thesis has identified the areas of service quality within each agency that requires either intermediate or immediate attention. While managers of the agencies are of the view that the executive agency approach has yielded some successes, they are concerned that current actions by government may overturn these successes or hamper future success.

Keywords: Phillipa Ann Campbell; congruence; dissonance; employees; customers; service quality; executive agencies.