

## **Effect of Service Quality Dimensions on Customers' Satisfaction in Case of Ethiopia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of service quality dimensions on customer's satisfaction in case of werabe town municipality. The study reviewed relevant literature with the aim of establishing a gap which the research fulfilled. The researcher used descriptive research design with quantitative research approach in order to meet the objective of the study. The target population for this study was customers of werabe town municipality. To select sample respondents, probability sampling method was employed and 380 respondents were selected using Simple Random Sampling Technique. Methods of collecting data were structured and semi structured questionnaires. 281 questionnaires were used for this study and the data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson Correlation analysis shows that there was statistically significant positive relationship between the five independent variables at the .000 level (2-tailed) had positive and statistical significant correlation relationship with dependent variables in study area. The multiple linear regression of the study indicated that all service quality dimensions had statistically significant on customers' satisfaction in werabe municipality and customers' satisfaction was explained by 83.8% with all the independent variables. Independent variables are significant impact on dependent variables.

**Keywords:** Service, Quality, Dimensions, Customer, Satisfaction

### **1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

In today's global competitive environment delivering quality service is considered as an essential strategy for success and survival (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1990). Service quality is seen as the major driving force for business sustainability (Carlzon, 1987), it is also recognized as the success factor for firms (Rust and Oliver, 1994) and higher profitability (Gundersen et al., 1996). Public sector organizations have come under increasing pressure to deliver quality services (Randall and Senior, 1994) and improve efficiencies (Robinson, 2003).

The term Service Quality is an association of two different words; 'service' and quality. Service means "any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything". Quality has come to be recognized as a strategic tool for attaining operational efficiency and better performance of business (Ramya,N., 2019).

Many scholars and researchers attempts to explain and measure customer satisfaction, there still does not appear to be a consensus regarding its definition (Giese & Cote 2000). Customer satisfaction is an experience-based assessment made by the customer of how far his own expectations about the individual characteristics or the overall functionality of the services obtained from the provider have been fulfilled (Bruhn 2003). According to Gyasi and Azumah (2009) satisfaction is the process of customer overall subjective evaluation of the product/service quality against his/her expectation or desires over a time period. Customer satisfaction can also be defined as a customer's overall evaluation of the performance of an offering to date(Sisay Zerfu 2021).

## Statement of the problem

In today's competitive environment, delivering high quality service is the key for a sustainable competitive advantage. Customer satisfaction does have a positive effect on an organization's profitability. Satisfied customers form the foundation of any successful business as customer satisfaction leads to repeat purchase, brand loyalty, and positive word of mouth (Angelova, 2011 as cited in Sisay Zerfu 2021).

Like many other services organizations, public services organizations specifically those ones operating at local government level, are not immune to the pressures to improve the quality of their services on a continuous basis. Municipal authorities as one of public service organization face more daunting tasks than those in the private sector in their efforts to provide excellent service and maintain citizen satisfaction. A wide variety of influences is effectively bringing about awareness of quality issues, and of concepts such as quality management. Some of these influences arise directly from local authorities' genuine desire to enhance their public image by improving the quality of those services provided to the community, while others come "imposed" or "forced" either by means of public initiatives or through an increase in consumers' awareness of their rights (Gutiérrez Rodríguez et al., 2009 as cited in Abdissa Gemechu 2019).

In Ethiopia, the urban development agenda was given little attention until the mid-2000s because the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) led government that came into power in 1991 had focused on Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI) policy (Befekadu and Nega 2000; Abreha et al. 2021). However, the government ratified a national urban development policy in 2005 that aims to make urban centres become industrial hubs. The GoE has also ratified the 10 years perspective plan (2020–2030) in 2020 that includes industry growth as one of its cornerstones (UN-Habitat 2014; NPC 2020).

To the best of the researcher's knowledge and the literatures reviewed, empirical studies have mostly been conducted on staff dissatisfaction rather than customer satisfaction but few of them are conducted on municipalities and none of them are investigated in study area. Hence this study tried to fill this gap by examining the effect of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction in case of Worabe Municipality.

## Objectives

1. To examine the effect of tangibility on customer satisfaction in Worabe town municipality.
2. To examine the effect of reliability on customers satisfaction in Worabe town municipality.
3. To investigate the influence responsiveness on customer satisfaction in Worabe town municipality.
4. To examine the effect of assurance on customer satisfaction in worabe town municipality.
5. To examine the effect of empathy on customer satisfaction in worabe town municipality.

## Service Quality Model

Given the complex nature of service quality, it is not surprising that there have been divergent views about the most suitable way to conceptualize and measure it Palmer (2011:293). Much of the research still uses some variant of the disconfirmation paradigm to measure customer satisfaction.

## SERVQUAL Model

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), is a measurement model for service quality that has been extensively applied in many studies focusing on service quality assessment (Zeithaml et al., 2008:154). Zeithaml et al. (2008:151) add that the SERVQUAL model

is one of the first measures to be developed specifically to measure service quality. The SERVQUAL instrument is known to be the predominant method used to measure customers' perceptions of service quality (Lewis & Booms, 1983:100). Boshoff and Du Plessis (2009:43) believe that this model is arguably, the best-known instrument to measure customers' perceptions of service quality.

## 2. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The service quality literature has seen a substantial debate on the nature and dimensionality of the construct. Most of this debate centered on the dimensionality of the SERVQUAL scale and the appropriateness of measuring service quality as a gap between customer expectations and customer evaluations of performance (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1991). The result of this debate was general agreement that it is not necessary to measure consumer expectations of service performance in measuring the service quality construct (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996 as cited in Aree Mohammed Ali and Shivan A.M doski 2022).

A second debate within the literature pertains to the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers tend to be loyal to the company and more likely to return. Understanding satisfaction is important in the sense that dissatisfied customers rarely complain, but rather simply purchase from another service provider (Milbourn, 1998 as cited in Aree Mohammed Ali and Shivan A.M doski 2022).

The most popular conceptualization of service quality is Parasuraman et al. (1985) SERVQUAL model. Originally containing 10 dimensions, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) later reduced the SERVQUAL instrument to its present five dimensions: a) tangibles; b) reliability; c) responsiveness; d) assurance; and e) empathy. However, scholars continue to examine issues related to the validity and reliability of the SERVQUAL instrument (Nel, Pitt, & Berthon, 2022).

In (2020), Gopi & Samat researched how service quality impacts satisfaction among library users in various universities within Sweden. Based on this analysis, it was established that service quality has over 71% impact on library user satisfaction. Additionally, Gopi & Samat noted that service reliability results in more user satisfaction, whereas the empathy dimension has minimal impact.

Modiri Matthews and Bakae Aubrey Mokoena (2020), studied the influence of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction within visa facilitation centers in south Africa. The result indicate that a moderate positive association exists between tangibility and customer satisfaction, ( $r = 0.382$ ). In (2019), Abdissa Gemechu conducted research on the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction within Nekemte municipality, Oromiya region of Ethiopia, and find out all service quality dimensions have significant impact on service quality and customer satisfaction.

Lee & Madanoglu (2018) analysed service quality dimensions alongside customer satisfaction within India's telecommunication industry and established a positive relationship between customer contentment and the service standard dimensions. Moreover, this study outlined the higher impacts of the reliability dimension with regards to service quality. On the other hand, the 19-tangibility dimension seemed to be less effective. Further, Lee & Madanoglu outline that all of the dimensional aspects should get modified and improved since they all positively impact customer satisfaction.

An Assessment of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction at eThekweni Municipality: Water and Sanitation Unit (Nonhlanhla Nxumalo (2017), found that all service quality dimensions have a significant impact on service quality and customer satisfaction. The results of the study carried out by the researcher are similar to the findings of Mhlongo, et al. (2016), in their study reliability dimension had the second average gap score. It is noted that a few researchers like Omar, Bin-

Saddan & Kamaruzziman (2014), Mokhils et al. (2013) have through research concluded that there a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and reliability dimension.

### Conceptual Frame Work

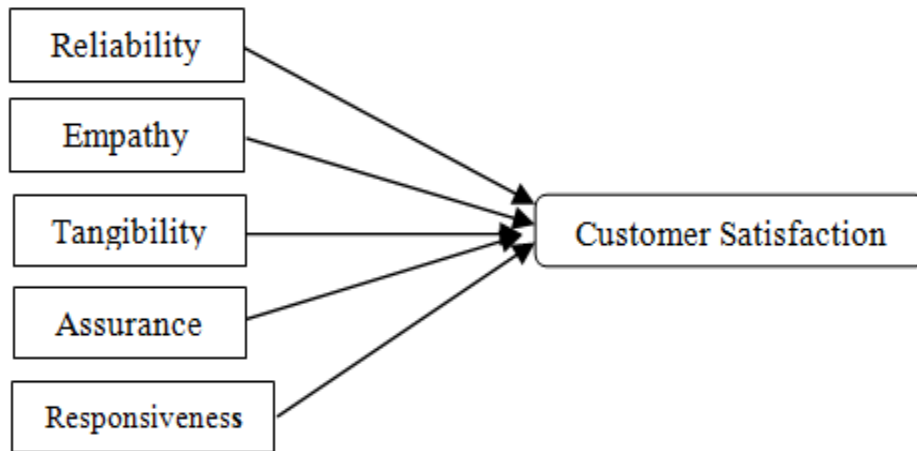


Figure 1. Conceptual Frameworks

### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH.

Kothari (2004) stated that the research design is the conceptual arrangement within which the research conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. The study was involved descriptive and explanatory. This study followed quantitative research approach that helps to collect numerical data from the group of people, and generalize those results to a larger group of people and it gives breadth.

#### Target Population and Sample size

The target population of the study was customers of werabe town municipality. The researcher used stratified random sampling to categorize the customers of the municipality in 11 kebeles. This technique was preferred because it helps to minimize bias when dealing with the population. With this technique, the sampling frame can be organized into relatively homogeneous groups (strata) before selecting elements for the sample.

The researcher was tried to calculate the sample size after determining the target population. In addition to population, purpose of the research, population size, the level of precision or sampling error, the level of confidence or risk level and the degree of variability or the distribution of attributes in the population determine the appropriateness of the sample size (Miaoulis & Michener, 1976).

For this study sample size was determined by using Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula. Thus, the sample size determination was determined as follows. According to preliminary data which obtained from werabe town municipality 2023, werabe town has 11 kebeles namely werabe 01, werabe 02, Alkeso, Anshabeso, Agedale. Dile Datte, Burka, Germama, Datte wezir, Fuge Achraye, and Albazar.

$$\text{Yamane (1967)} \quad n = \frac{N}{(1+N(e^2))}$$

$$n = 91,602 / (1 + 91,602(0.05^2))$$

$$= 91,602 / (1 + 91,602(0.0025))$$

$$= 380 \text{ respondents}$$

## Reliability Analysis

**Table 1. Cronbach's alpha value of all variables.**

S.no	Name of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
1.	Reliability	0.83	Reliable
2	Empathy	0.83	Reliable
3	Tangibility	0.91	Reliable
4	Assurance	0.87	Reliable
5	Responsiveness	0.85	Reliable
6	Customer satisfaction	0.82	Reliable

**Source;** SPSS version 24 Reliability test 2023.

The above table 1 reveals that service quality dimensions (reliability, empathy, tangibility, assurance and responsiveness) had 0.83, 0.83, 0.91, 0.87, and 0.85 respectively. This implies those independent variables were internally consistent to each other and with dependent variable (customer's satisfaction, 0.82).

## Correlation Analysis

**Table 2 correlation coefficient of variables.**

	Reliability	Empathy.	Tangibility	Assurance.	Responsiveness.
Customer Pearson satisfaction Correlation	<b>.849**</b>	<b>.789**</b>	<b>.568**</b>	<b>.513**</b>	<b>.693**</b>
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	281	281	281	281	281

**Source:** Compiled from SPSS result, 2023

As shown on the above table, there was statistically significant relation between reliability and customer satisfaction with ( $r = 0.849$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). There were statistically significant positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction at  $p < 0.01$  level since  $p$  value is 0.000. This implies that there is very strong correlation between reliability and customer satisfaction since its  $r$  value found between 0.80 and 1. In other words; reliability plays a deceive role in holding a customer satisfaction by the clients of worabe municipality.

According to the result correlation above, there was found a positive and strong relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction with ( $r = 0.789$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This implies that there was a strong positive correlation between empathy and customer satisfaction since it  $r$  value is found 0.60-0.79. There were statistically significant positive relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction at  $p < 0.01$  level since  $p$  value is 0.000.

## Regression Analysis

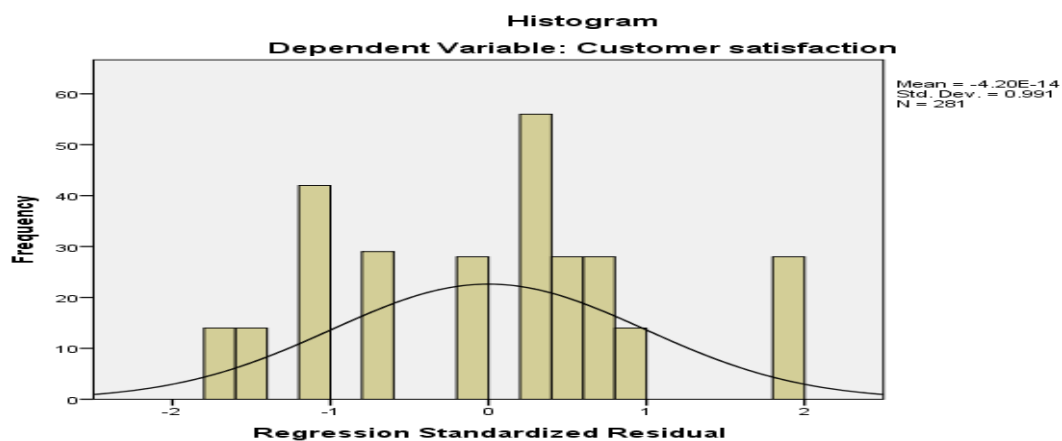
### Assumptions of Multiple Linear Regressions

**Table 3 Multicollinearity test**

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		
	Reliability.	0.121	8.274
	Empathy.	0.126	7.914
	Tangibility.	0.758	1.320
	Assurance.	0.410	2.439
	Responsiveness.	0.374	2.674

The above table shows that the tolerance values for each independent variable (Reliability, Empathy, Assurance, Tangibility and Responsiveness) are 0.121, 0.126, 0.758, 0.410 and 0.374 respectively. Since the values for each independent variables were not less than 0.10, the multiple correlations between variables is low, there was no a chance to Multicollinearity. This was also supported by the VIF value, which were 8.274, 7.914, 1.320, 2.439 and 2.674 respectively which are well below 10. Therefore, the analysis was not violated the Multicollinearity assumption.

### Normality

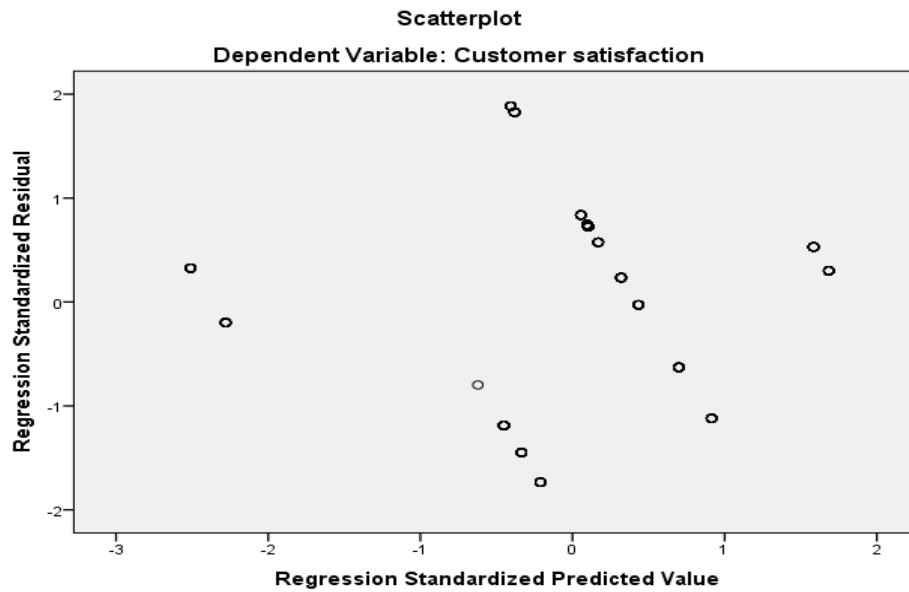


**Source;** Compiled from SPSS result, 2023

As depicted in the figure above; which is an example of a histogram with a normal distribution from the SPSS software, there was no normality problem on the data used for this study.

### Homoscedasticity

The assumption of homoscedasticity refers to equal variance of errors across all levels of the independent variables (Osborne & Waters, 2002). This means that researchers assume that errors are spread out consistently between the variables. Statistical software scatter plots of residuals with independent variables are the method for examining this assumption (Keith, 2006). Ideally, residuals are randomly scattered around zero providing even distribution (Osborne & Waters, 2002). To check this assumption scatter plot was generated for the model.



**Figure 3. Scatter Plot.**

As shown in the figure above; the error variance is constant since most scattered plot attributes are around zero and near to the horizontal line. Therefore, there was no violation of homoscedasticity assumption in this study.

**Table 4 Model summery**

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
dimension1	.917 <sup>a</sup>	.841	.838	.05252	2.24
a. Predictors: (Constant), Reliability, Empathy, Tangibility, Assurance, Responsiveness.					
b. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction.					

**Source:** SPSS Regression results output, (2023)

As shown on above table 4.13, R is the degree of association between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. On the model summary the values of R, R<sup>2</sup> and the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> are 0.917, 0.841 and 0.838 respectively. The adjusted R square result 0.838 implies that 83.8% of the variation can be predicted in Customer satisfaction by the independent variable. In other word, five service quality dimensions collectively influenced customer satisfaction by 83.8%. To improve the customers' satisfaction addressing service quality dimensions is taking 83.8% and other activities and variables collectively take only 15.9% since 84.1% of customer satisfaction can be ensured by service quality dimensions.

**Table 5. ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.99	5	.800	290.00	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	.759	275	.003		
	Total	4.758	280			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reliability, Empathy, Tangibility, Assurance, Responsiveness.

b. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction.

ANOVA analysis is normally used to compare the mean scores of more than two groups or variables. It is also called analysis of variance because it compares the variance between groups (Pallant, 2010). On the above table, the data shows that all independent variables collectively significant with dependent variable since  $p < 0.000$  and the relationship between all independent variables highly significant with dependent variable. F value was 290 is greater than 10 indicates good model of fit.

**Table 6. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-0.002	.107		-0.203	0.839.
	Reliability.	0.584	0.068	0.598	8.640	0.000
	Empathy	0.032	.0061	-0.036	-0.528	0.598
	Tangibility.	0.190	0.021	0.250	9.042	0.000
	Assurance	0.155	0.035	-0.167	-4.434	0.000
	Responsiveness.	0.427	0.038	0.439	11.163	0.000

**Source:** SPSS Regression results output, 2023

Accordingly, Standardized beta coefficients ( $\beta$ ) tell us the unique contribution of each factor to the model. A high beta value ( $\beta$ ) and a small p value ( $p < 0.05$ ) indicate the predictor variable has made a statistically significance contribution to the model. On the other hand, a small beta value ( $\beta$ ) and a high p value ( $p > 0.05$ ) indicate the predictor variable has little or no significant contribution to the model (George and Mallery, 2003). Above table indicates that Reliability had statistically significant contribution to Customer satisfaction at 95% confidence level, since their p-values were 0.000 and which was less than 0.01 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Also, Tangibility, Assurance and Responsiveness had statistically significant contribution to customer satisfaction since their p-value were 0.000 and which was less than the significance level 0.05

The only service quality dimension which had insignificant contribution to customer satisfaction in this study was empathy with p value of 0.598 it was greater than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). In this study the standardized coefficients used to figure out which of the independent variables is more importantly affect the dependent variable. Therefore, reliability the highest standardized coefficient  $\beta = (.598)$ , followed by responsiveness  $\beta = (.439)$ , tangibility was the third important variable which affect customer satisfaction  $\beta = (.250)$ . The remaining variables assurance and empathy had negative beta value of standardized coefficient  $\beta = -.167$  and  $-0.036$  respectively.



### Model Specification of Regression Model:

The model specification of regression model through the simple regression equation is mentioned below.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}, i = 1 \dots N; t = 1 \dots T$$

$$Cs = \alpha + 0.584Re + 0.190Tn + 0.155As + 0.47Rs + \epsilon$$

$\beta_i$  = the coefficient of independent variables. Where  $i = 1, 2, 3, 4$  and  $5$

Therefore Reliability ( $\beta=0.584$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) means that when the explanatory variable reliability increases by one-unit, dependent variable (customer satisfaction) is also increased by 58.4%, then keeping the other significant explanatory variables are constant. Tangibility ( $\beta= 0.190$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) indicated that, the existence of significant and positive relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction. That means when explanatory variable is increased by one unit, the response variable (customer satisfaction) is also increased by 19%, then keeping the other significant explanatory variables constant. Assurance  $\beta= 0.155$  indicated that, the existence of directly (positive) relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction. Responsiveness  $\beta = 0.427$  means that if the explanatory variable responsiveness is increased by one unit, customer satisfaction would be increased by 42.7%, then keeping the other significant variable constant.

$E = 0.107$  which implies unobserved random variables 10.7%.

Therefore, researcher can conclude that from the correlation analysis there is a significant and positive relationship between dependent variable and five independent variables. From regression analysis there was a significant effect of the independent (Reliability, Empathy, Tangibility, Assurance, Responsiveness) to a dependent variable Customer satisfaction.

### Hypothesis testing

**Table 7. Summary of hypothesis.**

Variable	Hypothesis	Decision criteria	Decision
Tangibility	Ho; Tangibility has no a significant effect on customer satisfaction.	P=0.000	Rejected
	H1; Tangibility has a significant effect on customer satisfaction.	“ ”	Accepted
Reliability	Ho; Reliability has no significant effect on customer's satisfaction.	“ ”	Rejected
	H1; Reliability has significant effect on customers satisfaction.	“ ”	Accepted
Responsiveness	Ho; Responsiveness has no significant effect on customer satisfaction.		Rejected
	H1; Responsiveness has significant effect on customer satisfaction.		Accepted
Assurance	Ho; Assurance has no significant effect on customer satisfaction.		Rejected
	H1; Assurance has significant effect on customer satisfaction.		Accepted

Empathy	Ho; Empathy has significant effect on customer satisfaction.		Accepted
	H1; Empathy has significant effect on customer satisfaction		Rejected

Source; Own computation 2023.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It can therefore be concluded that the research objective which was to explore the effect of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction was positively achieved. The frame work of the study conceptualized that five service quality dimensions such as reliability, empathy, tangibility, assurance and responsiveness affect customer satisfaction. The study also examines the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. The results revealed that there is significant relationship between four independent and one dependent variable of the study. Therefore, addressing service quality dimensions is the significant role to improve organizations customer satisfaction. It is therefore concluded that organizations that pay great attention to service quality dimensions directly able to enhance its customers satisfaction decisively.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Worabe municipality should focus exceeding customer satisfaction in one of service quality dimension these means "Empathy" and lucking the other four service quality dimension. Empathy dimension was considered as one of the most important factors influencing customer satisfaction. And it has strong relationship with customer satisfaction. One way of addressing this could be by always treating customers in a friendly manner, understanding customers' specific needs, treating customer with great respect and giving individual attention to customers. This is to say, the municipality management should focus on this factor to maximize customer satisfaction.
- Furthermore, assurance dimension was considered as one of important factors influencing customer satisfaction but according to this study its contribution is less.
- Therefore, the municipality should have to work for increasing the Assurances contribution. One way of handling this problem is by having the required skills in providing services, instilling trustworthiness, having sufficient knowledge of service information, making customers feel safe in their concern and instilling confidence in customers.
- Management and employees of the municipality should be aware that, among the various dimensions of service quality, reliability was especially significant in fostering satisfaction for the customers of Worabe Municipality. Therefore, the municipality should have to work to keep the consistency of their performance and work to provide the expected service as its promise.
- Responsiveness also plays a key role in determining customer satisfaction implying that willingness and readiness to provide a service has crucial role to improving customers' satisfaction. Therefore, management and employees of the municipality should understand it is apparent that focusing on delivering high quality services and improve service quality effectively is critical for customer satisfaction.
- In addition, the satisfaction of customers was significantly influenced by the Tangibility. It is thus apparent that worabe Municipality could have attractive materials and maintain it periodically that enable to be attractive enough in customers' view point, and work to keep the cleanness of the working environment and neatness and discipline of employees.
- Generally, by working hard on all service quality dimension at every point the Municipality can maximize its customer satisfaction.

## DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was conducted to examine the effect of service quality dimension on customers' satisfaction. The sample was drawn conveniently from the customers of worabe municipality from August 2023 to September 2023 G.C. Thus, this study may be limited in its generalizability of the findings to other public service sectors and in the future time. So, future research should have to draw sample of respondents on more time length. In line with this, the sample size was not large. Therefore, future studies can analyze effect of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction with wide range of factors by using large sample size. In this study, the researcher was forced to build up on the theoretical literature reviews from different sources and on previous works in other countries. The study analyses only customers of worabe municipality due to lack of capacity. The case organization taken in this study may limit the applicability of the findings to the public sector in general. Thus, the researcher suggests that further studies can examine the remaining sectors, which would provide a wider basis of analysis and get more reliable findings. Finally, the study focused only on the effect of five service quality dimension namely reliability, empathy, tangibility, assurance and responsiveness on consumers' satisfaction. So, future researchers can include the remaining dimensions such as Communication, Credibility, Security, Competence, Courtesy, Understanding, and Access.

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