



**ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**SCHOOL BUSINESS**

**ASSESSING STUDENT PERCEPTION ON SERVICE**  
**QUALITY OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY OF SCHOOL**  
**OF COMMERCE**

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**ASSESSING STUDENT PERCEPTION ON SERVICE QUALITY OF ADDIS  
ABABA UNIVERSITY:IN CASE OF SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

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**This paper is dedicated to my beloved Mom who is in heaven.**

**MOM**

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## **Acronyms**

AAUC:	Addis Ababa University
BPR:	Business Processing Reengineering
EQUIP:	Educational Quality Improvement Program
ETQAA:	Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
HE:	Higher Education
HEDPERF:	Higher Education Performance
HEI:	Higher Education Institutions
HERQA:	The Higher Education Quality and Relevance Agency
HESC:	Higher Education Strategic Centre
IPA:	Importance Performance Analysis
MOE:	Ministry of Education
QUALED:	Quality of Education
PHEI:	Private Higher Education Institutions
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Science
SQ:	Service Quality
SERVPERF:	Service Performance
SERVQUAL:	Service Quality

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work, completed after enrolling in the MSc program at St Mary's University and has never before been included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other school for a degree, certificate, or other qualifications.

I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and I have attempted to identify all of the risks associated with this research that may arise in the course of conducting this research, obtained the necessary ethical and/or safety approval, and acknowledged my obligations and the rights of the participants.

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgment**

Isaiah 41:10

“Have no fear, for I am with you: do not be looking about in trouble, for I am your God; I will be your strength, yes I will be your helper; yes, my true right hand will be your support.”

Thank you, Jesus, for being my dad, my strength, my wisdom, my grace.....

I give you glory because you are worthy, because you are holy and because there is none like you.

I would also like to acknowledge and appreciate my friends and families for their continuous support and encouragement throughout this project. I want to thank my Mom Bekelech Kebede now she is heaven mom for being a model for us and for your nonstop prayers. Lastly, my very special appreciation and thanks goes to my respected father Mr.Beyene Meskele, My sister Maheder Beyene.

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## **Abstract**

*It is argued that the strategic success of a service organization depends on its ability to consistently meet or exceed customer service expectations. Delivering quality service is the key success factor of any institution that wants to remain in business. This study thus set out to measure the service quality performance of the School of Commerce. Descriptive study was designed to investigate the problem areas and their root causes, as identified through preliminary investigation with a group of students.*

*SPSS 26.0 package was used to analyze the data obtained. Analysis showed that there are significant differences between perceived importance and performance; the main reason for this gap is the problem associated with the discrepancy between management and customer's perception.*

*There are several gaps between service providers' perception of the quality requirements of the consumer and the expectations of the end users. It was the aim of this paper to suggest solutions that will close these gaps. The narrower these gaps are the better the quality of service. Recommendations are made to enhance quality service delivery in order to meet and surpass the requirement of the customers; students, especially from Addis Ababa University School of Commerce.*

*(service quality,importance,performance,attributes)*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter aims to identify the research problem, research questions and objectives for carrying out the study. The chapter begins with introductory background, followed by statement of the problem, research question, objective of the study and Significance of the study followed, scope of the study is navigated, limitation and by organization of the study will end the chapter.

### **1.1 Background of the research**

In today's highly competitive business environment, service quality has emerged as a strategic concern for marketers due to its direct and strong impact on customer satisfaction. It is a form of attitude that arises from customers comparing their expectations with their perceptions of performance. Fogli (2006) defines service quality as a customer's overall impression of the relative inferiority or superiority of an organization and its services. It is a cognitive judgment. Service quality plays a crucial role in determining an organization's competitiveness and profitability.

The education sector is among the various services where the concept of service quality is applied for its development. Quality is deemed significant from the perspective of all stakeholders, and it has shaped a competitive environment within educational institutions. This, in turn, emphasizes the importance of measuring the quality of services provided by universities Gbadamosi (2008).

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental building block for human development and a potent tool for poverty reduction. It empowers individuals and society to actively participate in the development process by acquiring knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes. Ethiopian education and training policy acknowledge the strengthening capacity, problem-solving abilities, and cultural development of individuals and society at all levels Whitty, Vol. 22, (1997). Moreover, education contributes to the creation of a strong and competitive economy, enabling a country to effectively respond to the

challenges of development and adapt to global market and technological conditions TSEGAYE, MAY (2014).

In the competitive landscape of the educational sector, providing high-quality services becomes a fundamental strategic tool for academic institutions. A positive perception of the service quality offered by HEIs leaves a favorable image in the minds of students, ultimately leading to higher levels of satisfaction Alves (2010).

In Ethiopia, the Government places higher education at the core of its strategy for social and economic development. The history of modern higher education in Ethiopia can be traced back to 1950 with the establishment of the University College of Addis Ababa, which later became Haile Selassie I University and eventually Addis Ababa University G.W. (1990).

One of the key frameworks used to assess service quality in higher education institutions is the SERVQUAL model, which measures the five dimensions of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. Studies using this model have found that service quality has a significant impact on student satisfaction and retention in higher education institutions Hapsari (2020).

This study aims to address this gap in the literature by assessing the student perception of service quality in public higher education institutions in Addis Ababa, specifically focusing on Addis Ababa Commerce Campus. By using the SERVQUAL model to measure the various dimensions of service quality, this study will provide insights into the areas of service quality that need improvement and provide recommendations to enhance the quality of service provided to students.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Identifying and meeting customer needs is the sole objective of every organization. Satisfying and retaining customers require an eloquent approach and sustained

commitment. Customer satisfaction occurs when organizations meticulously accomplish their duty to meet their customer needs and wants. Customer satisfaction is defined as "the number of customers, or percentage of total customers, whose reported experience with a firm's products and services exceeds specified satisfaction goals (Zimmerman, 2010).

According to Hill (1995) the primary customers of the education sector are students; therefore, it is necessary for the institution to fulfill the needs of their students. Furthermore, studies conducted on this subject have been very few in the context of Ethiopia. According to Mulu (2012) among the 92 articles published in Ethiopian Journal of Education over the year between 2000 and 2009 periods, only 15 were related to higher education topics but they were other than quality. Likewise, 2 out of 21 articles published in the Journal of Education. Development over a period of three years (2006-2008) focused on higher education themes and none of them had relation to quality.

The quality of service provided by public higher education institutions in Ethiopia is crucial for promoting social mobility, economic growth, and national development, yet many of these institutions face challenges in delivering high-quality services that meet the needs and expectations of students. As a result, assessing the service quality of public higher education institutions, specifically Addis Ababa School of Commerce, is important for identifying areas where improvements can be made in this research.

Public higher education in Ethiopia has been criticized for their low-quality services in this School of Commerce as part of its public higher education and the negative impact of this is felt by both students and the society. The quality of service provided by these institutions is critical to developing a skilled workforce and promoting economic growth. Assessing student perception of service quality is an important step in understanding how these institutions can improve their services.

Despite efforts by the Ethiopian government and various stakeholders to improve service quality in public higher education institutions, there is still limited understanding of how students, faculty, and staff perceive the quality of services provided. This lack of understanding can hinder the institution's ability to provide high-quality services that meet

the needs and expectations of their stakeholders, resulting in low retention rates, low academic performance, and decreased societal impact.

The specific problem addressed in this study is the assessment of student perception of service quality in Addis Ababa university School of Commerce. Although Addis Ababa University School of Commerce has made efforts to improve service quality, there is still limited understanding of how students perceive the quality of services provided, including academic and administrative services. This lack of understanding can hinder the institution's ability to provide high-quality services that meet the needs and expectations of students, resulting in low retention rates, low academic performance, and decreased societal impact. Therefore, the study aims to provide insights

### **1.3 Research Question**

Based on the problem mentioned the study attempts to get answer for the following questions:

1. How do students perceive the service quality of the School of Commerce?
2. Which service quality attributes are considered as important to students?
3. To assess a significant difference between students' expected result before and perceived performance of service quality?
4. Which areas and priorities do students consider crucial in the service quality in the School of Commerce?

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.4.1 General objective**

The main objective of this study is to analyze the perception of students on service quality of the School of Commerce.

### **1.4.2 Specific objectives**

The study has the following specific objectives:

- 1.To assess perceptions held by students towards the service quality School of Commerce.
- 2.To identify the significance of differences between students' expected result before and perceived performance of service quality.
- 3.To investigate service quality attributes that are considered important to the student.
- 4.To identify priority areas that is crucial service quality for school of commerce

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study on student perception of service quality in Addis Ababa, particularly in the context of Addis Ababa commerce campus, is significant for several reasons. One reason is that understanding student perceptions of service quality is critical for improving the quality of education in the School of Commerce.

According to a study by (Sureshchandar, 2002) service quality is a critical factor in student satisfaction with higher education institutions, and institutions that provide high-quality service are more likely to attract and retain students. In addition to improving service quality, understanding student perceptions can also enhance institutional reputation.

A study by (Saleh, 1991) found that students' perceptions of service quality are strongly correlated with institutional reputation. Therefore, institutions that provide high-quality service are likely to have a good reputation, Therefore, institutions that provide high-quality service are likely to have a good reputation, which can lead to greater interest from potential students, higher levels of recruitment of faculty, and more funding opportunities.

In conclusion, the study on student perception of service quality of School of commerce campus, is significant for improving service quality, enhancing institutional reputation.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

The scope of the research focuses on assessing student perception of service quality in the School of Commerce at Addis Ababa University. It aims to understand how students perceive the quality of services provided by the school, such as teaching, administrative support, facilities, and overall educational experience.

The study specifically targets students enrolled in the School of Commerce at Addis Ababa University. The sample size and selection method is determined based on the research design and available resources.

The research provides valuable insights into the students' perception of service quality and identifies areas of improvement within the School of Commerce. The findings can be used to enhance the educational experience for students, address any issues or concerns, and ultimately improve the overall service quality of the school.

## **1.7 Limitation**

The research is only addressed students only in Addis Ababa university school of commerce and restriction was set in from different undergraduate departments. Lack of adequate research material conduct in this area within the country; and the time assigned to complete this study may not be sufficient, so it is a bit difficult for the researcher to make a thorough investigation in the area within this short period of time.

Because of these limitations the researcher was forced to limit the size of sample selected from Addis Ababa university school of commerce student. The study was only conducted in Addis Ababa university school of commerce.

## **1.8 Structure of the paper**

The paper is categorized into five parts which includes Chapter one the introduction, under chapter two, the literature review presented. Chapter three focuses on the methodology part Chapter four presents the findings of the study and will also contain data presentation, analysis and interpretation, as well as major findings.

The final chapter will provide conclusion, recommendation with research limitation and future research suggestion, this result the findings is not to be generalized across all public higher institutions in the country.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Service Quality

Service quality is a crucial factor in the success of service-based organizations, including higher education institutions. Therefore, understanding the concept of service quality and its dimensions is essential in evaluating student perceptions of service quality in public higher education.

The concept of service quality was first introduced by (Parasuraman, 1985) who defined service quality as “the degree and direction of discrepancy between customers' perceptions and expectations of the service provider.” This definition suggests that service quality is subjective and based on the customer's expectations and perceptions of the service provided.

In their subsequent research, (Parasuraman, A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality, 1988) identified five dimensions of service quality known as the SERVQUAL model. These dimensions include reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Reliability refers to the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Assurance is the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Empathy is the caring and individualized attention that the service provider gives to its customers. Tangibles refer to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.

(Later, 1991) expanded the SERVQUAL model and introduced a hierarchical model of service quality. This model consists of three levels: the macro level, the meso level, and the micro level. The macro level represents the overall evaluation of the service quality of the organization, while the meso level represents the evaluation of the service quality of specific service departments. The micro level represents the evaluation of the service quality of individual service encounters.

## **2.2 Types of service Quality**

### **221 Technical Quality**

One of the types of service quality used to evaluate the performance of public higher education institutions is technical quality. Technical quality refers to the quality of the core services provided by the institution, such as the quality of teaching, research, and academic programs. According to (Parasuraman, Refinement and Reassessment of the SERVQUAL Scale, 1985) technical quality is one of the dimensions of service quality and is critical to the success of service-based organizations like higher education institutions. Therefore, in assessing the performance of the Addis Ababa Commerce Campus, it is important to evaluate the quality of its academic programs, teaching, and research to ensure that it meets the expectations of its students and stakeholders

### **222 Functional Quality**

Another type of service quality used to evaluate the performance of public higher education institutions is functional quality. Functional quality refers to the quality of the support services provided by the institution, such as administrative and student support services. According to (G. Sureshchandar, July 2002), functional quality is an important aspect of service quality and can significantly affect the overall perception of the quality of services by the students.

Therefore, in evaluating the performance of the Addis Ababa Commerce Campus, it is important to evaluate the quality of its support services such as library services, academic advising, and student counseling to ensure that they meet the expectations of the students.

### **223 Process Quality**

Process quality is another type of service quality used to evaluate the performance of public higher education institutions. Process quality refers to the quality of the processes and procedures used by the institution in delivering its services, such as registration, grading, and student feedback mechanisms. According to (Taylor, 1992), process quality is a critical aspect of service quality and can affect the overall satisfaction of the students with the services provided by the institution. Therefore, in evaluating the performance of the Addis

Addis Ababa Commerce Campus, it is important to evaluate the quality of its processes and procedures to ensure that they are efficient, effective, and meet the needs of the students.

#### **224 Outcome Quality**

Outcome quality is another type of service quality used to evaluate the performance of public higher education institutions. Outcome quality refers to the quality of the results and outcomes achieved by students after completing their studies, such as their academic performance, job prospects, and career success. According to (Taylor, Reconciling Performance- Based and Perception- Minus-Expectation measurement of service quality, 1992), outcome quality is an important aspect of service quality and can significantly affect the reputation of the institution.

Therefore, in evaluating the performance of the Addis Ababa Commerce Campus, it is important to evaluate the quality of its outcomes to ensure that its graduates are successful in their careers and are able to contribute positively to the development of the society.

#### **225 Perceived Quality**

Perceived quality is another type of service quality used to evaluate the performance of public higher education institutions. Perceived quality refers to the quality of the services as perceived by the students, which is influenced by their expectations, experiences, and perceptions of the service encounters. According to (Parasuraman, A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality, 1988), perceived quality is one of the dimensions of service quality and is critical to the success of service-based organizations.

Therefore, in evaluating the performance of the Addis Ababa Commerce Campus, it is important to evaluate the perceived quality of its services by the students to ensure that it meets their expectations and perceptions.

#### **226 Relational Quality**

Relational quality is another type of service quality used to evaluate the performance of public higher education institutions. Relational quality refers to the quality of the

relationship between the institution and its students, which includes aspects such as trust. relational quality is an important aspect of service quality and can significantly affect the overall satisfaction of the students with the services provided by the institution.

Therefore, in evaluating the performance of the Addis Ababa Commerce Campus, it is important to evaluate the quality of its relationship with its students to ensure that it is based on trust, communication, and responsiveness. Institutional Quality:

### **2.2.7 Institutional Quality**

Institutional quality is the overall quality of the institution as a whole, including its reputation, leadership, governance, and financial sustainability. According to (Salleh, 2012), institutional quality is an important aspect of service quality in higher education and can significantly affect the perception of the institution by its stakeholders.

### **2.3 Nature of Service Quality**

Service quality is a multidimensional construct that can be defined as the degree to which a service meets or exceeds customer expectations (Parasuraman, A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality, 1988). According to this definition, service quality is subjective in nature and can vary depending on the expectations and perceptions of individual customers. To better understand the nature of service quality, researchers have identified various dimensions or components that can be used to evaluate service quality.

One widely used model is the SERVQUAL model, which was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). This model proposes five dimensions of service quality, including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Tangibles refer to the physical aspects of the service, such as the appearance of the facilities and equipment. Reliability refers to the ability of the service provider to perform the service as promised, and to do so accurately and dependably. Responsiveness refers to the willingness of the service provider to help customers and provide prompt service. Assurance refers to the knowledge and courtesy of the service provider, as well as their ability to inspire trust and

confidence in customers. Finally, empathy refers to the degree to which the service provider is able to understand and respond to the needs and concerns of customers.

Another model that has been proposed is the RATER model, which was developed by (Gronroos, 1984). This model proposes five dimensions of service quality, including reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. While the RATER model shares some similarities with the SERVQUAL model, the dimensions are arranged differently and the emphasis on each dimension may be different.

In addition to the SERVQUAL and RATER models, other researchers have proposed different models for evaluating service quality. For example, (Carman, 1990) developed the Patient-Provider Encounter Scale, which includes dimensions such as communication, rapport, and patient-centeredness.

Another model is the Kano model, which proposes three types of attributes that can affect customer satisfaction: must-have attributes, performance attributes, and delighters (Kano, 1994). While the different models may have different dimensions and approaches, they all share the common goal of evaluating service quality from the perspective of the customer. This customer-centric approach is essential for understanding the nature of service quality, as it recognizes that service quality is ultimately determined by the perceptions and expectations of the customer.

It is important to note that the nature of service quality can vary depending on the context in which the service is provided. For example, the nature of service quality in a healthcare setting may be different from the nature of service quality in a higher education setting. Therefore, it is important to consider the specific context and needs of the customers when evaluating service quality in any given setting.

## **2.4 Dimension of Service quality**

Service quality has been a popular topic in academic literature for decades, with researchers focusing on identifying dimensions that affect customers' perceptions of service delivery. (SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service

Quality, 1988) proposed a widely accepted conceptual model of service quality that consists of five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.

#### **241 The dimension of reliability**

is a crucial aspect of service quality, as it represents the ability of service providers to deliver services consistently and accurately over time? Customers expect their service providers to perform their duties correctly and on time, which can enhance their perception of service quality and their overall satisfaction with the service.

In addition, reliable service delivery can also build trust and loyalty between customers and service providers. Researchers have highlighted the importance of reliability in various service contexts, such as healthcare, transportation, and financial services, among others. For instance, in healthcare, reliable service delivery can lead to better health outcomes and patient satisfaction (Conway, 2006) while in transportation, it can increase customer loyalty and willingness to use the service again (Zhang, 2016). Therefore, service providers must prioritize the dimension of reliability to meet customer expectations and enhance their overall perception of service quality.

#### **242 Responsiveness**

is an important dimension of service quality that plays a significant role in shaping customers' perceptions of service delivery? It refers to the ability of service providers to provide prompt service and personalized attention, meeting customers' needs and requirements (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Customers appreciate service providers who are responsive and able to attend to their needs quickly and efficiently, which can enhance their perceptions of service quality and increase their satisfaction.

Research has shown that responsiveness is a critical factor in service quality, with customers rating it as one of the most important dimensions of service quality (Mackoy, 1996). Service providers who are responsive can build customer trust and loyalty by demonstrating their commitment to providing high-quality service. They can also differentiate themselves from competitors by providing personalized attention and going the extra mile to meet customers' needs and expectations.

In addition, responsiveness is closely linked to customer satisfaction, as customers are more likely to be satisfied with services that are provided promptly and efficiently (Taylor, Reconciling Performance- Based and Perception- Minus-Expectation measurement of service quality, 1992). Service providers must, therefore, focus on providing responsive service to enhance customers' perceptions of service quality and increase their satisfaction.

To achieve responsiveness, service providers must develop effective systems and processes that enable them to respond quickly and efficiently to customers' needs. This can include investing in technology and training staff to provide personalized attention and ensure that customers' needs are met promptly. Service providers must also communicate their responsiveness to customers through effective marketing and communication strategies, which can enhance customers' confidence in the service provider's ability to provide high-quality service.

### **243 Assurance**

is the third dimension of service quality, which involves building trust and credibility in service delivery (Parasuraman A. Z., 1985). Service providers must demonstrate their expertise and competence to establish customers' confidence in their services.

Research has shown that assurance is a vital driver of customer satisfaction and loyalty, with customers valuing service providers who they perceive as knowledgeable and trustworthy (Taylor, Reconciling Performance- Based and Perception- Minus-Expectation measurement of service quality, 1992). Service providers must ensure that their employees possess the necessary skills and expertise to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. This requires recruiting and training qualified personnel, providing ongoing education and training, and instilling a culture of excellence and continuous improvement.

Service providers must also communicate accurate and honest information to customers about their services, pricing, and policies to build trust and credibility. This includes providing transparent and clear information about service quality, delivery times, and potential limitations or constraints. Service providers must also ensure that their marketing and promotional activities accurately reflect their services, avoiding exaggerated or misleading claims that could damage their reputation and trust.

In addition, service providers can use various tools and mechanisms to enhance assurance, such as certifications, accreditations, and awards that demonstrate their commitment to service excellence and quality (Mackoy, 1996). Service providers can also implement feedback mechanisms, such as customer satisfaction surveys, to identify areas where they can improve their service quality and address customer concerns.

## **244 Empathy**

Is a critical dimension of service quality that involves understanding and responding to customers' needs and concerns? Service providers must demonstrate care and concern for their customers and actively listen to their feedback to improve service delivery (Parasuraman Z. a., Refinement and Reassessment of the SERVQUAL Scale, 1985).

Service providers can enhance empathy by cultivating a customer-centric culture that prioritizes customer needs and preferences. This requires service providers to train their employees to be empathetic and attentive to customers' needs, develop processes to capture customer feedback and concerns, and empower employees to take corrective action where necessary.

Service providers can also use various tools and mechanisms to enhance empathy, such as customer relationship management systems and personalized services that cater to customers' specific needs and preferences. By collecting and analyzing customer data, service providers can gain insights into their customers' preferences, behaviors, and needs, allowing them to tailor their services and interactions to meet individual needs.

Service providers must also demonstrate empathy during service recovery situations, where customers have experienced a problem or issue with the service provided. Service providers must respond quickly and effectively to these situations, demonstrating genuine concern and a willingness to resolve the issue to the customer's satisfaction. This can help to turn negative experiences into positive ones, enhancing customers' overall perception of service quality (al, 2010).

## 245 Tangibles

Are a crucial dimension of service quality that refer to the physical facilities, equipment, and materials used in service delivery. Customers assess service quality based on the appearance and functionality of the physical environment, as well as the appearance of service providers (Parasuraman A. Z., 1985).

To enhance tangibles, service providers must pay close attention to the design and layout of their physical environment, ensuring that it is comfortable, aesthetically pleasing, and easy to navigate. Service providers must also ensure that their equipment and materials are up-to-date, well-maintained, and functional to avoid service disruptions and breakdowns that can negatively affect customers' experiences.

Additionally, service providers must invest in the appearance of their employees, including their uniforms, grooming, and personal hygiene. This can help to convey a sense of professionalism and attention to detail, which can positively influence customers' perceptions of service quality (al B. e., 1990).

### 2.5 Service Quality in Higher Education

According to (Berry, 1980), services can be defined as behavioral rather than physical entities and are performed as deeds, acts or performances. (Hill, 1995) argues that if higher education (HE) is considered a service, it should exhibit all the classical features of services, making the measurement of quality a complex issue. This idea has motivated some authors to discuss the framework for researching services marketing from an educational perspective (Lovelock, 1983).

HE meets the criteria of intangibility and heterogeneity, and satisfies the criterion of inseparability by being produced and consumed at the same time. It also assumes students' participation in the delivery process, thus satisfying the perishability criterion (Cuthbert, 1996). Therefore, the concepts of service quality are directly applicable to higher education.

(Adee, 1997) suggests that several 'university characteristics' can explain perceived quality among students, such as competent teaching, staff availability for consultation, library

services, computer facilities, recreational activities, class sizes, level and difficulty of subject content, and students' workload. However, there is considerable debate on the best way to define service quality in HE (Brookes, 2006). Service quality literature suggests that educational institutions must monitor the quality of services provided to commit themselves to continuous improvements. Although it is pointed out that the concept of education quality is vague and controversial (Tam, 1997), universities are increasingly recognizing the role and importance of service quality (Shank et al., 1995).

## **2.6 Customers of the Education Industry**

According to (Griffin, 1996) and Stanton, Etzel, and Walker (1994), a customer is someone who pays for an organization's products or services, while a consumer is the person or entity that uses or consumes a product. In the context of education, students are the customers who seek the services of educational institutions. As primary customers, student-perceived service quality is of utmost importance to universities and their management. However, (Aspinna, 1997) study showed that employers, society, faculty, and families also play important roles as customers of educational institutions. (Waugh, 2002) argued that viewing students as customers could lead to tensions in universities, as it may make them seem too business-oriented.

(Pitman, 2000) examined the extent to which university staff perceived students and academics as customers in Australia, while Emery et al. (2001) argued that conducting student evaluations of teachers and teaching practices may lower academic standards. The issue of defining customers in public services like education is complex, as individuals, government agencies, and society as a whole may be considered as customers with conflicting interests. Thus, it is claimed that a less controversial term, such as stakeholders, should be used to define and manage quality in higher education.

(Athiyainan, 1994) emphasized that higher education institutions must identify the characteristics that their clients (students, staff, faculty, alumni, donors, etc.) value the most and measure their performance against these characteristics to assess quality. In addition to students, other customers, such as funding bodies seeking good return on investment and

society as a whole looking for a better-educated workforce, should also be taken into consideration (Srikanthan, 2003).

## **2.7 Service Expectations**

Service expectations are the beliefs that customers hold about what they will receive from a service provider. In the context of higher education, service expectations refer to the expectations that students have of their educational institution in terms of the services provided.

One of the most widely cited frameworks for understanding service expectations is the SERVQUAL model developed by (Parasuraman A. Z., 1985). The model suggests that service quality is determined by the gap between customer expectations and perceptions of service delivery. In other words, service quality can be improved by managing customer expectations and meeting or exceeding those expectations. Several studies have applied the SERVQUAL model to higher education and found that students have high expectations of their educational institutions in terms of service delivery (Parasuraman A. Z., 1985). These expectations include factors such as academic quality, facilities, faculty, staff, and administrative services.

In a study conducted by (Mekonnen, 2015) on service quality in Ethiopian higher education institutions, students identified several factors that were important to them in terms of service expectations. These factors included academic quality, faculty expertise, student-teacher relationships, administrative services, and campus facilities.

In a separate study by (Admasie, 2018) specifically focused on Addis Ababa Commerce Campus, students identified factors such as faculty expertise, course content, student-teacher relationships, and administrative services as important service expectations. The study also found that students had relatively high levels of satisfaction with the services provided by the campus

One framework that has been widely used to understand service expectations in higher education is the SERVQUAL model. This model suggests that service quality is determined by the gap between customer expectations and perceptions of service delivery.

In other words, service quality can be improved by managing customer expectations and meeting or exceeding those expectations. Studies that have applied the SERVQUAL model to higher education have found that students have high expectations of their educational institutions in terms of service delivery. These expectations include factors such as academic quality, facilities, faculty, staff, and administrative services.

## **2.8 Perceived Service Quality**

The concept of perceived service quality is widely discussed by both practitioners and academics, yet there is no universally accepted definition. Generally, perceived service quality refers to a customer's evaluative judgment or impression of a service provider's overall performance or excellence, based on their overall experience of the continuous service encounter. In forming their perceptions of quality, customers rely on a variety of cues, which can be categorized as either intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic cues refer to attributes that are fundamental to the service and cannot be changed without altering its physical characteristics, while extrinsic cues are attributes that are not part of the physical product.

To further elaborate on the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic cues in the context of a university, intrinsic cues can include classroom facilities, library and laboratory resources, staff services, program and curriculum design, and extra-curricular activities, which are fundamental to the quality of education provided. Meanwhile, external cues such as location, building, price, and image dimensions are considered non-fundamental service characteristics that can also influence customers' perceptions of quality. These ideas have been discussed in works such as (Parasuraman Z. a., Refinement and Reassessment of the SERVQUAL Scale, 1985), (Woodruffe, 1995), and (Chowdhury, 2002).

## **2.9 Instruments to Measure Service Quality in HE**

Various researchers have varied opinions on how to measure service quality in higher education. Studies on this topic have utilized a range of measurement scales, including SERVPERF (Cronin, 1992), HEdPERF (Panda, 2011), SERVEQUAL (Parasuraman A. Z., 1985), and Importance Performance Analysis (Martilla, 1977). These methods assess service quality from different perspectives and have their own strengths and limitations.

Researchers need to carefully select the most appropriate measurement tool based on their research objectives and the specific context of the study.

### **291 SERVPERF**

In contrast to SERVQUAL, which measures service quality by comparing customer expectations with perceptions, (Cronin, 1992) proposed a performance-based measure called SERVPERF. SERVPERF includes 22 perception items from the SERVQUAL scale and excludes any consideration of expectations. The research of (Cronin, 1992) suggested that the performance minus expectation is an appropriate basis for measuring service quality. Although expectations can have a unique effect on customers' perception of service quality, the performance-based paradigm was found to be superior to the disconfirmation-based SERVQUAL paradigm in many emerging literatures.

However, (Parasuraman A. Z., 1994) criticized the SERVPERF instrument, arguing that the marketing literature's support for the superiority of simple performance-based measures of service quality was questionable. They also revealed that service quality measurements that incorporate customer expectations provided richer information than those that focus on perceptions only. Despite this criticism, (Cronin, 1992) maintained that SERVPERF was a superior measure of service quality compared to SERVQUAL.

They claimed that the SERVPERF scale consistently outperformed other competing models in service environments and provided a useful tool for measuring overall service quality attitudes by service managers.

### **292 HEdPERF (Higher Education Performance)**

(Firdaus, 2004) introduced a new performance-based measuring scale, HEdPERF (Higher Education Performance), which aimed to capture the authentic determinants of service quality within the higher education sector in a more comprehensive way. The instrument consists of 41 items and has been tested for unidimensionality, reliability and validity using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The study focuses on the measurement of service quality within the higher education sector using a single, empirical study with customers from this industry. The study compared the effectiveness of the HEdPERF scale

with two other alternatives: the SERVPERF instrument and the merged HEdPERF-SERVPERF as a moderating scale.

### **First dimension: Non-Academic Aspects**

This factor pertains to the necessary variables that enable students to meet their academic obligations and is associated with the duties and responsibilities of non-academic staff. Essentially, it focuses on the capacity and willingness of administration or support staff to demonstrate respect, equitable treatment, and maintain confidentiality of information. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of being welcoming and available, displaying positive attitudes and effective communication skills, allowing adequate autonomy, and rendering services in a timely manner.

### **Second dimension: Academic Aspects**

This dimension pertains to the academic aspects of the institution and emphasizes essential characteristics such as a positive attitude, effective communication skills, providing adequate consultation, and offering regular feedback to students. Additionally, it focuses on the reputation of the institution in terms of its ability to provide diverse and prestigious programs with flexible structures, degrees that are acknowledged both locally and globally, and a highly qualified and experienced academic staff (Firdaus, 2004).

### **Third dimension: reliability**

This factor focuses on the reliability and dependability of the service provider in delivering their promised services accurately and timely. It also emphasizes the importance of their willingness to address and resolve any issues or problems in a compassionate and reassuring manner.

### **The fourth dimension: empathy**

This factor is focused on providing customized and tailored support to students, with a clear understanding of their unique and evolving needs, while prioritizing their well-being and interests.

### 293 Service Quality Model (GAP model)

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) defined service quality as the outcome of the comparison between the expectations customers have of a service and their perceptions of the actual performance of the service provider. Due to the unique features of services such as intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability of production and consumption, service quality is an abstract and complex construct that is difficult to evaluate as different customers have different perceptions of service quality. Based on further research, Parasuraman et al. (1988) revised the initial ten dimensions of service quality and proposed the SERVQUAL instrument which measures service quality along five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1990) suggested that subjective measurement of service quality could be achieved by determining the level of discrepancy between customers' expectations or desires and their perceptions of the actual quality of service provided. When customer expectations are met or exceeded, good service quality is achieved. The SERVQUAL methodology, which involves comparing customers' expectations and perceptions along the five dimensions of service quality, is a popular tool for measuring service quality (Nitecki, 1996).

The Disconfirmation of Expectations Paradigm, as elaborated by Patterson (1993), relates customer satisfaction to their pre-purchase expectations and perceptions of service performance, identifying any difference between expectations and perceptions as Disconfirmation. The model involves comparing customers' expectations and perceptions of service performance, and forms the basis for evaluating service quality.

Perceived Performance > Expectation: High satisfaction (Delight)

Perceived Performance = Expectation: Merely Satisfied  
Perceived Performance < Expectation: Dissatisfaction

According to Parasuraman et al. (1985:47), the SERVQUAL model is also referred to as the disconfirmation paradigm or gap model, the model says that the expected service is influenced by the word-of-mouth, the personal needs, past experience and also by the external communication to customers. A perception gap can appear between the expected

service and the perceived service. This gap is called the GAP 5 (also called the service quality gap); it occurs if the customer is not satisfied and depends on the other 4 gaps which are:

Provider gap 1: not knowing what customers expect.

Provider gap 2: not selecting the right service design and standards  
 Provider gap 3: not delivering to service standards  
 Provider gap 4: not matching performance to promises

The customer gap can be represented mathematically by the following formula

$$SQ = \sum_{j=1}^K (P_{ij} - E_{ij})$$

Where: SQ = Service quality

$P_{ij}$  = Performance perception of stimulus  $i$  concerning attribute  $j$   
 $E_{ij}$  = Expectation of service quality for attribute  $j$ , which is the relevant norm for stimulus  $i$   
 $K$  = number of attributes  
 Parasuraman et al,(1990) further defined an additional series of items that captured the importance consumers place on each service attribute captured by the SERVQUAL scale: Service Quality= f (Perception- Expectation) \*Importance.

$$SQ = \sum_{j=1}^K I_{ij} (P_{ij} - E_{ij})$$

The weighting factor, represented as  $I_{ij}$  in the equation, signifies the significance of a particular attribute ' $j$ ' to an individual ' $i$ ' in evaluating overall quality. It is crucial to weigh all the dimensions in terms of the relative importance that customers attach to them to assess the overall quality of service. The equation highlights the role of three variables: importance, perceptions, and expectations, which play different roles in determining the perceived service quality improvement. Therefore, collecting information on all these variables is essential.

This formula enables us to determine the gap between a customer's perceptions and their expectations of service quality improvement. The larger the difference between stakeholder expectations and perceptions, the more significant the weakness in service quality improvement. This gap analysis approach was introduced by Parasuraman et al. in 1985 and has since been widely used to evaluate service quality in various industries.

### **2.9.3.1 Criticisms on SERVQUAL**

The SERVQUAL instrument, which measures service quality based on five dimensions, has been widely debated since its initial publication. While some researchers agree that the instrument is suitable for measuring service quality, others have criticized it for its weak points, both theoretically and operationally.

Asubonteng (1996) claims that the popularity of SERVQUAL with managers is due to its ease of application and flexibility, even though the results obtained from the model may not be objective truth. The model is useful in identifying the direction in which the firm should move.

However, Babakus and Boller (1992) suggest that the number of dimensions comprising service quality is contextually determined and dependent on the particular service being offered. Andersson (1992) points out that SERVQUAL does not draw on previous social research, particularly economic theory, statistics, and psychological theory.

Criticism has also been directed at the methodology of comparing the gap between expectation and perception. Cronin and Taylor (1992; 1994) argue that SERVQUAL is paradigmatically flawed because of its adoption of the disconfirmation model. Babakus and Boller (1992) suggest that the use of a "gap" approach to service quality measurement is intuitively appealing, but the difference in scores may not provide additional information beyond that already contained in the perception component of the SERVQUAL scale.

Lewis (1993) criticizes the use of a seven-point Likert scale for its lack of verbal labeling for points two to six, which may cause respondents to overuse the extreme ends of the scale. Babakus and Mangold (1992) suggest using a five-point Likert scale to reduce the frustration level of respondents and increase response rate and quality. Double

administrations of perception and expectation questionnaires may lead to boredom and confusion (Bouman & Van Der Wiele, 1992) and may also be deemed too time-consuming (Carman, 1990).

#### **294 Importance Performance Analysis Model**

The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) is a technique used to determine which product or service attributes a company should focus on to achieve customer satisfaction. The technique involves constructing a two-dimensional matrix using data from satisfaction surveys, with importance on the x-axis and performance (satisfaction) on the y-axis. Customers rate each attribute on its performance to identify strengths and weaknesses of a market offering in terms of two criteria: the relative importance of attributes and evaluation of the offering in terms of those attributes.

To apply the IPA technique, attributes relevant to the choice situation being investigated are identified by canvassing relevant literature, conducting focus group interviews, or using managerial judgment. The IPA is a low-cost, easily understandable model, which indicates to managers where they should devote more resources and time, as well as those areas where too many resources are utilized.

The IPA is widely applicable in measuring service quality satisfaction in education, as it identifies which attributes or combinations of attributes are most influential in stakeholder satisfaction. The importance and performance mean values can be displayed graphically in a two-dimensional grid to facilitate easy interpretation. The grid is divided into four quadrants to enhance the interpretation of the mean importance and performance measures associated with each of the quality attributes. Mean performance and importance scores are used as coordinates for plotting individual attributes on a two-dimensional matrix, which is used to prescribe prioritization of attributes for improvement and can provide guidance for strategy formulation.

The four quadrants are described as: high priority, keep up the good work, low priority, and possible overkill.

**1. Concentrate here:** This quadrant indicates that the respondent feels that a particular quality attribute is highly important, but the attribute's performance causes low satisfaction.

**2. Keep up the good work:** The quality attribute in this quadrant is regarded by the respondent as both important and indicates a satisfactory performance.

**3.Low priority:** The quality attribute here is rated low in terms of performance, but respondents do not regard the attribute as highly important.

**4.Possible overkill:** Here the performance of certain quality attributes in the institution is judged as being good, but respondents attach slight importance to it.

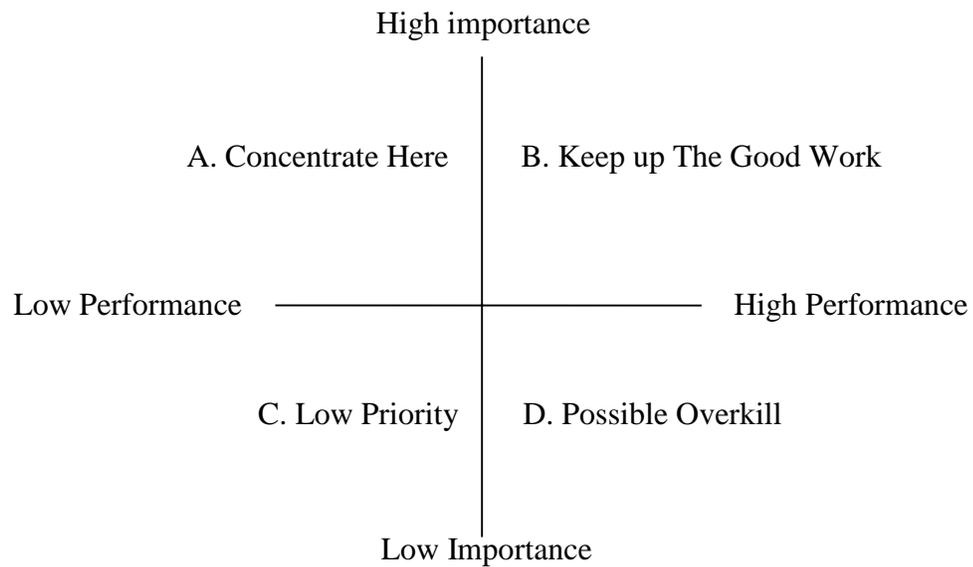


Figure 1 The four quadrant of IPA

Hemmasi et al. (2004) conducted a study that proposed using importance-performance analysis as a more effective tool for assessing service quality compared to the gap measures recommended by the developer of the SERVQUAL scale. Their findings suggested that the expectation/performance gap model underlying the SERVQUAL scale was inadequate for conceptualizing and operationalizing service quality. They argued that an importance-performance analysis, such as the one demonstrated in their study, was a more appropriate method for identifying areas where resources could be strategically reallocated to improve service quality. Specifically, they suggested placing SERVQUAL scale items on an importance-performance grid developed by Martilla and James (1977). This approach would help to identify areas where service quality is highly important but underperformed, and thus require resource redeployment.

The traditional importance-performance analysis has two weaknesses, as highlighted by Burns (1986) and Engle and Blackwell (1990). Firstly, it only considers an object's own performance and ignores its performance relative to competitors. Secondly, while it takes into account attribute salience, it fails to recognize the determinacy of an attribute. Determinant attributes are those that effectively differentiate among competing products and directly influence consumer choice. However, an attribute may be highly salient to consumers, but if they perceive alternative products as being priced similarly, then price is not a determinant attribute. Focusing solely on salience and disregarding determinacy may lead to misguided strategies. To overcome these limitations, a modified IPA model could be developed based on comparing perceived performance and the importance of each service attribute in the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model.

## **2.10 Conceptual Relation between Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality**

Service quality and customer satisfaction have become increasingly popular topics among researchers and practitioners in the field of Services Marketing, largely due to the seminal work of Parasuraman et al. (1985). Some scholars have suggested that service quality and customer satisfaction are essentially the same, as both concepts are based on the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm (Tian-Cole et al., 2003). Customer satisfaction is typically determined by the size and direction of disconfirmation, which is the difference between an individual's pre-purchase expectations or other comparison standards and their post-purchase perceptions of product performance (Tse et al., 1990).

Service quality is a critical factor in shaping customers' evaluations of pure services, such as healthcare, financial services, and education. Customer satisfaction, on the other hand, is related to the extent to which a product or service has met customers' expectations. Customer satisfaction is a dynamic construct that is influenced by various factors, including product and service features, consumer emotions, attributions related to service success or failure, perceptions of equity or fairness, and the influence of other customers and family members (Oliver, 1997).

Customer satisfaction has significant macroeconomic implications and is an essential indicator of national economic health, economic efficiency, pricing statistics, quality of

life, corporate earnings, and stock value. In many service-based firms, customer satisfaction is closely linked to customer loyalty and profitability (Anderson et al., 1994). Therefore, understanding and managing customer satisfaction is crucial for achieving long-term success in service industries.

### **2.11 Review of Empirical Literature**

In a study conducted by Mulu (2012) on quality and quality assurance in Ethiopian higher institutions, it was found that academic staff in public universities are not adequately trained and engaged to address challenges and improve the quality of education to the desired level. The study highlights the need for proper training and engagement of academic staff to ensure the delivery of quality education in Ethiopian higher institutions.

Negi (2010) conducted a study on educational quality and students' complaints handling in private university colleges in Addis Ababa. The research revealed that the primary focus of private higher educational institutions is on attracting new enrollments rather than effectively addressing the complaints of existing students.

In his research, Solomon (2012) explored stakeholders' perceptions of service quality improvement in Ethiopian public higher education institutions. The study found that the highest gap between perception and expectation is due to stakeholders expecting more from the service quality improvement initiative, which is a result of the implementation of Business Process Reengineering (BPR). Additionally, the study suggested that further research should be conducted on private higher institutions.

Krisana Kitcharoen (2004) conducted a research on the analysis of service quality of private higher education institutions (PHEI) in Thailand using the modified Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) model. The study sampled students and staff from ten randomly selected Thai universities to investigate the importance of service attributes for service providers' and students' evaluation of services, and to evaluate the gap between importance and performance from both perspectives.

The study found that students' satisfaction with service quality was significantly explained by age, tangible importance, empathy importance, reliability performance, and empathy

performance. On the other hand, staff members' satisfaction with service quality was significantly explained by tangible importance, reliability importance, assurance importance, and reliability performance. Furthermore, the study also revealed that students' satisfaction with service quality positively affected their pride in the universities.

## 2.12 Conceptual Framework

This research will endeavor to find out the main service quality problems in School of Commerce by using the SERVQUAL model with adding cost of courses offered and access to facilities in addition to the five dimensions.

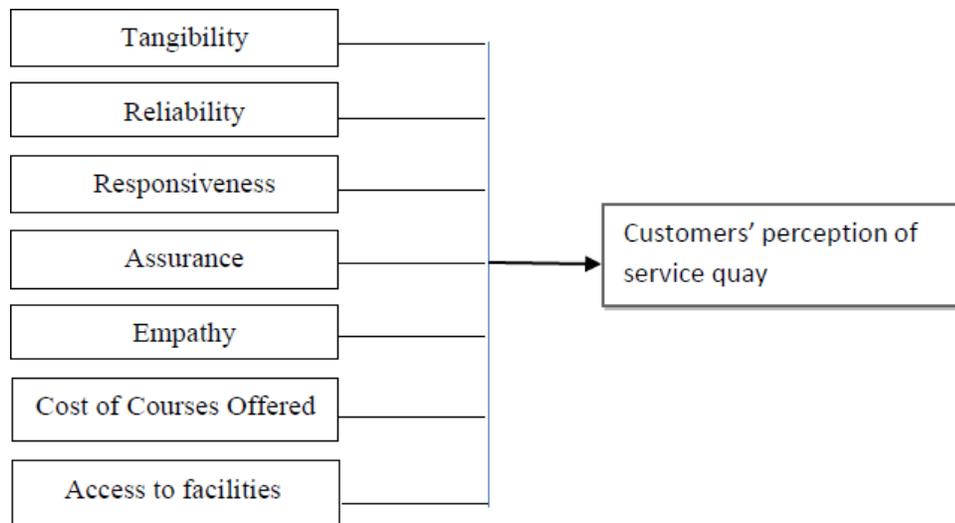


Figure 2 Conceptual framework

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This chapter focuses on providing a comprehensive discussion of research methodology, including the rationale for selecting various research strategies.

#### **3.1 Study area**

The study area for the research is the Addis Ababa Commerce Campus, which is a public higher education institution located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The campus is dedicated to providing quality education in business and economics to students in the region.

Addis Ababa Commerce Campus was established in 1943, and it has since grown to become a well-respected University in the region. The campus offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business and economics. As a public institution, the campus is funded by the government and is expected to provide quality education and services to its students. Therefore, assessing the student perception of service quality is crucial in ensuring that the campus is meeting the needs and expectations of its students.

#### **3.2 Research design**

The researcher in this study opted for a descriptive research design because it is particularly suitable for determining the degree of relationship between variables and actual phenomena, which can provide decision-makers with evidence for taking action (Hair, 2000). Descriptive research is also useful for describing the characteristics of a particular phenomenon, providing specific predictions, and narrating facts and characteristics concerning an individual, group, or situation (Kothari, 2004). The goal of descriptive research is to describe some aspect of a phenomenon, such as its status, and it can also lead to causal analysis and a better understanding of a topic (Abiy Zegeye, 2009).

The time scale for this research was cross-sectional, which means that data was collected at a specific point in time. As (Gray, 2008) explains, a cross-sectional study is used when data is gathered at a single time point to provide a snapshot of a particular phenomenon.

### 3.3 Research approach

(Kothari, 2004) notes that there are two fundamental approaches to research: the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach. The former involves the generation of data in quantitative form, which can be subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis in a formal and rigid fashion. The latter qualitative approach is concerned with the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behavior, and research in such a situation is a function of the researcher's insights and impressions

The present study used a mixed-methods research approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. (Greene, 2005) argues that a mixed-methods approach enables researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of educational phenomena, from simple to complex, and from particular to general, as well as from internal to external perspectives. Punch (2005) adds that using both quantitative and qualitative approaches increases the scope, depth, and power of the research.

### 3.4 Population

The target population for this study is limited to the School of Commerce undergraduate regular students undergraduate program in which there are around 1140 regular undergraduate students enrolled in 2022/2023 Academic year. These students have been enrolled in the university for at least three years and above have had the opportunity to experience the university services and facilities, making them more capable of evaluating the quality of service provided by the Addis Ababa university school of Commerce.

Table 1 Population of School of commerce

<b>Department</b>	<b>Number of Student</b>
Accounting	119
BAIS	236
Management	84
Economics	68

Logistics	118
Marketing	96
First year students	419

The total target population in this study is the sum of all students in the six departments from second year to fourth.

Year and fresh year students, that is 1140. Here are the departments with their respective number of students and the sample taken from each of them.

### **3.5 Sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals or elements from a larger population for inclusion in a study. Sampling is a critical step in research, as it directly impacts the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the study results.

#### **3.5.1 Sampling Method**

The sampling method used in this study is stratified sampling to classify School of Commerce student's based on the department followed by simple random sampling to select respondents from each department of final students. This sample includes a proportional representation of students from each department and ensures that final year students were selected to provide reliable perceptions of service quality over time. The sample size is determined by using probability-based techniques and it is proportional to the department enrolment rates, with a slightly larger number of respondents added in cases where departments have low enrolment rates to accurately represent the students of those departments.

### 3.5.2 Sample size

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals or observations from a larger population to represent the population. The goal of sampling is to obtain information about the population by studying a smaller, more manageable sample of individuals.

Including all undergraduates, these regular students may lead to a large and diverse population, making it difficult to obtain meaningful insights into the perceptions of service quality at the Addis Ababa University School of Commerce. By focusing on final year students and third year students, the study can be conducted on a more homogeneous sample, reducing the variability in the data collected. This approach can also reduce the cost and time required for data collection and analysis, making the study more feasible. Final year and third year undergraduate students are the most appropriate population for this study as they have been enrolled in the university for a longer period and have had more opportunities to experience the services provided by the university. They have also had more time to interact with the university staff and faculty, making them more capable of evaluating the quality of service provided by the Addis Ababa School of Commerce Campus. Moreover, final year students are about to graduate, and their perceptions of the service quality at the campus can help the university to make necessary improvements before they graduate.

Additionally, final year students and third year students may have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the university services and facilities, making them more capable of evaluating the service quality accurately. They have gone through various courses and programs, utilized campus facilities such as libraries, and computer centers, and interacted with staff and faculty members. This experience provides them with a holistic view of the campus's services, which can help in assessing the service quality provided by the Addis Ababa Commerce Campus. (Muijs, 2004).

rejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table is a widely used reference table in social science research for determining sample size. The table provides minimum sample sizes required for a given population size and desired level of precision.

According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table, the sample size required for the study is 278. This means that if a researcher wants to estimate a target population of 1140 parameter with a certain level of precision and confidence, they can select a sample of 278 individuals from the population, and the resulting estimates will be reasonably accurate.

The total target population consists of 1140 students, and the sample size selected for the study is 278. The sample is taken from both the fourth year and third year students, as they are more familiar with the campus and are considered capable of providing meaningful responses compared to students from other years. Among the sample of 278 students.

### **3.6 Source of Data**

The source of data for the study on the assessment of student perception of service quality in Addis Ababa university school of Commerce was both primary and secondary data. Primary data will collect through the administration of a questionnaire and interviews, while secondary data will from prior literature.

#### **3.6.1 Method of Data Gathering Instruments**

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on a review of prior research and was designed to assess students' perceptions of service quality in PHE in Addis Ababa University school of Commerce. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions that required respondents to rate their satisfaction levels on various aspects of service quality, such as academic quality, facilities, and support services. The questionnaire was administered to final-year undergraduate students selected through stratified random sampling.

Secondary data for this study were acquired by conducting a comprehensive review of existing research on service quality in higher education. This review served as a basis for developing the theoretical framework of the study and identifying the key factors that affect students' perceptions of service quality in Public Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs). Additionally, comparing the study findings with previous research on service quality in higher education was made possible through this review Berg, B. L. (2001).

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The statement is referring to the process of analyzing data collected in a research study using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data, which is typically numerical and measurable, will be analyzed using a statistical software called SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 26.0. This software is specifically designed to help researchers perform statistical analyses, create charts and graphs, and generate reports based on the data collected.

This statement is described by the initial steps taken by the researcher in a study to ensure the validity and reliability of the survey questions. Validity refers to whether the survey questions accurately measure what they are intended to measure, while reliability refers to the consistency of the survey questions over time.

To ensure the validity of the survey questions, the researcher based them on a thorough literature review and frame of reference. This means that the survey questions were designed to measure the constructs and variables of interest in a way that is consistent with what is known in the existing research. By doing so, the researcher can increase the likelihood that the survey questions accurately measure what they are intended to measure. To check the reliability of the survey questions, the researcher intends to use the Cronbach alpha test. This is a statistical test that measures the internal consistency of a set of survey questions. It assesses how well the questions within a survey measure the same underlying construct or variable.

Following the validity and reliability tests, the researcher plans to use descriptive statistics to interpret the demographic variables of the study participants. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize and describe the data collected from the survey responses. This could include measures such as mean, median mode, and standard deviation to describe the central tendency and variability of the demographic data.

Overall, by conducting validity and reliability tests, the researcher is taking important steps to ensure the quality of the survey data and the accuracy of the results. Using descriptive statistics to interpret demographic variables can help provide a clear picture of the study participants and facilitate further analysis of the survey data.

methodology for conducting an IPA (Importance-Performance Analysis) on a set of SERVQUAL service attributes.

First, mean importance and mean performance ratings are calculated for each service attribute. This involves determining how important each attribute is to customers, as well as how well the service provider is currently performing in delivering that attribute. Next, gap scores are calculated for each IPA item. This involves subtracting the mean performance rating from the mean importance rating for each service attribute. This tells us how well the service provider is meeting customer expectations for each attribute, and where improvements may be needed.

Then, an IPA graph is plotted, which shows the relationship between importance and performance for each service attribute. This helps to identify areas where the service provider may need to focus their efforts in order to improve customer satisfaction. Finally, a paired sample t-test with a confidence interval of 95% is used to compare the importance and performance ratings for each service attribute. This statistical test helps to determine if the gaps between importance and performance are statistically significant, and provides a basis for making recommendations for improvement.

The research methodology used in this study included both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis involved calculating the mean scores for the importance level and performance level, and then testing for a significant difference between the two means. The relationship between each of the independent dimensions was examined using Pearson correlation, and regression analysis was conducted to determine the relative importance of service quality factors in contributing to the overall evaluation of service quality by customers.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative data was collected and analyzed using a procedure outlined by Silverman (2009). Open-ended survey questions were analyzed using content analysis to identify patterns and commonalities of responses. This resulted in the identification of themes, which were then cross-examined to establish an agreed set of themes that were thought to appropriately represent the participants.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this chapter the primary data collected from respondents were analyzed, the first part focused on analyzing the self-administered questionnaires collected from students and the second part deals with the interview questions with the managers.

In order to collect the data, 278 structured questionnaires were distributed to students and from the distributed questionnaires 256 were returned giving a response rate of 92%.

#### 4.1 Reliability analysis

The study used Cronbach alpha to assess the internal consistency of the research instrument. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is a coefficient of reliability and it is commonly used as a measure of internal consistency.

The reliability in this study as assessed by coefficient alpha is stated below in table

Table 2 Result of Reliability Analysis

Service Quality Dimension	No of Items	Importance	Performance
Tangibility	5	.864	.951
Reliability	5	.846	.857
Responsiveness	4	.827	.732
Assurance	4	.758	.846
Empathy	5	.784	.892
Cost of Course offered	3	.727	.795
Access to facility	3	.740	.919
Overall Scale	29	.832	.871

## 4.2 General Profile of the Respondents

The biographical profile of respondents is presented in Table 4.1. The properties include the gender and age of the sampled students. The results reveal that 43.4% of the students were male and 56.6% were female. This showed that the majority of the students are female which indicated females are becoming more active participants in learning.

As for the age distribution, 67.2% of the respondents were young and between 18 and 21 years old, followed by 28.9% between 22 and 24 years. Only 3.9% of the sampled students fell into the 25 to 27 age group.

Table 3 Summary of demographic variable of respondents

<b>Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	111	43.4
	Female	145	56.6
	Total	256	100
<b>Age</b>	18-21 years	172	38.5
	22-24 years	74	28.9
	25-27 years	10	3.9
	Total	256	100

Table 4 Summary of Demographic variable of respondent department

<b>Department</b>	<b>No of Students</b>	<b>In Percent</b>
Accounting	48	18.8
BAIS	61	23.3
Management	28	10.9
Economics	39	15.2
Logistic	47	18.4
Marketing	33	12.9

Student distribution by Department shows that BAIS has the highest respondents which counts 23.8% followed by Accounting 18.8%, Logistics 18.4%, Economics 15.2%, Marketing 12.9% and Management 10.9.

### **4.3 Importance and performance of the attributes**

#### **4.3.1 Importance**

The mean score of importance and performance of the attributes are presented in Table 4.4 with the gap between them. The mean score of the importance attribute was found to be with the value of maximum of 4.51 and minimum 3.52.

Depending on the Score of their mean the result is interpreted below

Attributes like, “Staffs assist their customers(13)”, “consistently courteous towards customers(17)”, “Staff have sufficient knowledge to answer customers’ question(18)”, “Staff of the university has never been too busy to respond to customers’ requests(14)”, “Staff of the university have pay individual/personal attention to customers(19)”, “The staff of the university understand the specific need of its customers(23)”, “A variety of scholarships are offered to Students with free charge(26)”, “the university has convenience of access to the computer facility(27)” were rated as the most important by the respondents. This attributes rated above 4.30 and they are relatively higher than other attributes.

In addition, the mean score result of attributes between 4.00 to 4.30 is “the university has lecture hours convenient to all students(20)”, “the customers at the university receive special attention from staff(21)”, “the university has the customers’ best interests at heart(22)”, “the cost of the academic programs is reasonable(25)”, “The convenience of access to the parking facility and sport areas(29)”. which also shows that these items are also important to the respondents.

The remaining elements scored between 3.732 and 4.00 are “The university classroom has adequately equipped with modern technology and modern resources(1)”, “Customers of the university feel safe in their dealings with the university(16)”, “The physical facilities at the university are well maintained and conducive to learning(2)”, “The behavior of staff

of the university has instilled confidence in you(15)”, “Staffs of the university dressed neatly(3)”, “Staff of the university has always been willing to assist its customers(13)”, “Resource associated with the service ( such as modules, cafeteria utensils etc) are in line with the type of services they provided”, “Staff of the university provide prompt service to all customers(4)”, “The miscellaneous service charges are reasonable(24)”, “The university buildings and infrastructure are easily navigable and well organized(5)”, “Staff of the university tell their customers exactly when service will be performed(11)”, “When the university promises to do something, it has fulfilled its promise(6)”, “The university has error free records (10)”, “The university provides reliable service consistently”(8), “The university has provided its services at the time they undertook to do so(9)”.

Generally, respondents thought the importance attributes are importance as per their perspective and there is not even one element found to be unimportant which scores less than 3.00.

#### **4.3.2 Performance**

The aggregate mean of the performance attributes is which varies between the maximum value of 3.95 and minimum 2.37.

Based on the mean score the performance attribute result is interpreted as this.

Attributes score which resulted between 3.50 and 4.00 is “Staffs of the university dressed neatly(3)”, “Resource associated with the service (such as modules, cafeteria utensils etc.) are in line with the type of services they provided(4)”, “The university buildings and infrastructure easily navigable and well organized(5)”, “The university has provide its services at the time they undertook to do so (9)”, “Staff of the university has provide prompt service to all customers(12)”, “Customers of the university has feel safe in their dealings with the university(16)”, “Staff of the university have sufficient knowledge to answer customers’ question(18)”, “The university have lecture hours convenient to all students(20)”, “The customers at the university receive special attention from staff (19)”, “The university have the customers’ best interests at heart(22)”, “A variety of scholarships are offered to Students with free charge(26)”, “The university has convenience of access to the computer facility(27)”, “The university has convenience of access to the study room facility(28)”.

Items rating between 3.00 to 3.5 are; “When customers have a problem the university has demonstrate a sincere interest in solving it(7)”, “The university provides reliable service consistently(8)”, “The university has error free records(10)”, “Staff of the university has told them customers exactly when service will be performed(11)”, “Staff of the university has always been willing to assist its customers(13)”, “The behavior of staff of the university has instill confidence in you(15)”, “Staff of the university has be Consistently courteous towards customers(17)”, “The miscellaneous service charges are reasonable(24)”, “The cost of the academic program is reasonable(25)”.

The remaining service attributes score are like “The university classroom has adequately equipped with modern technology and modern resources(1)” , “The physical facilities at the university are well maintained and conducive to learning(2)” “When the university promises to do something, it has fulfilled its promise(6)”, “Staff of the university has never been too busy to respond to customers’ requests these items receive(14)”, “Staff of the university have pay individual/personal attention to customers(19)”, “The staff of the university understand the specific need of its customers(23)”, “The convenience of access to the parking facility and sport areas(29)”. The lowest score in their performance.

#### **4.4 Importance and Performance Gap**

To find out the gap between perceived performance and importance, the difference of mean score of performance and importance is computed. The gap analysis is performed for all the service attributes.

The result from the gap analysis shows that all the twenty-nine attributes had a negative mean gap which means the attributes perform less compared to the importance level and positive mean gap which means all the attributes perform high compared to the performance. The highest gap score is "Staff has never been too busy to respond to customer request" scores (-2.08) and the lowest gap is “staff of the university dressed neatly” scores (-0.01).

Table 5 Mean, Standard deviation and Gap analysis

	Service attributes from questioner list ordered question	Importance		Performance		Gap (P-I)
		Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev	
1	Modern technology and modern resources	3.83	1.056	2.76	1.176	-1.07
2	The physical facilities at the university	3.72	1.134	2.96	1.77	-0.76
3	Staffs dressed	3.72	1.072	3.71	1.097	-0.01
4	Resource associated with the service	3.84	1.120	3.87	1.049	-0.03
5	The university buildings and infrastructure	3.59	1.244	3.51	1.087	-0.08
6	When the university promises to do something, it has fulfil its promise.	3.71	1.251	2.38	1.151	-1.33
7	When customers have a problem the university sincere interest in solving it.	3.82	1.189	3.45	1.394	-0.37
8	The university provides reliable service consistently	3.67	1.300	3.41	1.449	-0.26
9	The university has provide its services at the time they undertook to do so.	3.80	1.169	3.55	1.405	-0.25
10	The university has error free records.	3.90	1.119	3.45	1.362	-0.45
11	Staff of the university has told exactly when service will be performed.	3.69	1.373	3.09	1.450	-0.6
12	Staff provide prompt service to all customers.	3.87	1.151	3.58	1.323	-0.29
13	Staff willing to assist its customers.	3.91	1.160	3.42	1.381	-0.49

14	Staff has never been too busy to respond to customers' requests.	4.45	0.771	2.37	1.295	-2.08
15	The behavior of staff has instilled confidence in you.	3.84	1.055	3.29	1.464	-0.55
16	Customers feel safe in their dealings with the university.	3.85	1.054	3.52	1.363	-0.33
17	Staff Consistently courteous towards customers.	4.41	0.970	3.48	1.428	-0.93
18	Staff sufficient knowledge to answer customers' questions.	4.49	0.821	3.58	1.302	-0.91
19	Individual/personal attention to customers	4.41	0.836	2.63	1.536	-1.78
20	Lecture hours convenient to all students.	4.26	1.009	3.53	1.316	-0.73
21	Customers receive special attention from staff.	4.29	0.971	3.76	1.284	-0.53
22	The university customers' best interests at heart.	4.06	0.990	3.74	1.222	-0.32
23	Staff understand the specific need of its customers.	4.51	0.894	2.75	1.438	-1.76
24	Miscellaneous service charges are Reasonable	3.52	1.363	3.37	1.220	-0.15
25	Cost academic programs is Reasonable	4.29	0.955	3.44	1.347	-0.85
26	A variety scholarships are offered to Students	4.36	0.991	3.79	1.250	-0.57
27	Convenience of access to the computer facility.	4.30	0.863	3.83	1.277	-0.47
28	Convenience of access to the study room facility.	4.36	0.875	3.76	1.278	-0.6
29	Convenience of access to parking facility and sport areas	4.19	0.910	2.88	1.588	-1.33

#### **4.5 Importance –Performance Analysis (IPA)**

IPA analysis is conducted on the mean score of importance and performance is taken to draw the IPA matrix which is separated into four quarters. The X-axis represents the performance score of service attributes as Y-axis represents importance. The graph below is separated at 3.0 for both importance and performance axis by referring to the guidelines for the graph, that is less than 3 represent low importance and performance whereas more than 3 is for high importance and performance. Therefore, based on the result that is stated in the table the mean scores are pointed in the graph with the four quadrants named “keep up the good work”, “concentrate here”, “and low priority” and “possibly over kill”.

Most of the attributes are under “keep up the good work” which is a quadrant that shows high performance and importance. Attributes under the quadrant include, “Staff of the university dressed neatly(3) “Resource associated with the service (such as modules, cafeteria utensils etc.) are in line with the type of services they provided(4)”, “The university buildings and infrastructure easily navigable and well organized(5)”, “When customers have a problem the university has demonstrate a sincere interest in solving it(7)”, “The university provides reliable service consistently(8)”.

“The university has provided its services at the time they undertook to do so(9)”, “The university has error free records(10)”, “Staff of the university has told customers exactly when service will be performed(11)”.” Staff of the university has provided prompt service to all customers (12)”, “Staff of the university has always been willing to assist its customers (13)”, “The behavior of staff of the university has instill confidence in you (15)”.

“Customers of the university has feel safe in their dealings with the university(16)”, “Staff of the university has be Consistently courteous towards customers(17)”, “Staff of the university have sufficient knowledge to answer customers’ question(18)”, “The university have lecture hours convenient to all students(20)”, “The customers at the university receive special attention from staff(19)”, “The university have the customers’ best interests at heart(22)”, The miscellaneous service charges are Reasonable(24)”, “The cost of the academic programs is Reasonable(25)” “A variety of scholarships are offered to Students with free charge(26)”, “The university has convenience of access to the computer

facility(27)”, “The university has convenience of access to the study room facility(28)”.

However, these attributes need improvements as Concentrate here quadrant because the importance and performance gap shows still not satisfactory.

In the “concentrate here” this quadrant shows the importance is high for the students but the Campus perform low.

There are seven attributes which provide less than the optimal service these are “The university classroom has adequately equipped with modern technology and modern resources(1)”, “The physical facilities at the university are well maintained and conducive to learning(2)”, “When the university promises to do something, it has fulfilled its promise(6)”, “Staff of the university has never be too busy to respond to customers’ requests(14)”, “Staff of the university have pay individual/personal attention to customers(19)”, “The staff of the university understand the specific needs of its customers(23)”, “The convenience of access to the parking facility and sport areas(29). These attributes which have also negative gaps need service enhancement to make them keep up the good work quadrant.

There is no element in “low priority” this quadrant shows attributes that are low importance as well as low performance.

For the fourth quadrant “possibly overkill” which represents high performance and low importance has no element, therefore there is neither a single element which is rated unimportant nor the institutions investing resources on it.

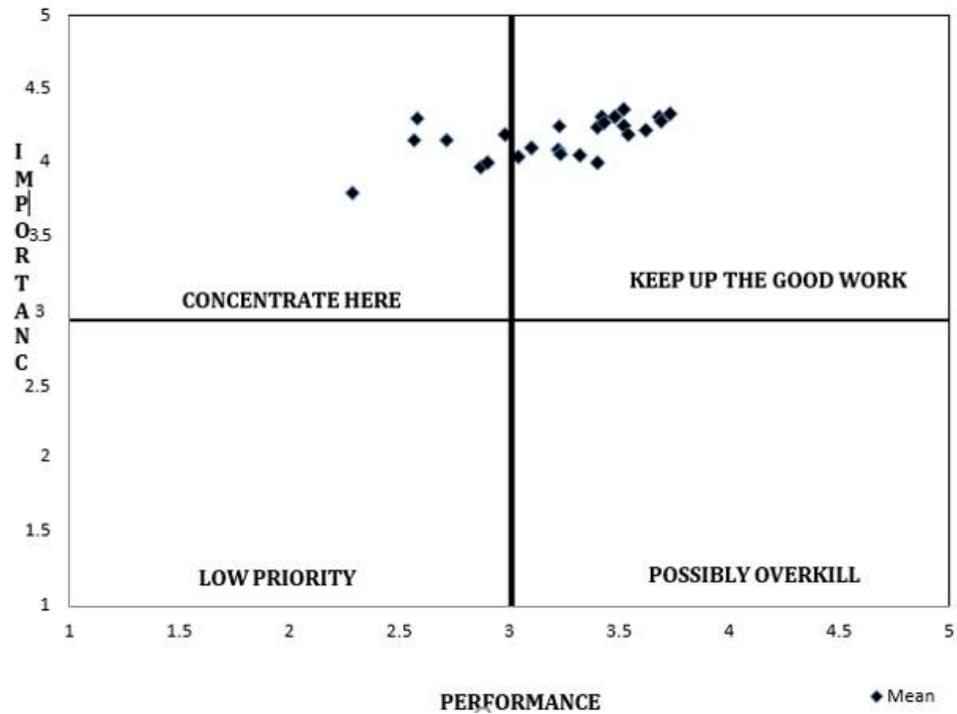


Figure 3 Importance Performance Analysis

#### 4.6 Rank of Overall Importance of the Attributes

From the data collected from students the rank of the attributes in their level of importance is presented as follows.

**Table 4.3. Mean Score of Importance for each Service Quality Dimension**

Table 6 Mean, Standard deviation and Gap analysis

Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Tangibility	3.74	1.13	7
Reliability	3.78	1.20	6
Responsiveness	3.98	.891	5
Assurance	4.14	.975	3
Empathy	4.36	.94	1
Cost of courses	4.05	1.103	4
Access to facilities	4.28	.882	2

Among the dimension's empathy has the highest score with 4.36 and ranked the first, Access to facilities ranked second with 4.28. Assurance, cost of courses offered, responsiveness, reliability and tangibility also ranked from third to six with respective mean value of 4.14, 4.05, 3.98 and 3.78, respectively.

The attribute tangibility has got the lowest score of 3.74 and which makes it the last from the attributes. This indicated that tangibility with the elements (having modern looking equipment, visually appealing physical facilities, staffs dressed neatly and equipment's are in line with the service they give) are less important as per student's response.

#### **4.7 Rank of Overall Performance of the Attributes**

The performance of attributes was also ranked as per students' response and the rank shows the results below.

Table 7 Mean Score of Performance for each Service Quality Dimension

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Tangibility	3.48	1.77	3
Reliability	3.25	1.35	6
Responsiveness	3.11	1.36	7
Assurance	3.47	1.38	4
Empathy	3.28	1.35	5
Cost of courses	3.50	1.27	1
Access to Facilities	3.49	1.38	2

The result indicated that the Cost of course dimension has got the highest value (3.50) and ranked first as compared to the other six dimensions. Access to facility ranked second with mean value of 3.49, in addition, Tangibility ranked third with a mean value of 3.48. On the other hand, dimensions like Assurance with the mean score of 3.47 is rated fourth by the respondents. Empathy and reliability were ranked fifth and sixth with mean values of (3.28 and 3.25), respectively.

#### 4.8 Differential Analysis: Comparison of Importance and Perceived Performance Based on Service Quality Dimension

The paired-sample t test was used to compare the means of two variables within a single group; in this research it is utilized to compare mean importance and performance. The confidence interval of 95% is taken to compare the means.

Table 8 Paired Sample t-test

Service Quality Dimension	Importance		Performance		Paired Difference	T	Sig.
	Mean	Std.dev	Mean	Std.dev			
Tangibility	3.74	1.13	3.48	1.77	- 0.26	-3.699	.000*
Reliability	3.78	1.20	3.25	1.35	- 0.53	-10.788	.000*
Responsiveness	3.98	.89	3.11	1.36	-0.87	-10.380	.000*
Assurance	4.14	.97	3.47	1.38	-0.78	-9.593	.000*
Empathy	4.36	.94	3.28	1.35	-1.08	-10.045	.000*
Cost of courses Offered	4.05	1.10	3.50	1.27	-0.55	-8.277	.000*
Access to facility	4.28	.88	3.49	1.38	-0.79	-7.798	.000*

\* Paired difference is significant at 0.05 levels (2- tailed)

As you can see from the table above the paired difference for all attributes indicated a negative sign which means the mean score of importance is less than the mean score of students' perception of actual performance. The highest difference is possessed by empathy (-1.08) and the lowest is tangibility (-0.26).

The t-test result shows negative for all attributes; this shows that the mean score of importance is greater than perceived performance. The p value of service quality dimension is lower than .05 which demonstrate the sig divergence between expected importance and perceived performance of the institutions, all of them are 0.000\*\*.

#### 4.9 Correlation Analysis

Correlation helps to know if there is any relationship between variables and it is a measure of linear relationship between variables. Correlation of .01 to .30 is considered small, correlations of .30 to .70 are considered moderate, and correlations of .70 to 1.00 are considered very large (Marczyk et al, 2005). The result of this study also showed there is positive relationship among the attributes.

There is higher positive correlation between responsibility and assurance dimensions, access to the facility and reliability dimensions and; tangibility and reliability dimension with Pearson correlation coefficient of .538, .366, .360 respectively.

Table 9 Pearson Correlation

	TANG	RELI	RESP	ASSU	EMPA	ACCESS
TANG	1					
RELI	.366**	1				
RESP	.095	.271**	1			
ASSU	.158*	.242**	.538**	1		
EMPA	.145*	.103	.15	.085	1	
ACCESS	.220**	.161**	.36	.170**	.060	1

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

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note:

TAN- Tangibility REL- Reliability RES- Responsibility ASS- Assurance EMP- Empathy

COS-Cost

ACC- Accessibility

#### 4.10 Regression Analysis

The first statistic ‘R’ is the multiple correlation coefficients between all of the predictor variables and the dependent variable. In this model, the value is 0.333. In this model, the value is 0.728, which indicates that 72% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables in the model. The model also indicated that 28 % of the variance can be explained by other factors which indicated further research is needed to identify the remaining factors that influence the level of service quality in the education sector.

Table 10 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.333 <sup>a</sup>	0.728	.72	.53135

Table 11 ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8.717	7	1.245	4.411	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	70.018	248	.282		
Total	78.734	255			

a. Dependent Variable: Rate your overall service perception

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance,

Empathy, cost of courses offered and Access to facilitate F ratio (systematic variation to unsystematic variation) greater than one explains systematic variation is greater than unsystematic, in addition, the ratio also indicated whether the result of the regression model could have occurred by chance. In this study the F ratio has a value 34.2 and is significant at 0.000. Therefore, it is possible to say the regression model adopted in this study could have not occurred by chance and is considered significance.

a. Dependent Variable: Rate your overall service perception.

Table 12 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	
(Constant)	2.036	.435		4.676	.000		
Tangibility	.079	.041	.129	1.953	.052	.823	1.214
Reliability	.038	.41	.065	.910	.346	.712	1.404
Responsiveness	.012	.044	.020	.272	.786	.681	1.468
Assurance	.117	.068	.126	1.730	.085	.675	1.482
Empathy	.153	.072	.131	2.1330	.034	.953	1.050
Cost	.057	.039	.092	1.4830	.039	.922	1.085
Accessibility	.036	.067	.035	.544	.089	.851	1.175

The results indicate the positive and statistically significant relationship of perceived service quality with six of the explanatory variables except tangibility which has p value > (0.05). The relative importance of the factor (independent variable) in contributing to the variance of the student's perception of service quality (dependent variable) was explained by the standardized beta coefficient.

Here the largest beta coefficient is .131 which is for empathy. This means that this variable makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable, when the variance explained by all other variables in the model is controlled for with a sig. of 0.000\*(<0.05). The next higher beta coefficient is tangibility with a  $\beta$  coefficient of .129 with an important sig. Level (p=.052) that makes it to be the second most important factor in determining overall service quality

The third contributor is assurance  $\beta=0.126$  and  $p=0.085$ , the next elements in their respective contribution are; cost  $\beta=0.092$  and  $p=0.139$ , reliability  $\beta=0.065$  and  $p=0.346$  and

the attribute with the lowest weight but has significance value is accessibility  $\beta=0.035$  and  $p=0.139$ . Moreover, responsiveness with a  $\beta$  value of 0.020 and  $p$  value 0.786.

Tolerance is an indicator of how much of the variability of the specified independent is not explained by the other independent variables in the model and is calculated using the formula

$1-R$  for each variable. If this value is very small (less than .10), it indicates that the multiple correlation with other variables is high, suggesting the possibility of multi collinearity. The other value given is the VIF (Variance inflation factor), which is just the inverse of the Tolerance value (1 divided by Tolerance). VIF values above 10 would be a concern here, indicating multi collinearity. Since the lowest tolerance is .675(i.e.  $> .1$ ) and the highest VIF is 1.482 (i.e. $<10$ ) there is no problem of multi collinearity.

The model can be written as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_nx_n + \epsilon$$

**Were:**

**Y**- Dependent variable

**B**- Constant

**X1-xn**- latent dependent variable

**$\beta_1 - \beta_n$** - regression coefficient of latent independent variable

$\epsilon$  -random error

Thus to find the impact of predictors on dependent variable the specific regression equation in the study will be:

$$SQ = \beta_0 + \beta_1(TAN) + \beta_2(REL) + \beta_3(RES) + \beta_4(ASS) + \beta_5(EMP) + \beta_6(COS) + \beta_7(ACC)$$

**Were:**

**Y**- Dependent variable

**B**- Constant

**X1-xn**- latent dependent variable

**$\beta_1 - \beta_n$** - regression coefficient of latent independent variable

$\epsilon$  -random error

Thus to find the impact of predictors on dependent variable the specific regression equation in the study will be:

$$SQ = \beta_0 + \beta_1(TAN) + \beta_2(REL) + \beta_3(RES) + \beta_4(ASS) + \beta_5(EMP) + \beta_6(COS) + \beta_7(ACC)$$

**Where: TAN- Tangibility, REL- Reliability, RES- Responsibility, ASS- Assurance, EMP- Empathy, COS-Cost and ACC- Accessibility**

Student's overall SQ perception =

From the regression analysis we can say that there was a positive relationship between three independent variables and dependent perception service quality since they have significant values. This indicates that overall perception of service quality largely depends on the five variables, when there is a high performance level these dimensions the overall service quality level increases. Students thought responsiveness and reliability has no significance value and the service quality equation for the institutions will be represented by the five dimensions only (Tangibility, Assurance, Empathy, cost and accessibility)

#### **4.11 Perception towards service quality**

The overall students' perception towards service quality has been assessed using a five point Likert scale ranging from very poor, poor, neutral, good and very good as shown in the following table 4.11 and in figure.

Table 13 Overall Service Rating

	Frequency	Percent
V POOR	21	8.2
POOR	45	17.6
FAIR Valid	38	14.8
GOOD	104	40.7
V GOOD	48	18.7
Total	256	100.0



Figure 4 Rate of over all service perception

In general, we can assume that students are not very good with the service being provided by the campus because only 18.7 percent of the respondents said the service quality is very good. The service rated 17.6 percent and 8.2 percent thought the service is very poor. 14.8 of the respondents said fair, from the all respondents 40 percent which is below half said it is Good, so the Campus overall service is not very good in general.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The main objective of this study was to assess the perceived service quality of the School of Commerce in Addis Ababa by employing IPA analysis. The study was conducted using the modified service quality dimensions (Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy) and adding two elements in addition which are cost of courses offered and access to facilities. As a result, the study used seven service quality dimensions as suggested by different authors of service quality measurement, it can be appropriate to modify the items of service quality dimensions' instruments to make the survey more relevant to the context of the particular environment.

To test reliability of the modified SERVQUAL Cronbach Coefficient (alpha) was computed all items are 0.832 the overall attributes. The research was conducted by distributing 278 questionnaires to respondents from which 256 were returned.

The IPA analysis results show that the majority of the attributes are laid under keep up the good work. Items under the quadrant include "Resource associated with the service(4)", "The university buildings and infrastructure easily navigable and well organized(5)", "Customers problem has demonstrate a sincere interest in solving it(7)", "reliable service consistently(8)", "Provided its services at the time (9)", "The university has error free records(9)", "Staff told customers exactly when service will be performed (10)". "Staff has provided prompt service to all customers(10)", "Staff always willing to assist its customers(11)", "The behavior of staff instill confidence in you(12)", "Customers feel safe in their dealings with the university(13)", "Staff Consistently courteous towards customers (15)", "Staff sufficient knowledge to answer customers' question (16)", "lecture hours convenient to all students (18)", "customers receive special attention from staff(19)", "Customers' best interests at heart(20)", "miscellaneous service charges are Reasonable (22)", "Cost of the academic programs is Reasonable(24)" , "Variety scholarships are offered to Students with free charge(26)", "Convenience of access to the computer

facility(27)”, “Convenience of access to the study room facility(28)”.these items are rated good from the student’s perspective but they all possess negative gap scores. However, these attributes need improvements as Concentrate here quadrant because the importance and performance gap shows still not satisfactory.

In the “concentrate here” this quadrant shows the importance is high for the students but the institutions perform low. In this quadrant we found seven attributes these are; “Classroom has adequately equipped with modern technology and modern resources(1)”, “Physical facilities are well maintained and conducive to learning (2)”, “Promises to do something, it has fulfilled its promise (6)”, “Staff never be too busy to respond to customers’ requests (14)”, “Staff of the university pay individual/personal attention to customers(19)”, “The staff understand specific need of customers (23)”, “Convenience of parking facility and sport areas(29) ”. These attributes which also have negative gaps need service enhancement to make them keep up the good work quadrant.

For the third quadrant there is no element in “low priority” this quadrant shows attributes that are low importance as well as low performance and this implies there is no need to improve this area or invest resources.

For the fourth quadrant “possibly overkill” which represents high performance and low importance has no element, therefore there is neither a single element which is rated unimportant nor the institutions investing resources on it.

The analysis results in relation to the student's score of importance among the seven variables are among the dimension’s empathy has the highest score with 4.36 and ranked the first, Access to facilities ranked second with 4.28. Assurance, cost of courses offered, responsiveness and reliability also ranked from third to six with respective mean values of 4.14, 4.05, 3.98 and 3.78.

The attribute tangibility has got the lowest score of 3.74 and which makes it the last from the attributes. This indicated that tangibility with the elements (having modern looking equipment, visually appealing physical facilities, staffs dressed neatly and equipment’s are in line with the service they give) are less important as per student’s response.

Related to the respondents score for performance Cost of the course dimension has got the highest value (3.50) and ranked first as compared to the other six dimensions. Access to facility ranked second with mean value of 3.49, in addition, Tangibility ranked third with a mean value of 3.48. On the other hand, dimensions like Assurance with the mean score of 3.47 is rated fourth by the respondents. Empathy and Reliability ranked the fifth and sixth with a mean value of (3.28 and 3.25) respectively.

However, Responsiveness has shown the least score with a mean of 3.11. For that reason, the institutions should have to address the problem in the area by taking further investigations.

The gap result indicated that students perceived service performance was significantly less than their importance

The gap result indicated that students perceived service performance was significantly less than their importance. All the dimensions have shown a negative gap score, which indicated there is low service quality which may express less satisfaction. The highest gap score is on Reliability (-0.94) with the attributes like fulfilling promises, showing interest in solving customer's problems, performing service on time and having error free records. The second highest gap is on Responsiveness (-0.85) and the third highest gap score is Empathy (-0.83). Assurance and Access to facilities have (-0.78) gap score each followed by Cost of courses offered (-0.73). The least gap score of all is recorded on Tangibility with a score of (-0.27).

The Pearson correlation result indicates that all the service quality dimensions were positively correlated which is there is higher positive correlation between responsibility and assurance dimensions, access to the facility and reliability dimensions and; tangibility and reliability dimension with Pearson correlation coefficient of .538,.366,3.60 respectively.

From the regression analysis we can say that there was a positive relationship between three independent variables and dependent perception service quality since they have significant values. This indicates that overall perception of service quality largely depends on the five variables, when there is a high performance level these dimensions the overall

service quality level increases. Students thought responsiveness has no significance value and the service quality equation for the institutions will be represented by the five dimensions only (Tangibility, Assurance, Empathy, Accessibility, Cost offered)

Lastly, the overall service evaluation result showed students are not highly pleased with so because only 18.7 percent of the respondents said the service quality is very good. The service rated poor 17.6 percent and 8.2 percent thought the service was very poor, 14.8 of the respondents said fair, from the all respondents 40 percent which is below half said is Good. The overall service is not very good in general.

## **52 Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that from the twenty-nine questions most of the attributes are traced at 'keep up the good work' quadrant which are twenty in number. The other attributes are laid under 'concentrate here' quadrant; these attributes have possessed importance but they are not performing well. On the third quadrant 'low priority' there is no element which is low importance and performance and also there are no any attributes on the fourth quadrant 'possibly overkill'. Even if most of the attributes are concentrated in the 'keep up the good work' quadrant they all show negative magnitude in the gap analysis.

From the seven dimensions' empathy is a priority attribute for students. Tangibility has got the lowest importance score. Whereas when we consider the performance rate, cost of course has got the highest score and responsiveness score the least. In this regard we can see that tangibility has low importance according to students' perception but it is performing better than other attributes. This shows that there is an information gap between the department and students.

From the gap analysis of all attributes; we can conclude that there must be some measures to be taken to improve quality of service, especially those with the highest gap. In addition, all the dimensions indicated negative gap score indicated there is a need for improvement in the university service delivery. The finding also indicated there is negative magnitude because the service performance by the campus is lower compared to the importance level, which tells us there is dissatisfaction.

The paired sample t-test showed the dimensions with the highest mean difference between importance and performance. The analysis also indicated priority areas which needed an improvement are reliability, responsiveness and empathy.

Regression analysis showed that five service dimensions explain the service variation (Tangibility, Assurance, Empathy, Cost, Accessibility) and Responsiveness and Reliability, these two attributes that do not explain any variation in the dependent variables.

When we consider the overall service rate, the majority of the respondents said the service is not very good.

### **53 Recommendations**

- ✓ Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are given: Empathy was rated first in importance; but when we consider its performance it is the fifth of all the others. This clearly indicates that there is an information gap between students and the institutions; therefore, the campus develops a regular means of collecting feedback on service delivery and customers' satisfaction so the campus should have to give priority to these crucial service attributes which have the highest importance score rate and also focus on the low performance attribute.
- ✓ The attributes showed a negative gap and the campus had to put good effort in order to narrow wider gaps. The difference shows there is significance difference between students' expected results before and perceived performance. This could be addressed by modern systems which shorten the lengthy process in areas such as registrars; and equipment like computers could also make the service delivery speedier and reliable especially in the library system where there is a need for online access to catalogs and digital books.
- ✓ The Seven dimensions which showed high importance and low performance need immediate action. "Classroom has adequately equipped with modern technology and modern resources(1)", "Physical facilities at the university are well maintained and conducive to learning(2)", "Promises to do something, it has fulfilled its promise(6)", "Staff has never be too busy to respond to customers' requests (14)", "Staff pay

individual/personal attention to customers(19)”, “The staff understand the specific need of its customers (23)”, “, “Convenience of access to the parking facility and sport areas (29)” this attributes are important to customers but their performance is low.

✓ Finally, the overall perception of the students towards the service quality of the campus is good but in order to become excellent they should work on the areas of low performance.

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**ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

**Masters of Business Administration Program Name of Student: - Abinet Beyene**

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect primary data for a study on “**Assessing Students’ Perception on Service Quality in Addis Ababa: In case of Addis Ababa university school of Commerce**”. This is undertaken as a partial fulfillment for the program of Masters of Business Administration at St. Mary’s University School Graduate Studies in this regard I kindly ask you to provide me with reliable information to the best of your knowledge, so that the findings from the study would meet the intended purpose. I strongly assure you of confidentiality of the information you give me, and would like to extend my deepest gratitude in advance for being a volunteer to devote your valuable time in filling this questionnaire.

**Directions**

1. No need to write your name
2. Please tick (√) in the appropriate box

**Section A- General Information**

1. Your gender

1. Male       2. Female

1. Age

1. 18 \_ 21years

2. 22 \_ 24 years

3. 25 \_ 27 years

4. above 27 years

2. Department

- 1. Accounting and finance
- 2. BAIS
- 3. Economics
- 4. Marketing Management
- 5. LSCM
- 6. Management

**Section B: Importance and Performance Attributes**

**Importance attributes**

How Importance to you each attributes which are mentioned below and rank them

**Column A**

- 1. Very Unimportant
- 2. Unimportant
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Important
- 5. Very Important

**Performance Attribute**

How effectively does the university perform in comparison to your importance

**Column B**

- 1. Very Poor
- 2. Poor
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Good
- 5. Very Good

**Instruction:**

- \* You should have to fill both columns
- \* Circle only one option from each column (column A and Column B)

Column A						Item	Column B				
Importance Rating							Performance Rating				
Tangibility											
1	2	3	4	5	1	The university classroom has adequately equipped with modern technology and modern resources	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	2	The physical facilities at the university are well maintained and conducive to learning	1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5	3	Staffs of the university dressed neatly	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	4	Resource associated with the service (such as modules, cafeteria utensils etc) are in line with the type of services they provided.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	5	The university buildings and infrastructure easily navigable and well organized					
<b>Reliability</b>											
1	2	3	4	5	6	When the university promises to do something, it has fulfil its promise.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	7	When customers have a problem the university has demonstrate a sincere interest in solving it.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	8	The university provides reliable service consistently	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	9	The university has provide its services at the time they undertook to do so.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	10	The university has error free records.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Responsiveness</b>											
1	2	3	4	5	11	Staff of the university has told them customers exactly when service will be performed.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	12	Staff of the university has provide prompt service to all customers.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	13	Staff of the university has always been willing to assist its customers.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	14	Staff of the university has never be too busy to respond to customers' requests.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Assurance</b>											
1	2	3	4	5	15	The behavior of staff of the university has instill confidence in you.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	16	Customers of the university has feel safe in their dealings with the university.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	17	Staff of the university has be Consistently courteous towards customers.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	18	Staff of the university have sufficient knowledge to answer customers' question.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Empathy</b>											
1	2	3	4	5	<b>19</b>	Staff of the university have pay individual/personal attention to customers.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	<b>20</b>	The university have lecture hours convenient to all students.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	<b>21</b>	The customers at the university receive special attention from staff.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	<b>22</b>	The university have the customers' best interests at heart.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	<b>23</b>	The staff of the university understand the specific need of its customers.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cost of Courses Offered</b>											
1	2	3	4	5	<b>24</b>	The miscellaneous service charges are Reasonable	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	<b>25</b>	The cost of the academic programs is Reasonable	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	<b>26</b>	A variety of scholarships are offered to Students with free charge	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Access to Facilities</b>											
1	2	3	4	5	<b>27</b>	The university has convenience of access to the computer facility.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	<b>28</b>	The university has convenience of access to the study room facility.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	<b>29</b>	The convenience of access to the parking facility and sport areas	1	2	3	4	5

30. What is your overall perception towards the service quality of your institution?

Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
1	2	3	4	5

*Thank you for your Cooperation!*