

The non-academic staffs' performance and its impact on the students' satisfaction- in case of private higher institutions - Addis Ababa

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Abstract: Many empirical literatures on quality of education have been developing. Different scholars and institutions have recommended using various parameters in measuring the extent of quality education and they also believe that quality education and students' satisfaction is predetermined by the performance of academic staffs and supportive staffs, as well as through the institutional infrastructure facilities, program and accesses. However, the researchers' and scholarly interest has so far been limited to supportive staffs' performance measurement and its impact on quality education and the students' satisfaction. Therefore, the prime focusing area of this Article is to assess the non-academic staffs' performance and its Impact on the students' satisfaction- in case of Private Higher institutions - Addis Ababa. Thus, the Author collected data from 300 respondents in various Private Higher institutions and analyzed via chi-square goodness of fit test, T-test, Correlation and regression analysis. As a result, the study confirmed that the extent of non-academic staffs' performance and the students' satisfaction is limited. However, the degree of students' satisfaction is highly predicted by the staffs' performance.

Keywords : service quality, quality education, non-academic staffs' performance, students' satisfaction, private higher institutions, Addis Ababa

1. Introduction

The concept of service quality has been the subject of many conceptual and empirical studies in variety of service industries; including higher institutions. Service quality has a positive implication for an organization's performance and competitive position. Quality of higher education is one of the most crucial determinants of national competitiveness in the global era and it is dependent up on the quality of the service delivered by the institutions. As to Hanaysha, Abdullah, & Warokka (2011) this quality, comes from the combination of excellent learning process and public satisfaction in the service delivered.

Higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa faces severe constraints. According to Teshome, 2007, like other Sub-Saharan African countries, quality of higher education is limited in Ethiopia. Poor-quality of education is becoming the major challenge in Ethiopian higher education and a serious concern in private higher education institutions. The problems related to quality education in HEIs are identified mainly as the rapid expansion of the institutions. According to a study by World Bank (2003) the rapid enrollment expansion is inevitably bringing progressively less qualified student in to the system.

On the other hand, Ethiopian government needs for quality education and training to the success of the country Growth and Transformation Plan as stated in Education Sector Development Program (ESDP, IV). However, practically, the increased effort on better quality of education, research conducted on it, the students' satisfaction measurement and publications largely remain limited in the domain. In Ethiopia higher institutions are categorized in to two; private and public Higher Education Institutes.

The contribution of Private Higher Education Institutes (PHEIs) in Ethiopia is considerable to a large extent. But which is not in vacuum, they should provide quality education. Which may be up on with the active involvement of all the stakeholders and mainly from the government, the right technical, professional and moral assistance from governments, and the consecutive and proper research work and publications, Hence, the focusing area of this study is the non-academic staffs' performance, quality of education and the degree of satisfaction of students.

Objective of the study

The core objective of this study was to appraise the quality of education and the nonacademic staffs' performance, assess the satisfaction of students, and analyze the causal relationship between non academic staffs' performance, quality of education and the students' satisfaction in Private higher institutions of Addis Ababa in general.

In order to address this objective; the non academic staffs' performances were categorized in to seven functions.

2. Survey of Related Literatures

2.1. Quality in Higher Education Institutes

The idea quality is difficult to characterize precisely, particularly with regards to higher education where institutions have the self-rule to make a decision on their own visions and missions. There have been a number of attempts to define quality in higher education, or even multiple models of quality (Cheng and Tam, 1997). According to Harvey and Green (1993) the term quality in higher education is seen from different aspects; quality is seen as a relative concept; what matters is whether one educational context has more or less quality than another, not whether it meets an absolute threshold standard so that it can be seen to be of adequate quality, nor whether it reaches a high threshold and can be viewed as outstanding and of exceptional quality, nor whether a context is perfect, with no defects. Quality may also be seen to be relative to purposes, whether to the purposes and views of customers or relative to institutional missions. Moreover, quality could be seen as transformation involving enhancing the student in some way. In this concept of quality is used when examining evidence of the educational gains of students in contrast to the educational performance and when examining the validity of student judgments of quality of teaching so as to research evidence for teachers to contribute for educational gains.

Quality in tertiary education may imply a certain relative measure against a common standard, where it is difficult to find such a common standard. Various concepts have evolved to suit different contexts ranging from quality as a measure for excellence to quality as perfection, quality as value for money, quality as customer satisfaction, quality as fitness for purpose, and quality as transformation (in a learner) (SAUVCA, 2002). Some institutions have adopted the International Standards Office (ISO) approach in some of their activities. In addition, the quality of an educational program is often defined as some combination of inputs, process and out puts. Quality in Education recognizes five dimensions of quality: learners, environments, content, processes and outcomes, founded on 'the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation' (UNICEF, 2000). At the level of international debate and action three defining principles tend to be broadly shared. These are the need to understand quality education in terms of content relevance, access and outcome and observance of individual rights. Hence, the concept of quality in higher institutions could be viewed from different perspectives; as a relative concept which determine the relative merit gained comparing one to another, in terms of purposes in views of customers or stakeholders, in relation to institutional mission and in terms of inputs, process or output or any other form of measurements. Thus, quality is mechanism to pledge the promises of institutions to the stakeholders and its primary goal is assurance.

The services in the education sector have its own unique property. According to (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000) the services have the following features; intangible, heterogeneous, simultaneous production and consumption. In the absence of tangible evidence on

which to evaluate quality, many authors are trying to use consumers' perception about the services as a tool for judge quality of services (Parasuraman, Zeithmal & Berry, 1985). Hence, comparison between customer expectations and perception of service performance is used to evaluate the service quality which leads to the concept of customer satisfaction.

2.2. Dimensions of Quality in HEIs

Higher education as any other service rendering organization is measured depending on service quality dimensions in other areas and the quality in different areas focus on investigating various aspects of customers' satisfaction with the services. According to Lagrosen et al., (2004) different dimensions of service quality are used for different industries but with similarities between them. Moreover, there is no single dimension which can be applicable for all the service sectors (Carman, 1990).

Identifying the primary stakeholders and service users is the first issue of concern to be considered in analysis of quality in higher education. The educational process involves many stakeholders; students, parents, teachers, and government are some to be mentioned. As to Sirvanci, M. (1995) students are the most numerous stakeholders and are involved in different roles: they are the product of the process, the internal customer for campus facilities, the laborers of the learning process and the internal customer of the delivery of the course material. Moreover, (Ramaiyah et al., 2007) states that there is a consensus about students as primary customers and prospective customers are such as alumni, parents, employers, employee, government, industry and society may be considered as secondary customers. Accordingly, it is crucial to assess the quality of education in HEIs from the viewpoints of students which are the primary customers of the institutions. Nevertheless, measuring the service quality by developing a model to find out the perception of students on quality is a very complex and tedious task because the service quality dimensions cover many areas and therefore, it is not possible to cover all (Hadikoemoro, 2002).

2.3. The Student as the Primary Stakeholder

The need to evaluate the roles of higher education institutions in the society enforces the institutions to identify their stakeholders where their success depends on their capability to identify and meet the stakeholders' needs. Moreover, by conducting continuous assessment and improvement of the demands of stakeholders HEIs would be able to archive the quality of services. Private HEIs as an industry in a fierce market competition should work a lot in identifying the needs of their stakeholders, and work towards satisfying the where their success and survival in the market depends on the satisfaction of their stakeholders Gruber, et al. (2010).

Identifying the primary stakeholder in higher education is problematic (Cuthbert, 1996). This combined with the issue that service providers can only deliver an effective service if they know what the customer wants (Gruber et al., 2010), makes the identification of the primary stakeholder even more crucial. Margaret M. Martin (2007) Claims that, students are the primary stakeholders of higher education services in the UK, demonstrating that they play a key role in the production and delivery process of the service. More recently, Gruber, et al. (2010) contends that students are the specific and primary target audience, stressing the need for academic administrators to focus on understanding their requirements. This could provide the institution with a certain competitive advantage, principally in terms of generating positive word-of-mouth communication between potential, current and future students (Alves and Raposo, 2009). Moreover, Leisyte et al. (2011) state that students as stakeholders need to be involved inequality management and internal quality assurance processes at higher education institutions. The SERVQUAL model enables higher education institutions to assess the satisfaction of students as their primary stakeholders with the service that the higher education institution provides. Assessing higher education service quality by measuring expectations and perceptions of students is a valuable tool for institutional management in order to improve the quality of the service and focus on the resources needed in order to improve it.

2.4. Student Satisfaction and Education Quality in HEIs

The concept of satisfaction in the context of higher education focuses on the student community. Student satisfaction is defined as the favorability of a student's subjective assessment of the numerous outcomes and experiences related with education and being shaped continually and repeated experiences in campus life Oliver and Desarbo (1989). It is the attitude of students that results from the assessment of their practice about the service received.

Students are the primary customers of higher education institutions and their satisfaction depends on the quality of education and the service received in the institutions. Consequently, as a primary and key stakeholder, the satisfaction of students contributes a lot for the institutions. According to (Helgesen & Nettet, 2007) student satisfaction is crucial since satisfied students could end up going back to their previous institutions for further studies or to enroll for new courses. Hence, higher education institutions should make every effort towards meeting and exceeding the expectations of their students in order to ensure the sustainability of their operations (Anderson et al, 1994).

The feedback from students is important for institutions in various forms including identifying the level of satisfaction from the service they have received (Rowley, 2003). Providing students with an opportunity to express their level of satisfaction with their academic experiences at the institution, providing auditable evidence that students have had the opportunity to commend on their experiences and that such information is used to make improvements, and to allow the institutions to benchmark and provide indicators that will contribute to the reputation of the institution in the market place are some to be mentioned (Ibid).

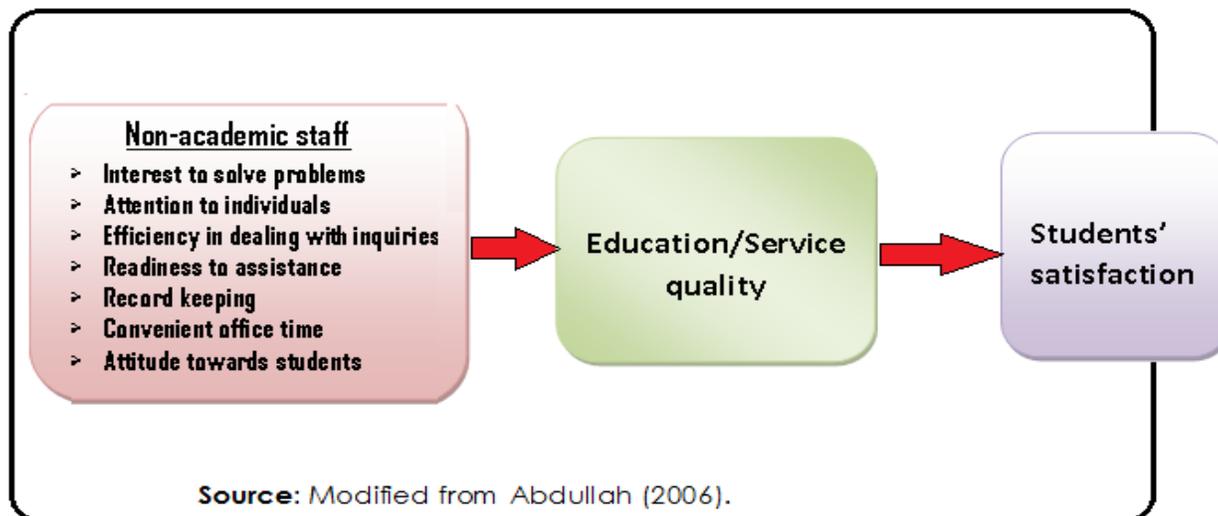
Higher education institutions, therefore, to assess the quality of education and service in general relies on the satisfaction of students and hence the higher education institutions must focus on every aspect of the students' experience at the institutions (Devinder & Dalta, 2003). According to (Ramsden, 1991) student satisfaction is viewed as a good indicator of the quality of teaching at the institutions of higher learning and is also an outcome measure of the education process.

2.5. Non-academic Staff functions and performance

1. **Non-academic Staff:** Aspects related to administrative staff studied are: Interest to solve problems, attention to individuals, efficiency in dealing with inquiries, readiness to assistance, record keeping, convenient office time and attitude towards students

3. Conceptual framework and hypothesis

The hypotheses of this study were based on the proposition that good non-academic staffs' performance and practices affect directly the quality of education and indirectly the students' satisfaction. The other proposition is that the students' degree of satisfaction is directly affected by good quality of education.



The followings were the tentative statement of the study.

- H1: There is no a significant positive relationship between non-academic staffs' performance and quality of education.
- H2: There is no a significant positive relationship between the non-academic staffs' performance and students' satisfaction
- H3: There is no a significant positive relationship between quality of education and students satisfaction

4. Data and Methodology

The main research question of the study is “What is the causal relationship between the non-academic staffs' performance and students' satisfaction in Private higher institutions of Addis Ababa in general. In order to answer this research question, the study has used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodology. The study has been organized in to three sections. The first section analyzed the non-academic staffs' performance. Second section appraised the students' satisfaction. Finally, the study analyzed the non-academic staffs' performance and students' satisfaction in Private higher institutions

4.1 Data, Sample design, and data collections

In the process of conducting research, at least five major activities are included: 1. matching the research design with research questions, 2. Sample determination, 3. selecting the research inventories, 4. Selecting methods of data collection, and 5. Selecting methods of data analysis (Heppner et al. 2007). In the previous section, the activities with related to matching the research design with research questions was discussed. The next section will discuss the rest major activities of the study. Before sample design, the data sources and data type required to the study should be determined (Kothari, 2004). To properly answer the research questions, primary data was the main sources of this study. According to the study's finding of Nicholson and Bennett (2008), 84% of social studies included primary data as major sources. Likewise, 51% of them employed Primary data only (Nicholson and Bennett, 2008)

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa; it is a capital City of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The total numbers of private higher institutions operating in Addis Ababa is 14. These were the focusing area of the study. The sample size of the study was 5 private higher institutions; which are purposively selected. Meaning that 36% of the population. The sample size of 30% seemed to be ideal (Range Management Society of India, 2000).

As far as concerning to designing sample respondents, the respondents of the study were identified as Bachelors and Diploma students of private higher institutions operating in Addis. The sample size was done using the formula developed by (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Thus, the study has taken 374 sample respondents. In order to select respondents, the study administered non proportional stratified sampling meaning that equal number of respondents from each program stratum (187 from each group of respondent). Moreover, to select respondents from students, the study employed convenient sampling. Likewise, the data was collected by using questionnaire. Likert scale has been the most widely used technique.

4.2 Methods of data analysis

The analysis was done through STATA-12 Software; specifically, by using chi-square goodness of fit test, one sample T-test, Correlation and regression analysis. chi-square goodness of fit for univariate categorical variable; one sample T-test- for interval scale univariate variable (Likert scale developed from two or more Likert type items); Correlation- to analysis the association between independent variables and independent with dependent variables. The reason is to know about the direction and extent of relationship between variables. Moreover, regression analysis was administered to analysis the causality relationship between non-academic staffs’ performance, quality education and students satisfaction. Furthermore, to determine the extent of reliability, the reliability test was done with considering the cut- point at 0.7 alpha coefficients. Validity test was also done through pilot study, comments from relatives and colleagues.

5. Data analysis and Discussion

5.1. Chi-square goodness of fit test

Non-academic staffs’ performance evaluation by using 7 indicator items was done. And the reliability alpha coefficient for these 7 items indicates to 0.7416; which is assumed to be acceptable. For these 7 indicator items as well as quality education and students’ satisfaction, chi-square goodness of fit test (univariate analysis-categorical) was done. The following table details the items used to measure the extent of non-academic staffs’ performance

No.	Non-academic staffs Performance Items	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Very High (5)	Chi-square	P- Value
1	When there is problem, administrative staff show a sincere interest in solving it	46 (15.4)	142 (47.3)	36 (12)	36 (12)	40 (13.3)	141.2	<0.0001
2	Administrative staff provide caring and individual attention	87 (29)	91 (30.3)	53 (17.7)	42 (14)	27 (9)	52.533	<0.0001
3	Inquiries/complaints are dealt with efficiently and promptly	30 (10)	57 (19)	152 (50.7)	22 (7.3)	39 (13)	187.633	<0.0001

4	Administrative staff are never too busy to respond to a request for assistance	26 (8.7)	162 (54)	22 (7.3)	50 (16.7)	40 (13.3)	225.067	<0.0001
5	Administration offices keep accurate and retrievable records	36 (12)	42 (14)	157 (52.3)	32 (10.7)	33 (11)	197.033	<0.0001
6	The opening of administrative offices are personally convenient for students	102 (34)	98 (32.63)	38 (12.7)	36 (12)	26 (8.67)	90.4	<0.0001
7	Administrative staff show positive work attitude towards students	38 (12.7)	49 (16.3)	163 (54.3)	29 (9.7)	21 (7)	228.267	<0.0001

To gain some insight into recognizing the extent of non-academic staffs' performance, the respondents

were asked to express their opinion. In favor of this, over half of the respondents feel that the supportive staffs are not solving problems in sincerely; along with this, they are performing the identified tasks to a low extent. While the Chi-square goodness of fit test value is 141.2 and the P-value is < 0.001. The result is statistically significant at P= 0.05. It signifies that there is significantly low interest to solve the students' problems. Concerning to providing good attention about the students matter, even more than 50% of respondents believed that proper caring and attention is no provided to students. According to the chi-square test, the value reached at 52.533 and the P-value in the chi-square goodness of fit test is still less than 0.001 at 5% significant level; it is statistically significant. Thus, there is significant evidence to say that there is no proper caring and attention paid to the students matter. Again, the collected data about the extent of managing complaints efficiently and promptly illustrated that 50.7 % of respondents answer that there is moderate level of performance. Although, the P-value of the chi-square goodness of fit test indicates less than 0.001; since its value is 187.633. The result is significant at the 5% significance level; which implies that still there is no properly managing complaints efficiently and promptly.

Again, as depicted in the table: majority, 162 (54%) of respondents believe that the most features of supportive staffs is low extent of willing to assist students. in line with chi-square test, the value indicates to 225.067; and the P-value reached at below 0.0001, it implies that the values is significantly declaring that there is low extent of willing to assist students. Likewise, 157(52.3%) of respondents advocate that there is moderate extent of quality record keeping system and practices. The chi-square test indicates to significance. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there is no good and proper record keeping practices in private higher institutions. As far as concerning to office time management and convenience, 2002(66.67%) Of respondents believed that private higher institutions' practice is either to a very low extent or low extent. Alike, the P- value in the chi-square test is less than 0.0001; which is statistically significant at 5% significant level. As a result, significantly, it signifies that their office time management and convenience is poor.

Lastly, concerning to having positive attitude towards students, majority, 163 (54.3%) or respondents replied that the there is a moderate extent of positive attitude towards students. Moreover, the chi-square goodness of fit test result showed coefficient value as 228.267; the P-value as less than 0.0001. Thus, there is statistical significant indication to declare that the non-academic staffs have moderate extent of positive attitude towards students in private higher institutions.

5.2. T-test for the overall performance evaluation via one sample T- test (univariate analysis-continuous)

One-sample t test

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Averstaffperform	300	2.68	.0520783	.902023	2.577514	2.782486

mean = mean(Averstaffperform) t = -6.1446
 Ho: mean = 3 degrees of freedom = 299

Ha: mean < 3 Ha: mean != 3 Ha: mean > 3
 Pr(T < t) = 0.0000 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000 Pr(T > t) = 1.0000

The above Table indicates the T- test results on the existence of good comprehensive performance by non-academic staffs. According to the table, the average value of their performance indicates to 2.68, and the P- value is less than 0.0001 with the expected average of 3. It is statistically significant. Thus, there is a statistically significant evidence to conclude that the non-academic staffs are not performing well about the identified duties.

No.	Quality Education and Students' satisfaction	Very Low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Very High (5)	Chi-Square	P-Value
1	What is the extent of Quality Education in your private higher institution?	53 (17.7)	57 (19)	102 (34)	49 (16.3)	39 (13)	39.733	<0.0001
2	What is the extent of Students' satisfaction in your private higher institution?	91 (30.3)	49 (16.3)	98 (32.63)	40 (13.3)	22 (7.3)	72.833	<0.0001

Again, respondents were asked to state their beliefs about the extent of existed

quality education and students' satisfaction. As a result, 34 % of respondents believe that there is medium extent of educational quality in private higher institutions. Only 29.3% of them advocate the existence of high quality education. The chi-square value reached at 39.733 and the P-value in the chi-square goodness of fit test is still less than 0.001 at 5% significant level; it is statistically significant. Consequently, there is significant evidence to say that there is no better quality of education in private higher institutions-Addis Ababa. In order to conclude something about the students' level of satisfaction, the data was collected. As a consequence, only 20.6% of respondents stated that the students of private higher institutions are properly satisfied. However, majority of them are not supporting this. But, the evidence from the Chi square test is 72.833 with the P-value less than 0.0001 at a significance level of 0.05. So, it is possible to conclude that there is no properly satisfied student in private higher institutions operating in Addis Ababa.

5.3. Relationship analysis

A. Correlation matrix

. correlate Problem attention complaints assistance record offices attitude educquality satisfaction
 (obs=300)

	Problem attent ⁿ	compla ^s	assist ^e	record	offices	attitude	educqu ^y	satisf ⁿ	
Problem	1.0000								
attention	0.0461	1.0000							
complaints	0.7290	0.2698	1.0000						
assistance	0.0907	0.6583	0.1547	1.0000					
record	0.6049	0.2390	0.8555	0.2032	1.0000				
offices	0.0642	0.1652	-0.0222	0.2287	-0.0896	1.0000			
attitude	0.4309	0.1058	0.6621	0.1109	0.7966	-0.1059	1.0000		
educquality	0.6167	0.1521	0.7332	0.2851	0.7399	-0.0321	0.5969	1.0000	
satisfaction	0.6079	0.2349	0.8554	0.1382	0.8184	-0.0405	0.6553	0.6705	1.0000

The above figure is about a correlation matrix to indicate the extent of relation between variables. As depicts in the matrix, the quality of education has positive and moderate level of association with the students' satisfaction. Moreover, the next figure is illustrating the partial correlation result. Accordingly, the value of partial correlation of overall performance practices of non-academic staffs with quality education is 0.3937 and significant value is 0.000; thus, there is significant positive association between non-academics staffs performance and quality of education. Likewise the partial correlation value of the supportive staffs' performance with students' satisfaction is 0.5007; with significance value of 0.0000. Here, there is statistical evidence to articulate that the average staffs' performance practices are significantly and positively related with students' satisfaction

Partial and semipartial correlations of avrperformance with

Variable	Partial Corr.	Semipartial Corr.	Partial Corr.^2	Semipartial Corr.^2	Significance Value
educquality	0.3937	0.2685	0.1550	0.0721	0.0000
satisfact ⁿ	0.5007	0.3626	0.2507	0.1315	0.0000

B. The causality relationship between the non-academic staffs' performance practices and quality of education– Multiple Ordered Logistic Regression

This paper has primarily assessed the performance extent of Non-academic staffs, the level of quality education and students satisfaction. The assessments were done through chi-square test and t-test. Moreover, it analyzed the causal relationship between these variables. In order to analysis these relations, the paper has reviewed and used correlation and regression analysis

As a result, the Non-academic staffs' performance, the quality education and students satisfaction were perceived as an important for the higher institution operations. However, there is no significant level of functions done towards to them in the selected private higher institutions. Furthermore, as it is widely documented in the analysis as well as in literature, non-academic staffs' performance was an important direct and immediate determinant factor affecting both quality of education and students' satisfaction. Furthermore, the quality education is a predictor of students' satisfaction

8. Reference

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