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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC STAFF SERVICE QUALITY IN ETHIOPIA: A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS, MEKELLE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made in the present study to explore, analyze, and measure students' perception on their academic staff service quality in the College of Business and Economics (CBE), Mekelle University, as well as to identify the dimensions that determine the students' evaluation of service quality. Moreover, the relationship between service quality, student satisfaction, propensity to recommend and students switching intention was examined. A total of 287(out of 327 sample) students both from the day, summer, and evening academic programs were responding the SERVQUAL instrument. After the reliability and validity test, hypotheses were tested. Its finding revealed that students' expectation was not met; assurance, empathy, and outcome dimensions as the most predictors of students' overalls service satisfaction; overall satisfaction had positive significant impact on their propensity to recommend and switching intention; and assurance is rated as the most important dimension and tangible as the least important. The study also suggested that service assessment be repeated from time to time for continuous service improvement through cooperative venture between students and academic staffs. Generalization to the university as a whole may not be legitimate. This study provides insights into the measurement of administrative service perceptions.

KEY WORDS

Expectations, Perceptions, Satisfaction, SERVQUAL, Quality.

INTRODUCTION

Service quality is defined in the marketing literature as *a post-consumption evaluation of services by consumers that compare expectations with perceptions of performance* (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Service quality evaluations are based on the manner in which the service was delivered (*i.e.*, functional quality) and what outcome resulted from that service (*i.e.*, technical quality) (Gronroos, 1993). For the purpose of this study, academic staff service quality is defined as students' perceptions on academic staff service performance regarding both functional and technical quality.

Service quality is about meeting customers' needs and requirements, and how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations (Bhat, 2004). Offering superior solutions for customers needs becomes a prerequisite to provide a sustainable competitive advantage for a firm, and being customer-focused is a prime imperative for a firm, whether the firm is a manufacturing or service provider (Morison and Davis, 2004). Therefore, an educational institution needs to differentiate itself from competitors in order to compete effectively in the marketplace. The use of marketing in this context is very helpful to educational institutions.

Marketing can serve society if its true meaning is applied. According to Krachenberg (1972) marketing deals with the concept of uncovering specific needs, satisfying these needs by the development of appropriate goods and services, letting people know of their availability, and offering them at appropriate prices, at the right time and place. Although some educators may be concerned with the business orientation of marketing, this definition shows how marketing can perform a service to society. The major question, however, ought to be "what makes one service provider stand out in the mind of the consumer over the others providing similar services?" Berry and Parasuraman (1992) argued that the strategic success of a service organization depends on the ability of service providers to enhance their images by consistently meeting or exceeding customers' service expectations. The measuring of consumer perceptions as to the level of service quality therefore becomes critical.

Services present special challenges for institutions of higher learning, i.e., the most intangible one, which must be identified and addressed. These challenges are inability to inventory, difficulty in matching demand and supply, and challenges in controlling the performance quality of human interactions due to encounters and inseparability of service production and consumption. The attraction, retention, and building of strong student relationships through quality service should be at the heart of the institution's system to defy such emerging service challenges. Moreover, there must be an integrated customer focus across the firm: all strategies should be developed with an eye on the student, all implementations should be carried out with an understanding of their impact on the student, and all monitoring and evaluation as well as student solutions should be made from the student point of view.

In the area of higher education, where they are accountable to their constituents, universities and faculties have been striving to provide high quality services because they need to compete for their students. Measuring the quality of their services using appropriate model adapted to the education context is therefore an important task, especially for those institutions that give a feed back on the dimensions of quality, because it offers them the possibility for significant competitive advantages in the knowledge market. It has been noted that most of the quality models that are commonly practiced in the business world have been adopted and used in the education sector as discussed in the following section (2.2).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

PARADIGM SHIFT IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

Earlier research has demonstrated that consumers were reluctant to complain about poor professional service, such as education, but these same consumers are becoming increasingly more value conscious. There is mounting pressure from the customers of higher education, which include students, parents, alumni, employers and legislators, to close the widening gap between their expectations of institutional performance and the actual performance (Brigham, 1994; Gronhaug and Arndt, 1980; Quelch and Ash, 1981). This indicates how imperative it is for institutions of higher learning to actively monitor the quality of their services and commit to continuous improvements in an effort to respond to the needs of the institutional constituencies.

Ballard (1986) at a "Conference on Education as an International Commodity," argued that it would be in the universities' interests to alter their product to suit the market in order to be successful. Universities are expected to change to meet students' needs and students in their identity as customers will have expectations and perceptions of quality service. However, the very complexity of higher education is an obstacle for students trying to make reasoned judgments on which to base expectations, this in turn makes it difficult to analyze how satisfaction can be achieved. Even so, identification of students as customers has implications for the treatment of students. A university as a service provider needs to uncover students' expectations, and then if necessary, educate students to have appropriate expectations and then actually deliver even better service than promised.

The current climate in tertiary education places students as primary consumers. As Darlaston-Jones et al. (2003) explained students are becoming more conscious of their customer rights and of gaps between their expectations of service delivery and the reality of that service. This service gap presents a quality assurance challenge and it is also likely to contribute to student attrition. For example, in 2003, Darlaston-Jones et al. noted that the Australian universities have undergone a major transition in the past decade as they have moved from public to a greater emphasis on private funding, and re-invested themselves as business enterprises. Furthermore, students are viewing themselves as consumers and are demanding value for money in their education.

SERVQUAL MODEL FOR SURVEYING PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

Managing quality in the education context should be handled differently from that of manufacturing or other service industries (Madu and Kuei, 1993). Most of the quality models that are commonly practiced in the business world have been adapted to suit an educational context and used in the education sector. For example, the Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy, where one of the fundamental principles of TQM is customer satisfaction, has been applied to schools and colleges in the UK, USA and in Asian countries such as Malaysia (Barnard, 1999; Kanji and Tambi, 1998, 1999). In addition, Chua (2004) said that tertiary institutions were using the quality practices such as the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) excellence model, ISO 9000, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), Singapore Quality Award (SQA), School Excellence Model (SEM), and the Service Quality (SERVQUAL). Moreover, Cronin and Taylor (1992) advanced the use of Service Performance (SERVPERF) and Teas (1993) proposed Evaluated Performance (EP). These all models embrace the philosophy of TQM that has been modified for the education environment.

Researches made on quality of education indicated that the tertiary education institutions are critically examining the student, academic staff and administrative staff service satisfaction on the basis of the gap between their service expectation and service perception (Darlaston-Jones et al., 2003; Pariseau and McDaniel, 1997; Petruzzellis et al., 2006; Sherry et al., 2004; Soutar and McNeil, 1996; Waugh, 2001) as recommended by the Parasuraman et al. (1988). SERVQUAL becomes the most popular service quality methodology, adapted and widely applied to measure the quality in the education context. Moolla and DuPlessis (2001) described the SERVQUAL model as being customer-oriented because it is concerned with the experiences and the needs of the customer.

SERVQUAL is a questionnaire designed to measure service quality that has been developed, refined and tested in the business area since 1985. The consumers of any service want to have the provider meet their expectations in the areas of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. These five dimensions represent the determinants of the perception of service quality on the part of the consumer. The five suggested service quality dimensions are (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003):

1. Tangibles (physical facilities, equipment, appearance of personnel),
2. Reliability (ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately),
3. Responsiveness (willingness to help and provide prompt service),
4. Assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire confidence), and
5. Empathy (caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers).

Kettinger and Lee (1995) underlined that while versions of SERVQUAL continue to be critiqued and improved (Cronin and Taylor, 1994), it stands as the pre-eminent instrument for assessment and measurement of perceived service quality. Carden and DelliFraine (2004) also claimed that the SERVQUAL satisfaction survey instrument is one of the most widely used techniques for obtaining quantitative measures of customer satisfaction in the United States. Customers assess service quality by comparing their expectations of service with their perceptions of service received (Wisniewski, 2001b). The difference between the customer perceptions and expectations is referred as the satisfaction gap (Parasuraman, et al., 1988).

There is evidence in the educational literature that pharmacy students use educational outcomes to evaluate the schools they attend. Fjortoft and Lee (1994) found student perceptions of their intellectual development (*i.e.*, an educational outcome which describes self evaluations of knowledge and skill gained and their relevance to student career goals) to be an important variable in student assessments of their school experiences. For these reasons, it is important that any instrument that assesses the service quality of education should assess both technical and functional quality. Therefore, this study employed SERVQUAL model using six dimensions: the Parasuraman et al's five-service quality dimensions (i.e., functional quality) and Gronroos's sixth dimension called technical quality (i.e., outcome) that are customized for higher learning institution. Both students' service expectations and perceptions are collected and analyzed. In addition, the service quality and service satisfaction is conceptualized and operationalized as follows based on the related literature discussed above:

Service Quality = ƒ (Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, Outcome)

$$S = \alpha + \beta_1 (T) + \beta_2 (Rl) + \beta_3 (Rs) + \beta_4 (A) + \beta_5 (E) + \beta_6 (O) + e_t \quad (1)$$

Where, S = overall satisfaction

α = Constant; β_i = Coefficient of the dimensions of quality

T = Tangible; Rl = Reliability; Rs = Responsiveness; A = Assurance;

E = Empathy; O = Outcome; e_t = Error term

Service Satisfaction = ƒ (Perception (P) – Expectation (E))

$$S = \sum_{j=1}^{k} (P_{ij} \_ E_{ij}) \quad (2)$$

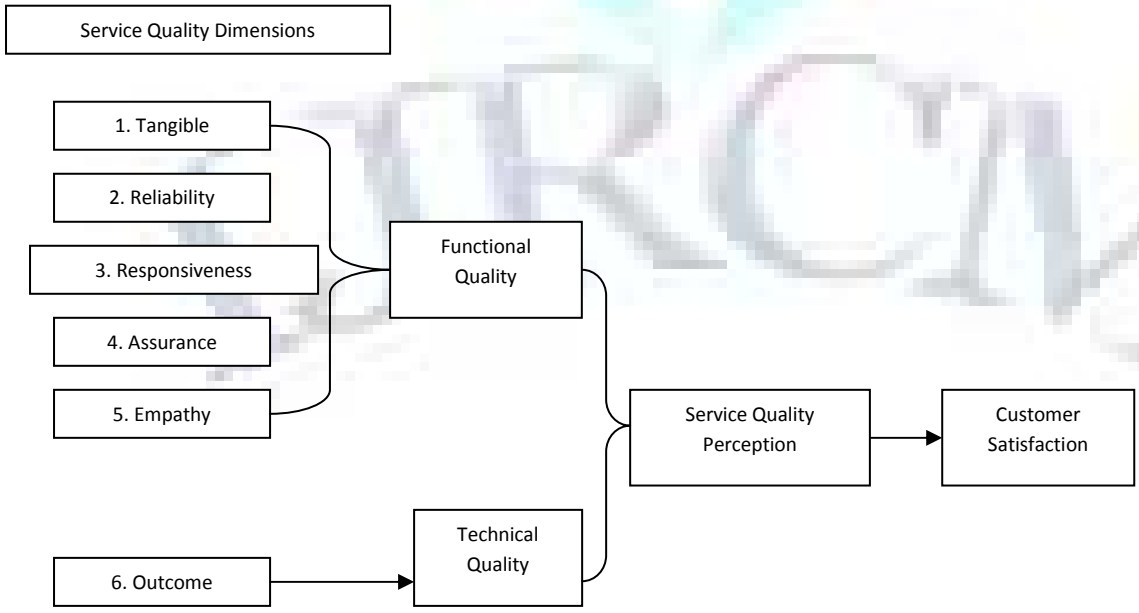
Where, S = Overall service satisfaction; k= number of attributes.

P_{ij} = Performance perception of stimulus i with respect to attribute j.

E_{ij} = Service quality expectation for attribute j that is the relevant norm for stimulus i.

P > E = Satisfaction; P < E = Dissatisfaction; and P = E, neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction.

FIGURE 1: SERVICE QUALITY AND SATISFACTION MODEL



Source: Adapted from Kang and James (2004)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING SERVQUAL

Student retention has received increased attention as competition for students has escalated among colleges and universities. It is important to measure service quality and use the tools of continuous improvement since service quality and student satisfaction are important factors in student retention. Coate (1990) explained quality as what our customers tell us it is, not what we say it is. Progress can only be determined and improved by measurement. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) argued that most students are in School to learn what they do not know. However, not knowing the subjects they are studying does not prevent them from making judgments about their professors. Cues such as the tangibles accompanying the service (overheads and other presentation materials), the professor's appearance of nervousness, degree of confidence communicated, or even whether the professor starts and ends class on time, are used to infer competence. Thus, this section is dedicated to present some of the research findings in the area of students' academic service quality perceptions (i.e., faculty's in-out of class services).

Chua (2004) has assessed the perception of quality in higher education of the School of Business Management, Ryerson University, Toronto-Canada, using the **input-process-output** (IPO) framework. This study supported the fact that different groups of customer have different perspectives of quality. Students' perspective of quality falls into mainly the process (46.56%) and output (46.56%); parents seemed to think that quality should be in terms of input (46.52%) and output (46.52%); faculty's' perspective of quality focus on all aspects of their activities, i.e., input-process-output; and the employers considered quality in terms of process (41.27%) and output (58.73%). The students gave most of the suggestions of improvement pertaining to the process of the education system to achieve quality output. Some of the suggestions mentioned were caring professor, provision for various support services for students, provision for a variety of advising services, participation in curriculum design, and encouragement for lifelong learning. They also noted that there is a large variation in terms of quality teaching, such as contents, feedback, and assessments to inspire learning. For most quality dimensions, students expect more than what they perceive the school would provide. Using the paired t-test, this study indicated that all dimensions except reliability were significant. Moreover, the study showed that all the quality dimensions are primarily related to the educational process of the IPO framework.

Faganel and Macur (2003/04) conducted a case study at the Faculty of Management, Koper, Slovenia by using the SERVPERF model (i.e., an instrument used to measure perception of performance only) in order to identify the most important quality dimensions. Their results showed that students and professors understand quality differently. Students' understanding of service quality can be described with two factors consisting of several items. The first factor includes four out of five quality dimensions, i.e., reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy; while the second factor which is less important consists of only one quality dimension, i.e., tangibles; which is less important in understanding quality and do not influence students' satisfaction as much as others. On the other hand, the academic staffs understand quality in different way than the students. They recognize five different quality dimensions which differ from the Parasuraman et al. They find (1) attention to students, (2) being regular and timely in informing students about services, (3) realization of planned services and students' suggestions, (4) attractiveness of study materials and other service materials, and appropriateness of service hours, and (5) service performance in time as the most important determinant of quality, respectively.

Darlaston-Jones et al. (2003) carried out survey on student expectations of higher education at the School of Psychology, Edith Cowan University, located in the Western Australian capital of Perth using the SERVQUAL model. This study showed that there is a difference between student expectations of university and the reality of their experience. The students anticipate having close contact with their lecturing staff to the degree that the lecturer would know each student and his/her personal situation. Besides, students need to have facilities and resources available to them at times that are convenient to students not just the university.

Sherry et al. (2004) have undertaken an assessment of the local and international students' perceptions of services experienced at New Zealand Tertiary Institute, UNITEC using the SERVQUAL model. The study indicated that expectations gap was larger for the international students on all five dimensions. It confirmed concerns of the international students with issues of assurance. The students were not confident that they are getting value for money, or that the skills they are being taught will get them good results both academically and for future employment. They were unsure of lecturers' knowledge in their subject area and do not feel that adequate ranges of support service are being offered to them. Their study indicated that international students do not feel taken care of by the UNITEC staff. It also showed higher expectations of international students in the responsiveness, empathy and assurance dimensions. It means international students have certain expectations of services they think a tertiary institute should fulfill, such as learning support services, quality teaching, good staff-student communications and prompt feedback from tutors.

Holdford and Reinders (2001) conducted a study to measure quality of pharmaceutical education using the SERVQUAL instrument at the School of Pharmacy, Virginia Commonwealth University. This study found that student perceptions of faculty significantly affect the manner in which students approach their school work. Student perceptions of faculty reliability, trustfulness, and communication have been found to affect student compliance and cooperation with faculty class assignments (Holdford and Wright, 1997). It indicates that education is a cooperative venture between students and faculty.

Ruby (1998) has tried to demonstrate how the use of SERVQUAL, a market-driven assessment model adapted from business, can be used to study student satisfaction with four areas of support services related to enrollment management (academic records, admissions, career services, and financial aid). This study was conducted at ten institutions that were members of the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) in Ohio. In the case of career services, the result identified the following service factors with the largest negative gaps (i.e., perception – expectation) requiring improvement: providing office hours that are convenient to students, avoiding the appearance of being too busy to help students, making sure that staff members are knowledgeable about career services issues, demonstrating an understanding of student needs, maintaining error free records, demonstrating a commitment to students' best interests, communicating a willingness to help, providing personal attention to students, being courteous to students, and performing services correctly the first time.

Pariseau and McDaniel (1997) assessed service quality in two small private business schools employing the SERVQUAL model in the north-east region of the USA where teaching is given primary importance. Their results showed that the faculty and business schools were not delivering quality service in the view of their students, ANOVA tests confirmed significant differences in perceptions of service quality; and student expectations were highest in the area of assurance. The second most important factor for students was responsiveness and rank tangibles last. However, the faculty rank tangibles second and responsiveness last. In sum, this study found that the most important determinants of overall quality for students were assurance, reliability, and empathy.

Soutar and McNeil (1996) have undertaken a pilot study that attempted to assess service quality in a number of units in a large Australian university using the SERVQUAL model. Students were found to be quite satisfied with the quality of the academic units surveyed although there were small gaps ranging from 0.79 to 0.18. This study showed that not all dimensions were significant. Reliability, assurance and responsiveness influenced student satisfaction, suggesting that dependability was a key feature sought in the academic encounter. Tangible and empathy were not determinants of student satisfaction.

Thus, the aforementioned empirical studies have indicated both applicability and its indispensable role of SERVQUAL model in higher learning institutions.

RATIONAL FOR THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

RATIONAL FOR THE STUDY

The Ethiopian public higher learning institutions' may still view themselves as bastions of education, but they are also businesses subject to the same market forces as the private ones. The government has been embarking to introduce an entrepreneurial approach to these institutions. They are under increasing pressure to demonstrate value for money- quality outcomes, excellence, and cost effectiveness- in response to the government fund and student cost-sharing (regular) and full-cost system (evening, summer, and distance). Such switching from haven of bastion to a service market-driven and customer focus (internal and external) is a challenge. It requires a change in management mind-set (who are the change leaders), change in culture, changes in the ways people work and are rewarded, and new ways of implementing customer solutions and relationships.

As their practices indicated, the Ethiopian public institutions of higher learning are following an inside-out approach, act as if they know what their students needs and deliver that, rather than finding out what they do want. However, an excellent approach to quality stressed the importance of customer satisfaction and customer solution (seamless prompt complaint redressing). To improve quality services to these customers, the service giving institution must first

understand their needs through the quality attributes embraced by the customers. A far better approach follows an outside-in approach, i.e., determining customer expectations and then delivering. Thinking outside-in approach requires an enabling environment of institutional continuous service assessment and improvement. The minimum requirement is having listening strategy. There may be discrepancies between students' expectations and the institution's model of what constitutes quality service. The institutions of higher learning management may be working hard to deliver some aspect of service to which the students are indifferent. Conversely, students may be basing their opinion of quality on some factor that the management assumes is unimportant.

Moreover, all types of organizations are being challenged all over the world by a rapidly changing environment. This is also true for institutions of higher learning; seriously challenging higher learning institutions to change not only in order to adapt, but also to contribute to the change. Ethiopia needs strong higher learning institutions in order for the nation itself to be strong. Increased liberalization and globalization of the higher education system seriously reinforces the climate of competition between the higher learning institutions. This is happening in a time of increasing competition between traditional institutions, the emergence of new types of institutions, increasing costs of teaching, and increasing difficulties for the public authorities to allocate the public funds which would be required, in particular due to other priority obligations. The consequences are serious, even threatening; those institutions which do not adapt fast enough or lead this change by taking proactive measures risk losing their importance and eventually disappearing. If this is recognized, especially by the private institutions, **why shouldn't it be also true for the Ethiopian higher learning institutions**?

In summary, the existing Ethiopian institutions of higher learning system is (1) an inward-outward looking than following an outward-inward approach, (2) focus on faculties' instructional quality (in-class services) than both in-out of class services, and (3) measures only students' perception on instructional quality than measuring both expectations and perception, Thus, it is this gap in the Ethiopian higher education quality assurance (i.e., ignorance of students service expectation and perception) which led to the problem statement called "**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC STAFF SERVICE QUALITY IN ETHIOPIA: A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS (CBE), MEKELLE UNIVERSITY".** Are students really served? An exploratory research was undertaken to explore students' perception of academic staff service quality by assessing their service expectation, perception, and gap by using the SERVQUAL model adapted to tertiary education context.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to explore how the FBE's academic staff service quality was perceived by students. It has been conducted with the following specific objectives in view:

1. Assess current level of perceived service quality for identifying the areas where customers have particularly high or low service gaps (i.e., the gap between the expectation and perception),
2. Evaluate how the quality factors are rated on the degree of importance and how actually are performed (perceived),
3. Measure whether variability is explained by the independent variables (service quality dimensions),
4. Measure the effects of service satisfaction on students' propensity to recommend and switching intentions, and
5. Suggest, on the basis of study results, ways and means for improving academic staff service quality.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses formulated to accomplish the specified research objectives included:

H1: There are no significant mean differences between students' expectations and perceptions regarding the quality dimensions. [Paired-Samples T Test]
H2: The service quality dimensions are not significant predictors of students' overall satisfaction. [Multiple Regression Analysis]
H3: There is no significant impact of students overall satisfaction on the propensity to recommend the FBE to others. [Pearson's Correlation]
H4: There is no significant impact of students overall satisfaction on switching intention from the FBE. [Pearson's Correlation]

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed at exploring the FBE students' service perceptions, expectations, and satisfaction on instructors' academic services. It was a quantitative research methodology employing the SERVQUAL model. The questionnaire instrument was an adaptation of the five service quality dimensions (functional quality) (Parasuraman et al., 1988, 1991b) that were initially designed to assess organizations and businesses in the service sector and the sixth technical quality dimension (Gronroos, 1993). Carman (1990) recommended that modifications in service quality instruments are often necessary to make them appropriate for specific industries. Thus, the Parasuraman et al.'s survey questions was adapted in congruent to the international experience to analyze the students' service expectations and perceptions of academic staff services.

Both primary and secondary data were collected. The primary data was collected through questionnaire adapted from the SERVQUAL survey questions in order to identify the service gap between perceptions and expectations of the service factors. All survey questions were positively worded based on previous research that found no advantage in including a mix of positively and negatively worded items (Parasuraman et al., 1991b). On the other hand, secondary data was collected from books, articles, journals, and Internet to enrich and critically analyze the subject under study.

2, 200 students attending their undergraduate programs during the 2009/10 academic year in the regular, summer, and evening programs were targeted (MUR (2010). Multiple-stage stratified random sampling was employed to select 327 from 2,200 students where samples of members from each stratum were drawn using systematic random sampling procedure. Judicious mixes of gender, academic program, department, and year/batch was considered. The registrar's student record was used as a population frame. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) had greatly simplified sample size decisions by providing a table that ensures a good decision model. Thus, this table was consulted in determining adequate sample size, i.e. this table recommended to take 327 samples from 2,200 populations.

Data obtained through questionnaire was appropriately edited, coded, categorized and entered in to an SPSS program for statistical applications (descriptive as well as inferential), wherever appropriate. The three data analysis objectives were met through:

1. **Getting a feel for the data** using frequency and descriptive statistics.
2. **Testing goodness of data** using the Pearson's Correlation, Reliability Analysis [Cronbach's alpha] and Factor Analysis [factor load], and
3. **Testing of hypothesis** using valid statistical testing instruments such as Pearson's correlation, paired-samples t-test, and multiple regressions that were convenient to the data type collected and the particular hypothesis question.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will benefit the CBE, Mekelle University, students and staff, potential researchers in this area and the nation at large.

1. The institutions of higher learning will benefit from the research findings in terms of (a) coping up with their student service expectations, (b) adapting to the changing national and global academic environment, and (c) educating their customers to have a reasonable level of service expectations through continuous service quality assessment.
2. The students will benefit in terms of getting improved future academic staff services as the findings may be useful to the CBE.
3. The academic staffs will benefit in terms of identifying what their students are exactly expecting and bridge the service gap.
4. The potential researchers have an additional data warehouse in the area of higher learning institutions' service quality assessment.
5. The nation at large (including the government, parents, and employers) will benefit in terms of having a quality graduates who are skilled, knowledgeable, motivated, creative, innovative, and ethical.
6. Finally, it contributes to the stockpile of literature on service quality and customer satisfaction, especially from the developing countries.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This study was addressing only the 2nd year day, and all batches of the summer and evening students who were attending in the 2009/10 academic year in the CBE, Mekelle University, Ethiopia. The data on students' perceptions and expectations was filled at the same time than at different intervals owing to the time constraint. The research finding gives comprehensive picture about the CBE students' service perceptions on their academic staff services. Thus, future research could be conducted by (1) covering the students who are attending in the day, summer, evening, and distance programs in all the colleges, and (2) collecting data at reasonable intervals (first about students' expectations and later about their perceptions on the same sample respondents). Besides, this research

finding had limitation for generalization. The study examined the responses of one college (i.e., the College of Business and Economics). Conclusions to other colleges or the university as a whole may not be valid. Further research is worth pursuing to assess how the students' academic staff service quality assessments vary over time in the CBE and in the different colleges, and to compare the CBE findings with other faculties.

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The survey instrument was designed around the validated SERVQUAL instrument which measures perceived service quality by calculating the direction and discrepancy between consumers' perceptions and expectations across 26 items using a seven-point Likert scale. The 22 items are related to the functional quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and 4 items related to the technical quality, i.e., outcome, (Gronroos, 1993). In addition, students were asked to evaluate the overall quality of services provided by the college, their level of propensity to recommend the college to others, their level of loyalty to continue in the college, and to rate the quality of services rendered by the college.

SERVQUAL survey questionnaire was distributed to 327 students of the College of Business and Economics (CBE) sampled from 2,200 students who were attending in the day/regular, evening, and summer programs during the 2009/10 academic year. Questionnaires were administered during the II-semester and III- term (i.e., summer) of the 2009/10 academic year. Students were given verbal and written instructions on how to fill the questionnaire as well as a brief explanation on its content and objective.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Frequency distribution was used to "getting a feel for the data", i.e., to describe sample characteristics. Of the 327 questionnaires distributed, 287 were returned completed, representing a return/response rate of about 87.8%. Subsequently, the characteristics of the sample are shown below based on the respondents' demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, academic program, department, and year/batch).

TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Age				
21-30	189	65.9	65.9	65.9
31-40	79	27.5	27.5	93.4
41-50	19	6.6	6.6	100.0
Total	287	100.0	100.0	
Gender				
Female	80	27.9	27.9	27.9
Male	207	72.1	72.1	100.0
Total	287	100.0	100.0	
Academic Program				
Regular	110	38.3	38.3	38.3
Summer	104	36.2	36.2	74.6
Evening	73	25.4	25.4	100.0
Total	287	100.0	100.0	
Department				
Accounting & Finance	108	37.6	37.6	37.6
Management	64	22.3	22.3	59.9
Economics	64	22.3	22.3	82.2
Computer Science	26	9.1	9.1	91.3
Business Education	25	8.7	8.7	100.0
Total	287	100.0	100.0	
Year				
Second Year	152	53.0	53.0	53.0
Third Year	25	8.7	8.7	61.7
Fourth Year	74	25.8	25.8	87.5
Fifth Year	6	2.1	2.1	89.5
Sixth Year	30	10.5	10.5	100.0
Total	287	100.0	100.0	

65.9% of the respondents were aged between 21-30 years while 27.5% were in the 31-40 age; and only 6.6% of the respondents were aged between 41- 50 years. No respondent aged above 50 years. The response rate was 27.9% for females and 72.1% for males; 38.3% regular, 36.2% summer, and 25.4% evening academic program; Department of Accounting and Finance (37.6%), Management (22.3%), Economics (22.3%), Computer Science (9.1%), and Business Education (8.7%) respectively; and second year (53%), third year (8.7%), fourth year (25.8%), fifth year (2.1%) and six year (10.5%) respectively.

GOODNESS OF DATA

Validity analysis (i.e., factor analysis) and Reliability analysis (i.e., Cronbach's alpha) were used to measure the "goodness of fit" of the data for further analysis. Factor analysis was used to make pre analysis testing (1) to check for adequacy of sample and (2) to determine factor loadings for including or excluding factors. This study used factor analysis for checking adequacy of sample through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and factor loadings through Extraction Method- Principal Component Analysis.

FACTOR AND RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

TABLE 2: KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.903
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3341.877
	df	325
	Sig.	.000

The 0.903 coefficient of KMO indicated that adequacy of the sample size for factor analysis, besides this measure suggests that the correlation matrix is appropriate for factor analysis (KMO> 0.813); and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at $p<0.01$ which shows the appropriateness for factor analysis. The KMO for the construct exceeded 0.60, i.e., the threshold recommended by Kaiser and Rice (1974) and Sharma (1996); and the factors are high loaded, ≥ 0.40, (Hair et al., 1998).

The factor loads below (**Table 3**) indicate that the items in the quality model were fit to measure the students' academic staff service perceptions, except **Tangible** dimension and **Q12PE,** i.e. the candidate for deletion**.** Besides, according to the item-to-total-correlation **Q1PE, Q2PE, Q3PE, Q4PE, Q5PE**, and **Q14PE**

are candidates for exclusion for being lower than 0.50. On the other hand these items are satisfying the minimum factor load requirement (0.40). The reliability test (**Table 3**) also indicates that the alpha coefficient would not be increased by the removal of these items, except for **Q2PE** and **Q3PE**. The **0.9260** alpha for all items and the **0.8827** alpha for all dimensions revealed strong internal consistency; it exceeds 0.70, i.e., the threshold recommended by Nunnally (1978), except **Tangible**.

TABLE 3: COMMUNALITIES AND RELIABILITY ANALYSIS-CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Service Quality Items and Dimensions		Item-Total Correlation	Factor Load	Alpha If Item Deleted
Tangible		**.4796**	**.353**	**.8922**
Q1PE	Instructors should be well dressed and appear neat.	.3479	.506	.9259
Q2PE	Materials associated with the services of instructors (such as handouts and course outlines) should be visually appealing and easy to understand.	.4387	.460	.9249
Q3PE	Instructors should wear uniform.	.2220	.488	.9276
Q4PE	Physical facilities being used by instructors (such as class room, uniform, duster, folder, chalk, etc) should be visually appealing.	.2467	.485	.9270
Reliability		**.7233**	**.672**	**.8575**
Q5PE	Instructors should apply the same standard of marking and grading to all students taking same subject.	.3955	.551	.9259
Q6PE	Instructors should provide their services at the time they promise to do so.	.5849	.503	.9227
Q7PE	Instructors' assessment should be accurate, fair and reliable.	.5956	.602	.9226
Q8PE	Instructors should keep accurate (i.e., error-free) students' records.	.5812	.626	.9228
Q9PE	Instructors should perform their services 'right the first time' (i.e., should provide zero-defect services).	.5976	.519	.9226
Responsiveness		**.7221**	**.673**	**.8575**
Q10PE	Instructors should give prompt/timely service to students.	.5901	.595	.9226
Q11PE	Instructors should be consistently courteous/polite and willing to help students.	.6045	.628	.9225
Q12PE	Instructors should not appear aloof/distant or too busy to respond to students' requests.	.4496	.343	.9251
Q13PE	Instructors should tell students exactly when services will be performed.	.6321	.555	.9222
Assurance		**.7403**	**.687**	**.8544**
Q14PE	Instructors should offer students a range of support services such as feed backs on assignments, quizzes, tests, and exams.	.4329	.717	.9250
Q15PE	Instructors should teach the knowledge and skills needed to get good results, both academically and for employment.	.6009	.535	.9225
Q16PE	Instructors should instill/inspire confidence in students.	.7007	.663	.9210
Q17PE	Instructors should make students' feel safe, secure, and comfortable in their transactions.	.5576	.524	.9232
Empathy		**.7812**	**.740**	**.8469**
Q18PE	Instructors should understand the difficulties facing students.	.7410	.665	.9200
Q19PE	Instructors should give an individual/personal attention to the specific needs of their students.	.5400	.574	.9234
Q20PE	Instructors should give useful advice during registration, senior paper, subject related, etc.	.5394	.438	.9235
Q21PE	Instructors should have students' best interest at heart (i.e., should have positive service attitude towards students).	.6323	.611	.9220
Q22PE	Instructors should have class times and office hours convenient to their students.	.6029	.561	.9224
Outcome		**.7202**	**.665**	**.8588**
Q23PE	Students should be confident that the time, effort, and money they spend on this education worth it (i.e., it has value for money).	.6506	.592	.9216
Q24PE	Students should be satisfied with their intellectual development at this education.	.6635	.727	.9215
Q25PE	Students should perform well academically as they anticipated they would.	.6502	.687	.9217
Q26PE	Students should be proud of their accomplishments at this education.	.5999	.636	.9225

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Alpha for all items = .9260; N of Cases = 287.0; N of Items = 26

Alpha for all dimensions = .8827; N of Cases = 287.0; N of Items = 6

Where Q1PE= the mean difference between Q1 perception and Q1 Expectation.

Thus, all the quality items and dimensions above are maintained, although the lower factor load (<0.4) and the lower item-to-total correlation coefficient values (<0.50) showed it didn't fit as good as the others. Therefore, the factor analysis as well as the reliability tests proved that (a) the sample was adequate, (b) the factors were loaded high, (c) there was strong correlation among the variables and (d) there was strong internal consistency among the constructs. This indicated that the variables in the quality model were fit to measure the students' academic staff service perceptions and hence hypothesis testing can be carried on.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

H1: There are no significant mean differences between expectations and perceptions regarding the quality dimensions. [Paired- Samples T Test]

$$S = \sum_{j=1}^{k} (P_{ij} \_ E_{ij})$$

Where,

S = Overall service satisfaction; k= number of attributes.

P_{ij} = Performance perception of stimulus i with respect to attribute j.
E_{ij} = Service quality expectation for attribute j that is the relevant norm for stimulus i.

TABLE 4: PAIRED SAMPLES TEST

		Paired Differences					Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean Differ.	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
					Lower	Upper	
Pair 1	Q1E - Q1P	.79	1.469	.087	.62	.96	.000
Pair 2	Q2E - Q2P	1.45	1.795	.106	1.24	1.66	.000
Pair 3	Q3E - Q3P	1.16	1.637	.097	.97	1.35	.000
Pair 4	Q4E - Q4P	1.16	1.418	.084	1.00	1.33	.000
Pair 5	Q5E - Q5P	1.91	2.107	.124	1.66	2.15	.000
Pair 6	Q6E - Q6P	2.00	1.931	.114	1.78	2.22	.000
Pair 7	Q7E - Q7P	1.62	1.785	.105	1.41	1.83	.000
Pair 8	Q8E - Q8P	1.72	2.002	.118	1.49	1.95	.000
Pair 9	Q9E - Q9P	1.50	1.772	.105	1.30	1.71	.000
Pair 10	Q10E - Q10P	2.06	2.031	.120	1.82	2.30	.000
Pair 11	Q11E - Q11P	1.69	1.775	.105	1.48	1.90	.000
Pair 12	Q12E - Q12P	1.67	2.168	.128	1.41	1.92	.000
Pair 13	Q13E - Q13P	1.62	1.681	.099	1.42	1.81	.000
Pair 14	Q14E - Q14P	2.15	1.838	.108	1.93	2.36	.000
Pair 15	Q15E - Q15P	2.21	1.862	.110	2.00	2.43	.000
Pair 16	Q16E - Q16P	1.67	1.831	.108	1.46	1.89	.000
Pair 17	Q17E - Q17P	1.85	2.020	.119	1.61	2.08	.000
Pair 18	Q18E - Q18P	2.13	2.058	.121	1.89	2.36	.000
Pair 19	Q19E - Q19P	2.25	1.995	.118	2.02	2.49	.000
Pair 20	Q20E - Q20P	2.23	2.123	.125	1.99	2.48	.000
Pair 21	Q21E - Q21P	1.97	1.926	.114	1.74	2.19	.000
Pair 22	Q22E - Q22P	1.99	2.028	.120	1.76	2.23	.000
Pair 23	Q23E - Q23P	1.76	2.016	.119	1.53	1.99	.000
Pair 24	Q24E - Q24P	1.75	1.888	.111	1.53	1.97	.000
Pair 25	Q25E - Q25P	1.52	1.881	.111	1.30	1.73	.000
Pair 26	Q26E - Q26P	1.61	1.838	.108	1.40	1.83	.000

Mean of Students Overall Satisfaction = 4.15 on a 7-rating scale.

The Paired Sample t-test indicated that there was significant difference on each paired test between students' service expectations and perceptions (i.e., Expectation – Perception). The significance test also demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference at 95% confidence interval for difference of means of paired statements at P = <0.05. It means the difference that occurred between the students' expectations and perceptions was greater than would be expected by chance.

Therefore, the paired-samples t-test **rejected the hypothesis** because there was significant difference between respondents' expectation and perception at p<0.05. For each statement in the service quality dimension, the perceived service quality was found to be significantly below the expected service quality.

H2: The service quality dimensions are not significant predictors of customers' overall satisfaction. [Multiple Regression Analysis]

$$\mathbf{S = \alpha + \beta_1 (T) + \beta_2 (RI) + \beta_3 (Rs) + \beta_4 (A) + \beta_5 (E) + \beta_6 (O) + e_t}$$

Where S = overall satisfaction

α = Constant; β_i = Coefficient of the dimensions of quality

T = Tangible; RI = Reliability; Rs = Responsiveness; A = Assurance;

E = Empathy; O = Outcome; e_t = Error term

TABLE 6: MODEL SUMMARY (b)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.701(a)	.491	.480	.00364

[a] Predictors: (Constant), OUTCMEAN, TANMEPE, RELMEPE, RESMEPE, ASSMEPE, EMPMEPE

[b] Dependent Variable: OSMEAN

Where OSMEAN = Mean of Overall Satisfaction; TANMEPE = Mean difference of Tangible's expectation and perception, RELMEPE = Mean difference of Reliability's expectation and perception, RESMEPE = Mean difference of Responsiveness's expectation and perception, ASSMEPE = Mean difference of Assurance's expectation and perception, EMPMEPE= Mean difference of Empathy's expectation and perception; OUTCMEPE = Mean difference of Outcome's expectation and perception.

The multiple correlation coefficients (**R**) large value (0.701) indicates a strong relationship among the six service quality dimensions and the students' perceived overall satisfaction and. the coefficient of determination (**R Square)** 0.491 shows about half the variation in the students perceived overall satisfaction was explained by the model. Therefore, the model summary **rejected the hypothesis** because the service quality dimensions were the predictors of the students' overall academic staff service satisfaction.

TABLE 7: COEFFICIENTS (a)

Model		Standardized Coefficients	Collinearity Statistics			t	Sig.	Correlations		
			Tolerance	VIF	Condition Index (CI)			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	Beta			1.000	1.001	.318			
	TANMEPE	.063	.624	1.602	10.126	1.171	.243	.420	.070	.050
	RELMEPE	.007	.385	2.596	12.591	.096	.924	.480	.006	.004
	RESMEPE	-.069	.367	2.723	16.808	-.987	.324	.469	-.059	-.042
	ASSMEPE	.352	.382	2.615	17.969	5.106	.000	.654	.292	.218
	EMPMEPE	.248	.319	3.138	18.840	3.278	.001	.601	.192	.140
	OUTCMEPE	.187	.358	2.790	21.373	2.621	.009	.613	.155	.112

[a] Dependent Variable: OSMEAN

The coefficients table reveals that there were many predictors in the model. There were also non-significant coefficients (i.e., for tangible, reliability, and responsiveness at p<0.05) indicating that these quality dimensions did not contribute much to the model (students perceived overall satisfaction). Therefore, the collinearity problem was fixed by using step-wise linear regression analysis in order to identify only the most useful predictor variables in the model as follows:

TABLE 9: COLLINEARITY DIAGNOSTICS (d)

Model		Collinearity Statistics		
		Tolerance	VIF	Condition Index (CI)
1	(Constant)[a]			1.000
	ASSMEPE	1.000	1.000	6.761
2	(Constant)[b]			1.000
	ASSMEPE	.520	1.922	7.435
	EMPMEPE	.520	1.922	10.344
3	(Constant)[c]			1.000
	ASSMEPE	.389	2.568	8.430
	EMPMEPE	.456	2.195	11.387
	OUTCMEPE	.400	2.500	13.308

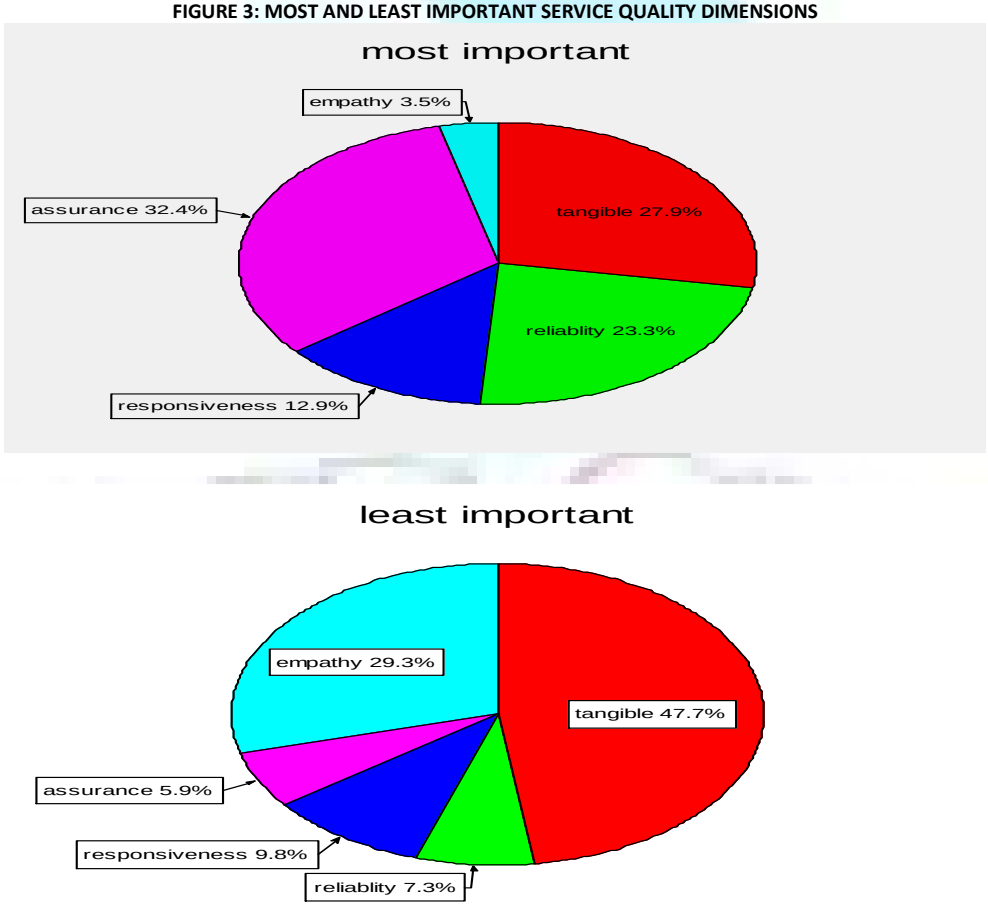
[a] Predictors: (Constant), ASSMEPE
[b] Predictors: (Constant), ASSMEPE, EMPMEPE
[c] Predictors: (Constant), ASSMEPE, EMPMEPE, OUTCMEPE
[d] Dependent Variable: OSMEAN

The step-wise linear regression analysis chosen assurance, empathy, and outcome as the three quality dimensions that were significant predictors of students' perceived overall satisfaction. There is no problem with multicollinearity: all of the VIF indices are less than 10, the condition indices (CI) are less than 15 and the tolerances are improved. The model built using stepwise methods did not have problems with collinearity (Bedi, 2004; Kwan and Ng, 1999).

TABLE 10: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Mean
R1	287	15.31
R2	287	21.38
R3	287	19.37
R4	287	24.38
R5	287	19.77
Valid N (list wise)	287	

FIGURE 3: MOST AND LEAST IMPORTANT SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS



Students ranked and rated assurance as the most important and tangible as the least important dimensions for evaluating their academic staff service perceptions.

H3: There is no significant impact of customers overall satisfaction on the propensity to recommend the FBE to others. [Pearson's correlation]

PWM = $\alpha + \beta_1(S) + e_t$

Where, PWM = Positive Word of Mouth; S = overall satisfaction; α = Constant; β_1 = Coefficient of the overall satisfaction; e_t = Error term

TABLE 11: CORRELATIONS

		OVERALL SATISFACTION	WORD of MOUTH
OVERALL SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	1	.777(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	287	287

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlations coefficient (0.777) showed that the overall satisfaction had significant positive impact on students' propensity to recommend the CBE to others at p<0.01. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

H4: There is no significant impact of customers overall satisfaction on switching intention from the FBE. [Pearson's correlation]

$L = \alpha + \beta_1(S) + e_t$

Where, L = Loyalty; S = overall satisfaction; α = Constant; β_1 = Coefficient of the overall satisfaction; e_t = Error term

TABLE 12: CORRELATIONS

		OVERALL SATISFACTION	LOYALTY
OVERALL SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	1	.700(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	287	287

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlations coefficient (0.700) showed that the overall satisfaction had significant positive impact on students' switching intention, when ever possibilities, to other higher learning institutions at p<0.01. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The test of goodness of data (i.e., the correlation, reliability, and factor analysis) demonstrated that the data collected were reliable and valid: (1) the Pearson's correlation coefficient showed a significant correlation among the SERVQUAL quality dimensions, (2) the Cronbach's alpha exhibited desirable levels of internal consistency among the quality statements(i.e., > 0.50), and (3) the factor analysis revealed that, with few exceptions, most of the items assigned to each quality dimension had high loadings (i.e., >0.40). Thus, the service quality instrument can be successfully used to assess the magnitude of the gap between students' academic staff service expectations and perceptions.

The current study sought to measure the College of Business and Economics (CBE) students' academic staff services expectations and perceptions in relation to **functional quality** (i.e., tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) and **technical quality** (i.e., outcome). Accordingly, the following results emerged from the study.

Although it is natural for students to expect excellent academic staff services, the significant mean differences between students' expectations and perceptions spelled that students did not get the expected services, i.e., the CBE did not perform well from the students' perception point of view. The paired-samples t-test indicated that students' perceptions significantly fell below their expectations. The mean differences between expectations and perceptions ranged from 0.79 to 2.25. Except one, all perception statements fell below expectation by at least 1.16.

Among the quality statements that were most expected but least performed (i.e., Expectation – Perception $\geq$ 2.0) were:

1. Instructors should understand the difficulties facing students.
2. Instructors should give an individual/personal attention to the specific needs of their students.
3. Instructors should give useful advice during registration, and senior paper.
4. Instructors should provide their services at the time they promise to do.
5. Instructors should give prompt/timely services to students.
6. Instructors should offer students a range of support services such as feedback on assignments, quizzes, tests, and exams.
7. Instructors should teach the knowledge and skills needed to get results, both academically and for employment.

The study also revealed that the mean value of the students' overall satisfaction was 4.15 on a seven-rating scale.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient showed a significant positive relationship between the six quality dimensions (tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and outcome) and the students' overall service satisfaction. It means these quality dimensions had significant impact on perception of overall service satisfaction. Thus, the model was fit to measure students' academic staff service satisfaction level. Besides, step-wise linear regression analysis (Multiple Regression Analysis) identified assurance, empathy, and outcome dimensions as the most predictors of the students' overall academic staff service satisfaction.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient also pointed up a significant positive relationship between students' overall service satisfaction and the students' propensity to recommend the FBE to others and students' switching intention to others. It means improving students overall service leads to positive word of mouth and loyalty to the FBE.

While rating the most and least important dimension, students rated assurance as the most important and tangible as the least important, i.e., students were considered tangible dimension least when appraising their academic staff service satisfaction.

This study results are consistent with prior research findings: (1) the paired-samples t-test revealed that students' expected more than what they perceived the academic staff would provide, (2) tangible was less important in assessing academic staffs service and did not influence students service satisfaction as good as the rest, and (3) assurance, empathy, and outcome were pointed out as the most predictors of students' academic staff service perceptions (Chua, 2004; Darlaston-Jones et al., 2003; Faganel and Macur, 2003/04; Pariseau and McDaniel, 1997; Sherry et al., 2003; Soutar and McNeil, 1996).

The study endorsed that there is direct relationships between service quality perception and the functional and technical quality dimensions; and the service quality leads to students' academic staff service satisfaction. The students' academic staff service quality assessment provided vital information. A great deal can be learned just from examining the service quality scores: expectation, perception, and mean difference between expectation and perception for the corresponding quality statements. Mean differences for each quality statement was computed. The study provided direct feedback on specific aspects of the academic staff's service qualities. There was a significant mean difference between students' service expectations and perceptions. The service perceptions fell significantly below expectation. This service gap can be used as a stepping stone to undergo service improvements.

The study also supported that academic staff service quality shall be assessed by the students. Although student assessments may not always reflect reality, they help determine important outcomes such as student participation in the classroom, involvement in extracurricular activities, and the image of the school that student carry with themselves upon graduation. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) discussed how students assess educational quality. They stated that most students are in School to learn what they do not know. However, not knowing the subjects they are studying does not prevent them from making judgments about their professors. Cues such as the tangibles that accompany the service (overheads and other presentation materials), the professor's appearance of nervousness, the degree of confidence communicated, or even whether the professor starts and ends class on time, are used to infer competence.

Moreover, student perceptions of their academic staff significantly affect the manner in which students approach their school work. Student perceptions of academic staff's reliability, trustfulness, and communication have been found to affect student compliance and cooperation with academic staff class

assignments (Holdford and Wright, 1997). If one takes the view that education is a cooperative venture between students and academic staff, then understanding student perceptions of their academic staff may permit strategies to enhance student participation in their learning.

As competition for students has been escalating among colleges and universities (especially for the summer, evening, and distance programs) to generate an internal revenue, student retention has received increased attention. Since service quality and student satisfaction are important factors in retention, it is important that the FBE measure service quality and strive for continuous improvement; quality is what our students tell us it is, not what we say it is. Progress can only be determined and improved by measurement.

Furthermore, the importance of these findings for managerial decision-making process is evident. Faculty managers seeking to improve their students' loyalty levels, in their effort to increase retention rates and attract new students through Word of Mouth (WOM), may benefit by information about the effects of individual dimensions of service quality on student service satisfaction and of the latter on loyalty. They may also benefit from the use of SERVQUAL for measuring the quality of services offered by their academic staff for discovering possible service quality flaws and/or benchmarking. The longitudinal use (i.e., periodic assessment) of such quality assessment to monitor the progression in time of their students' service quality perceptions will help them to take necessary measures for continuous service improvements. Faculty managers must also take into account that students gave less importance for the tangible elements in assessing their level of academic staff service satisfaction and, hence, primarily direct their efforts and resources towards improving the assurance, empathy and outcome, i.e., the human element, rather than the tangible element of their academic services.

Finally, the study was a snap shot of the CBE academic staff's service performance at a distinct time, i.e., 2009/10 academic year. Review of various service quality models revealed that the service quality outcome and measurement is dependent on the type of service setting, situation, time, need, etc factors. In addition to this even the customer's expectations towards particular services are also changing with respect to factors like time, increase in the number of encounters with a particular service, competitive environment, etc (Seth et al., 2005). Thus, it is recommended that the study be repeated from time to time, for example on semester basis, for continuous service improvement through cooperative venture between students and academic staff. Such synergetic attempt will help to identify necessary logistics, training, and empowerment needed by the academic staff for offering satisfactory services. In addition, the study be repeated on periodic basis (1) in order to show continuous service accountability and compare students' service expectations and perceptions so that to identify the service gaps to work for service improvements and enhancement and (2) in order to track performance and to determine whether changes made have been successful in improving service quality.

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