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CONTENTS

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ACADEMIC STAFF'S PERCEPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF SERVICES IN ETHIOPIA: A CASE STUDY OF ADI-HAQI CAMPUS, MEKELLE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore, analyze, and measure the academic staff's perceptions on administrative service quality. The study used a survey method to elicit perceptions from a total of 81 sample respondents, 74 academic staff were responding the questionnaires. The results showed that service expectation was not met; assurance and empathy dimensions are identified as the most predictors of the academic staff's overall service satisfaction; overall satisfaction had positive significant impact on their propensity to recommend and switching intention. Conclusions are drawn about academic staff's perceptions of administrative staff services in the College of Business and Economics (CBE) and College of Law and Governance (CoLG). Generalization to the university as a whole may not be legitimate; an all-inclusive research is suggested to measure how the academic staff perceives the administrative services. This study provides insights into the measurement of administrative service perceptions.

KEY WORDS

Expectations, INTSERVQUAL, Perceptions, Satisfaction, Quality.

INTRODUCTION

ervice quality is defined as *the post-consumption evaluation of services by consumers that compare expectations with perceptions of performance* (Parasuraman et al., 1985); *the customer's overall attitude towards the company* (Bitner, 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml, 1988); *the extent of the discrepancy between customers' expectations or desires and their perceptions* (Zeithaml et al., 1990); *the ability of the service organization to meet or exceed customer expectations* (Christopher et al., 1993); and the *customer's impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of a service provider and its services (*Bitner and Hubert, 1994). For the present study, *administrative service quality has been defined as an attitude resulting from faculty perceptions of administrative service performance.*

Positive correlations between customer satisfaction and retention, loyalty and WOM have been reported in a number of studies (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Chumpitaz and Paparoidamis, 2004; Fornell, 1992; Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). The role of service quality is, thus, widely recognized as being a critical determinant for the success of an organization in today's competitive environment. Any decline in customer satisfaction due to poor service quality would be a matter of concern. Consumers being more aware of rising standards in service, prompted by competitive trends, have developed higher expectations. In order to acquire and retain skilled academic staffs (front-line), an educational institution needs to satisfy its academic staff. Measuring the quality of their internal services using appropriate model adapted to their context is therefore an important task.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

INTERNAL MARKETING

Researchers considered the empirical research conducted so far on internal marketing, especially in developing countries, has been embryonic and descriptive (Varey, 1995; Wilson, 1995). In the early 1980s, the concept of internal marketing first emerged in service marketing literature (Berry, 1981; Gronroos, 1978, 1981, 1985), and was later adopted by the service management literature (Carlzon, 1987; Normann, 1984), and industrial and relationship marketing (Gronroos, 1985; Gummesson, 1987). Heskett (1987) observed that this shift towards internal marketing was because high-performing service companies had gained their status in large measure by turning the strategic service vision inward, i.e., treating their employees as customers.

Internal marketing literature suggested the way to satisfied external customers is through satisfied employees (Gronroos, 1981, 1985; Heskett et al., 1994). Oakland (1993) described the ability to meet customer requirements is vital, not only between two separate organizations, but also within the same organization. The level of satisfaction customers will experience with the firm would be enhanced by understanding and responding to the needs and concerns of the employees (Bitner et al., 1990; Zeithaml et al., 1988). This has been theoretically put forward through the service-profit chain by Heskett et al. (1994). The crucial question to be answered is "how does an organization go about ensuring that its internal customers (such as the academic staff for higher learning institution) receive service quality?"

Scandinavian Airline System (SAS) implemented the first classical documented example of an internal marketing strategy. Jan Carlzon, president of SAS, coined the phrase "moments of truth", believing in empowering his front-line people to take the necessary action to satisfy external customers at the organization-customer interface. He implemented a decentralized decision-making system that flattened the organizational structure, to the point where traditional corporation hierarchical tiers were eliminated; thereby facilitating quick and direct response to customer needs (Carlzon, 1987).

Albrecht and Zemke (1985) opined the front-line contact employees are the ones capable of making or breaking the customer's perception of service quality at the moment of truth. They are important elements in the service delivery process, thus ensuring customer satisfaction (George, 1977; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982). Gronroos (1981) has argued internal marketing should create an internal environment that supports customer-consciousness among the service personnel. This can only be achieved if front-line people are treated the same way as external customers are. It is the job of the administrative staff (support staff) to support and help the academic staff (front-line staff) in their mission to please the students (external customer).

In any service institution, an appreciation of good service orientation is extremely important (Bowen and Schneider, 1988; George and Gronroos, 1991; Schneider, 1980, 1986). Service-oriented culture involves service related behavior, attitudes, judgment, decisions and actions (Wasmer and Bruner, 1991). Internal marketing is a means of developing and maintaining such a service-oriented culture (Gronroos, 1989). In a constantly changing environment, a distinct service-oriented culture is needed that tells employees how to respond to new, unforeseen and even awkward situations (Schneider, 1986; Carlzon, 1987). The culture within the organization has a vital impact on how service-oriented its employees are and how well they act as internal marketers of the organization (Bowen and Schneider, 1988; Christopher et al., 1993). Internal service quality is thus necessary to superior external service quality (Varey, 1995). Service providers need to understand these discrepancies so that they are in a better position to understand, influence direct and, improve human resources in running service operations (Chang et al., 1996; Gronroos, 1981).

SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION, AND LOYALTY

Services are designed to satisfy one's requirements. Service satisfaction is, thus, customers' evaluation of a service in terms of whether that product or service has met their needs and expectations. Failure to meet needs and expectations is assumed to result in service dissatisfaction. Due attention is required to internal customer satisfaction because the continuity of any competitive organization relies on its customer satisfaction. For example, retention of qualified academic staff may depend on the perceived quality of the administrative services.

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5

Figure 1: Relationship Between Service Satisfaction and Loyalty

Source: Adapted from Zeithaml and Bitner (2003)

Heskett et al. (1997) has discovered increasing levels of customer satisfaction could be linked to customer loyalty and profits, as presented in the diagram above. This relationship is strong when customers are very satisfied, where their perceived quality is greater than their expectation (Customer Satisfaction = Perception – Expectation).

There is more widely accepted relationship between employee satisfaction and employee turnover. Models of employee turnover almost universally propose a negative relationship between satisfaction and turnover (Hom and Griffeth, 1991; Hulin et al., 1985; March and Simon, 1958; Mobley et al., 1979; Price and Mueller, 1986; Rusbult and Farrell, 1983).

Increasing employee satisfaction and thereby reducing employee turnover is critical. Estimates suggested that separation, replacement and training costs are 1.5 to 2.5 times annual salary for each person who quits (Solomon, 1988). This illustrates the value of retaining loyal employees. Long-tenured employees develop personal relationships with customers. These relationships are the foundation for a reinforcing cycle of positive interactions between employees and customers (Reichheld, 1993; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Schlesinger and Heskett, 1991). The retention of employees who develop continuing positive interactions with customers will become even more critical in the future. Employees with valuable work skills are becoming too scarce.

Ones organization people, those who are front-line employees and those supporting them from behind the scenes (back-stage), are critical to the success of any service organization because they are the service, the organization in the customer's eye, and they are also marketers (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). Service employees play an important role in creating satisfied customers and in building customer relationships.

There is also concrete evidence that satisfied employees make for satisfied customers and in-turn satisfied customers could reinforce employees' sense of satisfaction in their jobs. Burke et al. (2005) stated that their study indicated positive and statistically significant relationships between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Schneider and Bowen (1993) seconded both a climate for service and a climate for employee's well being is highly correlated with overall customer perceptions of service quality. Heskett et al. (1994), Loveman (1998) and Rucci et al. (1998) have also underlined employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction are interrelated and feed each other as demonstrated in the following diagram.

FIGURE 2: THE SERVICE PROFIT CHAIN
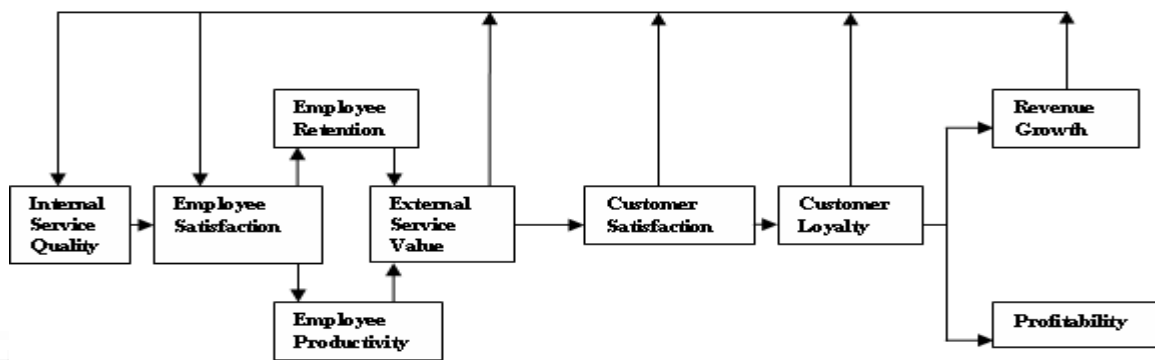
Source: Adapted from Davis and Heineke (2003)

Appropriate logistics of administrative services (the service package) is critical for the faculty to undertake satisfactory teaching, consultancy and research services that are the core missions of a given tertiary educational institution. An increase in administrative service satisfaction among the institutions of higher learning academic staff (front-line employees) will undoubtedly have a carry over effect on students' academic staff service satisfaction.

THE SERVQUAL MODEL AND INTERNAL SERVICE QUALITY MEASUREMENT

SERVQUAL instrument is extensively used to assess external customer service quality. The instrument can also be adopted to assess the quality of the internal customer service provided, for example administrative staff service provided to the academic staff.

The five dimensions used to explain the service quality measure are similar to those used in Parasuraman et al. (1991). The five dimensions with their definitions are listed below (Parasuraman et al., 1988, 1991; Zeithaml et al., 1990).

Dimension	Definition
Tangibles:	Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials
Reliability:	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
Responsiveness:	Willingness to help (internal) customers and provide prompt service
Assurance:	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence
Empathy:	Caring, individualized attention the employees provide to each other

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In Parasuraman et al.'s Gap Model, gap 5 is the main gap, where customers' expectations of a service provided is compared with their perception of that service. In this study, the gap focuses on the front-line staff (internal customers). The gap is based on the difference between front-line staff's expectations and perceptions of support staff's (internal supplier) service quality. Internal gap 3 is the significant difference between service quality specifications and the service actually delivered resulting in an internal service performance gap as can be seen in the following internal service quality model.

FIGURE 3: INTERNAL SERVICE PERFORMANCE GAP
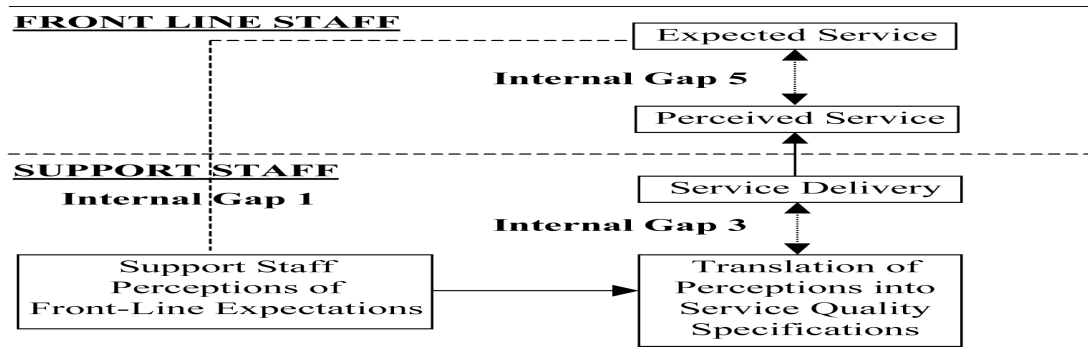
Source: Adapted from Frost and Kumar (2000)

There is merit in evaluating the performance of administrative staff with a service-marketing instrument such as SERVQUAL. This gap model has clear implications for the measurement of service quality, implying both expectations and perceptions need to be explicitly measured in order to quantify service quality gaps (Wisniewski, 2001). It is argued that service institutions could use the SERVQUAL, with appropriate adaptation, to measure the quality of services provided to employees (Chaston, 1994; Edvardsson et al., 1997; Frost and Kumar, 2000; Kang et al., 2002; Young and Varble, 1997; Zeithaml et al., 1990).

Hence, this study employed an internal service quality model- INTSERVQUAL. It is an adaptation of the Gap Model (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988, 1991) and the SERVQUAL measuring instruments. Its model construct encompasses the five-dimension structure, i.e., tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, adapted to higher learning institution. 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 and Empathy)

$S = \alpha + \beta_1 (T) + \beta_2 (Rl) + \beta_3 (Rs) + \beta_4 (A) + \beta_5 (E) + e_t$ $\qquad$ (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; e_t = Error term

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

$S = \sum_{j=1}^{k}(P_{ij} \_ E_{ij})$ $\qquad$ (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 4: INTSERVQUAL AND SATISFACTION MODEL
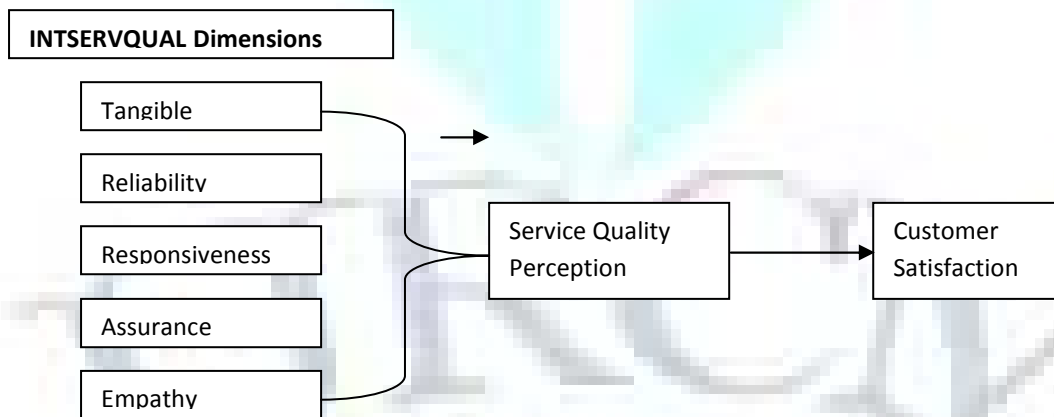
Source: Adapted from Kang and James (2004)

RATIONAL FOR THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

RATIONAL FOR THE STUDY

The institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia do not have a system for assessing academic staff's (front-line) perceptions on administrative services (support staff). It is important to introduce effective system of periodic assessment of the front-line staff service perceptions on their support staff's service performance so that to know their level of administrative service satisfaction, propensity to recommend (word-of-mouth) and switching intention (loyalty) in order to take purposeful service measures.

The reasons for undertaking this exploratory research included:

1. Employees them selves are customers of internal services.
2. Absence of formal evaluation of administrative staff's service by the academic staff.
3. Commitment and passion to the inevitable environmental change on the part of the support staff will contribute a lot to the very interest of the institution when the INTSERVQUAL model is introduced.

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4. Analyzing academic staff's service gap may enhance accountability of the administrative staff and in return enhance the service quality of the academic staff to students.

5. Research on internal customer's service perception serves as an early word of warning to service delivery system because employees are able to identify when the system is derailing.

Finally, it is the ignorance of the academic staff as customer as well as lack of systematic assessment of academic staff's perception on administrative services led to the problem statement called "**Academic Staff's Perception of Administrative Staff Services**".

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to explore how the administrative service quality being provided by the Adi-Haqi Campus was perceived by the academic staff. It has been undergone in view of the following specific objectives:

1. To assess current level of perceived service quality gap; the gap between service expectations and perceptions,
2. To identify the major predictors of administrative service quality,
3. To assess the effects of service satisfaction on propensity to recommend and switching intentions and
4. To forward recommendations, on the basis of the study, which helps improve the administrative service quality.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following research hypotheses were formulated to get done the aforementioned research objectives:

Ho1:   There are no significant mean difference between the academic staff's administrative service expectations and perceptions.

Ho2:   The administrative service quality dimensions are not significant predictors of the academic staff's overall administrative service satisfaction.

Ho3:   There is no significant impact of the academic staff's overall service satisfaction on their propensity to recommend.

Ho4:   There is no significant impact of the academic staff's overall service satisfaction on their switching intention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed at exploring the Adi-Haqi Campus academic staff's service perceptions, expectations, and satisfaction on campus administrative staff services. It was a quantitative research employing the INTSERVQUAL model. The questionnaire instrument was an adaptation of the Parasuraman et al.'s (1988, 1991) five service quality dimensions that were initially designed to assess organizations and businesses in the service sector. These survey questions were customized to explore the academic staff's service expectations and perceptions on administrative 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 service perceptions and expectations. 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., 1991). On the other hand, secondary data was collected from books, articles, journals, and Internet to enrich and critically analyze the subject under study.

Academic staff that was on duty during the II -semester of the 2009/10 academic year was targeted; 81 out of 103 academic staff were sampled; and 74 (out of 81sample) academic staff were responding. Multiple-stage stratified random sampling was employed where a sample of members from each stratum were drawn using systematic random sampling procedure. Judicious mixes of gender and faculty were considered. Payroll sheet 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. This table was consulted in determining adequate sample size.

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:

Getting a feel for the data: using frequency distribution.

Testing goodness of data: using the reliability analysis [Cronbach's alpha] and validity analysis [factor load] and

Testing of hypothesis: using inferential statistics such as paired-samples T-Test, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regressions that are valid for the particular hypothesis.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will benefit the 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 academic staff's service perceptions, (b) adapting to the changing national and global academic environment and (c) educating their academic staff to have a reasonable level of service expectations through continuous service quality assessment.
2. The academic staff will benefit in terms of getting improved future administrative services.
3. The students will benefit in terms of getting improved future academic services.
4. The potential researchers will have an additional data warehouse in the domain of the institutions of higher learning's internal service quality assessment.
5. The nation at large (including the government, parents, and employers) will benefit in terms of having a qualified academic staff that are skilled, knowledgeable, motivated, creative, innovative and ethical.
6. Finally, it contributes to the literature on internal service quality assessment, especially from the developing countries.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This study was addressing only the Adi-Haqi Campus academic staff's that were on duty during the II – semester of the 2009/10 academic year in the College of Business and Economics (CBE) and College of Law and Governance (CoLG). The data on academic staff service perceptions and expectations was filled at the same time than at different intervals due to the time constraint. The research findings can give comprehensive picture about the campus academic staff service perceptions and may provide a glimpse of the Mekelle University's internal service quality level. Future research could be conducted by (1) including the academic staff of all the faculties and colleges and (2) collecting data at reasonable intervals (first about the faculties' expectations and later about their perceptions on the same sample respondents).

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The survey instrument was designed on INTSERVQUAL model (an internal adaptation of the Gap model and the SERVQUAL instrument) which measures perceived service quality by calculating the direction and discrepancy between the academic staff service perceptions and expectations across the 22 items using a seven-point Likert scale. The 22 items were customized from Parasuraman et al. (1988) to measure service perceptions of the academic staff on administrative services. Moreover, the academic staff was asked to evaluate the overall quality of services provided by the administrative staff, their level of propensity to recommend and their level of loyalty to continue working in the Campus.

INTSERVQUAL survey questionnaire was distributed to 81 academic staff sampled from 103 academic staff that was on duty during the II semester of the 2009/10 academic year. Questionnaires were administered during the third and fourth week of May 2010. Academic staff was 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 RESPONDENTS

Frequency distribution was used to "getting a feel for the data", i.e., to describe sample characteristics. Of the 81 questionnaires distributed, 74 were returned completed, representing a response rate of about 91.36%. Subsequently, characteristics of the sample respondents are demonstrated based on the demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, education, work experience and Faculty).

Table 1 below reveals 74.3% of the respondents were aged between 21-30 years while 17.6% were in the 31-40 ages; and only 8.1% of the respondents were aged between 41- 50 years. No respondent aged above 50 years. The response rate was 29.79% for females and 70.3% for males; 56.8% of the respondents were undergraduates while 40.5% were post-graduates; and only 2.7% of the respondents were PhD holders; 9.5% of the respondents had less than one year

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work experience, 39.2% of them 1-2 years, 14.9% 2-4 years, and 36.5% of them had above four years work experience; and 78.4% of the respondents were from CBE and 21.6% from CoLG.

TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Age				
21-30	55	74.3	74.3	74.3
31-40	13	17.6	17.6	91.9
41-50	6	8.1	8.1	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	
Gender				
Female	22	29.7	29.7	29.7
Male	52	70.3	70.3	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	
Education				
Undergraduate	42	56.8	56.8	56.8
Post-graduate	30	40.5	40.5	97.3
PhD	2	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	
Work Experience				
<1year	7	9.5	9.5	9.5
1-2years	29	39.2	39.2	48.6
2-4years	11	14.9	14.9	63.5
>4years	27	36.5	36.5	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	
Faculty				
CBE	58	78.4	78.4	78.4
CoLG	16	21.6	21.6	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY
FACTOR AND RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

TABLE 2: KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.836
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	888.274
	df	231
	Sig.	.000

The 0.836 coefficient of KMO indicates 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 (**Table 3**) indicate the items in the quality model were fit to measure the academic staff's administrative service perceptions. According to the item-to-total-correlation, **Q1P, Q2P, Q3P, Q4P, Q12P, Q14P** and **Q15P** are candidates for exclusion for their correlation coefficient is <0.50 (Blaikie, 2003). On the other hand these items are satisfying the minimum factor load requirement (≥0.40). The reliability test also indicates that the **0.9259** alpha coefficients for all items would not be increased by the removal of these items, except for **Q3P, Q4P** and **Q14P**. The **0.9259** alpha for all items and the **0.8887** alpha for all dimensions reveal strong internal consistency; it exceeds **0.70**, i.e., the threshold recommended by Nunnally (1978).

Therefore, 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) show some items didn't fit as good as the others. Therefore, the factor analysis as well as the reliability tests proved that (a) the sample size 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 academic staff's administrative service perceptions and thus hypothesis testing can be carried on.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT 9
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TABLE 3: COMMUNALITIES AND RELIABILITY ANALYSIS-CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Service Quality Items and Dimensions		Item-Total Correlation	Factor Load	Alpha If Item Deleted
Tangible		**0.5722**	**.492**	**0.8968**
Q1P	Administrative staff is neat appearing.	0.4109	.619	0.9254
Q2P	Materials associated with the services of administrative staff (such as notices, letter, information bulletin, legislations, and working manuals and guidelines, request forms, etc) are neat, visually appealing and easy to understand.	0.4550	.678	0.9251
Q3P	Administrative staff has up to date working manuals and guidelines.	0.2863	.659	0.9275
Q4P	Physical facilities being used by administrative staff (such as office building, office equipment, office furniture and fixture, notice board, cars, toilet, uniform, etc) are neat and visually appealing.	0.3646	.549	0.9262
Reliability		**0.8121**	**.786**	**.8452**
Q5P	Administrative staff provides problem solving (i.e., effective and efficient) services or tell accurately where to find them.	0.6059	.790	0.9223
Q6P	Administrative staff provides error-free information or tell accurately where to find them.	0.7093	.806	0.9200
Q7P	Administrative staff provides dependable, correct, and supportive services or tell accurately where to find them.	0.7432	.746	0.9196
Q8P	Administrative staff provides their services 'right the first time' (i.e., provide zero-defect services).	0.7150	.773	0.9201
Q9P	Administrative staff provides their services at the time they promise to do so.	0.6121	.739	0.9220
Responsiveness		**0.7535**	**.715**	**0.8591**
Q10P	Administrative staff provides prompt/timely services.	0.5999	.669	0.9223
Q11P	Administrative staff is willing to help the academic staff.	0.5716	.745	0.9228
Q12P	Administrative staff does not appear aloof/distant or too busy to respond to academic staff's requests.	0.4940	.603	0.9244
Q13P	Administrative staff tells exactly what and when services will be performed.	0.6791	.596	0.9209
Assurance		**0.7228**	**.684**	**0.8680**
Q14P	Administrative staff instills/inspires confidence (by providing dependable, error-free, courteous, and prompt services).	0.3825	.611	0.9260
Q15P	Administrative staff provides consistently courteous/polite attention with prompt follow-up to administrative queries/requests.	0.4945	.490	0.9241
Q16P	Administrative staff has the knowledge to answer academic staffs' queries.	0.6536	.728	0.9216
Q17P	Administrative staff makes academic staff's feel safe, secure, and comfortable in their administrative transactions.	0.5875	.773	0.9226
Empathy		**0.8144**	**.797**	**0.8442**
Q18P	Administrative staff provides individual/personal attention (in a caring and understanding way) to the specific administrative queries.	0.7634	.721	0.9190
Q19P	Administrative staff makes academic staff's feel that they care about "doing a good job" and have sympathy with academic staff.	0.6640	.587	0.9211
Q20P	Administrative staff is always available during office hours for administrative queries.	0.5704	.721	0.9228
Q21P	Administrative staff has academic staff's best interest at heart (i.e., have positive service attitude towards the academic staff).	0.7009	.782	0.9204
Q22P	Administrative staff understands the difficulties facing the academic staff.	0.6393	.782	0.9215

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Alpha for all items = .9259; N of Cases = 74;   N of Items = 22
Alpha for all dimensions = .8887; N of Cases = 74; N of Items = 5
Where Q1P = perception of quality statement number 1

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HYPOTHESES TESTING

Ho1: There are no significant mean differences between the academic staff's administrative service expectations and   perceptions.

TABLE 4: MEAN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Q1E - Q1P	.97	1.596	.186	.60	1.34	5.244	73	.000
Pair 2	Q2E - Q2P	1.78	2.056	.239	1.31	2.26	7.464	73	.000
Pair 3	Q3E - Q3P	1.20	1.744	.203	.80	1.61	5.933	73	.000
Pair 4	Q4E - Q4P	.93	1.707	.198	.54	1.33	4.699	73	.000
Pair 5	Q5E - Q5P	2.22	2.313	.269	1.68	2.75	8.242	73	.000
Pair 6	Q6E - Q6P	2.09	2.114	.246	1.60	2.58	8.522	73	.000
Pair 7	Q7E - Q7P	1.85	1.892	.220	1.41	2.29	8.417	73	.000
Pair 8	Q8E - Q8P	2.07	1.940	.225	1.62	2.52	9.169	73	.000
Pair 9	Q9E - Q9P	1.84	1.986	.231	1.38	2.30	7.959	73	.000
Pair 10	Q10E - Q10P	2.20	2.054	.239	1.73	2.68	9.225	73	.000
Pair 11	Q11E - Q11P	1.73	2.043	.237	1.26	2.20	7.284	73	.000
Pair 12	Q12E - Q12P	1.76	2.086	.242	1.27	2.24	7.245	73	.000
Pair 13	Q13E - Q13P	1.92	1.849	.215	1.49	2.35	8.929	73	.000
Pair 14	Q14E - Q14P	2.32	1.814	.211	1.90	2.74	11.022	73	.000
Pair 15	Q15E - Q15P	1.99	1.817	.211	1.57	2.41	9.405	73	.000
Pair 16	Q16E - Q16P	1.49	1.657	.193	1.10	1.87	7.716	73	.000
Pair 17	Q17E - Q17P	1.64	1.733	.201	1.23	2.04	8.118	73	.000
Pair 18	Q18E - Q18P	1.95	2.080	.242	1.46	2.43	8.048	73	.000
Pair 19	Q19E - Q19P	2.24	1.943	.226	1.79	2.69	9.931	73	.000
Pair 20	Q20E - Q20P	1.99	2.003	.233	1.52	2.45	8.530	73	.000
Pair 21	Q21E - Q21P	2.20	1.951	.227	1.75	2.65	9.711	73	.000
Pair 22	Q22E - Q22P	2.05	2.073	.241	1.57	2.53	8.523	73	.000

Mean of academic staff's overall administrative service satisfaction is 4.31 on a 7-rating scale.

The paired-samples t-test indicates a significant difference on each paired test between the academic staff's service expectations and perceptions. The significance test also demonstrates a statistically significant difference at 95% confidence interval for difference of means of paired statements at P<0.05. It means the difference occurred between the expectations and perceptions were greater than would be expected by chance.

The **hypothesis is rejected** because the paired-samples t-test result disclosed the presence of significant difference between the academic staff's administrative service expectations and perceptions 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.

Ho2: The service quality dimensions are not significant predictors of the academic staff's overall administrative service satisfaction.

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

Where, S = overall satisfaction; α = Constant; β_i = Coefficient of the dimensions of quality; T = Tangible; Rl = Reliability; Rs = Responsiveness; A = Assurance; E = Empathy; e_t = Error term

TABLE 5: FITNESS OF MODEL

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.658(a)	.433	.392	1.024

[a] Predictors: (Constant), TANGIBLE, RELIABILITY, RESPONSIVENESS, ASSURANCE, EMPATHY

[b] Dependent Variable: OS, where, **OS** = Overall Satisfaction.

The multiple correlation coefficients (**R**) large value (0.658) indicates a strong relationship among the five service quality dimensions and the academic staff's perceived overall service satisfaction and the coefficient of determination (**R Square)** 0.433 shows about half of the variation in the academic staff's perceived overall satisfaction was explained by the model. The **hypothesis is rejected** because the service quality dimensions were the predictors of the academic staff's overall administrative staff service satisfaction.

TABLE 6: SIGNIFICANCE OF SERVICE DIMENSIONS

Model		Standardized Coefficients	Collinearity Statistics			t	Sig.	Correlations		
			Tolerance	VIF	Condition Index (CI)			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	Beta			1.000	1.043	.301			
	TANGIBLE	.130	.637	1.569	9.283	1.134	.261	.465	.136	.104
	RELIABILITY	-.092	.314	3.184	13.008	-.567	.572	.490	-.069	-.052
	RESPONSIVENESS	.230	.314	3.184	16.508	1.414	.162	.554	.169	.129
	ASSURANCE	.270	.444	2.252	16.745	1.971	.053	.582	.232	.180
	EMPATHY	.228	.340	2.943	18.263	1.454	.151	.587	.174	.133

[a] Dependent Variable: OS

The coefficients table above reveals there are many predictors in the model. There are non-significant coefficients at p<0.05; and the value of the tolerance is minimum and the CI for the responsiveness, assurance and empathy dimensions is above 15 indicating the problem of collinearity (Bedi, 2004; Kwan and Ng, 1999). Therefore, the collinearity problem is fixed by using the step-wise linear regression analysis in order to identify only the major predictor variables in the model as follows:

TABLE 7: COLLINEARITY DIAGNOSTICS (c)

Model		Collinearity Statistics		
		Tolerance	VIF	Condition Index (CI)
1	(Constant)[a]			1.000
	EMPATHY	1.000	1.000	6.533
2	(Constant)[b]			1.000
	EMPATHY	.487	2.055	7.850
	ASSURANCE	.487	2.055	11.780

[a] Predictors: (Constant), EMPATHY

[b] Predictors: (Constant), EMPATHY, ASSURANCE

[c] Dependent Variable: OS

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT 11

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The step-wise linear regression analysis chooses empathy and assurance as the two major quality dimensions that were significant predictors of the academic staff's perceived overall administrative service 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 8: RANKING OF SERVICE DIMENSIONS

	N	Mean	Rank
R1	74	11.58	5
R2	74	16.50	4
R3	74	16.61	3
R4	74	29.86	1
R5	74	25.45	2
Valid N (list wise)	74		

Where, R1= Tangible, R2= Reliability, R3= Responsiveness, R4=Assurance, and R5= Empathy.

The academic staffs have ranked assurance, empathy, responsiveness, reliability and tangible from first to fifth, respectively, in terms of their degree of importance. Thus, assurance is ranked as the most important (first) and tangible as the least important dimension (fifth).

Ho3: There is no significant impact of the academic staff's overall service satisfaction on their propensity to recommend the Adi-Haqi Campus to others.

TABLE 9: ACADEMIC STAFF'S WORD OF MOUTH (WOM)

		OS	WOM
OS	Pearson Correlation	1	.743(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	74	74

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

Where, OS = Overall Satisfaction; WOM = Word of Mouth

The Pearson's correlations coefficient (0.743) shows the overall satisfaction had significant positive impact on the academic staff's propensity to recommend the Adi-Haqi Campus to others at p<0.01. Thus, **the hypothesis is rejected**.

Ho4: There is no significant impact of the academic staff's overall service satisfaction on their switching intention from the Adi-Haqi Campus.

TABLE 10: ACADEMIC STAFF'S SWITCHING INTENTION

		OS	LOYALT
OS	Pearson Correlation	1	.692(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	74	74

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

Where, LOYALT = Loyalty

The Pearson's correlations coefficient (0.692) demonstrates the overall satisfaction had significant positive impact on the academic staff's switching intention from the Adi-Haqi Campus to others at p<0.01. Thus, **the hypothesis is rejected.**

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The test of goodness of data (the correlation, reliability, and factor analysis) demonstrated that the data collected were reliable and valid: (1) the Pearson's correlation coefficient showed significant correlation among the INTSERVQUAL quality dimensions, (2) the reliability levels (Cronbach's alpha) of the model all exceeded 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978) and (3) the factor analysis revealed the amount of variance captured by the model demonstrated high validity; except few, almost all of the items assigned to each quality dimension had high factor loadings (i.e., >0.50). Thus, the internal service quality instrument can be successfully used to assess the magnitude of the gap between the academic staff's administrative service expectations and perceptions.

The paired-samples t-test demonstrated the academic staff's administrative service perceptions significantly fell below expectations. Its significant mean differences between service expectations and perceptions meant the academic staff did not get the expected services. The mean differences between their service expectations and perceptions ranged from 0.93 to 2.32.

There was significant positive relationship between the service quality dimensions and the academic staff's overall service satisfaction. It means these quality dimensions had significant impact on perception of the overall administrative service satisfaction. The model was also fit to measure academic staff's administrative service satisfaction level. The study also showed significant positive relationship between the academic staff's overall service satisfaction and their propensity to recommend and their switching intention. It means improving academic staff's overall administrative services leads to positive word of mouth and loyalty.

While many service quality dimensions may influence an academic staff's perception of internal service quality (administrative service), the study indicated some dimensions have a greater impact on the overall perception of the administrative service quality. The step-wise linear regression analysis (Multiple Regression Analysis) identified assurance (knowledge and courtesy of the administrative staff and their ability to convey trust and confidence.) and empathy (caring and individualized/personal attention of the administrative staff to the academic staff.) dimensions as the most predictors of the academic staff's overall administrative service satisfaction, i.e., the assurance and empathy dimensions significantly influenced their overall administrative service quality perception.

Ranking of the five quality dimensions (tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) pointed out assurance as the first and tangible as the fifth important in measuring administrative service quality. The implication of these finding is that the academic staff perceived some quality aspects to be more important than others for determining the quality of the service that they received from the administrative staff (the internal service providers). The finding does not mean, however, that the administrative service providers should neglect other quality dimensions (e.g. tangible, reliability, and responsiveness). It is important for the administrative staff to provide adequate service on all dimensions, and then to ascertain which dimensions may require greater attention for a period of time by means of continuous service assessment.

These results are consistent with prior research findings that (1) the paired-samples t-test revealed that academic staff expected more than what they perceived the administrative staff would provide, (2) tangible was less important in assessing academic staff's service perceptions and did not influence the academic staff service satisfaction as good as the rest, and (3) assurance and empathy were pointed out as the most predictors of administrative services (Chua, 2004; Darlaston-Jones et al., 2003; Faganel and Macur, 2003/04; Pariseau and McDaniel, 1997; Sherry et al., 2004; Soutar and McNeil, 1996). On the contrary, this too did not concur with the findings of Parasuraman et al. (1988, 1991), Frost and Kumar (2000) and Kang et al. (2002) whose research found reliability, responsiveness, and reliability and responsiveness, respectively, to have the most significant influence of all the service quality dimensions on the overall perception of service quality.

The importance of these findings for managerial decision-making process is evident. Knowing how academic staff perceives the administrative service quality and being able to measure internal service quality can benefit the institutions of higher learning managers both in quantitative and qualitative terms. The measurement of internal service quality can provide specific data that can be used in quality management. Assessing internal service quality and better

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT 12
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understanding on how various dimensions impact the overall service quality would enable them to efficiently design the service delivery process. By identifying the service perception gap, they can better allocate internal resources to provide better internal service for their academic staff and ultimately better service to their students.

The longitudinal use (periodic assessment) of such quality assessment will help them to take necessary measures for continuous service improvements. They have to recognize assurance and empathy dimensions are significant determinants to the academic staff's overall internal service quality perceptions. Therefore, the support staff should provide courteous and knowledgeable services to the academic staff and demonstrate caring and personal/individual attention to the academic staff (front-line employees).

The managers also must have a checklist of best practices with regard to service assurance and empathy, and to monitor whether such practices are implemented. With the knowledge of the internal service quality dimensions, the institutions of higher learning managers can then judge how well their administrative employees performed on each dimension and could identify the gap in order to make improvements.

The study was a snap shot of the Adi-Haqi Campus administrative staff's service performance at a distinct time, i.e., II-semester of the 2009/10. 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 is also changing with respect to factors like time, increase in the number of encounters with a particular service, competitive environment, etc. Thus, it is recommended that the study be repeated from time to time for continuous service improvement through cooperative venture between the academic and administrative staff. Such synergetic attempt will help to identify necessary logistics, training, and empowerment needed by the administrative staff for offering satisfactory internal services.

Finally, conclusions are drawn about academic staff's perceptions of administrative staff services in the CBE and CoLG. Generalization to other colleges or the university as a whole may not be legitimate. Thus, an all-inclusive research is suggested to measure how the Mekelle University's academic staff perceives the administrative services.

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